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Participatory Action Research: An Evaluation of the 8Twelve Coalition



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Habitat for Humanity

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Executive Summary

This research project began with Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity requesting help from Ball State University in evaluating the success of the 8twelve Coalition. The evaluation ultimately manifested as a class on participatory action research (PAR) based in Ball State University's Urban Planning Department. The class collaborated with local Muncie residents to determine the methods of evaluation, design the evaluation, gather data, and produce a final report.

The specific objective of the project (as dictated by Habitat for Humanity) was to evaluate the 8twelve Coalition in regards to achieving their stated foundational outcomes: Social Cohesion, Collective Action, and Sense of Community. Based on the ease of data collection and the data researchers sought to collect, the methods chosen for data collection were surveys and interviews. These methods were carried out over the course of a few weeks in meetings, as well as in door-to-door data collections and in impromptu encounters. In its entirety, the collected results revealed a variety of (often conflicting) perspectives and insights within a confined geographic area. From the survey responses and interviews, few single overarching trends of resident sentiment can be determined. However, the research offers a relatively comprehensive picture of the neighborhood and of resident sentiment from which Habitat for Humanity can reference when pursuing future projects and initiatives.

A summary of major findings in each category is listed below:

Sense of Community	Social Cohesion	Collective Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong sense of loyalty to the community (59% of people said they would stay in the community)There is a social divide between homeowners and renters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">People are getting to know and trust each other (43% of people said people in the neighborhood are getting to know and trust each other)People want to know more members of their communities (48% of people said they want to know more members of their community)People trust individuals, not groupsPeople fear trusting people deeplyPeople fear neighborhood is changing for the worse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">People feel they can affect decisions in neighborhood and nonprofits (50% of people said they could get their neighbors to influence the decisions of the neighborhood and nonprofits)People feel they cannot impact decisions made by politicians (50% of people said they could not get their neighbors to influence the decisions of politicians)People feel unheard in decision makingPeople seem to want to more opportunities to work in community (58% of people said they would like more opportunities to volunteer in the neighborhood)Majority of respondents have not worked on a community project

“That’s the worst thing we have in Muncie though is housing. Good, clean, possible living affordable housing for people on disability or social security.”

“Every factory we had is gone, there’s no money.”

“These are nice questions and the gift cards are nice. But it just, people says they care but then they walk out the door and go I got my money.”

“Neighbors were friendlier [back then]. If you had a problem with somebody, you could go talk to them. Your parents could talk and settle it.”

“[my] neighborhood is so cool, because everybody watches over everybody”

“There’s a lot more [assistance programs] than people think or know about...they just need to get the word out more.”

I think we need some kind of treatment clinic; [it] would benefit especially this area.”

Participatory action research necessitates a high level of community participation in gathering information. To accomplish this task, it was agreed that residents of the 8twelve neighborhood were to have equal authority with the academic research team in creating and performing the evaluation. Habitat for Humanity hired residents and citizens associated with the 8twelve area to work as community-based researchers. Although the number of community participants dwindled over the course of the semester, community-based researchers worked with the students throughout the duration of the project to collect data on opinions and sentiments about the neighborhood.

This report is organized into four sections. The *Introduction* details the boundaries of the neighborhood undergoing research, the foundational outcomes being evaluated in said research, the method of participatory action research, and the phases of the study. The *Methods* section explains the methods of research conducted, and the reasoning for selecting these methods. The *Results* section has been organized according to the three foundational outcomes being evaluated (Social Cohesion, Collective Action, and Sense of Community). Under each outcome, predominant themes drawn from the survey and interview responses are summarized with survey data and quotes from interview participants. In the *Discussion* section, the collected data is analyzed and suggestions from the research team are presented for Habitat for Humanity as they continue to operate in the 8twelve neighborhood. The Appendix lists the survey and interview questions utilized during the research

Introduction

The 8twelve Coalition is the Habitat-designated neighborhood bounded by 8th street, Madison Street, Memorial Drive, and Perkins Avenue on the South side of Muncie [fig. 1]. This is a target area that incorporates parts of the Thomas Park-Avondale and South Central neighborhoods. It is known for its high vacancy rate and its increasing number of rental properties with short term residents. Therefore, Habitat efforts here have focused on refurbishing existing housing and revitalizing the neighborhood rather than building new homes.

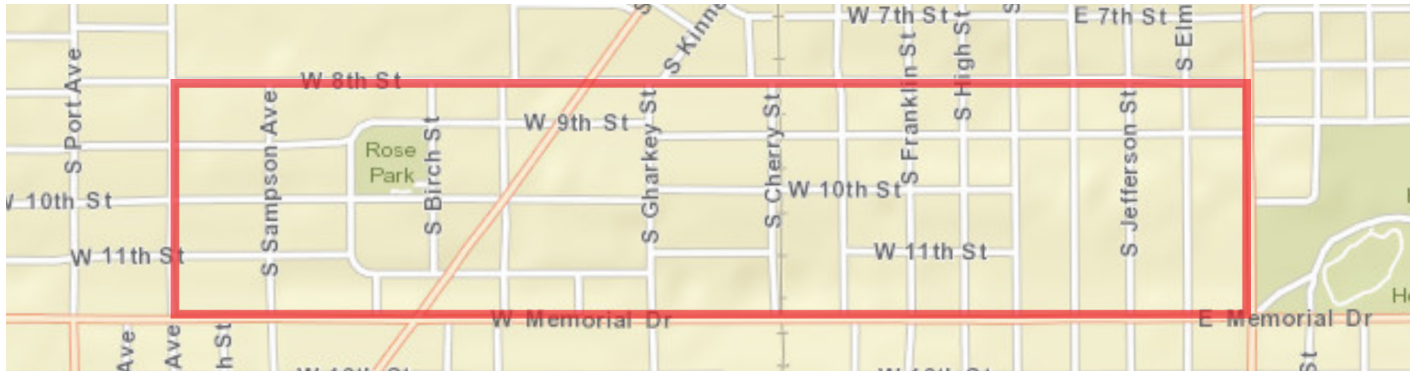


Figure 1: 8twelve neighborhood boundaries¹

There are a number of social services, churches and community development organizations partnered with the 8twelve Coalition (see Fig. 2). More than half of 8twelve board members are residents of the neighborhood².

