

Social Support and Social Cohesion  
Outcomes for

Kenya Woman Association

and

Para Los Niños

Prepared for:

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Strengthening Services Using Outcomes

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# Social Support and Social Cohesion Outcomes for Kenya Woman Association and Para Los Niños

## Background

This evaluation examines the outcomes for two organizations -- Kenya Woman Association (KWA) and Para Los Niños that were funded by the South King County Community Network.

The Mission of Kenya Women Association (KWA) is empowering others to empower others. It was organized to meet unique needs of newly arrived immigrants particularly immigrants from Africa. KWA was formed out of shared experiences, positive and negative, received among the members and their families. We believe it is necessary to provide support for immigrants to attain a successful transition from one culture into another to ensure success. The organization was founded in August 2004 and focuses its work in Seattle and South King County areas. The following are areas they address:

- Immigration and legal rights
- Acculturation
- Health care- transportation
- Daycare- after school care
- Employment opportunities- skills training
- Financial literacy
- Education system-Pre - Secondary
- Supplementary services

Para Los Niños is a grassroots community organizing that seeks to foster academic success for every Latino student through parent and community involvement. Located in the Highline School District area Para Los Niños is recognized as a vital part of the Highline School District's community engagement and academic improvement strategies for Latino children and their families.

Para Los Niños began to work in the Highline School District area in the March of 2003. Started by a group of Latino parents who worked together to advocate for a school levy, a grassroots effort emerged where in Latino parents sent a strong message to the community that they wanted to improve the educational experiences of their children. Since the first Latino summit was held in 2003, Para Los Niños has

engaged over 200 parents and held 2 Latino parent summits. Our close relationship with Highline (school) district has resulted in our working in schools that serve with the highest percentage of Latino students, providing them with school readiness (pre k) educational support, ESL, and parent engagement services. From the beginning Para Los Niños has focused our services on low income families who are making difficult transitions to retain their cultural identity while still becoming part of the mainstream community. The majority of parents we serve speak the Spanish language and at least 60 speak an indigenous language spoken in Central Mexico called Purpecha.

Para Los Niños as November 2006 has its own 501 © (3). We have become a permanent partner with the Highline School District and will work in 2006-2007 school year in 5 schools. We are also now partners in the Making Connections work in White Center and Boulevard Park, and are continually receiving requests to provide educational, advocacy and leadership support to Latino families from Highline School District and from all those in the community who share our dream to foster academic success for every Latino student through parent and community involvement.

## Evaluation Design

### Measurement Tools

Typically, the Communities Count administers surveys to community members. To be sensitive to language and culture, Para Los Niños chose to conduct focus groups to gather the feedback from their community. KWA chose to keep some of the Communities Count questions, but added some additional questions about important issues for their community. KWA chose to have youth interview adults in person.

Both the focus groups and interviews included questions about social support and social cohesion. The focus groups allowed for open-ended responses. The interviews asked respondents to choose among answers on a 4 point scale. It should be noted, that some youth dropped this to a 2 point scale.

## Outcomes and Indicators

Outcomes and indicators from the Communities Count project were chosen. Communities Count is a collaborative initiative of public and private organizations including: City of Bellevue Parks and Community Services Department, City of Seattle Human Services Department, King County Children and Family Commission, Public Health – Seattle and King County, Sustainable Seattle, The Seattle Foundation, and United Way of King County.

The following outcomes and indicators were chosen from the Communities Count report:

Outcome	Indicator
Social Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you get help from others</li> <li>• Do you help others</li> <li>• How do you learn about people in need</li> <li>• Someone to help if you were admitted to the hospital</li> <li>• Someone who is there to talk to teens and young adults</li> <li>• Someone to inform parents about American schools</li> <li>• People who bring the community together for a positive cause</li> <li>• Someone to help children with school work</li> <li>• Transportation for the community</li> </ul>
Social Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you know your neighbors</li> <li>• What activities bring your neighbors together</li> <li>• This is a close-knit community</li> <li>• People in the community can be trusted</li> <li>• People are willing to help neighbors</li> <li>• People in the community do not share the same values</li> <li>• People in the community generally do not get along with each other</li> <li>• People in the community would do something if children were skipping school and hanging out in the community</li> <li>• People in the community would do something if children were spray painting graffiti</li> <li>• People in the community would do something if children were showing disrespect to an adult</li> </ul>

## Sample Size

Kenyan Woman Association conducted 53 interviews in the following locations in South King County: **(insert locations)**

Para Los Niños conducted 3 focus groups in the following locations in South King County: Mount View Elementary School, Hazel Valley Elementary School, and Bow Lake Elementary School, all in the Highline School District.

## Data Analysis

The focus groups are qualitative data that is organized into themes.

The interview questions were analyzed using Excel to calculate averages and percentages.

## Results

### Para Los Niños

#### Social Support

The following themes were mentioned by the focus group participants:

Do you help others? Do they help you?

- People help each other out
- Examples include dealing with immigration issues, feeding people meals, seeking employment, finding housing, getting health care, watching children for each other, borrowing phones, getting help when stuck in a storm, helping elders, collecting donations for families, and collecting donations for towns in Mexico.
- Importance of helping others out, we all need help sometime.

How do you learn about people needing help?

- From friends and neighbors
- Word of mouth
- Newspaper or radio stories

## Social Cohesion

The following themes were mentioned by the focus group participants:

Do you know your neighbors?

- Neighborhoods are safe and calm, so able to meet neighbors
- Get a chance to talk to neighbors at church, stores, mailboxes, school, getting ice cream from the ice cream truck, community festivals
- Doing favors for each other, helps people get to know each other
- Attending classes, school events, and community festivals give people a chance to know each other
- Many people work long and different hours so it is harder for people to get together
- Language barriers interfere with meeting neighbors
- Discrimination at work makes people hesitant to trust others
- Discrimination among Latinos makes people hesitant to trust others

What activities bring your neighbors together?

