

Youth Participatory Action Research

A Review of the Literature

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades the prevalence of obesity among youth has increased dramatically¹ and research shows that the obesity epidemic may reduce life expectancy with minority populations hit the hardest². While youth represent almost one-quarter of the U.S. population (approximately 74 million³), they rarely have the opportunity to shape the health programs, services and policies that impact their lives. Youth are almost always the subjects of research projects aimed at youth programs and services, as opposed to research partners actively shaping the research process⁴. In addition, negative youth stereotypes are pervasive throughout American culture. Historically terms such as disaffected, apathetic, immature and lacking discipline have been synonymous with youth. The negative perceptions of youth, have in part led to their disenfranchisement. While age can be an impediment to youth engagement in civic affairs, age coupled with race, ethnicity, gender or class can create seemingly insurmountable obstacles to youth involvement in areas that impact their lives⁵. However, the tide on youth engagement is starting to change; in the past decade, public health and youth development practitioners have begun to engage youth through a research process aimed at giving youth a voice and encouraging their participation in health, scholastic, and civic affairs⁶.

Youth participatory action research (YPAR) has emerged as a research paradigm employed to give youth voice. The YPAR model defines youth as assets, rejecting the age old, deficit oriented stereotypes. YPAR is based on the same principles as participatory action research (PAR), but mandates that the research process be led by youth with guidance from an adult ally. Youth are tapped to lead research projects because of the unique energy and insights they provide, and their unbridled enthusiasm, optimism and credibility to promote change.

YPAR involves youth in areas of their lives where they are greatly impacted, but typically exercise little influence (e.g. schools, health programs). YPAR projects have been conducted both nationally and internationally on a wide range of health and social issues. A diverse array of youth have been engaged in YPAR through schools, community based organizations, state government and international government agencies such as the World Health Organization. YPAR is increasingly being used by public health practitioners who realize that resources are ineffectively allocated toward health promotion programs when youth are not involved in the planning and evaluation of those programs⁷. In addition, research is demonstrating that:

Youth who are civically engaged are less likely to partake in health-damaging behaviors and more likely to have improved health outcomes, including a reduction in rates of alcohol and drug use, and fewer teenage births. (Soleimanpour, Brindis, Geierstanger, Kandawalla, and Kurlaender, 2011:710).

Not only do youth develop personally from their involvement in action research, but the organizations and communities that sponsor YPAR projects benefit as well.

Through the research process, civic engagement and advocacy, youth gain valuable practical skills and become empowered as social change agents. Similarly, organizational benefits through YPAR include the development of processes to continually engage youth and a redefined, youth friendly culture. Communities benefit from having a contingency of skilled young people able and willing to infuse the youth perspective and voice into civic affairs. The research process is enhanced, with creativity manifested through the youth lens. Finally public health is enhanced through the development of appropriate youth-focused health promotion interventions resulting from the engagement of hard-to-reach youth from marginalized communities who are often overlooked by health systems.

The information presented in this literature review is a synthesis of findings from academic journals and Internet resources. This literature review includes:

- Overview: a brief overview that describes the research context within which Participatory Action Research developed, and the central tenets of PAR as a research paradigm;
- Essential Elements: A review of the essential elements of YPAR, that includes YPAR outcomes, challenges and best practices developed by YPAR practitioners;
- Photovoice Methodology: An overview of the photovoice methodology and a youth photovoice project;
- YPAR Projects: A brief description of national and international YPAR projects, with an emphasis on how youth were engaged in the research process; and
- Intended Outcomes: Evidence of YPAR intended outcomes with an assessment of the need for evaluation of YPAR programs.

This literature review was undertaken to inform the development of a process and outcome evaluation toolkit for the Youth Engagement Initiative (YEI) launched by the California Department of Public Health's *Network for a Healthy California* in October of 2006. YEI engages low resource middle and high school age youth, in a youth-led PAR project aimed at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and increased physical activity.

SECTION 2: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Although there is debate as to the origin of PAR, three sources are often credited, Saul Alinsky^{8,9,10}, Paulo Freire^{11,12,13}, and Kurt Lewin¹⁴. The PAR paradigm was developed through critical analysis of social research methods where research "experts" controlled both the production and distribution of knowledge¹⁵. The PAR methodology was developed as an antithesis to the dominant research paradigm, and includes four tenets that at one time were perceived as non-scientific:

1. Inclusion: A central tenet of PAR is the inclusion of local communities as active participants in the research process^{16,17,18,19,20,21}. Those who will be impacted by the research being conducted are drawn in as research partners to co-create the research question, design and process. PAR gives voice to those affected by the research by, "*breaking down distinctions between the researcher and the researched*" in analyzing conditions that affect their health and well-being (Flicker et al., 2008:288).
2. Shared Authority: A second principle of PAR is the necessity for shared authority between the researchers and community participants, in that "*all phases of research and action are shared equitably among partners in collaboration*" (Ozer et al., 2010:152). PAR recognizes that both the researcher and community participants bring inherent knowledge and that a true partnership is necessary for the sharing and transfer of that knowledge. Whereas residents have knowledge of their communities, researchers have knowledge of theory and technical skills. An essential element of PAR is the transfer of that knowledge, particularly the technical skills transferred from researcher to community partners. Through an iterative process of research and action, community members become empowered to act independently as researchers and social change agents^{22,23}.
3. Knowledge Legitimacy: A third tenet of PAR is the legitimization of local knowledge. According to London, "*PAR valorizes local knowledge, and expresses confidence in the ability of people to critically reflect upon their own experiences to generate scientific knowledge,*" (2006:2). Participatory research is based on the epistemological assumption that knowledge is constructed socially, and therefore collective analysis of life experiences with regard to power and knowledge creation is appropriate²⁴. The collection and critical reflection of local knowledge, or life stories, allows community partners to understand the multiple ways in which individuals are impacted in their community and to recognize the socio-political environment that shapes their lives. That shared understanding is necessary for the development of collective empowerment to guide change in communities and the research participants themselves.
4. Vehicle for Social Change: The ultimate goal of a PAR project is positive social change that is driven by empowered community members based on the research they conducted. PAR projects should not end with a report that sits on a shelf. Project participants should be mobilized to act through the collective analyses of research findings. Furthermore, the ultimate path to action is chosen by the project participants whose lives will ultimately be impacted by the action taken.

SECTION 3: YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Through the use of YPAR, public health and youth development practitioners are increasingly including young people in research on important social issues or programs that affect their lives. The principles of YPAR parallel those employed for PAR projects in that researchers share authority with the research participants who are trained in all aspects of the research process, encouraged to share their stories, and through critical reflection and research become aware of the factors that shape their lives and become empowered to make positive social change. According to Jonathan London, youth-led research;

... pushes PAR to include age as an identifier that should not serve to deny the legitimacy to speak one's own truth. PAR offers the opportunity for young people to speak the world as they see it, to envision the world as they desire it, and then to take action to make these visions a reality (2006:2).

A defining feature of YPAR is the *decision making influence of youth*. In YPAR youth make the decisions regarding the projects focus, and direction^{25,26,27} and are actively engaged as research partners, as opposed to having a token level of involvement²⁸. For both youth and adults, YPAR is a departure from traditional roles, norms and power relations. Traditionally adults have authority over youth in most settings, and control the production and distribution of knowledge. In YPAR, youth share authority with adults and influence the production (research) and distribution of knowledge (research report and presentations). YPARs departure from long held roles, norms and power relations makes " *an emphasis on promoting youth's sense of ownership and control over the process*" an essential element (Ozer et al. 2010:153). Youth development practitioners postulate that the youth-led nature of YPAR can serve to attract youth who otherwise might not participate in a research project. For example, according to Anyon and Naughton;

... the youth-led design is critical in a community like West Oakland, where academic disengagement is prevalent and similarities with a traditional classroom arrangement are to be avoided. Furthermore, given the participants' sense of powerlessness in other areas of their lives, the youth-led nature of a program can give a sense of control that has a unique draw in communities like this one (2003:5).

