School Repurpose Co-Design
Project Executive Summary
About IIT Institute of Design
IIT Institute of Design (ID) is a graduate school of the Illinois Institute of Technology located in Chicago. ID is dedicated to humanizing technology and improving the process of innovation by developing and teaching a more methodological and human-centered approach to design. We believe that real innovation starts with users’ needs and employs a set of reliable methods, theories and tools to create solutions to their problems.

About R.A.G.E.
The Resident Association of Greater Englewood represents new leadership within the community. This resident-funded and resident-led association consists of members who reside in all six wards of the Greater Englewood area. R.A.G.E. members are homeowners, stakeholders, business owners, professionals, students, parents and grandparents fighting against the stereotypes that often stigmatize Englewood.

About the Co-design Team
The co-design team is comprised of: Asiaha Butler, co-founder of the Resident’s Association of Greater Englewood; Amanda Geppert, PhD student and faculty of IIT Institute of Design; and, Betina De Gorordo Bolado, Nayaab Lokhandwala, Laura Mattis and Charity Shi, students of IIT Institute of Design.
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Section 1:
INTRODUCTION

Project intent
Many Englewood residents have expressed a desire for a local public space to foster community connectedness and communication, as well as to provide a space for education, entrepreneurship, and entertainment opportunities.

In 2013, six community schools were closed in Englewood and West Englewood, making it one of the communities most affected by the largest single wave of public school closures in American history. This project aims to explore how Englewood community members envision using a vacant school building to meet longstanding desires for a local public space.

Project overview
This project, a partnership between R.A.G.E and IIT Institute of Design was a way to learn how the community would like to develop and use public space. From January to May 2014, the Repurpose team iterated through a social innovation design process in order to develop a deliverable documenting this thinking. This document could be used by community stakeholders to continue the discussion and development of concepts at the conclusion of the engagement between RAGE and IIT Institute of Design.

Over the course of four months, the Repurpose team captured and documented community wants and desires in three stages: learning about Englewood’s neighborhood and residents, extracting themes about the social and economic context in Englewood, and community and other local community spaces around the globe, and conducted a large community brainstorming retreat.
Phase 1: Learning about the neighborhood and residents
While learning about Englewood’s present situation, the Repurpose team familiarized themselves with the neighborhood and the residents by visiting key community spaces in the neighborhood through a day-long ride along with local stakeholders. The project officially started in Englewood with a kick-off session with R.A.G.E. members to gain and build a common understanding of members’ thoughts and dreams. In order to learn how Englewood residents spent their time, the daily pressures they may face and where they find happiness, an ethnographic-style interview and map activity was developed and strengthened by feedback provided by R.A.G.E. members during the prototyping process.

The team recruited residents from a variety of social, economic and family backgrounds by posting flyers across the neighborhood and posting to the online Englewood portal and Facebook. Thirty residents responded via phone and email to the project team and after screening, nine ethnographic-style interviews were conducted with seven women and two men from varied economic backgrounds and half between 50-60 years old.

Phase 2: Extracting themes
After gathering information and stories from interviews, the team sought to develop higher-level concepts and patterns that would be actionable learnings for the project. In a co-analysis session, R.A.G.E. and IIT Institute of Design sensitized themselves to resident interview transcripts and used a framework to organize the masses of information from interview participants. In this session, the teams took advantage of multiple perspectives on what was said to properly interpret the information. Through multiple iterations of synthesizing patterns, many patterns emerged through the data, but there seemed to be three distinct clusters of matters of concern: divisions, youth and control.

In addition to analyzing the participant data, the team was also assembling a library of social innovation projects related to repurposed space and community development. These precursors from across the world would serve as inspiration for future brainstorming. To extract meaning from these examples, a typology was developed to describe innovation patterns in these examples, which could be used to develop solutions for Englewood.

Phase 3: Brainstorming retreat
In order to capitalize on community interest in how shuttered schools could be repurposed and to sensitize the Repurpose Project work to broader audiences, we facilitated a co-design brainstorming retreat with an invited group of 30 residents, community leaders and experts.
This retreat was an opportunity for the Englewood community to combine their collective experience and come together to generate solutions for potential school spaces.

Attendees of the retreat were sensitized to the resident quotes, stories and insights and discussed the research as small groups; reviewed and were inspired by the precursors from secondary research; and, brainstormed ideas and solution ecosystems.

Attendees were highly engaged and, by the end of four hours, had created seven distinct space concepts aimed to exist as economically and socially sustainable ecosystems. When examining all of the ideas, there are key themes that residents expect in a future public space:

- Culture/art/entertainment
- Housing/event spaces
- Entrepreneurship/job creation/co-working spaces
- Live/work spaces
- Urban agriculture
- Technology
- Services/resources
- Child and youth education/services

All of these spaces will need to have accessible hours, locations and payments structures; encourage intergenerational activities; and, foster open communication and trust.

**Project outcomes and next steps**

At the culmination of this process, the Englewood community is empowered and energized to develop space and resources that residents want and desire. This report should serve as documentation of a process that is still living and growing in Englewood, as community organizations, leaders and residents rally around a key vision.

Moving forward, the community needs to vet the ideas created and presented during the retreat more fully and identify potential funding models. A second retreat could engage funding partners and business model experts in crafting creative financing solutions. With this knowledge in hand, key partners for funding and implementation should be identified.
and activated in order to live prototype a short-list of ideas in the community at a small, but realistic space for further community feedback

**Approach**

The voices Englewood residents are essential in determining the future of the community. Co-design methods were used by the Repurpose project team to make sure that community voices were at the center of the social innovation process, shaping solutions from beginning to end.

