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A video to empower and engage youth in Santa Cruz County

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CR#2.1. Final Capstone Project Title and Abstract

(Feb 2021)

Abstract

A video to empower and engage youth in Santa Cruz County

United Way of Santa Cruz (UWSCC) is a non-profit organization that provides programs to improve the well-being of the community, such as the Community Assessment Project (CAP), Jóvenes Sanos, 2-1-1 Santa Cruz, United 4 Youth, and the Youth Action Network (YAN). These programs assist with economic development, health, public safety and support the youth community. The macro-level problem is that too many youth are unmotivated or alienated from their community. The micro-level problem that will be addressed by this project is adults in Santa Cruz County undervalue youth engagement and contributions in decision making. The purpose of this project is to educate United Way staff members and stakeholders and the community that youth involvement and youth voice are important. The method used to implement this project is through a youth-created video that will be utilized as an apparatus in the YAN program.

Keywords: *United Way of Santa Cruz County, youth empowerment, youth engagement, youth video, Youth Action Network*

CR# 1.1: Agency information and partnering organizations

(9/11/20)

Agency Information

United Way of Santa Cruz County (UWSCC) is a non-profit agency. Their mission statement is “To improve the youth and families in Santa Cruz County by uniting our community to address the basic needs of education, health, and financial stability.” (United Way, 2020). In support of their mission, they

strategically address complex social issues, in particular youth violence, drug and alcohol policy, criminal justice reform, and obesity prevention (United Way, 2020).

UWSCC is striving to meet its mission daily by planning meetings, addressing issues, and advocating to improve the Santa Cruz County community. One of its goals is to increase awareness in Santa Cruz County about how to assist crime survivors to heal and restore from trauma. UWSCC will ensure access to trauma recovery services, engage crime survivors, and strengthen community trust (United Way, 2020). They also work throughout Santa Cruz County, specifically with Watsonville's youth community, to decrease obesity. Values such as dignity and respect, inclusion, cultural sensibility, relationship building, collaboration, and positive youth development are some values that will help the agency flourish (Youth Action Network, 2020)

There are six fundamental programs developed through UWSCC: Children's Network, Smart Solutions to Homelessness Santa Cruz County, Community Prevention Partners, Youth Violence Prevention Network, Jóvenes Sanos, and United 4 Youth. The agencies just mentioned implement their vision through education, raising awareness about child obesity, decreasing youth violence, homelessness, providing shelter to displaced families, and promoting social policy changes. The agency's goals are to acknowledge and encourage the youth community to be involved, for the youth to engage with mentors of their communities to better the community, for the youth to feel free in expressing themselves (Youth action network, 2020).

Since COVID19 has created many uncertainties in the communities, UWSCC is finding new ways to get the youth involved in decision making, as well as brainstorming new ideas that will benefit their community. UWSCC is remotely working with the youth community through the YAN program.

YVPN is a project that is dedicated to responding to the safety and well being of the community, especially in support of youth and their families. The YVPN goals are to increase the sense of importance for creating equitable culturally responsive trauma informed systems, to increase the understanding as to why meeting the needs of youth of color increases the well being for all in Santa Cruz County and to create a shared commitment for centering youth voice and leadership (United Way, 2020).

United Way of Santa Cruz County is an organization that strives to improve the quality of the community in whatever form the community may improve and flourish. They strive to decrease poverty, and improve health, and education. The agency exists to help anyone who is in need, for those who are at a disadvantage due to health issues like diabetes, financial issues, educational inequalities, and racial inequalities.

To address the pandemic restrictions, UWSCC has been working remotely with other organizations that collaborate with the agency. Recently, during a zoom conference these organizations discussed their needs and aspirations, as well as future strategies to involve the youth community so they will feel welcomed to participate. UWSCC not only wants to collaborate with the youth community, but they also want to encourage them to become leaders. Some of their primary partners and collaborators include Big Brother's Big Sister, First 5 Santa Cruz County, Community Bridges, Catholic Charities, Digital Nest, Pajaro Valley Shelter Services, Homeless Service Center, and Hospice of Santa Cruz County (United Way, 2020).

