Youth Voice in Action: Tips, Strategies, and Advice from Youth Evaluators

YouthPower Learning
Youth Engagement Community of Practice & American Evaluation Association Youth Focused Evaluation Group
September 13, 2017

Advancing solutions to transform the lives of young people
YouthPower Learning
Advancing Solutions to Improve Young Lives

• YouthPower Learning advances solutions through integrated research and development programs to improve the capacity of youth-led and youth-serving institutions.

• By engaging youth, their families, communities, and governments in innovative programs, we build young people’s skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the enabling environment; and transform systems.

What is Positive Youth Development (PYD)?

PYD programs recognize youth’s inherent rights and result in youth who have assets, the ability to leverage those assets (agency), and the ability to contribute to positive change for themselves and their communities, surrounded by an enabling environment that supports them.

http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development
YouthPower Learning Youth Engagement (YE) Community of Practice (CoP)

- **Co-champions**
  - Christy Olenik, Making Cents International
  - Mike Sweigart, Independent Consultant

- **Facilitator:**
  - Lindsey Woolf, Making Cents International

- **Started December 2015**
- **300+ members**
YE CoP

**Goal 1:** Contribute and disseminate a shared definition of YE for YouthPower

**Goal 2:** Support the development of measurement indicators focused on YE

**Goal 3:** Create a space for the sharing of YE experiences and group problem solving

**Goal 4:** Develop a clearinghouse of resources and tools on YE

**Goal 5:** Bring the youth voice into YouthPower activities
Thank You to our Co-Hosts

American Evaluation Association
Youth Focused Evaluation
Topical Interest Group

Topical Interest Group within AEA
Approximately 300 members (US and Global members)
Meetings, webinars, newsletters, exchanges, and community of practice
Speakers

Jessica Hackbarth
McCreary Centre Society

Annie Smith
McCreary Centre Society
Speakers

Leili Lyman
RYSE Youth Center

Brian Villa
RYSE Youth Center
Speakers

Sergio Bustamante
International Republican Institute
WHAT SKILLS WE LEARNED FROM MCCREARY

- Data entry
- Analysis
- Database creation
- Survey development
- Literature review
- Claymation creation
- Workplace Etiquette
- Computer skills – Excel, PP, Word
- Statistical Software- SPSS (frequencies, crosstabs)
- Facilitation and workshop development
- Note-taking
- Presentation skills
PROJECT INVOLVEMENT

• Representative for Children & Youth (RCY) Educational Outcomes

• Federal Youth Justice Project
  • Culturally sensitive practices for residential drug treatment centres

• Collective Impact

• Deprivation Index
RCY EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Who works there?
What skills/experience do they have?
What qualities do they have?

What does the physical environment look like?
What does the emotional environment feel like?
How is this created/maintained?

Activities
- Swimming, sports, fitness, yoga, meditation, science, outdoor activities, etc.
WHY INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE’S VOICE IS IMPORTANT
TIPS AND STRATEGIES

• Topic of interest to young people
• Be mindful of the barriers youth face
• Be flexible in hours
• Cover transportation/food
• Target youth through youth workers and school counselors
• Have a work place point person
• Open space (with others but can works alone)
• Recognise different dynamics
TIPS AND STRATEGIES

• Agenda that is flexible
• Be ready for the craziness!
• Chances for advancement
• Easily accessible (on transit)
• Chance to network and see other opportunities
• Empathetic and safe environment
• Build connections
• Recognise topic might be hard or triggering
• Be open to youth’s ideas
TIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

• “Take this job because it’s not like any other job that you can get as a youth, and it’s a good learning experience which can expand into a career”

• “It’s a learning experience and it allows you to have a voice in things that you are passionate about.”

• “It’s a good opportunity to get into the field of research or youth health-related things”
Ground Breaking Research

HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=VF7DH4SHOUE
FOR MORE INFORMATION

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT MCCREARY OR THE YRA, OR IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE YRA, VISIT WWW.MCS.BC.CA. YOU CAN CONTACT US AT MCCREARY@MCS.BC.CA OR 604-291-1996.
Brief History of RYSE

RYSE creates safe spaces grounded in social justice that build youth power for young people to love, learn, educate, heal and transform their lives and communities.

- Born from youth organizing
- Created to address and promote health equity
- Integrative Model: All right doors
- Systems change focus; values driven
- Theory of Liberation
“Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

- Listening Campaign
- Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)
  - Gender and sexual-based violence
  - LGBTQ safety and visibility
  - School to prison pipeline
  - Mental Health and Coping
- Listening to Heal
- Creating Beloved Community
YPAR on Mental Health & Coping

- Background on Public Health Internship
- Topic, Issue, Purpose, Research Question
- Mixed methods
  - Quantitative: Surveys
  - Qualitative: Focus group & Interviews
- Key Findings:
  - Youth find that weed is more accessible than talking to an adult
  - Youth feel that talking to adults can be potentially harmful
- Conclusion
- Action Plan: Chat Lounge
Why Youth Voices Matter

“We know we can’t run the city, it’s too complex, but our experiences and voices should count, especially because we’re the ones most affected.” - RYSE Youth

- RYSE & Listening Campaign
  - Youth Driven
  - Context, Time, Place
  - Youth Leadership & Agency
- Youth narratives and lived expertise
- Platform to speak up
- Youth Leadership Pipeline
Takeaways

- **Brian:**
  - Relationships are key
  - The YPAR process involves a variety of skills
  - Assess short-term and long-term goals

- **Leili:**
  - Changed perspective on community
  - Supported academic & career goals
  - Received new opportunities
Tips/Strategies/Advice

- Youth must feel connected to research
- Preparation using various methods
- Holistic support and mentorship of adult allies
- Create a timeline
- Cycles of inquiry
- Cohort model, flexible
- Stay connected and follow up
Youth Democracy Lab
Small-scale Evaluation

Youth Democracy Lab (YDL)
Youth Democracy Lab
Small-scale Evaluation
Young voices unite!
Youth Democracy Lab
Small-scale Evaluation

What to keep in mind?
Youth Democracy Lab
Small-scale Evaluation

🎉 Have FUN! 🎉
Q&A
Thank you!

Thank you for participating in this event organized by YouthPower Learning.

The recording will be made available to all registrants.

@YPLearning

YouthPower Learning

www.YouthPower.org