

ICF Transcription  
Webinar Recording Latinx and Civic Engagement

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JENELLE: Hello, everyone. I am Jenelle Azore from ICF International. And before we begin we'd like to cover a few housekeeping items. This webinar will be recorded and posted online on AmeriCorps Impact Webinars page. And if you have any questions or experience technical difficulties please let us know using the chat box feature. Please be advised that all lines have been muted to avoid background noises and to allow for greater engagement.

You can submit questions at any time during the presentation by using the chat feature below. Select Everyone when submitting your questions. We will read your questions for you during the Q&A session following the presentation. Spanish captions are available. To activate please select the Live Transcription icon on the Zoom menu and select show subtitles.

That takes care of our housekeeping items. The webinar will start now and here to welcome us is Dr.

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Andrea Robles from AmeriCorps' Office of Research and Evaluation.

ANDREA: Thanks, Jenelle. So hello, everyone and welcome. Buenas tardes and bienvenidos. I want to thank you all for joining us today. And I really just want to mention how thrilled we are at the interest in this topic. Our office's objectives are to support AmeriCorps' mission by building knowledge on civic engagement and to use this knowledge to both contribute to the scholarship of this field, and demonstrate how civic engagement, volunteering, and national service can be a solution to national challenges and have a positive impact on individual lives and communities.

Since 2002 we have been sponsoring a supplement to the Current Population Survey called the Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement or CEV for short. It is fielded every two years and it is the nation's most robust longitudinal data on American civic engagement and volunteering behavior. In fact, the census fielded the 2021 CEV this past fall and we

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hope to have the data publically available later this spring or early summer. As an office we trust and rely [audio cuts out] However, we know it doesn't tell the whole story. So next slide, please.

So, for example, as you will see in a minute, here is an analysis of the 2019 data regarding the volunteering rate by Hispanic origin and education. And although this information is very useful and provides us with some broad national level trends, it does not show us how volunteering may vary at the community level, or whether it captures all types of formal and informal volunteering behaviors such as helping one's neighbor. So next slide, please.

So, in 2014 our office convened a group of experts to assess how to best measure constructs related to civic engagement, social cohesion, and social capital. One of the recommendations was to complement the CPS data that we collect with more research at the sub-national or local levels by using diverse research approaches to tap into the complexity of volunteering and civic engagement. In response our

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office developed a research grant program for institutions of higher education. And since 2015 we have awarded 34 cooperative agreement grants to study and measure these concepts by using diverse research methods and approaches.

The presenters today are two of our 2017 grantees. Their research provides more insight on Latinx civic engagement at a more local level and how to ignite civic engagement of Latinx youth, adults, and seniors. Next slide, please.

So the structure of the webinar today is as follows, we will begin with introductory and framing remarks by Dr. Amy Ramos who is a Senior Research Consultant at Harder and Company, and has conducted community based research with vulnerable populations throughout California in projects that address equity and civic engagement. She will be followed by our two main presenters and their teams. Dr. Suzanne Pritzker who is the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, an Associate Professor at University of Houston, and a few of her team members, as you will see.

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And then we will hear from Dr. Marisol Clark-Ibáñez who is a full Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology of California State University San Marcos and her team. We will finish the presentation portion with brief reflections from Mr. Victor Garcia, Director of the California Campus Catalyst Fund from Immigrants Rising. And Angelica Razo, Texas State Director of Mi Familia Vota. And finally for the last 25 or 30 minutes we will open it up for Q&A.

But as Jenelle said, if you think of any questions, comments, or useful resources during the presentations, feel free to add them to the chat. So now I will pass this on to Dr. Amy Ramos to provide some introductory remarks. Thank you.

DR. RAMOS: Thank you so much, Andrea. And as Andrea said, my name is Dr. Amy Ramos. And I would like to just open up by reminding us how imperative it is for the future of our country to ensure that our Latinx communities, regardless of age or geography, understand how to become civically engaged. In 2020

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we witnessed the mobilization of Latinx communities across the United States. For example, we saw record turnouts in states like Arizona. However, opportunities for sustained civic engagement for Latinx communities are scarce. The nature of civic lives of our Latinx communities in the United States is an important barometer for the future of democracy, if for no other reason than that Latinx make up a significant share of the population.

The Latinx population, which includes people of any race, was 62.1 million in 2020. The Latinx population grew by 23%. Let that sink in for a minute. The gaps in Latinx civic engagement are reflective of our inequities that continue to plague our educational system and contribute to our social class divide. The social class divide in civic participation is well documented. We all know many of the factors that contribute to this divide. For example, people who attend college tend to show higher rates of civic participation. We also know that access to opportunities that close the divide are limited for our Latinx communities.

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A viable solution to increasing the Latinx civic engagement must be focused on eliminating the inequities before the transition to adulthood and propagating knowledge on how our civic system functions using culturally relevant approaches that Latinx communities value.

Today we have the privilege to hear directly from two innovative teams who are challenging the status quo on what it means to be civically engaged and how to increase the Latinx civic participation. So with that said, at this time I'd like to pass it to Dr. Suzanne Pritzker to kick us off.

DR. PRITZKER: Thank you for the opportunity to share our work with you today. During our presentation you will hear both from a member of our youth research team and members of our University of Houston team, as we share some of our findings around what Latinx youth experienced as facilitators and barriers to their civic engagement, as well as youth-driven strategies to support expanding civic engagement on

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the part of Latinx youth. So we will start off our presentation with Katherine Avila, one of the youth co-researchers on our team. Over to you, Katherine.

KATHERINE: Thank you, Dr. Pritzker. So hi, everybody. My name is Katherine Avila and I'm here today as a member of the Youth Expert team to share about the work I have been part of since my senior year of high school, which now to say that I am a current senior in college, it just makes me really excited to be here to share the things that we have found from this project. But before we do get started we want to thank AmeriCorps for giving us the opportunity to share our work here today, as well as for funding this project, that means a lot for us here today. So, next slide.

Thank you. So I'm going to be talking about some of the background on this project. So, personally I got involved in this project due to an organization called Young Emerging Leaders that came to my high school that was run by Mi Familia Vota. And this organization is where I first learned how to send

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letters to Congress, call Congress, it's also where I met Angie and Denise, who you will be meeting later. And I just got involved in this project because I saw that even though my high school consisted of over 3,000 students there was not much civic engagement going on.

I mean, to say that there weren't that many students, and I was sometimes one of the only ones attending these very informative meetings. And this project is just very unique because it connects to the Latinx youth which is very essential to trying to find the different facilitators and barriers to their civic engagement to talk to them. And in order to communicate with them there were Youth Experts guiding these conversations with them in schools. And so like I mentioned, I am one of eight Youth Experts in Houston, Texas, however, there were eight other Youth Experts in Denver, Colorado. And we were just sitting in conversation and focus groups with our classmates, other Latinx teenagers, and we would ask questions like, what is civic engagement and what are

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the things that are allowing us or getting in the way from getting civically engaged? So, next slide.

