

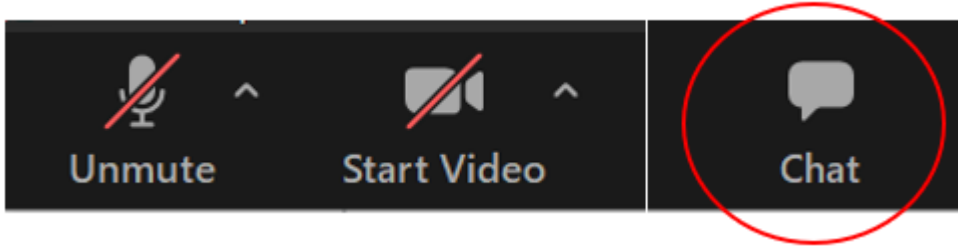
Latinx Civic Engagement: Building, Connecting, and Expanding

Igniting the Volunteering and Participation of Youth, Adults, and Seniors

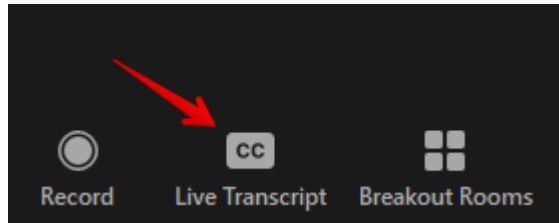
December 1, 2021

Office of Research and Evaluation (Evaluation@cns.gov)

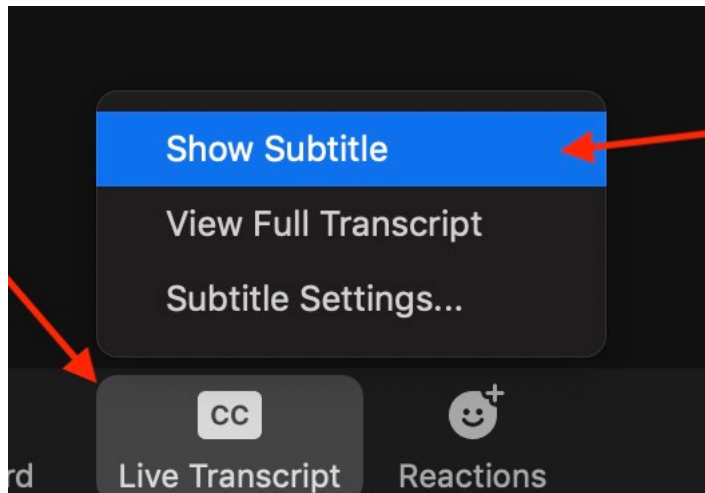
Welcome!



Please be advised that all lines have been muted to avoid background noises and to allow for greater engagement.



Please use chat feature to submit any questions throughout the presentations. Select *Everyone* when submitting your questions. We will read your questions for you.



Spanish captions are available. To activate closed caption please select click on captions and select show subtitles.

Latinx Civic Engagement: Building, Connecting, and Expanding

Igniting the Volunteering and Participation of Youth, Adults, and Seniors



Welcome

Andrea Robles, Ph.D.

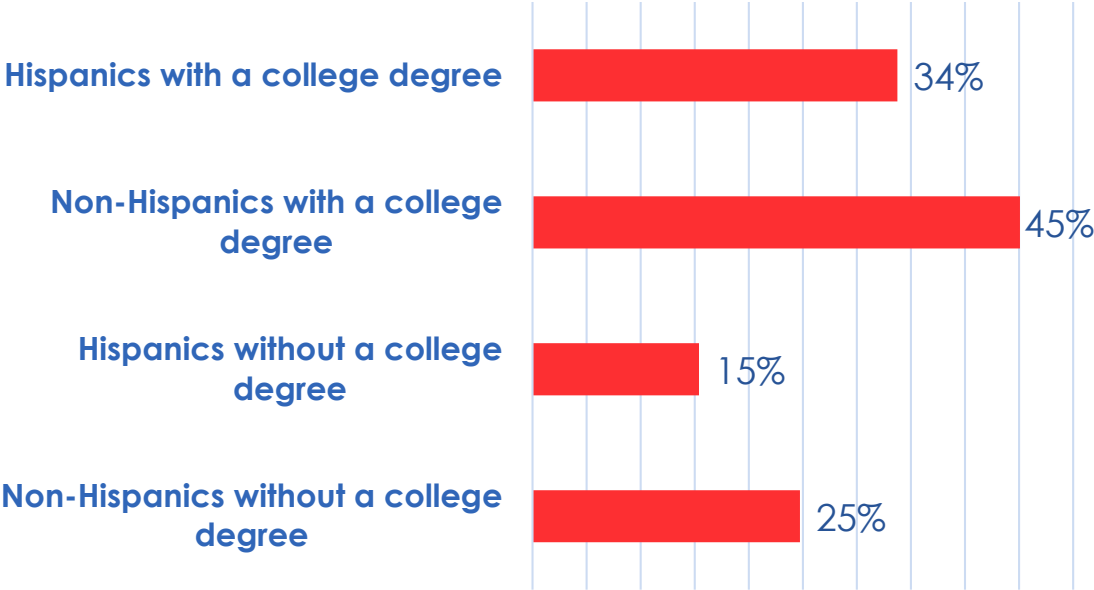
Manager, Office of Research and Evaluation
AmeriCorps

Data on Latinx Volunteering



2019 Volunteering Rate by Hispanic Origin and Education

Among those 25 years and older (CPS/CEV data)