CR # 1.2: Communities Served: Demographic Profile and Needs Analysis

In 2012 UWSCC developed a strategic plan and formed the Youth Violence Prevention Network (YVPN) focused on advocating, serving, supporting and respecting young men of color (United Way, 2020). YVPN mission statement is "An equitable, united, and safe county where all youth are engaged in family, school and community, have a sense of safety and well-being, feel they have a voice and are empowered to use it, and are able to access opportunities for successful transition into adulthood." (United Way, 2020). UWSCC provides services to Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Watsonville. The population in Santa Cruz County is 273,213, Capitola 10,010, Santa Cruz city 64,608, Scotts Valley 11,757, and Watsonville 53,856 (USCensus, 2019).

Table 1 shows demographics reflecting the differences between communities in terms of race, age and gender, education and income. These factors reflect how the agency must develop services that impact each city according to their community's different needs. Organizations such as UWSCC take this into

consideration when developing programs. For example, Jovenes Sanos is a program that was developed to advocate for the rising number of children with obesity (Jóvenes Sanos, 2021). According to Table 1 white alone is the biggest racial group in the county and cities and hispanic is the second population with 34%.

Table 1. Race in the Santa Cruz County

| Race and Hispanic Origin | Santa Cruz County, CA | Capitola | Santa Cruz | Scotts Valley | Watsonville |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| White alone | 87% | 83.30% | 75.40% | 85.60% | 53.50% |
| Black or African American alone | 1.50% | 0.60% | 1.90% | 0.50% | 0.50% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone | 1.80% | 0.20% | 0.40% | 0.40% | 0.70% |
| Asian alone | 5.30% | 4.80% | 9.80% | 6.90% | 2.50% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone | 0.20% | 0.00% | 0.20% | 0.00% | 0.10% |
| Two or More Races | 4.2 % | 8.00% | 5.90% | 5.50% | 1.7%% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 34.00% | 25.80% | 21.10% | 11.10% | 81.70% |
| White alone, not Hispanic or Latino | 56.80% | 62.00% | 62.60% | 77.60% | 15.00% |

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

The agency serves all races and ages in the county, but they strive to engage the youth which make up 19% of the County population compared to the population age of 65 years and over who only make up 17.3% of the population (Census, 2019). Scotts Valley forms 22.2% and Watsonville 30.50% of the youth population (Census, 2019). The age and gender population is important for UWSCC because it directs the agency to understand what type of services are needed in the specific community. As shown in Table 2 the youth community is the second largest population in the state of California as well as in Santa Cruz County. Furthermore, a reason why it's important to engage with the youth community.

Table 2. Age and gender differences between California and the Santa Cruz County & Cities

| Age and Sex | California | Santa Cruz County, CA | Capitola | Santa Cruz City | Scotts Valley | Watsonville |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Persons under 5 years, percent | 6.00% | 4.90% | 3.70% | 3.30% | 6.50% | 9.70% |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Persons under 18 years | 22.50% | 19.00% | 16.30% | 13.00% | 22.20% | 30.50% |
| Persons 65 years and over | 14.80% | 17.30% | 20.60% | 11.70% | 16.00% | 9.50% |
| Female persons | 50.30% | 50.00% | 54.10% | 51.50% | 50.00% | 48.60% |

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

United Way of Santa Cruz County is committed and recognizes that one of the keys to success for the youth community is to have an excellent educational background. As stated by United Way (2020), “United Way focuses on youth success, family financial stability and health, because these are the essential building blocks for a good quality of life. We raise awareness surrounding key issues that affect everyone and promote social and policy change that helps strengthen people and our community.” As reflected in table 3, while 86.4% of the County’s population is a high school graduate or higher and 40% have a bachelor’s degree or higher, Watsonville has a significantly lower number of high school graduates at 59.6% and those with a bachelor's degree at 11.40%. Given these differences, UWSCC is committed to addressing these lower education rates by focusing on youth educational attainment.