So as Youth Experts we got the opportunity to be a part of a research team, which was really exciting for us because it was the first time we did things like this. We got involved in things like learning about the IRB process or being part of like the people that are creating the questions. We were able to help with that. And then once we ran all the students and got all their information, we were able to sit with them in conversation with grad students with doctors and talk about what this data that we were getting, all these responses that we were getting what it meant, and interpret that.

And this picture just shows how we would meet at the University of Houston. Like all of the Youth Experts in Houston, we would meet and sometimes we would talk to the students in other group, and at the University of Denver, and just like write it down and exchange thoughts, and it was just like a working process that was really exciting. And it just meant a lot to me

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because I remember some of the students that were part of my focus groups and the conversations that I had in my high school were some of my friends, and even though we were close friends none of these things ever came up. Like we never talked about barriers and facilitators that allowed us to get civically engaged. So it was a good opportunity to also have these conversations. But yeah, I will pass it on to Denise.

DENISE: Next slide, please, thank you. Good afternoon.

My name is Denise Moreno. I've been part of this project since its inception and was the main point of contact between the Houston Youth Experts and the rest of the team. So now we're going to start with our findings. Throughout the focus groups youth spoke about what encouraged them and discouraged them to participate in a wide range of context. So, the youth identified everything you see here as both barriers and facilitators to civic engagement. So it included, as you can see, how economics and politics, and their community, their schools, their family, their peers,

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and even themselves affected their participation.

Next slide.

So our first context is individual. Next slide. So youth recognized that their primary barriers and facilitators to civic engagement included within the individual, as you can see here, factors included youth lived experiences with issues or personal motivations, the changes that they wanted to see, or the examples that they wanted to make, but it also include emotions. How their fear, anxiety, hope, and hopelessness affected their participation. Next slide.

So now this quote is one of our youth participants. Each of the quotes presented today specifically makes the connection between the barriers and the facilitators that the youth experienced and the strategies that they recommend. In this quote we can see how the youth talk about change, but I want to bring your focus to the bold part where it says, "As long as they know that there's a safe space that they don't have to constantly go to, but they can use it

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when they can." So it shows us how the youth wants safe spaces that they're not forced to go, but they're there when they need it. Next slide.

So this brings us to the individual strategies. Youth identified within the individual context three strategies. The first is youth want to see safe spaces for engagement. Spaces where everybody is welcome and that they're teen related. Youth also talked about the need to increase civic knowledge. This can be done by the sharing of personal stories and teaching youth about their rights, both as students or as immigrants. And finally youth want to see positive youth-focused messaging. And they recommend that this could be done through just amplifying youth voices and treating youth seriously. Next slide.

So next we have our peer context slide. So within the days our youth discussed how their peers acted as barriers and facilitators to their civic engagement by the way they encourage or discourage each other. They discussed about the peer energies. So it's just

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more about how committed the youth are or how there's a lack of commitment and participation. They also spoke about wanting to see their peers as leaders and how that's encouraging to them, but the lack of youth leadership is discouraging to them. Next slide.

And in this quote we have another participant where they're talking about their participation with their peers. And once again I'd like to bring your attention to the bolder part, "If somebody's curious or wants to join, you have to sit down with them and actually talk about it." So this talks about just communicating with each other peer to peer. Slide.

So this brings us to our youth-driven strategies for peers. And the peers recommend two main things within peer relationships. And this is communication should be done directly to youth. Peers want to hear from other peers. They want to hear their stories, their passions. They want to learn from other peers how to get involved. And secondly, they want to share their experiences in supportive spaces where they can have opportunities to share knowledge. Slide.

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KATHERINE: So hello again. I'm going to be talking about our findings for the family context. So, next slide. And so we were able to poll some of the family-based facilitators and barriers of civic engagement. And some of the facilitators that we found were that how certain family members experiences that the Latinx youth saw or heard of allowed them to become civically engaged, like encouraged them to, like they were pushed by it. But however, some students spoke on how being able to see some of these family member's experiences also discouraged them from being civically engaged because of safety concerns that they had or like that their families had for them. And next slide.

And so, this is a student. A lot of students were echoing how a big barrier of their engagement was the lack of conversations with their families due to different opinions and discussions. And so some of the things that they want is that - Like as the student said if other adults that knew more about this, about these topics or were more active were to

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reach out to the parents like theirs and just inform them they believed that their parents would be more involved. So this leads me to talk about the different strategies that we saw and we heard from these students, and what they want, which I will be talking in the next slide.

They want to see like the families - As that student said, they do want to see the families involved. Which means that they also want information that is provided in Spanish, information that is clear and accessible to their parents, while still addressing their family's fears towards being civically engaged. They also would find that if having these adults talk to the other adults, and their parents being involved in those conversations addressing the safety as well as like the good in being civically engaged, they believed that their families would be more engaged and that would take away that barrier of, the discouragement in being involved. So, yes. That just means putting parents on board in whatever way that they can help.

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And for our school context that I'm going to talk about next. So next slide. So schools are a huge factor for like Latinx youth because they do spend a lot of time there. And some of the facilitators that we found was that students saw that if they had youth models that acted as resources for them at schools and make them feel heard, make them feel included then this would affect the school climate, and it overall make them a better environment for them. But there's a huge barrier such as like the GPA and putting academic first, which I will talk about in the next slide with the strategies.

So, students are very aware that there's no time or no space dedicated to these things. So, yeah, so like this quote says, if they had like a conversation, if they had a space or like a time to have these conversations they were at school at least once a month about what was going on, then they would be able to like do something with all of that. And they keep going on saying that if one of them do it or they see that a lot of people are doing this then everybody would follow. That's how they know that

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their school, their classmates were able to follow it if everybody is doing it. So they just kind of need a space and a time to do these things. And so, next slide.

So this leads me to the strategies that we came up for for schools. So the Latinx youth want to see programming setup for them that allows them and informs them about how to register for voting, like gives them information about current events, but they also want to see that their teachers, principals are involved in what they're doing, that they helped them out, and that means by offering school clubs that have these things available to them. And set aside class time or assemblies that focus on these topics so that they can have these conversations. Next slide.

REBECCA: Hi, good afternoon. I'm Rebecca or Becca Saenz. And I've been on a team for about a year now helping to review this data and helping connect the findings with existing research. And so right now I'm

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going to be talking a little bit about the community and the neighborhood context. So, next slide, please.