In youth-led research, the *adult ally* is largely responsible for promoting and ensuring the decision making influence and continued engagement of youth.

The adult ally shapes the environment within which the research is being conducted and is responsible for promoting youth's ability to take ownership and manage the research process. Serving as a research partner, the adult ally provides education and training to youth on all facets of a research project^{29,30}. Through education and training, the adult ally guides youth through the research process in such a way that

youth are enabled to make the decisions necessary to move the project forward and ultimately become empowered to create social change. In addition to promoting youths' sense of control over the project, the adult ally must also promote the social and political engagement of youth to address the problems identified by their research³¹. Power and Tiffany (2006:80) posit that YPAR;

engages young people in research on important social issues that enables them to exercise their political rights, prepares them for active participation in a democratic society and empowers them to make social change.

Youth-led PAR projects are guided by the same principles employed for community-based PAR projects. However, what sets YPAR apart from community-based PAR is a research process led by youth in partnership with an adult ally. The youth navigate the research seas from the beginning of the journey – defining the research question – to the end – acting on research recommendations - and ultimately feel empowered to become agents of change.

Benefits of YPAR

Youth development practitioners employ YPAR as a research methodology primarily due to the benefits correlated with the approach. The primary rationale for conducting a YPAR project is the positive benefits realized by youth, although organization, community, research and public health benefits also are associated with the methodology.

Table 1: Youth Skills and Benefits

Skill Development	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership³² • Critical thinking^{33,34,35} • Writing^{36,37} • Public speaking^{38,39,40} • Decision making⁴¹ • Advocacy⁴² • Communication⁴³ • Time management⁴⁴ • Meeting facilitation⁴⁵ • Conflict resolution⁴⁶ • Teamwork^{47,48} • Research methods^{49,50} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased social networks^{51,52} • Improved self-respect⁵³ • Enhanced Self-efficacy⁵⁴ • Increased self-confidence^{55,56} • Instilled sense of civic responsibility⁵⁷ • Increased Self-esteem⁵⁸ • Community awareness⁵⁹ • Trusted and respectful relationships with adult ally and members of the community^{60,61,62} • Confidence in their ability to affect positive community change/empowered^{63,64} • Awareness of the social factors shaping their lives⁶⁵ • Opportunities to serve as role model/mentor for other youth^{66,67}

Youth Benefits: Youth gain new skills and positive benefits through training and applied learning and as a result of being engaged in advocacy and civic engagement activities. Ultimately, youth become empowered through the process of training, conducting research, and compiling research findings in a report aimed at directing the refinement and/or development of programs and/or policies that impact them⁶⁸. Table one outlines both the skills and positive benefits correlated to youth involvement in YPAR projects.

It is interesting to note that YPAR has the potential to affect long-term youth outcomes; youth can apply the skills and benefits gained through participation in an YPAR project to other aspects of their lives, i.e., academic, employment and community engagement.

Organizational Benefits: Typically, positive social change in an organization or community is the long-term goal of an YPAR project. Given the goal of instigating change in an area(s) they do not control, youth must involve the organizational and community powerbrokers in their quest for positive change. Through successful engagement of the powerbrokers, it is inevitable that some degree of organizational and community benefit will be actualized. According to Powers and Tiffany;

Engaging youth in research and evaluation not only generates useful knowledge for communities and individuals but also provides opportunities for the development and empowerment of youth participants, leading to benefits for young people, organizations, the broader community, and the research process (2006:79).

According to London, Zimmerman and Erbstein (2003) organizations will benefit from YPAR projects in three different areas:

1. Skill and knowledge building: Organizational skill and knowledge building benefits include an expanded understanding of community issues, increased staff and institutional capacity to foster and maintain youth-led research projects, an improved organizational culture, and relevant programming and services;
2. Leadership and relationship development: An organization's leadership development capacity is enhanced through YPAR by increasing the organization's ties to a potential pool of skilled employees. Additionally, YPAR strengthens the relationships between the organization, youth and community members by engaging those who might not have interacted with the organization outside of a youth-led research process; and
3. Identify formation: The identity of the organization is bolstered by the inclusion of youth centered or intergenerational characteristics.

Community Benefits: Comparable to the above organizational benefits identified, London, Zimmerman and Erbstein (2003) also distinguish potential community benefits that result from YPAR project involvement. Communities benefit from an increased capacity to cultivate intergenerational partnership and youth leaders. London et al (2003) also posit that the community will have increased social capital, "*through a new generation with civic responsibility, analytical skills, and empowerment to address the challenges of the community,*" (2003:38). YPAR also leaves a lasting legacy in communities as a result of new decision making models that engage multiple generations and instill intergenerational communication and collaboration.

Research Benefits: Whilst youth, organizations and communities benefit from YPAR projects, the research process and products are enhanced through youth involvement. A youth led research design will result in data collection tools and methodologies that are youth friendly^{69,70}. In addition, youth populations that are difficult to reach by adults can be accessed and recruited by youth to participate in the study⁷¹. Data analysis and interpretation is improved because it involves experts in the issue being researched^{72,73,74}. Lastly, the final reports developed through youth-led research are creative in nature and speak to a wide range of youth and community audiences^{75,76}.

Public Health: Progressively over time, YPAR has become a strategy employed to improve public health and health services. According to Sánchez, Lomelí-Loibl and Nelson, "YPAR can be a key tool for prevention and early intervention in the health field and beyond," (2009:8). Historically, health prevention and intervention programs aimed at youth were not informed by the youth perspective and at times alienated the intended audience. Through YPAR, youth can provide firsthand accounts, and "ethnically and culturally diverse perspectives that are vital in implementing responsive health programs," (Soleimanpour et al. 2008:709). Youth perspective can ensure that youth prevention and intervention health programs use relevant messaging, outreach and data gathering techniques. In addition, through YPAR youth gain leadership and advocacy skills and a belief in their ability to succeed. Youth engaged in health related YPAR projects become change agents impacting their immediate social networks and often times community networks, which is beneficial to achieving public health goals.

YPAR is associated with youth, organization, community, research and public health benefits. The broad array of benefits is a byproduct of a process that is largely used to engage youth in area of their lives where they are greatly impacted, but are afforded little influence. YPAR is a methodology employed by YPAR practitioners in the hopes of transforming youth into social change agents through education, training, research and advocacy.

YPAR Challenges

All situations present both opportunities and challenges and YPAR projects are no exception. While the above section highlights benefits correlated with youth-led projects, the below section presents potential challenges identified by YPAR practitioners. The majority of the challenges are directly tied to the context within which the project is based, (e.g. community, school).

In their article, Ozer, Ritterman and Wanis (2010) outline YPAR challenges by drawing on their experience implementing a youth-led PAR project in a San Francisco middle school. The school is located in an affluent neighborhood, but on average, two-thirds of the student population are economically disadvantaged and do not live in the immediate school vicinity. The youth-led research team included 32 ethnically diverse students in the 7th and 8th grades, two university students and an adult ally who met daily during an elective period. After the first year, interviews were conducted to obtain data pertaining to project activities, impacts and challenges. The data revealed that the student's maturity level, the academic calendar, and teacher's tenure presented challenges to YPAR implementation.

Researchers observed challenges posed by the uneven maturity levels between boys and girls. While middle school girls were focused, the boys were energetic and unfocused. Observation logs noted that the boys poked each other, talked over each other, and continuously sought attention. Unsurprisingly, the unfocused enthusiasm of the boys was disruptive and created a challenge for the transfer of decision making authority to students, which is mandated by the YPAR paradigm.

