ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report provides a summary of key findings for Youn **th 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.

“**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.

East Salinas

40%

under 20 years of age
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.

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

- Change is occurring in Salinas for positive youth development
- Youth are engaging in meaningful opportunities that are transformative
- Community assets, such as people, programs, and organizations are contributing to this change
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**

Youth

- Learn about purpose
- Design methodologies
- Lead and facilitate inquiry
- Synthesize and code data
- Critically reflect and analyze data
- Develop action plan

★ Youth-based findings and proposed actions

Youth-Serving Organizations

- Codevelop research design
- Conduct youth outreach
- Prepare youth leaders
- Invite youth participants
- Trust and confidence in process

★ Organizational Capacity Building

**RESULTS**
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**

- **Family**
- **Motivation for college**
- **Cultural identity and roots**
- **Influence of peers and others**
- **Involvement outside of school**

Organizational partners: 32

Exploratory conversations: 4

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

| CAPACITY               | Needs are greater than capacity  
|                       | Sustainability, commitment, and accountability |
| CONSCIOUSNESS         | Conscious of adultism  
|                       | Need for adult reflection    
|                       | Need to be intentional        
|                       | Need not tokenize youth       
|                       | Organizational reflection    |
| OUTREACH              | Analyze outreach methods       
|                       | Questions of access           |
| PREVENTION            | 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... |
| INTEGRATION           | Need not compete as organizations |
|                       | Need not keep youth within our own organizations |
| PREPARATION           | Youth prepared, connected, aware |
|                       | Translate into a smooth experience for youth |
From Assessment Project to Youth Voice

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.

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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVOCACY &amp; EMPOWERMENT</th>
<th>ACCESS, DEDICATION &amp; COMMITMENT</th>
<th>FUN, ARTS, MUSIC &amp; SPORTS</th>
<th>IDENTIFY AS YOUTH</th>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>LGBTQ GENDER LENS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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 | Safe spaces
Expanded network
Education | Teachers and counselors
Tattoo removal
Tutoring | Professional development
Parent involvement
Resources and life skills | Events
Resources
Sports | Land stewardship
Public art
Healing | Culturally relevant arts programs
Performance |
| | | | Mentors
Role model
Connect easily
Approachable | Management
Leadership
Facilitation
Planning | Parent support |
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). ¹

¹ 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.

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

Adult Ally
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.”
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

Youth Voice Findings May 2016
Reflective Practice

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

Youth Participant

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

“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.”
### Reflective Practice

Youth participant reflections on how they feel about Youth Voice convenings

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

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 [Instagrarns] 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 mean 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 with15 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.
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”.

A theme illustrated in three out of six drama sculptures 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.”

Key themes from the Instagram Visuals

- AGRICULTURE
- UNITY
- LOVE, NATURE & PRIDE
- HOPE & EQUITY

“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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HARD</th>
<th>NOT A LOT TO DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So hard to get out</td>
<td>Lack of fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangs in streets</td>
<td>Can’t go out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>So hard to grow up</strong></td>
<td><strong>No places to go</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard not to find people on drugs</td>
<td>No places to hang out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to see things happening</td>
<td>Parents do not let us out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard because of violence</td>
<td>Can't go out much at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really hard</td>
<td>Not many things we can do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Can’t do what you want to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRIGHTENING</strong></td>
<td><strong>LACK OF SUPPORT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guys and girls all the time get shot</td>
<td>Have to make choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have had gun pulled on me</td>
<td>Can’t express yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of places that are safe</td>
<td><strong>Lack of people that are inspiring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch my back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frightening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Adults don’t see youth perspective.”
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