To frame it as one of our Youth Experts has, so much of the daily activity for Latinx youth happens within this context, and it's really made up of their different family members, friends, neighbors, and I think a lot of what the facilitators and barriers consist of include the adults in their community, as you can see. Whether or not they model civic engagement, whether or not their messaging around youth voice is positive, and then they're also made up of their access to community resources as youth and how relevant the issues for civic engagement are to their community specifically. Next slide, please.

So, during our focus group discussions we can see here in this quote a real call for community organizations to take the time to make change in their communities. As one of our youth put it here they want to see the consistency from these organizations and to see that they actually mean it. And I think that this just calls to the desire to see

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lasting and sustainable change that truly benefits their community. Next slide, please.

And so, from this community context we see two main strategies emerge. The first is to provide community-based opportunities for engagement. The youth feel the need to increase youth awareness of community issues. And once they're aware of how they can create change then they can get included in actually making it. So this can be done with outreach methods that both benefit the youth and reach them where they are in real time in their real settings through means like youth friendly communication that they can then go on to share with their peers. And then we have our second strategy that touches on taking a community focused approach. And the youth lead a call here with this strategy to recruit youth and encourage their leadership in their communities here. Next slide, please.

So next I'm going to be talking about the sociocultural context. Next slide. So as one of our Youth Experts, Alexis, who you all will meet in a

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later video, points out is that this context discussion is about combating social issues on a smaller scale and then on a larger scale. And you really see that in the facilitators and barriers that the youth identified here. This context consists of the social environment which includes the racial and ethnic dynamics, age, demographics that the youth are in, as well as the cultural norms, beliefs, and values. These things also were shaped by things shared by the media and on social media, as well as things that they fear such as speaking out as a young person. Next slide, please.

So, the youth talked about making information relevant to them as a way of ensuring that other youth will want to get involved. They talked about the influence of social media as a way to do that. And we had one youth quoted here who says that they use a lot of social media and maybe we can use that as a reference to show all the situations that are going on right now. Next slide, please.

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So, we have two more strategies, again, in this context. And first is to engage all youth in civic engagement and this can be done in a few ways that we show here, some of which are by creating a social environment where youth voice is taken seriously and really valued, and where youth of other racial and ethnic backgrounds are also included. Our youth voiced a real desire for an environment for these things to come together so as to not feel so isolated in their pursuit for change. And then our next strategy is to use social media to share information about issues and ways that youth can get involved, specifically to the Latinx population. Our youth experts have identified that in all youth, including immigrant youth have rights, and the youth want to be able to share this with others through these means. Next slide, please.

DR. PRITZKER: So finally, I want to share a little bit about how youth discussed the influences of economic and political context on their civic engagement. So, next slide. The youth in our focus groups spoke extensively about the influence of politics. The

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presence and absence of political discussion, trust and mistrust towards political leaders, as well as policies. They spoke about immigrant policies, as well as age restrictions, like the voting age, on their engagement and ways that that impacted whether they were able to engage or not. They also spoke about barriers posed by economic factors. For example, the need to work to support their families, a lack of access to transportation, and barriers posed by the cost of participation.

And so on the next slide we want to share a brief video from Alexis Ruiz, another one of our youth co-researchers, and he connects exactly these economic and political influences with the types of specific youth-driven strategies that emerged in our findings. So next slide, and can you play it please?

ALEXIS: ...which is the economic and political context that goes into civic engagement. So I remember, I mean often times, a lot of youth won't get involved in civic engagement due to economic reasons that stop them, and besides the fear that - especially Latino

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parents have for their youth in getting civically engaged. I think, oftentimes and I would always talk to my high school friends about why they wouldn't get involved, a lot of it has to do with money and transportation. So I think what we could do is create clubs for each high school in which they could get funding to provide them food, you know, at no cost, and they can eat and have transportation. Those are the two main things that hinder. You know, food is already enough of an incentive. Well, free food is enough of an incentive and then if they had transportation to get home and to wherever they need to be then that's another plus because a lot of times, you know, parents work long hours, and they don't want to drive another whole hour to go pick up their children after working a long day. So, that will definitely create more access and allow more youth to get involved.

And also providing financial incentives for youth to get involved. I remember when I first heard about this research I was already - the incentive of being around a doctor, and being around scholars, and being

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around other intelligent people was already enough of an incentive to me, but when I saw those Amazon gift cards coming my way I was like, 'Okay, this is pretty cool that I see my work coming back to me.' So I think by knocking down those big barriers in terms of transportation and money, and providing spaces where you can talk about these things is going to be a big way that we can actually start creating change and allowing us to take youth seriously, and allowing them to foster and grow and change the current situation that we're living in. So yeah, I really appreciate you guys.

DR. PRITZKER: So, next slide. So the strategies that emerged from our focus groups include those highlighted by Alexis. Eliminating cost barriers, providing food and transportation, as well as a desire for inclusive opportunities to engage in change with other youth across different. Next slide.

So as we reflected on the many youth-driven strategies that emerged from our research across context, we looked across them and really identified

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a set of foundational principles that seem to connect across these strategies as really essential in supporting Latinx youth civic engagement. And so I really want to focus on these implications from our work. That Latinx youth want safe and supportive spaces that support them directly, that address youth and their family fears, and enable them to learn their rights around civic engagement. Youth want youth-led spaces that promote youth leadership and provide space for peer to peer communications where youth can come together to learn and support each other in civic actions.

They spoke about wanting accessible community-tailored information about current issues and change efforts that directly impact them and their families, and information that is culturally and linguistically designed for youth and their families. Those strategies consistently show a desire for positive messaging and modeling that highlight ways Latinx youth are already having societal impacts. Showing civic role models, helping youth see their power, and encouraging family pride in youth civic success.

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And finally, as Alexis pointed out and as we saw across strategies as well, youth want strategies that reduce institutional barriers to participation. Supporting transportation and food access, eliminating participation fees, eliminating GPA requirements that are often associated with civic opportunities in schools that can prevent Latinx youth participation in civic activities.

So as each of you move forward in your own work with AmeriCorps programs that engage youth as host to young AmeriCorps members, as AmeriCorps staff and researchers, we hope that these foundational principles that emerge directly from youth's own perceptions and experiences can help guide and engage Latinx youth in your civic programming. So, next slide.

As we wrap up our presentation I'd like to share a few resources that we hope will be helpful to you, and I'll put these in the chat as well. These are links to both reports and infographics that we've

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produced that are on the AmeriCorps site. And then two infographics that highlight some of the findings from our broader study that we will share with you as well. So, again, we want to thank AmeriCorps for this opportunity to, both for supporting this work and for this opportunity to share our work with you all today. And I will now pass this onto Dr. Marisol Clark-Ibáñez. Thank you.

