



Community **Futures**  
Community **Lore**

# 01



## Stepping Stone 1

*in the CFCL Youth Participatory Action Research Series*

**Get Ready for Your Project**

# Stepping Stones

1

## GET READY FOR YOUR PROJECT

Learn more about YPAR and the values behind it

Assess your community & organization's readiness to do a YPAR project

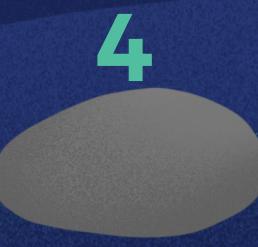
Plan & prepare for your project & assemble your team

2

## GET TO KNOW YOUR PROJECT & TEAM

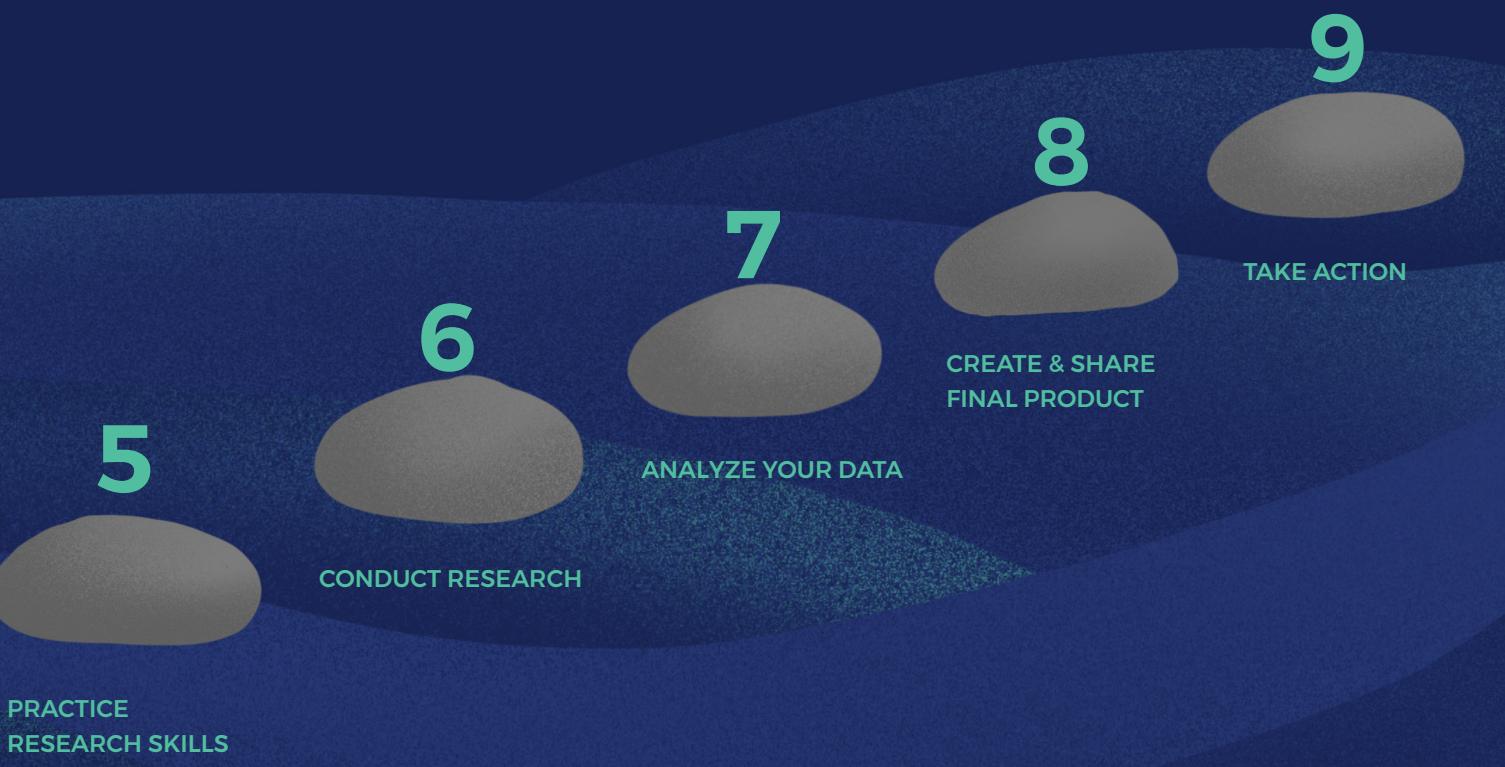
CHOOSE A FOCUS:  
WHAT DO YOU WANT  
TO CHANGE?

3



DEVELOP YOUR  
RESEARCH PLAN

4



# Stepping Stone 1

## Get Ready for Your Project

So you are thinking about doing a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project in your community or organization? Are you ready? In this first stepping stone, you will learn more about Community Futures Community Lore's approach to YPAR, assess your community and organization's readiness to do a project, plan and prepare for your project, and recruit your team. Ready? Set? Go!



### Get oriented to the fundamentals of CFCL's approach to Youth Participatory Action Research

- » Resource 1.1: CFCL Core Values (tapping into our motivation and inspiration for this work)
- » Resource 1.2: What is YPAR? (becoming more familiar with youth participatory action research)
- » Resource 1.3: The 9 Stepping Stones (learning about our approach to YPAR)
- » Resource 1.4: How to Use the Stepping Stone Guides (using and adapting this resource to fit your needs)

# 2



**Are you ready? Assess readiness to organize and implement a YPAR project in your community**

- » Activity 1.5: Spectrum of Youth Leadership and Participation (recognizing degrees of youth engagement)
- » Activity 1.6: Ready or Not? (assessing organizational and community readiness)
- » Activity 1.7: For Our Town (adapting to local context, conditions and goals)
- » Activity 1.8: Our North Star (creating your vision for youth voice and intergenerational partnership)
- » Resource 1.9: In It Together (understanding how adults can stop adultism)

# 3



**Are you set? Reflect on advice from others who have implemented YPAR projects before**

- » Resource 1.10: Snapshots (exploring stories from other YPAR projects)
- » Resource 1.11: If We Only Knew... (gaining advice from other YPAR projects)

# Stepping Stone 1

## Get Ready for Your Project (cont.)

4



### Let's go! Prepare for your project and recruit your team

- » Activity 1.12: Our Compass (clarifying your purpose, outcomes and intended impact)
- » Activity 1.13: Rules of the Journey (deciding on your project givens, expectations, and parameters)
- » Resource 1.14: Team Roles (clarifying everyone's roles and responsibilities)
- » Activity 1.15: Charting Our Path (creating a project timeline and exploring examples)
- » Activity 1.16: Day by Day (creating team agendas and activity plans)
- » Activity 1.17: Resources (creating a project budget and raising funds)
- » Activity 1.18: Organizing Community Support (developing community and gate-keeper buy-in & MOUs)
- » Activity 1.19: Team Recruitment and Hiring (creating job descriptions, applications, flyers)



#### Bonus Material

- » History of CFCL
- » Roots of YPAR

#### Stepping Stone Tips

- » This stepping stone lays the foundation for your entire project and should not be overlooked or underemphasized!
- » Creating a clear structure and process—goals, timeline, framework and communication—is vital in this stepping stone.
- » Although little training has begun, organizational staff (youth and adults) will need to work closely together to prepare for project success!
- » Everyone involved needs to have a clear understanding of the YPAR process before a project is initiated, including youth participants, adult allies and partners.
- » It is important to have transparent discussions and set expectations as

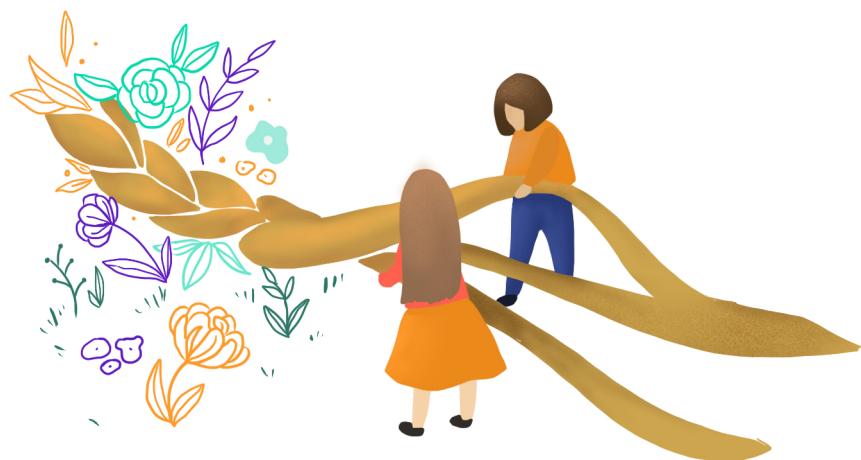
early as possible regarding any significant project parameters that might impact roles, responsibilities, decision-making processes, or the project's timeline, objectives or issue areas.

- » Resource needs will vary according to the scope and goals of each particular project, but almost all projects require: adult and youth time; meeting space; basic materials and equipment; project-specific materials and equipment; and training and technical assistance.

**Time Commitment:** 3 – 5 sessions.



## *Braiding Wisdom Across Generations*



Youth are a transformative force in society.  
When we braid wisdom across generations,  
We have tremendous power to  
Solve problems and create a  
More joyful, just and sustainable world!



# Welcome to CFCL's YPAR Stepping Stones Toolkit!

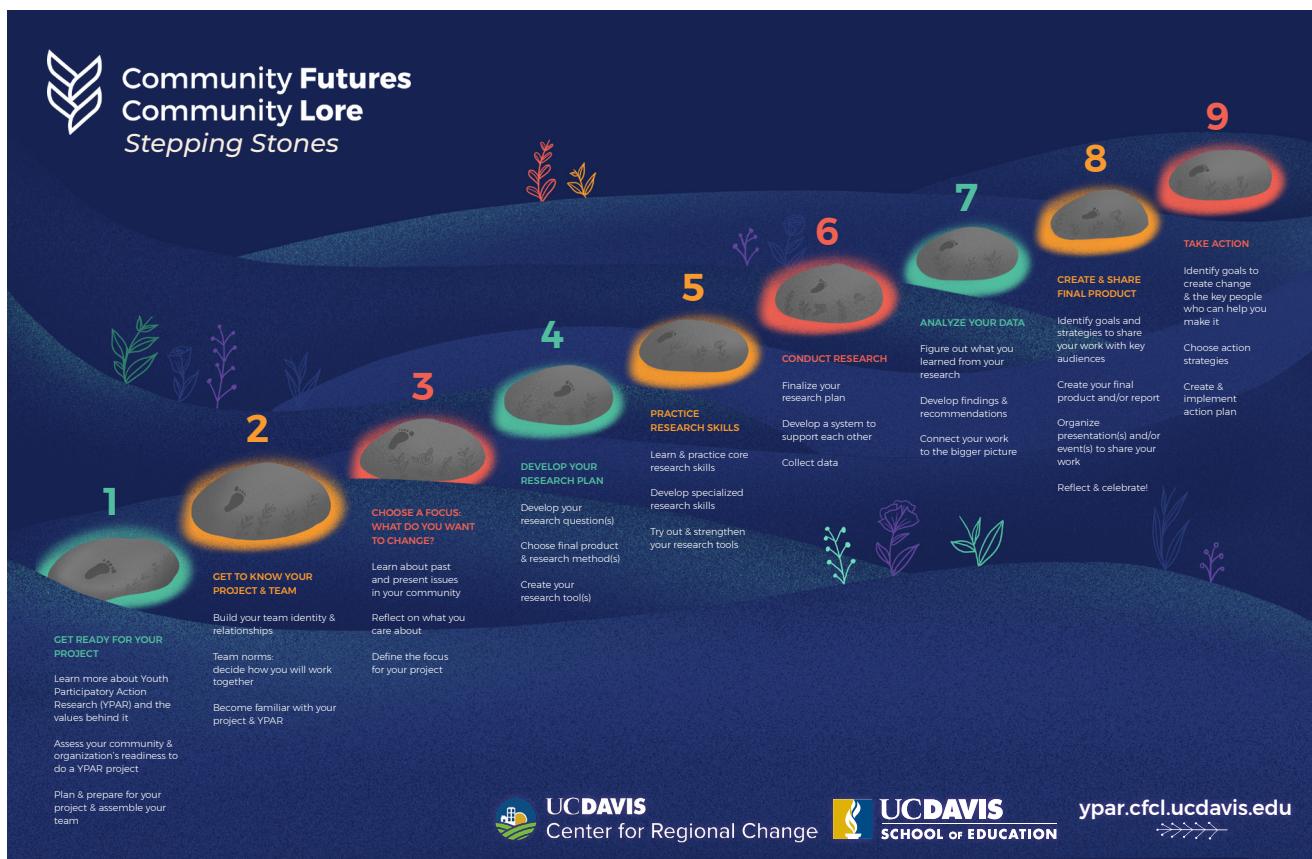
The world needs you – ALL OF YOU – to find and create the solutions we need to help our world heal and our communities thrive. This work is bigger than what any one generation can do on its own. Creating thriving, equitable communities will take ALL of us. Young people play a critical role in this evolution and the work of transforming our communities and societies to be more joyful, just and sustainable.

