



**This Project Questionnaire is the report from your project to the Kellogg Foundation. It is a permanent record of what you have achieved and what you have learned in the process. Use this document to submit your report.**

**Grantee:** Regents of the University of New Mexico

**Project Number:** P3021510

**Fiscal Period:** June 1, 2012 — December 31, 2013

**Project Purpose:** increase development of youth-directed health programs and policies by training youth to interpret and use health-related data to conduct community dialogues and develop action plans to address health concerns

**Grant Amount:** \$140,000

**Name of Person Completing This Report:** Linda J. Peñaloza, Ph.D.

**Title:** Associate Research Professor

**Date:** Thursday, March 27, 2014

**List the primary goal(s) of the project.**

---

1. To collaboratively adapt, implement, and evaluate a positive youth development project to put public health data into the hands of youth, and support them in recommending programs and policies to support youth health.
2. To gain insight into context surrounding youth health risking behaviors and resiliency factors measured in the New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (NM-YRRS), by including youth voice in data interpretation
3. To empower youth as active stakeholders, and to increase student-level outcomes of (1) health literacy, (2) self-efficacy, and (3) sense of community engagement/civic attitudes.

**What were the problems, issues, and opportunities addressed?**

---

As the team that administers the NM-YRRS and reports its results, we sought a way to effectively communicate YRRS results to youth, from whom the data are collected. Sharing research results with the population from whom the data were collected is ethically appropriate, but this had never before been done in New Mexico.

In New Mexico, because we survey so many students and can produce data at a local level, we had an opportunity to provide local-level data directly to youth. We believed engaging youth directly in the interpretation and communication of the data would:

1. Increase the usefulness and applicability of data at the school/community level
2. Increase adult stakeholder understanding of the contexts surrounding youth health and health behaviors
3. Enhance adults' perception of youth as appropriate and desirable partners in understanding public health data, and in shaping programs and policies that affect youth
4. Improve youth participants' health literacy, their self-efficacy, and their sense of community engagement

*Problems and issues*, as well as strengths and assets, were identified by youth participants in their own interpretation of the NM-YRRS data, and in their exploration of root causes and potential solutions to the problems they identified.

### **What were the principal actions and activities?**

---

***IRB Submission, Approvals:*** Research protocols, and consent forms were submitted to both the University of New Mexico and Albuquerque Public School institutional review boards. All materials were approved prior to any data collection.

***Project Advisory Committee:*** We engaged a community advisory committee, initially comprised of adult representatives from government and nonprofit organizations that use NM-YRRS data, to help adapt the project for use in New Mexico. Students joined the committee later in the project. The advisory committee made recommendations for changes to the intervention prior to and throughout the project's pilot implementation. As a result, we added new components to the existing project to increase its cultural responsiveness, and made modifications to the existing project materials.

***Recruitment and Training:*** Two schools were recruited for participation in RAPS. From these schools, 11 youth leaders and 25 additional students participated in the project. Youth leaders were trained to conduct RAPS in January, 2013. Dr. Helen Beattie, who developed the model project in Vermont, provided this training to students.

***Student-Facilitated Data Analysis Retreats:*** RGHS held its data analysis retreat with 22 students on March 1, 2013. NACA's retreat took place on March 8, 2013 with 14 students. At their data analysis retreats, students identified strengths in their school and community and conducted a group analysis of a specific data-set from the 2011 NM-YRRS. Students voted on the top strengths and their top concerns from the data, discussed root causes and potential solutions for concerns they identified.

***Photovoice Project:*** In total, 24 students (14 from NACA and 10 from RGHS) were trained to participate in the Photovoice project. Each school received 12 digital cameras to check out to participants. A total of 47 photographs were uploaded to the project website, and 19 of these were chosen to be part of a year-end photography exhibition at the UNM Health Sciences Center.

***Student-Facilitated Community Dialog Events and Action Planning:*** 14 people attended RGHS's community dialog event on May 13, 2013, and 26 people attended NACA's on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, six students and 20 adults. At the dialog nights, student leaders shared the results from their data analysis retreats, led adult attendees in a discussion of community strengths and areas of concern identified in their analysis, and advocated for programs and policies to improve NM-YRRS statistics for their school and community. At RGHS, adults and students developed three preliminary action plans to address (1) sadness/hopelessness among girls, (2) teen dating violence, and (3) lack of communication between students and teachers at RGHS. At NACA's dialog event, students and adults developed four preliminary action plans to address (1) underage drinking, (2) suicide ideation and attempts, (3) vegetable consumption, and (3) prescription drug use.