While the authors note that a lack of time is always an issue when conducting a PAR project, "*the academic calendar and competing demands represent formidable challenges for school-based PAR,*" (Ozer et al. 2010:160). YPAR projects conducted in a school-based setting only have nine months, not accounting for winter and spring breaks, to complete the necessary education, training and research. For projects that cannot be completed within the nine month timeframe, student attrition due to graduation and competing demands can become problematic when the program is reconvened with a new cohort of youth the following academic year. For example, the new cohort may have difficulty following through on the previous research and taking ownership of a research question and process not defined by them. Bringing the new cohort up to speed requires time, which detracts from the already tight nine month timeframe. It is interesting to note that the above mentioned challenges will be largely mitigated by the adult ally working in partnership with youth. Although the adult ally plays a central role in the process, the ally's tenure can also have an impact on the YPAR implementation.

The adult ally's social networks, or lack thereof, can influence the YPAR project in various ways. A teacher with a long tenure at a school is likely to have social ties to administrators, other teachers and student clubs. The social capital inherent in existing networks can be leveraged by the teacher to engage other stakeholders as a practice audience, change strategy consultants or as partners. According to Ozer, Ritterman, and Wanis;

Students engaging in PAR projects that seek to make changes in schools are operating with limited power in a politically-sensitive environment; forming alliances with more powerful stakeholders such as teachers and administrators and getting them "bought in" early on thus improves the likelihood of having a positive impact (2010:162).

In comparison to veteran teachers, newly hired teachers will lack established social ties and will have to expend more energy in the identification and recruitment of allies. In addition, a newly hired teacher may be concerned about negative repercussions that might result from mentoring students engaged in politically-sensitive issues. Regardless of tenure, staff turn-over can also pose a challenge to YPAR project.

As mentioned previously, the adult ally plays an essential and integral role to the success of a YPAR project. When there is adult ally turn-over, "background, history, and forward momentum are lost," (Marois, 2011:23). A new adult ally will need to complete training and build relationship with both the youth and project stakeholders;⁷⁷ which can add more time, to the typically tight project timeline. Moreover, the departure of an adult ally can negatively impact the retention of youth who have developed meaningful relationships with their outgoing mentor. Retirement and budget cuts are the leading causes of staff turn-over.⁷⁸ In lean economic times, school funding is tenuous at best. Precarious budget situations can make long-term planning impossible in school districts threatened by lay-offs and cut backs to balance budgets. Interestingly, research illustrates that family budgets also can impact on YPAR projects.

Anyon and Naughton authored an issue brief that outlines the benefits and challenges of sponsoring an afterschool youth-led research project in the high-poverty, urban setting of West Oakland. While they conclude that the YPAR paradigm has value in that context, the high-poverty setting poses challenges to the program design. Challenges faced by the West Oakland project included transforming power relations, converting the youth agenda into community change and the competing demands placed on youth.

Although West Oakland youth wanted to participate in a youth-led research project focused on bettering the community, they were faced with conflicting demands on their time due to their family's economic situation. Youth were expected to spend their after school time caring for siblings or working to supplement the families income, as opposed to working on a youth-led research project. The deeply ingrained economic

realities of the community also caused an impediment to transformation of power relations between the youth and adult allies.

While the adult allies attempted to create an environment for the transfer of authority to youth, at first, the youth were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with that authority. The issue may stem from long-held role norms and the lack of opportunities in economically depressed neighborhoods. Anyon and Naughton believe, "*habits and notions of power relations between youth and adults are deeply ingrained, especially in high-poverty communities where young people believe they have little control over their own destiny,*" (2010:4). While the adult allies were ultimately successful in the transfer of authority, the socioeconomic forces at play made that process arduous and complex.

The norms surrounding power relations also had an impact converting the youth agenda into community change. In order for youth to impact change, they must navigate bureaucracies created by and for adults. In West Oakland, youth were often confronted with adults in bureaucracies who felt powerless to make change and found it difficult to share the power they had. Although adults listened to youth, they were not ready for youth to be active change agents, shaping policy or practice in a substantive way. The prevalence of adultism is not simply confined to West Oakland, as Marois notes, "adults have their own ideas about effective strategies and find it difficult to resist imposing these," (2011: 21). In addition the bureaucracies are not always equipped to respond to youth recommendations. For many communities, long-term funding is scarce and economic resources are not readily available to implement the youths' vision for change. Additionally, individuals outside the immediate organization or community often make funding decisions that determine which change strategies are implemented and often times, there are multiple agencies involved in those funding decisions.⁷⁹

As to be expected, there are challenges inherent in implementing an YPAR project. Some projects will be negatively impacted by challenges, while others will have the resources and skills necessary to surmount the obstacles. Challenges associated with the implementation of YPAR involve all of the actors necessary for a successful project, (i.e., youth, adult allies and community partners). The challenges range from the maturity level of youth involved in the project to the norms surrounding power sharing among youth and adults. However, it should be noted that the projects briefly discussed above were implemented successfully despite the challenges encountered. Perseverance among the participants resulted in meeting challenges head-on and identifying solutions. While the stories shed light on the challenges that can arise when implementing youth-led research, they should simply serve as illustrations of potential challenges YPAR interventions might anticipate and prepare for, as opposed to definitive challenges every YPAR project will encounter.

YPAR Best Practices

Through the ups and down of youth-led research, YPAR best practices or lessons learned have emerged and been documented by youth-led research practitioners. Below is a brief overview of some of the best practices identified in the literature.

- *Organizational readiness*: Before embarking on a youth-led research project, the organizational sponsor should ensure they are adequately prepared for the task at hand^{80,81,82}. Readiness includes an assessment of the organizational culture to accommodate the responsibilities and demands of a youth-led research project^{83,84}. According to Jonathan London (2006), organizational readiness should be assessed on two different dimensions: the anticipated level of youth authority and youth inclusion.

The level of authority bestowed to youth in youth-led research will require a supportive organizational culture and an adult ally with strong facilitative leadership capacities. Organizations also will need the resources (e.g., funding, adult training, logistical support) to sustain the project, due to the high level of youth inclusion^{85,86}. London cautions that research projects with a high level of youth inclusion and authority require a high level of organizational capacity if they are to succeed. If organizational readiness is not considered and the institutional capacity is inadequate to support the tenants of PAR (e.g., providing a positive learning environment that culminates in empowerment and social change), the youth and/or community may be let down by unrealized expectations. There are various youth development organizational assessment tools available. A few examples include: (1) assessment questionnaire available in *Putting Positive Youth Development into Practice* published by the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth, and (2) an assessment checklist available in *Assessing Your Organization's Readiness for Youth Development* published by ACT for Youth Center of Excellence.

- *Trained Adult Ally*: The adult ally plays a significant role in YPAR projects. The adult ally is typically responsible for youth recruitment, education and training; garnering the support of the sponsoring organization and project partners, and helping youth navigate the overall research process. A key function of the adult ally is setting the tone of the research project by sharing authority with youth from the start of the project, and helping youth to embrace their new role^{87,88}. While youth education and training is explicit in the YPAR paradigm, a successful project will also require training and support for the adult ally^{89,90}. In order to perform their critical role, most allies will require training on how to, "*support youth voice in a meaningful way,*" (Anyon and Naughton 2003:6). The sharing of authority with youth is a new role for adult allies and one that some adults may resist. Training provides a foundation for allies ready to meet the challenge of an YPAR project by providing them with tools to comfortably transition into their new role. In addition, adult allies need training on

the basic tenants of PAR and YPAR and how to adopt the model to the needs and skills of youth⁹¹. According to Marois, “because results and activities can vary depending on the skill level and interest of the adult allies, selecting the ‘right’ adult ally is an important factor in project success,” (2011: 10).