Young people live, play, work, learn, grow up in and love your communities, yet are rarely included in the vital decision-making processes that impact lives. In order for our society to truly thrive, we need youth to be full partners and participants in decision-making processes with adults and elders. Community Futures, Community Lore's approach to Youth

Participatory Research gives offers the practical support, skills and tools you need to become community leaders through youth participatory action research projects.

These 9 Stepping Stone guides will help you learn how to use youth participatory action research, community mapping, public data and cultural organizing to solve problems and generate solutions for your community and our collective future.

Together with adult allies, you will learn to build on your vision for a thriving, inclusive and just society and use it to strengthen communities, organizations and institutions right now!



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# CFCL CORE VALUES

Six core values ground all of CFCL's work. At the center of all of these values is unwavering love for our community, ourselves and each other, including past and future generations.



Our relationships to each other, to place, and to culture are the most important assets we have.



Our communities are always learning, growing, and evolving.



Through investing in our youth, we invest in our future.



We leverage the wisdom of our communities.



We center those most impacted by the issue at hand.



We make decisions for the future and well-being of all.

# WHAT IS YPAR?

## Youth Participatory Action Research

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is an approach to research and social change that centers young people. In partnership with adults and elders, youth are supported to utilize their own perspectives and strengths to identify, study and address social issues that impact them. YPAR is designed to empower youth and center youth voice while promoting intergenerational healing and catalyzing community transformation. CFCL views youth leadership and local wisdom as essential elements for generating sustainable solutions and thriving communities, both locally and globally.

### YOUTH

 At its core, YPAR is unique in that it is youth-led, youth informed and youth driven. Youth live, play, work, learn, grow up in and love their communities. They carry vital knowledge about community strengths, challenges and possible solutions, yet they are rarely included in the decision-making processes that impact their lives. In order for our society to truly thrive, we need youth to be full partners and participants in decision-making processes with adults and elders.

### PARTICIPATORY

 YPAR's adaptive, flexible approach allows youth to shape and design a research project based on their own questions and concerns. It gives youth the opportunity to shape the issues they would like to research and address to improve their community. This is very different from traditional, top-down research approaches, where in many cases, outside researchers make all the decisions and often gain all the benefits. In YPAR, youth are recognized as experts who can generate and use knowledge for their own purposes.

### ACTION

 In YPAR, research findings are not meant to just sit on a shelf and be forgotten. It's about youth doing research, developing findings and creating recommendations that propel action and support transformative social change. Taking action is a critical part of YPAR and the reason that research is done in the first place.

### RESEARCH

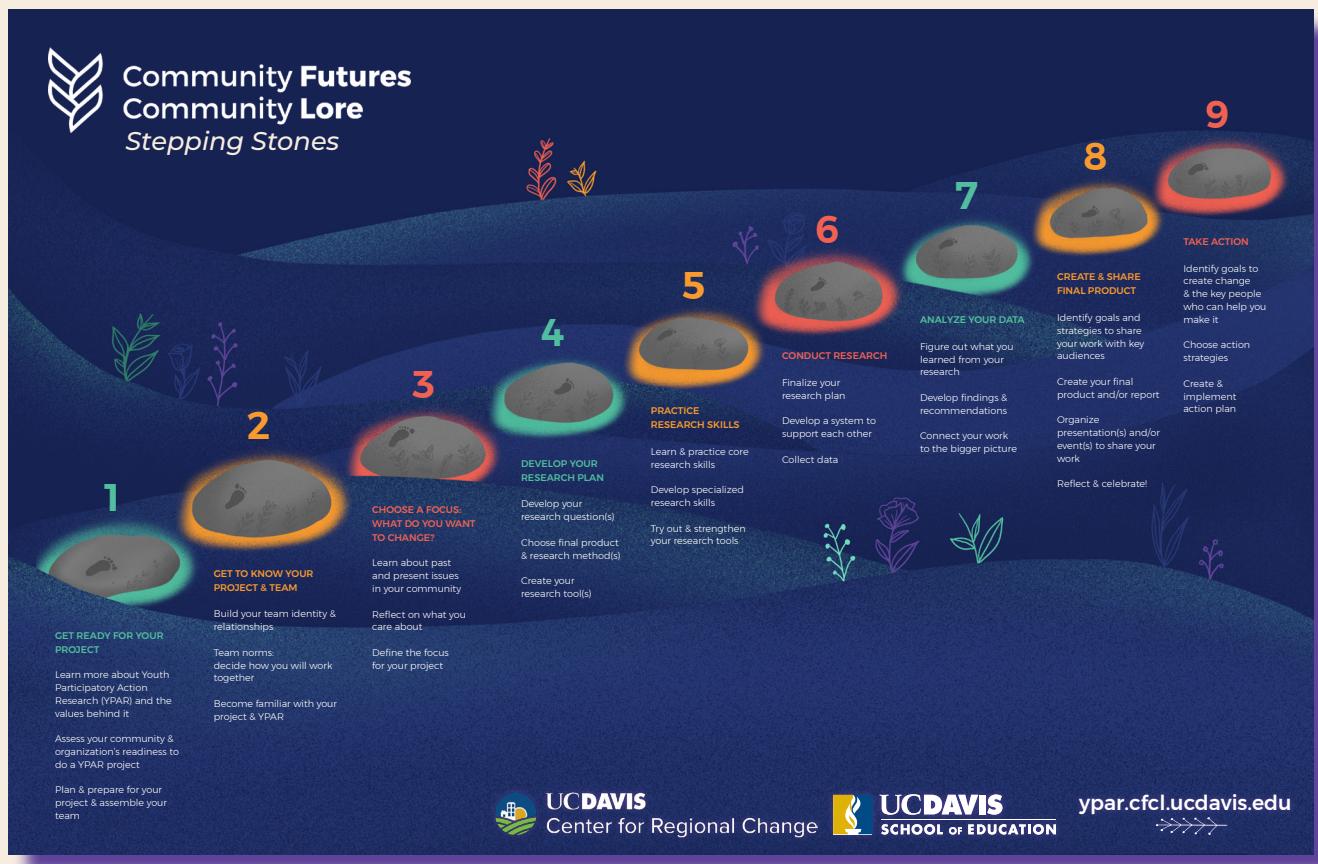
 YPAR redefines who has the expertise to produce and use knowledge. Youth are supported to design a research effort, collect and analyze data, document their findings and share their recommendations for change. By not limiting research practices to just professional adult researchers or institutions, it gives youth the chance to conduct more rigorous research and generate more effective solutions for issues that directly impact them and their community.

# THE 9 STEPPING STONES

## Navigating the Stepping Stones

Community Futures, Community Lore's 9 Stepping Stone guides are designed to help you and your team understand the YPAR process and put it into practice. Anyone who is interested in starting a YPAR project will find useful information here. These tools were originally designed to center youth ages 9 – 22; however, they can be adapted to work for intergenerational teams. The Stepping Stones work best if you embrace them as guides to inform and help you plan your journey (rather than a step-by-step manual that needs to be strictly followed from start to finish). It's up to you to choose the pieces that fit your unique needs, adapt them and make them your own!

The 9 Stepping Stones build on each other. Each one represents a stage of the research and action process. You can think about it like a series of steps you might take to get from one side of a river to the other.



The 9 Stepping Stone guides support you and your team through each stage of your YPAR project. This **First Stepping Stone** helps you **Get Ready for Your Project**. The others support you to Build Your Team, Choose a Project Focus, Develop a Research Plan, Practice Research Skills, Conduct Your Research, Analyze Your Data, Create and Share a Final Product, and then Take Action!

Get ready to become an even more powerful leader, thinker and organizer who can advocate for positive changes in your community, school, and beyond!



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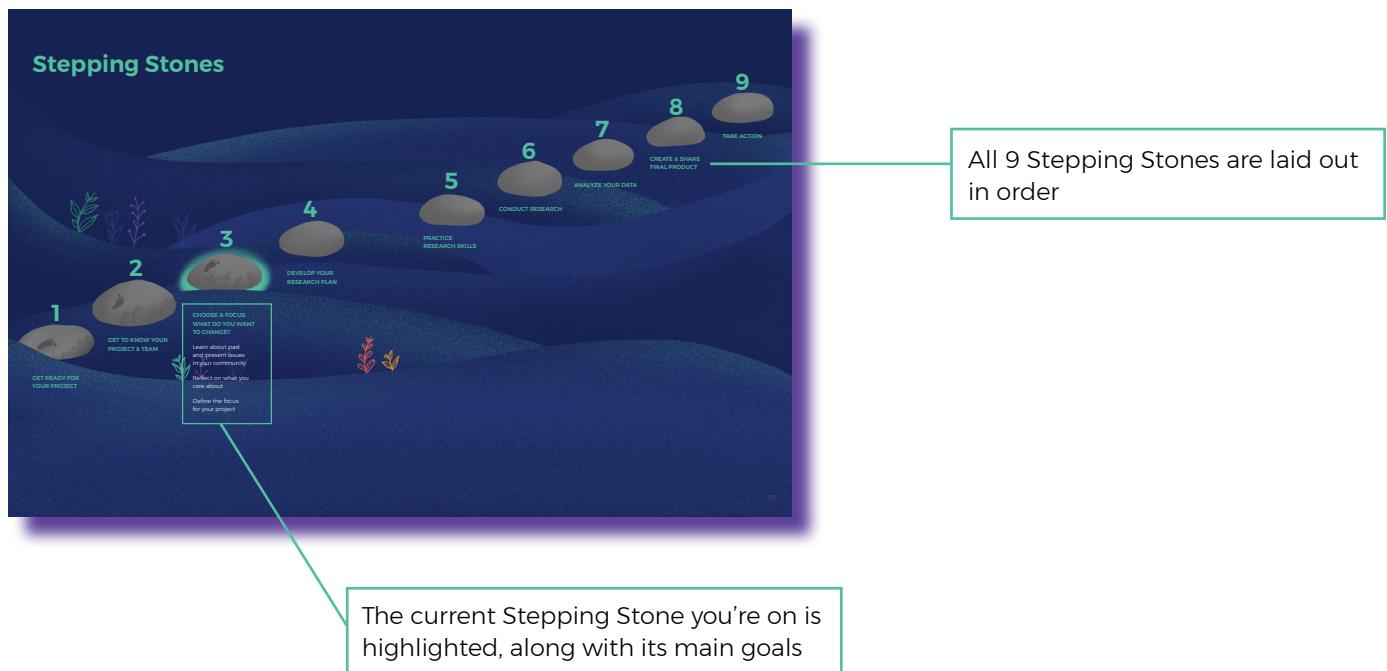
# 4 HOW TO USE THE STEPPING STONE GUIDES

