

Y N P A R

R E S O U R C E

Pre-YPAR Reflection Questions



Before launching a **Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)** project in your organization or community, it is important to:

1. Assess your readiness to launch a YPAR project
2. Recruit your youth-adult research team
3. Plan and prepare for the collaborative work

Consider the following reflection questions.

Assessing Your Readiness to Conduct a YPAR Project

- ➔ Who are the key stakeholders and/or decision-makers you require support from to execute the YPAR work?
 - *Do adult leaders at the organization understand the need, value, and importance of engaging youth?*
 - *Is a review/approval process required before launching a project with youth?*
 - *Do you need to obtain parental consent for youth to engage in the work?*
- ➔ Are the necessary resources available to support youth engagement and collaboration with adults?
 - *Will the adults and youth on the research team be appropriately compensated for their involvement?*
 - *Is there a room/space available for the research team to regularly meet for collaborative working sessions?*
 - *Do youth have access to the necessary equipment/tools to collect and analyze data (e.g., audio recorders for interviews, cameras for photomapping, online platform subscriptions for data analysis, etc.)?*
- ➔ What existing organizational values, beliefs, and/or behavioral norms may influence the success of the YPAR work?
 - *Do adults in your organization believe youth voice and perspective is/has been missing in planning, decision-making, etc.?*
 - *Do adults in your organization believe youth can and should be engaged in partnership work to address the problem/issue?*
 - *Is addressing the problem/issue considered a priority by adults in the organization?*

- ➔ Does your organization/community have access to youth who are excited, willing, and able to commit to a sustained, challenging and rewarding YPAR project?
 - *Do youth believe adults will value their voice and perspective throughout the YPAR process?*
 - *Do youth believe that with the right knowledge and skills, they will be able to address the problem/issue?*
 - *Is addressing the problem/issue considered a priority by youth in your organization/community?*

- ➔ What are the relational strengths and/or strains between youth and adults in your organization/community?
 - *Are there previous examples of youth and adults working together in partnership to accomplish a goal?*
 - *Do youth trust adults to follow through on their commitments? Is there anything adults need to take accountability for to build trust with youth?*

- ➔ What changes is your organization/community willing and capable of making to actively respect youth's insights, experiences, and capacities?
 - *How will the upcoming YPAR work look and/or feel different from previous efforts to engage and/or empower youth?*
 - *Which rules/structures/practices/processes can be changed based on feedback/recommendations provided by youth? What (if any) are the limitations or stipulations for such changes?*
 - *Which decisions will adults hand off to youth? Which decisions will be made jointly by adults and youth?*

- ➔ What changes is your organization/community unable to make at this time?
 - *Which rules, structures, practices, or processes cannot be changed at this time?*
 - *Which decisions must be made solely by adults? How will the rationale, process, and outcome(s) of adult-only decisions be shared transparently with youth researchers?*

Assembling a Youth-Adult Research Team

- ➔ Are there adult staff members with the time and capacity to develop/oversee a YPAR project?
- ➔ What is the appropriate age/grade range to target in recruitment for the YPAR project?
- ➔ Are the adults adequately trained and prepared to be partners and allies to youth researchers?¹
 - *Do adult partners have the necessary knowledge/skills to engage in hierarchy flattening practices and/or empowerment of youth in partnership work/decision-making?*
- ➔ Are the adults adequately trained and prepared to design and implement a research project?
 - *Do they have the necessary knowledge/skills to oversee, guide or collaborate on the planned data collection methods?*
 - *Are they able to train youth on how to conduct the required quantitative and/or qualitative data analyses?*
- ➔ What proactive strategies will you take to ensure the recruitment of a diverse group of youth and adult research team members?
- ➔ What proactive steps will be taken to reduce adultism and/or practice good partnership?
- ➔ What existing hierarchical systems of power may influence the success of the YPAR work?
 - *Will youth work with adult staff (teachers, admin, program directors, etc.)?*
 - *Will the research team include youth from different age groups or grade levels?*
 - *Will the research team include English Language Learners?*

¹Similar to how youth researchers need to prepare and train to conduct a YPAR project, adult allies, and partners must also be trained to support and facilitate the collaborative work, including being ready to reduce power imbalances, addressing the mistrust youth may have in adults, etc.

Planning & Preparing to Launch a YPAR Project

- ➔ What have you learned from past attempts to address the problem/issue before?
 - *What contributed to the success?*
 - *What challenges can you anticipate based on past experiences?*
- ➔ What have you learned from past attempts to engage youth in your organization/community?
 - *What contributed to the success?*
 - *What challenges can you anticipate based on past experiences?*
- ➔ How is this project addressing historical concerns, current issues, trends, and needs in the organization/community at large?
- ➔ What is the goal of using YPAR in general and in this project specifically? Towards what end?
 - *Is there an overarching focus or question that will shape the project? If so, what is it? Who is funding this project? Do they have any expectations that need to be fulfilled?*
- ➔ What are current restraints, implicit/explicit expectations, and/or pre-existing requirements for completing the YPAR project?
 - *Are there time, schedule, or budget constraints to consider?*
 - *Is there an expectation that a specific problem/issue will be addressed or a certain type of deliverable will be generated?*
 - *Is there specific/non-flexible recruitment criteria for selecting the youth and/or adult researchers who will be involved?*
- ➔ What key products will be generated through this YPAR project?
- ➔ What level of youth participation is needed and feasible at each stage of the YPAR work?
 - *During which stage(s) of the YPAR work has youth voice and perspective been notably absent?*
 - *What desired outcomes of the YPAR work require youth collaboration?*

- *Which existing youth skill sets can be immediately leveraged vs. which skills will require training youth to allow for meaningful participation in the YPAR work?*
- *How much time and capacity do youth have to participate at each stage of the YPAR work?*

Logistical Concerns

- ➔ What are the calendar or scheduling constraints that need to be considered for both youth and adult research members? (e.g., holiday breaks, after-school clubs or sports, state testing, etc.)
- ➔ What is the approximate time estimate for each cycle of inquiry?
- ➔ Are there particular deadlines that need to be adhered to for completing this project or completing specific stages in the process?
- ➔ Are there limits to how the research can be conducted given available resources (e.g., tech resources, transportation)
- ➔ Is all the equipment that is needed to complete the proposed work (e.g., student computers with appropriate software) available, including any special equipment required to collect, analyze or disseminate information (e.g., video camera, audio recorder, etc.)?