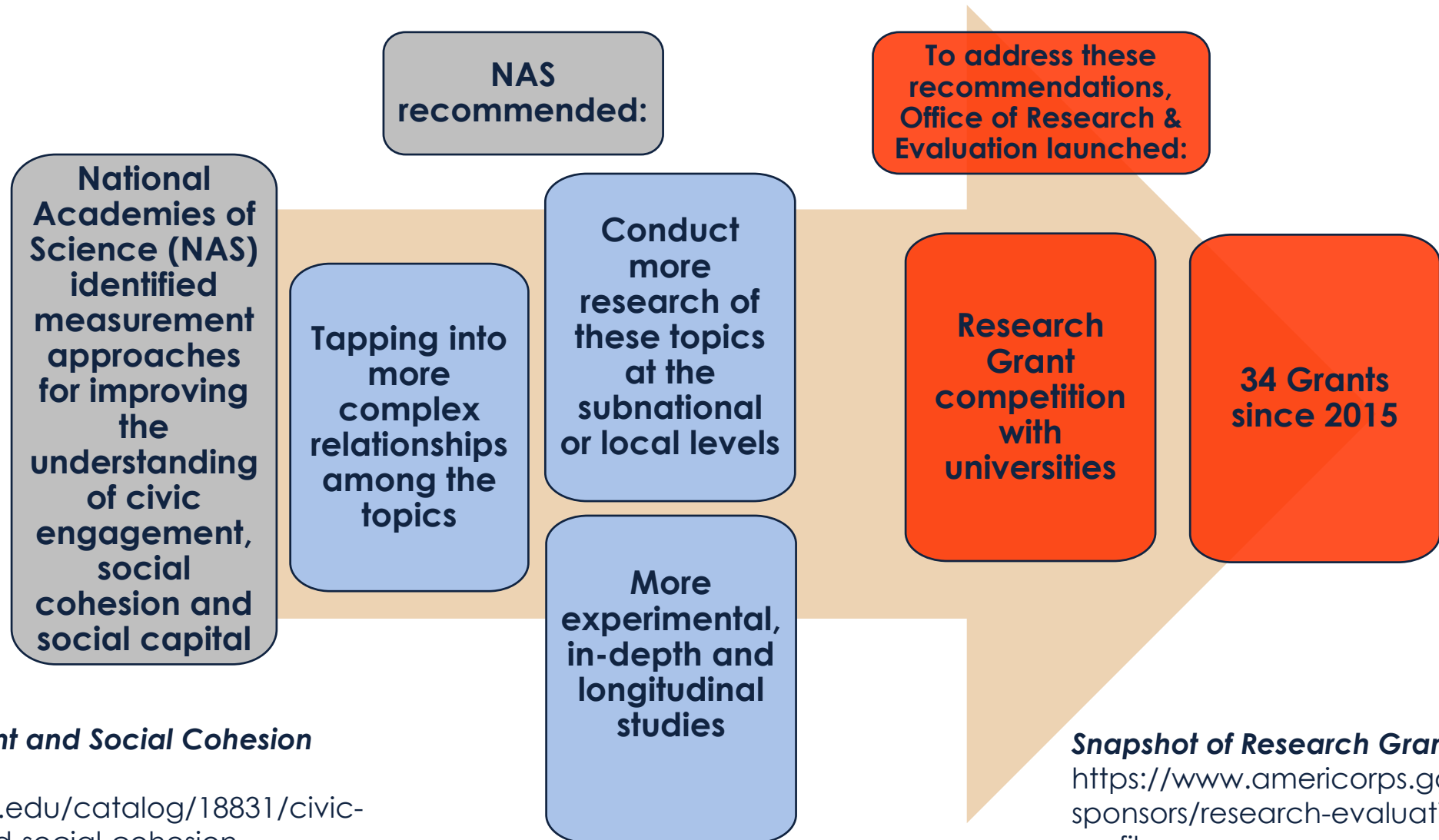
More to know...

For example,

How does volunteering vary by community?

Are the questions capturing a variety of volunteering behaviors?

Recommendations for better and different measures



Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion
(2014)
<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18831/civic-engagement-and-social-cohesion-measuring-dimensions-of-social-capital>

Snapshot of Research Grantees:
<https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/research-evaluation/grantee-profiles>

Agenda



Introductory Remarks: Amy Ramos, Ph.D., Senior Research Consultant, Harder+Company
Community Research

Speakers:

- Suzanne Pritzker, Ph.D., and Team, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor, University of Houston
- Marisol Clark-Ibáñez, Ph.D., and Team, Senior Team Professor, Department of Sociology, California State University San Marcos

Reflections:

- Victor García, Ed.D., Director, California Campus Catalyst Fund, Immigrants Rising
- Angelica Razo, Texas Director, Mi Familia Vota

Q&A Discussion: Andrea Robles, Ph.D., Research and Evaluation Manager, AmeriCorps

Latinx Civic Engagement: Building, Connecting, and Expanding

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Introduction Remarks

Amy Ramos, Ph.D.

Professor of Psychology, Grossmont College
Senior Research Consultant,
Harder+Company Community Research

Latinx Civic Engagement: Building, Connecting, and Expanding

Igniting the Volunteering and Participation of Youth, Adults, and Seniors



Navigating Facilitators & Barriers to Latinx Youth Civic Engagement: Exploring Youth-Driven Strategies



Dennise Moreno



Katherine Avila



Becca Saenz

Suzanne Pritzker, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor, University of Houston

Navigating Facilitators & Barriers to Latinx Youth Civic Engagement: Exploring Youth-Driven Strategies

Dec. 1, 2021

Project Background



Project Purpose:

To learn directly from Latinx teenagers how they think about and experience these questions:

1. What is civic engagement?
2. What facilitates civic engagement?
3. What serves as barriers to civic engagement?
4. What are practical strategies for encouraging Latinx youth civic engagement?

Led By:



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

GRADUATE COLLEGE of SOCIAL WORK

- Youth Experts, Houston & Denver

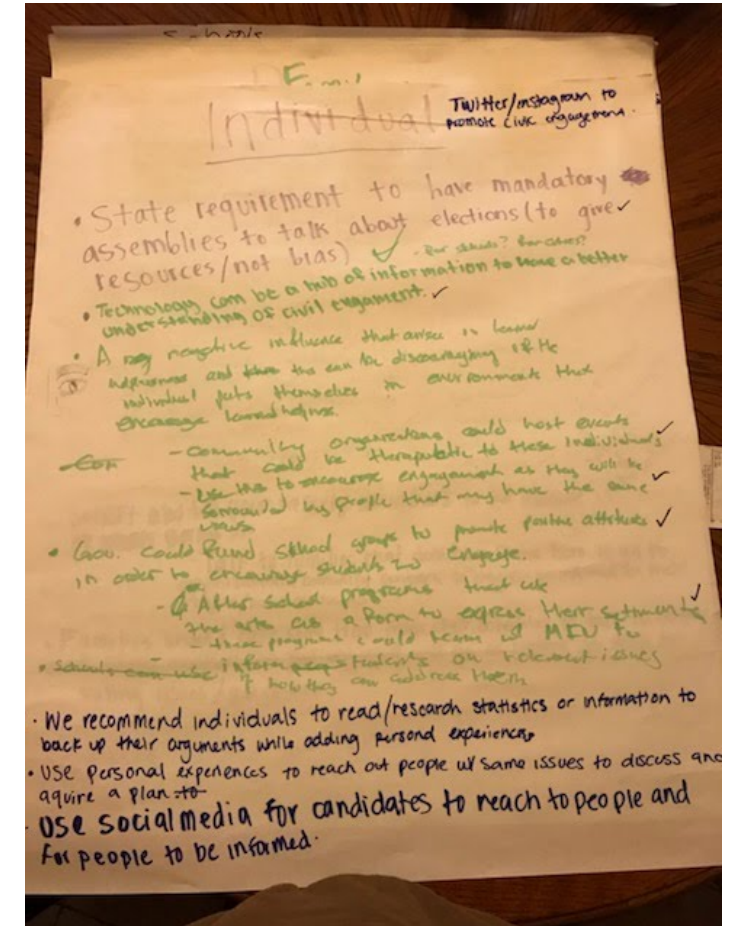
Community Partners:

- Mi Familia Vota – TX
- Mi Familia Vota – CO
- The Bridge Project

Project Approach



- Youth-focused “Community-Based Participatory Research” method:
 - Two 8-person Youth Expert teams – in Houston & Denver:
 - Trained in the research process
 - Designed, recruited for & conducted focus groups with peers
 - Participated in data coding and interpretation
 - Identified data-grounded implications
 - Presented findings
- 108 Latinx teens participated across 25 focus groups

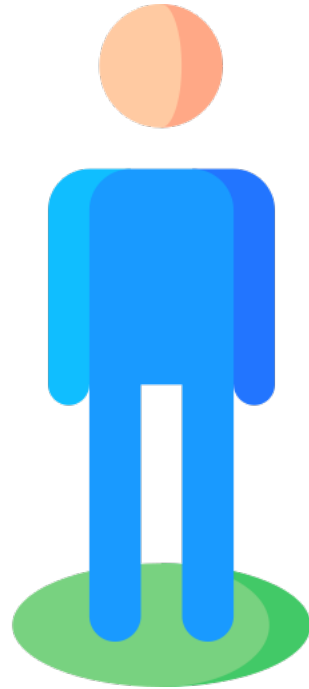


A range of contexts in Latinx youth's lives encourage **AND** discourage their engagement





Individual Context





Facilitators/Barriers

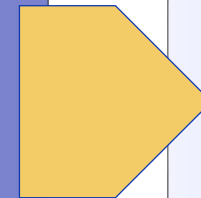
Lived experiences

Knowledge about issues, how to create change

Personal motivations

(Dis)interest

Hope/hopelessness, fears



Strategies



*“Change happens when people get angry or lose hope...and so, people are getting angry. So, as long as they know that there's a safe space where people just like them want the same thing, they'll come together for sure. They just need to know that a place, a safe place exists... **So long as they know that there's a safe place that they don't consistently have to go to, when they want to they can go to, it for sure will grow.**”*

Youth-Driven Strategies



Create **safe spaces for engagement**:

- Where youth *don't need to feel scared*; everyone is welcome
- *Teen-relatable*, focus on youth-identified problems
- Specifically *servicing youth of color*

Increase youth's civic knowledge:

- Use technology to *share personal stories*; how issues affect youth; how youth can create change
- Share *specific ways youth can get involved*, impact issues they care about
- Explain *youth's rights* as students, immigrants

Promote **positive youth-focused messaging**:

- Focused on youth's *civic duty, potential impact*
- *Amplify youth voices*, ability to make change
- Treat youth seriously, show their *voices will be heard*



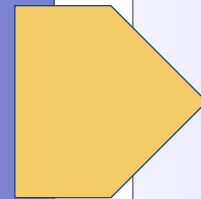
The Peer Context





Facilitators/Barriers

- Peer (dis)encouragement
- Peers sharing ideas, engaging collectively
- Peer energy around engagement
- Peer perceptions of engaged youth
- Wanting to see peers step up



Strategies



*“And, we started having more meetings...I would attend because I was interested. And since I've got interested and some of my friends, "What are you doing? Why?" So, I guess they came interested to what I was doing. I told them about it, and I guess that's why they got in it. That's how my other friends got to go to D.C.... So, I guess **if somebody's curious or wants to join, you have to sit down with them and actually talk about it, give out details.**”*

Youth-Driven Strategies: Peers



Communicate civic information directly to youth:

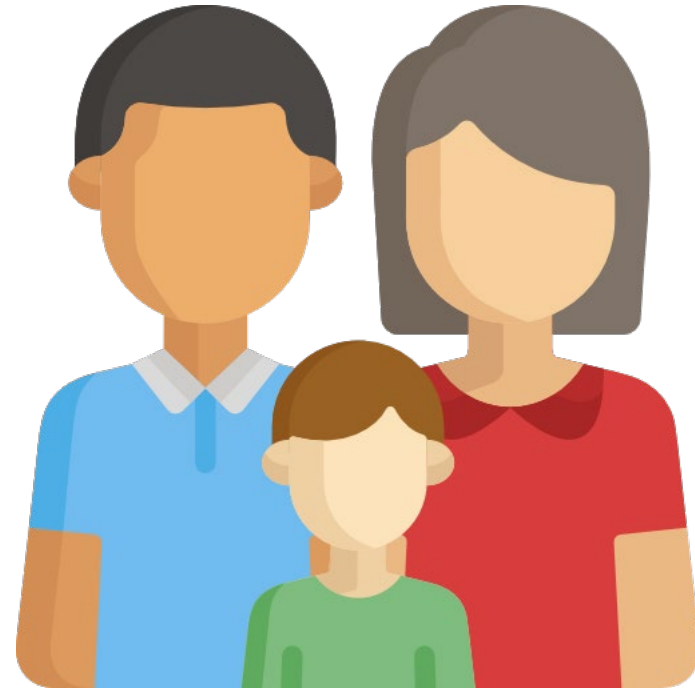
- In-person, *peer-to-peer opportunities*, where youth can share:
 - Civic information, power, and change strategies
 - Personal stories about civic passions and successes
- *Specific action steps* on how to get involved; especially without placing oneself or family at risk

Facilitate **shared peer experiences**:

- Support *opportunities for shared knowledge*, experiences; encouraging each others' participation
- Create *supportive spaces* so youth don't feel alone in taking action



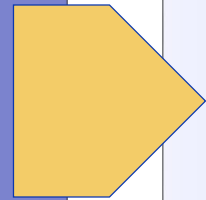
The Family Context





Facilitators/Barriers

Family members' experiences
Family role models
(Dis)encouragement around civic activities
Fears, safety concerns
Making things better for younger family members



Strategies



*“I think that getting the parents informed...for example, in my case, when it comes to politics my parents are very much, like, scared. I guess it’s a topic we don’t really discuss a lot because...just a lot of different opinions and discussions. And, I feel like **if other adults that knew more about this reached out to parents like mine...just inform parents and then parents would be more involved**, which therefore could go to the students as well or, like, their children, which would get just a lot of people more involved.”*

Youth-Driven Strategies: Families



Use **family-based approaches to engagement:**

- *Family-friendly communications* help parents understand youth civic opportunities
- Intentionally *bring parents on board:*
 - Show them positives of civic engagement
 - Encourage pride in children's civic involvement
 - Help them see their children have a voice, can make change
 - Inform about impact, safety

Use **clear, accessible communications:**

- Include *Spanish-language explanations*, so parents understand, provide permission
- *Address parental fears* directly
- Facilitate *parent-to-parent outreach* about civic activities



The School Context





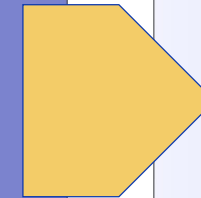
Facilitators/Barriers

Adult messages around youth voice,
action

(Un)engaged adult models

Information, opportunities for involvement

Pressure to put academics first



Strategies



“We should have like conversation here at school at least once a month...about something that is going on. “We want to know how you’re doing. We want to know, do you want to do something about it? Do you want to do something as a whole as a school? Protest? Do you want us to do community service?” ...If everyone at the school are, like, motivated and are doing something then they’ll be, like “Ok, let’s go. Might as well.” So like it’s a party, a quinceañera. If everyone at school is going, obviously most of the people are gonna be, like, “Oh, so like let’s go, my friends are there, all my friends are there.” So if it’s the same thing, like, for the school, like, if the principal and all the teachers...let’s all go to this protest....”