8 Twelve Coalition, Board Member Affiliations
Avondale UMC
Habitat for Humanity
Urban Light CDC
Muncie Mission
Inspire Academy
ecoREHAB
Boys & Girls Club
South Central Neighborhood Association President
Vectren Foundation
PathStone
Building Better Neighborhoods, BSU
Ross Community Center

Figure 2: 8twelve Coalition affiliations²

This evaluation was the result of collaborative efforts between members of the 8twelve neighborhood and students from Ball State University and was funded by Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity. The goal of the evaluation was to collect information from members of the Muncie community on the 8twelve Coalition Neighborhood and the effects that Habitat efforts have had in the area. In addition, the evaluation attempts to determine whether Habitat has been successful in reaching its own goals. Habitat has defined its foundational outcomes for the 8twelve neighborhood as:

- **Sense of Community:** Residents, community associations and partners identify with the neighborhood, feel connected, and support one another.³
- **Social Cohesion:** The willingness and competency of residents, community associations, and partners to work cooperatively.

1 Image Source: World Street Map (Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, mapwithyou, NOSTRA,, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community)

2 <http://www.muncienighborhoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Muncie-Neighborhood-Revitalization-Plan-2-11-2016.pdf>

3 Habitat for Humanity. (2018). *The future of neighborhood revitalization*. Muncie, IN

- **Collective Action:** Residents, community associations and partners have completed projects or advocacy efforts that will drive ongoing work in the neighborhood.

Once these goals are achieved, they are supposed to lead to seven sector outcomes: education, safety, economic opportunity, decent housing, health, consumer and recreational amenities, safe and affordable transportation, with the ultimate result being improved quality of life.

Methods

PAR is a framework of research that encourages people to participate in gathering information about their own community, under the philosophy that knowledge should be created democratically and in collaboration with the people who will be affected by the results⁴. To that end, people from the 8twelve neighborhood were hired as community-based researchers—partners in the research process. We set out to find 20 community-based researchers, recruited 9 initially, but had only 3 who participated consistently over the course of the semester. Community-based researchers helped to design the research instruments (the survey and the interview), and went out into the field to conduct the research as well.

The study was broken down into three phases: 1) Ideas, 2) Research, and 3) Report.

1. *Ideas*: As a team of students and community researchers, we interpreted Habitat's goals of social cohesion, collective action, and sense of community. We translated these goals into questions that would determine the extent to which Habitat is reaching its goals. These questions then developed into the research instruments: a survey and an interview (see appendix for the full survey and interview document).
2. *Research*: From there, we decided where we were going to collect data and when. In teams of two or three, we went door-to-door along 10th, 11th, and 12th streets, to bars, to Maring-Hunt Library, to community events at the Ross Center, and we hosted a community dinner at Avondale Church. We received approximately 50 survey responses and approximately 30 interview responses over the course of 4 weeks in March and April 2018.
3. *Report*: After the survey and interview responses were collected, we tallied the survey responses and pulled out quotes from the interviews. We then analyzed the data, made recommendations, and composed this report, which will be distributed to local institutions and posted online. This information is meant to be open to everyone.

Surveys

The survey differed from the interview in that it was mainly a series of questions with predetermined (closed-ended) answer choices. Open-ended questions, or questions where the respondent writes in answers rather than choosing from a list, were kept limited. Unlike the closed-ended questions, the open ended ones cannot be easily quantified by tallying up the responses. They were, however, useful in obtaining responses that we did not anticipate.

The advantage of a survey is that it can be filled out in a quick, impromptu manner. Because of this convenience, the group was able to collect a large volume of responses, and collect responses from a broader geographic area. Surveys were taken door-to-door throughout the neighborhood, at Workman's Bar and Buttonhole bar, at Maring-Hunt Library, and at the Avondale Methodist Church over a period of four weeks.

Interviews

Interviews consisted of four open-ended questions. Because of the lack of predetermined answer choices for these questions, interview participants could provide responses unbiased by the students' and community researchers' preconceived ideas. Additionally, the interview questions were formulated with the intent of being asked in a group setting; interviews were intended to prompt conversation between interview participants, and in doing so, gain a more comprehensive picture of the 8twelve neighborhood.

Over the course of the semester, the researchers found a unique and fruitful base of operations at Avondale United Methodist Church attending the weekly Thursday night dinner that is open to the public and frequented by low-income residents who need a meal. Much of the data collection, especially interviews, took place at Avondale UMC. We may assume that our interview results over-represent the perspective of the residents who attend the weekly dinner.

Results

The following results are divided into three sections corresponding to Habitat for Humanity’s foundational outcomes. Themes have emerged from the research and are discussed in reference to the foundational outcome that each theme matches.

Sense of Community

Habitat defines sense of community as, “residents, community associations and partners identify with the neighborhood, feel connected, and support one another.” Respondents expressed a loyalty to their community, with almost 60% indicating that they would not choose to leave, if they could (fig. 3). On the other hand, residents expressed a trepidation about getting to know new people in the community that is epitomized by this exchange in a panel interview:

“I’ve got a garden in my backyard. I have taken tomatoes and things to my neighbors and given them out of my garden, but for me to actually go into one of their homes, I’ve been in very few of their homes, I know nothing about their lives, I don’t know anything, you know? I do know some of them have families, you know kids and stuff, but as far as to know if they’re married or if they’re single, I don’t, you know, I feel like that’s none of my business.” Another interviewee added, “That’s the way I was raised, it’s none of my business, because when you get involved you get backstabbed.”

Despite the mistrust, residents have a sense of loyalty to the community. Some of the key issues that arose in explaining the lack of a sense of community were problems with housing and job loss.

Housing and Community Residents perceive a lack of decent, affordable housing, purchasing in a neighborhood with many poorly maintained rental and abandoned houses. There is a divide between those who rent homes and those who buy homes. Homeowners felt renters do not care about the neighborhood due to a lack of long-term commitment to the place and the people. High turnover and transience may be a cause of a lack of sense of community. The lack of participation in community work may be attributed partially to these weak social connections.

available housing and incentive to buy homes. People were upset about the “disreputable” property owners who rent houses in Muncie. “There’s nothin’ been done,” and “Muncie’s a ghetto” run by “slumlords.” In addition to this, the properties that are still available for purchase are in poor shape, and as a result, people felt there was a lack of incentive to buy homes as opposed to renting them. In addition to lack of decent properties, many noted that, “too many people are on the edge of homelessness,” and this needs to be addressed as much as homelessness itself.