- Have witnessed violence: 75%
- Have been in a physical fight: 68%
- Know someone in gang: 54%
- Have family member done/doing time in jail or prison: 50%
- Heard gunshots: 43%
- Have lost someone to gang violence: 43%
- Have been bullied: 36%
- Feel unsafe in your neighborhood: 32%
- Have translated information for your family: 75%
- Have family that works in the fields: 71%
- Have free or reduced lunch at school: 68%
- Have had your gas/electricity and/or water turned off: 64%
- Know someone who is or has been homeless: 54%
- Have missed school to help family: 43%
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

| If you can’t fly, then run, if you can’t run, walk. If you can’t walk, crawl, whatever it is, keep going. | This feeling is not going to last forever. “Every little thing is gonna be alright.” Tomorrow will be a better day. Be Positive. Do not overthink. Everything will be ok. | If I go through hard times I just tell myself, someone else is going through harder times than me. “Sometimes to self-discover, you must self-destruct.” | It’s ok, it won’t last forever. Nothing is forever. |
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scream about how you feel about violence</th>
<th>Yell No to youth behind bars</th>
<th>Stomp your feet to make change</th>
<th>Yell Yes to education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scream about what happens when that negativity persists</td>
<td>No to racism</td>
<td>Stomp to stop the violence</td>
<td>Yes to equity and equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scream if we want homelessness to stop</td>
<td>No to gang violence</td>
<td>Stomp for gender rights</td>
<td>Yes to youth opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No to gender discrimination</td>
<td>“So loud please”</td>
<td>Yes to skate park renovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Let it all out, as loud as you can” [laughter].</td>
<td>No to homelessness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Thank you for participating. Let’s shake off, that was deep.”

“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).

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What comes to mind when you hear social justice?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✦ When someone is made to feel less than a human being and second class citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Education is of lower quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Less opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Having the same rights, and being treated fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Having equal opportunities as everyone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Rich have more medical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Wealth and income equals more resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever felt angry because something was unjust?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✦ LGBTQ community is treated very different from “straight”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ #NoToLabels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ No discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Having to see people being made fun of for having different ethnicity/stereotypes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Being treated different for being different or where you come from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Females are not objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do gang-affiliated youth have a place to go and change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✦ Violence is a big issue in my neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ A diverse amount of programs should be offered with resources to succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Others don’t live with the fear of wondering if your family will make it home safe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RACISM + OPPRESSION</strong></th>
<th><strong>GENDER DISCRIMINATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>LACK OF SUPPORT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Mexicans come here to provide a better life for their family</td>
<td>No one supports girls sports, but at boys games they sell items and tickets</td>
<td>No opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People make fun of people from different ethnicities</td>
<td>Young women feel unsupported in their sports</td>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyone who is not white</td>
<td>Can’t walk down the street without getting whistled at</td>
<td>No outside support, end up making bad decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different opportunities</td>
<td>Covered up and still getting called at</td>
<td>Not a lot of places to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated unfairly</td>
<td>Dress code targets girls</td>
<td>Hard to meet people that are inspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypes</td>
<td>Gay youth are targeted</td>
<td>School didn’t even acknowledge shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inequality</strong></td>
<td>Unsafe to walk</td>
<td>and it was a student at our school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judged</td>
<td>Unfair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HEALTH + EDUCATIONAL INEQUITIES</strong></th>
<th><strong>25 youth</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wealth and income equals more resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich have more medical resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is of lower quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LACK OF POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE</strong></th>
<th><strong>LACK UNITY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard for youth to speak up</td>
<td>Become part of gangs…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels like media…negative portrayal</td>
<td>feel like that is where they belong, only family - they should be here right now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I hate having a body that is sexualized.”
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