**Design**

Design is a discipline that approaches problem solving in new and different ways that bring definition to ambiguous problems. Englewood is a complex and diverse community; as designers, we employ methods that look at all the aspects that can be of tremendous value and lead to discovering real unmet needs and desires that won’t come out in a simple survey.

**Co-design**

Co-design is a design approach that actively engages diverse stakeholders in long-term collaboration. Co-design has become increasingly engaged in public spheres and everyday life products and services, where the democratization of innovation empowers users of products and services to innovate. This can help users develop exactly what they want rather than what industry professionals or organizational leaders think they want.
Section 2:

RESEARCH PLANNING

Interviews
In an innovative design process, qualitative interviews enable us to drive into the details and nuances of the lives of individuals. Rather than timed, short surveys, we conduct ethnographic-style interviews that resemble conversations more than interviews.

Interview prototyping
To ensure that the interview methods and language was appropriate for the community, R.A.G.E. and the IIT Institute of Design co-designed the interview guide and accompanying activities through prototyping. Prototyping the interview guide and activities allowed these to be furthered strengthened by feedback given during the prototyping process. As a result interview questions were refined or reworded, and new questions added, such as, “What if you were a tourist in Englewood for a day? What would you do?”
**Recruiting interview participants**

To attract participation and in respect of their time, interviewees would receive an incentive of $25 visa gift card at the end of the interview. We posted flyers at grocery stores, convenience stores, laundromats, the Salvation Army, the police station, the local cafe and the offices of leading community organizations. R.A.G.E. also posted the call for volunteers and contact information on their Facebook page and the Englewood portal.

**Finding diverse voices**

To capture the diversity of voices in the neighborhood, we screened residents to find varying family structures, relationship status, number and age of dependents and ages. We also aimed to speak with residents in different career situations: business owners, working professionals and unemployed adults.

In all, we received 30 responses and scheduled interviews with 9 African American residents (7 women and 2 men). They came from varied economic backgrounds and half were between 50-60 years old. All interviews were held at the Kelly Branch of the Chicago Public Library for everyone’s safety and convenience.

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**Earn a free $25 gift card!**

Your voice is important! Earn a free gift card for 90 minutes of your time telling us about your daily life.

RAGE and IIT are working together on an exciting project to talk to Englewood residents about imagining a local public space that works for you and your family.

**Call us today for more information:**

708-613-0452
project.publicspace@gmail.com

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Section 3: INTERVIEWS

Kevin*

We spoke to Kevin, a 29-year-old male, who has been in Englewood for almost 17 years. He’s currently looking for work and would like to work in construction near or in Englewood, but has had difficulty joining local unions and finding work close to home.

*Names have been anonymized to respect participant privacy.
He was incarcerated twice between 2004 and 2008 and hasn’t been in trouble since. “Actually I got my cases when I was trying to fit in, in Englewood. Every time I thought, ‘yeah, I can make it in Englewood’ some bad happen – which was two felonies.”

“...The hardest part of my day now its buying the kids what they want. If they want a bag of chips or quart of juice or a piece of bubble gum. I don’t have the currency to do that. That’s the hardest part of the day when the kids want something and I don’t have the currency to produce it... But I know when they deserve something, when I want to reward them for bringing in good grade or being outstanding in class and following directions in school. I wanna appraise them with things that they can use, “

He believes that there is so much violence in Englewood because “We are bored... You gotta sit at home and figure out how to make your days exciting. It’s boring in Englewood, can’t really go anywhere, can’t do too much. And if you do, you gotta watch your back, you gotta watch who you with, where you going, and its a hmmfff headache.” Kevin wishes that there was somewhere in Englewood to let his kids run free, interacting with other kids without any harm coming their way.

**Donna**

Donna, a 59-year-old female, is a retired telephone technician who grew up and currently lives in Englewood. She lives with her 30-year-old son, whom she raised as a single mom. She believes in “keep[ing] everything open, that way you can enjoy everything and not get stuck in one place. Everything is an adventure.”

Donna has a deep passion for her community and volunteers extensively for organizations in Englewood and the city of Chicago like the Chicago Symphony Orchestra so she can enjoy opera performances and more for free.
Donna is frustrated by “people in charge [who] do not take their position seriously.” Her block is split between two alderman, so as a national block club member, she has to commute to the offices of two different alderman and visit different community meetings to accomplish what needs to be done.

Daniel*
We also spoke to Daniel, a 60-year-old male, who has been working in Englewood since 1972 and living in Auburn Gresham. It was not his decision to move to Englewood in 1983, but his property was inherited and he always had relatives in Englewood. Daniel is dedicated to his church and spends his weekends at church.

“ENOUGH’S ENOUGH. EITHER WE MAKE A PLAN EXECUTE IT AND GET IT DONE. OR PEOPLE LIKE NORFOLK AND EVERYBODY ELSE, TELLING US WHAT ENGLEWOOD NEED TO DO AND WHAT THEY GOING TO DO WITH ENGLEWOOD. AND ENGLEWOOD IS BEING ATE UP LIKE A LITTLE PAC-MAN GAME AND THAT’S WHAT GOING ON.”
“Because of the volume of crime in the area and children undisciplined run on the street ... there is not much activities outside for children in Englewood... and they have very limited indoor facilities for basketball other than the school and the park district... picturing Englewood and picturing activity - they don’t do together. You have to almost go outside of Englewood to do any constructive activity.”