Job Loss and a Turn Towards Individual Concerns: In the interviews people seemed unsure about how to ask others to take part in community work because they recognize everyone has their own personal affairs to work through. One resident spoke to the difficulty of asking if others wish to help in the neighborhood by noting many have had to “give up their lifestyle”, following the loss of industry and jobs in Muncie. As a result of this less stable lifestyle, residents agreed that many have been forced to focus solely on personal matters, they “have no time, have no money”, and are unable or unwilling to help with community work. Research participants noted the lack of community work could also be attributed to the lack of social connections. Participants noted they did not know their neighbors, and as a result, felt unable to approach their neighbors about participating in community work.

Resilience: In the survey, people strongly expressed that they would stay in the 8twelve neighborhood if given a choice. Despite the perception of poor housing, drug abuse, job market, and overall safety as described during interviews, most people did not express a desire to leave the neighborhood.

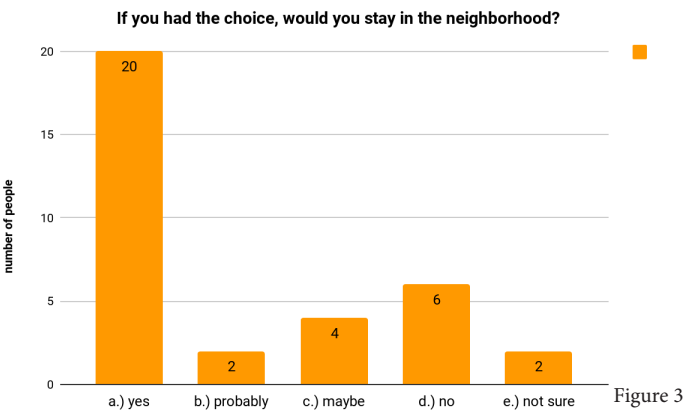


Figure 3

Residents expressed concerns about a lack of

Social Cohesion

Habitat for Humanity defines social cohesion as “The willingness and competency of residents, community associations, and partners to work cooperatively.” Three themes found in the data relating to this outcome were trust, change, and safety. For themes of trust and change the surveys and interviews showed contradictory findings, where surveys responses seemed generally positive and interview responses seemed generally negative. This may be due to residents giving default positive answers to short survey questions, but upon deeper reflection, in group interviews, express negative concerns. Responses regarding safety were mixed both in surveys and interviews. These differences seemed to be related to where respondents live. The residents’ feelings of safety change from block to block.

Trust: The survey begins by asking the question of whether, over the past few years, people in the neighborhood are getting to know and trust each other (reference Figure 4 & 5). Most said that people might be getting to know and trust each other and want to know more members of their community.

Over the past few years, people in the neighborhood are getting to know and trust each other.

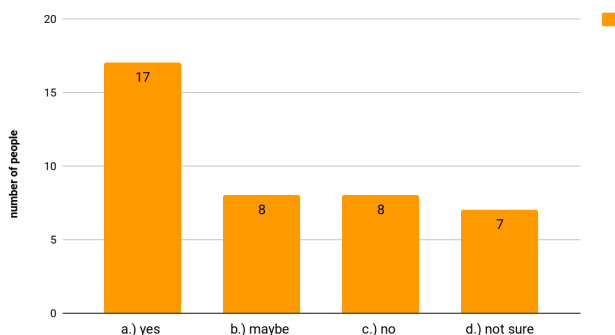


Figure 4

Do you want to know more members of your community?

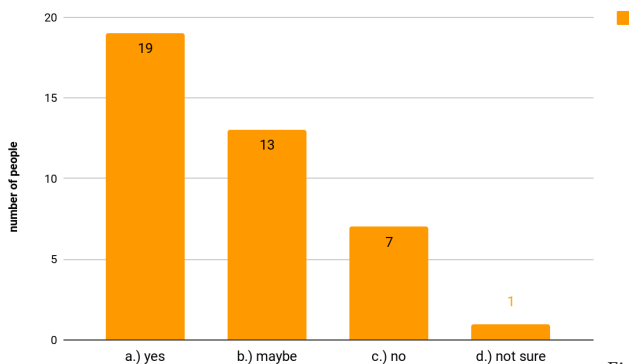


Figure 5

The question then becomes: to what extent do people trust each other? To attempt to answer this question, the survey asks questions about whether a neighbor would give someone a cup of flour, whether someone would help a neighbor with a flat tire, and whether someone has helped a person in the neighborhood who is neither family nor friend. On average, 75% of people who responded to these questions said they would help or had helped.

However, in significant contrast from the survey results, during interviews, people tended to say they were less trustful of people in the neighborhood. Many of the participants noted that they did not know their neighbors, despite evidence in surveys that people knew their neighbors and were willing to help them. The participants in one interview group were all life-long Muncie residents and had seen the changes the city had experienced. Many noted that they used to know their neighbors, but that it is different now, namely because of transient renters.

“They move in the middle of the night, and they move out in the middle of the night, and you begin to question whether or not to get involved”.

Furthermore, there was a general sentiment that residents might not want to know their neighbors and that knowing the details of the neighbors’ lives was none of their business.

“That’s the way I was raised, it’s none of my business, because when you get involved you get backstabbed.”

Change: The perception of change in the area is another interesting point of contradiction. During the survey, a majority of residents indicated that trust and connections have improved over time (see figure 4). However, during interviews there seemed to be a perceived increase in the number of ‘strangers’ in the neighborhood. People who have been in Muncie for a longer period of time seem to find that many aspects of the neighborhood have changed for the worse. People noted that:

“When I was growing up, there was no bullying.”

“Neighbors were friendlier [back then]. If you had a problem with somebody, you could go talk to them. Your parents could talk and settle it.”

“Nowadays they want to kill each other.”

Any positive gains in safety or social cohesion that happened in recent times are lost in respondents’ impression of overall decline.

Safety: In addition to this feeling of distrust, residents expressed a mixture of perceptions with regards to the area’s safety, not just from person to person, but from block to block. Some residents felt their homes were in safe areas. One expressed,

“[My] neighborhood is so cool, because everybody watches over everybody” and another said, “a lot of people, they don’t interfere in your life, but if you need them they’re there.”

However, other residents’ experiences of the surrounding areas were very different. One resident described a nearby location, saying,

“It’s not a really safe neighborhood. It’s got drugs in it and there’s a lot of killings that goes around over there. It’s not safe.”

In contrast, some interviewees who recently relocated to Muncie, described Muncie as, “a daycare” compared to their hometowns. One participant described his hometown having “shootings twenty-four hours a day seven days a week.”

