

# SALINAS YOUTH VOICE

September 2015 - May 2016

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United

United

No More  
PESTICIDES/Chemicals  
IN MY WATER, AIR, FOOD  
LIFE!

HEALTH FOR  
ALL YOUTH

Get  
INVOLVED

Step up and  
take action!

UNIFY

COMMUNITY → COMMUNICATION → ACTION

Happy

relating with  
parents  
make  
better

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report provides a summary of key findings for **Youth Voice**. The report draws on data collected from September 2015 to May 2016.

The design of this research study was informed by literature on positive youth development. The main inquiry for this report was to assess **“what it is like to be a youth in Salinas”**.

The report incorporates the following elements.

Overview	Framework + Methodology	Outcomes	Conclusion	Appendices
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**“Uplifting youth voice!”**

**Youth Participant**

## OVERVIEW

### SALINAS

In the last few years, private foundations, including the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, have increased their funding in support of positive youth development opportunities in the City of Salinas. Of interest, is the funding that has been allocated to the East Salinas (Alisal) community, a region vastly comprised of immigrant farmworkers and their families. In East Salinas, **youth 19 years of age and younger represent 40% of the population** (US Census 2010). While the recent investment in positive youth development may be reaching more youth with new opportunities, decades of disinvestment in East Salinas contribute to an environment of political, educational, social, and economic inequities.

Strategies for reaching youth in East Salinas and the corresponding narrative of the community have historically been shaped within a context of 'violence prevention' and 'gang intervention'. After years of traditional enforcement and intervention-based approaches, which at best, attempt to fix at-risk youth and keep them occupied, the new investments for youth represent a glimmer of hope. Prevention-based, creative and fun youth alternatives, leadership development opportunities, and other supports may be transformative for East Salinas youth and may help to transform their narrative into one of opportunity, social justice, hope, belief, expectations, and resilience.





## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

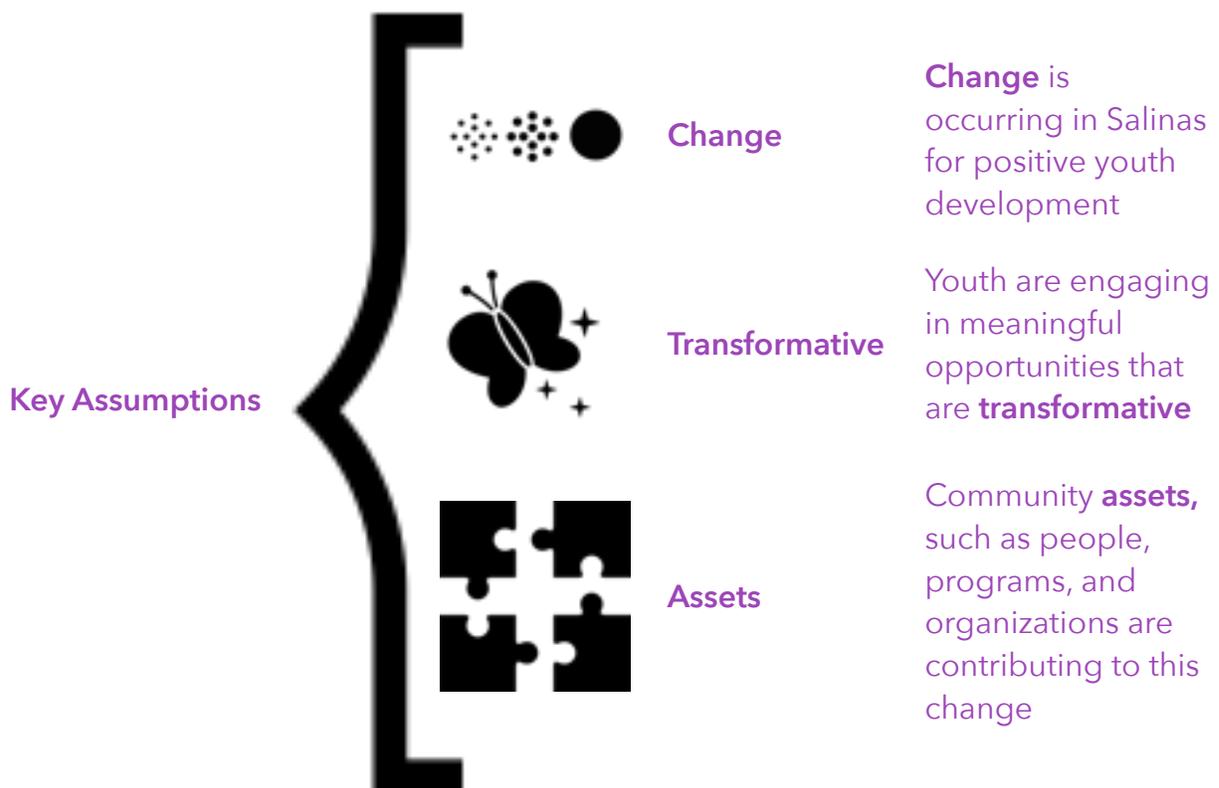
In September 2015, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation initiated the Salinas Youth Assessment to obtain a better picture about *“what it is like to be a youth in Salinas”*.

A social action research methodology, utilizing youth researchers, was selected as the design for the study, which would **model youth development** as an element of the research process, and **produce data collected and analyzed by youth**.

Deepen our understanding from a youth perspective

Key assumptions articulated during the design phase included the following: 1) positive change is occurring for youth in Salinas; 2) youth are engaged in meaningful opportunities that are transformative; and, 3) positive change is occurring due to community assets - people, programs, and organizations.

### Key assumptions shaped the assessment framework





# ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

Literature on “Positive Youth Development” to inform this study was condensed into four Domains of Transformation: **Youth, Organizations, Youth Unity, and Community** (see Appendix III). This study will seek to expose areas of alignment with the literature and the youth findings.

## YOUTH



Optimism  
Self-Esteem  
Self-Confidence



Information  
Opportunities  
Cultural Identity



Communication  
and Public Speaking  
Skills



Motivation for  
Education  
Accountability to Self  
and Others

## ORGANIZATIONS



Safe  
Trust  
Respect  
Recognition



Vision  
Values  
Identity  
Belonging



Action  
Learning  
Influence  
Meaningful



Leadership  
Relationships  
Youth Mentors  
Supportive Adults

## YOUTH UNITY



Capacity  
Relationships  
Opportunities



Collective Identity



Action  
Influence



Community  
Engagement

## COMMUNITY



Ready  
Accessible  
Recognize  
Responsive



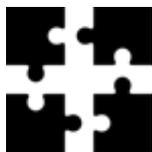
Opportunities for  
Leadership  
Relationships with  
Leaders



Space for Youth  
Involvement  
Safely Feel Part of  
School,  
Neighborhood,  
Community



Employment  
Internships  
Scholarships  
Role Models  
Media and Voice



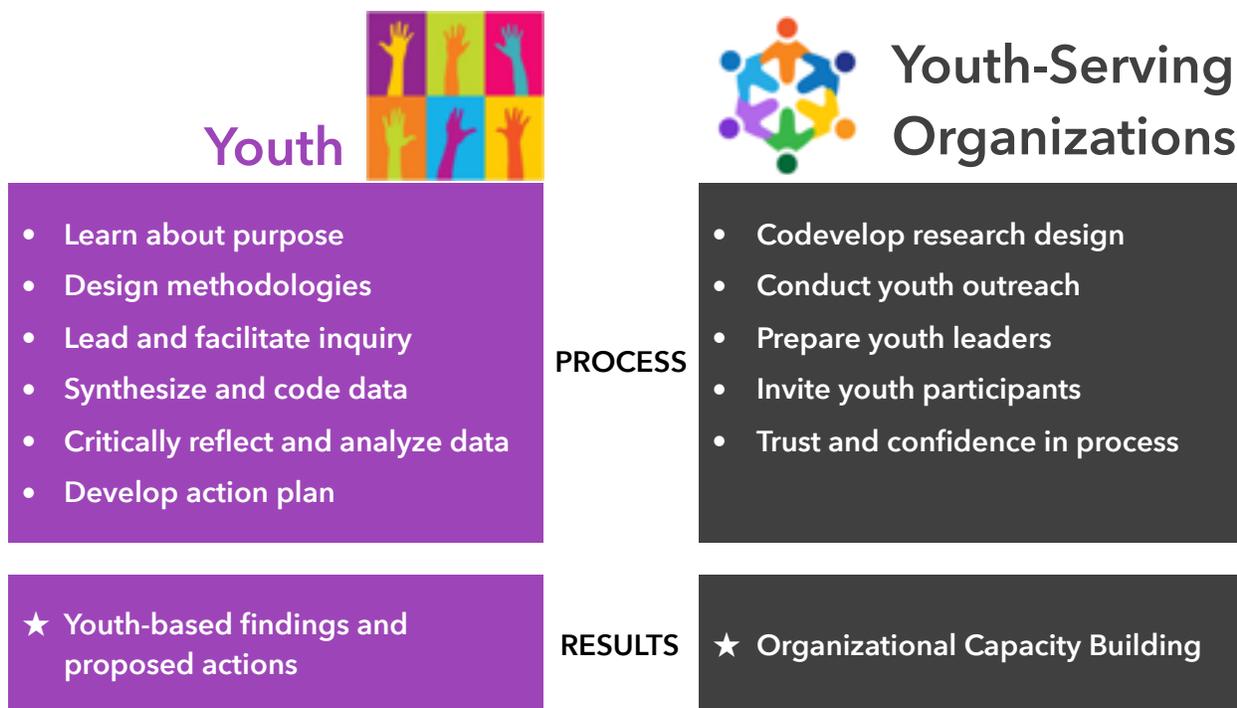
## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