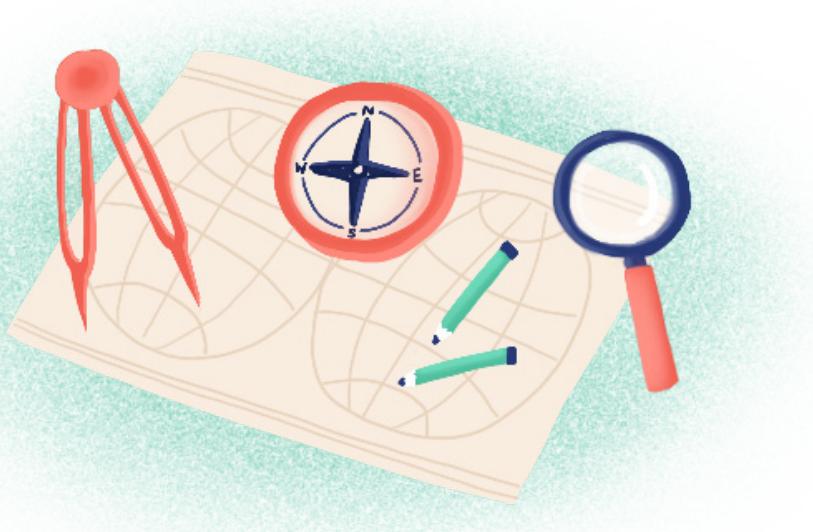
The Community Futures, Community Lore Stepping Stone guides are designed to support intergenerational teams to plan and run YPAR projects. Every Stepping Stone includes:

- » A checkpoint diagram to highlight where you are in the YPAR process
- » A trail map orienting you to that stage of action research
- » Activities to help you plan and run your team meetings
- » Sample tools

## Checkpoint Diagram

The checkpoint diagram at the beginning of each stepping stone shows the main goals for that stage and how it fits into the bigger picture. Use this as a “you are here” map for your YPAR project to see what you’ve already accomplished, what you’re about to do and where you’ll be headed next.





## Trail Maps

The trail maps serve as a visual table of contents and orient you to the purpose and goals of that stepping stone. Under each goal, we list the activities and resources that support you to meet that goal. Before you begin each stage of the work, use the trail map to understand what the stepping stone is about and plan out the path you want to take with your team.

**Stepping Stone 3**  
 Choose A Focus: What Do You Want to Change?  
It's time to dive in and think critically about your community! In Stepping Stone 3, you will choose your project's focus after exploring the issues shaping your community as well as your own personal experiences.

**1**  
  
Reflect on your project's historical and present-day environment  

- > Activity 5: Mapping Matters Skills [understanding histories of community and place]
- > Activity 5: The Boat Metaphor [exploring power and who has it]

**2**  
  
Explore what you already know about your community and what's important to you  
It's time to dream big (ideal learning) about your community's present and imagining its future!

- > Activity 6: Community Mapping [identifying community challenges and resources]
- > Activity 6: Data Ground-Truthing [engaging with publicly available data]

**3**  
  
Choose your project's focus  

- > Activity 6: Choosing an issue [deciding what you want to take on as a group]

?

A description of the stepping stone's purpose is under the title

The core goals of the stepping stone are numbered and illustrated

Supporting activities and resources are listed underneath each goal

Helpful tips for facilitators and estimated time commitment

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## Activity Pages

Every Stepping Stone includes activities and resources that help you and your team do YPAR in a fun, engaging and rigorous way. These activities are most useful for the facilitation team – as a resource for planning your team meetings and retreats. Feel free to also add your own activities and adapt what's here to fit your unique community and needs.

Supporting activities and resources are listed underneath each goal

At the top of each activity you can find the objectives, time needed and materials needed

The screenshot shows the '3.1 ACTIVITY' section for 'Mapping Matters Skits'. At the top, there are three boxes: 'Objectives', 'Time Needed', and 'Materials'. The 'Objectives' box lists: 'Learn how maps can be powerful tools', 'Understand how maps can be used to oppress and make change'. The 'Time Needed' box says '45 minutes'. The 'Materials' box lists: 'Role play scenarios, maps and role descriptions can be found here', 'Flip chart paper', 'Markers'. Below these are sections for 'Introduction', 'Instructions', and 'Debrief'. The 'Introduction' section includes a note about printing out scenarios and maps ahead of time. The 'Instructions' section provides step-by-step guidance for facilitating the skit, including preparation, breaking participants into groups, handing out scenarios, and developing a 5-minute skit. The 'Debrief' section contains a list of discussion questions for the team to reflect on after the activity.

Each activity is broken down into step-by-step instructions

Suggested debrief questions help the team reflect on what they have learned

## Sample Tools

The tools we have included in each stepping stone help you run a project that fits your group and its goals.

These resources include:

- » Worksheets to plan your project and run activities
- » Examples of flip charts to be used in activities
- » Sample project materials (e.g. timelines, budgets, release forms, recruitment flyers, etc.)

# 5

## A SPECTRUM OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION



It can be helpful to think about participation on a continuum. The continuum pictured here illustrates high to low levels of youth participation in YPAR and can be used as part of a training—or simply a source of reflection.

This chart can help you:

- » Assess where your community or organization is currently
- » Decide where you want to go
- » Plan how you will get there

In general, the Community Futures, Community Lore approach advocates a high level of youth participation. However, different settings call for different levels of youth involvement. To determine what makes the most sense in your setting, consider the nature of your initiative or organization, the goals of the research, the outcomes you are seeking, your team's interests and available resources.



<b>Highest Youth Engagement/ Involvement</b>	Youth participatory action research and youth leadership in community planning, evaluation, design and campaigns is a normal, expected part of the community. YPAR is institutionalized in the organizational or network's culture and planning cycles. Experienced youth leaders act as peer trainers and organizers. Young people are paid staff.
<b>High Youth Involvement</b>	Youth-led participation is present throughout action research and post-research campaign process. Youth roles include research design, data collection, data analysis, reporting findings and recommendations and implementing change through various types of campaigns.
<b>Medium Youth Involvement</b>	Youth leaders design research tools, administer them and help to present the findings to decision makers. For example: youth design and give a survey to their peers. Adults analyze the result, develop findings and implement changes. An intergenerational team presents findings to decision makers.
<b>Low Youth Involvement</b>	Youth give input and participate in limited roles in an adult-led process. Example: Youth participants give adults feedback on an adult-designed survey. Example: Youth collect data for adult researchers with an adult-designed survey.
<b>Little Youth Involvement</b>	Information is collected from youth by adult researchers to inform an adult-led process. Example: Youth take an adult-designed survey.
<b>No Youth Involvement</b>	Adults collect research about an issue, initiative or project that impacts youth without collecting any information directly from youth.

## Our Organization: Spectrum of Youth Engagement



### **Where We Are Now:**

Where are we now in terms of youth engagement? Give some evidence.

### **Where We Aspire to Be:**

How do we grow and strengthen youth engagement in our organization or community over the next year? Include some specifics.

### **Habits and Challenges:**

What is a pattern or ongoing challenge that might make this difficult? How could we lovingly interrupt it?

### **What We Will Practice in this Cycle of YPAR:**

How do we want to use this project to develop and cultivate youth engagement in our organization or community? What can we consciously do to support that?

# READY OR NOT!



## Role of Adult Allies

It's vital to assess the readiness of your community, network or organization to take on and succeed in youth participatory action research. Adult-led institutions and systems sponsoring a YPAR project play a significant role in building the capacity of youth and supporting them to make lasting community and/or organizational changes. Just as the youth researchers need to prepare and train to conduct a YPAR project, adult allies and partners must also commit and be prepared to support, facilitate and follow-through on the effort.

## Supporting YPAR

To support YPAR, the sponsoring organization or community group must have—or be willing to develop—the conditions that will encourage and sustain youth involvement throughout the process. Following are some ingredients that have been key to the success of other projects.

### Are You Ready?

Consider whether these ingredients are in place, in the works, or within easy reach for your community, network or organization. Jumping into a youth-led project too quickly can lead to disempowering and counterproductive results for everyone involved. However, with the appropriate preparation, YPAR can catalyze positive intergenerational community evolution and action!

The following charts will help you reflect on and assess the current state of your organization or community group. For each of the statements, check the appropriate box based on how well the conditions match your own.

### Organizational and/or Community CULTURE

						Evidence/ Notes:
Our organization/ community values and actively respects the insights, experiences and capacities of youth						
Our organization/ community is committed to youth and community development that builds on individual and collective strengths while recognizing and addressing challenges						
Our organization/ community has strong relationships and communication between staff and youth and between staff and community						
Our organization/ community values multiple forms of diversity (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) as assets						
Our organization/ community has broad support for youth as active leaders and participants in research, planning, evaluation and campaign processes						

### Organizational and/or Community STRUCTURE

						Evidence/ Notes:
Our organization/ community decision-making processes include youth and other community constituents						
Our organization/ community channels of communication are accessible to and actively used by youth and other community constituents						
Our organization/ community has strong communication between organization staff and leadership						
Our organization/ community has organizational stability (i.e. solid finances and low staff turnover)						
Our organization/ community has intergenerational staff-youth researcher ratios to allow for personalized, supportive facilitation for the team						
Our organization/ community has existing systems for conducting and applying the results of needs assessments, research and evaluations						

Our organization/ community has high and fair expectations of all staff, youth researchers and community constituents						
Our organization/ community has the capacity to allocate or raise the funds required to support the project and related activities						

Knowledge of COMMUNITY CONTEXT						
						Evidence/ Notes:
Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	Mostly	Definitely		
Our organization/ community group has strong knowledge of the local social, political and economic history of the community and potential issues to focus on						
Our organization/ community group practices cultural competency and humility						
Our organization/ community group has strong relationships— both formal and informal—with local leaders						
Our organization/ community has the ability to identify potential community resources and allies as well as challenges						

Our organization/ community has the ability to identify potential community resources and allies as well as challenges						
Our organization/ community has the ability to weave cultural practice and relevant history into the team building and research process						

Organizational and Community RESOURCES						
						Evidence/ Notes:
<b>Youth capacity:</b> We have access to youth who are excited, willing and able to commit to a sustained, challenging and highly rewarding project						
<b>Youth researcher compensation:</b> We have a paid stipend, salary and/or other incentives (movie/concert amusement park tickets, gift certificates, outings, educational scholarships, etc.) to fairly compensate team members for their time and work on the project						
<b>Youth researchers – legal considerations:</b> We are clear about the legal issues we need to consider if we hire our team (e.g. type of compensation, age of participants, city/state guidelines or restrictions for hiring youth, background checks, etc.)						

						Evidence/ Notes:
	Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	Mostly	Definitely	
<b>Staff time – Executive Leadership:</b> We have executive leadership that is committed and will oversee the project and integrate efforts into the larger efforts of the community, organization or network						
<b>Staff time – Project Lead:</b> We have staff members who will develop the project and serve as lead adult or youth facilitators during all the project stages (typically at least eight to twenty hours per week depending on the project scope) and additional staff members to serve as back-up facilitators and troubleshooting support for the primary facilitators						
<b>Staff capacity – Project Facilitation:</b> We have an excellent, highly organized youth development practitioner who can serve as a facilitator, advisor, teacher, resource person and cheerleader for the YPAR team						
<b>Equipment:</b> We have the equipment we need for this project—computers with appropriate software, photocopier for general use, special equipment for specific project needs (e.g. video camera, audio recorder, etc.)						