DR. CLARK-IBÁÑEZ: Hi, everybody. Great to have so many people here and from across the country. As I go along I'm going, I gave you some links that relate to our projects and resources. And we have a couple colleagues joining us: Michelle Ramos-Pellicia and Valentina Martinez-Rodriguez. Michelle is experiencing some technical difficulties so I'm going to do our slides together. So Michelle, if you by chance hop on, let me know.

So thank you, thank you everyone for being here. We want to - I saw some really great connections with the Houston project. And we are going to share with you about two funded research projects that

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AmeriCorps' generous funding in the Research and Evaluation Office gave us to study the efficacy of a type of inclusive curriculum that we delivered. So, next slide.

This is not even all the team members, but I've highlighted the ones who are here presenting. But I wanted, if you saw in the chat, you can see that the founder of these programs and PI, and co-PI, and Research Director of the NLRC during the time of these projects, Dr. Arcela Nuñez-Alvarez is here, and she is now Director of Universidad Popular, and so it's great to have team members here from San Marcos, and to feel free to use the chat as a way to elaborate and add.

And I also want to point out that the National Latino Research Center at Cal State San Marcos also had, at times 30, up to sometimes 40 research assistants and interns that were students and community members, along with other staff members. So, let's go to the next slide.

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Because this is a national webinar we just really wanted to give a quick focus to the geographical location. We're located in the San Diego County region, but we are in the north part of the county, and this is where many of our participants come from. And so the impact of the US-Mexico border, issues of immigration are very significant for our communities where we live. Next slide, please.

Okay, so to work with the community, and in the community we really needed to come up with a concept of civic engagement that was not so abstract or philosophical because as you'll see we know that our community members were already kind of moving within the community and doing so much great work. So you can see what our kind of operational definition is. People or groups find ways to improve their community and social institutions. Next slide.

And as it was already mentioned by Dr. Ramos and our Houston team, while there is an ever growing population of Latinx communities, and individuals, and families, the actual civic engagement, seeing

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some surges of increased participation, but I really like the way Dr. Amy Ramos talked about how do you sustain this moving forward. And I feel like our presentation is going to hopefully inspire and give some ways that you all in your own communities can kind of tangle with this issue and do so in a way that's participatory and with an eye on sustaining. Next slide.

So, even though there's a narrative around the Latinx population as a sleeping giant, meaning such a growing population, and when will they wake up? Well, we really didn't want to use that, that format of, or that rhetoric that they're sleeping. I mean, there's a lot of problems with that metaphor anyway, but instead we chose a community cultural wealth framework that's really highlighting what is already happening in the community, within families through generations. And you can see just a touch of Tara Yosso's theoretical framework that we created, this program, the programs that we're going to be presenting, and also our research approach of looking

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at things through an asset based rather than a deficit based framework. Next slide.

Okay, so I mentioned we're going to talk about two, give an overview of two programs, funding the research of two programs. And one is Cultivating Leadership, Cultivando Liderazgo. And as you can see, I won't read every line on this slide, but studying the efficacy of this approach is what brought us into connection with AmeriCorps. And obviously the idea of this first point of bringing the principles of democracy and understanding civic engagement and how people can participate, this was really the intersection of the grant funded research, and then the curriculum that was being delivered. And these are photos from folks that were participating in our various programs over these last years. Alright, let's see, next slide, please.

And I wanted to point out about the curriculum. Now this is a very fast overview. And so, if you want copies of our reports and other resources, we are more than happy, and even some publications that are

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out there and in the works, we are very more than happy to share this with anybody, and we'll put some more contact information. But, the curriculum was created, even before this Cultivando Liderazgo truly got off the ground, by Anna Orthon and Arcela Nuñez-Alvarez. And they worked with the standards of the California Department of Education on civics. And very importantly they created a curriculum that really connected what the government and all these social institutions are, but to our community members lives. And this is what the basis of what the classes were. And as the last point below shares, that we also grounded the curriculum within the human rights principles. Okay, next slide.

Okay, so how did we measure this? And those of you, if you're in the audience maybe you've probably done these surveys, if you were part of the team at one point or another. We did create a very, very long survey. And it's really important to acknowledge the fact that the National Latino Research Center really did quite intensive training on culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate research assistants,

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and of course the staff being bilingual, to be able to conduct these surveys one on one in more of an interview conversational format, even though they were quite long.

And we did draw on questions from elements of the census and other standard questions around civic engagement where we measured attitudes, knowledge, and behavior, and also we wanted to also see the kind of content being learned of the Cultivando Liderazgo curriculum. So we did three points of contact as the student enrolled in the class, you know, before it started, after about ten weeks, and then a year later. And this also took quite the effort, and also generous funding, to make sure that students were in class, that the interviews were followed up on, and we had - I'm forgetting off the top of my head, but we had quite an amazing completion rate, even all three time periods. Next slide.

Thank you. And this is just indicating that there were just over 300 surveys started and the time period. And I just saw a chat bubble pop-up that

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Andrea, our grant officer, noted. At the time doing all of our reporting every year, a pretty phenomenal completion rate up to T2 and T3. Next slide.

Okay. So, for this first larger delivery of the curriculum in the Liderazgo program, we just provide here a snapshot of our participant's demographics. I also wanted to share that the National Latino Research Center, led by Dr. Nunez-Alvarez, delivered stakeholder and presentations based on what you see in the age group. The elders, millenials, and actually women to share just specific drilldowns from our project and from the results. So again, all of these are available. We can share them and collaborate in the future, for sure. Next slide.

Okay. So, if you can remember what Andrea showed at the beginning of the presentation in terms of volunteering and volunteering and voting. I feel like the beauty and the power of these projects really showed that the students in Cultivando Liderazgo are indeed civically engaged. And so the question doesn't become, how do we ignite - Well, how we could ignite

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more, that's a good question. But the question really becomes is how do organizations and other stakeholders in our regions tap into and support and amplify and elevate community members who are ready to go? So, and of course the curriculum and the organizing that was done to enhance the students, and when I say students it's a multi-generational group of community members that came together, how do we make this get to the next level? Next slide.

Okay. And then something that was pretty fun for us to see is the learning that actually happened because there was, you know, civics, facts, and dates, and basic civics 101 type of class that was delivered in a culturally relevant, linguistically sensitive way, and in a participatory way. And we saw the results of this group, and remember it was about 300, that there was gains across all of the measures. And there was an overall 10% gain in the civic knowledge. But if you can really look at what was the baseline. I mean, the baseline was already pretty high, if you think of your own civics education and how much you've retained it, and so we were able to retain and

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increase this already very meaningful level of civics knowledge.