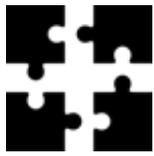
The research design incorporated two levels of involvement: **youth and youth-serving organizations**.

Youth-serving organizations were invited to learn about the study, and determine their interest and capacity to be **“organizational partners”**. As partners, organizations were asked, at minimum, to invite youth to participate in the study, and to provide guidance on the research design (i.e., methodology, define age of youth, methods of outreach, etc.).

Youth were invited to an experiential learning opportunity (first Youth Voice convening) to learn about the purpose of the study and the initial research design. Their level of commitment and interest would be determined by their participation and outreach to other youth.

### Framework for youth and youth-serving organizations





## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

From September to November 2015, four exploratory conversations were held with 30 youth-serving organizations to generate enthusiasm and interest in the Salinas Youth Assessment project\*. These organizations participated in shaping the research framework and methodology.

The result of these conversations involved an **energetic endorsement of the study, and an interest in continuing to come together for cross-organizational capacity building**, in addition to learning about findings from the youth.

During these initial conversations, organizations shared some key factors they believed to be important when working with youth in Salinas. These include: **importance of family, cultural identity, motivation for college, influence of peers and others, and engaging youth outside of school.**

### Key considerations for youth in Salinas

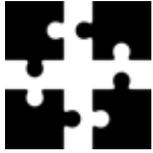
<b>Family</b>
<b>Motivation for college</b>
<b>Cultural identity and roots</b>
<b>Influence of peers and others</b>
<b>Involvement outside of school</b>

Organizational partners **32**

Exploratory conversations **4**

- 2nd Chance
- ACAN
- Alisal Center for the Fine Arts
- Alisal Family Resource Center
- Alisal Percussion
- Baktun 12
- Big Sur Land Trust
- Building Healthy Communities / Ciclovía
- Cesar Chavez Futbol Academy
- Center for Community Advocacy
- CHISPA
- City of Salinas, Community Safety Division
- Colectiva de Mujeres
- California Rural Legal Assistance
- California State University Monterey Bay
- Door to Hope
- Dream Academy
- El Camino Real
- EpiCenter
- Girls Health in Girls Hands\*
- Hijos del Sol
- Monterey County Probation Department
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- MILPA
- Monterey Bay Central Labor Council
- Monterey County Health Department
- Partners for Peace
- Rancho Cielo / Silver Star\*
- Restorative Justice Partners
- Salinas City Elementary Unified School
- Sunstreet Centers
- Urban Arts Collective

\* A total of 30 organizations took part in the initial conversations. Two organizations began to partner in April 2016.

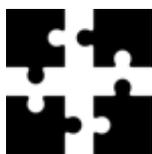


## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

During the exploratory conversations with youth-serving organizations, discussions emerged about organizational needs, capacities, and methods. Themes that were lifted up included: **sustainability, commitment, and accountability; addressing “adultism”; conducting outreach; identifying strategies for prevention and support; integrating versus competing (among organizations); and, preparing youth for various opportunities and experiences.**

### Youth-serving organizations identify individual and collective organizational needs for reaching and working with youth

<b>CAPACITY</b>	Needs are greater than capacity Sustainability, commitment, and accountability
<b>CONSCIOUSNESS</b>	Conscious of adultism Need for adult reflection Need to be intentional Need not tokenize youth Organizational reflection
<b>OUTREACH</b>	Analyze outreach methods Questions of access
<b>PREVENTION</b>	What do we do when we see youth getting involved... Who do we/they go to... We just lost a youth that we saw going down a negative path...
<b>INTEGRATION</b>	Need not compete as organizations Need not keep youth within our own organizations
<b>PREPARATION</b>	Youth prepared, connected, aware Translate into a smooth experience for youth



## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

### From Assessment Project to Youth Voice

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At the first strategic planning session, a partner organization suggested that “Salinas Youth Assessment” sounded like an “uncool project” with a short life span. **“Youth Voice”** was born.

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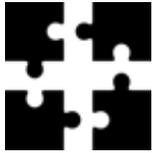
### Strategic Planning Sessions among Organizational Partners

From November 2015 to January 2016, about 20 partner organizations attended four planning sessions in order to prepare for the first Youth Voice convening. A partner offered the use of their space for ongoing organizational convenings; as a result, **Youth Voice obtained a home in the heart of East Salinas at the Alisal Family Resource Center.**

The planning sessions provided a space for partner organizations to deepen and develop a shared understanding of the purpose and the process of Youth Voice. Defining the age of youth for the study, agreeing on expectations of participating youth, preparing youth, and co-creating the first agenda for bringing youth together were areas of focus for these sessions.

After much conversation, partners agreed to focus on **“youth” between the ages of 14 and 18**, with intentional inclusion of **“young adults” from 19 to 26 years of age.**

- ◆ Deepen and develop a shared understanding of purpose and process
- ◆ Define age of youth
- ◆ Agree on expectations of youth participants and methods for preparing and orienting youth participants
- ◆ Craft first Youth Voice convening agenda, including “pilot” research methodologies

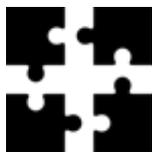


## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

A spontaneous organizational assessment occurred at the second strategic planning session, whereby individual and organizational strengths for working with youth were reflected upon in small groups and then shared together. Interest among these partner organizations was expressed to continue to come together to build capacity and share information. Interest, for example, in sharing strategies for engaging and reaching youth, was expressed. Two organizational partners offered to lead these discussions in the future should there be shared interest and commitment.

### Youth-serving organizations identify personal and organizational assets in relation to working with youth

ADVOCACY & EMPOWERMENT		
Organizing Campaigns Public policy Data analysis Power analysis	Research action Conflict resolution Awareness building Leadership development	Internships Youth council Ethnic studies Chicano culture Connect with public officials
ACCESS, DEDICATION & COMMITMENT		
Safe spaces Expanded network Education	Teachers and counselors Tattoo removal Tutoring	Professional development Parent involvement Resources and life skills
FUN, ARTS, MUSIC & SPORTS		
Events Resources Sports	Land stewardship Public art Healing	Culturally relevant arts programs Performance
IDENTIFY AS YOUTH	EXPERIENCE	LGBTQ GENDER LENS
Mentors Role model Connect easily Approachable	Management Leadership Facilitation Planning	Parent support



## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

### Emergence of Organizational Leaders

During the strategic planning phase, **five organizational partners offered their leadership and support for Youth Voice (Building Healthy Communities, Alisal Family Resource Center, Baktun 12, Door to Hope, and César Chávez Futbol Academy).**

From that point forward, these partners (three males, two females) played a fundamental leadership role during the planning phase, and more formally as **Adult Allies** for the remainder of the research period.