- *Realistic Time Frame*: Research projects with a high degree of YPAR fidelity may require a significant amount of time to complete. Not only must youth be trained and research conducted; ultimately the research results should be used as a catalyst for change. Organizational sponsors, adult allies and youth must set realistic time frames for the completion of an YPAR project⁹². When setting a time frame, consider the following: 1) the development, application and refinement of new skills; 2) data collection, analysis and synthesis; and 3) the action steps necessary to make change. It is important to note that seasoned professionals can require a significant amount of time to implement and complete a research project. Time frames should allow for youth to, “*learn, practice and improve their craft,*” (Powers and Tiffany 2006:86). In addition, consider obstacles that may prevent youth from shepherding the project through completion. As mentioned previously, school-based YPAR projects are confined to a nine month time frame for research related tasks. As a result, students involved in the project from the beginning, who are nearing the end of their middle or high school careers, may not be able to participate in the final phases of project. In this case, actions might be strategically placed throughout the research process to accommodate those students who cannot participate in the culminating action or final phase of the project. For example, once youth have been trained on research methods and defined their research methodology, they can make a formal presentation of their progress to school administrators and leadership to garner the support of project stakeholders. This is a significant and realistic action step for YPAR.
- *Multiple Modes of Participation*: The YPAR methodology does not explicitly address youth recruitment strategies. However, integral to the methodology is the recruitment of youth with diverse life experience and/or cultural backgrounds⁹³. This diversity also extends to the academic backgrounds, skills and talents of youth. While the heterogeneity of youth is an asset for YPAR projects, it also requires the use of multiple modes of participation that cater to the youth’s level of development and academic strengths^{94,95,96,97}. Youth may feel uncomfortable engaging in research tasks that utilize academic skills that are undeveloped. For example, youth that lack interest in math may struggle with quantitative data analysis, but excel at qualitative data analysis. Employing a variety of activities that address the various modes of learning and academic backgrounds of students will increase the participation of the full spectrum of youth. In Redwood City, YPAR practitioners;

...developed a blend of activities – some written, other oral; some in small groups, others in large groups – so that youth could engage in the ways they felt most comfortable while still being exposed to other types of learning experiences they found more challenging. Furthermore, we tried to foster a cooperative environment in which everyone was expected to support one another in learning and working towards a common goal (Fernandez 2002:4)

Gradually increasing the complexity and/or number of tasks over time is another strategy employed to immerse youth at varied academic levels^{98,99}. According to Powers and Tiffany (2006) the changing development needs of youth can be accommodated by slowly increasing the complexity of youth responsibilities, while also providing opportunities for those who want to decrease their level of involvement. The gradual approach can also be defined as initially giving youth well-defined tasks and encouraging them to take on more, less-defined tasks as their motivation and expertise increases. Gradually increasing the amount and/or the complexity of tasks, while also incorporating multiple modes of participation, are YPAR practices aimed at eliciting the involvement of a diverse array of youth. Ozer and colleagues also note that, "*YPAR projects must be different from typical classroom relationships and curricula to avoid 'business as usual' interactions and role demands,*" (2010:160).

- *Early Alliances:* YPAR projects can be impacted both positively and negatively by alliances or the absence of relationships with powerful stakeholders. Established relationships can facilitate the research process or open doors for the incorporation of research data in the decision-making process. In West Oakland, YPAR participants noted that the;

... most significant accomplishments were facilitated by the relationships they developed with adults in power. For example, without the support of the principal, the students would not have been able to distribute surveys to the whole school or, later, become part of the Leadership Team (Anyon and Naughton 2003:6).

Conversely, Fernandez noted that the lack of relationships or alliances negatively impacted the ability of a Redwood City YPAR project from meeting the goal of aligning the research and action timelines to facilitate full youth engagement. With regard to the alignment of timelines Fernandez notes;

This alignment for us was even more difficult since there wasn't a visible critical mass of adult allies or young people in the decision-making bodies to advocate for concrete entryways for youth involvement and therefore the use of the data into decision-making, (2002:6).

Given the direct impact that alliances and relationships can have on an YPAR project, youth and adult allies should focus on getting buy-in from powerful

stakeholders early in the process to increase the chances of having a positive impact¹⁰⁰.

- *Transparent and Open Dialogue*: There are many factors that can shape the implementation of an YPAR project. Examples of those factors include available funding, organization policies, the skills and talents of youth and adult allies, the project timeline, stakeholder expectations, and the competing demands on youth time. While adults may want to shield youth from directly addressing those factors, not discussing them could negatively impact the research processes. According to Flicker et al., "*the key to authentic youth participation is not to deny these environmental factors but to encourage transparent and open dialogue with the youth,*" (2011:297). Flicker et al. assert that youth have the ability to comprehend and successfully navigate boundaries. They illustrate their assertion with an example of youth becoming disenchanted by some project participants doing more work than others. The solution posed is to discuss the low morale and devise an equitable strategy for recognizing work that all youth participants believe to be fair. While the low morale of team members can be a difficult discussion topic, left unchecked it can lead to youth disengaging from the project. The YPAR paradigm is based on youth sharing power with adults. If youth are not encouraged to weigh all the factors when making projects decisions, they are not truly involved in a power sharing relationship.

The above discussed best practices were derived from the experiences of dedicated youth-led research practitioners reflecting upon YPAR project challenges or successes. While the best practices reviewed above may not speak to all of the issues that should be considered prior to YPAR implementation, it does establish basic criteria for success. In considering organizational readiness, adult ally training, realistic timeframes, incorporating multiple mode of participation, establishing early alliances and engaging in open and transparent dialogue, YPAR project partners will be primed for success.

SECTION 4: PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice is a community-based, participatory action research process whereby community residents document their concerns with photographs and create action plans for change^{101,102,103}. Developed by Wang and Burris in 1997, the methodology was first used with women in the Yunnan Province of China^{104,105}. Since its inception, the photovoice methodology has been applied to a variety of research topics including the, "*environmental factors that can affect health and to advocate for improvement in health for communities,*" (Necheles et al.:221). Public health researchers and practitioners have successfully used photovoice to, "reach hard-to-reach communities and engage them in a meaningful, action-oriented research process," (Catalani and Minkler, 2010:447).

Similar to YPAR, photovoice seeks to give voice to those who are marginalized through a participatory process to identify community issues, conduct research (i.e., photography, critical dialogue) and advocate for positive social change^{106,107}. At the onset of a project, participants receive cameras to take pictures that represent a particular issue or aspect of their community that is of concern to them. The participants then share their photographs, and with the assistance of a facilitator, proceed through a freewrite or facilitated discussion using SHOWeD, a Freirean-based process to critically analyze the issues^{108,109,110}. SHOWeD is a series of questions that are “*designed to uncover the root causes*” of an issue (Strack et al. 2010:633). The SHOWeD questions are as follows:

- What do you See here?
- What is really Happening here?
- How does this relate to Our lives?
- Why does this problem/situation exist?
- How can we become Empowered?
- What can we Do about it?

Based on the freewrite and discussion, participants create photography captions to narrate their opinions and observations. The process concludes with the development of an action plan to guide policy and systems change advocacy efforts^{111,112,113}. Much like YPAR, one of the goals of photovoice is the long-term empowerment of participants to become social change agents. The addition of visual cues and story-telling through pictures reinforces the youth voice.

