Statement of Purpose

To assess the scope and quality of youth participation in community evaluation research, and to formulate strategies for strengthening this work in the future. These strategies will be developed by people who have demonstrated commitment to youth participation, and the proceedings will be communicated widely in order to advance the field and extend the purpose of the meeting.
PROGRAM

Wednesday, January 10, 2001

5:20 & 5:40 Van will depart from the hotel for the conference center

5:30  Hospitality

Welcome to Michigan

Barry Checkoway/ Katie Richards-Schuster
University of Michigan

Julia Burgess
Center for Community Change

Winnie Hernandez-Gallegos
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

6:30  Opening Session

Symposium Goals and Introductions

Involving Young People in Community Evaluation Research:
Making the Case

What is the reason for involving young people in community evaluation research? Why should we, or others, want to increase their involvement? What are the gains for them and their communities?

Panel:

Maggie Aragon
PUEBLO
Jonathan London
Youth in Focus

Philip Nyden
Loyola University

7:30 Dinner

8:30 Adjournment

Thursday, January 11, 2001

Breakfast will be on your own in the hotel, and continental breakfast also will be waiting at the conference center

8:00 & 8:15 Van will depart from the hotel for the conference center

8:30 Roundtable Discussion

What is Youth Participation?

What does youth participation mean to YOU? Is it presence or power? Is it adult-led, youth-led, or intergenerational? What criteria should be used to assess it?

Moderators:

Barry Checkoway/Katie Richards-Schuster
University of Michigan

Panel:

Ramesh James
Youth Force
Involving Young People in Community Evaluation Research: Latest Lessons from the Field

What is the status of youth participation in community evaluation research as a field of practice? What do we know about its quantity and quality? What are some examples, and what lessons can be learned from them?

Thursday, January 11, 2001 (continued)

Moderator:

**Terri Sullivan**
Search Institute

Panel:

**Leslie Goodyear**
Harvard University

**Hartley Hobson/ Carla Roach**
National 4-H Council
10:45 Working Group Session

In small groups we will formulate strategies for strengthening youth participation in community evaluation research.

Group A: Superior Room
Group B: Huron Room
Group C: Michigan Room
Group D: Erie Room

11:45 Hospitality

12:00 Luncheon

1:00 Roundtable Discussion

Creating a New Field: Age-Appropriate and Culturally-Sensitive Methods

What are the steps in the process of involving young people in community evaluation research? Which methods are most common, and which ones are cutting edge? Are there methods that are especially age appropriate and culturally sensitive and, if so, what are they?

Thursday, January 11, 2001 (continued)

Moderator:
Alicia Wilson  
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

Panel:

Jay Schensul  
Institute for Community Research

Andrew Schneider- Muñoz  
Search Institute

Nina Wallerstein  
University of New Mexico

2:00 Refreshments

2:00 Working Group Sessions

Again in small groups we will formulate specific strategies for involving young people in community evaluation research. However, this time we will focus on some selected strategic elements.

Group A: Preparing a training curriculum for involving young people in community evaluation research

Group B: Strategizing for building support for youth-led community evaluation research (e.g., identifying stakeholders, finding funding, and national networking)

Group C: Formulating age-appropriate and culturally-sensitive methods

Group D: Strengthening roles of youth and adults as
citizens, collaborators, and bridging persons

3:00 Checking-In Session

What are some strategies for strengthening youth participation in community evaluation research? We will very briefly check on the ideas which have arisen in the working groups.

Thursday, January 11, 2001 (continued)

Facilitators:

Matt Rosen
Youth Leadership Institute

Yve Susskind
University of Michigan

3:30 Strategy Session: Obstacles and Opportunities

We will identify the forces that limit youth participation in community evaluation research, and discuss what can be done to strengthen participation.

Facilitators:

Barry Checkoway/Katie Richards-Schuster
University of Michigan

Alicia Wilson
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

4:30 Van will depart from the conference center for the hotel

Leisure
6:30  Vans will depart from the hotel for the School of Social Work

6:45  Hospitality

7:00  Dinner

8:00  Plenary Session

New Initiatives for Youth Participation in Community Evaluation Research

Selected participants will discuss their work: What are you trying to accomplish? How well are you doing? How could you improve the process? What do you think is needed to advance the field?