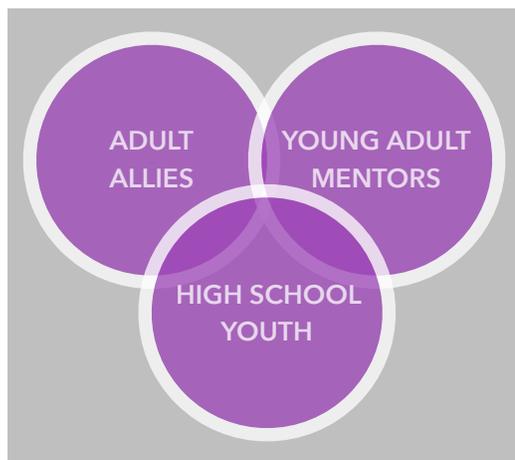
### Emergence of Youth and Young Adult Leaders

Outreach to high school youth and young adults by several partner organizations, led to the formation of a **Youth Voice Leadership Team, consisting of adult allies, young adult mentors, and high school youth** (see Conclusion).

Between February and May 2016, between five and ten Youth Voice Leaders (adults, young adults, teens) spent two hours or more per meeting in 14 planning and reflection meetings at the Building Healthy Communities office.

The **fluid and dynamic process** delivered an **organic emergence of shared and rotating volunteer leadership.**

**Multigenerational leadership** and balanced **gender representation** were reflected in the composition: adult allies (two females, three males), young adult mentors (four females, three males), high school youth (four males, three females).<sup>1</sup>



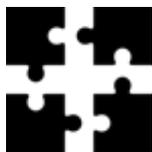
Adult Allies **5**

Young Adult Mentors **7**

High School Youth **7**

Planning & Reflection Meetings **14**

<sup>1</sup> During the planning process with organizational partners, gender equity and inclusiveness was modeled in a youth participant form. A non-binary series of responses for gender identity was included; only male/female responses were selected.,



## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

### Shaping the Youth Voice Inquiry



- \* Fun
- \* Relational



- \* Inspiration
- \* Social Justice
- \* Leaders
- \* Youth Movements



- \* Inquiry
- \* Critical Reflection



- \* Action
- \* Change

The first Youth Voice inquiry (convening) incorporated several core elements which became the practice for interacting with youth moving forward.

A key ingredient was the development of agendas with high school youth. At first, adult allies, young adult mentors, and high school youth worked together on the agendas. Quickly, adult allies learned that the agendas needed to be developed by youth, with only moderate support from adults and young adults (e.g., time, flow, results, etc.).

Rehearsals prior to the convenings also became a critical component, given that **youth were simultaneously learning** (about the process, about research, about facilitation) **and leading**. As convenings continued, facilitation transitioned from a combination of adult allies, young adult mentors, and high school youth, to largely high school youth-led convenings, with young adult support and minimal adult ally support.

Activities and processes at each Youth Voice Convening - co-designed and reinforced by this team of adults, young adults and teens - sought to incorporate the following: **fun, relationship-building, inspiration, peer-based inquiry and critical analysis, awareness and capacity building, and action planning.**

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**“This is an opportunity to build leadership through this process.”**

Adult Ally



## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

### Reflective Practice

A practice of reflective partnership was developed for Youth Voice planning meetings and convenings. **The high level of intentionality and deliberation among the five volunteer adult allies was evidenced from the onset of their involvement.**

Reflections below from a debrief of the first Youth Voice convening demonstrate their authentic commitment and keen insight into issues of accountability when engaging with youth. Particularly important given their work with youth from a community that has been historically disenfranchised, like East Salinas.

### Adult Allies reflect during the early stage of their involvement



"I do want to be a part of this. It is something that is needed in our community. If we are going to do this, we need to assess our capacities to do this. That we are very honest. I am committed. This is really, really important."



"I echo that. It is an opportunity for leadership development. I think that is going to be something that will really help (internal organizations). If we can make it a point to be simple and direct, in our messaging, being transparent about that, that [youth] know that we are communicating to them, that they can feel it, our vibe, in our body language. We all know the condition of our city, the last thing I want is for me to try and convince [youth], to sell something to them. We are though...civic engagement. What we need to do is be critical and transparent."



"I am in. Early stages. Excited. More direction to youth...they take it from there. More adult involvement. Then let their creativity. I am in for the ride."



"I am interested. Next meeting, provide opportunity for youth to identify themselves as leaders. Get their opinions of what they want."



"I echo that. Seatbelt on. Ready for the ride."



## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

### Reflective Practice

**Adult Allies reflect on their commitment and approach for working with youth and each other during the Youth Voice planning process**

Genuine  
Takes time  
It's an adventure  
Not a formula to work with youth  
Moments of exposing vulnerability  
How the youth perceive our commitment

**We are holding each other's hands, that's our strength**

Process and road to get to youngsters...challenge, is the gift  
Ultimately trust in ourselves...youth will then be in this  
Our space for honest reflection is important  
As an educator, it always is different  
Practice of passion is an asset  
Only way is by showing up  
They want to see us solid  
Let go of expectations  
All an experiment

**Youth Voice Leaders express their feelings about what it is like to be involved in the planning process and why they continue to engage**

Energy  
New voices  
Shared a lot  
Comfortable  
Be vulnerable  
See the difference  
All on the same page  
Know each other better

**Youth leading change...not adults**

See things through a different perspective  
All same views...don't know until brought to our attention  
Research other communities that have done change  
Expand research on community needs  
Communicate more toward end goal  
Project or issue we care about  
Stay out of trouble



## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

### Reflective Practice

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“Leave with hope...feeling that what I say will lead to actual **change.**”

Youth Participant

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### Youth participant reflections on what inspires them about Youth Voice

Powerful

Really important

Can do something about it

Ability to do something great

Uplifting in energetic and positive way

Youth to really engage in their community

Was a trouble maker, now know how to use my voice

Known about in high school...would have really helped

Want to be the resource that I didn't have in high school

Who we are, we are beautiful, beautiful cultures, we should celebrate

**This proves we have a voice, now. We can do something to fix our community**



If we had more circles like this, what changes we can do

We can move to a bigger space...more things to do

Trying to do something positive

Uplifting youth voice

Leadership

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“Something about being part of this, being a leader, being a part of the community, to talk in small groups, to help you grow more as a person, makes you a better person, **to grow as a leader.**”

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## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK + METHODOLOGY

**“I feel supported as a youth in Salinas  
with adults in the room.  
Thank you.”**

### Reflective Practice

Youth participant reflections on how they feel about Youth Voice convenings

<b>FUN</b>	RELAX	<b>HEALING</b>	CHILL	MUSIC
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER</b>	SMALL GROUPS	IMAGE ACTIVITY	BEING IN A CIRCLE
<b>INSPIRING</b>	INSPIRING LEADERS	<b>MORE TO US THAN VIOLENCE</b>	SPEAKING UP	MORE VOICES
<b>MEANINGFUL</b>	IMPORTANT TOPIC	TOPIC WE CAN RELATE TO	<b>GAIN LEADERSHIP</b>	LEARN
<b>SAFE SPACE</b>	FELT SAFE	CAN SAY WHAT IS IN MY HEAD	COMFORTABLE SPEAKING WITH NEW PEOPLE	<b>POSITIVE VIBE</b>
<b>TOGETHER OUTSIDE SCHOOL</b>	WE CARE ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY	<b>I FEEL GOOD THAT WE CARE</b>	VOLUNTEER BY GUYS A LOT	EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES
<b>OPINIONS</b>	<b>I LIKE HOW WE SAY WHAT WE FEEL</b>	GOOD EXPERIENCE TO HEAR HOW OTHERS FEEL	WE ALL GOT TO SHARE PERSPECTIVE	SURROUNDED BY LIKE MINDED YOUTH, SAME THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS
<b>GOALS</b>	YOUTH AGENCIES COLLABORATE TOWARD SAME GOAL	WANT TO SEE DIFFERENT AGENCIES WORK TOGETHER	SAME EXPECTATIONS	<b>WANT TO SEE ACTION</b>



## OUTCOMES

### METHODS OF INQUIRY

Six methods of inquiry were utilized during the data collection period from January to May 2016. The inquiries were conducted by Youth Voice Leaders, mainly high school youth, with support from young adult mentors and adult allies.

Instagram Drama Scenes	Instagram Visuals	Talking Circles
Walk the Line	Post-It Note Board	Vision Art

The first inquiry, “if Salinas had an Instagram”, was the only methodology first designed by organizational partners, and then modified by youth and young adults. All other methodologies were developed by Youth Voice Leaders.

#### If Salinas had an Instagram

The first inquiry sought a general perspective from 36 youth about their impression of Salinas. Two different forms of expression, drama and art, were utilized with the prompt, “if Salinas had an Instagram”. The drama inquiry was led by a male adult ally and the visual inquiry was led by a young adult male and a female teen.