In addition to empowering participants, photovoice and YPAR share other similarities. Both photovoice and YPAR bring together residents to conduct research on pressing community issues. As with YPAR, community residents and researchers involved in the photovoice project operate as equals for all phases of the research process. Both YPAR and photovoice participants receive training from a research partner or a facilitator throughout the research process. Similar to the YPAR adult ally, the photovoice facilitator shapes the research environment and must operate as a mentor, building rapport with community participants. As a result, Strack and colleagues (2010) identify the need for robust facilitator training prior to implementing a photovoice project to aid in the retention of research participants and the overall success of the project.

With grant funding from the *UCLA Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program* and the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, the *UCLA RAND Center for Adolescent Health Promotion* launched a photovoice project with 13 students, 13 to 17 years of age, who served on the Youth Advisory Board (YAB)¹¹⁴. The project aimed to engage youth in conversations around health and foster the development of health advocacy

projects. Youth received digital cameras, memory cards, photo-editing software and a photo album for organizing photos. Students photographed community images to illustrate things that contribute to healthy or unhealthy lifestyles. In addition to taking more than 3,500 photos, youth participated in nine, 2-hour sessions over a five month period to receive training and engage in critical reflection and dialogue. The youth used a photo sorting process to identify themes, and then worked with a graphic artist to create posters that addressed the three themes that emerged – nutrition education, stress in the community, and stress in school. Copies of the posters were provided to photovoice participants, their schools and community partners to assist in spreading the message. After participating in the project, one student photographed the food at her school cafeteria, which she used to lobby the Director of Food Services for healthy lunch options. In addition, all youth participants encouraged the funder to conduct more research on obesity prevention using participatory methods.

Photovoice is one example of a participatory research method that supports working with marginalized groups on a variety of issues. Photovoice shares many of the same attributes as YPAR and has been successfully employed by health-oriented youth development practitioners to engage youth in research and social action.

SECTION 5: YPAR LEVELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES

YPAR projects have been conducted both nationally and internationally, with various levels of youth engagement. In most cases youth are involved in all aspects of the research process, from developing the research questions to presenting research findings and recommendations. YPAR projects employ a wide range of research methodologies and reporting procedures for a myriad of research topics. While YPAR is diverse on many different levels, YPAR practitioners have observed and reported positive youth, organization and community outcomes. The case studies presented below illustrate the various topics including public health related issues researched by YPAR projects, with an emphasis on the ways in which young people were engaged and the observed outcomes.

1. HIV/AIDS Communication Strategies - What every adolescent has a right to know – Bosnia / Herzegovina

From 2001 to 2003, UNICEF sponsored a global initiative aimed at building youth skills and informing UNICEF's global HIV/AIDS communication strategies¹¹⁵. The initiative involved youth working with adult supporters to research the impact of HIV/AIDS on young people's lives and communities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the research team included an adult and five core youth researchers, and 15 to 20 youth researchers' ages 13 to 19 years old. The youth were involved in almost all aspects of the research design, including selecting research topics from a predetermined list provided by UNICEF, developing research procedures and

instruments, recruiting peers and adults to participate in the study, surveying peers and adults, debriefing about the research process, entering and analyzing data, interpreting data, presenting findings, developing publications and meeting with other youth researchers to share findings and experiences. The youth also used research results for action planning. The youth researchers gained research, public speaking, presentation, group facilitation, planning, and advocacy skills as a result of their involvement with the *Right to Know* campaign. Youth who served as peer educators, also acquired teaching skills. The research process benefited from youth engagement as well, "*the project reached segments of the rural youth population that would not have been reached by traditional methods,*" (Powers and Tiffany 2006:85).

2. *Teen Smoking - Smoke Free World*

Nine youth ages 14 through 19 were involved in a grant funded project titled "Smoke Free World" (SFW) to investigate teen smoking¹¹⁶. The project was sponsored by TeenNet (now Youth Voices Research Group), an applied research center that was affiliated with Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. Initial SFW research methodologies included Internet research, critical reflection and a photovoice project. After conducting exploratory research the youth decided to focus on environmental and social justice issues as opposed to individual smoking cessation.

Over two years the youth researched international tobacco issues such as the use of western images to promote tobacco sales overseas, international marketing to women and children and a wide range of international tobacco issues. The research culminated in the development of, "*a website, video, several public service announcements that aired on television and online and an interactive youth-focused workshop that they have presented at various schools and conferences to over 500 peers,*" (2011:293). The youth participants credited their involvement in the Smoke Free World project as a catalyst to them becoming more involved in their community.

3. *Youth-led needs assessment of South of Market (SOMA)*

In 2000 – 2001 *Serving Our Youth and Communities*, a collaborative of local youth serving organizations, sponsored a youth-led needs assessment of the South of Market (SOMA) neighborhood in San Francisco¹¹⁷. The collaboration sponsored the project to counteract the dearth of youth voice in discussions related to planning for the future of SOMA. A diverse group of seven high school teens ages 14 through 17 were engaged in the project and *Youth In Focus*, a consulting and training non-profit focused on community and social change, provided training and technical assistance. The youth selected the issues to research, which included recreation, drugs, violence, and housing. Over a four

month period youth, "*designed, administered, analyzed, and reported out the results of a survey on youth experiences and aspirations for the SOMA neighborhood. The team conducted 194 surveys with young people ages 5 -18,*" (London 2006:7).

The youth analyzed the survey data, produced a written report and video titled REALISM to document their research findings and recommendations. Youth presented their research findings and recommendations at a meeting of the San Francisco Redevelopment Authority and the video REALISM was screened at the National Community Building Network annual conference in Seattle. In addition, a community coalition used the youth's research findings and recommendations to effectively lobby for the construction of a new elementary school to prevent neighborhood youth from being transferred to other school districts; however, the youth were not engaged in that effort. In a large part, the construction of a new school is a positive community impact that resulted from the SOMA youth-led needs assessment. Youth reported a sense of pride and self-efficacy from participating in the project and the acquisition of public speaking, writing and visual production skills.

4. *Youth Homelessness - Independent Living Study*

The Independent Living Study (ILS) was conducted to, "*better understand the scope and nature of youth homelessness in an update New York community,*" (Powers and Tiffany 2006:80). The purpose of the study was to obtain community planning data to qualify for federal funds to serve the communities homeless population. Typically, methods used to collect data on the homeless underestimate the number of homeless youth because the population is mobile and does not utilize traditional services. Given the limitation of traditional methods, ILS recruited six formerly homeless youth to participate in the project as core research team members, and 10 youth interviewers to facilitate a youth-friendly approach to collecting data on a hard-to-reach population. The research team also included two university students who helped facilitate the research process.

The youth involved in the ILS project developed the research tools (i.e., survey instrument and interview protocol) and methodology; recruited research participants; collected data, including 165 one hour interviews over the course of three months; interpreted findings and made presentations to key community stakeholders (e.g., legislators, funders, state policy makers). *Ultimately, policy makers and funders changed funding priorities and service delivery to address the issues faced by homeless youth based on the ILS research and recommendations.* Youth involved in the ILS project reported that adult partners listened to them, valued their insights and acted upon their findings, which

increased youth's sense of agency of personal efficacy. Youth learned how to design, plan and implement a project. They gained research, public speaking and advocacy skills. In addition, the research sample was also bolstered as a result of youth-led recruitment efforts.

5. *Youth Services - Redwood City and the John W. Gardner Center*

The Redwood City youth research project was the result of a partnership between the community collaborative Redwood City 2020 and the John W. Gardner Center - a Stanford University research institute - aimed at identifying the youth services at a new school-based family center¹¹⁸. The research team consisted of Gardner Center Staff and 13 middle school eighth graders. The youth involved in the project developed the research questions, selected the research tools, collected and analyzed data, generated findings, developed recommendations and actions and presented findings to policy makers and community members. The youth also engaged in a process of reflection, revising research questions and redefining problems as they went along. *The assessment process was instrumental in the city securing \$400,000 for the family center.* Fernandez reports that;

we have also begun to see a paradigm shift, both in adults recognizing the importance of youth being at the table, as well as youth understanding the complexities of effecting change and understanding the challenges faced by adults (2002:3).