Some differences, though. We did deliver Cultivando Liderazgo in different parts of our county. And so the rural areas had slightly less gains, whether the participants had access to or used technology, and the knowledge of English resulted in some differences. But as I mentioned, everybody showed progress. So it was really an amazing program and curriculum that was delivered. Next slide.

Okay, so I'm about to pass it over to Valentina, who is going to highlight some of the, briefly, some of the findings of what happened when we took this first three years of delivery and the elders who were participating, and some of them who were participating in Cultivando Liderazgo, really we could see there was specialized needs to create a class specifically for elders. Valentina, are you ready?

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VALENTINA: Yes. So, as Dr. Marisol said, Cultivando Liderazgo really did teach us a lot about students and civic engagement, but it also demonstrated that need for particular targeted attention to Latino immigrant elders. So, if we could go to the next slide.

So, Cultivando Sabiduría's purpose is to first and foremost honor elder's experiences and create a learning environment that centered wellness, community leadership, and civic engagement. The program saw a total of 300 students between the years of 2017 and 2020, right when the pandemic hit, and even after I believe there was an attempt to follow up between the program staff toward Cultivando Sabiduría students, to just do those checkups and see how the students were doing during the pandemic.

So, if we go to the next slide we can see a snapshot of the students that were involved in this program. So the majority of the participants were female, however there was a significant male participation, we see 19.2%. And the majority of the students were

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between the ages of 55 to 65 years old, with most of them reporting as independent or needing very little to no help with daily needs and activities. Next slide.

DR. CLARK-IBÁÑEZ: If you could stay on this, go back just one. We also wanted to share something that was really important, you'll see it in the next couple slides, how important it was to have the bilingual and strong Spanish speaking staffing, students. And also to point out that the students in Sabiduria were not, they didn't have higher levels of formal learning, and most had around an elementary level education in their own home country. One thing I want to also point out is that we do have a presentation that's specifically about literacy and literacy classes, and other material developed, so if anybody here wants more information about that we can also share that. Next slide.

Thank you. So, the courses, the classes that were held every Thursday morning, technically 9 to 11, but as folks will, folks here in San Marcos were involved

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in the project know that the students would start to arrive at around 8 and wouldn't leave often until noon. And you can see some of the courses that the students themselves asked for. And also, because this is based in a popular education approach, that they themselves also started teaching in these areas and leading, and having the shared collaborative approach to these courses. Next slide.

Great. And these are photos from those Thursday mornings from technology, from crafts, and from the couple of the literacy classes. And like I said, we developed some of the deliverables from this grant funded work that are guides and overviews and videos that can definitely make this all come alive much more. Next slide.

Well, we wanted to wrap up because I know we were asked to talk a little bit about the adults or elders. We wanted to wrap up one of the more significant and meaningful findings of delivering, yes, civic engagement type of program, but the fact is that the students and the elders in the class

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really it was a common refrain to feel like I'm going to my class, I'm going to school. And we saw how important it was to feel like I'm finally kind of getting to become the student that because of life and work, and all sorts of other challenges in life they were navigating, they found this place, and this really echoes I think what the Houston group talked about is having an inclusive space and place for this to occur, and how much literacy is connected with civic participation. So next slide, please. And Valentina?

VALENTINA: Yeah. So, elders participating in this program were not only presented with culturally validating and relevant curriculum, but they also left with feelings of accomplishment, community, and purpose. So as we can see in this quote from Dona Alicia, one of our students, she said that she wants to be a good example for her children and her grandchildren, and they should never give up. So this impact goes beyond the individual elder and on through the next generation. So that was really, really cool to see. And if we go to the next slide, we have another

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student Dona Carmen who says that at 79 years old she's able to achieve the goals that she sets out for herself. And she's learning and helping her community. So this just goes to the further, to the impact that this program has, not just on the individual, but the community as a whole, which is really the model of Cultivando Sabiduría. Next slide.

So, we developed this guide with Dr. Marisol, and these resources and links can all be shared with you all. But we developed this guide to provide details of the program that we created to ignite and validate the civic engagement activities of low-income Spanish speaking Latino elders. This guide also describes the curriculum in detail and provides recommendations for broad implementation based on analysis of both the qualitative and the quantitative data. And as was mentioned, there was also a really big push on literacy. So we have the Community Resource Book as a culturally informed approach for teaching Spanish literacy to Spanish speaking Latino adults ages 50 and older who have no to low formal levels of education. So these two resources were created and

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made accessible to all so that others interested in implementing similar programs and approaches would be able to take what we have learned and bring it into their space. Next slide, please.

DR. CLARK-IBÁÑEZ: Okay. And to wrap up, like we said, the home where you can find many of these resources is at the National Latino Research Center at Cal State San Marcos. There is a publication in a journal that really focuses on Cultivando Liderazgo in much more detail. And let's see, I'm going to, as soon as we're done here, I'm going to upload this whole presentation in a PDF and you all can cut and paste here. And we actually also have a publication that's under review, a scholarly publication about Sabiduría as well, and that should - You know, we've turned in our revise and resubmits, and please keep in touch in terms of what other type of work you'd like to do, or how this could maybe help each of you in your own kind of seeking to connect and work with your Latinx population in your own region. Next slide, the last slide.

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Great. So, one of the things I want to also just put a plug in for is that ETHA and NLRC have Dr. Konane Martinez, the Faculty Director, and her contact information there because the NLRC provides technical support, coaching, assessment, and evaluation, and is an amazing resource in order to help colleagues, help community, participatory research, and other methodologies. So please feel free to reach out to Dr. Martinez and myself as well, and some other members of the team who have been commenting in the chat. Any one of us would be happy to collaborate and discuss future directions. Thank you so much. I appreciate everybody's attention and engagement with our presentation. Thank you.

ANDREA: Thank you so much. So I have a number of names. Thank you Amy, Suzanne, Katherine, Denise, Rebecca, Marisol, Valentina, and I know Michelle is having difficulty. So before we go to Q&A, I am just going to have Victor García from Immigrant Rising and Angelica Razo from Mi Familia Vota to just say a few words in terms of what you heard or any other piece of information you'd like to bring in. Victor?

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VICTOR: Sure, thank you Andrea. So, first of all, thank you so much to the teams in Houston and in San Diego for the amazing research that you're each leading in your respective areas. I think that there is a lot that we sort of were able to sort of glean from the research that you provided and help us think about how it is that we implement our programs, whether we are funders, whether we are program designers, implementers, and such.