#### Talking Circles

At the 2nd convening, a young adult female led 23 youth in the inquiry, “**what do you see [Instagrams] and what is missing**”, followed by, “**what is it like to be a young person in Salinas**”. At the 4th convening with 25 youth, a female teen led the inquiry, “**what does social justice means to you**”. A total of 31 youth at the 5th convening were led by a young adult male in an inquiry about **violence**, due to several tragic teen homicides that had just occurred, and a **vision for Salinas**.

#### Walk the Line

The 3rd and 4th convenings involved an **intimate and deep inquiry**, among 18 and 25 youth, respectively, and was first led by a female young adult and then by four teens (two males, two females).

#### Post-It Note Board

The 3rd convening included a post-it note board inquiry with four **social justice** questions.

#### Vision Art

The 5th convening was led by a young adult male using an arts-based inquiry with 15 youth participants. The probe was “**from real to ideal...what is your vision for Salinas**” with responses drawn in images/words posted on butcher paper.



## OUTCOMES

### IF SALINAS HAD AN INSTAGRAM

#### Instagram Drama Scene Inquiry

At the convening, one of the adult allies, led a total of 36 youth in a drama activity to express their perspective of Salinas. Youth participants formed into six groups and responded to the prompt, "what drama scene would you create if Salinas had an Instagram".

36

Youth

6

Instagram  
Drama  
Scenes

A theme illustrated in three out of six drama sculpts was a depiction of agricultural fields. Participants shared that their drama scenes showed how their **parents worked as farmworkers**, in the **strawberry fields**, with reference to the land of **John Steinbeck**. An equally prevalent theme was **unity**. Participants shared that art unites people, and one scene created an image of a Salinas united. The third most common theme was **compassion**. Participants demonstrated that they were lifting up others, helping homeless people, or other youth, and reaching out and helping each other. One of the dramas reflected a crime scene, with violence prevention as the message.



#### Key themes from Instagram Drama Scenes

**FARMWORKERS**

**UNITY**

**COMPASSION**

**"If you care so much about the food you eat,  
why don't you care that much about those that grow your food."**



## OUTCOMES

### IF SALINAS HAD AN INSTAGRAM

#### Instagram Visual Inquiry

After the drama scenes, youth participants were asked to create and post as many images as they would like, in response to the prompt, "what would you post if Salinas had an Instagram". A total of 49 Instagram visuals were created, and then coded by Youth Voice Leaders, after a mini training on coding data. The following themes were created by the youth based on the Instagram visuals: "agriculture", "unity", "love, nature, and pride", and "hope and equity."

36

youth

49

Instagram  
visuals



#### Key themes from the Instagram Visuals



**"Our families work hard in the fields,** under rain and sun, for the world and community...defines Salinas and who we are."



## OUTCOMES

### IF SALINAS HAD AN INSTAGRAM

#### Critical Analysis of Instagram Visuals

Youth Voice leaders led a critical inquiry with other youth participants about what they see in the Instagram visuals and what is missing.

##### What do you see

Parents sacrificing, not always there  
 Shame of where we come from  
 Our city is agricultural workers  
 Our parents work in the fields  
 Portrays what too many feel  
 Never should feel shame  
 Parents in agriculture

##### What is missing from the visuals

People working in the fields  
 Hard working  
 Conditions



#### Key themes from Instagram Drama Scenes and Visuals

**FARMWORKERS  
AGRICULTURE**

**PARENTS**

**UNITY**

Key themes from the Instagram Drama Scenes and the Visuals: "Farmworkers/ Agriculture" and "Unity".

Critical analysis identified "farmworker parents" as a key issue; their sacrifice, hard work in the fields, and absence, at times, due to working conditions in agriculture.



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

#### Talking Circle Inquiry

Youth Voice Leaders guided a talking circle inquiry with 23 youth, producing the following themes with the probe, "what is it like to be a youth in Salinas".



#### Key themes from talking circle

<p><b>HARD</b> So hard to get out Gangs in streets</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; color: purple;">23 youth</p> <p><b>So hard to grow up</b> Hard not to find people on drugs Hard to see things happening Hard because of violence Really hard Hard</p>	<p><b>NOT A LOT TO DO</b> Lack of fun Can't go out</p> <p><b>No places to go</b> No places to hang out Parents do not let us out Can't go out much at night Not many things we can do Can't do what you want to do</p>
<p><b>FRIGHTENING</b> Guys and girls all the time get shot Have had gun pulled on me</p> <p><b>Lack of places that are safe</b> Watch my back Frightening Dangerous</p>	<p><b>LACK OF SUPPORT</b> Have to make choices Can't express yourself</p> <p><b>Lack of people that are inspiring</b></p>

**"Adults don't see youth perspective."**



## OUTCOMES

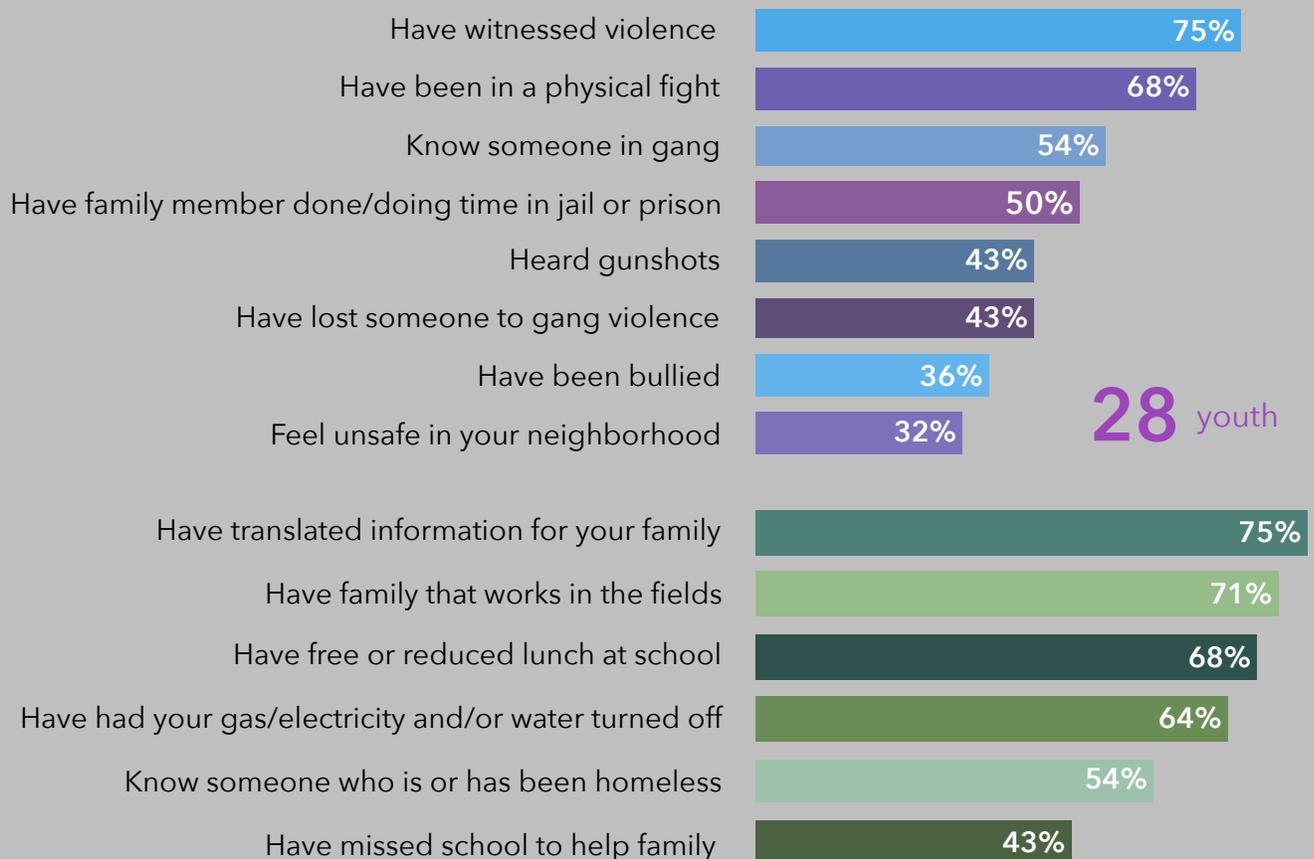
### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

#### Walk the Line Inquiry

Youth Voice Leaders led 28 youth through a series of questions that became increasingly deep. Two lines of youth participants faced each other and two lines of tape extended out in front of them. Standing several inches back from the lines of tape, participants would step forward to the line of tape in order to answer the questions affirmatively or stay where they were to answer in the negative. This inquiry was conducted twice, at two convenings. The totals, with 28 youth below, emerged at the second inquiry. That data is included since the first inquiry may be considered more of a “pilot test” of the methodology.