Thursday, January 11, 2001 (continued)

Moderator:

Judy Watson-Olson
Marquette Alger Youth Foundation

Panel:

Lynn Sygiel/ Wendy Potasnik
Y-Press: A Children's News Network

Julia Burgess/ Maggie Aragon/ Ellen Reddy/ Ramesh James
Lifting New Voices

Jonathan London/ Elizabeth Gettleman
Youth in Focus/ City of San Francisco
9:15 Adjournment

Friday, January 12, 2001

8:00 & 8:15 Van will depart the hotel for the conference center

8:30 Working Group Sessions

What are some strategies for strengthening youth participation in community evaluation research? In small groups we will formulate specific strategies and practical steps for advancing the field.

Group A: Superior Room

Group B: Huron Room

Group C: Michigan Room

Group D: Erie Room

9:45 Coffee and tea

Friday, January 12, 2001 (continued)

10:00 Concluding Session

*Barry Checkoway/ Katie Richards-Schuster*

University of Michigan

Working Group Reports
What are some strategies for strengthening youth participation in community evaluation research? What are the priorities? What are the next steps?

We will compile a list of action strategies, discuss priorities, and indicate which one or ones (if any) you'd like to work on after the symposium.

Closing Comments

**Winnie Hernandez-Gallegos**
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

**Julia Burgess**
Center for Community Change

12:00 Luncheon

1:00 Symposium adjourns

Vans departing for the airport will be available according to participant departure schedules.
I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Symposium was to assess the scope and quality of youth participation in community evaluation research, and to discuss strategies for strengthening this work in the future. People who have demonstrated commitment to youth participation developed these strategies, and these proceedings will be communicated widely in order to advance the field and extend the purpose of the meeting.

The symposium was intended to offer opportunities for advanced discussion of such topics as the (1) changing context of youth participation in evaluation research (2) latest lessons from the field (3) methods of age-appropriate and culturally-sensitive practice (4) roles of youth and adults as citizens and collaborators (5) obstacles to youth empowerment, and (6) strategies for finding funding for work of this type.

II. SPONSORS

The symposium was coordinated and sponsored by Lifting New Voices, a project of the Center for Community Change, and the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Ford Foundation. Lifting New Voices is a five-year project of the Center for Community Change funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Ford Foundation.

The purpose of Lifting New Voices is to increase the participation of young people 15-21 years old in organizational development and creating community change. It is hoped that youth and adults working together will build the capacity of the organization to enable young people to organize and become more central to its planning and decision-making.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The symposium brought together a small number of carefully selected people who have demonstrated commitment to youth participation, including representatives of community-based organizations, civic agencies, private foundations, and universities. The participants were recognized as highly experienced, anxious to communicate at an advanced level, and committed to strengthening youth involvement in community evaluation research. A complete list of symposium participants is included in these summary proceedings.
IV. PLANNING

Barry Checkoway and Katie Richards-Schuster facilitated the planning process with active involvement of the prospective participants. Through electronic mail, telephone discussions, and face-to-face meetings, individuals participated in all stages of planning, including steps to finalize the symposium design, select the panelists, facilitate the sessions, and build support for the process.

Participants were consulted through an electronic mail called youthandcommunity@umich.edu to formulate the agenda. They received a draft agenda and were asked for feedback: (1) What are some questions or issues you'd have us discus? (2) What information or ideas would you yourself like to share with others? (3) Additional comments or suggestions?

Based on the responses, a revised draft agenda was prepared for review, additional feedback was sought from participants, and the following topic were identified as priorities:

- Preparing a training curriculum for involving young people in community evaluation research.
- Strategizing for building support for youth-led community evaluation research, e.g., identifying stakeholders, finding funding, national networking.
- Formulating age-appropriate and culturally-sensitive methods.
- Strengthening roles of youth and adults as citizens, collaborators, and bridging persons.

