



Welcome to SYNC Safety Learning Lab 2

April 30, 2024



Intro of Advancing Policy & Systems Change for Community Safety and & Partnering

with the Center for Law and Social Policy





About the Speaker

Clarence Okoh is a civil rights attorney and racial justice advocate whose work addresses the impact of mass criminalization, algorithmic racism, and economic divestment in Black communities, with a particular focus on Black youth and young adults. Clarence is Senior Policy Counsel at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), where he leads the organization's cross-team policy agenda to advance abolitionist approaches to community safety by challenging systems that surveil and punish economically marginalized Black, brown and Indigenous youth and their communities. He is also an inaugural member of the Just Tech Fellows at the Social Science Research Council. In this capacity Clarence leads an interdisciplinary advocacy project that blends legal research and analysis, public policy advocacy, and public education strategies to challenge the use of algorithmic technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), that criminalize Black and brown youth and systematically violate their civil and human rights.



Clarence Okoh
Senior Policy Counsel

Overview

- Understanding the National Context on Community Violence & Youth
- Federal Policy Context
- State and Local Policy Context
- Local Strategies



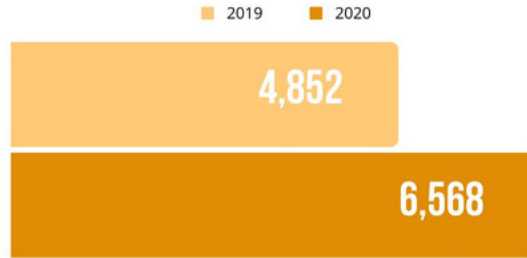
National Context



National Trends on Community Violence

DEATHS CAUSED BY HOMICIDE (14-24, ALL RACES)

The total number of reported **homicides** against youth and young adults grew by **26.1%** between 2019 and 2020.