This mixed sentiment is reflected in survey responses. While most surveyed residents indicated they do not wish to leave the area, of the few who do wish to leave, 42% indicated that this was due to safety concerns (see figure 6).

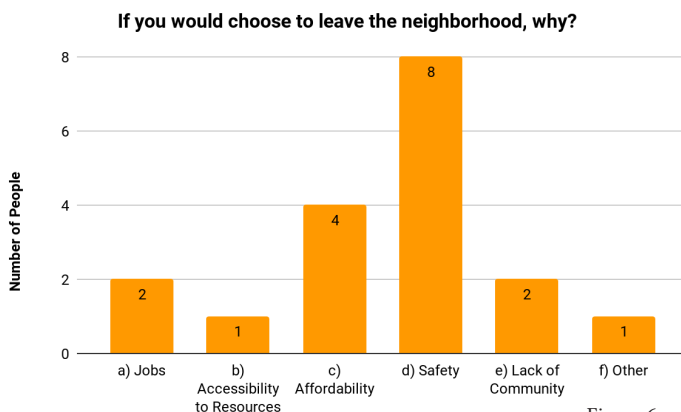


Figure 6

One factor that influenced the feeling of safety was the presence of the police. Sentiment on the police was divided. Some residents described cops as “turning their heads” from (as in ignoring) drug use and being detached from the community. Police officers were described as having a “job [that] was just a job”, not a public service. Other residents viewed the police as absolutely necessary in maintaining safety. One resident noted, “I think any neighborhood would be a lot safer if they had cops and stuff going around.” However, people also believe that police officers need to have more interaction with community members. One woman noted,

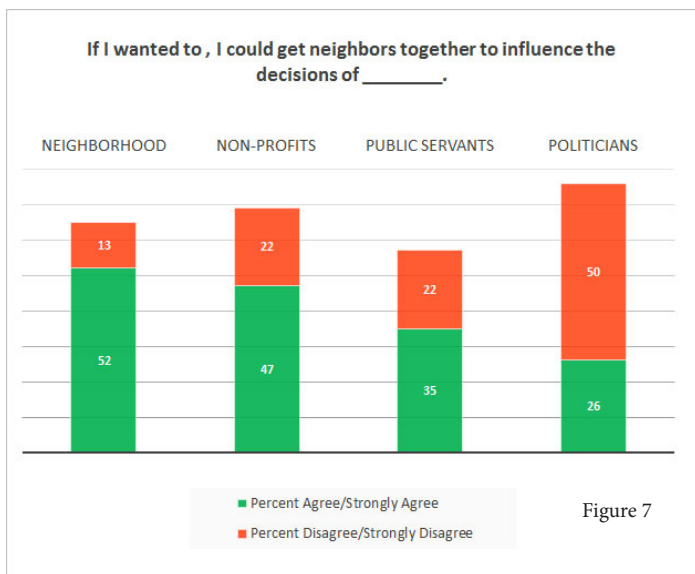
“They [kids] only see their parents getting arrested when they’re on drug charges. They don’t see cops being people.”

In order for people in the neighborhood to see the police more positively, people agreed that, “cops who know the people who live in the neighborhood” would help.

Collective Action

Habitat for Humanity defines collective action as “Residents, community associations and partners have completed projects or advocacy efforts that will drive ongoing work in the neighborhood.” Residents expressed positive perceptions of their ability to undertake collective action to influence the decisions of institutions. This varied significantly depending on the target of action. Residents felt a sense of collective power regarding neighborhood decisions and decisions made by public servants. They did not feel capable of shaping the decisions of local politicians. Respondents believe most organizations are doing work that positively affects residents. However, accessing resources can be difficult. Finally, many people said they had not participated in community projects, but would like more opportunities to engage.

Decision Making: In the survey, we asked questions about whether people felt they could organize with their neighbors in order to influence local decision making. We found that people believed they could organize to change their neighborhoods and the decisions of nonprofit community organizations, but felt unable to change the decisions of local politicians and public servants. Sentiment surrounding politicians is that “all they want is votes,” and that they lack follow-through on political promises.



While surveys indicate that respondents felt like they could influence local institutions, a more subtle narrative came through in the group interview. This bit of dialogue captured a sentiment that was expressed in several interviews:

“These are nice questions and the gift cards are nice. But it just, people says they care but then they walk out the door and go I got my money.”

Another resident then chimed in,

“We need our voices heard. I mean there’s things that we have said we would like to see and you know we’ve told them what we thought and basically it’s like it goes in one ear and out the other.”

Some residents thought that there was too much “red tape” in receiving help. People believed community organizations require you to give up your freedoms, have extremely long wait lists, or have strict requirements to receive assistance. These observations seemed to be directed towards social service, housing and medical organizations including were Meridian Health Services, Muncie Mission, and Bridges. Other people believed community organizations discriminate against people without children. Some members said they did not expect help from community organizations and even described irreparable damage to their bodies due to lack of shelter and safety.

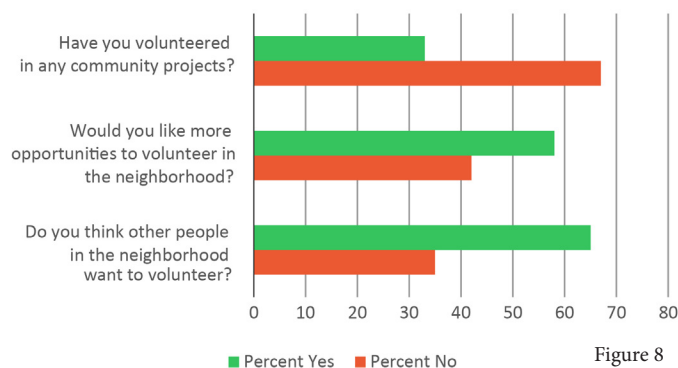
“If I go to places like Meridian (health), or Bridges, or somewhere like that, they’re talking about months down the road, get in line and wait your turn.”

“YMCA is good for the women... They treat you a lot different when you have kids. When you’re a single person, they don’t do nothing to help you... I hear people steal from you left and right.”

“It seems like we need a more non-discriminative homeless shelter.”

Desire to Participate: There appears to be significant interest in participating in community projects, but a low level of participation (see figure 8).

Current Participation and Desire to Participate in Community Projects



Discussion

Summary Findings

In total, we have observed several phenomena in this study, and varying viewpoints spreading across a small community area. The positive and negative aspects all need to be kept in consideration when evaluating the data, and finally giving an evaluation to 8twelve and Habitat for Humanity.

