2022 Research Grantee Dialogue

Embracing the Diversity of Civic Engagement: Opportunities for National Service

Thursday, May 19, 2022
2022 Research Grantee Dialogue:
Embracing the Diversity of Civic Engagement:
Opportunities for National Service

Katy Hussey-Sloniker, MBA, MSW, LGSW,
Learning Officer,
AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation
Welcome!

Please be advised that all lines have been muted to avoid background noises and to allow for greater engagement.

Please use the chat feature to submit any questions throughout the presentations. Select Everyone when submitting your questions. We will read your questions for you.
2022 Research Grantee Dialogue:
Embracing the Diversity of Civic Engagement:
Opportunities for National Service

African American Youth and Civic Engagement

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Embracing the Diversity of Civic Engagement:
Opportunities for National Service

Introductory Remark

Mary Hyde, Ph.D.
Director,
AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation
Data Driven:

How the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) Injects Data into AmeriCorps
African American Youth and Civic Engagement
Panel Moderators

Andrea Robles, Ph.D.,
Research and Evaluation Manager,
AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation

Shane Dermanjian
Research Assistant,
AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation
African American Youth and Civic Engagement
Young Black Changemaker Project

Laura Wray-Lake, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Social Welfare,
University of California, Los Angeles
The Role of Community-Based Civic Organizations in Sustaining Young Black Changemaking

Laura Wray-Lake, PhD
Department of Social Welfare, UCLA
May 19, 2022
AmeriCorps Research Grantee Dialogue
Young Black Changemakers and the Road to Racial Justice

Cambridge University Press, 2023
Today’s Aims

What experiences do young Black changemakers have in organizations that grow and sustain their efforts?

What implications can we draw for best practices in community-based civic organizations?
About the Young Black Changemakers Study

43 Black Youth in LA
..ages 13-18
..from 13 different orgs
..37 high schools
..interviewed remotely Feb-Aug 2020

Here's what we asked

• Tell me about some of your civic activities and how you are engaged.
• Walk me through your own journey of becoming civically engaged.
• What is unique about civic engagement for Black youth?
• How does being Black matter for your civic engagement?
• What other identities do you hold that connect to your civic engagement?
• Tell me what this current moment of political action means to you.
FINDINGS

Gaining Expertise as Changemakers
Youth gain voice, civic skills, and a systems-perspective through experiences in orgs.

Being Sustained by Community
Youth’s involvement is sustained through support from adults and connections with others, especially when Blackness is celebrated.

Seeing Impact of Civic Actions
Youth saw different impacts of their changemaking that built meaning and agency.
“It is like our job to organize it ourselves. And so as I've gotten older in [ORG], I've really gotten more of an appreciation for like doing civic engagement and...organizing it myself based on, like, what I care about. Because when I'm younger, it's just like, oh, let's make like, lunches for homeless people. But now that I'm older, it's a lot more in my hands. And I've taken that into a lot more. I've taken that like experience into a lot more areas of my life...I've learned how to like advocate for not only myself, but like, people who don't have voices, in terms of like, stand up for everybody.” Camille, age 15 (she/her)
“It was like the gut feeling I got from being in there, because everybody there we just had like a good energy and they really wanted to just help people. And...they really uplift you. It just felt like a family in those [spaces]. It felt more like I wanted to be there with those people...The adults, they would just be like, so cool. They were like, support you in any way like you. Like, I was at the meeting like last week, I was, I talked, I gave an answer. And then like the adults, they just like were like, clapping, like they’ll give you encouragement. They’ll just have so much positive energy that it’s just like, really good.” Cory, age 15 (he/him)
“I have people at my school and people at [ORG] it's like, no, it's so you know, it's not a bad thing to be Black. It's like, it's beautiful to be Black. Like, you know, all these problems, these things happening right now. It doesn't mean, you know it's bad to be Black. That's basically what I'm learning. That's what I'm getting from people.” Quinn, age 16 (she/her)
Oh, um, what keeps me going? So, um, just, like, knowing that I am supported because a lotta times, it wouldn’t just be me there. It would be, like, my classmates and a few of my teachers would also be there with me and other volunteers, so knowing that, one, knowing that I was, like, helping those people and, like, them thanking me and me feeling good that I had helped them, and then also other people being by my side through the whole thing and, like, believing that, you know, we could really help these people and help them to survive, so yeah, those two things really helped me to keep going and stay passionate about it.” NA, age 13 (she/her)
“I felt empowered. Like, I felt like I could move the world. Because we actually got it to happen, that's the crazy part. Like it's one thing when you want something to happen, and then you just speaking on it, but when you really acting on it, that's something different. So when that happened, I was like, ‘Oh, we can really do this, like we're really out here.’ So yeah, I feel empowered. Like, I felt unstoppable, I was like, ‘Okay, Unique, you better go girl.’” Unique, age 17 (she/her)
Implications

Organizations can help support young Black changemaking by:

→ Providing opportunities to take ownership, lead, and develop other skills.
→ Supporting and mentoring youth through new challenges.
→ Celebrating Black culture and identity.
→ Offering opportunities for youth to see impact through action.
THANK YOU, AMERICORPS!