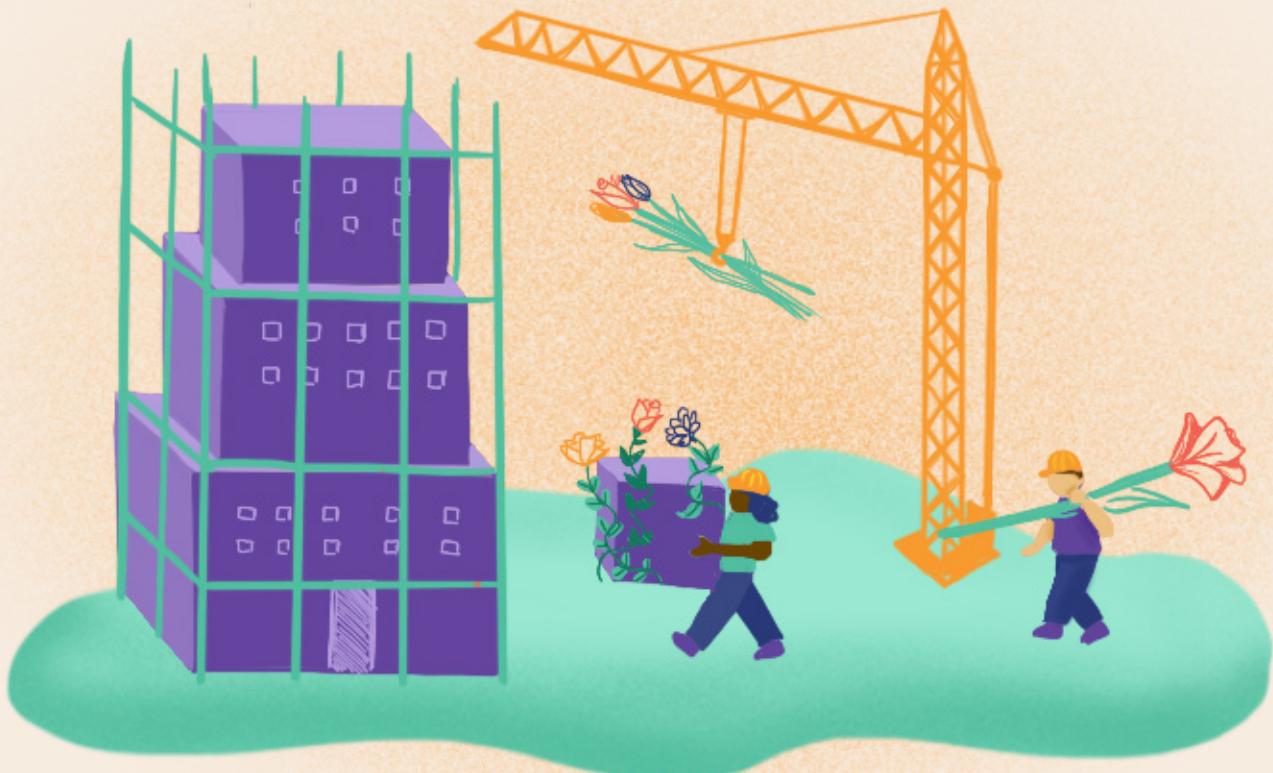
						Evidence/ Notes:
	Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	Mostly	Definitely	
<b>Materials and supplies:</b> We have the general office supplies (e.g. paper, markers, flip chart paper, etc.) and special materials for special projects (e.g. mural supplies, materials to frame a photo exhibit, etc.), as well as snacks for meetings and working sessions						
<b>Space:</b> We have space to hold regular meetings and conduct research that is comfortable, private, convenient and safe for youth						
<b>Transportation:</b> Youth have, or we can provide, the transportation needed to attend meetings and trainings, collect data, present findings and go on special outings						
<b>Final product and event funds:</b> We have, or can raise, the funding we need to cover the costs of producing, disseminating and celebrating a final product and supporting and publicizing a team event						
<b>Training Resources:</b> We have, or can secure, the training and technical assistance we need to guide the facilitator and/or youth team through more difficult and unfamiliar aspects of the process (e.g. research design, complex data analysis, etc.)						

# FOR OUR TOWN

## Your Community Matters

Community Futures, Community Lore YPAR projects are designed to engage intergenerational teams in the evolution of their communities. That means we hope you will use YPAR to become agents of change in your community. The history, local conditions, goals and aspirations of your community matter. The hopes, dreams, and challenges of young people in your community matter. Your project is taking place in the context of your larger community.

That's why we do this work. Here are a handful of suggested reflection questions that you can use to ground and adapt your YPAR project to your local community, conditions and goals. Any of these could be research topics in and of themselves. Feel free to use them with your research team, and to create your own community reflection questions!



Areas to Explore	
<b>Community Stories and Histories</b>	<p>What are the stories and histories of your community?</p> <p>What are the hidden stories and histories of your community?</p> <p>Who are the storytellers in your community?</p> <p>What do you/your team know about their community? What do you not know? What do you want to know?</p> <p>What community stories connect and shed light on your research focus?</p> <p>Where do they connect? Where are they in tension with each other?</p>
<b>Current Issues and Trends</b>	<p>What current events are impacting your community?</p> <p>Are there national and global trends and issues that are directly impacting the local community?</p> <p>What local debates are most critical to community members?</p> <p>How do these issues unite or divide community members?</p> <p>How do these issues impact and intersect with your research project?</p>
<b>Identity and Diversity</b>	<p>How do people inside your community see themselves?</p> <p>How do people outside your community see you?</p> <p>What are the hidden identities and diversities of your community?</p> <p>Where do people connect around identity? Where is there tension and conflict?</p>
<b>Strengths and Assets</b>	<p>What are the strengths of our community?</p> <p>What are hidden or undervalued assets?</p>
<b>Tensions, Challenges, and Opportunities for Growth and Change</b>	<p>What are the sources of tension and challenge in your community and region?</p> <p>Which of these are current? Which are historical?</p> <p>Where might there be opportunities for growth and change in these tensions?</p>
<b>People</b>	<p>Who are the seen and unseen leaders?</p> <p>Who are the formal and informal decision makers?</p> <p>Who are the gatekeepers?</p> <p>Who are the organizers and community builders?</p> <p>Who are the peacemakers, helpers and connectors?</p>

# 8

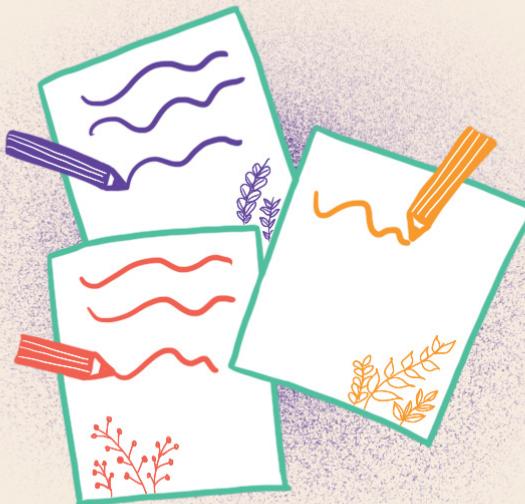
## OUR NORTH STAR

### Defining North Star

Your north star is your purpose which guides your work. What are you really trying to do with this project? Who are you trying to be? How are you trying to grow as a result of this effort? It's helpful to take time to reflect on this before you begin a YPAR project. Be creative! Consider doing this as a story circle with your leadership and facilitation team and returning to it at various points in the YPAR process with your whole team. Some prompts include:

- » What is our north star? When we are in the middle of our YPAR project, what do we want to remember about why we are doing this?
- » What is our vision for youth and intergenerational leadership? What about that is most important to us?
- » What kind of community, organization, classroom and/or network do we hope to be in the future because of this work?
- » What are we working to heal or transform?
- » Why youth? Why focus on youth leadership in our community?
- » What do we love about our community? How will this work help it thrive?





## Potential Benefits of YPAR

Why put energy and resources into youth participatory action research?

We asked youth leaders and adult partners about their experiences with YPAR, including what major struggles they faced, what benefits the project offered, and what recommendations they would have for organizations embarking on a similar path:

### YPAR can catalyze youth involvement and leadership in community change

- » Provides youth with opportunities, skills and information to make real change
- » Focuses community change by integrating issues most important to young people
- » Strengthens strategies informed by the unique creative insights of young people

### YPAR can strengthen communities

- » Helps to create new programs, services and solutions and/or improve those that already exist
- » Integrates youth perspectives into community development and problem solving
- » Develops community capacity to support youth-led and intergenerational work
- » Cultivates young leaders



### YPAR can facilitate healthy youth development

- » Promotes personal and leadership development
- » Encourages community and relationship building
- » Facilitates learning through skill-building and real world experiences
- » Provides youth leaders with tools to address issues that impact their lives
- » Building a sense of hope

### YPAR can strengthen an organization's development and capacity-building

- » Strengthens planning, decision-making and resource allocation
- » Enhances fundraising efforts
- » Strengthens staff development and capacity
- » Facilitates youth ownership and buy-in
- » Encourages community and relationship building
- » Helps organizations address the needs of culturally diverse youth and communities
- » Promotes youth-friendly, democratic and responsive organizational culture

# 9 IN IT TOGETHER – HOW ADULTS CAN STOP ADULTISM

Adapted from Creighton, A., & Kivel, P. (1993). *Helping teens stop violence: A practical guide for counselors, educators, and parents*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House Inc.

## Practicing Good Partnership

A critical—and sometimes obscured—part of YPAR is the work of preparing adults to be good partners and community members with youth. We need to remember ways to be authentic with youth and to interrupt adultism. Here are some ways to interrupt adultism that we have found useful over the years.



- » **BE AN ALLY.** Young people need to see adults as strong, reliable, and completely on their side, knowing that adults trust them, respect them, care for them and will tell them the truth.
- » **TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT POWER.** Be open and honest with youth about how power is used and abused in this society. To do this, adults must be informed, clear, and firm about how systems of oppression (i.e. racism, classism, sexism, etc.) work and they need to listen to youth about how they experience power.
- » **TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT VIOLENCE.** Listen, support, and validate youth when they talk about all violence, including when they are targeted because they identify as LGBTQ, young women and girls, people of color, immigrants, poor, and/or young.
- » **PROMOTE HEALING.** Remind youth it is not their fault that they have been demeaned, assaulted, or discriminated against, and that it happens to many of us. Adults need to pass on skills to youth and hear how they want to work towards healing.
- » **INTERRUPT ADULTISM.** Intervene supportively when young people's rights or respect are being denied by other adults.
- » **PROMOTE TRUE HISTORY.** Share resources and information about the struggles, strengths and achievements of youth of color and communities who identify as LGBTQ, disabled, immigrants, refugees, poor, etc.
- » **BE A PARTNER.** Share power and trust young people to make decisions.
- » **DON'T DO IT ALONE.** Get support from other adults who are trying to be allies with youth. Train and support other adults who want to end adultism and ally with youth.
- » **TRUST YOUTH TO BE POWERFUL.** This is their world. Trust youth to be as strong, smart, and experienced as they are and give them space to make decisions.
- » **CELEBRATE EACH OTHER.** Celebrate powerful words spoken, overcoming oppressions, and creating a more just world.

# 10 SNAPSHOT

As you're preparing for your own YPAR project, it can be helpful to explore stories from previous YPAR projects. These can also serve as helpful examples to inform potential partners about this approach and get people excited about the possibilities of this work.

In San Francisco, the Youth Impact team was funded by the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) to answer two questions: 1) How well are youth being served by community-based organizations funded by DCYF? and 2) What makes for a trustworthy youth-serving organization? Based on their work, the team created the "Ten Commandments for Youth Programs" which was used by DCYF as a funding guideline for all future proposals.



In Riverside County, youth with the Land Use Planning Awareness (LUPA) Project collaborated with the Riverside County Department of Public Health to inform development of their General Plan. The team used the Putting Youth on the Map and Regional Opportunity Index data mapping tools from the UC Davis Center for Regional Change to find relevant publicly available data. They combined this with data gathered through their own walk audit research, using their analyses to influence the local planning process.