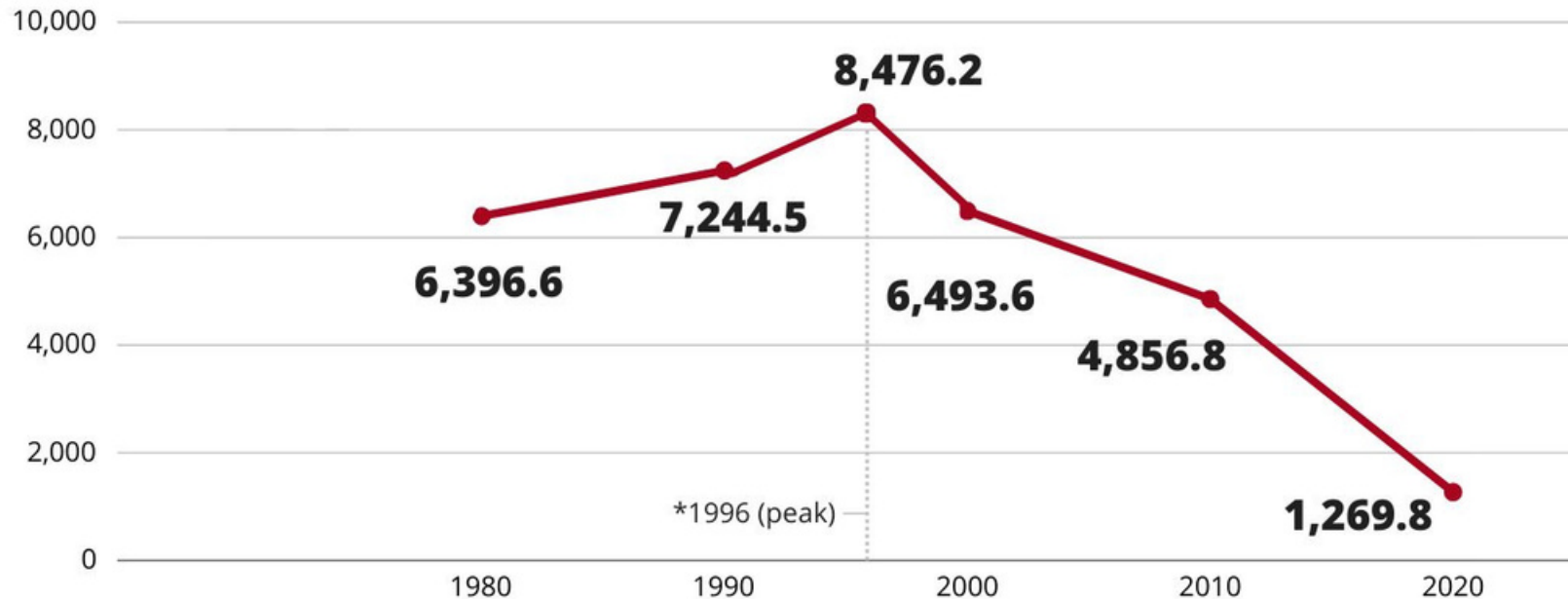


Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Leading Cause of Death & Injury, 2020.

- Community violence remains a significant barrier to public safety which disproportionately harms Black, brown and Indigenous youth living in economically marginalized communities.
- Despite media narratives, overall youth crime is down across the United States. However, youth victimization rates have increased in dramatic fashion.
- Police violence also remains an impediment to community safety. Police killed the highest number of people on record in 2023.

The rate of juvenile arrests has reached its lowest level in over 40 years.

JUVENILE ARREST RATES (PER 100,000)



Source: United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Statistical Briefing Book.

IN 2021

BLACK YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS REPRESENT

14.0%

OF ALL YOUNG
PEOPLE AGES 14-24
IN THE U.S.,

BUT MADE UP

47.9%

OF GUN-RELATED
DEATHS AMONG
THEIR PEERS.

WHILE WHITE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS REPRESENT

52.0%

OF ALL YOUNG
PEOPLE AGES 14-24
IN THE U.S.,

BUT MADE UP

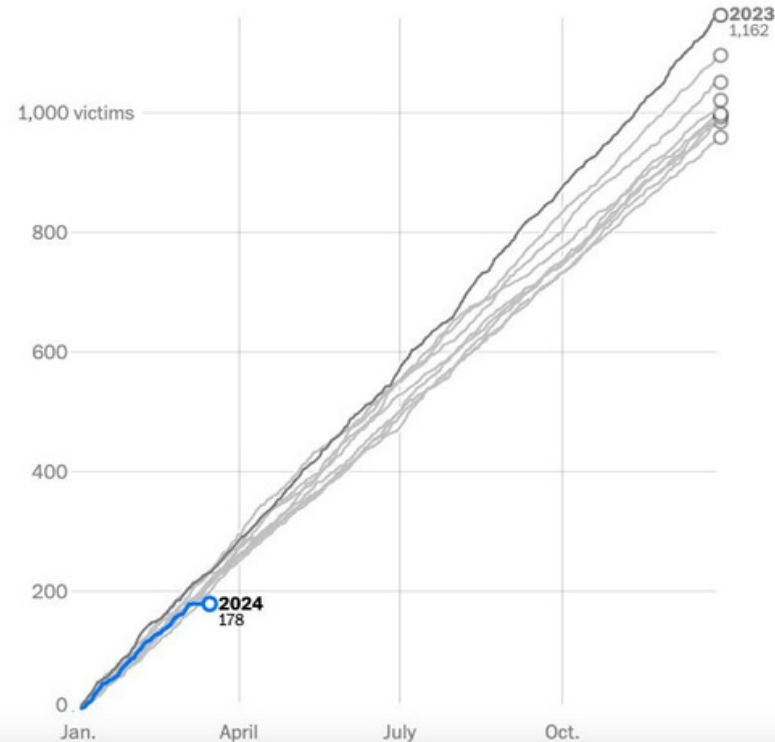
29.5%

OF GUN-RELATED
DEATHS AMONG
THEIR PEERS.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021.

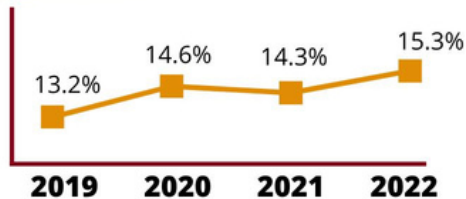
How 2024 compares with previous calendar years

The number of fatal police shootings has risen slightly in recent years. Police killed the highest number of people on record in 2023.



National Trends on Youth Wellness & Economic Security

The young adult poverty rate, as measured by the official poverty measure (OPM), **increased to 15.3%** in 2022 - the highest level since 2017. That's more than half-a-million more young people living in poverty in 2022 than in 2021.