Contact me:
Laura Wray-Lake, PhD
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@wraylake
African American Youth and Civic Engagement
Youth and Civic Engagement in a Diverse Urban Neighborhood: Reframing Partnerships with Youth

Maren King, MLA
Associate Professor and Director
State University of New York-ESF

Christina Limpert, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF)
Youth and Civic Engagement in a Diverse Urban Neighborhood: Reframing Partnerships with Youth

AmeriCorps Office of Research & Evaluation
Research Grantee Dialogue: Embracing the Possibilities from Communities to Opportunities
May 19, 2022

Maren King, MSLA and Christina Limpert, PhD

This material is based upon work funded by the Office of Research and Evaluation at the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) under Grant No. 18RE204028 through the Community Conversations research grant competition. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, CNCS.
Meet the Team

Jylecia
Teen Researcher
"I got involved because I thought it’d be a good experience to get involved with the community.”

Madeline
Teen Researcher
"I always wanted to help the community and show others that they could do something good and be the change that could make a big difference.”

Nicky
Teen Researcher
Interview Group

Maren King
Associate Professor
SUNY ESF
“I am excited that our team is learning and applying our research skills.”

Christina Limpert, PHD
Assistant Professor
SUNY ESF
“To support university-community research partnerships and youth in our community.”

Alex
Graduate Research Assistant
“Assisted teen researchers with project research dissemination and Peacemaking garden implementation.”

Q
Teen Researcher

Savanna
Teen Researcher
“Joined to meet new people and learn more about my community.”

Yaya
Teen Researcher
"Joined to make a difference in my teen community: take that first step to change!”

Leah Russell
Peacemaking Project Coordinator
“To empower young leaders by connecting them with resources, community stakeholders, and opportunities for personal and professional development.”

Maddie
Graduate Research Assistant
“I enjoy mentoring, coaching, and helping teens achieve their goals.”

Bridget
Graduate Research Assistant
“Mentored teen researchers in poster design to share research findings virtually.”

Achol
Teen Researcher
“Insert quote about why you got involved with the project/what you wanted to accomplish”

Alonzo
Teen Researcher
"I felt like I was doing my community/neighborhood a service by telling our story and trying to better ourselves.”

Dante
Teen Researcher

Yanira
Neighborhood Project Assistant
“To get a good example for youth like me that grew up in the neighborhood and to get my neighborhood into a better place for future children in the neighborhood, especially my son.”

Grace
Graduate Research Assistant
“This project allowed me to get involved with the Syracuse community through collaborative environmental research.”

Renee
Graduate Research Assistant
“Analysis and evaluation of the project in its end phase by organizing data and writing a literature review.”
Reframing Partnerships with Urban Youth

- Youth as partners
- Youth as amplifiers of assets and issues
- Youth as community builders
### Youth as partners

#### STAGES OF RESEARCH PROCESS

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<th>ESF - GRAD STUDENTS</th>
<th>NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATOR</th>
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#### Notes
- **High level of involvement**: 3
- **Moderate level of involvement**: 2
- **Lower level of involvement**: 1
- **No involvement/not their role**: 0
Youth as partners

Violence + Crime

Why an issue?
- unsafe
- people getting hurt
- to many deaths, random people dying everyday
- no communication, few groups
- affecting everyone; lives in jeopardy
- can’t use public spaces in community
- peoples state of mind; violence, trauma
- loss of loved ones
- makes you question tomorrow

Who is affected?
- people behind the desk
- kids affected; loss of social skills
- parents; afraid for their children to play outside
- elders, parents, grandparents, great grands
- teachers
- peoples communication

Why important to research?
- safety for others: part of everyday life
- can help improve conditions; we can feel safe in our neighborhood
- we can find out more about this problem to come up w solutions
- end the common fear

Problems of researching issue?
- complex issue with so many factors
- have to put ourselves in harms way to reveal
- having to find the right people to talk to about this
- may not feel safe; might make you a target
- people change the issue

Benefits:
- start with a smaller factor
- better understanding of possible solutions
- precursors
- the way people are living their lives is a big issue
- brings more attention to this issues
- can help us provide other outlets to express problems
- understand whose violence is happening
- can solve & bring more attention to the issue
- people will start to take the issue more seriously
Youth as partners
Youth as partners

Syracuse’s Near Westside
Carrying Out The Research

Research Participants

- Huntington Center Parents Group
- Police officers
- Teachers and Parents
- Community Impact Team
- Other teens
- Project Advisory Committee
- Peacemakers
- Mundy Library Staff
Youth as Amplifiers of Assets and Issues
Youth as Amplifiers of Assets and Issues
Youth as Amplifiers of Assets and Issues

Syracuse’s Near Westside
Stories From The Community

Crime And Violence Impacts All Members Of The Neighborhood

Strength Through Stories
Although crime and violence may be something many people see as a bad thing, strengths emerged from people sharing their stories.

““The library is a family.”