Table 3. Education

| Education | Santa Cruz County,CA | Capitola | Santa Cruz City | Scotts Valley | Watsonville |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| High school graduate or higher | 86.40% | 92.80% | 93.70% | 98.30% | 59.60% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 40.00% | 35.10% | 52.50% | 55.20% | 11.40% |

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

Every factor impacts the disparities of the community; but the most important factor that impacts the community’s well-being is income level. It can position one self or the community at a disadvantage. The differences of income as shown on Table 4 reveal to the agency that certain parts of the communities may be having financial difficulties. During these unprecedented times families have been impacted financially, there has been food disparities, mental health issues are arising, and with difficulties of digital divide (United 4 Youth, 2020)

Table 4. Income inequality

| Income | Santa Cruz County, CA | Capitola | Santa Cruz City | Scotts Valley | Watsonville |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Median household income 2014-2018 | \$78,041 | \$80,090 | \$70,102 | \$106,086 | \$54,001 |
| Per capita income 2014-2018 | \$39,001 | \$43,489 | \$36,712 | \$54,960 | \$19,930 |
| Poverty % | 12.20% | 13.10% | 23.60% | 4.70% | 16.40% |

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

I will be carrying out a research capstone project with the collaboration of my mentor Amanda Gamban (Community impact coordinator) from Youth Action Network (YAN). The research video will focus on why the youth community is important in Santa Cruz County or in any community. This project will be constructed remotely with my mentors Amanda and the YAN youth community. I will be conducting research on youth empowerment, the importance of engaging the youth community with decision making, why their voices and opinions are important, and how youth community engagement impacts communities. Research indicates that youth empowerment is disregarded in the communities. And that when the youth are empowered they can obtain the skills, critical awareness, and opportunities to flourish within themselves, and other individuals, organizations, and communities. The community and the organizations must approach the youth community with attentiveness and embrace their individuality and input into the organizations and communities. Some ways of inclusion include youth in decision-making processes, value the youth voice, understanding and incorporating their honest opinions and ideas, and for the adults to be willing to share power and privilege with the youth community in the decision making to assist in improving the welfare of both the youth and the adults (Boakye and Procida, 2016). The issue that will be addressed in this project is the importance of the youth community involvement in the community as well as the youths statements about the importance of their voice in the community and changes they will like to see in their community. The timeline for this project is approximately 3 to 4 months. It is expected for the project to be implemented in March or April of 2021.

A Video to Empower and engage youth in Santa Cruz County

Project Description

This capstone project is conducting a research project. The purpose of the project is to increase knowledge about youth voice, youth engagement and empowerment among United Way of Santa Cruz County (UWSCC) associates, staff, stakeholders, and the community. First, create an informative powerpoint that is presented to the youth participants. The powerpoint will reflect my capstone idea, acknowledge collaboration with the YAN members and lastly ideas about what exactly Amanda, Gabby (YAN members) are looking for in the video. Secondly, research about youth empowerment and the information collected will be integrated into the video. Lastly, all videos will be gathered to begin editing to make the video presentable.

Project Justification

The project should be implemented because part of UWSCC's purpose is to purposefully engage the youth community in agency decisions about policies that affect the youth community. Making the youth community engage in decision making will foster connectedness with the adult community and vice versa. It encourages opportunities for the youth to convey barriers they encounter on a daily basis and support them to move forward into adulthood in a more impactful way. In addition, the adult community who implement youth programs can learn from the youth community more effective ways to deliver such programming (Davis, 2016).

The community need that will be addressed in the project is more of a positive experience for the youth to express themselves what youth leadership is to them and what changes they would like to see in their community. YAN, committed stakeholders include Education, Community Based Organizations, Watsonville and Santa Cruz City Council, Youth Leadership Groups, Santa Cruz County Office of Probation and Watsonville Police Department will be able to see the youth express what they feel is needed for their community to thrive.

The long term goal of this project is to create a state policy or law that allows the youth community to be more involved in decision making in their communities. The youth communities can bring new ideas about what is needed in Santa Cruz County. The youth community will be able to make decisions that impact them.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders for this project are UWSCC, YAN, the youth community (ages 13-25), Santa Cruz County, and the parents of the youth being interviewed. Other stakeholders are the education system, Community Based Organizations, Watsonville and Santa Cruz City Council, Youth Leadership Groups, Santa Cruz County Office of Probation and Watsonville Police Department.