In Imperial County, students at Meadows Union Elementary School formed the group Helping Hands, Active Knights (HHAK) in partnership with an adult ally from CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California. The group mapped out their school resources, surveyed their peers, and analyzed publicly-available physical fitness and obesity data for their school to successfully advocate for new physical activity equipment and approval of a playground stencil project. The following year, they conducted a plate waste study in their school cafeteria and successfully advocated for the installation of a share table and share refrigerator to cut down on food waste and combat food insecurity.



In Madera, the Madera Youth Leaders was formed as part of the Madera Coalition for Community Justice. This team undertook the first youth-led needs assessment of the issues, concerns and aspirations of low-income youth, immigrant youth and youth of color in Madera. Their findings helped shape the advocacy activities of the Coalition and informed local youth organizing efforts.

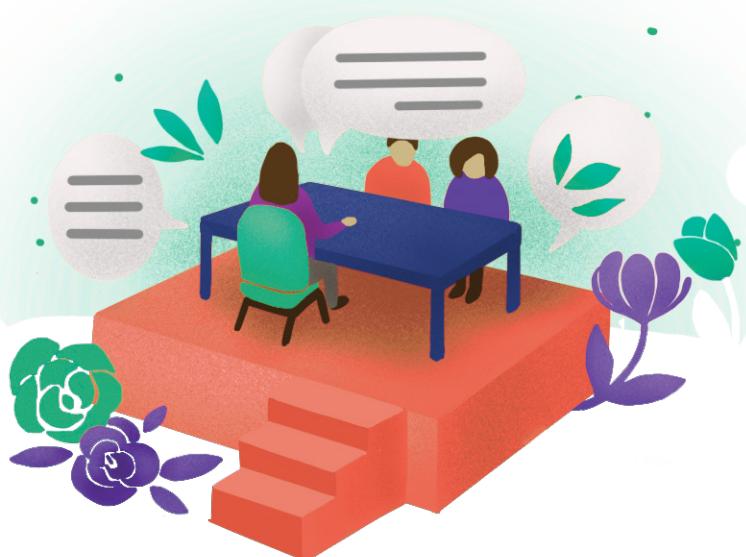


In Contra Costa County, youth leaders at John Swett High School in Crockett led the 4-H2O project with support from CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California and UC 4-H. The group implemented peer surveys and used data mapping to research water access, appeal, and consumption on and off campus. They presented their findings to the school board and successfully advocated for six additional water stations to be installed on their campus.



# IF WE ONLY KNEW...

You are part of a vibrant community of people who are working to integrate YPAR into their organizations, networks and communities! The following advice was culled from other practitioners and represents things they wish they had known when they first started their projects. Take what is useful to you and leave the rest.



## Active community and organizational support for the project are critical

*Get school organizations and/or community leaders engaged at a high level from the beginning as appropriate. Be as clear as possible about specific needs providing a tangible way to support and contribute to the project. Create plans to stay in communication as the project progresses, so that they are prepared to support youth findings and actions.*

- » Examples of potential support: coordinating with teachers and staff, promoting the group to others in the community or organization,

- » providing meeting space, food, supplies, access to WiFi and technology, etc.
- » Engaging community or organizational leaders early on in the planning process helps build collective buy-in for prospective projects and establish parameters for administrators' involvement and preserve autonomy for youth input and leadership.
- » Use success stories can help build relationships with new potential partners and develop champions

## The Most Essential Advice

Set clear terms for change:

- » Clearly delineate decision-making power and roles
- » Be transparent with the "givens" and parameters of the project
- » Prepare adults to be partners and allies to youth researchers
- » Prepare youth leaders for the slow pace and potential challenges of social change

Sustain youth engagement:

- » Support youth researchers in creating their own clear vision for the project
- » Provide a lot of feedback and encouragement and celebrate big and small successes throughout the project
- » Team build, team build, team build!
- » Keep it fun and dynamic
- » Create multiple opportunities for the team to present their findings
- » Network with outside partners to create opportunities for collaboration and impact

### **Cultivate a clear understanding of the YPAR process with all stakeholders**

*YPAR is unique in that it is youth-centered, iterative, and process-oriented, requiring flexibility and a commitment of time and support that can differ significantly from more familiar programming (e.g. direct education or service provision).*

- » All partners involved must have a clear understanding of the YPAR process before it is initiated—including youth participants, parents/caregivers, and school and/or community partners, as well as the adult allies facilitating the project and their supervisors. (Consider holding an orientation to increase their understanding and buy-in.)

### **Maintain a consistent presence in the organization, community or on campus**

- » If facilitation is provided by someone outside of the primary youth site, regular visits to the site you are working with (such as a school campus) also provide additional opportunities to connect with youth participants and other adult partners outside of meetings.

### **Partnerships take time and flexibility**

*While the percentage of work time will vary between projects, YPAR facilitators need to be flexible with time to develop and maintain partnerships at different phases of a YPAR project and school year.*

### **Actively facilitate connections between partners, youth, and the project**

*For example, adult allies should play a leading role in identifying partners to support the project. This requires understanding the surrounding community and researching potential resources (e.g. unique partner attributes that may provide creative opportunities for assistance and collaboration).*

**YPAR Example:** An adult ally with Project 4-H2O in Crockett, CA worked with a local company to identify an affordable water testing kit and establish standard field practices for the group's research, which would have been difficult to accomplish on their own.

### **Be transparent with young people**

*Establish open communication and set clear guidelines with young people as early as possible (e.g. starting with recruitment) to support a youth-centered process, build authentic relationships and foster trust. This can include establishing collective roles, responsibilities, expectations and decision-making processes for youth and adults; and discussing any requirements that must shape youth projects.*

- » Develop the project's timeline, structure and objectives with youth. Be realistic about what can be completed given the anticipated time frame and competing priorities.
- » Revisit the timeline at various points, so youth understand how many meetings remain in relation to how much they still want to accomplish. This can reinvigorate participants at crucial stages and continue to encourage project ownership.
- » Support youth's direct engagement directly with YPAR training materials—like the 9 Stepping Stones guides—so everyone shares in the planning and decision-making.

### **Check in regularly with youth participants and change course when necessary**

*Developing young people's capacity and maintaining a youth-centered process takes continuous reflection and adaptation, as well as dedicated time and effort. Providing gentle guidance as an adult ally means knowing when to intervene and when to create space for youth to lead.*

- » Outside of meetings, youth may respond more effectively to different communication methods (e.g. phone call, text, social media site, communication app), so using a variety of approaches can be helpful.
- » Consider enabling youth to be able to opt in or out of a YPAR role, without judgment or negative consequences.

**YPAR Example:** A YPAR team at Georgetown Elementary School created Action Teams, smaller working groups with clearly defined focus areas and tasks, so youth could opt-in to specific roles, pursue their interests, leverage their strengths, and exercise leadership over a segment of a larger project.

### **Find varied and innovative ways to keep youth engaged and keep it fun**

*Team building is an important element of youth engagement work that should be included at every stage of a YPAR project. Do not shortchange having fun—build in sufficient time for this!*

- » Make sure to do fun activities every time you are together.

**YPAR Example:** An adult ally at Meadows Union Elementary School set aside time at the end of each meeting to go outside and simply play together as a group, supporting youth relationship building while also promoting physical activity.

- » Preparing a healthy snack is another way to build relationships.

**YPAR Example:** An adult ally at Calexico High School partnered with the school's culinary class teacher to get donated food items for YPAR meetings.

- » Whenever possible, pay youth for their involvement in a YPAR project or seek creative ways to compensate them for their efforts.
- » Choose a meeting location where youth feel safe and comfortable.

**YPAR Example:** The Eco Garden Club at Calexico High School met outside in their garden, where youth felt at home and could have a break from being in a classroom setting.

- » Celebrate successes, throughout the project and at the end. Even if a full YPAR project cycle is not completed, ensure participants finish with a sense of closure.

### **Build partnerships between YPAR projects**

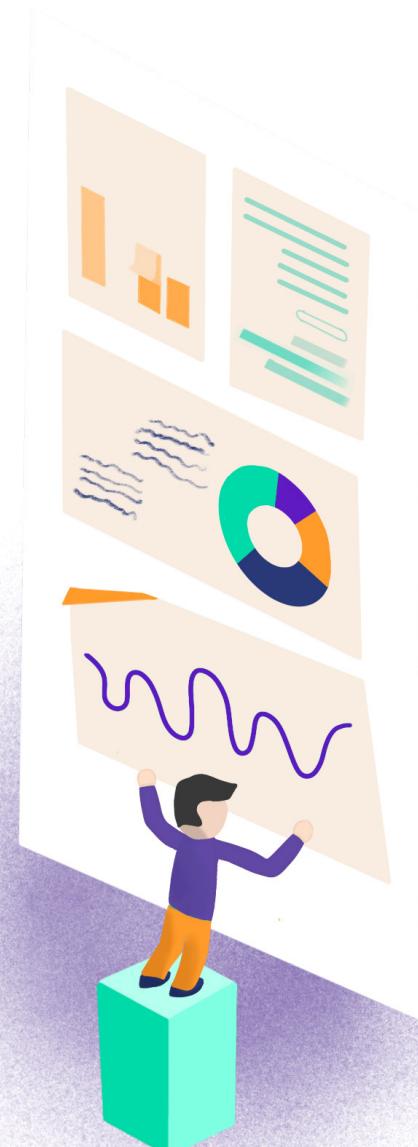
*It can be beneficial to have multiple YPAR projects and adult allies working simultaneously in close geographic proximity to one another, or even connecting across wider distances.*

- » Awareness of and connection with other YPAR efforts can help motivate youth and encourage greater engagement, wider perspectives and deeper understanding of possibilities. Nearby youth can also support each other's action strategies and build greater regional collective power.
- » Having multiple adult allies on hand to substitute or assist with facilitation can support project management and progress.

### **Keep moving forward, innovate and adapt**

*YPAR projects will always confront challenges, but it is important to maintain momentum and approach adult allyship as an active state to continually strive towards rather than a static, self-conferred title.*

- » Hurdles such as shifting timelines, conflicts with partners, competing priorities, and fluctuations in youth engagement are common—but it's important to persevere and maintain a commitment to youth and a youth-centered process.



# 12 IF WE ONLY KNEW...

The first step in initiating project planning is framing the purpose, desired outcomes and intended impact of the project. Even if your YPAR team has not been formed yet, it's important that you clarify your own sense of purpose before you begin this effort. It's ok if these change and evolve—that's a good thing, it means you are learning and growing! Use these questions to help you develop your purpose, which will serve as your guiding compass.

Our Project's Compass	
<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>Why are we doing YPAR in general and this project specifically? Towards what end?</p>	
<p><i>Focus:</i></p> <p>Do we have an overarching focus or question that will shape the project? If so, what is it? Why did we choose it?</p>	
<p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <p>What are our 3-5 top activities we want to pursue or products we want to create through for this project?</p>	
<p><i>Impact:</i></p> <p>What impact do we want to have in the near term? Ideally, who will this project inspire/move?</p>	
<p><i>Context:</i></p> <p>How is this project addressing historical concerns, current issues, trends and needs in the community at large?</p>	
<p><i>Assets and Challenges:</i></p> <p>Are there broader community supports and/or constraints with respect to our purpose, focus and objectives? What are their implications for the project?</p>	

# 13 RULES OF THE JOURNEY

Project givens or the “rules of the journey” are important to identify and name before starting so everyone knows what they are getting into. It is especially important for youth team members to start a new project with a clear understanding of what they will and won’t control (e.g. potential issue areas or research topics the group can or can’t focus on due to funding constraints). Use the following chart to brainstorm and record the core expectations and required elements for your YPAR project.