Source: Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic (March) Supplement, 2023.

- Today, the federal government has suspended, limited or terminated many highly effective COVID-era safety net programs including the child benefit program, expanded unemployment insurance, expanded Medicaid coverage, student loan forgiveness, rental assistance and much more.

- The end of these antipoverty programs

have

led to a resurgence in child poverty, family economic hardship, and mental health challenges like anxiety and depression.

The economic recovery has maintained or expanded inequities in youth unemployment.

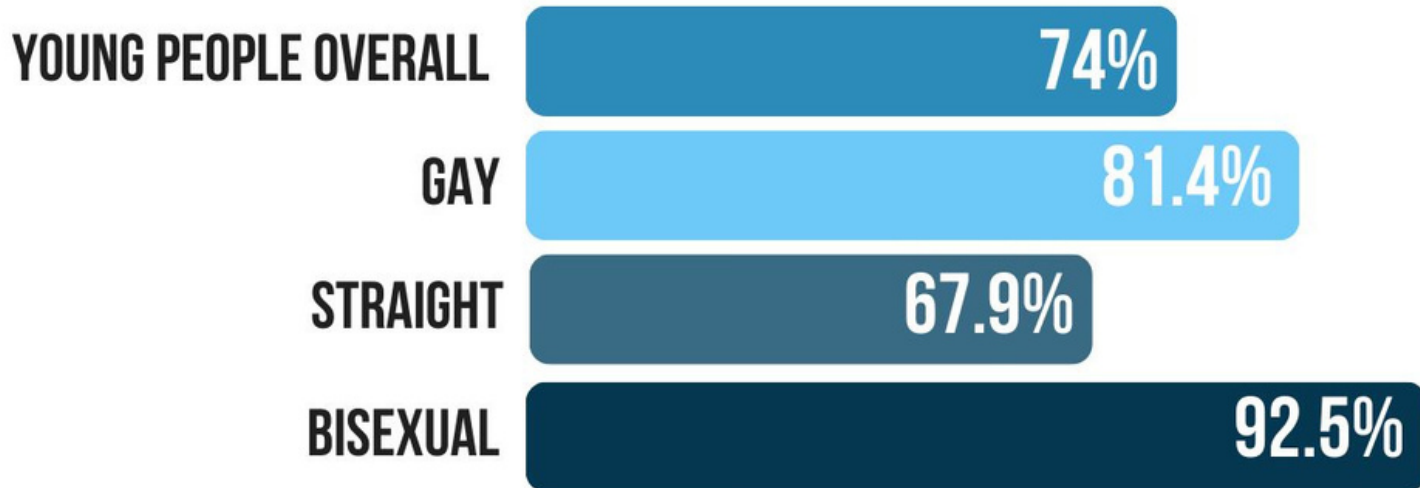
Youth unemployment rate in July 2023:



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, 2023.

GAY AND BISEXUAL YOUNG PEOPLE REPORTED EXTRAORDINARILY **HIGH LEVELS** OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION.

Rates of Anxiety and Depression in July 2023:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey, Week 59 (2023).



Federal Policy Developments

Federal Policy Developments

- Failure to enact legislative reforms addressing systemic police violence or innovative approaches to community safety.
- Return to 90s era “tough-on-crime” policy frameworks and political rhetoric.
- Underwhelming federal investments in police-free community safety strategies.



The President's Budget & the "Safer America Plan"



Biden Administration's FY 25 Budget calls for:

"\$2.2 billion in mandatory funding, and \$370 million in discretionary funding, for a total of almost \$2.6 billion for the COPS Hiring Program to provide resources to meet the administration's goal of 100,000 new police officers in America's neighborhoods, through the President's Safer America Plan."

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act



The BSCA appropriates \$1.5 billion in new funding for the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Of this money awarded to the DOJ:



\$750 million is allocated to support the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program;



\$300 million is allocated to the Bureau of Justice Assistance for the STOP School Violence grant program;



\$200 million is allocated to expand the FBI's data-sharing capacity with local law enforcement agencies and mental health systems; and



\$250 million is allocated for unspecified "community violence intervention programs."