V. DESIGN

The symposium was designed as a working group of individuals who came prepared to participate in intensive discussions rather than to present or listen to lectures from experts. It includes a variety of activities, including participant roundtables, small group discussions, problem-solving sessions, and working group reports. Participants were asked to make brief presentations on panels and facilitate roundtable discussions in order to increase involvement in the process.

In the spirit of sharing, participants were asked in advance to bring resource materials for sharing with others, including: (1) One or more examples of their experience involving young people in community evaluation research; (2) Copies of "favorite readings" – or references to publications – on the subject; (3) Names of individuals and/or organizations that share our interest in this work; (4) Resource materials to share with other participants - such as evaluation research reports, training manuals, videos of youth-in-action.
VI. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Welcome

Conveners: Barry Checkoway/Katie Richards-Schuster – University of Michigan
           Julia Burgess – Center for Community Change
           Winnie Hernandez-Gallegos – W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The symposium opened informally with refreshments and hospitality. As the opening session
drew near, conveners welcomed the participants, stating that it was inspiring to assemble this
group of experts in the growing field of youth participation in evaluation. They summarized the
symposium goals and process expectations: to share our experiences, learn from one another,
and build mutual support for our common cause.

Opening Session
Making the Case

What is the reason for involving youth people in community evaluation research? Why
should others, or we, want to increase their involvement? What are the gains for them
and their communities?

Moderator: Katie Richards-Schuster – University of Michigan
Panel: Maggie Aragon – PUEBLO
       Jonathan London – Youth in Focus
       Philip Nyden – Loyola University

Maggie Aragon introduced PUEBLO, a multicultural social justice organization affiliated with
the Center for Third World Organizing. PUEBLO organizes citizens as “parents” which helps
them to appreciate an important common role, and brings people together across racial lines.
They have been working with young people around their issues for years, and now are
integrating them into other campaigns.

Two young people serve on PUEBLO’ board, and an evaluation team has been established,
including two adults, two staff and two youth members. Team members met to discuss, give
feedback, and evaluate youth programs. This process creates an intergenerational approach to
evaluation and challenges conventional social dynamics and roles of youth and adults.

Jonathan London sought to answer these questions: (1) Why do I do this? (2) Why do we (as a
field) do this? (3) Why should others do this?

Youth in Focus involves young people in evaluation in order to engage them in knowledge
development, increase individual and collective well being, improve program outcomes, and
strengthen social change and social justice. Involving youth in evaluation brings out voices that
are typically not heard, improves their sense of confidence, and promotes positive relationships
with adults.
Jonathan believes that professionals normally do not involve young people because it is expensive in time and money, and it challenges privilege and power of adults in society.

Phil Nyden discussed the similarities between involving residents in community-based research and involving youth in evaluation research. If community research cannot be done without the community, how does research on youth programs occur without youth? If people are not engaged at 13, how do we expect them to be engaged at 35? Without the voices of all members, is an organization effective?

He argues that because youth have a strong sense of justice and injustices, this makes it especially beneficial to involve them in evaluation. We need youths’ eyes, perspectives, energy, and fun. He also states that if people really care about the future, they must involve youth, and if they do not there will be an even greater loss of civic engagement. Through convincing and confronting, it is critical to involve youth in evaluation research as it develops capacity, ownership and commitment over time. This involvement also demystifies the process, helping to redistribute power as it lies in the mystification; it decreases the distances between the researcher and the community, between the youth and the adult.

Roundtable Discussion
What is youth participation?

What does youth participation mean to YOU? Is it presence or power? Is it adult-led, youth-led, or intergenerational? What criteria should be used to assess it?

Moderators: Barry Checkoway/Katie Richards-Schuster – University of Michigan
Panel: Ellen Reddy – Southern Echo
Ramesh James – Youth Force

Ellen Reddy described efforts to involve youth in intergenerational evaluation in Mississippi. Middle-school students are the most active in this process, and adult support is key to success. Adults provide information, access to systems, opportunities for planning and reflection, and strong social support. She showed a video illustrating her points about youth participation.