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.”
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Unity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support or end up making bad decisions</td>
<td>Youth programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School didn’t even acknowledge the shooting and it was a student at our school</td>
<td>Amusement parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become part of gangs...feel like that is where they belong, only family</td>
<td>More resources for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They should be here right now</td>
<td>More spaces to create art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More resources for youth to come together</td>
<td>More places to hang out with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like to see more youth come together</td>
<td>A lot of violence because no where to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities for youth solidarity...come together</td>
<td>After school programs for youth in Salinas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right here, cool that we are together, could be more youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of kids on east side could benefit from being here...too much violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Start with our parents</strong></th>
<th><strong>Safe places</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mentors</strong></th>
<th><strong>Second chances</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place to socialize with other parents</td>
<td>Safe space to do this, hear your voice</td>
<td>College support</td>
<td>More awareness of youth programs that give youth 2nd chances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places where parents can inform themselves</td>
<td>Less violence</td>
<td>For younger age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic mentors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>More awareness of programs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Already enough youth programs, more youth need to go, consistently, need to know about them</td>
<td>Youth programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness of programs and services, need for greater awareness</td>
<td>Amusement parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More resources for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More places to hang out with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lot of violence because no where to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After school programs for youth in Salinas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITY</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>PEACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unify</td>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>No violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Safe place for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United</td>
<td>Health equity</td>
<td>Police witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Together</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Educational equity</td>
<td>Gun control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get involved</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Gun restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>No borders</td>
<td>Riding a bike in a safe neighborhood with people outside saying “hi”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step up and take action</td>
<td>Get rid of people like Donald Trump</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth advocacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>POSITIVE INFLUENCE</th>
<th>HEALTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Mic</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen youth center</td>
<td>Reassurance</td>
<td>Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second chance groups</td>
<td>Positive media</td>
<td>Healthy food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start at home, out of home into communities</td>
<td>Positive expression</td>
<td>Health for all youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 Youth

Youth doing good stuff Be who we want to be and influence others

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”.

![Image]

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

## LACK OF SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Skill-Building Practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Racial, Health, Educational, Social and Economic Inequities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inequities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to Violence &amp; Gangs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Lack of a Positive Youth Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Lack of Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need to Value All Young Life… Even Gang Members… Need Opportunity for All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“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

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

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

---

“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

---

77 youth + young adults
**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.

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
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”.

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.”
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.
WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

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”.

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

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR SALINAS

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.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>VOICE</th>
<th>TOGETHER OUTSIDE SCHOOL</th>
<th>COMPASSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSPIRATION</td>
<td>ADVOCACY</td>
<td>YOUTH COME TOGETHER</td>
<td>YOUTH REACHING OUT, HELPING EACH OTHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH AGENCIES WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS SAME GOAL</td>
<td>SOLIDARITY</td>
<td>MORE YOUTH</td>
<td>LOVE FOR COMMUNITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 exceptions 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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURE</th>
<th>NO PESTICIDES</th>
<th>LAKE</th>
<th>HEALTH FOR ALL YOUTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIC FOOD</td>
<td>AFFORDABLE, HEALTHY FOOD</td>
<td>PLAYGROUND</td>
<td>HOMEGROWN FOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTSIDE</td>
<td>TREES</td>
<td>GYM</td>
<td>HEALTHY EATING HABITS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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.

“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.”

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.

“Adults don’t have any hope for us... makes me feel like nothing.”
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

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

Univision
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 Hebron 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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APPENDIX I

YOUTH VOICE PARTICIPANT DATA

Youth Participants by Gender

FEMALES 53%

MALES 47%

Youth Participants
Top 3 Zipcodes

93905 57%
93906 12%
93901 10%

Youth Participants by Age

80%
13 to 18 years

20%
19 to 26 years

Out of 65 total youth
APPENDIX II

YOUTH VOICE PARTICIPANT DATA

Youth Participant by Top 3 High Schools
Out of 36 total youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALISAL</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALINAS</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERETT ALVAREZ</td>
<td>14%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Youth Participant by number of convenings attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (60%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (16%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average new participant at each convening 29%
APPENDIX III

SELECTED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT-RELATED REFERENCES


Comack, E., Deane, L., Morrissette, L., & Silver, J. If you want to change violence in the hood, you have to change the hood: Violence and street gangs in Winnipeg’s inner-city. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2009.


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