Youth-Driven Strategies: Schools



Foster **school cultures that promote safe engagement** spaces:

- Support students to *use their voices* for action
- Build student *awareness of their civic rights*
- Facilitate *classroom-based activities* to inform youth about current issues, opportunities to get involved
- Support *student-led programming*, without barriers to participation

Create **school-based civic opportunities**:

- *Assemblies* focused on current events, civic engagement; Latinx youth examples
- *Teachers, principals involved in civic actions* with youth
- Encourage *voter registration*
- *Step-by-step guidance*, connecting civic knowledge to real impacts
- Civic-oriented *school clubs*



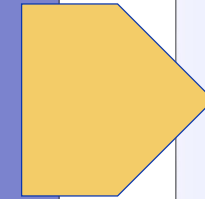
The Community/Neighborhood Context





Facilitators/Barriers

(Un)engaged adult models
Adult messages around youth voice
Community resources for involvement
Community-specific issues



Strategies



*To see that they have effort. That they are willing to try and make those changes to stay in that one spot and not try to change it all...them constantly working with us or like volunteers helping out or something you know, I don't know. **To see the consistency, to see that they actually mean it**, that they actually want to help us do something.*

Youth-Driven Strategies: Communities/Neighborhoods



Provide **community-based opportunities** for engagement:

- *Increase youth awareness* of community issues, ways to make community change
- *Intentionally foster youth involvement:*
 - Provide transportation
 - Encourage peer-to-peer word of mouth
 - Highlight personal benefits of engagement
 - Youth-friendly, non-intimidating communication

Adopt a **community focused approach:**

- Help community members *recruit, support each other* in community change
- Be consistent, *stay involved* through change efforts
- Community-grounded programs that *promote youth leadership*



Sociocultural Context





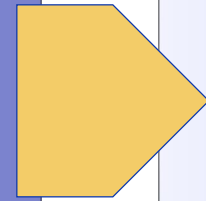
Facilitators/Barriers

Social environment (racial/ethnic dynamics, age, demographics)

Cultural norms, beliefs, values

Fear of going against the norm

Cultural and media influences



Strategies



We use a lot of social media and maybe we can use that as a reference to show all the situations that are going on. Like, maybe someone can do a YouTube video of immigration, to show how they really fight for their rights and that they're not just here to be lazy. And for mental health – they also had a TV show last year.... And I think we need more of that in this world, because we need to get the word out that it's not just immigration, depression. It can be anything else.

Youth-Driven Strategies: Sociocultural Context



Engage all youth in civic engagement:

- *Treat youth seriously*; don't seek to change youth's minds
- *Bring youth of all races together* for collective change efforts
- Foster participation among youth in *high school and middle school*
- Let youth know *immigration status does not hinder* ability to create change
- Survey *youth who are not involved* to understand why

Use media, social media, videos to share information:

- *Promote organizations that engage youth* in civic activities
- *Share ways* youth can get involved, how civic actions impact their lives
- *Build awareness* about youth-relevant current issues, ways others take action



Economic and Political Context





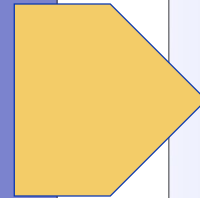
Facilitators/Barriers

Political:

- Polarization, presence (or not) of political discussion
- Perceptions of political leaders
- Policies related to immigration; youth involvement
- Political efficacy

Economic:

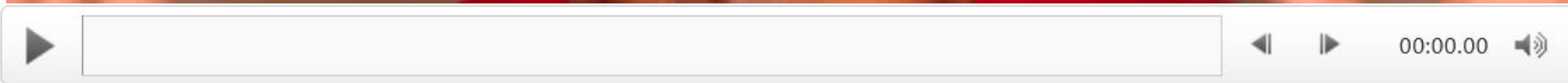
- Economic dynamics in society; poverty
- Work responsibilities
- Transportation access



Strategies



gente inteligente, estaba ya en el camino, pero cuando vi las



Youth-Driven Strategies: Political & Economic Context



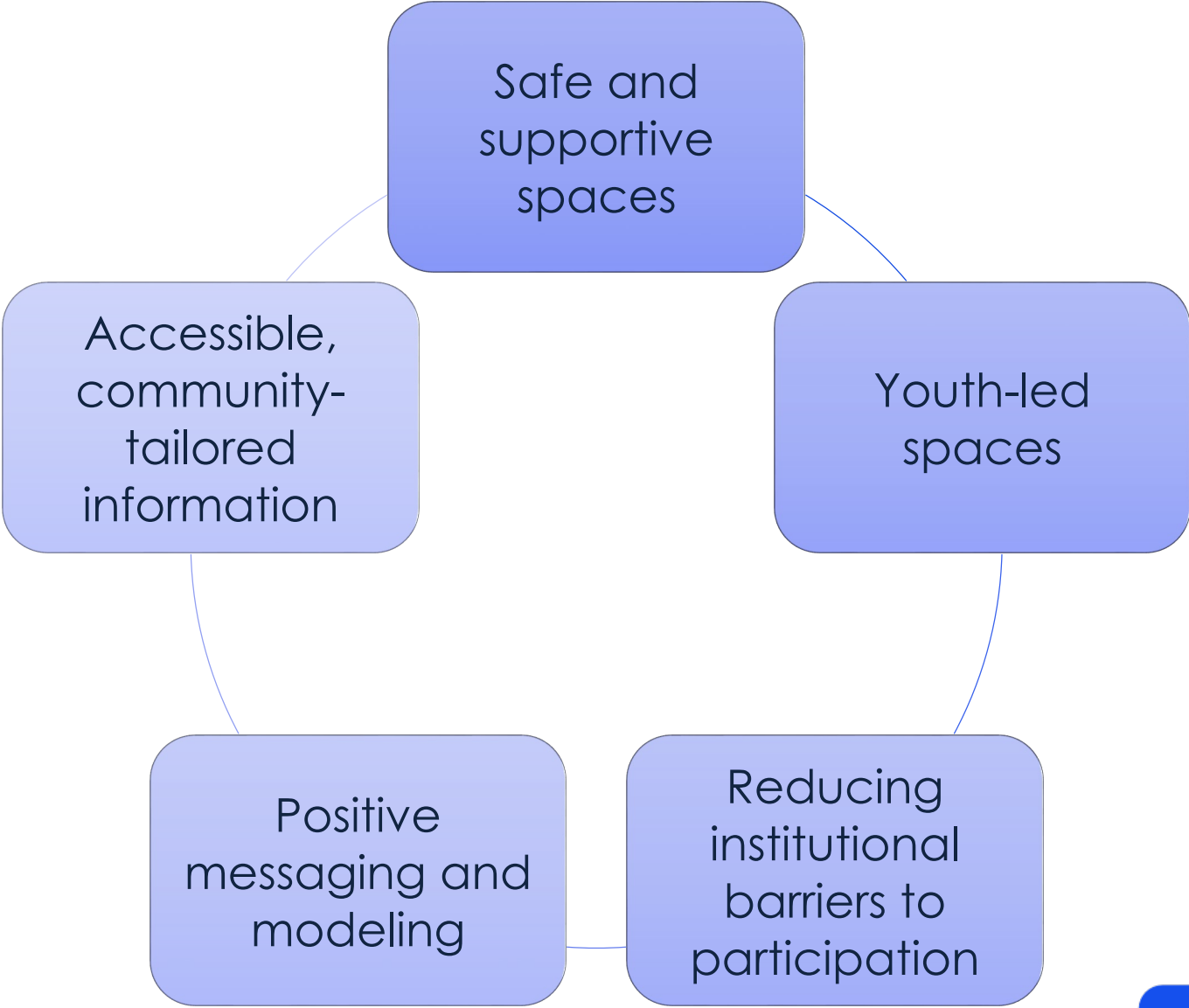
Build supportive political communities:

- Create *inclusive organizations*, bring people of all races together to make change

Reduce economic costs to engagement:

- Offer clubs with *no cost* to join or participate
- Provide *transportation* and *free food*
- Provide *financial incentives* for youth who participate in civic activities

Implications for Engaging Latinx Youth: Cross-Strategy Principles



Resources



1. Snapshot of AmeriCorps' research grantee activities: <https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/research-evaluation/grantee-profiles> (under 2017 Cohort - University of Denver & University of Houston)
2. Promoting Latinx Youth Civic Engagement: Issues for School Settings (infographic): https://www.dropbox.com/s/68rexpwvmkmnpd/Latinx%20Youth%20Schools%20Draft_Practitioner%20Focus.pdf?dl=0
3. Promoting Good Trouble: Latinx Youth-Driven Change Strategies for Civic Engagement and Activism (infographic): https://www.dropbox.com/s/f0ix5v4c9w0uv/Latinx%20Youth%20Driven%20Change%20Strategies%20Infographic_YouthPractitionerDraft.pdf?dl=0

Latinx Civic Engagement: Building, Connecting, and Expanding

Igniting the Volunteering and Participation of Youth, Adults, and Seniors



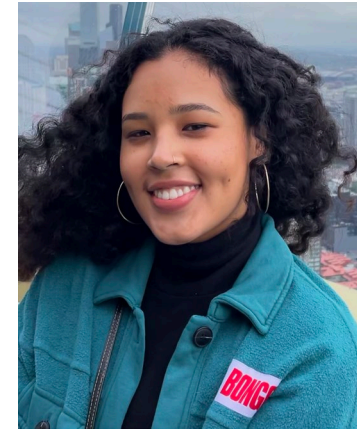
Cultivating Civic Engagement with Latinx Immigrant Adults, Families, and Elders



Marisol Clark-Ibáñez, Ph.D., Professor. Department of Sociology California State University San Marcos



Michelle Ramos-Pellicia, Ph.D.



Valentina Martinez-Rodriguez

Cultivating Latinx Civic Engagement: San Diego County

National Latino Research Center
California State University San Marcos

Building, Connecting, and Expanding:

Igniting the Volunteering and Participation of Youth, Adults, and Seniors

AmeriCorps' Research & Evidence Webinar

Office of Research & Evaluation

December 1, 2021

TEAM MEMBERS

- Founder, PI, and Director: Arcela Nuñez-Alvarez, Ph.D.
- Faculty and PI: Marisol Clark-Ibáñez, Ph.D.
- Faculty Researcher: Alicia Gonzales, Ph.D.
- Faculty Researcher: Michelle Ramos Pellicia, Ph.D.
- Researcher: Ana Ardón, M.A.
- Research: Noemi Jara, M.A.
- Evaluator: Amy L. Ramos, Ph.D.
- Coordinator: Lilian Serrano
- Coordinator: Flor Alvarez
- Project Assistant: Valentina Martinez-Rodriguez



San Diego County, California





Defining Civic Engagement

- Civic engagement can be an abstract concept.
- We offered a simple definition:
 - People or groups find ways to improve their community and social institutions.

Overview of Latinos & Civic Engagement

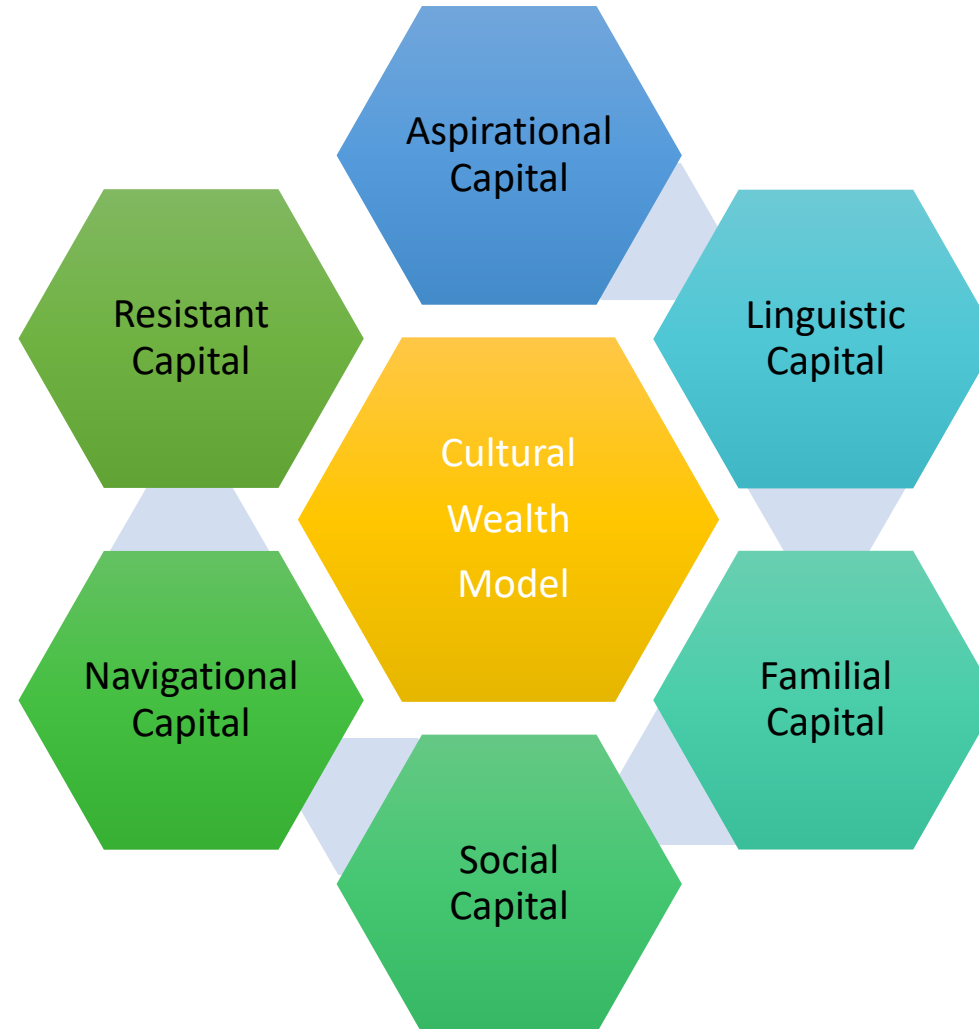
Civic engagement among Latinx lags White, Asian, and African American counterparts across every form of participation in California and nationally (Garcia Bedolla, 2012; Abrajano & Alvarez, 2010).