Ramesh asked: Does youth participation supplement and support the work of your organization or does it drive and dictate it? That is, is there a transfer of power? At Youth Force, youth leadership drives the organization, and people over 21 years old have no vote in the organization. It provides opportunities for young people, as oppressed citizens, to participate in organizational development and community change as ways to increase their power in society.

Hanh Cao Yu asked, “Participation in what? To what end?” Evaluation research is a tool change and the process includes: research methods, data collection, and analysis. It is a process of ongoing reflection, which can be adult-led, youth-led, intergenerational, or externally-driven.
To involve youth in this process requires a safe space, a definition of the roles of adult partners, and attention to pacing and timing of the evaluation.

When youth actively participate, it becomes a tool for youth development, organizational development, and community change. The goal is not to make youth into expert evaluators, but to foster analytic and critical thinking, and involvement in power analysis. Indeed, the process of engaging youth in evaluation requires adults to relinquish some of their control, which represents a shift in power relationships.

There was discussion about how youth participation in evaluation affects power relationships, followed with the rest of the group. Some expressed discomfort with a view of evaluation as empowerment, whereas most participants appeared comfortable with this concept. When evaluation enables people to strengthen their voice, collect their own information, become critical thinkers, and play activist leadership roles, power is at issue.

There was discussion about the differences between youth participation in evaluation and youth-led evaluation, and how these differences affect the potential of evaluation to empower young people. There was also discussion about the distinction between evaluation and monitoring; about the nature of objectivity in participatory evaluation; about how youth involvement affects the rigor of the evaluation; and about whether it makes a difference if the evaluation is summative and formative.

**Roundtable Discussion**

**Latest Lessons From the Field**

What is the status of youth participation in community evaluation research as a field of practice? What do we know about its quantity and quality? What are some examples and what lessons can be learned from them?

**Moderator:** Terri Sullivan – Search Institute  
**Panel:** Leslie Goodyear – Harvard University  
Carla Roach – National 4-H Council  
Kim Sabo – InnoNet NYC

Leslie Goodyear described findings from focus group interviews with youth and adults involved in evaluation of after school programs. Youth said that involvement provided them with experiences for job and college applications, enabled them to develop new skills, offered opportunities to meet other young people, and proved that they could do something positive. They said that adults were most helpful when they shared their experiences, listened respectfully, and encouraged their efforts.

Carla Roach reported that the National 4-H Council promotes youth-adult partnerships, and seeks to increase youth involvement in evaluation of social action and social change. She raised questions about whether this work were theory-based or funder-driven and if funder-driven, if it
were serious in purpose or only an add-on to other activities. She described examples of youth involvement, including the Coalition of Asian Pacific Islander Youth (engaged youth in theory of change) and on Native American Reservation (community mind-mapping).

Kim Sabo trains people in participatory evaluation research. She asks, “How are youth engaged in the evaluation of programs intended to serve them?” and described the following patterns observed in her work on youth participation in evaluation:

♦ Youth engaged in self-assessment and monitoring their own projects as early as 1st and 2nd grade.
♦ Participatory monitoring of programs which fall short of evaluation, such as youth on boards.
♦ Groups monitoring programs in which youth engage in all decision-making where monitoring and evaluation are interrelated.
♦ Youth engaged in self and peer assessment, group monitoring, and setting objectives with an outside evaluator to train them.
♦ Youth working hand-in-hand to monitor and evaluate simultaneously.
♦ Highly participatory evaluation in which data is used for advocacy.

There was discussion about issues of rigor in participatory evaluation, and the need for increasing the scope and quality of this approach. Issues were raised about the status of a field whose youth participants are often subservient to adults, and the legitimacy of a field whose participants are often transitory in their involvement. Questions were asked difficulties in measuring youth outcomes, and in conforming to accepted standards of practice in evaluation. This returned the group to discussion of a fundamental question: What, after all, is the purpose of involving young people in community evaluation research?

Working Group Session 1

Participants were divided into small groups to formulate strategies for strengthening youth participation in community evaluation research, with the following facilitators:

Group A: Alicia Wilson – High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
Group B: Winnie Hernandez-Gallegos – W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Group C: Lynn Sygiel/Wendy Potasnick – Y-Press
Group D: Linda Camino – School of Human Ecology, University of Wisconsin

Roundtable Discussion

Creating a New Field: Age-Appropriate and Culturally-Sensitive Methods

What are steps in the process of involving young people in community evaluation research? Which methods are most common and which ones are cutting edge? Are
there methods that are especially age-appropriate and culturally-sensitive? If so, What are they?