Daniel believes that Englewood’s reputation is based on its crime, not its growth or history as a booming commercial center at 63rd and Halsted. He believes that Englewood isn’t getting its fair share of economic development and that without resources and a strong plan, Englewood will continue to be “lost in the wilderness.”

“EVERYTHING DID BEGIN ON HALSTED AND 63RD STREET. THEY JUST LIKE A BLOOD VESSELS. YOU COULD READ OUT THEIR POINT WHICH WAS 63RD AND HALSTED. THERE WAS MOVIE THEATERS, 2 LARGE STORES...”
“Changed for the worse, not for the better, politics and poor management and unconcerned so-called politicians and leaders... Chicago politics and the Chicago police department have probably done more damage to Englewood than Englewood had ever done to itself.”

Jasmine*

Jasmine, a 42-year-old female, moved to Englewood in 2010 with her husband and young children in order to live with her husband’s mother, who was recently widowed.

A student at Kennedy-King College, Jasmine is also working to rebuild her small hat business that suffered during the 2008 financial crisis. In the few free hours of her day, she’s looking for warehouse and office space, reactiving her online store, and seeking suppliers and sales channels that would enable her to move her current stock and operations to Chicago.

“I need models, I need spokespeople. I would rather get people from here. When you talk about outreach, a lot of people from the outside don’t understand the community as best as maybe you would want them to.”
There isn’t much for her to do with her children in Englewood and she takes them to activities in other neighborhoods. “The problem with Englewood in the summer is that there is this feeling that it’s dangerous. In the nighttime, we can hear the guns. So, when you have a little kid and you just, you wanna be inside or in the backyard. That’s the problem.”

Jasmine thinks Englewood has “these spots of grandness and other spots where it’s just complete decay.” She loves the history on her block and she think that if the community started with just one block, property values could then start to go up and encourage those who aren’t going to put money into homes to sell them, drawing in “young minds who have the energy to do something” to build a community.

June*

We spoke to June, a 38-year-old female, who works as a community health advocate that advises youth on reproductive health. She grew up and works in Englewood.

“We bring in like volunteer chefs, volunteer nutritionists to help lead the classes. Because of that, I’ve joined a gym, I’ve started reading labels... It gives me chance to do other things, so its a lot of things I could do while having this job. I hope to be able to share my resources and information that I have with others.”

Her three teenage boys “don’t do much within Englewood.” Her 18-year-old is a culinary student and June is also a self-proclaimed foodie. She combines her work breaks to be able to visit restaurants for long lunches sometimes going to Bridgeport to “some awesome restaurants” like Zaytune and Pleasant House Bakery.

“I WOULD ALSO CHANGE LIKE THESE STORES THAT SELL WHAT I CALL BOOTLEG MEAT. YOU GO TO GET MEAT AND THE MEAT IS NOT THAT FRESH. LIKE THE CANNED GOODS ARE EXPIRED. WE HAVE A LOT OF THOSE STORES IN ENGLEWOOD. THE CANS IS DUSTY ‘N ALL. I WOULD CHANGE THAT TOO.”
The vacant lots in Englewood make her feel hopeless because it feels like there’s nothing she can do to change it, even the kids are lacking motivation to graduate high school. June believes that if stores and entertainment was available that just looked and functioned better, people might want “to be better, want better.”

**Kelly**

Kelly, a 45-year-old female, works 10 hours a week as a homemaker taking care of elderly people in Englewood. She is looking for more work and is considering college for nursing.

Kelly would love to go out dancing, but she hasn’t been out dancing in a long time because of the crime. Instead, she turns on music at home and dances in her house with a little dinner.

She has four children between 13 and 25 years old. The hardest part of her day is hearing about her teen daughter’s struggles at school and not knowing how to help her; “sometimes I don’t really know what to do but pray about it.” Recently, 10 girls were trying to “jump” her daughter and a friend.
Kelly believes strongly in the power of education because she doesn’t want her kids to struggle in life. She is having a difficult time finding housing that’s affordable and appropriate for her. When she was looking for an apartment recently, one man was asking for $750 a month for an apartment with no kitchen.

“WHEN I SAID I DON’T WANT MY KIDS TO BE LIKE ME, I JUST I DON’T WANT THEM TO, YOU KNOW, PUT THEIR CAREER ASIDE FOR A MAN, AND THAT’S EXACTLY WHAT I DID. I DON’T WANT THEM TO HANG WITH THE WRONG PEOPLE... JUST GET YOUR EDUCATION FIRST.... YOU’LL STRUGGLE PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK. NO, I DON’T WANT THEM TO LIVE THEIR LIFE LIKE THAT.”
Alice*
We spoke to Alice, a 33-year-old female, who leads a middle school youth group focused on pregnancy prevention and has lived in Englewood most of her life. Alice has three children and she enjoys spending time with them because they are growing and she sees herself growing with them.

“I believe in making a positive impact around... It’s working with the children and the growth. There’s some of the student we see have turned around attitudes. There is something you can’t measure with our surveys.”

At one point, Alice was planning to leave the neighborhood because she thought it would be safer for her and her children. But, she says, violence is everywhere in the city of Chicago. She plans to stay in Englewood because its where she was born and raised. She has lots of family nearby so it’s very convenient for her.

When she visits other neighborhoods, she wonders why Englewood doesn’t look like some of the communities downtown or near downtown. She believes there is a lack of sense of unity in the community.

