

What is dissemination?

Dissemination is a fancy word for sharing research ideas and key findings with a wide range of audiences. There are several reasons it is important to share your work with others, including: raising awareness, gathering feedback, and highlighting key lessons learned and/or recommended action steps.

There are many different channels and methods of disseminating your research findings to target audiences. These include traditional avenues such as poster or paper presentations at conferences, submissions to scientific journals, policy briefs, and press releases to more innovative or creative options including, infographics, social media platforms, podcasts, TedTalks, documentaries, art-based events, and performances.

Why is creating a dissemination plan in Youth Participatory Action Research important?

Dissemination is an essential step in YPAR (and the key to linking “action” steps to the “research process”). Effective and thoughtful dissemination can support youth empowerment, highlight actionable findings to drive social change, and celebrate the successful completion of a research project. It is important to begin thinking about a dissemination plan before launching a YPAR project, which includes identifying the audience(s) that will benefit from your findings and considering how to design and execute the work with the end products in mind. It is also important to consider the timing and delivery style of dissemination products.

Who is in charge of disseminating research findings?

Creating and executing a dissemination plan is a shared responsibility between all members of the YPAR team. The most effective dissemination plans integrate key insights and recommendations from youth researchers, adult leaders, and community partners. There is also an opportunity to utilize a participatory approach to dissemination and involve relevant stakeholders throughout the dissemination process to increase project engagement and outreach.

How do you decide what findings to disseminate?

It is important to consider your audience's needs, interests, and priorities before deciding what findings to share. For example, community members may be more interested in hearing about how actionable recommendations from the work can support community transformation and well-being. Practitioners and researchers may value information directly related to the work they do on the ground and in their day-to-day practices. Funders are more likely to seek information related to the overall impact of the project and the extent to which the research questions and findings are aligned with their respective areas of investment. Other YPAR teams may be eager to hear about what did and didn't work well during the collaborative process between youth and adults and whether the intended next steps offer opportunities for collaboration. Consider each audience's informational needs and carefully select the appropriate and relevant channel for reaching them.

Tips for Disseminating Research Findings

Written Summaries of Findings:

1. Always write with the specific audience in mind
2. When possible, keep the information short and to the point
3. Use clear, non-technical language
4. Ensure the size/style of font is easy to read and includes reasonable spacing
5. Consider leveraging data visualization techniques

Public Presentations of Findings:

1. Highlight the principal points to organize the findings clearly
2. Practice your public speaking skills
3. Include opportunities for interaction with the audience and build in time to address their questions/solicit feedback
4. Leverage networking opportunities with individuals and organizations that can help share and promote your research findings.

How can our YPAR team disseminate our findings?

Here are a few examples!

Social media campaign



A social media campaign is a series of relevant content that brings awareness to a defined goal or objective. YPAR teams can use a variety of social platforms such as Instagram, Twitter or TikTok to engage/interact with their target audience.

Student interns at the Netter Center's University Assisted Community Schools program, alongside Jeffrey Fishman, created [meme graphics and TikTok videos](#) to share health-related messages (Philadelphia, PA)

Brief



A brief is a short document that summarizes key points of an issue and provides relevant recommendations. YPAR teams can use briefs to communicate their work to various stakeholders and provide actionable suggestions obtained from their research process.

A [policy brief](#) summarizing findings from a YPAR project named “Raise Your Hand Campaign”, which aims to promote educational equity (New Orleans, LA)

Research poster



Research posters are a visual representation of research results using text, charts, graphs, and tables. Posters allows YPAR teams to engage with event attendees who are interested in youth-led efforts and receive feedback for future projects.

L. Trenton Marsh and colleagues’ [research poster](#) on social and emotional learning, youth mentoring, and YPAR, presented at the 2022 Annual American Educational Research Association Conference (Orange County, FL)

Research presentation



A research presentation is an informative way to verbally communicate research processes and findings. Similar to posters, presentations allow YPAR teams to share their knowledge and action plans with a specific audience.

Intercultural Development Research Association’s YPAR team presented highlights from their study on culturally responsive education during a [virtual symposium](#) (north Texas)

A website



A website is a collection of virtual content. Websites are a tool for YPAR teams to showcase their research process, findings, resources that could help other YPAR teams, and ways for stakeholders to contact them for inquiries and collaboration.

University of California San Francisco's Collaborative Learning for Equity and Respiratory Health Lab [YPAR website](#) summarizing their research projects (Richmond, CA)

Documentary



A documentary is a film that captures real events and highlights a particular viewpoint. YPAR documentaries educate viewers about the process of completing a youth-led research project through storytelling and participant testimonials.

Lugo-McGinness Academy's YPAR project [documentary](#) about the creation of the "Neighborhood Kitchen" (Charlottesville, VA)

Journal Manuscripts



Journal manuscripts are academic articles that communicate research findings to a scholarly audience in a structured way. YPAR teams can share their research methodologies, supporting literature, participatory community involvement, and actionable implications in academic journals.

[An article](#) in the "Voices in Urban Education" journal detailing the development of a YPAR project called "The Purple Room" (Brooklyn Center, MN)

Magazine



Magazines are a form of written publication that contains short articles and interactive content relevant to a specific theme. Magazines are ideal for YPAR teams who want to share their research with audiences outside of academia in engaging and visually appealing ways.

YoUthROC's YPAR project [magazine](#) about centering BIPOC youth in school and community spaces (Minneapolis, MN)