Nationally & State: Latinx are the most “civically alienated” group and the “least likely to be broadly engaged” (Sullivan & Godsay, 2014) and least likely to vote in CA (Baldassare et al., 2020).

Locally – Latinx slowly increasing civic engagement in San Diego county; younger voters leading the increase (Galdaméz et al., 2021).

Cultural Wealth Framework

Strength-based framework that highlights the importance of beliefs and practices originating from the family and culture. (Yosso, 2006)





Cultivando Liderazgo,
Cultivating Leadership
(2015-2018)

- Brings to life the principles of democracy and the role of civil society in shaping government and policies to create change.
- Funded by AmeriCorps' Office of Research and Evaluation.
- To examine traditional and non-traditional forms of civic engagement in Latinx communities.
- To understand the efficacy of the CL curriculum.
- To document the many ways in which the Latinas & Latinos engage in solving problems in their neighborhoods and in the region.

Cultivando Liderazgo Curriculum

Meets CA Department of Education
Standards on Civics

Connects students' lives to
government structures

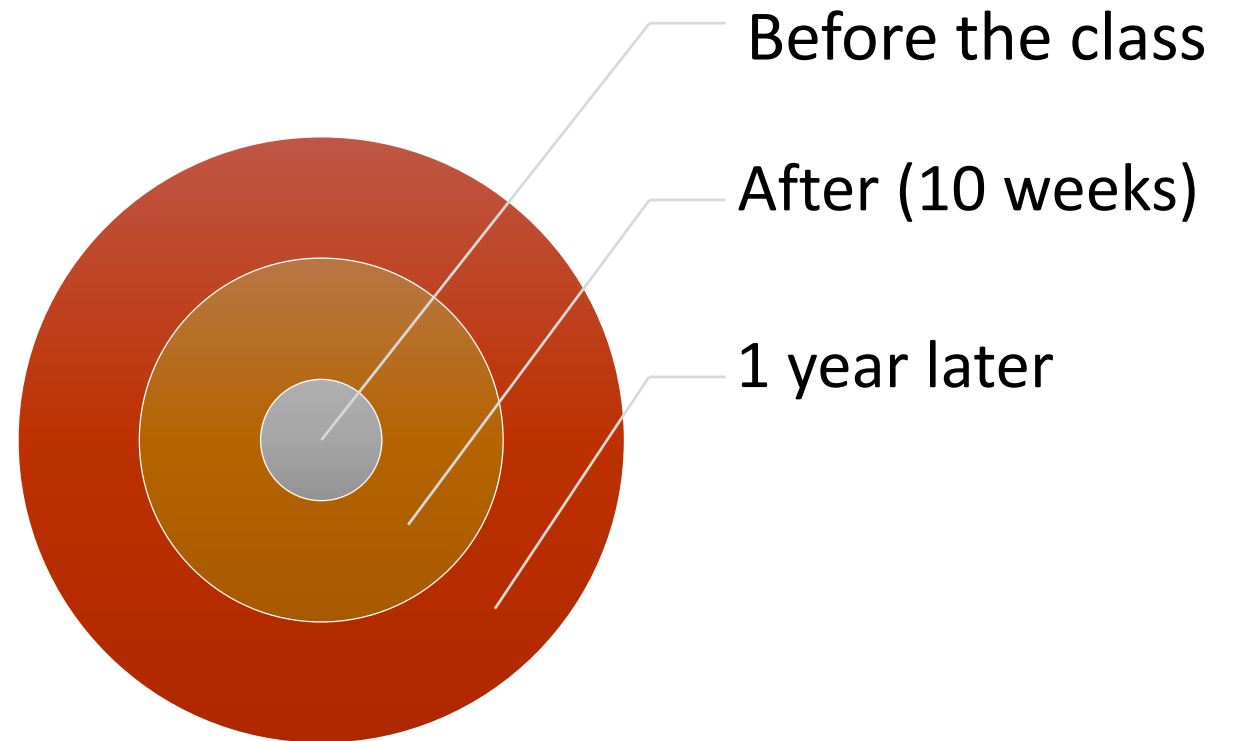
Enacts democratic processes to
enhance civic knowledge of students

Facilitate actual and direct
engagement

Based on democratic, civil, and
human rights principles

Measuring Civic Engagement

- 200-question **survey** conducted in one-on-one interview format
- Survey assesses civic engagement **attitudes, knowledge, and behavior**, and measures CL curriculum content



CL Data Collection

305 surveys
collected when
participants began
their participation

Surveys collected
from 2016 to 2018.

CL PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

ETHNICITY & GENDER

- 73% FEMALE
- 95% Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicana/o
- Central Americans from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

AGE

- Elders 47% (n=144) (50+ yrs)
- Millennials 28% (n=84) (18-29 yrs)
- Adults 16% (n=50) (30-49yrs)
- Youth 9% (n=27) (17 yrs or younger)

CULTIVANDO
LIDERAZGO
STUDENTS
ARE
CIVICALLY
ENGAGED

79.8% Registered to vote

64% voted during an election

92.7% planned to vote or voted in 2016
presidential elections in November

47% volunteered to inform neighbors about
services or resources in my community

CIVIC QUIZ RESULTS

- Significant improvement and knowledge gains for **all participants**.
- Overall quiz performance reveals a **10 percent gain** in civics knowledge: 76 at baseline to 85 percent after the completion of the class.
- Some differences:
 - Rural
 - Access to and use of Technology
 - Knowledge of English

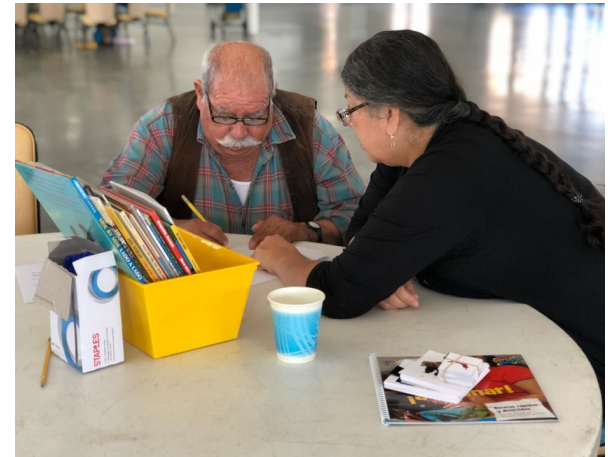


Latinx Immigrant Elders

2017-2021: Cultivando Sabiduría / Cultivating Wisdom

Cultivando Sabiduría

- Honors elders' life experiences.
- Cultivates learning, wellness, community leadership, and civic engagement.
- 300 students (2017-2020).