As described in The Future of Neighborhood Revitalization guide, the ultimate outcome of the 8twelve Coalition is to improve the overall quality of life in the area. The research has provided insight to how residents and other stakeholders view the quality of life in the area. We believe the data gathered reveals:

- The role of institutions, whether perceived positively or negatively, play a significant role in the quality of life in the area. This is shown through the data described in the 'Community Organizations' segment under the 'Collective Action' topic, shown in the 'Results' section.
 - There could be a link between the perceived level of influence citizens can have and the perception of government or large institutional involvement.
- Unmet physiological and psychological safety needs, as described in the 'Safety' segment under the 'Social Cohesion' topic, shown in the 'Results' section
 - The research revealed some of the most fundamental needs (as defined by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, under 'Safety Needs' and 'Physiological Needs') are being unmet in the community. We believe different members of the community are not having the needs of shelter, health, employment, and safety met. If these basic needs are currently being unmet, it could be challenging, if not impossible to have a positive outlook, along with faith in systems in place, and focus on less pressing quality of life indicators.
- Perceptions of safety are relative. Under the 'Safety' segment under the 'Social Cohesion' topic, shown in the 'Results' section, recent Muncie transplants vs lifelong residents can have radically different views about safety in the neighborhood. Perceptions of safety also varied by neighborhood block.
- Sector outcomes and foundational outcomes have a circular relationship. Although social cohesion, sense of community, and collective action are viewed as the foundational outcomes, they might be actualized without addressing the sector outcomes like housing, health, and employment. However, a strong sense of community could improve feelings of personal and neighborhood safety.



Figure 9: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs⁴

⁴ Image Source: Simply Psychology (2017).

Moving Forward

As the 8twelve Coalition plans for the future, the process and results of this evaluation allow us to make informed recommendations. Firstly, the 8twelve Coalition will find that research participants comments could be applied to more than one of the foundational outcomes listed by Habitat for Humanity (Collective Action, Social Cohesion, and Sense of Community). For example, the basis for research participants' comments on the lack of involvement in community projects (Collective Action and Social Cohesion) aligned with comments made regarding the lack of residents identifying with the neighborhood (Sense of Community). As such,

the 8twelve Coalition may seek to identify and pursue core foundational issues - as suggested by neighborhood residents - that span across all three foundational outcomes.

and when you leave you forget about us; you know what I mean? We don't need to be forgotten about, we need to be thought of. We need to be thought of in these communities."

Secondly, new methods of research may be utilized to better understand the 8twelve neighborhood and the connections that reside within it. As can be noted in the collected survey and interview results, resident perspectives were incredibly varied and seemingly contradictory. While some research participants were pleased with the state of their neighborhood, others were displeased. While some research participants felt that they knew their neighbors, others felt that they did not. Mapping techniques may be pursued in future endeavors so as to determine if geographic location corresponds with clusters of similar resident sentiments. If such a correlation does exist, the 8twelve Coalition could choose to concentrate future efforts in specific geographic areas.

Thirdly, the question that researchers failed to investigate was *why* residents would stay in this neighborhood. As was noted in the survey data and in interview responses, the majority of research participants noted that they would choose remain in the 8twelve neighborhood. Therefore, identifying the reason(s) for this can assist in identifying a positive unifying factor that unites collective efforts going forward, in conglomeration with the core foundational issues and potential target geographic areas.

Finally, it should be noted that this data can not simply be taken in and then discarded; this data must be used to make a difference. This report will not only be given privately to the 8twelve Coalition and Habitat for Humanity, but it will be openly shared within the community. It is recommended that - as Habitat continues to operate in the area - there is a continued transparency in handling data, as it demonstrates to the community that Habitat is not merely *observing* their struggles, but is actively responding to community needs.

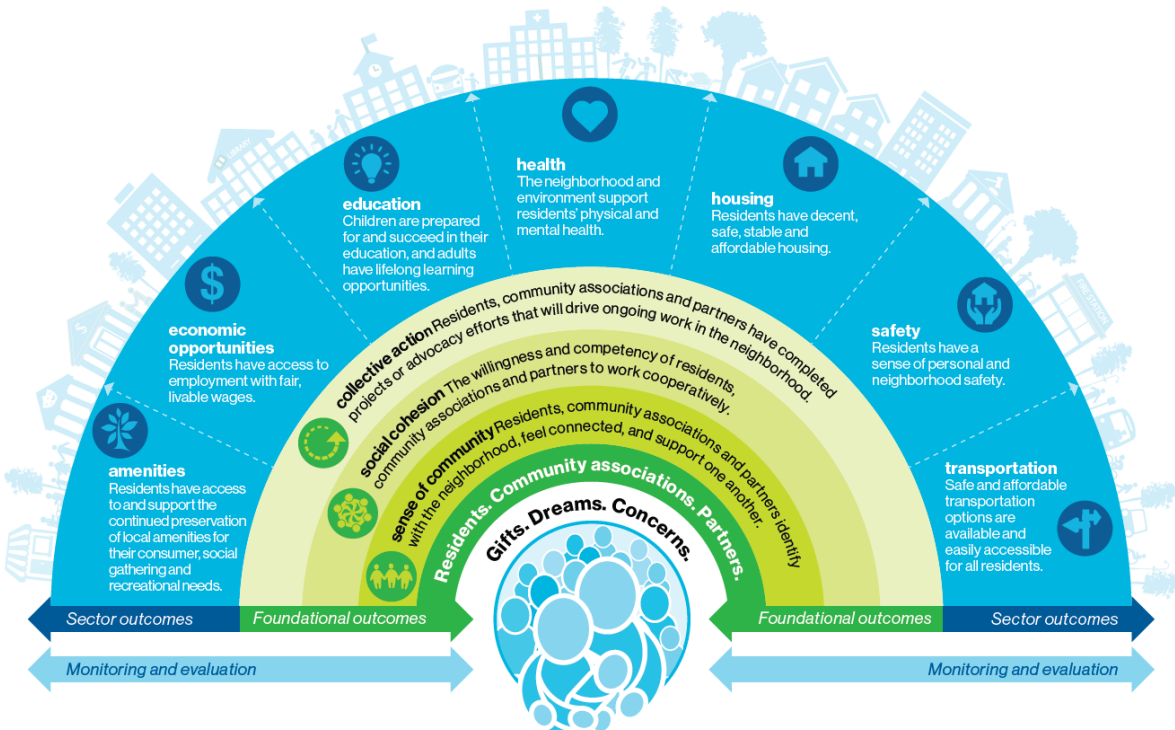
It was and continues to be a sentiment repeated by members of the community: "do not forget about us." It is not acceptable to enter the area, gather the data, and then simply move on. The struggles of the residents cannot be forgotten or given up on. As the 8twelve Coalition and Habitat for Humanity move forward in helping the residents of the 8twelve area, it is imperative that the residents' thoughts, words, and feelings is kept at the forefront of every action.