Sharing Stories
Unites Community
Institutions
Community Organization
Youth as Amplifiers of Assets and Issues
Raising the Next Generation of Community Leaders: A Participatory Research Project with Teenagers in the Near Westside Neighborhood of Syracuse, NY

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Youth as community builders
Youth as Community Builders
Youth as Community Builders

Meeting Objective: To further conversations about placemaking and continue community walk.

Community Walk:

1. PPC Gathering Garden
   - Part of the town research team project
   - Variety of flowering plants
   - Bench seating
   - Gathering space

2. 618 Gifford Street Community Garden
   - Variety of plants, though some past their peak
   - A few of the youth identified plants including basil, thyme, and cilantro that they cook with at home

3. Vacant Parcel
   - The parcel seemed to have some memories attached to it, though the teens did not disclose the details.
   - Potentially a hard to talk about situation
   - Houses use to sit in these lots but now it is an empty grass lot
   - "What could make this space more enjoyable?"
     - Barbecue
     - Picnic party
     - Basketball court
     - Events

4. Brady Stone Soup Garden
   - More clear arrival sequence
   - Youth immediately drawn into the space—especially the gathering circle space behind the shed tucked in the back of the garden. One teen suggested we "do circle" here because we start each meeting at the Peacemaking Center with circle.
   - We all gathered in the space and did a quick pass around the circle:
     - What is one word that describes this garden?
       - Quiet, Circle, "lush", "good"
       - Peaceful, "happy", "welcoming", "hidden"
       - "cool", "natural"
Continuing Research: Reframing Complex Partnerships to support continued work in this realm

- Changing nature of partnerships at different stages of the process
- Transdisciplinary - how is this evident or actualized? Landscape architecture and community design, sociology and youth studies, activism and placemaking
- Transcultural - african-american, latino, white, mixed race
- Transectoral - participants from different sectors: academic institution, non-profit organization, secondary school, general employment
- Transgenerational - teens, young adult, middle age and older adult
African American Youth and Civic Engagement

Anti-displacement: The Untapped Potential of University Community Cooperative Living

Ayana Allen-Handy, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Lily School of Philanthropy,
Drexel University

Rachel Wenrick, Ph.D.
Founding Director of Writers Room
Drexel University

Carol Richardson McCullough
Founding Member
Writers Room

Devin Welsh
Artist Year Fellow
Artist Year
Study Background

- Our Community-led Participatory Action Research (CPAR) study aims to investigate the effects of gentrification on residential displacement and affordable housing options in West Philadelphia.

CO-DESIGNED
- Centers the voices, expertise, and lived experiences of long-standing community members and youth

INTERGENERATIONAL
- Researchers ages 18-80 represent Robeson HS (African American Youth), YouthBuild Philly (African American Youth), Drexel, and the Mantua and Powelton neighborhoods

INTERDISCIPLINARY
- Incorporates creative writing, photography, music, architecture, design, and green building construction
Study Design

- **Community-led PAR Project:** CPAR is dynamic and involves community generated and executed problem identification, research and plan development, collection and analysis of evidence, reflection on the findings, sharing of results, and taking action to address the problem (Burns, Paul, & Paz, 2012)

- **Multi-modal Research Design:**
  - Our team has collected data through interviews with community residents and civic leaders, focus groups, census and GIS data, photovoice, narrative, document analysis.
  - We have engaged in a collaborative data analysis process that leverages the expertise and input of our entire team.
African American Youth and Civic Engagement

Drexel University Team

Anti-displacement: The Untapped Potential of University Community Cooperative Living

Findings

Finding #1: The Sandwich Effect-active gentrification and displacement of Black residents from the north and south-"squeezing" remaining residents in the center where they will eventually be pushed out.

Finding #2: Mantua residents are particularly cost burdened where housing costs are more than 30% of income and even 50% in some neighborhood census blocks.

Finding #3: Currently examining housing typologies for aging in place. Findings show that the community is excited about cooperative living and co-living as anti-displacement strategies. Including new partnership with Lomax Real Estate Group and Village Square on Haverford Affordable Housing Project.
African American Youth and Civic Engagement

Drexel University Team

Anti-displacement: The Untapped Potential of University Community Cooperative Living

Action

**Second Story Collective:** Forging partnerships with neighborhood, university, public and private stakeholders, Second Story Collective—an intergenerational co-housing network of homeowners and student tenants engaged in storytelling and the shared creation of community.

**Village Square on Haverford:** a new, multi-use construction development in Mantua that will offer 116 market rate rental units, 32 affordable rentals, 18 for-sale workforce housing units, a 21,000 sq ft supermarket, as well as house WURD Radio
Engaging African American Youth

We Start With Story—Writers Room

- Intergenerational Sharing of Stories
- Co-constructing Knowledge Across Intersecting Identities and Differences
- Youth Empowerment through Research and Action

African American Youth and Civic Engagement

Drexel University Team

Anti-displacement: The Untapped Potential of University Community Cooperative Living
Closing Remarks

Mary Hyde, Ph.D.
Director,
AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation
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Katy Hussey-Sloniker, MBA, MSW, LGSW,
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