

Obama's Promise Neighborhoods Initiative

February 17 2010

President Barack Obama has pledged to support urban America through policy initiatives, and has created a White House Office of Urban Affairs which reports directly to the President. He plans to implement the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative, which will be patterned after the Harlem Children's Zone, HCZ. In recent years, a lack of federal resources (mass transit, social service, public works, education, job training) designed to help disadvantaged individuals gain financial security have aggravated problems in inner-city neighborhoods. An article in *City & Community* raises important issues about the execution of the new initiative in light of recent evidence.

The HCZ is a ninety-seven block laboratory in central Harlem that combines two reform-oriented and public [charter schools](#) with a web of community services designed to help children from birth to college graduation. The program is meant to provide a supportive and positive social environment outside the schools and create a community partnership fit to survive ups and downs in the urban community. The charter schools have effectively reversed the black-white achievement gap in math (HCZ students outperform the typical white student in New York City) and significantly reduced it in English Language Arts.

Sociologist William Julius Wilson remarks, "The HCZ public charter schools have been incredibly successful. However, recent rigorous research on the successful public charter schools in New York and Boston reveal that it is possible to attain similar results in erasing or significantly reducing the black/white achievement gap independent of community investments."

Wilson states that additional evidence will be needed on the impact of the community investments not only on educational outcomes, but also on other outcomes ranging from delinquency and gangs to teen pregnancy and mental and physical health. And a research team headed by the Harvard economist Roland Fryer will soon conduct a comprehensive study of the HCZ to measure the long-term affects of such community investments.

The Obama Administration has dedicated ten million dollars to 2010 fiscal planning for the proposed Promise Neighborhoods in twenty cities, but more funding may be needed from philanthropy organizations and businesses.

More information: To view the abstract for this article please visit [www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo ... /123277275/abstract](http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo.../123277275/abstract) .

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Obama's Promise Neighborhoods Initiative (2010, February 17) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-02-obama-neighborhoods.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.