#### Results from Walk the Line Inquiry





## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

#### Walk the Line Inquiry

After the first Walk the Line inquiry, Youth Voice Leaders led participants through an activity to release tension, by first asking what emotions they felt, followed by what they tell themselves during tough times.



#### Emotions felt during Walk the Line Inquiry

I felt safer knowing other people had the same problems as me.  
 I noticed a lot of people share the same type of experiences.  
 Good vibe in the room as we got to know each other better.  
 It felt good to see most had same experiences as me.  
 Relief knowing people go through the same stuff.  
 I felt like other people could understand me.  
 People experienced what I experienced.  
 Knowing others had same problems.  
 Personal but good vibe in the room.  
 Knowing not the only one.  
 I felt a good atmosphere.  
**I didn't feel alone.**  
 It felt honest.



#### Phrase that helps you feel better about the emotions you experience

<p><b>If you can't fly, then run, if you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl, whatever it is, keep going.</b></p> <p><b>No one but yourself can make you happy.</b></p> <p>I can do anything.</p> <p><b>Never back down.</b></p>	<p>This feeling is not going to last forever.</p> <p>"Every little thing is gonna be alright."</p> <p>Tomorrow will be a better day.</p> <p><b>Be Positive.</b></p> <p>Do not overthink.</p> <p>Everything will be ok.</p>	<p><b>If I go through hard times I just tell myself, someone else is going through harder times than me.</b></p> <p>"Sometimes to self-discover, you must self-destruct."</p>	<p>It's ok, it won't last forever.</p> <p>Nothing is forever.</p>
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## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

#### Walk the Line Inquiry

After the second Walk the Line inquiry, an activity to relive tension and emotions was conducted. Outcomes from that debrief are included below.



#### Youth Voice Leader guides youth through Scream and Stomp Activity

<p><b>Scream about how you feel about violence</b> Scream about what happens when that negativity persists Scream if we want homelessness to stop</p>	<p>Yell No to youth behind bars <b>No to racism</b> No to gang violence No to gender discrimination "So loud please" No to homelessness</p>	<p>Stomp your feet to make change Stomp to stop the violence Stomp for gender rights <b>Stomp to create a change agenda</b></p>	<p>Yell Yes to education Yes to equity and equality <b>Yes to youth opportunities</b> Yes to skate park renovation</p>
<p>"Let it all out, as loud as you can" [laughter].</p>			
<p>"Thank you for participating. Let's shake off, that was deep."</p>			

**"Most Mexicans come here to provide a better life for their family."**



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN TO YOU

#### Social Justice “teach-in” circles

Coincidentally, the Youth Voice convening for which social justice was incorporated landed on Cesar Chavez Day (at what became the dedicated Youth Voice space, the Teamsters Union Hall). Prior to the convening, Youth Voice Leaders identified inspirational social justice leaders and conducted research on them. At the convening, they led “teach-in” learning circles with youth participants about who the leaders are, what they did, and how what they did relates to Youth Voice.

In addition, Youth Voice Leaders requested an example of a youth-led social justice action research project. A digital storytelling example was shared in which youth with parents that are incarcerated learned how to positively express their rights through rap (“Project Avery”, Hip Hop for Change. [www.hiphopforchange.org](http://www.hiphopforchange.org)).



#### Youth Voice Leader “teach-in” circles on inspiring social justice leaders

Kendrick Lamar, rapper from Compton, made music about reality, about social justice. Just like here, people work in the fields. **He made it out of the ghetto, then we can too.**

Cesar Chavez, saw how fieldworkers were treated, created UFW, fought for farmworker rights, how they were mistreated, how they got paid, how they were treated like slaves.

Rosa Parks, sat in the front of the bus during segregation, stood up for her rights, knew her voice mattered, inspired blacks to stand up for their rights. **We are here to fight for our rights, even though we are teenagers.**

Sal Castro, part of the LA school walk outs, organized youth for educational change, for Latinos to have the right to graduate. **Your voice does matter, your voice can create change.**



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN TO YOU

#### Post-It Note Board Inquiry

With support from adult allies, Youth Voice Leaders discussed what social justice meant to them during a planning meeting, and then prepared the following three prompts for youth participants to respond to using a post-it note bulletin board.



#### Key Themes from Post-It Note Board

What comes to mind when you hear social justice?	Have you ever felt angry because something was unjust?	Do gang-affiliated youth have a place to go and change?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ When someone is made to feel less than a human being and second class citizen</li> <li>◆ Education is of lower quality</li> <li>◆ Less opportunities</li> <li>◆ Having the same rights, and being treated fair</li> <li>◆ Having equal opportunities as everyone else</li> <li>◆ Rich have more medical resources</li> <li>◆ Wealth and income equals more resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ LGBTQ community is treated very different from "straight"</li> <li>◆ #NoToLabels</li> <li>◆ No discrimination</li> <li>◆ Having to see people being made fun of for having different ethnicity/ stereotypes</li> <li>◆ Being treated different for being different or where you come from</li> <li>◆ Females are not objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence is a big issue in my neighborhood</li> <li>• A diverse amount of programs should be offered with resources to succeed</li> <li>• Others don't live with the fear of wondering if your family will make it home safe</li> </ul>



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN TO YOU

#### Critical Analysis

Critical analysis was facilitated by Youth Leaders with youth participants on the post-it note board data on “what social justice means to you”. Youth Leaders guided a talking circle inquiry which resulted in the following additional and reinforced themes.



#### Key themes from Post-It Note Board and Talking Circle

##### RACISM + OPPRESSION

Most Mexicans come here to provide a better life for their family  
People make fun of people from different ethnicities  
Anyone who is not white  
Different opportunities  
Treated unfairly  
Stereotypes

##### Inequality

Judged  
Stigma

##### GENDER DISCRIMINATION HARRASSMENT BULLYING

No one supports girls sports, but at boys games they sell items and tickets  
Young women feel unsupported in their sports  
Can't walk down the street without getting whistled at  
Covered up and still getting called at  
Dress code targets girls  
Gay youth are targeted  
Unsafe to walk  
Unfair

##### LACK OF SUPPORT

No opportunities  
Lack of resources  
No outside support, end up making bad decisions  
**Not a lot of places to go**  
Hard to meet people that are inspiring  
School didn't even acknowledge shooting and it was a student at our school

##### HEALTH + EDUCATIONAL INEQUITIES

Wealth and income equals more resources  
Rich have more medical resources  
Education is of lower quality  
Educational opportunities

25 youth

##### LACK UNITY

Become part of gangs... feel like that is where they belong, only family - they should be here right now  
Lack unity in community

##### LACK OF POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE

**Hard for youth to speak up**  
Feels like media...negative portrayal

**“I hate having a body that is sexualized.”**



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

#### Talking Circle Inquiry

Due to several teen homicides, Youth Voice Leaders decided to focus a major part of the inquiry at the 5th Youth Voice convening on community **violence**. A Youth Voice Leader started the circle by requesting that everyone stand and lower their heads in a moment of silence for those that lost their lives and for those that lost loved ones.



#### Key Themes from Talking Circle

##### What is happening in our community?

Really scary

Violence in front of you

##### We all know someone lost to violence

Last week witnessed something for first time

Parents protect...don't know what else to do

How you are raised, situation you are raised in

Hear about it, don't see it often, first time last week, tragedy

We are too small of a community to have this happen, to see so often

Don't want to live in community where an innocent kid is shot in his home

Recent shooting...kid shot in home by stray bullet... not safe in own home

My favorite color used to be red...my mom threw away all my red clothes...now my favorite color is pink

31 Youth

##### Would you consider leaving Salinas if you could?

Yes, would come back

If I could, I probably would leave

I would leave but would come back

Went to college, came back... happy about it

##### How would we make it so you would want to stay?

Community needs to stand together

Community is numb to it now (violence/shootings)

Need to value all young life...even gang members...need opportunity for all

**"Three times a day, I see violence."**



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

#### Talking Circle Inquiry

After the talking circle in response to violent events, the inquiry shifted to a vision for Salinas.