“IT LOOKS LIKE A DEAD TOWN. IT REMINDS ME OF AN OLD WESTERN LAND, THE OUTLAWS MOVE IN AND THE SHERIFF IS A PUNK AND HE SO OLD. HE’S CAN’T YOU KNOW REALLY PROTECT THE TOWN. THE TOWN IS BEING BULLIED BY THE OUTLAWS.”
**Pam T.*

Pam T., a 58-year-old African American female, was raised in and now lives in Englewood. She was living outside Englewood until moving back to care for her mom with Alzheimer’s for 12 years before her mother passed.

When she and her brothers were growing up, she remembers them being involved in gangs and even recalls meeting the leaders of the Disciples. Pam T. was not herself engaged in gang activity; however, some of her friend’s didn’t fare as well.

Pam T. has three children ranging from 41-25 years old. Currently, her 41-year-old son lives at a development center and is working. She is glad that he’s close so she can visit him every couple weeks.

“*I’VE SEEN A FEW OF MY FRIENDS GO NUTS, JUST IN THE AREA FROM THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED TO UM. THAT WAS ANOTHER REASON FOR ME TO MOVE. BUT I LIVED ON THE EAST SIDE.*"
“Cause that’s something we always need to celebrate. When they’re doing something good. Let them feel like they did something... I’m very proud of my children. Period... Cause it’s a struggle.”

She wakes up early in the morning and reads the Bible twice a day with her family at the table. She is also dedicated to working with her pastor to run a food pantry.

“I WANNA RUN A MINISTRY FOR A FOOD PANTRY AND A CLOTHES PANTRY TO FEED THE PEOPLE WHEREVER WE MOVE TO... THAT’S WHAT GOD SEND ME TO THIS FOOD PANTRY TO LEARN HOW TO KNOW WHAT TO DO TOO SO I CAN OPERATE MY OWN.”

Bianca and Bethany*

We also spoke to Bethany (14) and Bianca (18), girls who work at a local youth organization. We planned to facilitate a youth workshop with over ten people; however, Bianca and Bethany were the only people to show up.

Bethany is very social and would consider following in her grandmother’s footsteps as a limo driver because “you get to meet a lot of new people;” her grandmother has met Tyler Perry and Bozo the clown!

“I’m a good debater and I gotta get the last word. One thing I can do is, like, look up a lot of college for law. I picked out one, I want to go to Florida State University for law school. They said that I’d be in there four year doing that. I said okay. And then, I sent them an email and they said they’ll try and keep me in touch. I’m 14.”

“I DON’T REALLY GO ANYWHERE. I DON’T GO OUTSIDE LIKE THAT. I STAY IN THE HOUSE WITH CHILDREN. CHORES ARE BASICALLY IT -- CHORES, WATCH TV. EAT... I BABYSIT A LOT. I DON’T MIND ‘CAUSE BIANCA LOVES THE KIDS. APPARENTLY THEY LIKE ME AND THEY WANT TO COME OUTSIDE.”
On the day we interviewed her, Bianca turned 18. She was going to celebrate by going skating, then having dinner at the Old Country Buffet and a party at a friend’s house in Englewood. At work, Bianca mentors younger children and helps out with nearly every event.

“BECAUSE ITS, LIKE, ENGLEWOOD, IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE TRASHY AROUND BECAUSE PEOPLE ACT LIKE THEY DON’T KNOW WHERE A GARBAGE CAN AT, ‘CAUSE ENGLEWOOD IS NOT A BAD SPOT AT ALL, I GUESS HALF THE TIME, IT’S OUTSIDE OF ENGLEWOOD, NOT INSIDE OF ENGLEWOOD.”

In Englewood, both girls agreed that Ogden Park is unsafe. Washington Park, however, is much more popular because there are big areas and it’s a neutral area. Bianca and Bethany also spoke about the importance of being observant when it comes to choosing friends and dealing with peer pressure.
Pam C.*
Pam C., a 55-year-old female, works at a large charity in Englewood. She grew up in Englewood; she left the neighborhood for 20 years, returning only to take care of family property. Pam C. returned to Englewood to make the house her own and give back to the community.

Pam C. is involved in the National Block Club and is highly active in local events, but she believes that most community members aren’t interested in coming together.

Pam C. would like to visit nicer restaurants and dessert places where she could hang out and meet people.

“Everything we want, we have to go out of the neighborhood to get. There is no place to rent, there is no hall, no banquet halls, where you can come in and put in chair covers on and decorations, no place like that.”

“...this is where you live, this is where you should wanna see some flowers, some grass and see the trash taken out. You shouldn’t have to be paid for things like this. You should automatically want to do this...”

“The people in the area are comfortable, not bothering and just living for today. I wanna live for today and tomorrow... there used to be pride if you had a business.”
Section 4

CO-ANALYSIS SESSION

After gathering information and story data from our participant interviews (photos, notes, audio recordings, and maps), the team began the process of extracting patterns and themes through a process called analysis. The objective was to see all the data from multiple participants together and abstract from that higher-level concepts that enabled us to discover patterns that create actionable learnings for the project to use.
Typically this work is done by designers who sequester themselves from the community, but with our co-design philosophy, R.A.G.E. and IIT Institute of Design could discuss and compare data from multiple participants. We needed to have a discussion around the data that informed our perceptions, so our insights could be accurate. By having different perspectives in the room, we could discover underlying messages in what was said. Secondly, because our R.A.G.E. partners were not present during interviews, they needed to get familiar with participants. Familiarizing themselves and co-analyzing the data, enabled them to see others’ perceptions of the neighborhood and become engaged and connected with the project and residents they are trying to serve.