- Activities for children
- School/classes for children
- ELL classes for adults
- Summer nights
- Community festivals
- Church events
- Para Los Ninos activities

These anecdotal stories indicate that:

- Social supports exist in the community.
- People mutually help each other in a wide variety of ways.
- Social cohesion exists in the community.
- People know each other.
- There are places (i.e., church, schools) that bring people together.
- There are events or classes that bring people together
- There are barriers that make social cohesion more difficult to achieve such as long working hours, language, and discrimination.

# Kenya Woman Association

## Social Support

Note: Some interviewers only used a 2 point scale: Often/Not Often

Question	Sample Size	Average	% Most Often (4)	% Often (3)	% Less Often (2)	% Never (1)
Someone to help you if admitted to hospital	53	3.43	45.3%	52.8%	1.9%	0.0%
Someone to talk to teens and young adults	53	3.11	18.9%	73.6%	7.5%	0.0%
Someone to inform parents about American school system	52	2.42	5.8%	30.8%	63.5%	0.0%
People who bring the community together for a positive cause	53	3.11	13.2%	84.9%	1.9%	0.0%
Someone to help children with schoolwork	53	2.94	7.5%	79.2%	13.2%	0.0%
Transportation for the community	53	2.74	5.7%	64.2%	28.3%	1.9%

These results indicate the following:

- Overall, the majority of the Kenyan community members interviewed believe they have social supports available to them. Two questions had 98.1% believe they have support most often or often, 2 questions had 92.5%, and one question had 69.8% that felt this level of support.
- The question demonstrating the highest level of support was someone to help you if admitted to a hospital.
- Additional questions with high levels of support include: people who bring the community together for a positive cause, someone to help children with homework, and someone to talk to teens and young adults.
- One question had less support: Transportation for the community.
- One question has the lowest level of support: someone to inform parents about American schools.

## Social Cohesion

Note: Some interviewers only used a 2 point scale: Agree/Disagree and Likely/Unlikely

Question	Sample Size	Average	% Strongly Agree (4)	% Agree (3)	% Disagree (2)	% Strongly Disagree (1)
This is a close-knit Kenyan community	53	2.87	5.7%	79.2%	11.3%	3.8%
People in the Kenyan community can be trusted	53	2.83	1.9%	81.1%	15.1%	1.9%
People in the Kenyan community are willing to help neighbors	53	3.02	5.7%	90.6%	3.8%	0.0%
People in the Kenyan community do not share the same values (reversed for scale)	53	2.58	1.9%	54.7%	43.3%	0.0%
People in the Kenyan community generally do not get along together (reversed for scale)	52	3.02	5.8%	90.4%	3.8%	0.0%
Question	Sample Size	Average	% Very Likely (4)	% Likely (3)	% Unlikely (2)	% Very Unlikely (1)
People in the Kenyan community would do something if children were skipping school and hanging out in the community	53	2.66	13.2%	41.5%	43.4%	1.9%
People in the Kenyan community would do something if children were spray painting graffiti	53	2.68	15.1%	37.7%	47.2%	0.0%
People in the Kenyan community would do something if children were showing disrespect to adults	53	2.98	47.2%	1.9%	50.9%	0.0%

	% Strongly Agree and Agree		
Question	KWA	White Center 2002	South County 2004
This is a close-knit community	84.9%	44.0%	57.0%
People in the community can be trusted	83.0%	64.0%	77.0%
People in the community are willing to help neighbors	96.3%	74.0%	80.0%
People in the community do not share the same values (reversed for scale)	56.6%	39.0%	29.0%
People in the community generally do not get along together (reversed for scale)	96.2%	10.0%	11.0%
	% Very Likely or Likely		
Question	KWA	White Center 2002	South County 2004
People in the community would do something if children were skipping school and hanging out in the community	54.7%	50.0%	59.0%
People in the community would do something if children were spray painting graffiti	52.8%	72.0%	85.0%
People in the community would do something if children were showing disrespect to adults	49.1%	54.0%	61.0%

These results indicate the following:

- Overall, the majority of the Kenyan community members interviewed believe they have social cohesion in their community. Two questions had 96% strongly agreed or agreed that there was social cohesion, one question had 85%, and one question had 83% that felt this cohesion existed.
- The two questions demonstrating the highest level of social cohesion was willing to help neighbors and people getting along.
- Two additional questions with high levels of support include: close-knit community and trusting people.
- Questions that had lower levels of social cohesion: sharing the same values, and adults intervening if children were skipping school, spray painting graffiti, being disrespectful to adults.
- Five questions had higher rates of social cohesion than the Communities Count White Center 2002 and South County 2004 report: willing to help neighbors, people getting along, close-knit community, trusting each other and sharing values.
- Two questions had similar rates of social cohesion to White Center and South County: Adults intervening if children are skipping school or being disrespectful to adults.
- One question had lower rates of social cohesion to White Center and South County: Adults intervening if children are spray painting graffiti.

## Conclusions

- Both the Kenya Woman Association and Para Los Niños communities believe they have social supports and social cohesion.
- Some aspects of social supports and social cohesion exist more strongly than others (i.e., helping others, getting along, trusting neighbors, close-knit neighborhood).
- Some barriers prevent social supports and social cohesion from being stronger (long working hours, language, discrimination, not understanding how schools work in America)
- These results could serve as a baseline, recognizing that change has most likely already occurred, but was not captured. Additional evaluation could demonstrate how social supports and social cohesion continue to change over time.
- Future interviews should be sure that the full scale of answers is provided to everyone.