There was a question or an idea that surfaced both from Amy and from Marisol, which I think is good for us to pause on, which is around the sustainability of programs. And sort of what that prompted me to think about was how is it that we really conceptualize about sustainability overall, right? I think so many times our initial sort of take is on the cost of the programs that we implement, that we fund, and such. And I think it's important for us to think of it in two sort of complementary ways. There certainly is, you know, how it is that the programs are funded, how folks are incentivized to participate, and such. I

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think we heard that from each of the teams and from the short video that was presented. But there are also cost efficient ways in which we can sustain the work in our respective programs, right, whether it is how we look at engaging youth leadership on our boards, on our councils that develops our programs, how it is that we build in specific ways for youth engagement, and for the engagement of folks in general in our programs.

The other is the sort of sustainability of civic engagement overall by participants in our programs, right. I think the sort of long term vision that we all have for the work that we do is that folks, whether they're young when they participate in our programs or whether they are seniors that we really think about where will they be even after they participate in our programs. What will be the long term sustainable impact of the programs that they engage in? So, whether that is thinking of them as the future professionals who will implement programs like these or whether it is about our elders who will go back into the community and to their families and

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go share about the benefits of being civically engaged in their communities.

And so, I would love for the presenters to be able to chime in about that distinction if they see it as well, and to hear from others who might have questions if they align with that sort of understanding of sustainability too.

ANGELICA: Thank you, Victor. Hi, everyone. My name is Angelica Razo. I'm the Texas State Director for Mi Familia Vota and we've partnered with Dr. Pritzker and her team at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. When this program got started I was a youth organizer, so I was working very closely with some of the youth leaders that are now part of the research project and others. And to me it was just so exciting that everything that we were seeing on the ground, stories we were hearing from our youth, the feedback they were giving us, that we would have an opportunity to validate this through our research.

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And so, I would say like taking a step back away from how we've been able to implement these findings, why civic engagement is so important to us as an organization and us as a community is that civic engagement is a tool that we have to develop leaders across all sectors. I loved what Victor was saying about where are these folks going to go in the future, where will they end up?

And the way we have seen our young people develop because of civic engagement, because they're helping as project management, because they're leading civic clubs at their school, and they're delegating tasks, and they're managing projects, and they're learning their personal narrative to share that and inspire others, that's their college essay, that's their scholarship essay, that's their interviewing skills that they have, that's the media spokespersons that we have, the future academics we have because now we have young people that are part of a research team.

And so for us it's just, it's the long term vision that we have. Our mission as Mi Familia Vota is

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social and economic prosperity and justice for our community. And we see that as a tool to be able to prosper as a community. Yes, we are an organization that is deeply devoted to turning out Latinos and voter registration, and helping people with citizenship workshops, but the end game is truly justice, prosperity for our community, and that's why these programs are so important for us.

In terms of some of the takeaways that we had, as I was hearing Dr. Pritzker name those components I just was able to name - I was also able to see how they're showing up in their program. I think the youth-led spaces is just super important. Young people need to see their peers leading these spaces and being active, that's how they inspire each other. The peer to peer empowerment is so crucial. And we as an organization, there is a tiny place where we need to step back and allow young people to really step into these spaces, and take charge, and have agency in that. Providing the safe spaces is also something that's really important.

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When I was a youth organizer I would hear in the classrooms as we were doing voter registration people saying, 'You're never going to vote. Latinos don't vote. We don't care.' And so battling that narrative and really providing a space where people can say, I'm not really sure what civic engagement is, I'm not really sure what the requirements to register to vote, I'm not really sure what advocacy is, but I want to learn because I care about my community is just so powerful. And so that's why this research has been very impactful for us because we're able to see from evidence, like how is it that we as an organization can take these findings and incorporate them into our programming knowing that they're coming from hundreds of students that have said this is how civic engagement can become more accessible to me?

More accessible, more creative, more fun, more lively. And so for us as an organization we are committed to doing that, not just in Texas where I'm based out of, but across all of our different, our states because we just see the change and we see the

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long term end game. So thank you so much for allowing us to be a partner in this.

ANDREA: Thank you so much. I love the fact that you're bringing in evidence with practice and how we bring those together, and that is a challenge, and very important, and I know it's something that we think about every day, and I would like for us to be able to talk a little bit more about that. So we're going to move into the Q&A. If you have specific questions please either type them in there to me, Andrea Robles, or just to everyone, and we'll have the team come on. Let's see what other things do I need to tell you. And when you're typing in a question, if you want it to go to everyone just make sure that you're hitting it to everyone.

So thank you all for such a wonderful and engaging conversation, and for all your work. And I know that this takes a community, not just all of you, but all your team members that have been part of this. Arcela who was very much part of the work in San Marcos talked about sustainability and how important this

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was in terms of the community. I think everybody could read her comment here, but talking about how sustainability is largely contingent on compromise, comunitarios. That it's not tied to funding or incentives, it's about being in touch, being able to touch people's lives in meaningful ways.

And I know all of you have been talking about voice in some way. So youth voice, senior voice, right, something that's meaningful, culturally appropriate, these safe spaces. So, I guess I have a couple questions to start off. Let's see, so if you had to right now, I mean, we have our AmeriCorps programs and we have our AmeriCorps seniors programs, and it's engaging all age groups, but mainly we have a lot of people who are between 18 and 26, and then people over 55, and mostly our grantees are nonprofits. So from yourself as a researcher or from the work that you have done, how would you talk about, I mean just a little bit more in terms of this issue around the safe space and voice, what would you recommend to our grantees or our programs who are trying to do that

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work right now and really engage that? And so I'll turn it first to Suzanne and then to Marisol.

DR. PRITZKER: Thank you for that question. I'm actually going to pass it along. Katherine, would you like to talk a little bit about sort of what we've learned and about safe spaces, and what that could look like for organizations?

KATHERINE: Yes. So, from the student's speaking on the focus groups, we talked about how especially in schools it would be really useful to have these actual physical safe spaces, but as well as, they do want to see like the freedom for them to guide them themselves, but also these organizations come in and help out with resources, and tutorials, and how to do different things, and get involved. So yeah, I think close connection. I mean, from that just keeping up with them was also very important. Yeah, I don't know if somebody wants to jump in. I don't know if I'm answering it all.

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DR. PRITZKER: Katherine, I think the one thing that I would add is I think something that really came through across our focus groups is the sort of larger fears, whether youth themselves are immigrants, whether their family members, whether extended family members, the larger community that the level of fear that came into thinking about civic engagement was evident across our focus groups whether they were in Houston, whether they were in Denver, whether they were in these Spanish language focus groups, English language focus groups, you know, consistently that came across too. So I think there's both safe spaces that in terms of what Katherine was describing, but also places to really talk through what does it mean to engage with those fears about my own safety, my family's safety, my community's safety? What are my rights? And to be able to kind of break those down and have those conversations too is something that I think came through a lot in our work that would be helpful.