In a four-hour workshop with five community members, we sensitized ourselves to the resident interview transcripts, which were formatted into snippets. Each resident we interviewed was assigned a colored paper. We then organized that data into the four categories (Activities, Attitudes, Anxieties and Ambitions) as a group; each community member sorted the comments from a single resident. After, we had sorted as much information as possible, leaving out what was deemed as unimportant or conversationalist. Finally, we discussed the themes we were seeing in the information based on the framework and our own experiences in interpreting that information.
Insights from analysis

After the analysis co-design session using the 4A’s framework, we conducted a second review of all the sorted data points. Since we had an exhaustive amount of information from each interview and there wasn’t enough time in our single session to extract all of the themes, we extracted chunks of information that expressed core or synthesized ideas.

There were many themes and patterns that emerged through the data. These seem to emerge as three distinct clusters or matters of concern: divisions, youth and control.

INSIGHT 1: DIVISIONS WITHIN ENGLEWOOD PREVENT A SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

Participants described a lack of a sense of community within Englewood. No one spoke about close relationships with their neighbors, seeming to indicate that neighborly bonds are not strong or nonexistent in the community. For some, gangs are able to provide this, which could be attracting youth in the community. However, there is a sense of community shared within and among different local organizations that exist in the community, yet these communities do not seem to extend beyond organizational membership.

“I think in the end Englewood will probably become a mix community. It’s already building up to be a mix community now. I don’t think that there would be a major thing in Englewood, but the businesses that are nationally known come back to the community. That corner store has to be put down.” - Daniel

“250 churches in Englewood and if you had a meeting you’d be lucky to get 10 pastors.”
- Pam C.
“But as far as the community coming together, they just satisfied with the way things are. I don’t wanna clean up, what you gonna pay me for cleaning up. “Pay you! I mean this is your community, this is where you live this is where you should wanna see some flowers some grass and see the trash taken out. You shouldn’t have to be paid for things like this. You should automatically want to do this.” – Pam C.

“I go to the Urban League. I love them everything they do, everything they say. They taught me a lot of things. They are very resourceful. They have father’s day picnic, they lets kids come with us and allow them to be on computers ‘n all and have board games ‘n all... I go there 3-4 times a week.” - Kevin

"Everyone need to briefed on what’s going on in the Community. Like the way they did those X’s, they didn’t do a public announcement on what they did. I called the city to know what they X’s mean and they didn’t know anything about the X’s. I was walking down on 71st and saw all those X’s, I remember this street used to be really beautiful.” - Pam C.

INSIGHT 2: SOME BELIEVE THAT VIOLENCE CAN BE CONTAINED BY CONTROLLING YOUTH THROUGH PROGRAMS.

There are many different kinds of programs in Englewood; programs seem to be trying to fill gaps like missing role models, missing places and missing resources. Residents we spoke to mentioned repeatedly that there is nothing for youth to do, but they did refer to local parks and programs. It seemed as though adults think that youth need to be registered for programs that structure their time, keep them safe and ensure a bright future.

“When I was in high school, there is a youth center right round the corner from my house. So they have programs where they can join. I joined one was called the future leaders, so they would go on college tours and different trips. There was stuff for us to do after school. You could go on the computer and do your homework. I don’t think we have too many things like that anymore.” - June

“If they caught you doing wrong or doing something you wasn’t supposed to do, we were more respectful of the adults, like than these children are now ‘cause you get on the bus you
wudn’t cussing now you gotta be scared because the kids are raising theyselve its not the same.” - Pam T.

“Just get your education first. I think that’s what you have to do. If you don’t want to struggle in life, ‘cause it will be a struggle if you don’t get your education - a struggle. I don’t care if you have a job, you have a bubblegum job, you’ll struggle paycheck to paycheck. No, I don’t want them to live their life like that.” - Kelly

“In my house, it’s not... it’s not about outside activity by environment. Because of the volume of crime in the area. And children undisciplined run on the street. Gang bang... Gang, stuff like that. So outside activity, that’s not even... It should be in Englewood, but it’s not, like that. This is what like that. You may find kids in park facilities in Englewood or kids playing basket ball or something like that in their school something like that.” - Daniel

“The kids don’t do much within Englewood. They are not interested in hanging out in Englewood. They have company over to the house, but these friends are from outside of Englewood.” - June

INSIGHT 3: RESIDENTS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING PUSHED. THEY FEEL CONTROLLED AT MULTIPLE LEVELS.

Violence in the community has pushed residents to leave, but those we spoke to returned because of their need to be close to family or the place they grew up. Nevertheless, residents are left feeling powerless and unable to navigate the neighborhood freely. Many of the participants spoke about a lack of hope in different ways: hopeless about the impact of violence; hopeless about their surroundings such as empty lots, garbage and houses boarded up for years; hopeless about decisions being made without them knowing about it; and hopeless about their futures and the lack of local job opportunities.

