Youth Participatory Action Research Projects (YPAR)

California Department of Public Health

Overview

Youth Participatory Action Research Projects (YPAR) engage middle and high school youth (ages 12-18) in projects that address and promote nutrition and physical activity issues in their community. YPAR aims to empower youth and achieve environmental changes related to health and nutrition. An adult ally works with the youth to help mentor, support, and facilitate the youth team. Through YPAR, youth engage in leadership, critical thinking, problem solving, strategizing skills, and service learning to address their target issue related to nutrition and physical activity. Target Behavior: Healthy Eating, Physical Activity Intervention Type: Direct Education, PSE Change

Intervention Reach and Adoption

YPAR targets middle and high school youth (ages 12-18) in school and community settings. Youth work with an adult ally on projects related to nutrition and physical activity issues in their school or community. YPAR projects have been implemented across California in both urban and rural areas. Setting: Community, School Target Audience: Middle School, High School Race/Ethnicity: All

Intervention Components

YPAR projects consist of a project coordinator, adult ally and youth team. Due to the nature of the approach, no two YPAR projects will look the same. YPAR is based on a variety of social learning, popular education, health
promotion, and youth development theories. Key principles of the approach include:

- Youth opinions are solicited, respected, and applied.
- Youth identify their own issues, problems, and possible solutions.
- Youth initiate project ideas, carry out planning, and goal setting.
- Youth drive the process and are involved in all states of decision-making.
- Youth teach other youth.

YPAR utilizes a participatory action research framework that includes the following steps:

1. Identify the issue or problem.
2. Define what is known about the issue or problem.
3. Identify what additional information is needed to understand the issue.
4. Determine what methods and approach will be used to collect this information and then work together as a team to accomplish this.
5. Use the information for education, understanding, strategic action, and/or community change.

http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/investigate-curriculum/

### Intervention Materials

The California Department of Public Health provides training and a binder of materials to help organizations implement YPAR. Materials include information on topics such as planning and launching the program, guidelines for developing research questions and methods, sample surveys and interview guides, photovoice resources, information on analyzing and making meaning of data, tips for preparing presentations, and sample forms for recruiting youth.

### Evidence Summary

Case studies have been conducted on numerous YPAR projects throughout both urban and rural areas of California. Positive results related to improvements in nutrition and physical activity behaviors among youth, their peers and families; increased access to fruits, vegetables and clean drinking water in schools and communities; new skills and exposure to new experiences acquired in youth; and expansion of successful projects to additional sites, new partners, additional funding, media attention, and other health improvement efforts. http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/investigate-curriculum/ Classification: Practice-tested

### Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate intervention progress and success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)</th>
<th>Changes – Medium Term (MT)</th>
<th>Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)</th>
<th>Population Results (R)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>ST1, ST3</td>
<td>MT1, MT3</td>
<td>LT1, LT3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Settings</td>
<td>ST6, ST7</td>
<td>MT5, MT6</td>
<td>LT5, LT6</td>
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<td>Sectors of Influence</td>
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<td>MT9</td>
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**Evaluation Materials**

Currently, no evaluation tools or materials are available.

**Additional Information**

**Website:** The YPAR website ([http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/](http://yparhub.berkeley.edu/)) includes background information and resources on the program. **Contact Person(s):** California Department of Public Health Phone: 916) 449-5400 Email: neopbcustomercare@cdph.ca.gov