**Wednesday, October 26th (3:45 PM ET)**

2022 NNIP DC Meeting, October 26

Session Title: Engaging Youth with Data and Research

Room: Deanwood

Led by: Kate Eikel, CT Data Collaborative

Notes by: Kathy Petttit

Present: Ashley Edwards (Baltimore), Toni Smith (Memphis), David Park (NLC), Gerika Logan , MIckey McGlasson (Carnegie Mellon), Rania Ahmed (Oakland), David Harris (Oakland), Erikka Gilliam (Philadelphia), Kate Eikel (Hartford), Cristina Martinez (San Antonio), Victor Amaya (Milwaukee)

Resources

* [Mobilizing Youth: Engaging Young People in Making Community Change | Urban Institute](https://www.urban.org/research/publication/mobilizing-youth-engaging-young-people-making-community-change)
* Data story on Oakland: [Residents Inform Priorities of Oakland’s Department of Violence Prevention | NNIP (neighborhoodindicators.org)](https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/library/stories/residents-inform-priorities-oakland%E2%80%99s-department-violence-prevention)
* MIT Data Culture Project – intended for nonprofits, but interactive activities that could be adapted for youth. [Data Culture Project (databasic.io)](https://databasic.io/en/culture/)

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Introductions

* Kate – we have a project with youth co-researchers on youth engaged grant from RWJF – it was an 8 week project since April.
* David Harris/Rania – youth fellowship programs – health and city planning.
* Liz Monk – we have a data literacy project with Youth.
* Mickey – different programs from educational standpoint and engage youth in communities.
* Cristina Martinez – don’t work on this now, but wants to
* Toni – working on arts and culture as an economic catalyst, wants to bring youth in
* Gerika – we are doing surveys in an area with a lot of schools ([Ghost Neighborhoods](https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/activities/partner/ghost-neighborhoods-columbus) - re-creating images of ngh before highway extensions) and want to engage youth
* Ashley – Baltimore – it is something that she wants to do – if we want sustainability, we need to start the conversation with youth is where we need to be. She was a high schooler working in the city govt and knows what a difference it could make.
* Jamar – we have a children’s mental health initiative – increase access to behavioral health – it is just an issue of getting to know them
* Rahul – running a survey with some youth in it – here to learn
* David P. – we’d like to elevate best practice – hs social studies/math teacher. Thinking about careers and connecting the dots.

Goal for session: shared learning, advice on how to start working with youth

Rania – we started our youth engagement in 2018 when we were contracted by city of Oakland to shape Dept of Violence Prevention. We launched a youth fellowship program to collect interviews, and trained them on analyzing, coding them and communicating the findings with city officials. We held a medium size community summit where they could practice public speaking and presentations skills.

Then more youth-engagement – we have many current fellowships, including a program about opioid use in African-American communities. We shifted from quant/admin data work to qualitative work.

David H. – Our current program has 5 1.5 hour sessions. Including importance of research and how their stories could make a difference; how to frame a question for research; different methods (qual-quant); interviewing skills. We didn’t get the approval to do the interviews, but we taught them issues around human subject protections. They were a mix of high-school and post-high school.

David H. – the one now is high school students around the city plan and a shorter training. We are learning from the young people – they brought in other ways to collect and capture data, like Tiktok – video interviews. Young people have a way of getting to other young people that we just can’t. They have an understanding of the vernacular. City has a housing survey questionnaire that wouldn’t work with young people. Youth deconstructed the survey to gather the same data. “How long have you lived in Oakland” Youth said, they don’t want us in their business. The biggest thing is the changes it has brought to us and the learning to our organization – a whole different kind of energy and the work that we do.

Kate – Ideally, you should involve the community throughout. We had a 7-month grant to look at data integration for COVID relief funds. Youth were not part of the design. It is harder to come into a project that is already set up. We did similar things around training – we had to adapt it for vernacular (training was for professionals). We had high school juniors, seniors that wouldn’t do a 2-3 hour training. We had to break it down into smaller chunks to process it. We explained “what is data” - explaining that their individual data from school was being uploaded, aggregated, sent to the state. Youth helped analyze the secondary data – lots of the data was missing. Youth were angry that the grantees didn’t turn the data in. In Hartford, the youth believe that they don’t get the full range of enrichment services needed. For the culminating event of the data walk, we had people from the mayor’s office and foundation partners and nonprofits. It was not an academic exercise. Youth spoke about how the data was important – if the data wasn’t there, they couldn’t understand which neighborhoods were getting more resources, who was being helped. As an organization, we had helped to design the program. It is a multi-year project, so now we are getting the traction to help grantees get the data. Grantees say - we collect the data, but so what? They usually collect data and nothing happens. City was unprepared for the questions. The grantees needed to understand it wasn’t just about compliance, but about investing in the youth. We had several youth who were on fire. One figured out pivot tables on his own and was on a roll! Now going to Morehouse and studying statistics.