Benefits

Some positive benefits that can be taken from this project is that the video can be used for educational purposes for UWSCC, YAN, stakeholders, and the community. It can also be used for other agencies that work with the youth community. New ideas can emerge from viewing the video about how important youth empowerment is. It's also beneficial for the youth community because they get to express themselves about what changes they would like to see in their community and why their voice and engagement is important in the community. Within the general community this video can be a source of information to understand the youth community. And lastly for the stakeholders this will be an informative video why it is important to let the youth be part of decision making in the community, and that adults and the youth can help the community thrive together.

Implementation method

This project is a research project that will be implemented via a video documentary. The project components include a video with educational information about youth empowerment. It will also include several clips where the youth speaks about their perspectives about the community and why is youth voice and engagement important. Furthermore, it will include research conducted about why youth empowerment is important in the community. The first step would be creating a PowerPoint presentation that will be presented to the youth community to engage them and request their collaboration. The power point is a tool for the youth participants to utilize to develop their videos. When the youth community finalized their videos those videos were integrated with the research I have collected about youth engagement. The recordings of the videos will be done individually per YAN members due to the circumstances of COVID-19. The main concept of the final video is to convey youth importance of engaging with adults, to convey that the youth community has a voice, ideas, and are disposed to engage to see changes in their community. In the video youth members will be expressing changes they will like to see in their community. A theory is building a relationship with youth who are surrounded by adult support. The idea is to support youth in times of need whereas non-compliant communities may lack resources for the youth community to relate with (Texas, 2003). As stated by Texas (2003), “ In addition, creating communities where youth are encouraged to be engaged allows youth to adapt to and overcome adversities. By developing positive relationships with adults in the community, youth will value the community and the relationships they have developed.”

Participants

Currently, six youth participants have been identified as wanting to participate in this capstone project. The videos created by the youth participants must reflect three of six questions that have been provided to them that reflect their thoughts and ideas about their community. My role in this project is to facilitate the implementation and creation of and research and educational video that best fits the YAN

program which will include data about educational attainment in the Santa Cruz County, and the importance of youth engagement, and lastly I will merge the videos of the YAN members so that staff members and stakeholders can view and listen to the youth from the YAN program.

Resources

Because of these unprecedented times, the main resource will be conducted remotely. The youth community will be using their computers and phones in creating their videos. I will develop my own video that integrates with the youth community videos. YAN will provide incentives such as gift cards to give to the participants a way of thanking them for their time.

Supplemental

This project is needed because YAN and other agencies such as Jovenes Sanos collaborate with the youth population. Research conducted by the census shows that there is a vast percentage of the youth community in Santa Cruz County making 19% of the population according to the census. Research conducted by Santa Cruz County Chambers of Commerce (2015), states that Santa Cruz County has a total of 49, 523 youth between ages 15-24. Having said that, it is important to take account of the youth population because their development depends on it. Research has shown that historically the field of psychology has pointed out that youth development depends on relationship building as they have needed as an infant (Texas, 2013 para. 3). As stated by Texas (2003), “This relationship is important because it ensures the proper social and emotional development of the child.” Moreover, as the youth community age they tend to look for other attachments in addition to the relationship developed with their parent(s) or other caregiver(s) (Texas, 2013 para 3). The youth community have demonstrated significant social and emotional development when engaging with the adult community (Texas, 2013 para.3). As stated by Texas (2013) “In addition, they also demonstrated increased social participation and community action. Meaningful positive relationships help to transform the community from a shared space to a set of psychological bonds between its members. So, it's important for the agency to acknowledge how important and impactful the youth community is to their community to thrive.

Potential Challenges

Challenges for the project are the youth participants may decline to participate in the project. Parents may also refuse to allow their son or daughter to participate. Another challenge is not having the resources to develop a video. Not enough YAN participants submit a video response. Perhaps the video will not reflect youth empowerment or engagement. There can also be difficulties editing the videos. Due to our unpresidential times it is more difficult to collaborate with others to aid with technical support.

COVID-19 Accommodations

The accommodations for this project is for the youth participants to create their videos remotely to decrease the chances of infection.

Overview

The following table provides information about the scope of work for the capstone project including the title of the project, project description, purpose/primary objective of the project, and a timeline. There are five phases of the timeline project: selecting a capstone project, plan project, implement project, assess project, and finally report on project findings.