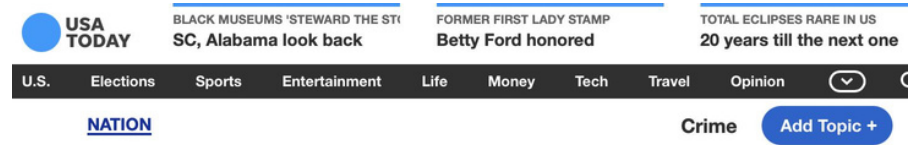
State and Local Policy Context

Trends and Themes

Examples of return to tough on crime rhetoric and policies at the state and local levels:

- New York State National Guard Conduct Subway Searches
- San Francisco Ordinance Requires Drug Screening for Public Benefits
- D.C. Crime Omnibus Ordinance
- Louisiana legislation allows children to be tried as adults

SYNC



'A stunning turnabout': Voters and lawmakers across US move to reverse criminal justice reform



The New York Times

National Guard and State Police Will Patrol the Subways and Check Bags

What to Be on the Lookout for in Your Community

- Drug Testing for Benefits
- Youth Curfews
- Charging Children as Adults
- Increased Criminal Penalties
- Heightened Law Enforcement Presence in Schools, Transit, Etc.
- Co-Responder Models
- The Return of Stop and Frisk
- Gang Databases & the Criminalization of Black Youth Culture
- Expansion of Police Surveillance Technologies in Neighborhoods



How local CVIs can push back against the return of “tough on crime” policies.



- Public education for communities that debunks misinformation and disinformation related to community violence & youth violence
- Partner with legal service providers to provide know your rights trainings and connect young people to legal services in communities that are targeted by tough on crime strategies
- Civic participation is evidence-informed violence prevention strategies



**What trends are you seeing in
your community and what
strategies are you using to push
back?**

COMMUNITY
JUSTICE 



**Community
Organizing
through policy to
Prevent Violence**





**How do you want to
engage your community
in your CVI work?**



Amber Goodwin
Founder, Community Justice

About the Speaker

Amber Goodwin is the founder of the Community Justice Action Fund, the leading gun violence prevention organization working on policy, education, and building resources centered on communities of color. Goodwin was also part of the Biden-Harris transition team as the organizer for gun violence prevention groups. She served as chair of the Austin Gun Violence Task force which helped to create the city's first Office of Gun Violence Prevention and currently acts as a liaison to the office. In 2019, Goodwin testified at the first-ever House Congressional Hearing on urban gun violence. Goodwin is a graduate of Mitchell Hamline School of Law, holds an MA from St. Edward's University and a BA from Florida State University.



Who We Are

Community Justice works to end gun violence in Black and Brown communities by empowering those impacted to tell their story, build political power, connect to resources and advance policy.



Key States

Northeast

- New York
- New Jersey
- Maryland

Southwest

- Texas
- Arizona
- California

Southeast

- North Carolina
- Georgia
- Louisiana

Midwest/Great Lakes

- Wisconsin
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Illinois

Our Approach



NARRATIVE CHANGE (C3)

Awareness Campaigns
Media Bias Research
Monthly Newsletter
"Just Us" Podcast
Earned Media

**TELL OUR
STORIES**

TELL OUR
**BUILD
POLITICAL
POWER**

ORGANIZING (C3)

Policymakers for Peace
Corporations for Justice
Organize Coalitions
Activist Trainings
Elect Justice Project

RESOURCE SUPPORT (C3)

Violence Prevention Index
Educational Webinars
Federal Funding Updates

**BRIDGE
COMMUNITIES
TO RESOURCES**

**FIGHT FOR
POLICY AND
RESOURCES**

ADVOCACY (C4)

Advocacy Campaigns
Bill Endorsements
Political Briefings
Policy Playbooks
Host Lobby Days



“

LEADING AND FOCUSING WITH
**BLACK AND BROWN LEADERS ON
THE FRONT LINES**
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

”



Issue Policy Advocacy

"INVEST IN US"

ADVOCATING FOR FEDERAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

"SURVIVORS FIRST"

ADVOCATING FOR RESOURCES TO SUPPORT VICTIMS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED BY GUN VIOLENCE

"PROTECT BLACK WOMEN"

ADVOCATING FOR FEDERAL RESEARCH RESOURCES TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS

"SAVE OUR FUTURE"

