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## TO THIS:



## WE WANT TO HELP MORE GRADS KNOW THEIR NEXT STEP!

At the Dekko Foundation, we're absolutely dedicated to preparing young people for what our founder, Mr. Chet Dekko, called economic freedom. While economic freedom naturally means different things to different people, our board offers these inspirational definitions:

- ***Economic freedom means producing more than one consumes.***
- ***Economic freedom is the ultimate liberty to make choices about one's own life!***

For 35-plus years, our foundation has invested in educational experiences that help young people thrive. As we refined our work, we began to focus our energy and resources in the area of early childhood education. We chose that focus because of the critical impact on long-term wellbeing that happens from birth to age five.

Now we're ready to hone in on another cornerstone of economic freedom. We want to help teens have the experiences they need to explore their abilities, begin participation in society and discover their life's work. Our vision is that more high school graduates will know their next step in life and head toward it (whatever it may be) with all of their energy and passion. We've prepared for this new direction by researching the concept of vocation, talking with stakeholders and learning from people who seemed to know, early on, their direction in life.

Our next step is to meet more people who want to help. Turn this page over to reveal what we've learned about how teens can thrive with the right adult support. Contact us if you want to help more young people, whatever their next step.

***Great things happen when adults consider what children need to grow and develop!***



# ADOLESCENCE

Ages 12 through 18

Learning environments should more closely resemble where students are headed than where they've been.

## HOME

## SCHOOL

## COMMUNITY

### OBSTACLES

### NURTURES AND NOURISHES

### IGNITES AND FUELS

### WELCOMES AND ELEVATES

#### FROM THIS:

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#### Adult-Centric World

Children have little opportunity to contribute.

Adults largely **doing to and for** children; children's time largely consumed by required compliance and busyness.

Cross-generational **doing with** children; children's time filled with meaningful tasks and authentic contributions.

Largely directive adults in school environments; schools focus on compliance, standardization, and efficiency.

Learning environments should more closely resemble where students are headed than where they've been. Allow independence.

Little opportunity for children to contribute; adult-sized everything; safety concerns.

Intentional inclusion in meaningful work, apprenticeships, internships, and employment.

#### Misplaced Direction

Emphasis on higher education, money, and passion.

Indulgence. Focus on standard of living. Higher ed decisions made on tradition.

Understand and live out the concept of economic freedom.

Pathways, clustering by reading/math ability, little regard to community assets.

Skill development focus; emphasis on contribution potential to local community; vocational opportunities.

Focus on what we need for the least amount of money; provide college scholarships.

Apprenticeships; diverse opportunities for skill development; higher ed opportunities when ready; gap years.

#### Underdeveloped Resiliency

Few constants, rapid change, limited commitment.

Little tolerance of whines; few opportunities for long-term responsibilities; reliance upon schools to develop grit.

Opportunities for long-term projects and delayed gratification.

Short-term work. Extrinsic reward system. Little room for failure.

Long-term projects; emphasis on intrinsic motivation; problem solving focus.

Some efforts from some organizations.

Cross-generational traditions, landmarks, rituals; increased involvement in intentional youth organizations.

#### Displacement of Skill and Manual Labor

Trades work viewed as inferior.

Parents work; children play. Chores at best.

Division of labor with emphasis on skills: basic maintenance, domestic skills, care of environment.

Emphasis on academic achievement; mental work.

Trades, vocational, project-based learning, care of environment and entrepreneurship.

Limited, happenstance involvement. Youth sports leagues.

Opportunities for hands-on work in parks, maker-spaces, science labs, industry, etc.

#### Limited Understanding of Brain Development

Progression and growth birth to 25; adolescent overhaul.

Focus on how the child was yesterday. Tolerance. Avoidance. Mockery.

Understanding of planes of development. Adjustments made with age. Growth mindsets.

One-size-fits-all model K-12 with focus on content, not the child.

Diversity in design of learning environments based on developmental stages.

Limited attention given to youth. Responsibility placed upon parents and law enforcement.

Intentional design of community spaces; mentors aplenty.

#### Displacement of Time

Disproportional amounts of time dedicated to personal entertainment and sensorial occupation.

Focus on keeping the child happy, busy and out of trouble. Limited regard to content, balance, or wholeness.

Children with meaningful involvement in developing and sustaining a healthy home. Contributing disposition.

Technology laden, teacher directed learning environments; time viewed as management tool.

Choice, work cycles, substance, sustained engagement.

Focus upon occupation of time and entertainment.

Attractive, interactive lures that give children a connection to place and a desire to sustain.

#### Extension of Adolescence

Hallmarks of adulthood (financial independence, committed relationships, career track) extending into the late 20s.

Co-dependence. Treating as though younger than what they are. Protection from adversity. Exposure to adult media. Lack of modeling.

Increased levels of freedoms and responsibilities. Observation of skills and thoughtful exposure to possibilities. Committed parents who invest time.

Little difference topically or structurally between lower grades and upper grades. All assignments look the same.

Off-site, extended learning blocks, applied knowledge, self-assessment. Less time in school buildings.

Youth put aside until labor is needed. Limited involvement with youth beyond direct family members.

Opportunities for rites of passage. Mentoring and outreach to youth. Civic engagement.