SOW Table and timeline

| Educational intervention (<i>Sample phases, activities, deliverables, timeline</i>) | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Title: A video to empower and engage youth in Santa Cruz County | | | | | |
| Project description: Develop a collaborative video with the youth community | | | | | |
| Purpose/Primary objective of the project: To inform staff members, stakeholders of UWSCC and the community that youth involvement and youth voice is important. | | | | | |
| Longer term goal: The long term goal for the agency is for all communities to empower the youth community by valuing their engagement and voice. | | | | | |
| Phases | | Activities/Tasks | | Deliverables | Timeline/ deadlines |
| 1 | Select capstone project | 1.1 | Discuss capstone project ideas with mentor and agency staff | Generate a list of capstone project ideas. | Sept 2020 |
| | | 1.2 | Discuss ideas with agency staff | Submit a list of potential ideas to mentor for review/approval | Oct 2020 |
| 2 | Plan project | 2.1 | Create a waiver to distribute parents of the participants | | Feb 2021 |
| | | 2.2 | Create an instructional powerpoint for youth | Submit a draft PPT to mentor for review and approval | Feb 2021 |
| 3 | Implement project | 3.1 | Complete video | submit to mentors | Feb 2021 |
| | | 3.2 | Present video to mentors | get feedback from mentors about the video | Feb-March 2021 |
| | | 3.3 | present video to the youth community, stakeholders and staff | Receive feedback from the youth community, stakeholders and staff through a survey about what they thought about the video | March 2021 |
| 4 | Assess project | 4.1 | Present video to mentor | | March 2021 |
| 5 | Report on project findings | 5.1 | Complete reporting requirements | | April 2021 |
| | | 5.2 | Prepare capstone presentation in selected format | Present at Dress Rehearsal for grading | April 2021 |
| | | 5.3 | Final preparation for Capstone Festival | Final Capstone Festival presentation! | May 2021 |

Introduction

The micro level problem of the Youth Action Network is adults in Santa Cruz County (SCC) undervalue youth voice engagement in decision making in the community. The causes include Adults don't understand the potential for youth contributions, lack of youth and adult partnership, and lack of youth voice in decision making. The consequences of not addressing the agency level problem are not enough youth involvement of the youth community, funders may stop contributing to the agency, and if the agency doesn't work with the youth it may cause an enervated agency.

The broader macro level problem is that too many youth are alienated from their community. The causes include Covid-19, family, neighborhoods, and schools, and youth feel stigmatized/unwelcome by adults. The consequences of not addressing the broader problem are youth violence, higher rates of youth unemployment, and low rates of educational attainment.

Its important to empower youth to make decisions Figure 1 summarizes the micro-level and macro-level problems, contributing factors to the agency's problem and to the broader social problem, and the consequences to the agency and to society.

Problem model

| Figure 1. Problem Model Template | | |
|---|--|---|
| CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO AGENCY PROBLEM | AGENCY-SPECIFIC "MICRO-LEVEL" PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY PROJECT | CONSEQUENCES TO AGENCY |
| Adults don't understand the potential for youth contributions | Adults in SCC undervalue youth voice, engagement, contributions in decision making | Not enough involvement of youth community |
| Lack of youth and adult partnership | | Funders may stop contributing to the agency |

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Lack of youth voice in decision making collaboration | | Enervated agency |
| CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO BROADER PROBLEM | BROADER “MACRO-LEVEL” HEALTH/SOCIAL PROBLEM | CONSEQUENCES TO SOCIETY |
| Covid-19 | Too many youth are alienated from their community | Youth violence |
| Family, neighborhoods, and schools | | High rates of youth unemployment |
| Youth feel stigmatized/unwelcomed by adults | | Low rates of educational attainment |

Problem description

Micro-level problem description

The micro level problem of the Youth Action Network (YAN) is that adults in SCC undervalue youth voice, engagement, and contributions in decision making. YAN is shifting the idea that the youth community doesn't want to participate in their own communities' success. The agency is conveying to center youth voice and leadership to decide what is best for youth. To stop disregarding youth and instead collaborate with the youth community across Santa Cruz County (Youth Action Network, 2020). Youth Action Network (2020) stated, “shift from the narrative that youth are disinterested and disengaged to youth are leading efforts for social change.” And that the efforts to change the community is not about adults vs youth and instead build a shared sense of community and belonging (Youth Action Network, 2020). One consequence is certain stakeholders may not agree in youth engagement in the Santa Cruz community.