ADVOCATING FOR FEDERAL FUNDING OF YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Policy Awareness Campaigns

365 PROJECT

VIOLENCE HAPPENS EVERY DAY AWARENESS & EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Policy Organizing & Education

STATE COALITIONS (12)

POLICY MAKERS FOR PEACE

ADVOCACY TRAININGS

VIOLENCE PREVENTION INDEX REPORT

EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS





**Decades of
Community
Violence
Intervention
Policy and
Advocacy Led to
This Moment**

A woman with glasses is speaking at a podium. Behind her, a crowd of people is visible. A sign in the background reads "COMMUNITY Break the Cycle OF Violence".

BUILDING STATE POLICY & ADVOCACY

STATES, COUNTIES AND CITIES Across America Are ALSO Making **HISTORIC** Investments

STATE HIGHLIGHTS

California - \$200 Million
District of Columbia - \$193 Million
Illinois - \$150 Million
New York - \$138 Million
Michigan- \$75 Million
New Jersey - \$45 Million
Wisconsin - \$40 Million
Minnesota - \$15 Million
Tennessee - \$10 Million
Virginia - \$4 Million
Connecticut - \$3 Million

CITY HIGHLIGHTS

Philadelphia, PA - \$155.7 Million
Indianapolis, IN - \$45 Million
Oakland, CA - \$18 Million
Miami, FL - \$8 Million
Atlanta, GA - \$7.5 Million
Buffalo, NY - \$6 Million
Columbus, OH - \$19.7 Million
Cincinnati, OH - \$5 Million
Akron, OH - \$24 Million
Milwaukee, WI - \$3 Million
Richmond, VA - \$1.5 Million
Charlotte, NC - \$2 Million
St. Louis, MO - \$11.5 Million
Minnesota, MN - \$15 Million
Baton Rouge, LA - \$2.5 Million
Los Angeles, CA - \$20 Million
Louisville, KY - \$15.8 Million



INVEST IN US STATE POLICY STRATEGY

01

Landscape analysis of the gun violence prevention space

02

Build a coalition and network of leaders that are directly impacted

03

Create a policy agenda centering the public health issue of gun violence

- Utilize templates and best practices from other states
- Utilize data points and research from the field

04

Build and bring training opportunities to everyday people who want to take action on gun violence prevention

05

- Consistently host coalition, convenings and collaborations on CVI and other violence prevention policy measures.
- Support policy and organizing on every level of government.

STATE BASED POLICY ORGANIZING TACTICS

**How Community Justice
approaches building and
sustaining political power for
gun violence prevention
advocacy in communities
disproportionately impacted by
gun violence.**



COALITION FOR CVI SUSTAINABILITY

Create sustained year round coalition to support building for community violence prevention and intervention



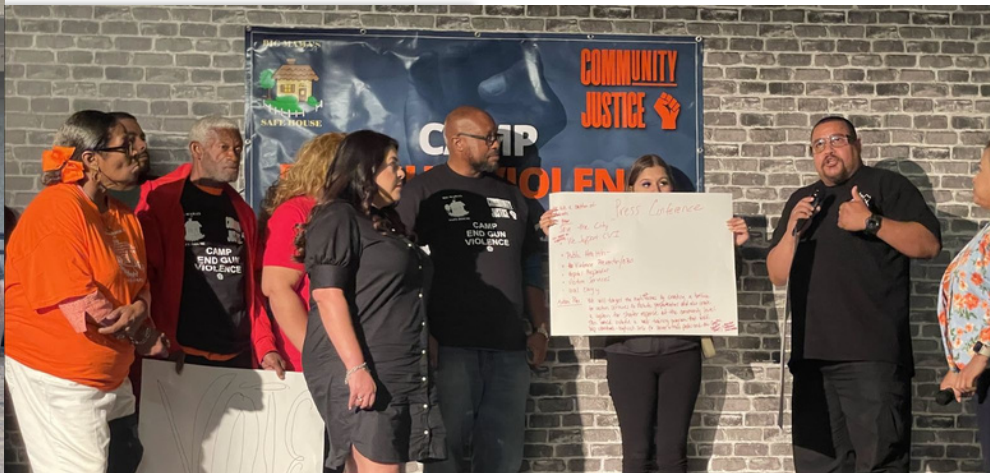
**"NOTHING ABOUT US
WITHOUT US"**

POLICY & ADVOCACY FOR CVI

Draft ongoing policy and advocacy materials and toolkits to engage key audiences across the state to support statewide efforts.