#### Key themes from Talking Circle

31 Youth

##### Unity

Support or end up making bad decisions  
 School didn't even acknowledge the shooting and it was a student at our school  
 Become part of gangs...feel like that is where they belong, only family  
 They should be here right now  
 More resources for youth to come together  
 Would like to see more youth come together  
**More opportunities for youth solidarity...come together**  
 Right here, cool that we are together, could be more youth  
 A lot of kids on east side could benefit from being here...too much violence

##### Opportunities

Youth programs  
 Amusement parks  
 More resources for youth  
 More spaces to create art  
**More places to hang out with friends**  
 A lot of violence because no where to go  
 After school programs for youth in Salinas

##### Start with our parents

Place to socialize with other parents  
 Places where parents can inform themselves

##### Safe places

Safe space to do this, hear your voice  
 Less violence

##### Mentors

College support  
 For younger age  
 Academic mentors  
 Importance of college

##### More awareness of programs

Already enough youth programs, more youth need to go, consistently, need to know about them  
 Lack of awareness of programs and services, need for greater awareness

##### Second chances

More awareness of youth programs that give youth 2nd chances



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

#### Vision Art Inquiry

At the final convening, an arts-based inquiry was led by a young adult, who is engaged with a local arts organization. The vision inquiry, “what is your vision for Salinas”, provided youth participants with the opportunity to respond with words and/or images on posted butcher paper. A reflection followed in which key themes were identified.



#### Key themes from Vision Art

##### **UNITY**

Unify  
Family  
United  
Together  
Community  
Get involved  
Communication  
Step up and take action  
Youth advocacy  
More youth  
Motivation  
Growth  
Love

##### **EQUITY**

Equality  
Affordable Housing  
Health equity  
Voice  
Educational equity  
Acceptance  
No borders  
Get rid of people like Donald Trump

##### **PEACE**

No violence  
Safe place for youth  
Police witness cooperation  
Gun control  
Gun restrictions  
Riding a bike in a safe neighborhood with people outside saying “hi”

15 Youth

##### **OPPORTUNITIES**

Art  
Music  
Open Mic  
Teen youth center  
Second chance groups  
Start at home, out of home into communities

##### **POSITIVE INFLUENCE**

Hope  
Support  
Happiness  
Reassurance  
Positive media  
Positive expression  
Youth doing good stuff  
Be who we want to be and influence others

##### **HEALTH**

Gym  
Trees  
Nature  
Playground  
Healthy food  
Health for all youth  
No more pesticides in my water, air, food, life



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

After five months of critical inquiry and analysis, utilizing six research methodologies, a total of 77 youth and young adults shared their perspective about “what it is like to be a youth in Salinas”. A general underlying theme, in addition to the four key themes described below, was the sense of a “lack of unity”.

77

youth + young adults



### KEY THEMES: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

LACK OF SUPPORT					
LACK OF SKILL-BUILDING PRACTICES	LACK OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS	BULLYING	LACK OF SELF EXPRESSION	LACK OF INSPIRING PEOPLE	LACK OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS
RACIAL, HEALTH, EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITIES					
EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE & GANGS	INCARCERATED FAMILIES	RACISM HUMAN RIGHTS EQUALITY LESS OPPORTUNITIES	GENDER / LGBTQ DISCRIMINATION HARRASSMENT	LOWER QUALITY EDUCATION LESS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	HEALTHCARE INEQUALITY LESS RESOURCES DUE TO LACK OF INCOME & WEALTH
LACK OF A POSITIVE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE					
LOW EXPECTATIONS	STEREOTYPES STIGMA JUDGED	NEGATIVE MEDIA PORTRAYAL	HARD FOR YOUTH TO SPEAK UP	WE HAVE A LOT TO GIVE... BUT GETS LOST IN THE VIOLENCE	
LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES					
NEED TO VALUE ALL YOUNG LIFE... EVEN GANG MEMBERS... NEED OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL	LACK OF FUN NO PLACES TO GO	LACK OF DIVERSE PROGRAMS & RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS	HAVE TO MAKE CHOICES	WOULD LEAVE SALINAS	LACK OF RESOURCES

**“Others don’t live with the fear of wondering if your family will make it home safe.”**



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

The main assessment, “what it is like to be a youth in Salinas”, incorporated deep social justice themes, and took place during a series of violent events. Visioning a future for Salinas became an important element of the research design. Through that process, the following key themes emerged and are in order of prevalence: **opportunities, unity, positive influence, health, equity, and peace.**

#### OPPORTUNITIES

77

youth + young adults

- Fun
- Art
- Music
- Sports
- Go kart
- College
- Mentors
- Open mic
- Safe places
- Youth places
- Start at home
- Ice skating rink
- More stuff to do
- Youth programs
- College support
- Places to hang out
- Academic mentors
- Teen youth centers
- Positive involvement
- Circulos...healing circles
- More resources for youth
- Youth come back to Salinas
- More second chance groups
- Out of home into communities
- Places for 16 and over like San Jose
- Farmworker parent spaces to socialize and get information
- A lot of kids on east side could benefit from being here, too much violence
- Need to value all young life...even gang members...need opportunity for all
- Programs for youth that have issues, who want to change, need a second chance
- More resources, spaces, places, especially for immigrants...parents work in agriculture

**“Do things that are popular, then we would see less violence.”**



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

#### UNITY

Unify  
Voice  
Family  
United  
Growth  
Support  
Kindness  
Together  
Solidarity  
Friendship  
Motivation  
More youth  
Community  
Get involved  
Youth advocacy  
Media advocacy  
Communication  
Love for community  
Youth come together  
Youth empowerment  
Step up and take action  
Community needs to stand together  
Youth reaching out, helping each other  
Feel you could do something, even if small

77

youth + young adults

"If we can step up,  
even being here,  
can make a  
change."



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

#### POSITIVE INFLUENCE

Hope  
 Prosper  
 Change  
 Support  
 Happiness  
 Acceptance  
 Reassurance  
 Encouragement  
 Positive expression  
 Youth doing good stuff  
 Social justice inspiration  
 Positive media of youth doing good things  
 Be who we want to be and influence others

# 77

youth + young adults

"Organic food in  
 Monterey and  
 Santa Cruz...  
 and Salinas is  
 known as the  
 salad bowl  
 of the world."

#### HEALTH

Gym  
 Trees  
 Nature  
 Outside  
 Playground  
 Healthy lifestyles  
 Homegrown food  
 Health for all youth  
 Healthy eating habits  
 Affordable, healthy food  
 No more pesticides in my water, air, food, life



## OUTCOMES

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

#### EQUITY

- Equality
- No borders
- Health equity
- Free education
- Educational equity
- Affordable housing
- Get rid of people like Donald Trump

**"More resources,  
spaces and places,  
especially for  
immigrant parents that  
work in agriculture."**

**77**

youth + young adults

#### PEACE

- No violence
- Safe place for youth
- Police witness cooperation
- Gun control
- Gun restrictions
- Riding a bike in a safe neighborhood with people outside saying "hi"

**"I love Salinas."**



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

Key findings from this study among 77 youth and young adults illuminate the consequences of historic disinvestment and inequities. Told by youth, “what is it like to be a youth in Salinas” has been largely a story of deficiencies, yet one that has been uplifted with a unifying voice and a harnessing of energy in demonstration of youth **belief, commitment, courage, resilience, and leadership to activate change, in unity with other youth.**

77

youth + young adults



### KEY THEMES: WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS

Five major themes, listed below in order of prevalence, emerged out of five months of inquiry, utilizing five methodologies.



**Lack of support**



**Inequity**



**Lack of positive youth perspective**



**Lack of opportunities**



**Lack of unity**



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS



#### Lack of Support

Areas identified by youth for support included **leadership development** and **communication skills**, support with **bullying**, and support to freely **express oneself**. Within the realm of support, youth participants also identified a lack of **inspiring people**”.



#### Inequity

Multiple socio-economic “inequities” were articulated by youth participants during one or more of the inquiries. Youth shared that growing up in Salinas was **hard, frightening, and dangerous**, with frequent exposure to gangs, drugs, and violence. During the Walk the Link inquiries, conducted twice, a notable majority of participating youth identified that they have family members that have been or are incarcerated. A large portion of these participating youth reported witnessing violence as well as having been in one or more physical fights. A significant number of the same participating youth stated that they know someone that is or has been homeless. Additionally, many of these youth participants shared that they have provided translation support for their family and that they have worked instead of attending school to support their family. A large portion of these youth participants reported that they have had the experience of their utilities getting shut off. Most participating youth expressed concern about their immigrant farmworker families and their hard working conditions. A frequent theme also involved gender-based and LGBTQ discrimination and harassment.