## **What were the project results?**

---

***Goal 1 Results: Collaborative development and implementation of a PYD project to put public health data into the hands of youth*** – Despite some delays in starting the project, we are happy to report that all project activities were implemented, with a high level of fidelity to the original project design. So far students at RGHS have followed up on one of their action plans and executed the first two of three steps, accomplishing the primary objective: to educate staff by presenting the RAPS project to them. Furthermore, the RGHS leaders have become affiliated with the local Girl Scouts of America organization. This burgeoning community relationship has not yet resulted in specific policy outcomes, however it has raised awareness among influential members of the community with a result being that a student and mother team from Santa Fe have now been trained in the RAPS project methods, and may expand the program to their community. NACA students are currently working with the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiological Center (AASTEC) to conduct another YRRS analysis of statewide Native American student data. They plan a road trip to present the RAPS project to tribes.

***Goal 2 Results: To gain insight into context of YRRS data by engaging youth voice in its interpretation*** – There were two processes in the RAPS project that provided the greatest opportunities for youth voice to inform us on the context of YRRS data; the Data Analysis Retreat where root causes were discussed, and the Photovoice project where students were able to publicly display their photography work together with statements about how the photos demonstrated what they had gleaned from the RAPS project. During the Data Analysis Retreat students shared explanations for root causes that were not necessarily ones that adults would have known about or considered important. Examples include “parents don’t care” and “too cool for School” in response to the alcohol use concern; “Some teachers just don’t care” and “Students don’t trust teachers or other adults” in response to the concern about youth not feeling like they have an adult at school who listens to them.

The Photovoice exhibit demonstrated youth voice in striking, sometimes touching ways. A student at NACA took a well composed photograph of his friend smiling toward the sky. When asked about it later he indicated that Native youth have a lot of strengths that people should know about. He recalled the Data Analysis Retreat and how they spent a lot of time talking about strengths of his school and community as well as individual strengths. “This,” he said, “is a picture of a strong, young Native American.”

At RGHS a student captured a “selfie” entitled simply “friends”. She is pictured with another female student leaning over her shoulder as they both smile for the camera. About this photo she said, “40% of girls at RGHS reported that they felt persistent sadness or hopelessness for more than 2 weeks during the last year. Of those students who reported feeling sad, 64% of them said it was “not at all true” that they have a friend about their own age who really cares about them. Friendship is a powerful protective factor.” In both of these examples we saw elegant expressions of youth worldview and how they connected their lived experience with the data. These and other like them are giving adults in the project a more nuanced and embodied understanding of YRRS data.

**Goal 3 Results: Student-level outcomes** – Student outcomes were measured qualitatively and quantitatively. For our quantitative assessment, we used items from instruments in *Measures of Service Learning* (Bringle, Phillips, and Hudson, eds., 2003) to create a survey that would assess student’s self-efficacy, sense of community engagement and civic attitudes, and health literacy. Items used a 5 point Likert scale. We validated the instrument with students at Rio Grande High School, and we administered this survey before and after the data analysis retreat to 35 participants. We found significant, positive change in all categories.

Table 1: Summary of Student-Level Indicators, Pre-Post

	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention		Difference (Pre-Post)	
	n	Mean (SD)	n	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p-value*
Summed Score Health Literacy	35	21.7 (2.8)	35	23.1 (2.5)	+1.4 (2.2)	0.0008
Summed Score Community Service	35	34.4 (4.2)	35	37.0 (3.4)	+2.6 (3.5)	0.0001
Summed Score Self Efficacy	35	38.8 (4.7)	35	42.0 (5.7)	+3.2 (4.6)	0.0003
Summed Score Civic Attitudes	35	21.3 (3.0)	35	23.2 (2.6)	+1.9 (2.8)	0.0003

\*P-value obtained from a paired t-test for the summed score post-intervention minus the summed score pre-intervention.

**Were any lessons learned? What would you have done differently?**

---

1. **Recruitment of schools became an unanticipated challenge.** Two schools originally identified and recruited by the research team later declined participation, citing time constraints. Based on the RAPS community advisory committee’s recommendations, we recruited NACA and Rio Grande High School. This time, we used Memoranda of Agreement (MOA), which outlined the commitments of the research team and the schools (e.g., schools allowing out-of-class time for student participation, the research team providing stipends to each school to offset project costs) as well as the potential benefits of participation (e.g., anticipated improvement in student self-efficacy, improved connections between the school and community). While not legally binding, the MOAs served as a tool to establish trust and manage expectations.
2. **Student leaders should be volunteers, not assigned.** At NACA, student leaders volunteered to participate in RAPS and to lead the project at their school. These

students had existing relationships and an established rapport, and working together came easily for them. At RGHS, engaging student leaders was more challenging because students did not know each other prior to RAPS, and because there was not a regular class or meeting time when all of them would be together. By the end of the pilot year at RGHS, we had 5 student leaders – two from the original group and 3 who self-selected to participate in a leadership role. Based on our experience, we determined that it is preferable to have students volunteer to be the student leaders, not to have them selected by an adult, especially if they don't know each other. If students do not know each other at the start of a project like RAPS, it would be important for adult facilitators to devote an ample amount of time to bonding students, engaging in ice-breakers and team-building activities.