THE STUDENTS

- Female (80.8%)
- Male (19.2%)
- 67% are 55-65 years old
- 80% report no or little help with activities of daily needs





Life-long learners

- Spanish is spoken most often (97.3%)
 - 12.3% speak English fluently
- 73% employed
- 80.8% income of less than \$2,500/month
- 57.5% have elementary level education
- 98.6% Immigrants
 - 41% citizens

Letras y Palabras - *Somos Multilingües (We are Multilingual)*

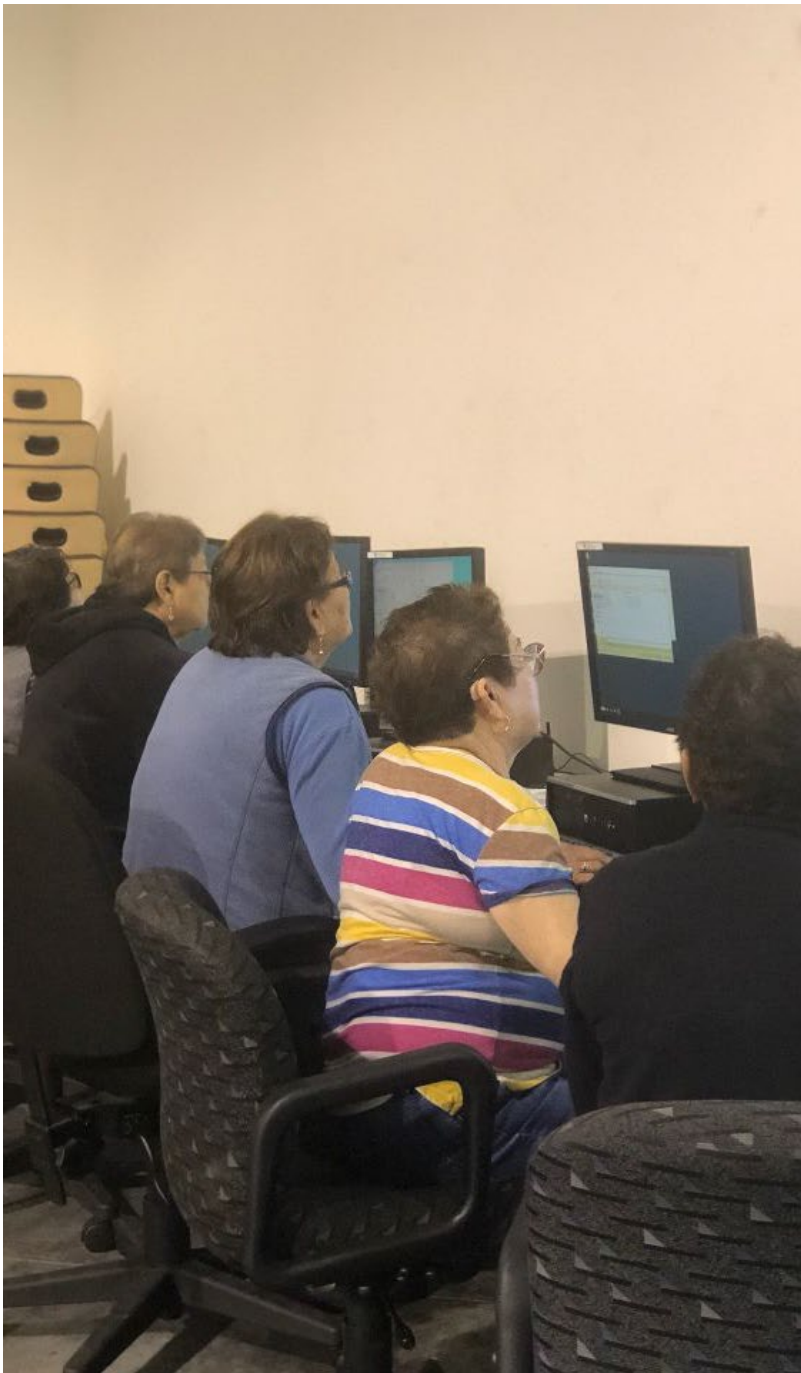
Letras y Palabras - *Spanish Literacy Learning with Elders*

Tecnología – Cell Phone and Tablets

Tecnología – Computers and laptops

Manualidades (jewelry making, knitting, quilting groups)