**“Violence is a big issue in my neighborhood.”**



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A YOUTH IN SALINAS



#### Lack of Positive Youth Perspective

Participating youth expressed that they feel **adults have low expectations for teens**, that youth **“have a lot to give but that gets lost in the violence”**, and that the **media portrays them negatively**. The sentiments expressed by youth participants seem to answer two questions posed during the design stage of this study, “do youth feel like they are telling their own story” and “how do youth feel perceived by the community”.

**“Salinas has a bad reputation. People automatically judge you.”**



#### Lack of Opportunities

Lack of **safe, fun places for youth** to go and to hang out with their friends, and lack of resources for their families was a prominent theme throughout the study. In addition, participating youth **demonstrated concern and compassion for youth that may have had troubles, or are in trouble**, and identified an interest in seeing more opportunities for youth to have “second chances”. A question posed during the design of the study, “are youth motivated to come back to work in the community”, was included in one of the inquiries. There was a mix of responses, including, “I did leave and I came back”, “I would leave if I could”, “I would leave, but I would come back”, and “I love Salinas, we are too small to have this happen [violence], to see so often”. Further inquiry would deepen an understanding as to what motivated those that left to return.



#### Lack of Unity

Youth participants highlighted unity as a theme throughout the study; the lack of unity among youth, and the need for the community to unite, more specifically.

**“Community needs to stand together.”**



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

Top themes that emerged among participating youth as part of their inquiry, “what is your vision for Salinas” included the following, in order of prevalence: **opportunities, unity, positive influence, health, equity, and peace.**



**Opportunities**



**Unity**



**Positive Influence**



**Health**



**Equity**



**Peace**



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS



#### Opportunities

Key to the Youth Voice vision for Salinas was the expansion of opportunities for youth, and for immigrant farmworker parents. Fun opportunities, safe spaces, more places for youth, mentors, college support, and opportunities for youth with problems were identified with notable significance. These themes combined with the inquiry about what inspired youth to participate in Youth Voice point to findings from the literature on positive youth development. An additional theme that was lifted up throughout the inquiry among participating youth included, **“information and socialization for parents”**.

FUN	YOUTH PLACES	IMPORTANT TOPIC	OPINIONS & ACTION
RELAX CHILL POSITIVE VIBE	SAFE SPACE	TOPIC WE CAN RELATE TO	SAY WHAT WE FEEL
HEALING	YOUTH RESOURCES & PROGRAMS	GAIN LEADERSHIP	ALL SHARE PERSPECTIVE
MUSIC	SECOND CHANCES	LEARN	SAME EXPECTATIONS
ART	GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER	COLLEGE SUPPORT	WANT TO SEE ACTION
IMAGE ACTIVITY	SMALL GROUPS	MENTORS	BEING IN A CIRCLE



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS



#### Unity

Unity was a common theme throughout the study. Youth participants seemed to appreciate coming together, outside of school, from different schools and neighborhoods and organizations. Creating their own agenda, their own research process, and their own actions for change appeared to be of significant value.

Engaging in a collective inquiry and action agenda through Youth Voice led to an expressed desire by participants to be brought together more, with more youth, to be inspired, to lift up youth voice, to motivate each other, to develop common goals.

**“Youth leading change...  
not adults.”**

MOTIVATION	VOICE	TOGETHER OUTSIDE SCHOOL	COMPASSION
INSPIRATION	ADVOCACY	YOUTH COME TOGETHER	YOUTH REACHING OUT, HELPING EACH OTHER
YOUTH AGENCIES WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS SAME GOAL	SOLIDARITY	MORE YOUTH	LOVE FOR COMMUNITY



# CONCLUSION

## WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS



### Positive Influence

Youth Voice participants voiced their interest in a Salinas with greater positive influence, among peers and among adults. Specifically, youth participants envisioned being **perceived as a positive influence**. Youth participants identified a desire for inspirational leaders, for adults with higher expectations of them, and for a media that portrays them and their community in a positive manner. This theme was lifted up early in the research design phase by partner organizations in which they identified the influence of peers and others as an important factor when working with youth. Literature on positive youth development similarly points to this theme as well.

LEADERS	SPEAKING UP	PROSPER	HAPPINESS
INSPIRE	MORE VOICES	CHANGE	ACCEPTANCE
YOUTH COME BACK	HOPE	SUPPORT	REASSURANCE
INFLUENCE OTHERS	POSITIVE MEDIA	ENCOURAGEMENT	POSITIVE EXPRESSION



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS



#### Health



While the theme of health equity was highlighted early on in the study, it wasn't until the second to last convening, with the influence of new youth participants, that a broader theme of "health" emerged. Within this category, health is defined by themes such as health care for all youth, healthy, affordable food, being in nature, being outside, exercising.

NATURE	NO PESTICIDES	LAKE	HEALTH FOR ALL YOUTH
ORGANIC FOOD	AFFORDABLE, HEALTHY FOOD	PLAYGROUND	HOMEGROWN FOOD
OUTSIDE	TREES	GYM	HEALTHY EATING HABITS



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS



#### Equity

Equity was an early and consistent theme. Youth participants envisioned a Salinas that addressed issues of immigration, racism, affordable housing, and free education.



#### Peace

Peace emerged as a theme from the beginning of the study. It is worth noting, that even with violent events taking place during the research, emphasis on peace or a lack of violence did not overshadow the above mentioned visions for Salinas. Rather, youth participants focused their action orientation on positive opportunities for youth and youth unity as solutions for the reduction and/or elimination of violence.





## CONCLUSION

### MOVING FORWARD

This study was initiated with three key assumptions as part of the research framework.



**Positive change is occurring for youth in Salinas**



**Youth are engaged in meaningful opportunities that are transformative**



**Community assets are contributing to this change**

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Key findings among youth participants suggest that **youth would like to be brought together more, in meaningful and transformative ways, in order to create opportunities for positive change**. As evidenced from the beginning of the study, community assets - partner organizations and adult allies - are committed and dedicated to the youth that they serve and are interested in reaching more youth in Salinas. They believe all youth should have the opportunity to have fun, to learn, to inquire, to express themselves, to develop, to lead, and to take action. The partner organizations identified many of the areas for which youth lifted up, including, the importance of parents, convening youth outside of school, motivating youth for education, and the influence of peers and others.

Initial interest was generated among youth-serving organizations for ongoing peer convenings to build capacity, provide support, and share information. This may be something to pursue moving forward, in particular around areas for which partner organizations expressed concern, namely, outreach, capacity, and sustainability.

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**“This is important to me because I work for a youth program.  
The reason that I am here is that I want to hear you [youth].  
As an organization, I need to respond.”**

Adult Ally



## CONCLUSION

### MOVING FORWARD

#### Action

The final (sixth) Youth Voice convening propelled youth participants forward into action. At the request of Youth Voice Leaders, a partner organization attended the sixth youth convening and made a presentation to youth participants on the FY 2015-16 City of Salinas budget. The presentation highlighted expenditures by the City of Salinas over the last fiscal year for police (44%) compared to library and community services (7%). Youth Voice participants also heard from the presenter about the difference in last fiscal year's budget for the City of Salinas in comparison to the City of Monterey's FY 2015-16 budget, which involved comparatively higher spending on library and community services (27%) and less on police (14%).

Youth participants were shocked to discover how much more spending per person is spent on police in Salinas than it is in Monterey, and how much more is spent on services for youth in Monterey, compared to Salinas. **"If we would have more services, then we would have less violence, more places to go, more people to rely on." "Instead we have a lot of police out there for youth to be scared." "They spend three times the amount on youth in Monterey, and half of our city [Salinas] is youth."**

**"Adults don't have any hope for us... makes me feel like nothing."**

At the conclusion of the presentation, the partner organization shared that youth had an opportunity to advocate to the city about the allocation of public funding prior to the adoption of the FY 2016-17 budget.

Following the convening, Youth Voice Leaders organized a march to the Salinas City Council and prepared public comments and posters in support of "positive youth investment". On the day of the march and the city council meeting, Youth Voice Leaders received a visit by the Mayor of Salinas to congratulate and thank them for being civically active, and encouraged them to voice their needs. About two dozen youth marched, along with a city council member, and spoke at the city council meeting.