“Since 2010 (in Englewood). So I moved here because my husband’s family lives here. And his father died and his mother is in the house by herself. So that make it necessary for us to move here, so he could live with his mother.” - Jasmine

“My oldest son -sighs- 25, have to think, he don’t live with me. He live with his father and I
don’t know where at, don’t ask me. Because he did not tell me. He don’t tell me nothing, very discreet and don’t tell me nothing. His daddy? ...He just he still have those ways I don’t like. His father and some of them ways rub off on my son.” - Kelly

“Instead of tearing down the buildings create jobs and let them go in and remodel the building and rebuild the community, you know. Like okay, we took this building that was shut down. we went in, we clean it up. we got the city license and everything and everything is check with it and all we gotta do is go in and fix it up. Hang new dry walls, paint it couple of light fixtures, make it available for rent for units. Instead of it sitting up for years and years and years and just collecting dust and one day just knock it down and making an empty field, its like create jobs.” - Kevin

"So ain’t no outside after 6. Outside after six, for what? What are you going to do outside after six? To be serious. in Englewood?” - Daniel

“Right now we need to go all the way downtown. People need to have access. People don’t have money for bus fare so $2 for bus.” - Pam C.

“What is the effect of the vacant lots? It makes me feel hopeless in some type of way. There is nothing much they can do to change it.” - June
Section 6

BRAINSTORMING RETREAT

Retreat preparation

In order to take capitalize on community interest in the school repurposing and to sensitize our work to a broader audiences, we facilitated a co-design brainstorming retreat with an invited group of 30 residents, community leaders and experts. This retreat was an opportunity for the Englewood community to combine their collective experience and come together to generate solutions for potential school spaces. Invited guests included social service organizations, parent associations, schools, local alderman and community leaders.

Working with R.A.G.E., the retreat was designed for four hours at Lindblom Math and Science Academy. Over the course of the afternoon, retreat attendees would:

- hear the stories and quotes of local residents and the themes in their comments,
- have robust discussion in small groups about resident challenges and important community voices that we missed in our research,
- review examples from around the world of inspiring spaces,
- brainstorm ideas and develop solution ecosystems for a public space in small groups; and,
- present those solution ecosystems to the entire group of attendees.

To ensure that all attendees would be able to share their thoughts, attendees were organized into groups of five people with a facilitator, who was a IIT Institute of Design student or faculty. Groups were designed to ensure there was a mix of background and expertise at each table. Unlike most retreats in design, two interviewees from our research reserved seats for the event and one interviewee attended. We were honored to see her and she told us she was happy to let people hear her voice, even though she had a few small corrections to our representation of her comments. She energetically participated in the brainstorming session.

Ideally, the workshop would have lasted an entire day, but we chose to have a 4-5 hour session from 1 pm to 5 pm that allowed participants to leave if necessary. Because of the
busy community schedule, it also ensured that people would attend by having a shorter, more flexible schedule.

Day of the retreat

Upon arrival and sign-in, attendees picked up programs with the agenda and note pages. The retreat began with an introduction from R.A.G.E. and IIT Institute of Design. After every attendee introduced themselves, we used an icebreaker activity to get attendees out of their seats and mingling around the room in search of their teammates for the rest of the retreat. We used eye-catching quotes from our research interviewees as a gateway for our attendees to be interested in learned about residents in the neighborhood.

Attendees continues this learning process by moving around the room as small groups, reading and interpreting posters on the wall that represented the residents we spoke to.
To prepare the brainstorming, we thought it was important to have attendees truly connect with our interviewees and employ the information collected. The posters presented key quotes, background details and images of our interviewees that were regarded important during our co-analysis session. As attendees reviewed the posters, they were asked to record their thoughts in their notebooks on two questions: “What is his/her biggest challenge?” and “What would prevent him/her coming a future public space?”

Immediately following this activity, facilitators shared audio clips of several interviewees with the entire room to further humanize participants.
A large brainstorming table worksheet on the tables documented attendee discussions and ideas. We were especially interested in their reactions to the fieldwork and wanted to instigate community dialogue about the most important observations and the voices that we were not able to capture in our limited amount of time.

To provide attendees with outside inspiration, each tables included secondary research cards. Each card included a brief description of a repurposed space or community development, multiple large photos, the location and type of innovation according to a typology of innovation developed through analysis of the secondary research.

These cards explored schools, repurposed spaces and community development around the world to provide inspiration for Englewood solutions. These meaningful precursors of social innovation around the globe, as found through secondary research, show that there are many angles in which a school repurposing or a community project could be approached. At the summation of the retreat, many attendees asked to take home copies of the secondary research cards or requested a full deck of every example we found for future inspiration.
After a short break, attendees were encouraged to draw and describe ideas for Englewood on 8.5x5.5" sheets. Brainstorming was open-ended, but included several rules that ensured...
every idea was captured and everyone had a chance to participate. For nearly two hours, attendees generated a variety of ideas and the room echoed with discussion and laughter.
Teams were asked to create a ecosystem of ideas from the mass of ideas that the team generated. This holistic ecosystem included spaces and activities that represented neighborhood needs and values while being self-sustaining.

The workshop ended with a sharing of ecosystem ideas to the room. If there had been more time during the session, there would have been a group discussion on idea feasibility and possibilities. But, ideas were documented on paper and video for future use by the community.
Retreat feedback

At the conclusion of the retreat, attendees enjoyed the discussion and appreciated the structured, but open, brainstorming process that facilitated creativity. In the future, several attendees expressed the desire for more workshops like this in the future for both the broader community and their own work.

“I don’t know all this design thinking. (laughs) But, no, this was a really helpful process... I like this structure... it’s structure organized to be open, right. So, if there’s a way to, as your debriefing, I would love to have like a kit of how someone like me could like do this... I would love to be a part of that.” – Retreat attendee

“I can appreciate this because I go to a lot of meetings, and these meetings always say, ‘take our community back,’ but the only thing is like, ‘what is your vision?’