BUILD A CVI POLICY AGENDA

Work together with CVI leaders to understand the legislative processes at the national, state, and local levels. Focus on developing a CVI-focused policy agenda.



BUILD POLITICAL PEOPLE-POWER

Create state specific organizing and policy trainings:
Campaign Camp & Justice Camp

STATE POLICY & ADVOCACY WINS

► POLICY AND ADVOCACY

- Successfully advocated for the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act that passed into law and funded state policy.
- Passed legislation for OVPs in 8 states & DC
- Created a list of sample bills passed.
- Passed innovative state legislation: example NY Medicaid

► POLICY AND ORGANIZING

- Organized Coalitions in 12 States
- Recruited 31 State and Local Officials for Policymakers for Peace
- Organized State wide survivors specific work in Buffalo and Uvalde for state based policy and advocacy work





Partnership Opportunities

In partnership with us, we can raise awareness on the crisis of gun violence, how it's impacting Black and Brown communities and the SOLUTIONS that have not been funded, supported or launched in communities suffering from violence.

- **Funding and Resource Education**
- **Issue Education & Awareness Campaigns**
- **Issue Advocacy Campaigns**
- **Rapid Response Support Efforts**
- **Violence Prevention Index**



Contact Us
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Role of Young People in Advocating for Community Safety

with the Center for Law and Social Policy





Deanie Anyangwe, MPH, MCRP
Policy Analyst, Youth Justice

About the Speaker

Deanie Anyangwe is a racial and gender justice advocate who focuses on preventing and redressing the structural violence that occurs at the intersection of criminalization, health and economic precarity, with a particular focus on Black youth and young adults. Deanie brings experience working on a variety of issues including criminalization, housing policy, health policy and communications, school health, and emergency preparedness and response. Deanie currently serves as a policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) where she leads the organization's interdisciplinary policy agenda to promote youth-centered, anti-carceral approaches to community safety by challenging the carceral system. She grounds her work in Black feminist and abolitionist politics.



Agenda

- ▶ **What is Youth Engagement?**
- ▶ **Then & Now: Youth in Movement Work**
- ▶ **Benefits of Being Youth-Led**
- ▶ **Challenges to Youth Engagement**
- ▶ **Strategies for Authentic Youth Engagement**



What is Youth Engagement?

Youth engagement happens when young people participate in meaningful opportunities and roles that allow them to build on their strengths, take on responsibilities, and contribute to decisions that affect themselves and others.

Source: [ACT for Youth](#)

SYNC

01

Involves collaboration between adults and young people

02

Demands intentional shifts of power to youth from adults to work toward

03

shared goals

Requires strength-based relationships, experiences, and environments that offer opportunities for positive



ROGER HART'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION



RUNG 8 - Youth initiated shared decisions with adults: Youth-led activities, in which decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

RUNG 7 - Youth initiated and directed: Youth-led activities with little input from adults.

RUNG 6 - Adult initiated shared decisions with youth: Adult-led activities, in which decision making is shared with youth.

RUNG 5 - Consulted and informed: Adult-led activities, in which youth are consulted and informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of adult decisions.

RUNG 4 - Assigned, but informed: Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, decision-making process, and have a role.

RUNG 3 - Tokenism: Adult-led activities, in which youth may be consulted with minimal opportunities for feedback.

RUNG 2 - Decoration: Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, but have no input in how they are planned.

RUNG 1 - Manipulation: Adult-led activities, in which youth do as directed without understanding of the purpose for the activities.

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, as cited in www.freechild.org/ladder.htm

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation presents eight levels of youth participation that start from manipulation and tokenism at the lower rungs, to full participation at the top.