Moderator: Alicia Wilson – High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
Panel: Jean Schensul – Institute for Community Research
Andrew Schneider-Munoz – Search Institute

Jay Schensul related issues of culture and identity to youth involvement in participatory evaluation research. She argued that information is a form of power, research is a tool for gaining it, and thus youth should participate in the process. At the Institute for Community Research’s Teen Action Center, youth identify their own issues and train other youth and adults in methods of participatory evaluation research. In order to create a culturally comfortable environment they recruit diverse youth from different schools and neighborhoods. Staff reflect the cultural characteristics of the youth, who themselves develop skills in interviewing, peer teaching, and group facilitation.

Andy Schneider-Munoz joked that asking an anthropologist to discuss culture is a mistake. He said that young people have their own cultures in which they themselves are the insiders, and that understanding of their culture- including race and ethnicity- thus becomes essential in their successful evaluation. It is important to create some sort of space for learning about and working with these cultures, including the creation of new cultural roles for youth in organizations and communities.

He referred to understanding community and culture as a “journey story.” Each of us should know his or her journey story, listen to one another’s journey stories, treat these stories with the greatest respect, and use them as a way of working together.

There was whole group discussion of culture. Increasing youth involvement in community evaluation, it is critical to respect the home culture of young people- e.g. patterns of self-esteem vs. humility in Asian cultures, special roles of young women in Puerto Rican cultures- while also avoiding over-generalizations.

How does the home culture affect the content and process of evaluation? It was argued that the process of creating community change may contradict the home culture, and this poses a dilemma for evaluation. Participants commented on the social construction of culture, the nature of internalized oppression, and the importance of knowing about cultural history.

Questions were asked about the relevance of class as a cultural characteristic in involving young people in evaluation. It was agreed that if evaluation is a vehicle for creating community change, then it is important to recognize as many factors affecting the process as possible.

If evaluation is a vehicle for creating community change, and if this process affects power relationships and requires conflict for change to occur, what dilemmas arise?
In working with young people, particular cultural issues can arise, such as though they can not speak up and “disagree with an adult” without being disrespectful. Conscientization on such issues can foster youth understanding, but the community as a whole must engage in that same process.

**Working Group Session 2**

In this second working group session, each group focused on the following four strategic elements:

1. Preparing a training curriculum for involving youth people in community evaluation research.
2. Strategizing for building support for youth-led community evaluation research e.g. identifying stakeholders, finding funding, and networking nationally.
3. Formulating age-appropriate and culturally-sensitive methods.
4. Strengthening roles of youth and adults as citizens, collaborators, and bridging persons.

**Checking-In Session**

What are some strategies we have discussed thus far for strengthening youth participation in community evaluation research?

Facilitators: Matt Rosen – Youth Leadership Institute  
Yve Susskind – University of Michigan

Participants were given three index cards and asked to write one strategy about which they were excited on each. Participants went around and shared one strategy each with the group, after they had taped their suggestions to the wall.

**Strategy Session:**

**Obstacles and Opportunities**

What are the forces that limit youth participation in community evaluation research, and what can be done to strengthen youth participation in the future?

Facilitators: Alicia Wilson – High/Scope Educational Research Foundation  
Barry Checkoway/Katie Richards-Schuster – Lifting New Voices

Participants discussed the forces that limit and facilitate youth participation in evaluation. These were written on a large newsprint paper illustration of a wave, with facilitating factors on one side and opposing factors on the other, followed by further discussion of issues arising.
Plenary Session  
New Initiatives for Youth Participation in  
Community Evaluation Research

What are you trying to accomplish? How well are you doing? How could you improve the process? What do you think is needed to advance the field?