I have a vision now, right, and you can tangibly see how, you know, this is possible... I’m glad to come here and see other people’s visions and not just talking about a vision. Maybe we can do it right now, because it’s in a vision... now we have a process.” – Retreat attendee
At the conclusion of the retreat, Englewood community members presented seven distinct concepts that aimed to exist as economically and socially sustainable ecosystems.

**The Bernie Mac Production Center**

The Bernie Mac Production Center is dedicated to providing economic development through fostering the creation and consumption of art in the neighborhood. It offers art production classes for youth and theatrical performances aimed at families.
The center was divided into two areas: The upper floors offer training classes for young people interested in art, theater and cooking with the opportunity to practice skills both on- and off-stage. The lower floors provided a theater and restaurants for intergenerational entertainment, including offer classes for parents.

The space also includes an outdoor space for live music and outdoor cafes. Small businesses like restaurants, bars and clubs support an entertainment district surrounding the center.

The center could be funded by celebrity partners, entertainment foundations, charities, businesses and government grants.

**Healing the Soul Space**

This space helps residents, especially young people, to understand who they are, where they are developmentally and spiritually and where they want to be in the future.
The designers of this space believe that some young people have misunderstood the meaning of “power” and lost their identities as individuals. This situation is causing chaos in the neighborhood. The Healing the Soul Space is dedicated to helping residents discover their talents and have faith in themselves.

This space also provides education and finds youth the right positions to motivate them to obtain more education, or develop life goals, even without college degree.

The interior of the space would be decorated with paintings and murals that bring peace of mind. Each room would have its own theme like “Love” or “Power”, so everyone could find the spaces felt at home.

**Net.Work.Space**

Net.Work.Space is a co-working space that offers high-speed internet. The space allows residents to work together and collaborate with each other. It also offers training programs.
Net.Work.Space could be funded by low membership fee and equity funding. Adults pay $5 a month for training memberships and this money subsidizes the youth programs. Fees could be waived for people who volunteer to work at the space.

Net.Work.Space was largely inspired by two ideas from the secondary examples: a high school cinema where young people get trained and residents get entertained, and a library bus where children could learn while traveling.

**Pride**

Pride brings young people back to the community by offering low-price apartments and co-working spaces. Tenants could include college students, young people willing to start businesses in the neighborhood, and young families. Building residents could provide amenities, like catering and gardening.
Pride is primarily focused on artists in its first stage because they require fewer expenses to start their businesses. Those artists could also offer classes to teenagers while serving as inspiring role models.

Inside of the community, time could be used as currency instead of paying cash for services.

People who pre-order housing in Pride would help build it, as it could be funded by rent and equity. Initial marketing would happen on the internet in order to target a younger audience.

**iHub**

iHub is a center where residents could come for community information and other services; it also serves as a base for residents, community organizations and canvassers. iHub would provide spaces for public meetings 24-hours a day, so residents could get full access whenever they need it and they can also access rich resources that improve civic engagement.
It includes a media center for youth and adults to learn skills like programming and leadership training. There would also be daycare service that focused on STEM education by engaging youth in fun activities and interests they already have, like autos, to cultivate their interest in learning.

IHUB also offers spaces and access to businesses that cater to socialization, especially targeted on families, including restaurants and cafes, bowling alleys and movie theaters. A black history museum would also be open all year round.

**Urban Agricultural Center and Nature Museum**

The Urban Agricultural Center and Nature Museum offers job training and entrepreneurship opportunities around food production and landscaping. It increases employment, beautifies the neighborhood, and provides healthy fresh food. Residents could come by for grocery
shopping or to relax at a juice/smoothie bar. It will be conveniently connected with ERA trails, with easy access to a transportation hub with car sharing in the South Side. The center also serves as a wellness center for families, including physical, mental and emotional care. People who are well-trained and have true desire to help will offer therapy, counseling and other healing activities. This center will also provide support to parents, especially single moms, and seniors.

To further the spaces impact in the community, there would be a “block house” built on every block. Block houses reach people who are concerned about their personal safety when leaving the block. These houses would be built on vacant lots, and nearby homes would provide breakfast to visitors.

The center will be run by alternative energy sources like sun and wind. Surplus energy will be sold to corporations like ComEd to generate revenue to support the space.

Englewood Townhall
The Englewood Townhall is comprised of abandoned houses that teenagers decorate with graffiti. Vacant lots surrounding the building are used for gardening, creating a beautiful vision that attracts people to come. The space will be promoted through print and radio slogans.

Programs include cooking classes and other activities that appeal to seniors and teenagers, bringing different generations together. These starter programs also help the space test out what exactly people are interested in.

Later on, the Englewood Townhall would offer city services, so people don’t need to go all the way to downtown. It also offers business and startup incubators, food production and fresh markets.

**Concept themes**

When we examine all of the ideas, we see key themes that residents expect in a future space. All of these spaces will need to have accessible hours, locations and payment structures; encourage intergenerational activities; and, foster open communication and trust.

**Culture/art/entertainment**

Culture and art activities are a common desire among the residents, not only because of the entertainment value but also because it provides a place to meet people and have conversation. Museums, especially those about Englewood, could be an effective tool for educating young people on neighborhood history, culture and role models.

Restaurants, movie theaters and jazz bars can generate profit and job opportunities.