A lot of the narrative about youth has been negative – this allows us to see the youth come back with passion. Youth are not jaded by data. We’ve seen stats on youth on Hartford – low level of literacy, 80 % of students are high needs, compared to 50% in the state. It woke us up to see people working on the information. They are fun too – talked about Beyonce’s album. We recruited them with partner organizations – seeing them get to know each other and supporting each other was powerful. 4 are now graduating from high school.

David H. – 1) we did get in on the “insert the youth piece” before the project started. We have put it in on most of the proposals and requests for money for every issue we are dealing with, though they are not all data-focused grants. It’s going to take a long time to solve and it is young people who will need to take ownership of the solutions. 2) we stipend the young people. For young people we work with, they need to be paid. Not enough to just do the work for resume-building. There are some activities they are suited to do – like asset-mapping. One project is around environmental justice – perfect for them to identify toxic sites – it is an eye opener to them. The biggest difficulty in training has been on the subject matter that we are doing the research on. For city planning, we train them on housing, zoning. For environmental justice, they need to understand mitigation v remediation. The violence piece they understood and got, but we had to learn about gender-based violence. 60% of black boys knew of 2 or more people who died from non-natural causes. They see things going on in their lives, but don’t connect it to the bigger issue (like commercial human trafficking). In their high school – slap ass Fridays where the administration turned a blind eye, but they don’t recognize that as gender based violence.

Victor – right now our social media is for people 40-60 years old. This is an important issue - youth need to get involved with data.

Victor – what would it look like to bring teens together to build capacity? I work with adults all day. Can they see the value of making decisions based on data? We hosted some high school students from black male achievement program in an all day training. It was a huge success. Staff were nervous. They are using what they learned at a Summit – it was so cool to see youth more comfortable talking about data. I need a data tiktok – I need some fun things. How do we make it attractive to the next generation or even the regular person?

David – And youth should care about the topics you choose – mental health, violence, financial wellbeing – wealth building. A natl intermediary – part of the Aspen Youth Initiative – they got money to start youth fellowship throughout the sites. The locals weren’t able to go to a big funder, so maybe there’s an opportunity for joint fundraising.

Victor – maybe next year, bring some students with you. Creativity is not our strong point.

Kate – we had to the pilot idea to prove the concept. We had pushback from city officials and community organizations. We got a national grant to do this and then they realized it was powerful.

We are doing high school data-civics program – we have technical schools and could graduate onto a data fellowship. The program we are doing is a longer training. Other schools it was hard to get into the schools and a lot of bureaucracy. My advice is to try something.

We l would like to bring the history of where the disparities come from to them. Why do the disparities exist? I'm talking to them about what else to build out and give them more context. We are trying to build out other projects that are self-directed. Training on working with census data. Our bread and butter is data-literacy/analytics/visualization and storytelling. It is after-school.

Rania – For one of our engagement projects, we had a capstone – they learned what to do with the data they collect and analyze so they can put together everything in a project. The project helped them to understand the use of data and how to influence the end result.

David H - Community pushed to say given the housing/homelessness are dealing with, that we won’t do planning as usual and community has to have greater input. We advocated to become part of the planning process and we brought the youth into it. The city is funding it. We might add a “research basics” at the front end. We do accompany the research and data training alongside of them and develop a shared analysis of how we got to where we are. Now we use YouTube – for example, john Powell, Arnold Chandler on life-cycle framework to ground them in an equity analysis. There were systems that failed.

Gerika – since you are working with school age students – how do you engage new people every year, especially with longer term projects? Or what do you do if new kids come along during a project?

Rania – it is a big challenge to sustain the youth throughout the program – they usually drop out after a few months. We need to think about how we keep them engaged – even with stipends. They are not thinking about careers and change their minds about what they are interested in.

Kate- the turnover isn’t a program. This is a new program – it is 8 weeks. If you finished the first six weeks you got some money and a bonus if you went all the way through. We are hoping to build the next cohort. For youth in our city, so much is going on. We had 2 that wanted to keep going. We are trying to build it out to 5 months now. It is requirement that everyone has a mentor for this one. We had 2 very recent immigrants in last round.

Kathy – everyone should be cautious about tackling difficult topics like mental health, violence.

David – We offer them therapy and self-help resources

Toni – how to train to harness ability to create $ for them down the road. If I talk about heavy analytics, light goes out. It is tied to arts and culture as well.

Liz - We have been doing an art and data series with college students – having conversations about different approaches.

Rania – we grouped people according to their interests – dataviz, social media, etc.