Moderator: Judy Watson-Olson – Marquette Alger Youth Foundation
Julia Burgess – Center for Community Change/Lifting New Voices  
Maggie Aragon – PUEBLO/Lifting New Voices  
Ellen Reddy – Southern ECHO/Lifting New Voices  
Ramesh James – Youth Force/Lifting New Voices  
Jonathan London – Youth in Focus  
Elizabeth Gettleman – City of San Francisco

This session provided participants with opportunities to discuss what they were trying to accomplish, and what is needed to advance the field.

Lynn Sygiel and Wendy Potasnik described Y-Press which uses journalism as a medium for youth voice. They discussed the organization, the role of youth in decisions, how youth voice is systematically incorporated into the operations, and how to incorporate youth’s learning. For instance, youth principles which they use to select stories, complete research, formulate questions, and conduct interviews.

Representatives of community-based groups in Lifting New Voices described their involvement in the evaluation process. Ellen Reddy of Southern Echo described youth involvement in issue identification, group facilitation, utilization of videotaping and other methods, debriefing of findings, and using the findings program planning. Maggie Aragon of PUEBLO described the importance of reflection and the role of youth leaders and adult allies in evaluation. Ramesh James of youth Force described the difficulties of struggling for social justice, and the additional difficulties of finding time for evaluation when they are busy in the trenches.

Jonathan London and Elizabeth Gettelman described the collaboration of Youth in Focus and the City of San Francisco in results-based evaluation, in a city where property taxes fund youth initiatives and support youth involvement in evaluation. Through the Youth Engagement Strategy, up to twelve youth are employed to formulate questions, indicators, and methods of evaluation.

Kim Sabo described InnoNet as a website designed to support organizations in evaluation using a theory of change and a logic model. Free of charge, visitors to the site can create an evaluation plan, a budget and fundraising plan, and a strategic plan which can be formatted into proposals.
Working Group Session 3

In this final meeting of the working groups, participants were asked to formulate specific strategies and practical steps for advancing the field of youth participation in community evaluation research. Groups were asked to prepare for reporting to the whole group the strategies, priorities, and next steps.

Plenary Session
Working Group Reports

This session focused on sharing the specific steps and actions strategies that were generated in the working group sessions. Group facilitators reported on their deliberations and summarized what they came up with:

Group A
- Curriculum and Training
- Survey of what already has been done and who needs what.
- Definitions of terms and evaluation language.
- Case examples and stories for other evaluators.
- Youth helping to facilitate trainings for adults.
- Youth sharing their experiences and teaching other youth.

Group B
- Building organizational support.
- Revise and contextualize information and sources.
- Create a list.serv for youth evaluation.
- Build a comprehensive bibliography.
- Define a specific mission and goal of youth evaluation.
- Integrate the youth into this process of teaching and learning from others in the field.
- Develop a glossary of terms.
- Create a needs assessment inventory for programs to use.
- Continue the dialogue between the small working groups.

Group C
- Build a support network of evaluators and youth wanting to become engaged in the process.
- Gather resources and tools.
- Involve youth in every aspect of the process.
- Present at various conferences to help advance the field.
- Facilitate a cadre of coaches to work on a local and larger levels.

Group D
- Capacity building for adults and youth.
• Find funds to document previous work done in the field.
• Enlist funders to provide resources.
• Find adult allies.
• Develop a tool kit that includes: forms, ideas, and strategies.
• Generate conditions for success.
• Help academic evaluation become more participatory and community-based.
• Develop ethical principles for this field

After each group listed their separate strategies and steps, all participants scrutinized the list, identified the patterns, combined some and eliminated others.

Participants then placed dots next to their priority items, initialed the ones on which they wanted to work, and indicated the ones with which they wanted to take the lead. These were later compiled in a master list of action strategies and working groups, which is attached to these proceedings.

Participants will be contacted by May 1, 2001 to check on progress made since the symposium.

**Closing Comments**

Barry Checkoway and Katie Richards-Schuster closed the symposium with appreciation to the participants for their intensive involvement in the process. They recalled the original objectives and observed that the group had exceeded expectations. They reiterated their pledge to prepare a proceedings and to continue communications for a period following the symposium. They thanked everyone again, and bid them safe journey home.
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