**Housing/event spaces**

Residents see an opportunity for profit to be made in renting apartments, dormitory-style rooms or cooperative spaces, hotel rooms and event spaces. Nice, affordable housing could attract more young people and business owners into the neighborhood.

**Entrepreneurship/job creation/co-working spaces**

Residents believe that unemployment and economic imbalance increases violence. While job training is an apparent need, facilitating entrepreneurship is seen as a way to create job opportunities while offering services and opportunities to other people too. Co-working
spaces offer facilities and services to small businesses to lower the barriers to starting a business. These spaces would be accessible and provide support to entrepreneurs.

**Live/work spaces**
Mixed-use spaces could offer housing or education on higher floors, while the street level provides retail or entertainment spaces where other residents could enjoy their work. These spaces give young people easy and convenient ways to live, go to school and work in the neighborhood.

**Urban agriculture**
Urban agriculture includes gardening and landscaping that beautifies the environment, but also includes a win-win-win model where residents could get professionally trained to produce fresh food and develop food-related businesses.

**Technology**
Technology training was mentioned as a specific type of job creation. It was widely believed that skills, like programming, can open up more job opportunities for the community. A technology center also improves seniors’ computer literacy and offers youth greater internet access.

**Services/resources**
Residents’ ideas include spaces where different social and government services came together. In these locations, residents might run errands at one place instead of traveling to other neighborhoods or downtown. These spaces include healthcare (mental, physical and emotional), city services, and an information center.

**Child and youth education/services**
Tutoring and daycare is not very accessible in Englewood and these spaces provide a place that includes teenagers’ interests in educational offerings and career opportunities.
Section 8

CHALLENGES

Moving forward, there are a few key challenges for the community and organizations involved in planning, funding and implementing a future public space.

**Disparate, unaligned efforts**
In order to take advantage of the energy and excitement from the brainstorming retreat and get the project moving quickly, we’d recommend key organizations to align their initiatives related to a proposed repurposed space. This ensures that spaces represent a harmonious and unified vision and resources aren’t wasted on duplicative efforts.

**Neighborhood perceptions of violence**
Residents we spoke to expressed apprehensions about public spaces every time they spoke about going out to parks and shops because of violence, or the expectation of, violence in those parts of the neighborhood. People get anxious about going out themselves but even more about letting children be outside of the home. One way of further understanding and mediating these reactions is to prototype and test different solutions. This will help the planning organizations really understand what makes people feel comfortable and safe.

**CRITERIA**
The following resident and business criteria are suggested for evaluating proposed repurposing concepts or solution ecosystems. The criteria are derived from primary and secondary research conducted in the course of the Repurpose Project. These criteria are not necessarily exhaustive, but represent what should be considered when creating solutions responsive to community needs and desires.
Resident criteria
Based on what we heard from residents and non-residents connected to Englewood, any future solution must be:

- In harmony with Englewood’s identity
- Accessible by those with and without transportation
- Create a sense of community and inspire hope
- Facilitate communication among neighbors, and between organizational leaders and the broader community
- Provide a safe space for youth
- Empower residents to have a stake in the solution
- Intergenerational space

Business criteria

- Self-sustaining, or economically stable
- Empower business owners and potential business owners in Englewood
- Have a sliding scale payment model
- Attract positive attention outside of the community (funders, collaborators, thought leadership, media)
- Mixed use
- Focused purpose
- Profitable

Next steps
In order to build upon excitement from the school repurposing brainstorming retreat, there are three key steps that Englewood could take now to keep the process going.

1. Vet ideas further and identify potential funding models.
In the brainstorming retreat, teams developed systems of ideas that served resident needs, but there was little time to critique the ideas and apply potential funding models. Ideas that satisfy resident and business needs would be further explored in a future retreat engaging funders and business model experts in a deep way; this retreat might be similar to the brainstorming retreat but would be focused mainly on funding and profit models. Secondary
research of other models might serve as idea-starters for attendees to be creative about how spaces could be supported in Englewood.

2. Identify and activate key partnerships for funding and implementation.
Further work on the school repurposing and community spaces will require key partnerships in order to implement concepts over time. Partners should include funding organizations that provide monetary support; staffing and resource partnerships that secure the necessary spaces, staffing and other resources; and managing partners that ensure community needs are executed and community voices are continually engaged throughout the process.

Such partners can determine the appropriate timelines for execution and the alignment of this timeline with broader community and Chicago planning timelines.

3. Live prototype a short-list of ideas in Englewood.
Englewood can take advantage of vacant buildings, lots and spaces to prototype future space ideas at a small, but realistic scale. For a nominal investment, R.A.G.E. and other organizations can implement the concepts in these spaces to test community interest, necessary resources and investment before significant investment in large scale build-outs.

For example, for the Healing Space concept, community partner organizations could run a pop-up clinic in a vacant space for a couple weekends to test pricing models, service models and feedback loops. This live prototyping would essentially act as though the service were real and would solicit direct feedback from residents utilizing the space or service.

CONCLUSION

R.A.G.E. and partner organizations have a great opportunity to engage residents in the future of Englewood. Through the work of this project, residents have had the opportunity to be engaged in a deep way in understanding the needs and aspirations of the community. Moving forward, this project serves as a jumping-off point for future work and there are already great ideas on the table for Englewood.
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John’s Hardware and Bicycle Shop
Salvation Army
Kelly Branch Chicago Public Library
Teamwork Englewood

Imagine Englewood If…
Powell’s Barber Shop