Adults involved with the project reported being revitalized by seeing young people involved in decisions regarding resource allocation. As a result of participating in the project, youth reported increased confidence and the attainment of research and public speaking skills. Youth also recognized the positive relationships they had developed with adult partners and a sense of optimism about creating community change.

6. *Youth Expression - Peace Power*

Peace Power was a project sponsored by Beat the Street, a community-based learning center for young adults in Toronto¹¹⁹. Over the course of 32 weeks, seven youth were engaged in identifying and researching topics of interest to them, which included surviving day-to-day street life, homelessness, poverty, racism and barriers to accessing support services. The youth participated in several trainings that focused on building skills and expressing themselves in different ways in order to meet their goal, the creation of dynamic show to communicate their positive message to youth audiences (i.e., Chase your Dreams; Develop Yourself; and Widen your Perspective). In order to develop the skills, content and approach for their production, the youth also attended lyric and songwriting, breakdancing, video production, Forum Theatre, contemporary

photography and Acid Pro music production software workshops. The culminating effort consisted of a youth-developed show that included video, photography, break dancing, music production and drama about the issues identified at the outset of the project. The production reached audiences of more than 700 youth and adults. Youth involved in the Peace Power project reported that, "*music technology enabled them to communicate their feelings in a way that they felt would be heard,*" (Ficker et al. 2008:297). The youth believed that the use of technology as a communication medium also facilitated the distribution of their message in areas where street-youth voices are often not heard.

The case studies above illustrate the variety of research topics and ways in which youth are engaged in youth-led research projects. They also exemplify the types of organizations that elect to sponsor YPAR projects. While the project outcomes are diverse, they converge in three broad areas: youth, organizational and community level outcomes. The case studies make a strong case for YPAR as an effective youth development and social change strategy for a variety of social and health oriented goals.

SECTION 6: YPAR EVALUATION

Engaging youth in research has been correlated to beneficial outcomes for both the youth and the organization, and community partners involved in the project. The case study findings reveal benefits that were either observed or self-reported by adult and youth research partners. While the literature overwhelmingly indicates that there are benefits associated with YPAR, it also identifies the need for the evaluation of YPAR programs to authenticate the positive effects correlated with the methodology^{120,121,122,123}.

Powers and Tiffany conclude that organizational and community benefits are realized through youth-led research; however they note that, "*there has been little systematic study to establish an evidence base for these effects,*" (2006:79). Similarly, Checkoway and Richards-Schuster also conclude that positive benefits are correlated to youth-led research and evaluation, including psychosocial benefits for youth, but that the, "*benefits are not established by long-term study,*" (2002:23). The authors assert that there is need for research that addresses participation models, including those that are sensitive to culture and age; short and long-term impacts; and factors that facilitate and limit effective practice¹²⁴. Ozer et al calls for the development of a common framework to inform YPAR implementation and evaluation efforts, which builds on Checkoway and Richards-Schuster's assertion.

Ozer et al. (2010) maintain that the existing literature provides broad principles to guide PAR projects, but that the field lacks specific guidelines for youth-led research implementation that would allow for an accurate evaluation of YPAR projects. A framework or model could be used by YPAR practitioners to not only inform YPAR implementation, but to also inform formative evaluation efforts. The authors present two school-based PAR conceptual models - a) youth-level effects model, and b) school-level effects model - that identified targeted outcomes of PAR project conducted in a school based setting (see attachment A).

The youth-level outcomes effects model includes intervention activities (i.e., PAR being conducted in the classroom), in combination with key processes (e.g., teacher student power sharing, group work) leading to youth-level outcomes (e.g., perceived school connection, skills, efficacy in research, communication and advocacy). The school-level outcomes model includes PAR being conducted in a targeted setting (i.e., class room/school) leading to school level outcomes, which are as follows: alliance between students and adult staff, meaningful student roles in school policies and practices, student-adult inquiry and learning and collective efficacy of students for research and advocacy. The authors conclude that one way to build on the model is to integrate ongoing program development through formative evaluation in the action phase of YPAR project. This would enable youth to assess the immediate benefits of their actions, given the amount of time it can take to achieve meaningful change. They reason that

a clear advantage of more quickly engaging the students in action steps that are relevant to the problem but do not necessarily involve a change in policies or practices is that they feel they are making something happen" (Ozer et al. 2010:162).

For example, while the ultimate YPAR goal (i.e., policy change, infrastructure updates) may not be achieved for some time, student led evaluation can assist youth in determining that actions taken during the project process (i.e., presentations to raise awareness) were an important and meaningful step towards achieving the identified solution to the problem. Flicker et al. (2008) also believe that evaluation can support the youth-led research process by providing a means for youth to analyze their chosen action. In addition to incorporating evaluation as part of YPAR projects, and developing an YPAR framework to guide YPAR implementation and evaluation, Ozer and colleagues (2011) believe YPAR evaluations would also be bolstered by a clear definition of empowered outcomes.

The empowerment of youth is a strong driver for the use of the YPAR research paradigm. However, the notion of empowerment is vague, which makes the task of operationalizing empowered outcomes challenging at best. In addition, the flexible youth development model is problematic for evaluation given the various research topics and methodologies employed by YPAR projects. Ozer et al. argue that empowered outcomes must be defined in order to effectively evaluate an YPAR

program. They believe that the definition of empowered outcomes cannot be issue specific, must include all of the relevant dimensions to be measured (e.g. resource mobilization, sociopolitical context), while also being developmentally appropriate.

In their quest to build on previous research efforts and move the field forward, Ozer and Schotland developed a self-report survey that measures empowered outcomes in four areas:

- adolescents' motivation to influence their school and community setting,
- participatory behavior,
- general sociopolitical skills, and
- perceived control in their schools.

After testing their instrument, they conclude that their survey is applicable to a broad spectrum of youth development programs, but that the survey questions would need to be refined to address issue specific research topics and the context within which the program is conducted (e.g. school versus organizational project sponsor). While Ozer et al. pinpoint the necessity of defining empowered outcomes at the individual level; Strack et al. believe the definition of outcomes at four different levels is necessary for photovoice processes and outcomes evaluation.

Strack et al. present a photovoice logic model based on the social-ecological model of health (see attachment B). Not only do they believe that the logic model will help with photovoice implementation, they also believe it is useful for evaluation purposes. They attest that a theory-driven evaluation, allows for the identification of processes that are tied to changes in measured outcomes. The authors outline program fidelity, systems-level change and causality questions that should be raised to evaluate the causal link between activities at the community, organization, interpersonal and individual levels and outcomes. Program fidelity questions include the following, "*was each element of the proposed photovoice logic model in place? Were the activities carried out as planned? Was attendance and quality of program elements sufficient for each activity? Were there sufficient physical and personnel resources available to carry out each activity?*" (Strack et al. 2010:634). Systems-level questions pertain to the level of activities beyond the individual level, the diffusion of photovoice efforts within the community and project barriers. Finally, causality questioning looks at the observed intended and unintended outcomes, the strength of causal relationships between activity and outcomes and other explanations for observed changes.