3. ***Adult support within participating schools is important.*** At RGHS, having an adult at the school with strong buy-in and who had the capacity to work with students to administer RAPS was very helpful in sustaining the project. At NACA, the RAPS project was challenged by the limited amount of time staff had available to be involved with the project activities. We determined that having a dedicated adult at the school – who can support students in their activities and help them navigate bureaucratic requirements, scheduling issues, etc. – is very helpful in ensuring ease of project implementation.
4. ***Students required more support in making sense of data than we had originally anticipated.*** Fortunately, adults with experience using and applying NM-YRRS data were present at student-led data analysis retreats to help groups of students with this task. We recommend that adults who understand charts, tables, and graphs be on hand to assist students at the data analysis retreat.
5. ***The more chances young people have to report and share their experiences and their data, the more comfortable and confident they become.*** By the end of our project, the youth participants were much more comfortable talking in front of adults than they had been. In the future we would like to involve the students more in the development of presentation materials.
6. ***Scheduling challenges are common for high school students.*** Most of the students involved in RAPS were also involved in other extracurricular activities. Scheduling meetings and events was often challenging. It is important to plan events far in advance whenever possible when working with youth, and to remind them frequently about the event.

### **What contextual factors were related to achieving of goals—what facilitated or inhibited success?**

---

***IRB Delays:*** All project materials for RAPS were submitted to the UNM IRB in July 2012, and approved in September that year. Unfortunately, the application was denied by APS RDA in November 2012. We re-submitted the applications in December 2012. Changes required by RDA meant that we had to resubmit our consent forms to the UNM IRB on February 1, 2013 for final approval. Because waiting for the UNM IRB to review the changes took 2 months, we created a letter for parents that addressed all APS RDA's concerns and attached the letter to the UNM IRB-approved consent forms for distribution to students. Because of delays in IRB processes, we were unable to collect any data (e.g., assessment of students' self-efficacy, sense of community engagement, and health literacy) until March, 2013. We appreciated the flexibility and dedication of our school partners

throughout the unanticipated delays in the IRB approval process. Ultimately, IRB delays did not affect our ability to deliver all project components.

***Initial school principal, board concerns:*** Both the principal at Rio Grande High School and a member of the governing council at NACA expressed concerns about potentially re-traumatizing the students by reinforcing negative, problem-focused statistics. Both were encouraged by RAPS's PYD approach. While initially skeptical of the project, both became enthusiastic supporters of RAPS. The support of these key stakeholders has increased the likelihood that the project will continue and be sustainable in both schools. The Governing council member who once scrutinized the project is now offering opportunities to her University of New Mexico Native American Studies students to work with NACA students on the RAPS project this coming year.

**Describe critical events in the course of the project—key activities/people who influenced the outcome of the project.**

---

Various activities and individuals influenced the outcome of the project. The IRB process, although critically important, produced unexpected delays and we can only speculate how the project might have turned out differently if we had been able to begin the work sooner.

Adults at both schools made important contributions to the course of the project. The school counselor at RGHS worked tirelessly to maintain student involvement, leveraging her relationships with the student population to keep them coming back for weekly meetings. She sold the project to both her principal and the students, telling them this was an opportunity they had to make a positive impact on the reputation of their school. She then proceeded to help us to navigate the APS bureaucracy, avoiding pitfalls and reducing anxiety. The principal at RGHS, while initially cautious about the project and about her students missing class time, became one of the project's biggest supporters. She facilitated the student presentation to school faculty and staff, and encouraged the faculty members to invite RAPS student leaders to present what they did in individual classrooms, which they have been doing since fall 2013.

At the Native American Community Academy, the high school math teacher, Clem Wings, became a very important figure for RAPS. She heard about the project from her students, and has decided to "throw out" her statistics curriculum and use RAPS as a way to teach statistics in her class. She also connected student leaders with another grant-funded project at NACA in partnership with First Nations Community Health Source. The project involves school officials evaluating YRRS data and then doing data-driven program evaluation. Because of Ms. Wings, RAPS will now be incorporated to add student voice to the project.

Presentations to adults in the community – both the community dialog events and presentations to others, like the Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails staff and board of directors, the NACA governing council, and the New Mexico Public Health Association – linked students to community and government organizations (e.g., Girl Scouts, Young Women United, New Mexico Department of Health Tobacco Use Prevention and Control, and Albuquerque Public Schools) and to adults who volunteered to help them make their action plans a reality. For example, after the RGHS students' presentation to the Girl Scouts,

the executive director offered to help in “whatever way we can,” and gave examples of marketing, dissemination, and funding for travel as ways the organization could assist the students.