# CONCLUSION

## MOVING FORWARD

### Action

Three local media outlets covered the Youth Voice march to city council. Please see the links below for the Univision interview with a Youth Voice Leader, and coverage by KSBW and KION television stations.

KSBW

<http://m.ksbw.com/news/youth-voice-marches-ahead-of-salinas-budget-meeting/39815676>

KION

<http://m.kionrightnow.com/salinas-group-marches-to-city-council-budget-meeting-asking-city-to-invest-more-in-youth/39815892>

Univision

<http://noticias.entravision.com/costa-central/2016/05/27/video-jovenes-buscan-respuestas-a-problemas-de-violencia-en-salinas/>





## CONCLUSION

### MOVING FORWARD

#### Research

Youth Voice participants analyzed their research to date. In so doing, they identified **youth populations that have been underrepresented and/or not included in the study**. Commitment and interest, therefore, have been expressed by Youth Voice Leaders and participants to **continue the research so that it is more inclusive and reaches more youth**. Some of the populations/organizations for which Youth Voice seek to further reach include the following: LULAC, youth in alternative education, youth in custody, youth on probation, foster youth, LGBTQ youth, youth from neighborhoods including Acosta Plaza and Hebbroon Heights, and youth that are working in the packing sheds and engaged with labor unions.



In closing, it appears that Youth Voice has only just begun. Additional research ideas among youth participants, including outreach to the above populations, include conducting a **school power analysis to develop school leadership champions that will provide Youth Voice with a space for high-school based youth inquiry and action**. As for Youth Voice taking action based on their research, there is no telling where they this may lead. Furthering their relationships with the City of Salinas and the media are but one of the many opportunities they now have before them.

What appears to be emerging for Youth Voice is a desire for youth in Salinas to occupy a unifying space, where youth have opportunities to engage with each other, develop a support system, and build a community of youth. Youth unity, identified in practically every methodology in the study is of paramount interest. The outcome of relationships, new and deepened, discovery of common struggles and emotions, identification of inequities among youth and their families, and a shared desire for ongoing youth solidarity, set the stage for leadership to action. From a shy, and at times awkward start to Youth Voice, there appears to be a glimmering hope emerging, one of **collective identity and agency for change**. This is one of the most illuminating outcomes thus far and a compelling reason to continue with the research and social action of Youth Voice.

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Daniel Ibarra, Baktun 12  
Daniel Salazar  
Destiny Villa, MILPA  
George Aquino, César Chávez Futbol Academy  
Jairo Guido, César Chávez Futbol Academy  
Jasmin Vargas, Ciclovía Salinas / DREAM Academy  
Luis Rodriguez, Urban Arts Collaborative  
Nancy Chavira, Ciclovía Salinas  
Rubi Galarza, Building Healthy Communities  
Victoria Delavie

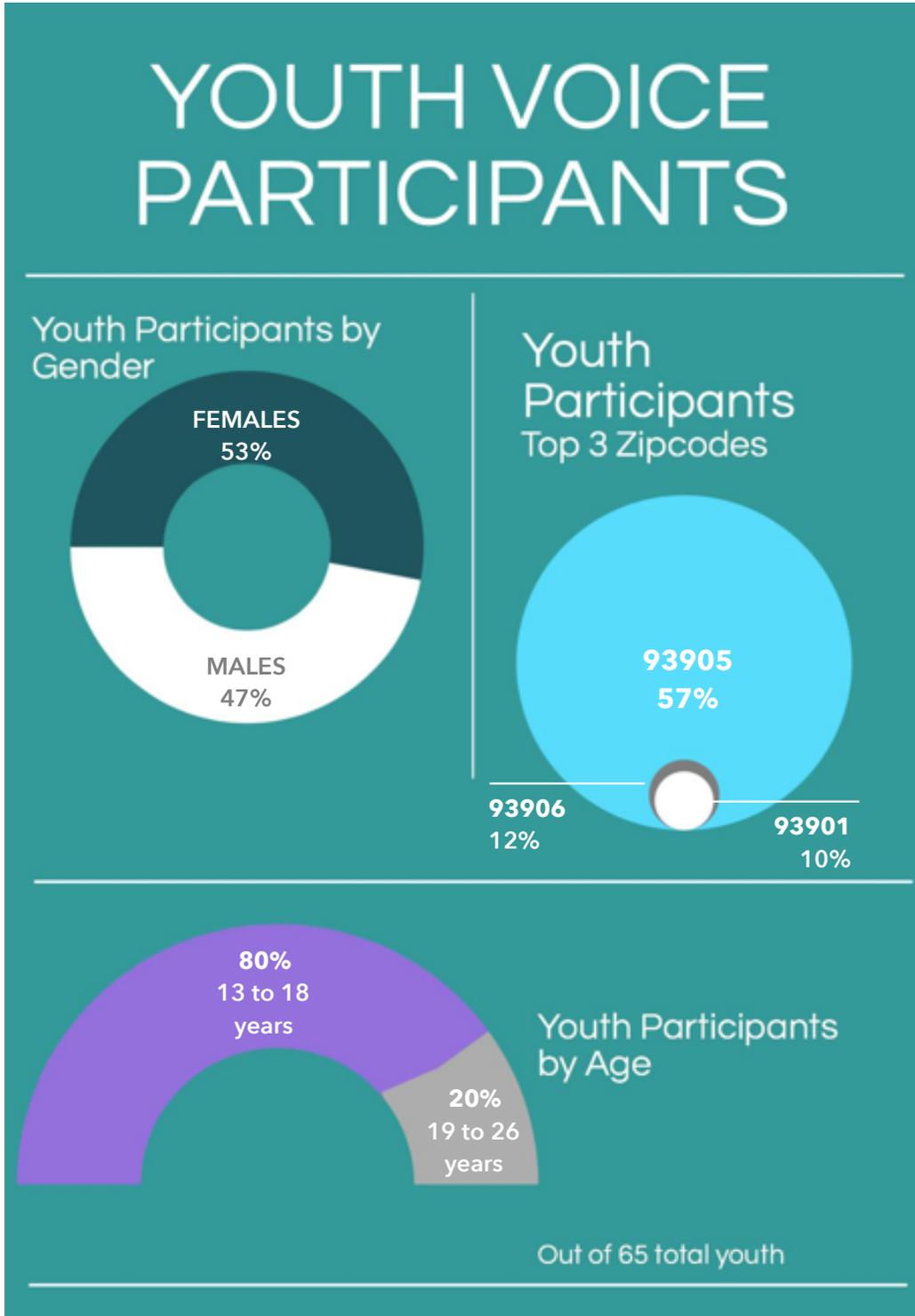
### Additional gratitude for community leadership and support

Cesar Lara and Jesus Valenzuela, Monterey Bay Central Labor Council  
Jorge Rubio, Sunstreet Centers  
Juan Carlos Gonzales, Urban Arts Collaborative

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# APPENDIX I

## YOUTH VOICE PARTICIPANT DATA



# APPENDIX II

## YOUTH VOICE PARTICIPANT DATA

### Youth Participant by Top 3 High Schools

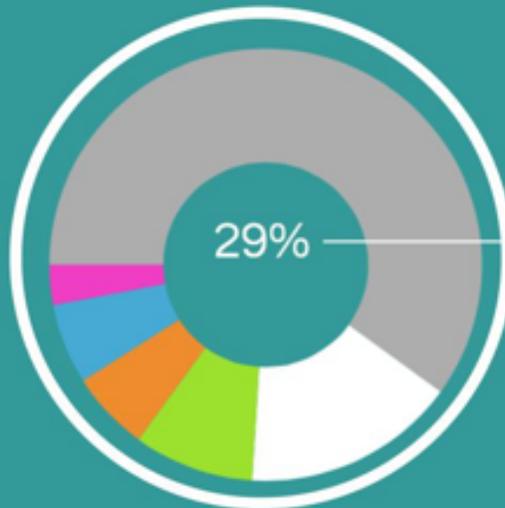
Out of 36 total youth

ALISAL 33%	
SALINAS 31%	
EVERETT ALVAREZ 14%	



### Youth Participant by number of convenings attended

1 (60%)	
2 (16%)	
3 (9%)	
4 (6%)	
5 (6%)	
6 (3%)	



Average new participant at each convening

## APPENDIX III

### SELECTED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT-RELATED REFERENCES

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