Population affected (by micro-level problem)

The population affected by the micro level problem is the youth community. Research conveys that neighborhoods, schools, programs are social settings that affect the youth population. According to The influence of Social and National Research council (2021), “Whether programs are offered in single site or through interagency collaborations, their goal is to provide services that ensure that emotional, recreational, academic, mental and physical health, and vocational needs of adolescents are explicitly addressed.”

Agencies and other social settings should support the youth community in a positive form and not in a negative form. As stated by The influence of social (2021), “Social settings that consistently provide negative messages about adolescent abilities and a limited range of desirable life options are thought to lead youth to make poor choices regarding the use of their time and resources. Several youth service programs are designed to move youth away from oppositional or alienated lifestyles and into support systems that can train and educate them to successfully be part of mainstream society.”

Contributing factors (to micro-level problem)

The micro level problem addressed by my project is that adults don't understand the potential for youth contributions, lack of youth and adult partnership, and lack of youth voice in decision making. Adults and youth should collaborate and communicate with each other because it benefits both. Research mentions that adults that participate in agencies that support youth gain personal satisfaction supporting youth growth and for the youth to succeed in life (Schultz, 2014). As stated by Shultz (2014), “Working in equal collaboration with youth allows adults to have a hand in fostering the active citizens of the future.” Building the adult and youth relationship may not be easy but would be impactful in the communities. As stated by Schultz (2014), “While this action and the development of these partnerships takes intentional trust building, group skill cultivation and some positive risk taking, the result can be liberating for both youth and adults.”

Consequences (resulting from micro-level problem)

Not enough involvement of the youth community, funders may stop contributing to the agency, and if the youth community does not collaborate with the youth community it may cause an enervated agency. It's important for the youth community to be involved in the community. Research says that community organizations and the youth community benefit from each other when collaborating. By the youth collaborating in the organizations they learn to be more empathetic citizens who can also take these skills and apply them when they are adults. They also learn leadership skills, learn the importance of the welfare of others, and develop skills that will help them for future jobs (Involving youth, 2012, para. 2).

Macro-level problem description

The macro level of Youth Action Network is to empower youth decision making in the county because their input is valuable and can help reduce youth violence and increase educational attainment

among the youth community. Youth involvement creates a dynamic of success and prepares them for a more thriving future. In a broader aspect it can improve the U.S. economy. According to Youth engagement (2016), “Closing the achievement gap between black and latino children and their white counterparts would add an average of \$551 billion per year to the U.S. economy. Research shows that youth engagement builds young people's economic potential by increasing their educational success and nurturing critical thinking skills.” The research also stated that youth participation in community organizations had a positive impact in their grades and an increase in the youths interest in attending college (Youth engagement, 2016, para. 4).

Population affected (by macro-level problem)

Population affected at the macro-level is the whole community.

Contributing factors (to macro-level problem)

The broader social problem addressed in the project is Covid-19, family, neighbourhoods, and schools, and youth feel stigmatized by adults. Because of Covid-19 my project was difficult to facilitate. I wasn't able to build a relationship with the youth community in order for them to feel comfortable and safe in sharing their videos. So, out of the six participants only one participant shared their video in which I developed more content that was placed in the video. My mentor also provided youth leaders quotes to add on to the content of the video. Family, neighborhoods, and schools were also factors that contribute to the broader problem because if families, neighborhoods, and schools are unaware or are not engaging with these organizations how effective can the agency be with the community. Research says that family is an asset to the programs, agencies need to build relationships with the youth families and speak about their concerns and needs, and build cultural competence within the staff (Engaging families, 2021).

Consequences (resulting from macro-level problem)

The broader consequences being addressed in this project are youth violence, higher rates of youth unemployment , and low rates of educational attainment. According to Violence prevention (2021), “Youth violence is a significant problem that affects thousands of young people each day, and in turn, their families,

schools, and communities. Youth violence and crime affect a community's economic health, as well as individuals' physical and mental health and well-being.”