Rules of the Journey / Project Givens	
<i>Funding:</i> Who is funding this project? Do they have any expectations that need to be fulfilled?	
<i>Sponsoring Organization:</i> Who (if anyone) is commissioning/sponsoring/running this project? Do they have specific things the team needs to answer or create?	
<i>Research Focus:</i> Are there any given expectations about the focus of this project? Are there any requirements about the question that the project will answer and why?	
<i>Resourcing:</i> Are there limits to how the research can be conducted given available resources (e.g. funding, tech resources, transportation, etc.)? Are there required final products or presentations that the group will need to do?	
<i>Time:</i> Do we have any deadlines for completing this project or for completing specific stages in the process?	



# TEAM ROLES

As you lay the foundation for your YPAR project and begin to assemble your team and partners, establish and communicate clear roles and responsibilities. Here are some of the typical roles associated with YPAR projects to keep in mind and help you with your own project planning.



Key Players	
<i>Youth Researchers</i>	Young people who design, conduct, analyze and present their own research and act on the findings. They are participatory action researchers because they are part of the community they are researching and they have a stake in the outcomes that their research informs or supports.
<i>Project Facilitator(s)</i>	Responsible for organizing and facilitating the team building and research processes. They plan and run meetings/activities and make sure the team has the necessary training, space, resources and support to conduct their project. Adult allies and/or young people can serve in this role.
<i>Executive Leadership (organizational or community)</i>	Responsible for making sure their organization/community is supportive of the YPAR team and responsive and receptive to their research, findings and recommendations.
<i>Decisionmakers</i>	Often the target of advocacy, research findings and recommendations. They are a potential target of action campaigns that come out of the research and can be gatekeepers that control resources and decision-making processes.
<i>Community Leaders</i>	May be champions of your project and/or targets of advocacy and action campaigns that come out of the research. They also might be partners in advocating for changes in the community based on your research findings. Adults or young people can hold this position in the community.
<i>Youth Community Members</i>	Other youth who are not a part of your YPAR team. May be allies of your project, and/or targets for educational campaigns and organizing.

# CHARTING OUR PATH

Full blown YPAR project timelines can span from three months to a year or more. Timelines depend on the complexity and scope of the project and action campaign. They also depend on the time that the team and staff have available on a weekly or a daily basis and other possible constraints (e.g. a grant funding period, school year calendar, etc.). Here are two sample timelines, a chart and a blank timeline template to help you start mapping out your own project. In both examples, we assume the team is meeting twice a week for two hours at a minimum, with additional times scheduled during the more intensive phases. Alternate approaches include organizing day long, half-day sessions once a week, having daily hour-long meetings five days a week, or intensive multi-day workshops.



## 4-Month YPAR Project Timeline

Short timelines require three things: a very focused project scope, limited data collection and intensive team meetings. With a four-month project timeline teams can expect to research one focused issue, do one round of data collection and create one relatively simple final product (such as a booklet or simple report or presentation). With more meetings and/or more behind-the-scenes support, teams can intensify an element (final product, scope, data collection methods) of their work.

Stepping Stone Activities	Pre-Project	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
<b>Getting Ready</b> (Initiating, planning, resources, hiring, orientation of staff)					
<b>Get to know our project and team</b>					
<b>Choosing Our Focus</b>					
<b>Research Design</b>					
<b>Skill Development</b>					
<b>Data Collection</b>					
<b>Data Analysis</b>					
<b>Create and Share Final Product</b>					
<b>Take Action (Action Plan)</b>					
<b>Project Follow Up and Next Steps Planning</b>					

## 12-Month YPAR Project Timeline

Longer timelines can allow for more complex projects and more polished products, advocacy and action plans. With a 12-month timeline, teams can take on a bigger project scope – such as evaluating a system or network of organizations, or researching a broader community issue such as juvenile justice issues or LGBTQI community health. They can consider doing multiple rounds of data collection such as distributing surveys, analyzing them and then convening focus groups to probe issues that surfaced in the survey analysis. They can also invest more in the final product production, developing products such as side shows, videos, photo voice exhibits, performance pieces or more polished reports. They can also create more thoughtful strategies for action campaigns. As with shorter projects, teams will have to make some careful choices about their relative priorities.

	Months											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Stepping Stone Activities</b>												
<b>Getting Ready</b> (Initiating, planning, resources, hiring, orientation of staff)												
<b>Get to know our project and team</b>												
<b>Choosing Our Focus</b>												
<b>Research Design</b>												
<b>Skill Development</b>												
<b>Data Collection &amp; Documentation</b>												
<b>Data Analysis</b>												
<b>Create and Share Final Product</b>												
<b>Take Action (Action Plan)</b>												
<b>Project Follow Up and Next Steps Planning</b>												

## Project Calendar Brainstorm

Use the following chart to brainstorm and record your project's scheduling needs and concerns:

What is the likely timeline & calendar for the project?	
How often do we plan to meet and how long do we want our meetings to be?	
What are the key deadlines and project milestones?	
What scheduling constraints for youth, staff and others do we need to plan around?	
What holidays, exam periods, community events, organizational activities, etc. do we need to account for?	

## Map Your Own Project Timeline

Adapt this template to map out your own YPAR project:

Stepping Stone Activities	Week/Month										
<b>Getting Ready</b> (Initiating, planning, resources, hiring, orientation of staff)											
<b>Get to know our project and team</b>											
<b>Choosing Our Focus</b>											
<b>Research Design</b>											
<b>Skill Development</b>											
<b>Data Collection &amp; Documentation</b>											
<b>Data Analysis</b>											
<b>Create and Share Final Product</b>											
<b>Take Action (Action Plan)</b>											
<b>Project Follow Up and Next Steps Planning</b>											



# 16 DAY BY DAY

Once you have your project timeline mapped out and you've recruited your team, it's time to start planning your team sessions. For each meeting, you will want to identify the purpose, outcome goals and process for the team. Here is an example facilitator agenda, which is basically your plan for the meeting. Also included is an agenda template for your own planning.

## Example Facilitator Agenda:

Your outcome goals for the session (what do you want to be true at the end of the session)

Time you have for the whole session

### FACILITATOR SAMPLE AGENDA

Duration: 1 hour - 1 hour 30 minutes

Below is a sample agenda of how you can begin to engage young people in a YPAR project. This agenda can be altered to fit age of youth, different meeting time durations, and include activities that will help meet goals you hope to accomplish from each session.

#### Sample Goals:

Develop 2-3 goals for the meeting. What do you want participants to accomplish by the end of this session? For example:

- To help youth gain a better understanding of what YPAR is and why their voice matters.
- To have youth begin to look at power structures, and their roles in decision-making.
- To map out what issues or needs exist in their community or school.

#### Sample Agenda:

Time	Duration	Activity
	15 minutes	Introductions Ice Breaker
	5 minutes	Stand and Decide: Youth Power Reflection Questions
	5 minutes	Presentation What can young people gain from participating in a YPAR project? What are different nutrition and physical activity issues they see in their community? What are youth expectations?
	30-45 minutes	Below are different activities that the facilitator can include in this initial conversation with the young people: <b>Defining YPAR</b> (refer to page # in YPAR Binder) <b>YPAR Puzzle</b> <b>Ideal vs. Real</b> (refer to page # in YPAR Binder) <b>Boat Metaphor</b> (refer to page # in YPAR Binder) <b>YPAR Shuffle</b> (refer to page # in YPAR Binder)
	5 minutes	Q&A Provide a signup sheet and collect phone numbers or find a communication method that students respond best to

The actual time the activity will start

The amount of time the activity will take

Time you have for the whole session

Always open the meeting with an ice-breaker so you connect with each other, your purpose and goals and you have fun

You may need to do a presentation to introduce the team to new ideas

Your main activity: choose a Stepping Stone Activity or create your own

Always plan a closing reflection and a preview of what's next

Meeting Agenda Template

**Facilitator Agenda for \_\_\_\_\_**

*Time Duration:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Session Purpose:*

**Session Outcome Goals:**

1.

2.

3.

**Agenda:**

Time	Duration	Activity	Team Member

# 17 RESOURCES

The organization leading and hosting a YPAR project should plan and budget for costs related to coordinating the project, compensating the youth team and providing the resources necessary to do the action research well. Typical budget line items include a project coordinator's salary, youth researcher compensation, refreshments, project resources (final product production, copies, pens, video camera, still camera, audio recording equipment, etc.), technical support (e.g. for data analysis), transportation, meeting space, and a celebration fund. In some cases, organizations hire a coach or training organization to assist with project development and coaching. Organizations have found creative ways to limit the amount of these costs and stay within their budget capacities by enlisting volunteers, sharing resources with other organizations and soliciting in-kind and monetary donations. The following are two sample budgets to plan your YPAR project.

## Sample Budget #1:

### 4-Month YPAR Project at an After-School Program

In this project, the team researches one focused issue, does one round of data collection, and creates one relatively brief final product (such as a booklet or simple report). They also bring in outside support to train and coach project facilitators, provide technical support for the youth, and coach the organization on sustaining this level of youth leadership.

	Item	Quantity	Cost
<b>Personnel expenses</b>	<b>Program Staff Facilitator</b> A facilitator will need to devote at least four hours a week to meeting with the youth team as well as an additional four hours a week for project planning, coordination and coaching.	136 hours (8 hrs/wk X 17 weeks)	
	<b>Programming Assistant</b>	8 hrs/wk x 17 weeks	
	<b>Youth Researchers</b> The youth will together devote hundreds of hours to assessing their school/community and we recommend that they receive compensation for their efforts. This might include vouchers for movie tickets, gift certificates, an amusement park trip at the end of the project, and/or a stipend.		
<b>Non-personnel expenses</b>	<b>Refreshments for Meetings &amp; Trainings</b> Healthy and tasty snacks are part of productive meetings.	Snacks for 17 weeks	

	<b>Project Resources and Supplies</b> Supply budgets vary depending on the final project goal (i.e. a simple report costs less than a glossy publication). The basic supply budget includes pens, paper, folders, cameras, art supplies, audio recorders, and photocopying.		
	<b>Transportation for Youth</b> This travel budget allows youth to present their work to local leaders, other organizations and/or conferences. Depending on the need it might also support youth to get to the project and home.	12 youth x ____	
	<b>Final Product Cost</b> Professional design, printing and production of a report or video or other product.		
<b>Non-personnel expenses</b>	<b>Celebration Cost</b> It's important to celebrate a job well done. This budget reflects a cost estimate to have a party or go on a celebratory field trip.	12 youth x ____  Adult allies x ____	
	<b>Organizational Oversight/Administration</b>		
	<b>Technical Support and Training</b> Outside support can provide training and technical skills to staff and youth (e.g. research methods) and can facilitate communication between youth, staff and administrators about the project and its implications for organizational and community change.		
		TOTAL	



**Sample Budget #2:****Year-Long Research Project for a City-wide Regional Network of Organizations**

This budget reflects a more complex project. In this project, teams are evaluating a regional system or network of youth organizations, or conducting a large-scale research project. They do more than one round of data collection and create a professionally-produced final product (such as a report designed by a graphic designer).

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Personnel expenses</b>	<b>Project Facilitation/Coordinator</b>	Full time for 1 year	
	<b>Administrative Support</b>	$\frac{1}{4}$ time for 1 year	
	<b>Youth Researchers</b>	\$X/hour X 10 hrs/wk x 12 youth x 50 wks	
	<b>Guest Trainer Fees</b>	10, 2hr workshops @ \$_____	
<b>Non-personnel expenses</b>	<b>Refreshments for Meetings &amp; Trainings</b>		
	<b>Project Resources (Copies, pens, video, camera, recorder, etc.)</b>		
	<b>Transportation For Youth &amp; Transit Passes</b>		
	<b>Meeting and Retreat Space</b>		
	<b>Final Product Cost (Design, production, dissemination, etc.)</b>		
	<b>Celebration Cost (Refreshments, entertainment, publicity)</b>		
	<b>Organizational Oversight/Administration</b>	5-15% of total	
<b>Coaching and Training</b>	<b>YPAR Coaching, Training, Technical Assistance</b>		
		<b>TOTAL</b>	

# 18 ORGANIZING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Community members can be champions of your project, potential targets of your action campaign and/or gatekeepers for decisions you hope will be made further along in your project. Using the following chart, take a few minutes and write down any community members that might be important to connect with at this pre-launch stage of the project.