Civic Engagement, Government & Voting



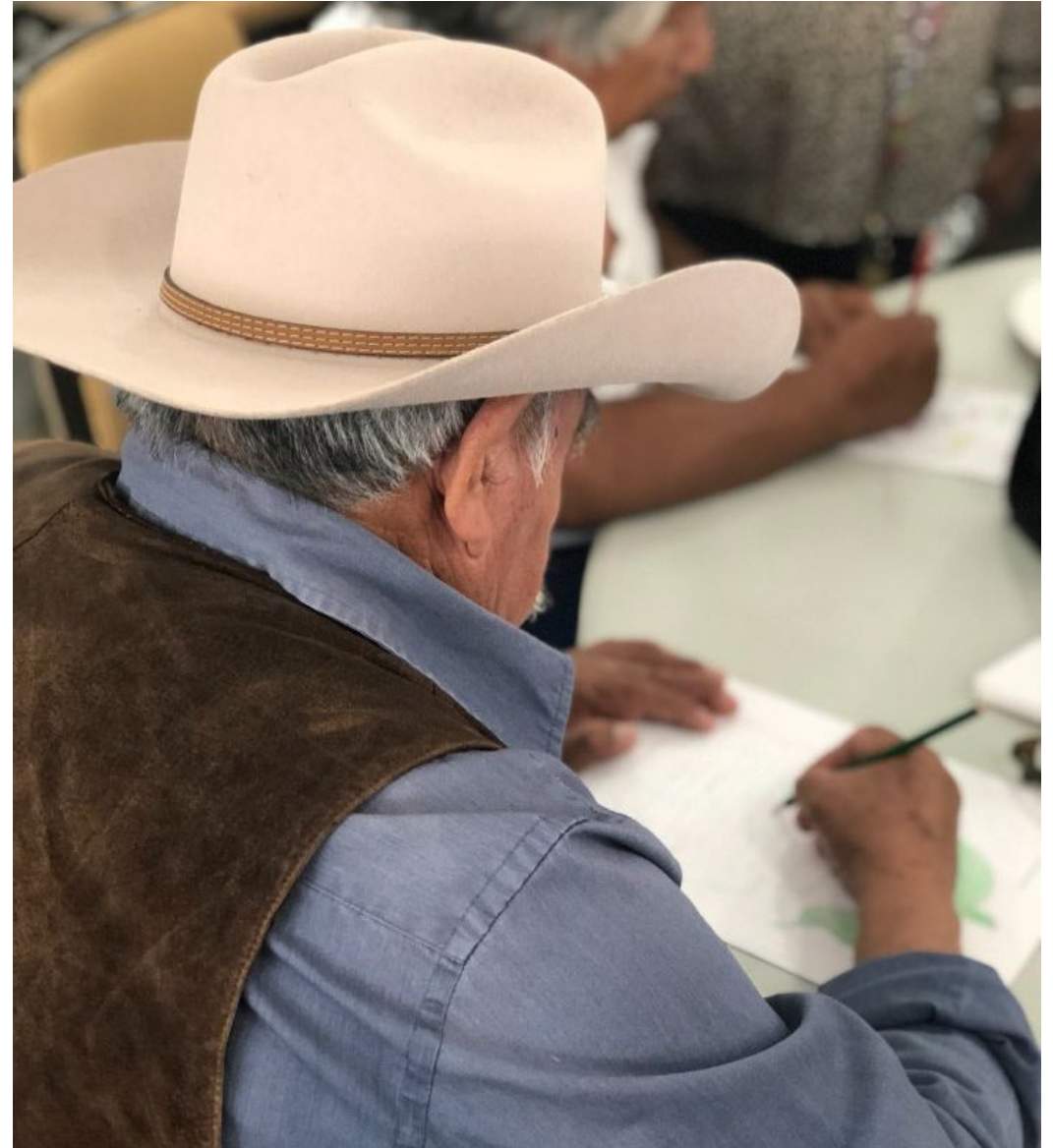
“Going to school”

Students came to Cultivando Sabiduría with low levels of formal education.

Elders reported working in Mexico as children and adolescents, so were unable to attend school.

Now, they are finally able to become students.

Civic participation is dependent on literacy (Nash, 2010).





Doña Alicia

- *“Estoy aprendiendo a leer y a escribir otra vez. Eso me hace sentir bien como nunca fui a la escuela. Me siento contenta ahí, seguir estudiando. No importa mi edad, porque yo quiero salir adelante. Para darle un ejemplo también a los hijos y a los nietos, que uno no se rinde.”*
- “I am learning to read and write all over again. I feel like I never even went to school. I feel happy there to continue my studies. It does not matter my age, because I want to get ahead in life. **I want to be a good example for my children and grandchildren, that they should never give up.**”

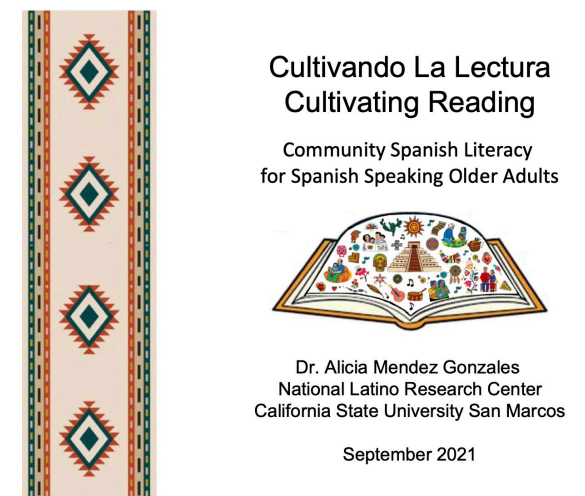
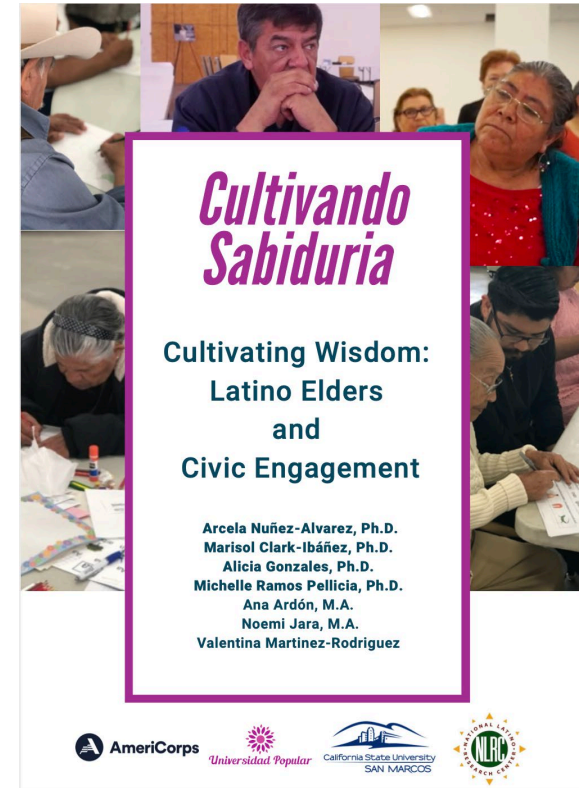


Doña Carmen

- *“Me siento muy muy orgullosa y para que sepan mis hijas que no tuve escuela pero ahora de mis 79 años lo logro lo que me propongo. Me encanta ser promotora de EMASS porque aprendo y ayudo a mi comunidad.”*
- *“I am very proud and for my daughters to know that I did not have any schooling but **at 79 years old I am achieving my goals that I set out for myself.** I love being a promotora for EMASS because **I am learning and I am helping my community.**”*

More on Sabiduría

- Cultivando Sabiduría - Program Overview and Application Guide
- Cultivando La Lectura - Community Spanish Literacy Workbook



Resources

- **Free resources**
 - Guidebook and Overview of Cultivando Sabiduría
 - Community Literacy Workbook in Spanish by Dr. Gonzales
 - Videos of our projects
 - Visit: <https://www.csusm.edu/nlrc/publications.html>
- Publication about Cultivando Liderazgo:
<https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/muj/article/view/21758>
- Publication about Cultivando Sabiduría under review

¡Let's Connect!

- National Latino Research Center
- Dr. Konane Martinez
- kmartine@csusm.edu



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Reflections

Victor García, Ed.D.

Director, California Campus Catalyst Fund
Immigrants Rising

Angelica Razo

Texas State Director
Mi Familia Vota



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Questions and Discussion

Andrea Robles, Ph.D.

Manager, Office of Research and Evaluation
AmeriCorps

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For more information

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Thank You!

- Recording will be available at AmeriCorps Impact Webinars

For more information on AmeriCorps Research and Evaluation: evaluation@cns.gov