CR#2.2 Project Assessment Plan (1-2 pgs.)

(March 2021)

Expected outcome

The expected (short term) outcome of the capstone project is to engage the youth community in developing short videos expressing their needs and thoughts about changes they would like to see in their community. A video of youth’s voices provides information for the adult community (staff, stakeholders, and the general public) to gain an awareness of youth interests and needs. Community stakeholders and new staff to the agency will learn that youth voices are essential to developing responsive community projects and decisions.

Measure

The measures taken are researching how youth voice is important and how youth involvement has supported community development. By applying this information in the project those who view the video are able to acknowledge that the youth community is as important in decision making as adults are. In addition, 6 youth participants will be developing 1 min videos addressing changes they would like to see in their community and leadership questions. Or another option is to quote participants from previous pre-recorded meetings and implement these quotes into the video. This will be measured with YAN participants satisfaction.

Method

One method to gather evidence to measure the outcome of the project is social media. The agency can post the video and be able to view how many likes it gets and how many comments are being left, as well as if it begins a conversation with the viewers. But due to our time constriction the only method that was

implemented was for my mentors to view the video and receive feedback from them. And my video was a success with them because both of my mentors appreciated the video I developed from YAN.

Short term

To engage the youth community in developing short videos expressing their needs and thoughts about changes they would like to see in their community. And merging their videos with research gathered that conveys that the youth community is a positive impact in the community and that their voices are important.

Intermediate outcome

To convey the importance of youth voice, involvement, and engagement in the Santa Cruz county community.

Long term outcome

The long term outcome for this project is to increase youth participation in the community, for youth voices to be acknowledged in SCC and for the adult community to allow them to participate in decision making that affects them.

Findings

During my research I found the importance of youth engagement in the communities. That the adult community should nurture the youth community and support their needs by allowing them to engage in decision making. By doing so they empower them with leadership skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, and become future leaders.

Assessment Results

The outcome of the project was partially successful. I was able to provide information YAN had not implemented in their site. And the project was able to give the YAN community a place where they can speak and be heard by others. Perhaps even inspire other youth to be part of the program. Some challenges

that affected the outcome was not being able to meet with the YAN community and go over their videos individually because of the timeframe and our unavailability. In addition, I wasn't able to facilitate these videos, instead each YAN participant recorded their videos at home. Another challenge was that some individuals that were going to participate were not able to participate. Reason being that they didn't feel comfortable sharing a video of themselves.

Recommendations

UWSCC and YAN can take this project and present it to schools to encourage them to participate in their schools more and in their communities. Because research shows that by engaging youth in community activities and decision making are part of the development growth for the youth. As previously stated the youth can gain leadership skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, and become future leaders of their community. Also, by engaging with the youth community it can reduce violence and increase educational attainment across Santa Cruz County (SCC). I do believe this concept of making videos with the youth community should be continued. The agency can use other platforms such as social media or podcasts.

The project was able to reflect the broader “macro-level” by projecting it into a video where everyone can see statistics about youth population in SCC, statistics about educational attainment, youth community population in Santa Cruz, and quotes of the YAN organization. In addition, the video conveyed what the youth leaders participants are learning in their programs.

Conclusions and personal reflection

The most important insights I gained from this project is understanding the importance of the youth community, which in the beginning of this project I had little knowledge about. Also, I learned how significant the youth is and how the youth community can make a difference in their communities. Throughout this project, research conveyed the importance of the youth community and how they are a

positive influence in the economy, how their engagement stimulates the youth to desire higher education, and that their voices are important to developing new policies.

Although my project did not turn out as I was hoping due to barriers such as time constriction and lack of participants I hope that YAN proceeds using this concept of creating videos with their participants, because it builds communication skills amongst the youth leader participants. And it's a great platform where the youth community can convey their ideas and concerns.

That being said, it was a pleasure interning at the Youth Action Network because my mentor was beyond supportive with my education and capstone project during our unprecedented times. Advice I would like to give to future CHHS capstone students is to try to be organized, communicate with your mentor, and reach for the homestretch even if things don't work out as you planned.

[CR#3. Final Capstone Report](#) (10-15 pgs.)

(May 2021)

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