ANDREA: Thank you. Marisol?

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DR. CLARK-IBÁÑEZ: Sure. And I just saw, I think Ruben put something in the chat just now, because I guess I interpreted, Andrea, your question as how can the AmeriCorps programs engage all this great work that's happening? And really immigration status is a barrier, right. If immigration status is contingent upon being a volunteer or getting a stipend, you know, if you have a significant population who are undocumented then you really have to find which programs would engage and appropriately compensate and nurture that relationship. So I feel like just thinking through what some of the issues could be and that takes a larger conversation, but I think it's a really important conversation to bring up at the national level, at the federal level in terms of the parameters that these programs have around them.

But I also wanted to share that Andrea and her team were amazing to try to connect us with state and local programs. And I think Andrea, you and I were reflecting it's like, oh my gosh, it never quite worked out because the smaller nonprofit approach needed more support to be able to host some type of

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AmeriCorps programming. We weren't ready, but there wasn't a lot of funding on our end to try to get it ready. And then also I know we have some folks who are in city government that maybe this is, that is the perfect way to go is connecting with city government into nonprofits and campuses to connect that civic, the local and the state level programs.

And so, I think it would be very exciting to see the type of AmeriCorps programs, whether it's for the grandparents, for the elders, or multigenerational or college students flow through our city governments. And then they're the ones who know all of the movers and shakers and organizations that we can then tap into, because if it's just the state to us littler entities, it was really hard to do. And I know it could have been great opportunities, but we just couldn't make it happen. Yeah, I think if that's where that question was going. Thank you.

ANDREA: Thank you for all your comments. So here's a question from Arcela. And I have a few people who to want to partner with all of you. But a question, as

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researchers, and that's to all of you, how do you cultivate and nurture relationships of trust and reciprocity with the community members you are studying? Now I think all of you used more participatory approaches, that might be something that people who are listening might know of or might not, so can you tell us, again, from your different perspectives? And then for Angelica, and Amy, and Victor who have seen the work that you've been doing, what is it that drew you to these groups and that you trusted with the population that you're working with? So let's start with Suzanne and your team.

DR. PRITZKER: Sure. So I think kind of part of what you were just saying that I think designing this work, one, in partnership with Mi Familia Vota, we worked with Angie and other folks at Mi Familia Vota from the start on this project and really thinking about what did they want to know, what did we know, how do we work together on that? We had actually previously worked together in multiple capacities. But then I think designing this study intentionally as a participatory research study so it wasn't university

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researchers going in and doing this work, but really designing youth research teams, really building relationships with youth who then, like Katherine, like Alexis, who were then themselves conducting focus groups, engaging recruiting.

So really the entire sort of engaging with youth was being led by youth. We worked with Katherine and others on the research team to train to really build those skills, to build relationships, and I'm actually going to ask Denise to talk a little more about this. So that it was peer to peer, it was community-based relationships that really helped make this research happen. One of the things I really enjoyed about this project was actually going back and just reading through transcripts and seeing the ways in which our youth leaders were really able to just encourage and support really meaningful conversations because they were trusted members of the community with whom they were engaging in this research. Denise, do you want to add anything?

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DENISE: I agree that the participation in the program with Mi Familia Vota was key to my relationship with the youth and just being a support to them. It was maybe them, the ones who were recruiting who were asking the questions. That made it a lot easier for the youth to just open up and talk about the issues. I just tried to stay as much in the background as I could and just come in just as a support to the youth experts who were the ones who actually do a lot of the work.

ANDREA: Thank you. Marisol, your team?

DR. CLARK-IBÁÑEZ: Yeah, I'll just be real brief here, because I know you're asking other participants on the panel to also chime in. But I think the basis of community and participatory research really speaks to what Suzanne mentioned in having researchers who are from the region who have a long term commitment. And I think one of the things, working with the NLRC over the years was, what I saw as a powerful approach, you're not always able to do it, but whether there was research funding or not, the community work

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continued, and the prolonged engagement and sustained engagement of working with schools, school districts, presentations, and that type of work continues whether there's a grant that pops up, and then all of a sudden you go back into the community.

And it's not always possible, and just to be frank, you can't always do community participatory methods for every project, but for sure the work that we presented has it. And I wanted to give a shout-out to the Office of Research and Evaluation of AmeriCorps because they fostered and sponsored a grant initiative for community conversations which we, at the NLRC we were able to do oral histories, photo elicitation interviews, and working with community on what those questions might be. And we also have that report to share if you wanted to see an example of what we did. And it was very meaningful for participants and researchers and team members alike. So, yeah, I'll stop there and let others also chime in.

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ANDREA: And we're still talking about these issues around trust and how you communicate with people. So Victor, what is it that you saw? And Angelica and Amy, I think if you're still there, what's the beauty? What do you see in the work that these groups are doing?

VICTOR: Sure, I'll just share really quickly anecdotally the very first time that I became aware of Marisol's research and the research of her center was actually at a conference with a very similar format to this where the folks that were accompanying Marisol were student action researchers, and that for me was like an immediate sort of way to recognize that this is an organization that really is living their mission. The research is about the Latinx community and the Latinx youth community was there presenting on their original research. And I think when we see those kinds of examples I think it really speaks to not only sort of the commitment to the work, but folks living the vision of what they intend to do.

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And so we through the Catalyst Fund partnered with campuses across California, we have for the last three and a half years. And in each of those places that is the constant. We look for, in our case, colleges and universities where students are helping to inform what it is that they want to see on their campus, whether they're working with a president, or a vice president, or a dean, really we see the mission of that institution coming alive by students saying, well, this is the way in which these things are not really playing out on our campus, yet it's part of our campus' sort of vision for change.

And so that I think is really the constant that we want to see. I see that as well with, even though I have not met the folks from the Houston, I can also tell that is the approach that they're taking. And I think that whether one is a funder or one is looking to sort of partner around expanding opportunity for students for elders or for others, that we really look at what is it that makes that vision or that vision of the organization come alive.

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ANDREA: Thank you. Angelica?

ANGELICA: Yeah, I would say for me, definitely the foundation was trust, and I had known Dr. Pritzker in other spaces, and that was really important to me that somebody that I already knew, trusted in the civic engagement space from the academic world was coming to us. Yes, it was a no-brainer. We want to partner with you. And then I think the other thing is like the mutual understanding. We operate on different timelines. Nonprofits are already at capacity. Like for our youth leadership development program it's really important that we're providing opportunities to students, not just asking them of time. And so the idea to have youth leaders as part of the research team was, I think that was like the cherry on top.