To help you connect with key community members and cultivate their support and buy-in for your project, we recommend referring back to and utilizing many of the resources and activities from this stepping stone, particularly the following:

- » **Resource 1.2 What is YPAR**
  - Can be shared as a 1-pager to help introduce the concept of YPAR to others and provides potential talking points for explaining and pitching a project
- » **Activity 1.7 For Our Town**
  - Reflection questions to help you examine your local community context and identify key individuals and groups you may want to connect with
- » **Resource 1.10 Snapshots**
  - Examples of previous YPAR projects you can share with others to familiarize them with the approach and help them envision possibilities in their own community
- » **Resource 1.11 If We Only Knew...**
  - Tips from previous projects to help you develop and maintain community partnerships to support YPAR

As you gain additional resources and collaborators for your YPAR project, consider developing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with them to clarify and solidify respective roles, responsibilities, expectations and accountability mechanisms.

**Community members and/or organizations**

<b>Community Champions</b>	People who will be really excited that we are doing this <i>and</i> would support us if they knew about the project	
<b>Resource People</b>	People in the community who have resources that could support the project (such as skills, knowledge or supplies)	
<b>Gatekeepers</b>	People who need to know about our project so that they are open to the findings and recommendations coming out later	

# 10 TEAM RECRUITMENT AND HIRING

After defining your project's purpose and north star, determining your timeline and securing resources, you will take the critical step of assembling your team: securing the project facilitators and recruiting and hiring the research team. The following section includes a checklist with key steps to guide you through securing and preparing your team, as well as sample recruitment flyers, job descriptions, and release forms. Remember: no one can recruit youth like other youth! Be sure to work with young people you already have relationships with to strategize how to tap into their social capital and peer networks.



## Checklist: Securing and Preparing Your YPAR Team

Facilitation & Leadership Support	
	Finalize the facilitator job description and hours
	Identify and secure project facilitator(s)
	Confirm the organizational leadership person who will support and supervise the project facilitator(s)
	Set up a regular meeting schedule to check in and support the project
	Hold an Orientation and Planning Meeting <i>Include:</i> project purpose, goals, timeline, budget, training needs <i>Assess:</i> do you have the team capacity to meet the project goals, or do the goals need to be adjusted?
	Organize and conduct additional training for facilitation and leadership staff

Youth Research Team Recruitment & Hiring	
	<p>Finalize job description for youth researchers  <i>Include:</i> hours and compensation, meeting schedule and location, duration of project</p>
	<p>Create youth recruitment strategy  Determine how you will find your candidates and let them know about the opportunity</p>
	<p>Develop and disseminate publicity materials and application  Develop flyers, social media posts, online and/or paper applications; connect with folks who can help with outreach (especially other youth!)</p>
	<p>Develop your hiring process protocol and recruit hiring panel  Create selection criteria, interview/selection process, and hiring committee (including youth participation)</p>
	<p>Schedule your hiring process  Review applications, conduct interviews, make calls, finalize team selection</p>
	<p>Develop a new hire packet and hold an orientation for the team  Consider having a contract for researchers and possibly a family member to sign, including a photo release form</p>

### Sample Recruitment and Hiring Materials

The next few pages are archival examples from former YPAR projects. They are intended to help you develop your own. One important caveat – we are not lawyers. You should consult with your organization's own human resources team to make sure you are considering the legal requirements of your organization and/or state.

# Project Facilitator Job Description

## Paid Internship Announcement **Oakland Fund For Children and Youth (OFCY)**

### **Youth Empowerment Evaluation Facilitator**

OFCY (Measure K/Kids First! Initiative) was born in 1996 from a grassroots effort led by Oakland youth and adults. Community activists saw the need for Oakland to invest more in young people. Responding to this need, Oakland voters passed the Kids First! Initiative that set aside about \$6 Million a year for youth programs. The OFCY plan includes youth evaluating how well the fund is meeting its goals.

OFCY is currently hiring a facilitator for the youth-led evaluation. The project facilitator is responsible for the day-to-day facilitation of the youth evaluation project. Through a series of "working sessions" & this person will work with Youth In Focus to design the framework and activities for their youth evaluation project. They are also responsible for working directly with youth evaluators through weekly meetings to train and organize the team to complete their project.

#### **Responsibilities**

- » Work with Youth In Focus to design the project framework and activities through a series of working sessions (planning meetings) over the course of the project
- » Work directly with youth evaluators to train and organize the team through weekly meetings (1-2/wk)
- » Attend and help to coordinate Youth In Focus trainings, including the Youth Evaluation team 2-day training retreat and periodic Stepping Stone trainings by Youth In Focus
- » Help to organize the youth evaluation team's final presentation and celebration
- » Serve as a liaison between the project and OFCY staff

#### **Time Commitment**

- » Approximately 10 hours a week over a 4 to 5 month period (February - June) (includes planning and prep, weekly meetings, working sessions, and presentations)
- » 2-day training retreat

#### **Qualifications**

- » Strong skills in youth development, facilitation and program planning
- » Interest in youth-led evaluation and research
- » Commitment to working with OFCY or the Oakland Youth Development Community
- » Some knowledge of evaluation and research

#### **Compensation**

- » \$X/hr
- » May be able to arrange as part of a school internship

**To Apply, Contact:** The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth

# Youth Researcher Job Description

## YOUTH EATING SMART ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

### JOB OPENINGS for Youth Researchers

Youth Eating Smart is doing a project to see what you and your peers think about food and physical activity in your school and/or community. We need young people like you to help us figure out what's going on, so...

We are hiring 10 youth to figure out what the food issues are in your community (nutrition, access to healthy foods, physical activity, built environment), find out what your peers think by collecting information from them, make recommendations and take action to create real change in your school and community.

#### Dates of Job

The job is from December 5 20XX to October 31, 20XX.

#### Days of Job

\* Tuesdays from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.  
(Some additional days, as needed)

#### Stipend

\$250/semester

#### Responsibilities of Youth Researchers

- » Attend all team meetings
- » Help design the research
- » Conduct the research (collect information from peers)
- » Learn about surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.
- » Analyze the results of your investigations
- » Write a report
- » Present your results to key stakeholders

#### Qualifications of Youth Researchers

- » Interested in issues of food and physical activity
- » Willing to work in a team
- » Want to make change in your school and/or community
- » Motivated to learn new skills
- » Want to have fun!

**To Apply:** Fill out application and turn in by Wednesday, November 29, 20XX. You may be called in for a short interview.

**Questions?** Call \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ at Youth Eating Smart (XXX-XXXX).

# Application for Youth Researcher

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RETURNED TO \_\_\_\_\_ AT Youth Eating Smart BY 5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 20XX.

Name:		
Address:		
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	
Age:	Grade:	School:
Parent/Guardian Name:		
Parent Home Phone:	Parent Work/Cell Phone:	
Emergency Contact Name & Relationship:		Phone:

**Please answer the following questions:**

Besides money, why do you want this job?

What qualities do you have that you think would make you a good researcher (someone who can collect information)?

What are two reasons that you want to be a part of this project? Why?

1.

2.

**After turning in this application, you may be asked to come in for a short interview. Think about some questions you may have about the job!**

# Sample Project Flyer

## OUSD Student-led Research Project

### *Announcement: Student Referrals Needed for Student Research Team*

**Teachers and School Staff:** Please refer students for the student-led research team! We are looking for both non-traditional and traditional student leaders who would work well in a team.

For more information, to refer student names or for a student application, contact: Kate (XXX) XXX-XXXX, \_\_\_\_\_@ousd.k12.ca.us

#### **OUSD Student-led Research Project Overview:**

During the 20XX-XX school year, Youth in Focus will support OUSD in developing a comprehensive strategy to engage student voice and participation as leaders. OUSD is hosting a youth-led research team of 8-10 students from district high schools. This student research, evaluation and planning team will:

- » Analyze Use Your Voice survey results to help design and conduct student focus groups at a sample of district high schools to further interpret the survey data.
- » Facilitate a series of student focus groups to gather student input on Use Your Voice results data to help Youth research team in developing findings and recommendations to address student concerns with proactive next steps.
- » Collect and document student input from student focus groups on suggestions and actionable next steps to inform school-site planning.
- » Build upon knowledge generated from the Use Your Voice findings and student focus groups to develop recommendations for ongoing student evaluation of student engagement and school improvement planning from a student perspective.
- » Conduct asset mapping to identify current campus assets and resources (student groups, clubs, people) to build upon existing programs to improve student engagement and leadership. Build relationships with identified assets.
- » Create an actionable plan that engages students in taking a leadership role in making improvements within their own schools that can inform school-site planning.
- » Present recommendations to increase student engagement and improve schools.
- » Create a final product on activities and approaches to involving youth voice and leadership in Use Your Voice Survey research and analysis process in 2007-8.
- » Develop a framework for ongoing student participation to inform school-site planning.

# Participation Release Form

**Date:**

Dear Youth Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_  
(insert name here)

You have been selected to participate as a Youth Researcher in a joint project between Youth In Focus and **insert your site here**. We are excited to be working in a team with you and **insert your site here** on this project. The project will last 10 months.

Youth In Focus is a non-profit organization that works with other youth agencies to train youth to conduct Youth-led Research, Evaluation and Planning (Youth REP). We believe that young people, like you, are experts in knowing what programs will best serve you. By giving you the tools and information to lead research, evaluation and planning of projects, we believe that you can become a powerful force in creating important change in this organization and in your community.

To see how well our program works and to help us improve it, we will be asking all participants to complete questionnaires and participate in evaluation discussions. The questions will focus on what skills you have learned, how you feel about participating in the project, and the quality of the training that we have provided during the project. The questions will be about your experience in the project and will not be of a private or sensitive nature. You will not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering.

The questionnaires and discussions will help us understand what you have learned from being in the program and how we can continue to make it better for other youth. We may use this information to help other organizations understand our work and we may write articles or papers about our projects. The information we collect through this project will be property of Youth In Focus and we will have the right to duplicate, sell and make use of the information as appropriate. Any information that you share with us about the project will be confidential – your name will not be used in any reports or descriptions of the project.

In addition, during the course of this project we may take photographs, audiotapes or videos of the project participants to document the project activities. These materials will become the property of Youth In Focus, and we may sell, duplicate, reproduce and make other uses of such information without additional consent from participants. Youth in Focus may use these materials for publicity, informational purposes including publication, multimedia productions, displays, advertisements or website publications. **If you do not want your image or voice used check the box below indicating that you do not consent to this use. If you are under 18 years of age your parent or guardian must also agree to this choice.** Choosing not to agree to this use of images or recordings of you will not affect your participation in this project.

**For school-based projects:** Your participation in this project will not affect your grades or evaluations at school. The information you share about what you learned will also not have any effect on school grades or evaluations.

This project does not involve inherently risky activities and is not intended to be physically strenuous. By signing this agreement you are releasing Youth In Focus from any and all liability arising from injury, loss, damage to person or property sustained or received in connection with this project.

If you have any question about your participation in this project, please contact **Insert Lead Coordinator's name and/or supervisor's name at insert your site here** at **Insert your site's phone number.**

**Please sign below if you agree to participate in this project under the terms outlined above. If you are under 18 years old, your parent or guardian will also need to sign this form for you to participate. Please keep one copy of this release for your records and return the other to your project coordinator by Insert date.**

Thank you!

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(insert your organization name here)

**Youth Signature**

I have read the information above and agree to participate in this project under the guidelines stated above.