Source: [YouthPower's Toolkit for Youth Inclusion in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance](#)



“

It's not an accident that most of
**the movements that have led to
significant change in this country
have been led by young people.**

- Ella Baker

”



History of Black Youth Leadership in Movement

Source: Black Youth Activism and the Reconstruction of America: Leaders, Organizations, and Tactics in the Twentieth Century and Beyond SYNC

Table 1. Black Youth-Oriented Movement-Building Initiatives, 1930s-2015

Organizations/Movements/Networks	Year(s)	Sample of Activities/Initiatives
NAACP Youth Council	1936-present	- voting rights - anti-poll tax campaign - boycotts, sit-ins, marches
Southern Negro Youth Congress	1937-1949	- tobacco workers' strike - labor schools, citizenship schools - Right to Vote Campaign - Abolish the Poll Tax Week - youth legislatures
Youth March for Integrated Schools (Organized by national civil rights leaders)	1958 & 1959	school desegregation rallies
Student Sit-In Movement	1960	50,000 students protesting segregated businesses & public accommodations
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee	1960-early 1970s	- local community organizing - voting rights initiatives - desegregation campaigns - freedom schools - Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
Freedom Rides (Organized by the Congress of Racial Equality, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, & Nashville Students)	1961	protests of segregated bus stations and transportation facilities
Student Organization for Black Unity	1969-1975	- Black People's Union Party - North Carolina Black Political Assembly - clothing centers & food buying clubs - campaign to save historically Black colleges and universities
Free South Africa Movement/ Student Divestment Movement/	1980s	shantytowns, boycott & protests at more than 100 colleges and universities
Black Student Leadership Network	1991-1996	- freedom schools - National Day of Action Against Violence - anti-childhood hunger initiatives
AFL-CIO's Union Summer Program	1996-present	local unionization & economic justice campaigns
Juvenile Justice Reform Movement	1990s-mid 2000s	- advocacy initiatives to close youth prisons - opposed zero-tolerance policies, organized anti-violence/mentoring programs
Black Lives Matter/ Movement for Black Lives Matter	2013-present	- protest state violence & police killing of Blacks - organize "die-ins" & sit-ins - promote restorative justice initiatives and criminal justice reforms





New Deal for Youth

ANewDeal for Youth (ND4Y) is a **youth-led, youth-centered effort** advocating for the creation of new systems, policies, investments and structures that **reimagine life for young people in America**. ND4Y **prioritizes youth who have been left behind** — the disconnected and the disenfranchised, marginalized, misrepresented, and silenced, young people who may not use their voice as much as they would like to. We **center Indigenous and Black communities and youth of color; LGBTQIA+ youth; disabled folks; all immigrant communities, including undocumented young people; young parents; transition age youth; and foster care and former foster care youth**. We recognize the intersections of these identities, including **intersections with gender and gender identity**.



“

We holistically advance youth justice by developing policies for youth by youth. Our new ideas offer a more youthful view and a fresh perspective, that will push conversation and ideas forward. We bring ideas to the table that are impacting future generations and need immediate attention. We believe our government should be setting youth up for success.

-New Deal for Youth

”





Benefits to Being Youth-Led

- Supports positive youth development
- Gain wisdom from young people and a better understanding of the ways in which they are experiencing existing systems
- Youth are more likely to hold themselves accountable to interventions that they were a part of developing
- Youth can more easily connect with other youth
- Youth-led interventions are more likely to succeed

What do our young people have to say?

"I am a daughter of a formerly incarcerated mother, a citizen of the Mvskoke Nation, and a policy expert who is on a mission to bring awareness and solutions to the issues impacting children of incarcerated parents and the mass incarceration of Native people. I believe those most impacted should be at the center of creating change."

Isabel Coronado, New Deal for Youth Changemaker

"Young people are more capable and more engaged in politics than what people think."

Rebecca Do, ND4Y Changemaker

"Trust us, and treat us as partners if you want to avoid tokenism."

Smitha Gundavajhala, ND4Y Changemaker

"Youth have the ability to do amazing things and we are doing amazing things, but we need the resources and education to teach us to speak in the policy language and apply it."

Anthony Dickey, ND4Y Changemaker

Challenges to Youth Engagement



01 ADULTISM

02

Cultural barriers to participation and challenges with navigating processes and spaces that are not youth friendly

03

Lack of time and capacity to support youth skill-building

04

Extractive relationships with youth

Key Strategies for Authentic Youth Engagement

- Build trust
- Provide education and resources
- Ask good questions
- Treat youth as experts
- Connect with youth from different backgrounds
- Don't tokenize