Millstein and Sallis believe that evaluations of youth advocacy obesity prevention efforts need to look at process measures, and also "measures of change in individuals, social factors, built environment and policies," (2011:7). In order to guide evaluation efforts,

they developed a model that depicts the health behaviors related to childhood obesity prevention and the multiple and intersecting influences on youth advocacy (see attachment C). The model contains both inputs and outcomes and characteristics of advocacy programs and behaviors. Inputs and outputs are defined for the individual advocate, social environment, built environment and policy level. The authors placed both inputs and outcomes on multiple levels to illustrate that while each domain is separate, they also interact to produce change. The individual level refers to the psychological processes of change related to both advocacy and nutrition and physical activity behaviors. Individual level inputs include self-efficacy/self esteem and individual outputs include increased self-efficacy/self esteem. The social level input and outputs take into consideration the individual in context of multiple groups, for example the level of social support before and after the project. Built environment inputs and outputs are defined as the neighborhood characteristics and broader context within which the advocacy work is being conducted (e.g., neighborhood location and physical characteristics), and the policy level refers to the regulatory factors that influence health behaviors. Finally, the core of the model is the “process of training and implementing advocacy behaviors,” which includes education, skill development, behaviors and informed public participation: broad engagement (Millstein and Sallis, 2011:4).

While Strack et al. describe a conceptual model that can be used to inform photovoice evaluation and Millstein and Sallis present a model to guide evaluation of youth advocacy efforts, Flicker and colleagues outline an evaluation model concerned with micro, meso and macro level outcomes, which has been applied to technology-based youth research projects. The TeenNet Research Program at the University of Toronto developed a participatory research program that incorporates the use of media technology and evaluation to engage youth in health promotion and community action. They aptly named their technology driven model “e-PAR”.

TeenNet evaluates their programs on three different levels: micro, meso and macro.

- Micro-level evaluation is focused on e-PAR process impacts at the individual or youth group level, with an emphasis on effective youth engagement. The e-PAR model weaves evaluation into the process by encouraging staff and youth to identify individual and group indicators of success (e.g. meeting attendance as a measure of group functioning) and then measure those indicators (e.g. surveys, focus groups) after the completion of each stage of the e-PAR model.
- Meso-level impacts are associated with the impact of e-PAR on the community organization sponsoring the project. For example, the ability of the organization to support the project and youth engagement and the necessary structures and resources necessary to sustain the e-PAR model are impacts evaluated at the meso level.

- Macro-level evaluation is concerned with how the e-PAR model fits with the organizations culture and impacts on the organization or the larger community. The authors note that evaluation is built into the e-PAR model to, "*ensure that the e-PAR process can adapt to the realities and personalities of those community organizations and youth who undertake an action project,*" (Flicker et al. 2008:297).

Evaluation is instrumental in program refinement and is necessary for causally linking the positive benefits realized by youth, organizations and communities to the YPAR process. While the literature contains examples of positive benefits correlated to YPAR, the literature also sheds light on the lack of outcomes identified through rigorous evaluation. Although evaluation can assist with verifying the causal connection between activities and outcomes, it can also be used as an YPAR action tool to engage youth and to refine YPAR processes while the research project is being conducted. YPAR practitioners should encourage the incorporation of evaluation in YPAR projects to understand both the short and long-term impacts that result from engaging youth in research. In addition, consideration should be given to a youth-led or youth involved evaluation process based in keeping with the YPAR paradigm.

SECTION 7: CONCLUSION

A review of the literature reveals that Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) has emerged as a common research paradigm employed to encourage and foster youth voice. Through the integration of participatory action research with public health advocacy and youth development practitioners are increasingly including young people in research on important social issues or programs that affect their lives. YPAR projects have been conducted both nationally and internationally on a wide variety of topics in a variety of settings. YPAR includes the three basic tenets of PAR:

1. The inclusion of local communities as active participants in the research process;
2. The necessity for shared authority between the researcher and community participants; and
3. The legitimization of local knowledge, as defined by the decision making influence of youth.

In YPAR, youth are actively engaged as research partners and make the decisions regarding the project's focus and direction. In large part, YPAR is utilized due to the benefits and skills realized by youth as a result of participating in the research project. Over the past decade there has been a marked increase in the use of YPAR by public health professionals. The reasons for this are threefold: 1) research illustrates that civically engaged youth are less likely to partake in health-damaging behaviors; 2) the inclusion of youth voice results in appropriate youth-focused health prevention and

intervention programs; and 3) youth engaged in health related YPAR projects become advocates for health changing behaviors which is beneficial to public health goals. While the literature includes stories of youth positively impacted by participating in YPAR projects, it also outlines the need for the long-term study and evaluation to provide overwhelming evidence of empowered outcomes. The *Network for a Healthy California* is adding elements of ongoing evaluation to the YEI, based on lessons learned in practice and from this review of literature on YPAR. In the fall of 2012, with USDA SNAP funding the California Department of Public Health will begin funding YEI projects that include a toolkit for evaluation of project activities and outcomes.

