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**Empowering Children and Youth - in the Family, Church, and Community. A Look at the
BRIDGE Model as a Foundational Paradigm**

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Abstract

Children and youth are arguably a vulnerable population, and whether it be in their family, community, or the Church, they are often subjected to unequal treatment. How can children and youth be empowered to be all they can be and become in Christ, while still in a vulnerable time of life? This paper is meant to instigate dialogue related to the use of Dr. Kathy Dudley's BRIDGE Model for societal transformation as applied to families and communities in order to answer this question. Dr. Dudley's BRIDGE model emphasizes Beliefs over the Bottom-line, Relationships over Results, Interdependence over Independence, Development over Dependency, Grass-roots over Government Driven, and Empowerment over Entitlement.

The BRIDGE Model has been used successfully in Dallas, TX, and is currently being implemented and taught by Imani Bridges, with growing success, in various locations in Nigeria for application at the Church and community level. Dr. Dudley claims the model can be applied to any level of society; from families to international relations. I would like to propose that it could be applied at the family and local community level—both within the Church, and in reaching out to youth who are not yet in the Church—with the goal of empowering children and youth to become all they can be, and become, in Christ, in the context of the Church community. The proposed application will be more theoretical in nature, with the understanding that the outworkings of the model will be expressed differently in various cultures.