And I think that was really beautiful. And for us as an organization it allowed us to take a step back from my time and some of our other folks' time, and really let the young people be the main point of the research, and drive those conversations, and be

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active there. And so that's why I thought that yes, this is a great partnership. Timelines are going to change, things are going to come up, and I was okay with that because the partnership fit.

ANDREA: Thank you. Alright, so I'm looking at the time, we have six minutes, and of course I want to talk to you for a lot longer. But the point though for the audience is people have been putting up resources, we have our website, the transcript, and the webinar will be available in just a couple of weeks. So if you for some reason cannot get to those links, you'll have those. And this is an important topic and it's an important priority for the new administration in terms of really engaging diverse populations. As Amy pointed out, Latinos are a large percentage of the population.

So I just want to ask you briefly, I just want to give each of you an opportunity to say something, even something that surprised you when you were doing the work, or something you heard from someone else, and I'll just go in order, and just anything that

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struck you. So Amy, I'm not sure if you're on. I'll start with you.

AMY: Yeah. I just want to end by really celebrating all the work that's been highlighted today, and the passion and compassion that everyone has as part of all of these teams to really be able to meet communities where they're at. So we talked about trust, we talked about how to actually build some of these authentic relationships, and that really is what's cemented in my mind today, and want to make sure that we make space to continue to propagate these effects across the nation.

ANDREA: Thank you. Suzanne, how about your team, you and your team?

DR. PRITZKER: Sure, I'll jump in first. So it's actually, maybe the observation I want to make is not just specifically about today, but actually in working with Katherine, both as a Youth Expert and other members from the Youth Expert team, but circling back and preparing for this presentation.

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Katherine, who was part of our research team starting four years ago, I just read a reference letter for a doctoral program, and just seeing the ways in which being involved in doing this participatory research where we bring youth in and really emphasize youth voice in the ways seeing that Katherine is going to be a future leader, a future researcher building off the kind of work we're talking about today is really I think something, as we think about youth leadership and youth voice, really kind of piggybacking on what Angie brought up earlier just that this is laying the roots for developing future leaders in so many spaces. And I think that just brought it full circle for me.

ANDREA: That's an outcome for us. Katherine, so you're next.

KATHERINE: Thank you, Dr. Pritzker. Yeah, I think ever since I've been coming back to look at all the data and all the findings that we found, it's nice, because even when we running through it, like new things kept coming up, like there's so much

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information here and it was nice because it has been four years, and it was nice to like remember, and look at the transcript that I got, like whenever Denise and, the whole team kind of gave me a transcript to do for the focus groups, and just remembering all that I learned back then, and all I'm that learning now with the findings. And there's just a lot of information that is really nice to see and be a part of ever since like four years ago. And it feels good being part of this team.

ANDREA: Thank you. And I guess you're an example of sustainability, right, you're still with it. Denise?

DENISE: Yeah. I just want to echo what they said. Seeing the youth grow throughout the program was an amazing experience. And also the youth really wanted to talk about the issues once they were really in a safe space, they were very open to talk about not only why they participated, but the barriers and the fears, and like Dr. Pritzker mentioned before, fear was a very key factor throughout each focus group of, 'I don't participate because I'm fearful of X, Y, and

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Z.' And it was very interesting to hear. And like I said, it was great to just - Giving them the space to talk and hearing that they, as long as we give them the space they will have those discussions, and they are wanting to be leaders, basically. Yeah, thank you.

ANDREA: Thank you. Rebecca?

REBECCA: I want to speak from the perspective as a Latina graduate assistant who came into this research and onto this team a little bit later, after the focus groups happened. It was just, you know, being really grounded in this research and having myself lived through some of these experiences, and those fears that Denise and the other youth have been talking about. Seeing teams, like the ones present today, are just really awesome and really inspiring, and I'm glad to hear about it, and to keep on contributing to that.

ANDREA: Thank you. Marisol?

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DR. CLARK-IBÁÑEZ: Yeah, just briefly to echo what our Houston team is talking about is the actual development of the folks who were sort of on the backstage, and delivering has been very promising. The engine that not only the NLRC provided, but also through Universidad Popular that really branched out to the census, hard to count, it branched off to other redistricting issues. It just had an amazing ripple effect. But what your original question, like something stuck out, and the note that I had is around the Houston team's education and high school, like how can high schools help?

And I just wanted to share at the National Latino Research Center Cal State San Marcos there was a concerted effort to bring the civics 101 through a Chicano studies lens into the high schools, and to teach it as either a free class or some type of way to get at students in their classes, whether it was alternative high schools, non-traditional high schools, or regular high schools, and also the role in supporting high school mecha.

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And so I just wanted to throw that out as ways that high schools may or may not have the capability to do it, but you from the outside may have the resources, skills, and passion to bring it to them, and then that's where the collaboration can hit. So that's what struck me from the original presentation. And Valentina?

ANDREA: Yeah, Valentina?

VALENTINA: Yeah. So it's been honestly really cool to see the different perspectives, both us working with an older population in Houston and with younger. Like Rebecca, I did come in later, so I was part of going through the reports, not so much being in the classroom. But what stood out to me throughout my time on the project and just reflecting here now is the importance of community. How it wasn't just about civic engagement, it's about making people feel heard, having a space where people can come to. Being like yeah, there's this person that I know and I'm going to go to them. And that network that really, like it breeds, not breeds, but it creates people

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wanting to be civically engaged, but it also builds stronger community ties. And that was something that really stood out to me and was really beautiful as I was going through all the videos, and the pictures, and just seeing. I think there's a picture on a slide too where we have, or in our guide book where there's a younger kid, I think he's like seven with an elder, right, working together and learning, just how it is intergenerational and really rooted in community.

ANDREA: Thank you. And finally Victor and Angelica.

VICTOR: Thank you, Andrea. I know we're out of time so I'll make this brief. I just want to commend everyone and thank you, Andrea for creating this space. I think while a lot of these themes and these topics are evergreen, I think it's so important for us to have this conversation across states at a national level to really build on our collective knowledge, and to be able to create new tactics and opportunities for folks to engage. So thank you for creating this space.

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ANDREA: Thank you. And Angelica, where are you? Maybe she had to drop. Well, I know there were 23 more messages that I didn't get to. So, we will make sure to download that. And if you have any specific questions, again, you can send it in, or there's [evaluation@cns](mailto:evaluation@cns), there it is, [evaluation@cns.gov](mailto:evaluation@cns.gov). If you want to go ahead and just submit any other questions or if you want some contacts, please feel free to do so. And you also have Suzanne and Marisol's contact right there. But I want to thank you all for all your wonderful work. And Arcela Nunez, thank you so much for you and all the work you have done. Yes, this will be available. So hopefully we'll do it again. Bye.

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