Youth Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Photo Refusal (Check if you do NOT want your image, voice or name used)**

I do **not** wish to have my image, voice and or name used in any Youth In Focus publicity and informational purposes including any publication, multimedia productions, displays, advertisements, or website publications. I understand that this choice will not impact my participation in this project.

**If youth researcher is under 18 years old, parent or guardian must sign below.**

I have read the information above and agree for my child/ward to participate in this project under the guidelines stated above.

Parent/Guardian Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Trip Waiver Form

I understand that during their participation in the travel to and participation in the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ may be exposed to a variety of hazards and risks, foreseen or unforeseen, which are inherent in each activity and cannot be eliminated without destroying the unique character of the activity. These inherent risks include, but are not limited to the dangers of serious personal injury, property damage, and death ("Injuries and Damages") from exposure to the hazards of travel and Youth in Focus has not tried to contradict or minimize my understanding of these risks. I know that Injuries and Damages can occur by natural causes or activities of other persons, animals, trip members, trip leaders and assistants, or third parties, either as a result of negligence or because of other reasons. I understand risks of such Injuries and Damages are involved in travel such as the travel to and participation in the \_\_\_\_\_ and I appreciate that my child may have to exercise extra care for his/her own person and for others around themselves in the face of such hazards. I further understand that on this activity there may not be rescue or medical facilities or expertise necessary to deal with the Injuries and Damages to which my child may be exposed.

In consideration for my child's acceptance as a participant on this activity and the services and amenities to be provided by Youth in Focus in connection with the activities, I confirm my understanding that:

I have read any rules and conditions applicable to the activities made available to me;  
I will pay any costs and fees for the activities and I acknowledge my child's participation is at the discretion of the leader.

The activities begin and end at the location where the activities officially commence with the leader and participants in attendance, as designated by Youth in Focus.

I am signing this Waiver and Release to induce Youth in Focus to allow me to participate in the activity described above for my convenience. I understand this Waiver and Release and would not sign it if I did not. I understand that Youth in Focus is not in the business hosting the activity, and that it would not permit me to participate if I do not sign this Waiver and Release because the possibility of liability for Youth in Focus to accept absent a complete waiver of liability and release is simply too great.

This Agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by law. If any provision or any part of any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid or legally unenforceable for any reason, the remainder of this Agreement shall not be affected thereby and shall remain valid and fully enforceable.

To the fullest extent allowed by law, I agree to WAIVE, DISCHARGE CLAIMS, AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY, and to INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS Youth in Focus, its officers, directors, employees, agents, leaders, from any and all liability on account of, or in any way resulting from Injuries and Damages, even if caused by negligence of Youth in Focus, its officers, directors, employees, gents, and leaders, in any way connected with these activities. I understand and intend that this assumption of risk and release is binding upon my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, and included any minors authorized to participate in the activities.

I authorize a representative of Youth In Focus to authorize emergency medical treatment for my child if necessary. Continued on the next page I have read this document in its entirety and I freely and voluntarily assume all risks of such Injuries and Damages and notwithstanding such risks, I agree to allow my child to participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ trip.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a minor (under age 18), your parent or guardian must sign this Agreement on your behalf. I hereby agree and consent to the foregoing Agreement on behalf of the minor below:

Name and Age of Minor: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Name of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete this form and return to your trip leader.**

# History of Community Futures, Community Lore

*The Community Futures, Community Lore field-tested approach grew out of decades of work and the wisdom of hundreds of communities, dozens of trainers and thousands of youth researchers and their allies.*

*The work originated with Youth In Focus in 1989, a project that was among the first YPAR innovators and practitioners in the United States and even the world. The work was later expanded and developed through the dedication of many young people, communities and organizations and was applied to address a broad range of issues (enhancing public health, strengthening after-school programs, reforming the juvenile justice system and improving public schools). After two decades of work, Youth In Focus closed its doors in 2010. However, the work continued to live on through former staff, youth researchers and partners.*

*Here is the back story of Youth In Focus as it was documented by former staff.*

Youth In Focus was born from the desire to address the experience of Tibetan refugees facing national education systems that did not value, reflect or transmit their language, history, or identity. Nancy Erbstein built connections with the Tibetan refugee networks as an undergrad and invited Kristen Zimmerman to help found The Intercultural Oral History Project (ICOHP) – originally an affiliate of Cultural Survival – in 1990 to develop education programs with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile through which Tibetan refugee youth in Nepal would be trained to collect and document oral histories of their elders.

Jonathan London joined this team in 1991, to adapt the ICOHP program in partnership with a Nepali NGO called the Annapurna Conservation Area Project, focusing on issues of cultural and ecological change with youth in the community of Ghandruk, Nepal.

These early programs established several basic values and characteristics of the organization that would become Youth In Focus. First, local knowledge needs to be central in any educational program or system. Second, learning by doing (project-based learning) is a powerful way to make education come alive. Third, youth (like all learners) can help shape their communities by creating tangible products from their learning such as self-created reports, booklets, exhibits and so on. Fourth, programs must strive to serve as a bridge between multiple constituencies, institutions and worlds to promote social justice. Fifth, work as program developers needs to build local capacity to ensure sustainability. Finally, as an organization, it grew from the passions, values, and skills of the staff.

Once settled back in the United States (San Francisco Bay Area) the three co-founders developed Community LORE (Learning through Oral History Education) to adapt their work in South Asia to urban U.S. communities. They worked in high schools and with classroom teachers to infuse a youth-led research component into programs for youth who had been “pushed out” of comprehensive high schools, traditional courses, as well as through school-based programs such as Healthy Start. By exploring local issues and contexts first hand – through interviews with other youth, local leaders, and other community members – learning became more meaningful and relevant. By 1994, they adapted their youth-led research model for use in youth-led program evaluation and applied it in a range of community-based organizations, as well as at broader scales, such as the San Francisco juvenile justice system. The notion behind these projects was that youth – as clients and constituents of programs, organizations, and institutions – are ideally positioned to serve as their evaluators. This approach later became known as Youth REP (youth-led research, evaluation and planning). By 2000, Community LORE became Youth In Focus, in order to reflect the observation about how difficult it was for youth-serving organizations and institutions to focus on actual youth experiences and youth needs. Two offices (one in the San Francisco Bay Area and one in California’s Central Valley) housed three initiatives (the Educational Justice Initiative, the Health Justice Initiative, and the Central Valley Initiative).

### Youth In Focus's Three Initiatives

Youth In Focus centered its work on organizations that serve youth and communities typically marginalized by mainstream policies and institutions. In particular, Youth In Focus offered YPAR support in the service of youth of color, immigrant youth, tribal youth, LGBTQ youth and low-income youth in three initiative areas:

The Education Justice Initiative (EJI) brought youth voices and experiences to the forefront of decisions made about educational reforms and schooling. The EJI worked to promote increased youth engagement in school improvement, leadership development, and decision-making and to link youth work to local action in education equity in the Bay Area. Past projects and partners included: Oakland Unified School District, San Francisco School District, OASIS Charter School, San Francisco Education Fund's Peer Resources, Coalition of Essential Schools, Cross-Cities Campaign for Urban School Reform, Youth Together and Youth Empowerment School.

The Health Justice Initiative (HJI) supported YPAR and youth-led evaluation on health issues that youth identified in the Bay Area. The HJI supported LGBTQ youth of color in conducting action research on health issues broadly defined, to include issues relating to identity, mental health, community health, and access. Through this work, the HJI addressed health impacts on youth in respect to racism, poverty, violence, HIV/AIDS and STIs, relationships, sex work, drugs and alcohol, and any other issues young people identified as affecting their well-being. An example project comes from the work of the Youth Empowerment Team and the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Center. Despite the city's reputation, the team found significant needs among LGBTQ youth in San Francisco. The team presented its findings to over 150 people, including elected officials, foundation staff, service providers, and their peers. For their work, the youth received a KQED Local Hero's Award.

The Central Valley Initiative (CVI) engaged youth and their adult partners in using YPAR, evaluation and planning to document and reverse the "school to jail house pipeline" and to elevate the voices of youth among youth-serving organizations in the Central Valley. Youth REP projects in the Central Valley focused on education equity, disciplinary policies, educational reforms, and other issues that affected the ability of youth to become active and productive citizens in their schools and communities. Example projects and partners included Davis High School and the Catalysts for Social Justice, Sacramento City Unified School District, Madera Youth Leaders, Fathers Matter in Stockton and Freedom Bound Center in Sacramento. The CVI also provided technical assistance and support to ESPINO - ¡Escuelas Sí! ¡Pintas No! - the first youth-led organizing network in the Central Valley.

By the time Youth In Focus closed in 2010, it had trained more than 30 staff and hundreds of youth and adult partners in youth participatory action research. Many of those trainers went on to be leaders in YPAR and related fields and to use and adapt Youth In Focus' original materials.

Community Futures, Community Lore's tools have built on that legacy and now include the learning, insights and evolution of many, many practitioners. It truly represents a collective practice and love for this work.

## Roots of YPAR

*This essay originally appeared in Youth REP Step By Step – an introduction to youth-led research, evaluation and planning, written and published by Youth In Focus. We decided to include the original piece with a new introduction to share some of the early foundation of this work. Youth In Focus, its founders, partners and staff, were some of the original practitioners of youth participatory action research. This article was written right when the work was becoming popular and the field was emerging. We included it in this Stepping Stone for those of you who are interested in the theoretical foundations of the work.*

The Community Futures, Community Lore model grew out of the action and reflection of Youth In Focus, its three youth co-founders and the generations of practitioners who continued to develop the work over time. At the same time, the ideas that underlie and inspire the work can be traced to several different fields, including popular education, participatory research and youth development grounded in social justice and organizing.

The fields of popular education and participatory action research support the notion that all people, particularly the least powerful, can and should play a role in decision-making, planning and change processes that shape their lives. Popular education—an approach to collective learning that begins with the lived experiences of participants and results in actions that reflect those experiences—offers a legacy of empowering communities all over the world to understand and solve problems. Participatory action research (PAR) reframes the typical dichotomies between researcher and subject and between research and action. PAR casts research and evaluation as democratic processes working to empower participants – especially the most marginalized – to act as informed agents in improving their lives and affecting social change. Youth-led research re-positions youth from passive subjects of inquiry to arbiters of the topics and questions to be studied, and to what (and whose) benefit this knowledge will be directed. Participatory planning has also contributed to our notion of planning of, by and for the people.

Theories of youth development, youth participation and youth organizing challenge the conventional view of youth as victims or threats and instead offer new conceptualizations of youth as resources, assets and community-builders. These ideas embrace the capacity and potential of youth to be critical and active members of their society while recognizing the need for youth supports. Youth REP (youth-led research, evaluation and planning) also springs from the social justice model of youth development, a model that recognizes that many young people's lives and communities are actively shaped by historical and institutional oppression and seeks to build the capacity of youth (particularly those marginalized by race, economics, language, culture, gender and sexual orientation, disability, etc.) first to critically understand oppression and then become active change agents in overcoming it. This understanding and action takes place on a personal, community and global level in order to promote the change needed for social welfare and the common good. Our work is further grounded in a tradition of youth organizing which assumes young people can educate, mobilize and act as a group on behalf of their interests.

Finally, there is a body of writing specifically focused on youth-led research and evaluation that is informing and has been informed by Youth REP.



# About

# Community Futures,

# Community Lore

## STEPPING STONE GUIDES



The CFCL Stepping Stone guides were developed based on the original work of the Intercultural Oral History Project/Tibet, the Intercultural Oral History Project/Nepal, Community LORE, Youth In Focus and the Putting Youth on the Map program at the UC Davis Center for Regional Change. Many, many individuals, communities and projects contributed over a period of more than twenty years to CFCL's approach to YPAR (youth participatory action research). For the full set of Stepping Stone guides, YPAR stories, background on the CFCL approach, and a list of project credits visit the website: [ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu](http://ypar.cfcl.ucdavis.edu)

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