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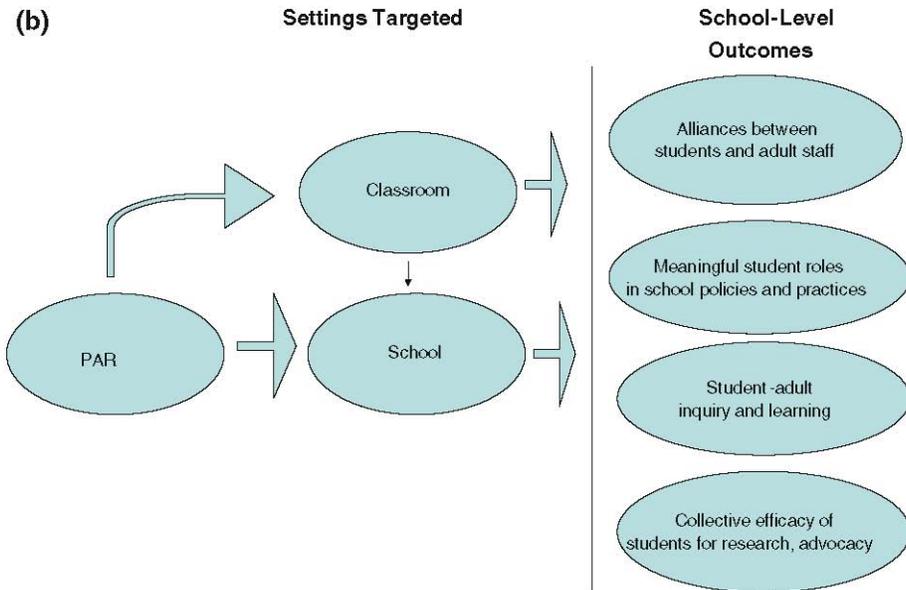
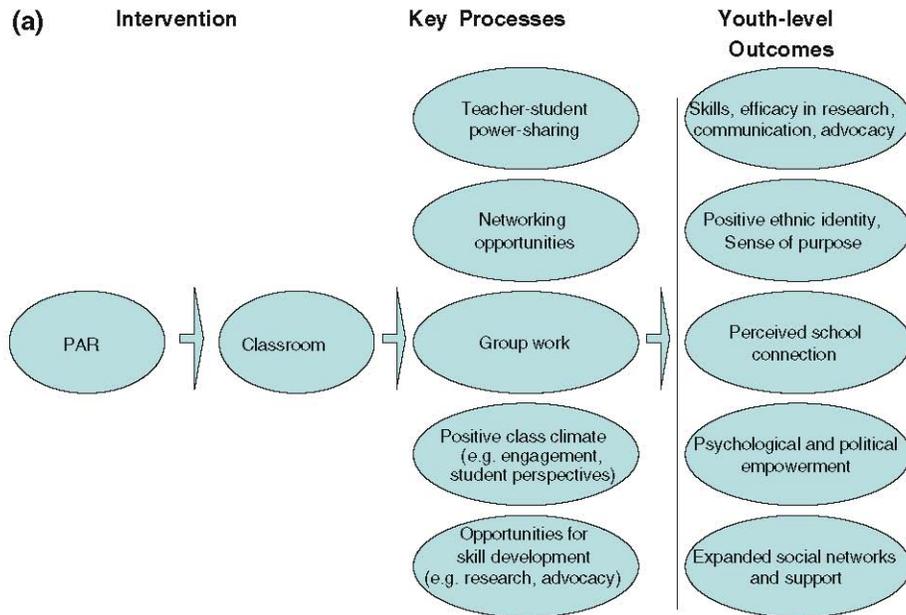
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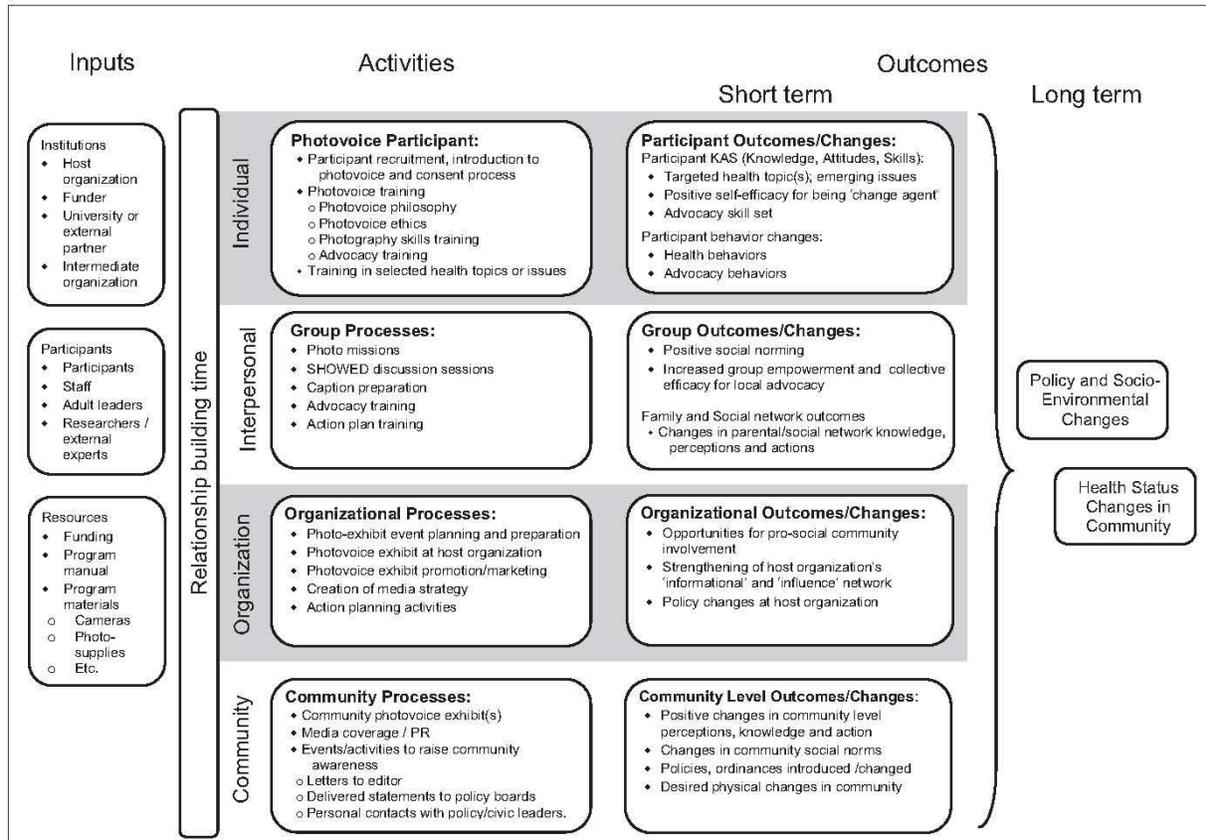
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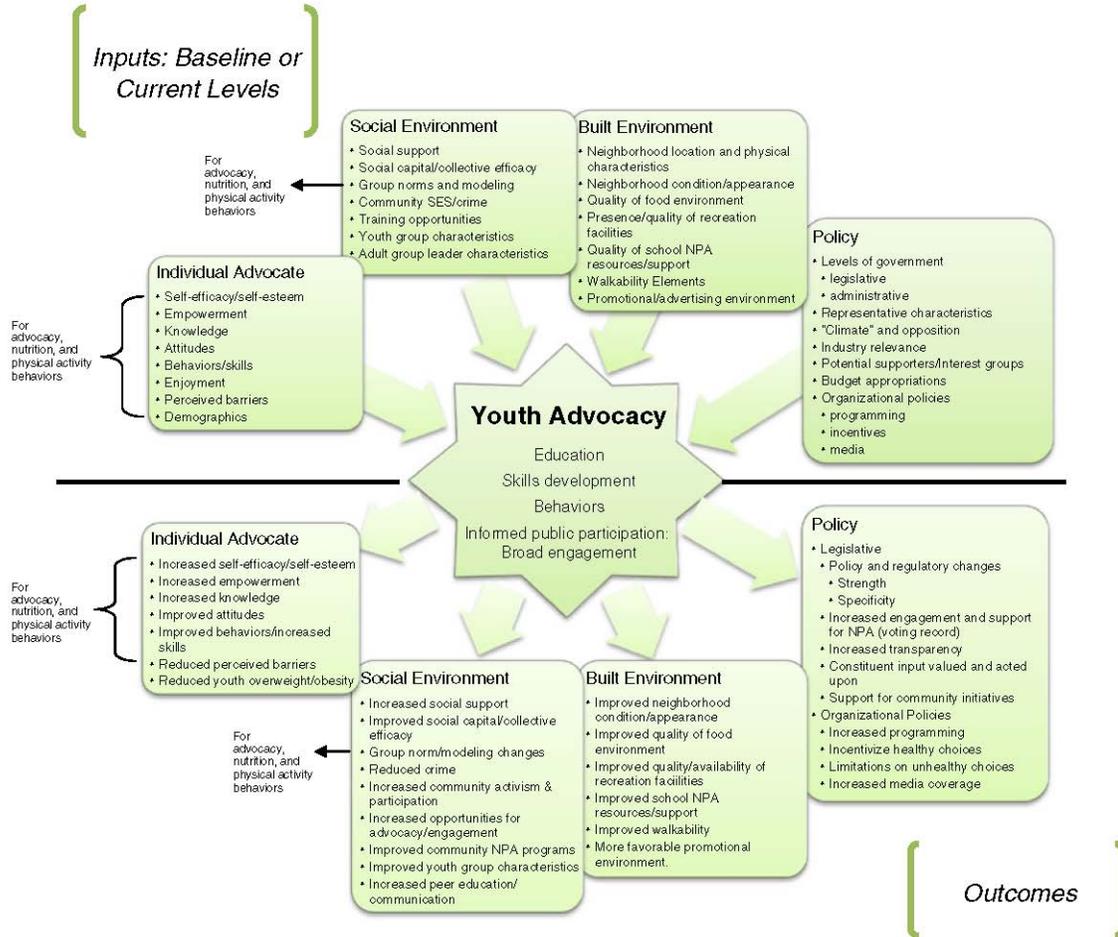
ATTACHMENT A: SCHOOL BASED PAR YOUTH & SCHOOL LEVEL EFFECTS MODEL



ATTACHMENT B: SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL LOGIC MODEL FOR GUIDING PHOTOVOICE EFFORTS



ATTACHMENT C: CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF INPUTS, PROCESSES, AND OUTCOMES OF YOUTH ADVOCACY FOR OBESITY PREVENTION.



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