The most influential and important group of people is the students at both schools. Obviously, without them this project would have been impossible. But more to the point, these particular students brought unique personalities and perspectives that deeply enriched our experiences and undoubtedly took the project in unexpected directions. One of our favorite statements about students who were involved as leaders in RAPS is from Clem Wings, who said, “What was cool for as teachers, and for me in particular with these kids is that they aren’t kids that we would have pegged as kids that would have volunteered for a project.”

### **Respond to the specific evaluation questions for your project as outlined below:**

#### Evaluation Questions

1. Describe the ways in which this project was relevant to, and resonant with, the racial, ethnic and cultural composition of your target families and communities.

The RAPS project was born out of a Positive Youth Development project developed in Vermont. RAPS was a deliberate attempt to adapt the Vermont project to the diverse cultural, racial and ethnic landscape of New Mexico. One of the adaptations we planned from the beginning was the use of a tool called the Circle of Courage [fill in more about the circle of courage here]. The Circle of Courage activity opened up a space where participants could express their unique communities' attributes. Through this process, students identified as an important value of their community to, "Know your culture – Roots". Later, during the community dialogue event, the students were asked to come up with solutions to the concern, "18.4% of Native students in Albuquerque made a plan to commit suicide in the past year". One of six steps they suggested was to, "Participate in ceremonies. Engage in your culture".

At the other high school the adult supervisor was interviewed toward the end of the project. She was asked, what made this project a good fit or not a good fit for this school and this community. She responded that her community, which is largely Hispanic with a high number of recent immigrants from Mexico, was a good place to do RAPS because it is a cohesive community. She believed that students there are not as rebellious as at more white schools. They are more respectful, and they are hard workers. They have been taught to respect authority. This difference between her school and other schools also presented a challenge. Youth from this community are much more likely to defer to adult authority due to cultural norms. It was difficult, but not impossible for them to breach the delicate topic of how they can change the statistic that, "Only 19.9% of RGHS students said it is "very true" that an adult at school listens to them". By allowing the school staff and student leaders to have meaningful decision making roles in how the project was conducted, the youth were able to put this concern in their own words and present their concern to the staff in a non-threatening way that satisfied their need to respect authority. Furthermore, the Principal at RGHS seemed to feel that the community centered characteristic of the project was key, saying, “If the data hadn’t been about the community the kids wouldn’t

have stayed in it.”

2. In what ways did this project increase students’ self-efficacy, improve their ability to critically assess health information, and provide them with advocacy and engagement skills to make lasting change in their school and community?

The self efficacy of students was measured through pre and post tests reported above. Additionally a number of mentions are made in the qualitative data collected from the project of student self-efficacy, critical analysis of health information and skills for advocacy and engagement.

Participants at the data analysis retreats viewed the YRRS data and discussed potential root causes. Through the interaction with adult and youth trainers, the students developed and contributed their own insights as to what caused a given statistic. In one case the students, of their own accord, looked at a statistic on reported suicide attempts for Native Americans as the glass half full rather than half empty. The frequency was high in comparison to other ethnic groups, but the students noticed that the number had been trending down significantly. They then decided to highlight this trending number as a major strength rather than a concern. This is something that the adults in the training were not expecting and it clearly shows what we gain through inviting a youth perspective and their ability to think critically about health data.

In another case students at another school demonstrated their increased self-efficacy and their ability to advocate on their own behalf. Through the action planning process they identified as a concern the fact that "Only 19.9% of RGHS students said it is "very true" that an adult at school listens to them." An action step for this concern was to make a presentation about this and present it to the staff of the highschool. Afterwards, when the adult supervisor for the students at that school was asked "Can you recall any examples where you feel the youth participants in the RAPS project experienced empowerment toward advocacy?" she responded in the following way:

*The staff presentation was a good example of that. The girls felt confident enough to answer the teachers questions. Teachers came up to me and said "wow, Camila did a really good job." This has been good for them. If this project hadn't been here for them they probably wouldn't have been involved in anything."So now they are thinking of running and being in the student senate... the younger ones. These students are very quiet and respectful in meetings and then when they get out there, BAM!*

**Were funds expended according to the approved budget and charitable purpose of the grant?    Yes    No**

**If no, please provide explanation.**



**If there are unexpended funds, please indicate amount \$ 20.00 and return with this report.**

---

Project Director Signature

*If submitting via upload to online web form, signature is not required.*

*If online submission is not possible, either sign, scan and send via email or sign and fax.*