Youth Participatory Action Research with Chican@/Latin@ Girls
Chicana/Latina Girls in the Juvenile Justice System Conference, Salinas, CA

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Welcome
Casa de Esperanza

“Starting from a small group of Latina activists in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1982, Casa de Esperanza has grown into the premier Latin@ domestic violence organization in the country.”
The National Latin@ Network
Guiding Frameworks

- Human Rights & Social Justice, Strength-Based
- Intersectional Frameworks
- Participatory Frameworks
What does this mean on the ground?

If we start with problems we get programs. If we start with strengths we get opportunities.

-Lupe Serrano
COMMUNITY CAPACITY

**INDIVIDUAL**
- Culturally Relevant Support
- Mind, Body & Spirit
- Health & Well-being
- Leadership Development
- Active Participation
- Opportunities to influence the organization

**FAMILY**
- Parenting Support
- Honoring Different Family Structures as defined by the individual
- Culturally Relevant Support
- Building Relationships

**POLICY & SOCIO POLITICAL**
- Technical Assistance
- Staying Culturally Specific Topics
- Organization collaborations
- Interwining in Policy

**COMMUNITY & ORGANIZATIONAL**
- PAR
- Connecting with Resources
- Knowledge Exchange
- Building Bridges

Putting the work into the hands of the community
Intro to YPAR
Discussion
“Knowledge is rooted in social relations and most powerful when produced collaboratively [with those most affected by the social issue] through action”.

(Torre and Fine, 2005)
Youth Participatory Action Research

- 3 Components of PAR (Meyer, 2000)
  1. Participation (emphasizing democracy)
  2. Empowerment (consciousness raising)
  3. Action (social change)

- Positive Youth Development (Larson, 2000)
  - Build on youth experiences
  - Youth as partners
Youth Participatory Action Research

**Participation** - “to have a part or share in something”

**Action** - ‘the bringing about of an alteration”

Using research as a tool.

(Kidd & Kral, 2005)

PAR as an *approach* to research and *not* a method of analysis (Ulin, Robinson, & Tolley; 2005).
Youth Participatory Action Research

“The creation of a context in which knowledge development and change might occur.”

“Dialectic movement between action & reflection”  
(Kidd & Kral, 2005)
1. Manipulation - adults use young people to support their own projects and pretend they are the result of young peoples' inspiration

2. Decoration - young people help implement adults' initiatives

3. Participation for show - young people have little or no influence on their activities

4. Young people are assigned tasks and informed how and why they are involved in a project

5. Adults make decisions, young people are consulted and informed

6. Adults' initiative, joint decisions

7. Young people's initiative and leadership

8. Young people's initiative, decisions made in partnership with adults

Hart, 1997
YPAR Approach

ISSUE/GOAL

Building ALLIES

Building EVIDENCE

Observe

Reflect

Act

Plan

Increasing STRATEGIC ACTION For SYSTEM CHANGE

Mosher, 2014
Healing Informed Approach
YPAR In Action

• Caminar Latino’s La Voz YPAR Group
  • 7 youth age 16-22
• Purpose of the study: Impact of current immigration policy from the perspective of Latino families affected by domestic violence living in Atlanta, GA.
La Voz Process

- Youth developed questions around immigration for their communities
- Areas of concern (per youth)
  - Reasons for coming and staying in the US
  - Impact of immigration policies on families at Caminar Latino
  - Potential problems and benefits of the undocumented community in society as well as potential solutions
  - Myths versus realities about Latino immigrants
- Conducted 19 interviews (Youth and Adults)
Youth Results: Immigration

- Discrimination at school: youth had experienced discrimination citing school as one of the main places where the discrimination took place.

  “Well personally, in school, people are a lot more open to being racist in school. Because with the new laws, they think its ok.” – Foreign born 15 year old female

  “At school we were talking about immigration and I don't know where it came up but someone asked me what it felt like to be an illegal alien.” – Foreign born 15 year old female

- Emotional distress: The youth also reported that they felt fear, sadness, anger, and a change in their lifestyle as a result of the discrimination

  “[...] in 6th grade they were calling me illegal and telling me to go across the border. This led to a physical fight. Although I didn't know what it meant, I knew it was bad. I mean, it's true but I can't fight back even though it wasn't my choice to be illegal.” – Foreign born 17 yr old male
La Voz de Caminar Latino

- Strategies for staying safe
- Experiences of law enforcement and child protective services
- Georgia Latin@ Gangs
- Childhood Experiences of DV Among Latin@ Adults
- Impact of immigration policy on Latin@ families affected by DV
Thank You!

casadeesperanza.org  nationallatinonetwork.org