"You guys just come here and do your little interview

APPENDIX

Ultimate outcome: Improved quality of life

Quality of life is the sense of well-being and happiness experienced by individuals, groups and communities.



Neighborhood Revitalization and the Quality of Life Framework

The ultimate goal of neighborhood revitalization is improved quality of life in a focus neighborhood. Over the last six years, Habitat for Humanity has produced extensive insights for how this goal can be achieved. The quality of life framework is a compilation of this understanding and maps how multiple elements work together to achieve improved quality of life in the neighborhood. The map and outcome pathways contained in the framework help Habitat affiliates, residents, and coalition members better understand how change happens in a neighborhood and where they are in this process. At the core of the framework are resident aspirations, which guide neighborhood revitalization work, inspire actualization of dreams, and sustain and nurture hope.

Reading the Map

Habitat for Humanity has learned that the greatest change happens in a neighborhood when people work together—residents, community associations, and partners. It starts first by understanding everyone's gifts, dreams, and concerns about the neighborhood (see Figure 1, center of map); then building a strong foundation around sense of community and social cohesion (green section), and; finally utilizing this base to collectively act and implement projects that contribute to sector outcomes (movements from green to blue). Arrows at the bottom of the map represent an iterative process, guiding users to continue to build social capital (green) in a neighborhood throughout the revitalization process.

Foundational Outcomes—Build foundational outcomes by partnering with and working alongside residents, community associations, and partners in the neighborhood (green section of map). This entails seeking to understand different perspectives and aspirations; bringing people together and finding opportunities to engage residents; formulating a comprehensive plan with all stakeholders that tackles common goals; and then implementing and taking collective action on this plan. Habitat has found that without taking these steps, sustainable and systemic change in the neighborhood is difficult to achieve.

Sector Outcomes—Seven sector outcomes are important to holistic quality of life change. The seven sectors include amenities, economic opportunities, education, health, housing, safety, and transportation. These sectors are inter-related and influence each other. For example, several studies point to the extent to which housing solutions contribute to improved safety, health, education, and economic well-being. Each neighborhood will determine which areas are most important to improve their quality of life. Active partners are needed to work in each of the priority sector areas.

Benefits to Neighborhood Coalitions for using the Quality of Life Framework

- Increases ability to make a greater impact through collaboration with partners, such as government agencies, schools, residents, associations, organizations, etc.
- Expands opportunities to attract and diversify investments in the neighborhood.
- Assists in understanding and articulating how and why change happens in a neighborhood.
- Leads to more sustainable results and helps address root causes of disinvestment and distress in neighborhoods, due to strong focus on three foundational outcomes (sense of community, social cohesion, and collective action).

Neighborhood Coalition Members and their Roles

Coalitions are made up of many members -- residents, community associations and partners -- all serving as participants in the process of improving quality of life. The quality of life framework assumes that one of these entities must serve as a convener of the coalition, depending on the capacity and willingness of the partner organizations. In some cases it will be the Habitat affiliate who convenes the coalition, and in others, it will be another community association or partner organization.

Residents – Individuals who live within the boundaries of the focus neighborhood.

Community Associations – Small informal groups of people, such as clubs and faith and spiritual organizations working with a common interest as volunteers are called associations and are critical to community mobilization.

Partners – Professionals structurally organized are called partner institutions, or partners for short. They include government agencies, private businesses, non-profit organizations, as well as schools, faith and spiritual communities, etc. The assets of these partner institutions help the community capture valuable resources and establish a sense of civic responsibility.

Role of Participants in a Coalition:

- Join an existing coalition in a focus neighborhood.
- Advocate for the importance of connecting, organizing and empowering residents, so that they lead the revitalization process.
- Take a humble listening posture to hear the aspirations of the neighborhood residents
- Develop a comprehensive sector response with other sector partners, in line with neighborhood aspirations.

Role of the Coalition Convener:

- Be a reputable, fair and committed contributor to the neighborhood's well-being.
- Have the capacity to assemble and explore the gifts, dreams and concerns of residents, community associations and partners, and place these at the center of the work.
- Coalesce neighborhood assets, discover resident leaders and direct conditions for a strong coalition
- Secure an exit plan to transition from convener to participant, as is appropriate.

For more information contact:

Want to learn more?

Sign up to receive neighborhood revitalization's **the bulletin**, where additional communications will be coming soon!

<http://v.ht/bulletin>



Survey Questions

Location of Interview (address): _____, zip code: _____

1. What's your age?
2. What's your connection with this neighborhood?
3. If you live in the area, how long have you been here? Are you a homeowner/renter?
4. How often have you been involved in community work? (Never, sometimes, often)

A. Social Connection in the 8twelve Neighborhood Instructions: Read the following questions and circle the answer that best matches your thoughts.

- 1) Over the past few years, people in the neighborhood are getting to know and trust each other.
 - a) Yes
 - b) Maybe
 - c) No
 - d) Not Sure
- 2) How many people do you know in your neighborhood well enough to say hello on the street?
 - a) None
 - b) 1-2
 - c) 3-5
 - d) 5-10
 - e) More than 10
- 3) Do you want to know more members of your community?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Maybe
 - c) No
 - d) Not Sure
- 4) If you needed to borrow a cup of flour, or a tool is there a neighbor who trusts you well enough to help?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Maybe
 - c) No
 - d) Not Sure
- 5) If yes, how many people can you think of that would help you?
 - a) None
 - b) 1-2
 - c) 3-5
 - d) 5-10
 - e) More than 10
- 6) If someone from the neighborhood asked for help with a flat tire, would you feel comfortable enough to help?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Maybe
 - c) No
 - d) Not Sure

7) Have you ever helped someone in the neighborhood who is not family or a friend?
Yes___ No___

- 8) Where do you meet for social gatherings in the neighborhood? (mark all that apply)
- a) More Community events MARK ALL THAT APPLY (___picnics, ___ block parties, ___ school events, ___ neighborhood association meetings)
 - b) Church or religious group events (community meals, parties, receptions)
 - c) Bars, restaurants or coffee shops in the neighborhood
 - d) Events hosted at your or your neighbor's houses
 - e) Other _____

- 9) What might help you get to know your neighbors? (mark all that apply)
- a) More Community events **MARK ALL THAT APPLY** (___picnics, ___ block parties, ___ school events, ___ neighborhood association meetings)
 - b) Church or religious group events (community meals, parties, receptions)
 - c) More bars, restaurants or coffee shops in the neighborhood
 - d) Other _____

- 10) If you had the choice, would you stay in this neighborhood?
- a) Yes
 - b) Probably
 - c) Maybe
 - d) No
 - e) Not Sure

- 11) If no, for what reason would you want to leave?
- a) Jobs
 - b) Accessibility to Resources
 - c) Affordability
 - d) Safety
 - e) Lack of Community
 - f) Other: _____

B. Collective Action in the 8twelve Neighborhood

- 12) What issues do you see that are **already being addressed or taken care of** in your community?
(Mark all that apply)
- a) Fixing private homes (other than your own)
 - b) Fixing streets and sidewalks
 - c) Fixing parks and other public amenities
 - d) Jobs, training and education
 - e) People are working together to improve communities
 - f) Support for people with drug and alcohol problems
 - g) Nothing
 - h) Other _____

- 13) What do you hope for your neighborhood? (Mark all that apply & **circle the most important**)
- a) Better private homes (other than your own)
 - b) Better streets and sidewalks
 - c) Better parks and other public amenities
 - d) More jobs, training and education
 - e) More people working together to improve communities
 - f) Support for people with drug and alcohol problems
 - g) Nothing
 - h) Other _____

Indicate whether you agree with the following statements:

- 14) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together to address **a problem in the neighborhood**
- a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither agree nor disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- 15) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together to **influence the decisions of local politicians**
- a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither agree nor disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- 16) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together **to influence the decisions of local church and non-profit community groups**
- a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither agree nor disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree
- 17) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together **to influence the decisions of local public servants (police, fire, building inspector, etc.)**
- a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neither agree nor disagree
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly Disagree

C. 8twelve Coalition and Community Work

- 18) Have you volunteered at any community projects? Yes___ No___ (For example community gardening, neighborhood clean-up)

- a) If yes:
- i) How many in the past year? ____
 - ii) Which projects. _____
 - iii) Who led the project? _____
 - iv) How did you find out about the project? _____

19) Would you like more opportunities to volunteer in the neighborhood? Yes ____ No ____

20) Do you think other people in the neighborhood want to volunteer at community projects? Yes ____
No ____

21) What could encourage people in the neighborhood to get more engaged? (mark all that apply)

- a) Interesting and fun projects
- b) Projects that affect a lot of people for the better
- c) Child care
- d) Transportation
- e) Compensation (being paid)
- f) Other _____

22) Can you name at least three people who are leaders in your neighborhood? If so, name them:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

23) Can you name at least three organizations that serve your neighborhood? If so, name them:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

24) Have you heard of the 8twelve Coalition? Yes ____ No ____

25) If yes, do you know if those organizations are involved with the 8twelve Coalition?

26) Have you heard of Muncie Mission? Yes ____ No ____

27) Have you heard of Habitat for Humanity? Yes ____ No ____

28) Have you heard of Urban Light Ministries? Yes ____ No ____

29) Have you heard of the Ross Community Center? Yes ____ No ____

30) Have you heard of your neighborhood association? Yes ____ No ____

31) Have you worked with any of these organizations before? If so, please circle the organizations listed below:

Muncie Mission Habitat for Humanity Urban Light Ministries Ross Community Center

Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what your life is like in the neighborhood
2. What do you think would make this neighborhood better? What prevents it from being better?
3. Can you tell me about how local organizations have affected you or someone you know in the neighborhood? What are they doing? (churches, neighborhood groups, local businesses)
4. What is it like to be a neighbor in this community and do you feel connected with other people?

Tabulated Survey Results

Average age of respondent: 42			
Question	Choices	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1) Over the past few years, people in the neighborhood are getting to know and trust each other.	a) Yes	17	43%
	b) Maybe	8	20%
	c) No	8	20%
	d) Not Sure	7	18%
2) How many people do you know in your neighborhood well enough to say hello on the street?	a) None	2	5%
	b) 1-2	8	20%
	c) 3-5	9	23%
	d) 5-10	13	33%
	e) More than 10	8	20%
3) Do you want to know more members of your community?	a) Yes	19	48%
	b) Maybe	13	33%
	c) No	7	18%
	d) Not Sure	1	3%
4) If you needed to borrow a cup of flour, or a tool is there a neighbor who trusts you well enough to help?	a) Yes	27	68%
	b) Maybe	5	13%
	c) No	6	15%
	d) Not Sure	2	5%
5) If yes, how many people can you think of that would help you?	a) None	4	11%
	b) 1-2	15	41%
	c) 3-5	8	22%
	d) 5-10	4	11%
	e) More than 10	6	16%
6) If someone from the neighborhood asked for help with a flat tire, would you feel comfortable enough to help?	a) Yes	30	75%
	b) Maybe	4	10%
	c) No	6	15%
	d) Not Sure	0	0%
7) Have you ever helped someone in the neighborhood who is not family or a friend?	a) Yes	32	84%
	b) No	6	16%
8) Where do you meet for social gatherings in the neighborhood? (mark all that apply)	a) More Community events MARK ALL THAT APPLY		
	Picnics	14	17%
	Block Parties	13	15%
	School events	9	11%
	Neighborhood association meetings	12	14%
	b) Church or religious group events (community meals, parties, receptions)	16	19%
	c) Bars, restaurants or coffee shops in the neighborhood	9	11%
	d) Events hosted at your or your neighbor's houses	4	5%
	e) Other _____	7	8%
	a) More Community events MARK ALL THAT APPLY		
	Picnics	20	21%

"Other ____" responses included: fundraisers, Canon Commons, Rummage Sale, Nowhere, Ross Center, Community Garden, Parks, Passing by

9) What might help you get to know your neighbors? (mark all that apply)	Block Parties	21	22%	"Other ____" responses included: NONE, more trust and safety, Dogs, keep doing what we are doing
	School events	11	11%	
	Neighborhood association meetings	17	18%	
	b) Church or religious group events (community meals, parties, receptions)	13	14%	
	c) More bars, restaurants or coffee shops in the neighborhood	9	9%	
	d) Other _____	5	5%	
10) If you had the choice, would you stay in this neighborhood?	a) Yes	20	59%	
	b) Probably	2	6%	
	c) Maybe	4	12%	
	d) No	6	18%	
	e) Not Sure	2	6%	
11) If no, for what reason would you want to leave?	a) Jobs	2	11%	"Other ____" responses included: It's a mess
	b) Accessibility to Resources	1	5%	
	c) Affordability	4	21%	
	d) Safety	8	42%	
	e) Lack of Community	2	11%	
	f) Other: _____	1	5%	
12) What issues do you see that are already being addressed or taken care of in your community? (Mark all that apply)	a) Fixing private homes (other than your own)	15	19%	
	b) Fixing streets and sidewalks	14	18%	
	c) Fixing parks and other public amenities	12	15%	
	d) Jobs, training and education	6	8%	
	e) People are working together to improve communities	11	14%	
	f) Support for people with drug and alcohol problems	12	15%	
	g) Nothing	8	10%	
	h) Other _____	1	1%	
13) What do you hope for your neighborhood? (Mark all that apply; circle the most important)	a) Better private homes (other than your own)	15	12%	"Other ____" responses included: More businesses in the area, general cleanup
	b) Better streets and sidewalks	25	20%	
	c) Better parks and other public amenities	15	12%	
	d) More jobs, training and education	23	18%	
	e) More people working together to improve communities	22	17%	
	f) Support for people with drug and alcohol problems	25	20%	
	g) Nothing	0	0%	
	h) Other _____	2	2%	
14) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together to address a problem in the neighborhood	a) Strongly Agree	8	21%	
	b) Agree	12	31%	
	c) Neither agree nor disagree	14	36%	
	d) Disagree	4	10%	
	e) Strongly Disagree	1	3%	
15) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together to influence the decisions of local politicians	a) Strongly Agree	3	8%	
	b) Agree	7	18%	
	c) Neither agree nor disagree	9	24%	
	d) Disagree	13	34%	
	e) Strongly Disagree	6	16%	
16) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together to influence the decisions of	a) Strongly Agree	4	11%	
	b) Agree	13	36%	
	c) Neither agree nor disagree	11	31%	

local church and non-profit community groups	d) Disagree	5	14%
	e) Strongly Disagree	3	8%
17) If I wanted to, I feel like I could get my neighbors together to influence the decisions of local public servants (police, fire, building inspector, etc.)	a) Strongly Agree	3	8%
	b) Agree	10	27%
	c) Neither agree nor disagree	16	43%
	d) Disagree	5	14%
	e) Strongly Disagree	3	8%
18) Have you volunteered at any community projects?	a) Yes	12	33%
	b) No	24	67%
If yes:	i) How many in the past year? ____	20 total events from 7 respondents	
	ii) Which projects? ____	Answer Included: Church food pantry, Avondale Meal, Trunk-or-Treat, Clothing Drive, neighborhood dinner, Ross Center workshop, Habitat House, Whitley Community, For Church, Community Garden, 8twelve coalition events, neighborhood cleanup, neighborhood picnic	
	iii) Who led the project? ____	Answers Included: Grace Baptist, Avondale, Habitat, Myself, neighbors, administrative, Urban Light, 8twelve, neighborhood association	
	iv) How did you find out about the project? ____	Answers Included: being invested in the neighborhood, Asked MAC center, neighbor, attended meetings	
19) Would you like more opportunities to volunteer in the neighborhood?	a) Yes	21	58%
	b) No	15	42%
20) Do you think other people in the neighborhood want to volunteer at community projects?	a) Yes	20	65%
	b) No	11	35%
21) What could encourage people in the neighborhood to get more engaged? (mark all that apply)	a) Interesting and fun projects	25	27%
	b) Projects that effect a lot of people for the better	19	21%
	c) Child care	18	20%
	d) Transportation	14	15%
	e) Compensation (being paid)	15	16%
	f) Other _____	3	3%
22) Can you name at least three people who are leaders in your neighborhood? If so,	a) _____	Answers Included: fire dept., Phil, Jim, Miss Jackie, Miss Susan, Miss Pagie, Garden Jeff, Josh Arthur, Jimmy + Malia Sandberg, Janet, Denise, Dale, Katie, Dad, Mom, Grandma, Josh Arthur, Jeff Bruebaker, those who drive by and wave, by face, Josh, Daley, Jim, outlaws or gangsters and cannot be named, Debra,	
	b) _____		

name them:	c) _____	Leszlie, Toddrick, Vickie, Leslie McCrary, Toddrick Gordon, Debra Simmons, Grandpa, Dad, Robert Scaif, Betty Robertson	
23) Can you name at least three organizations that serve your neighborhood? If so, name them:	a) _____	Answers Included: Workman's Bar, Habitat, Habitat, Ross Center, Ross Center, Habitat, Avondale Church and Morningstar Church, Avondale, Habitat, Ross Center, Avondale, Ross Center, Habitat, Avondale, Ross Center, Habitat, 8twelve, Habitat, Whitley Community Association, Christian Ministries, Church, Ross Center, Avondale, Ross Center, Avondale, Morning Star, South Central, Habitat/8twelve, Neighborhood Association, Urban Light, Muncie Mission, Christian Ministries, Avondale, Habitat, Ross Community Center, Muncie Mission	
	b) _____		
	c) _____		
24) Have you heard of the 8twelve Coalition?	a) Yes	9	25%
	b) No	27	75%
25) If yes, do you know if those organizations are involved with the 8twelve Coalition?	a) Yes	5	33%
	b) No	10	67%
26) Have you heard of Muncie Mission?	a) Yes	35	95%
	b) No	2	5%
27) Have you heard of Habitat for Humanity?	a) Yes	34	94%
	b) No	2	6%
28) Have you heard of Urban Light Ministries?	a) Yes	16	43%
	b) No	21	57%
29) Have you heard of the Ross Community Center?	a) Yes	34	92%
	b) No	3	8%
30) Have you heard of your neighborhood association?	a) Yes	13	34%
	b) No	25	66%
31) Have you worked with any of these organizations before? If so, please circle the organizations listed below:	a) Muncie Mission	6	18%
	b) Habitat	8	24%
	c) Urban Light	3	9%
	d) Ross Community Center	11	33%