



BERKELEY YOUTH GAIN SOCIAL MEDIA AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS WHILE PROMOTING **WATER**

THE BANPAC BERKELEY HEALTHY BEVERAGE PROJECT
DECEMBER 2021



**INNOVATIVE
HEALTH
SOLUTIONS**



INTRODUCTION

The City of Berkeley has a long standing commitment to promoting water as evidenced by the City sweetened beverage tax and the robust Healthy Berkeley Campaign that engages community organizations in promoting water and decreased sweetened beverage consumption. To support Berkeley's aims to promote water, The Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (BANPAC) conducted a youth initiative for the City enlisting high school aged youth in creating social media messages promoting water as well as in assessing message effectiveness and selecting winning messages for the City of Berkeley to use in their healthy beverage campaign. The messages were developed to speak specifically to high school aged youth and convey the harms of drinking sugar sweetened beverages and/or the benefits of drinking water. This initiative took place September 2020 through October 2021 and was funded through Healthy Berkeley with City of Berkeley soda tax dollars.

Project partners included: the BANPAC leadership council as project advisors; Innovative Health Solutions as project leads responsible for project management and operations including recruiting youth to the project; Club Stride Inc., responsible for training and mentoring youth social media content creators; and Ad Lucem Consulting, responsible for training youth focus group leaders, designing and managing the youth focus group process and preparing this brief.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

An innovative set of activities was conducted to develop social media messaging responsive to the interests and cultural touch stones of ethnically diverse youth. Project activities were designed to create and select social media content while simultaneously building youth creative and leadership skills. Specific project activities included:

Outreach and Recruitment:

- Recruitment activities included dissemination of an outreach letter, promotional flyer, and telephone communication with 8 Healthy Berkeley funded community organizations working with youth, Berkeley High School and other youth focused community organizations. Youth participants were selected at two points in time to form two cohorts for content creation.
- Recruitment was conducted to assure Spanish speaking youth were engaged in content creation and message selection and that enough youth were participating in both content creation and the focus groups to select winning messages.
- A total of 10 (cohort 1 + cohort 2) youth were recruited to the project, with 4 joining the social media content creation track and 6 selecting to lead/note take during focus groups to assess the youth created water promotion messages.

Orientation:

- Orientation sessions were conducted with all youth recruited to provide an introduction to the health impacts of sugar sweetened beverages, the benefits of drinking water and advertising strategies used by the beverage industry. The orientation sessions provided an opportunity for the youth to offer insights and ideas to one another around healthy beverages and advertising.

Social Media Content Creation:

- Club Stride worked with 4 youth to develop social media content about water. Club Stride's process included supporting youth to develop a key message statement, create social media content to convey their key message (still images, animated videos and live action videos), and share feedback with each other.
- The content creation work took place during weekly 90 minute Club Stride sessions with the youth. Cohort 1 youth participated in 5 sessions and Cohort 2 youth had 8 content creation sessions.
- Club Stride maximized the participation of the youth content creators through homework assignments, regularly scheduled text reminders, Trello board updates, and email/text communication to encourage full participation and completion of assignments.

A total of 14 messages were created by the youth. The 8 messages created by cohort 1 were developed in English and Spanish translation or subtitles were added after the messages were finalized. The 6 Cohort 2 messages were in English only.

Focus groups:

- Three focus group leaders were recruited and they in turn each recruited a notetaker for their focus group. Of the three focus group leaders, one was bilingual/bicultural and was tasked with leading a Spanish language focus group and recruited a bilingual/bicultural notetaker.
- Ad Lucem developed a toolkit to provide youth with a step by step guide for conducting virtual youth led focus groups and included all materials needed for the group.
- Focus group leaders and notetakers attended a virtual training that reviewed the toolkit materials and provided an opportunity for practicing focus group leader and notetaker skills.
- The focus group leaders recruited high school aged youth living in Berkeley to participate in their focus group. Focus group participants were asked to complete a brief online survey describing their demographics.
- The focus groups were conducted virtually via Zoom. Focus group leaders used a standard set of focus group questions to guide the discussion to identify criteria by which to select effective youth water promotion messages and to vote on winning messages from among all of the youth created content.

YOUTH CONTENT CREATORS GAINED SKILLS USING THE FOLLOWING TOOLS:



Trello: Project Management, Canva: Content Creation



FOCUS GROUP TOOLKIT CONTENTS:

- Focus Groups at a Glance: 7 Steps
- Detailed Leader/Notetaker Instructions
- Recruitment Tips
- Focus Group Discussion Tips
- Focus Group Questions
- Participant Tracking Sheet
- Notes Pages
- Focus Group Presentation

- Notetakers took contemporaneous notes during the group using the notetaking template from the toolkit. After the focus group, notetakers and leaders reviewed the notes for completeness and submitted them to Ad Lucem for analysis.
- Focus group leaders and notetakers participated in a follow up focus group to review the focus group process and select the winning messages according to the criteria that emerged from the youth led focus groups.
- Focus group leader and notetaker participation was maximized via weekly email and text communication to foster enthusiasm for the project and encourage the youth to complete activities.

Cohort 2 Message Selection Survey

- Messages created by the cohort 2 content creators were reviewed via an online survey that included questions to select the winning Cohort 2 messages.
- The survey was sent to the 6 youth focus group leaders and notetakers that participated in selecting the Cohort 1 winning messages. The survey link was also sent to a Berkeley Unified School District contact as well as the Healthy Berkeley community organization partners. A total of five youth responded to the survey and voted for the Cohort 2 winners.



YOUTH FOCUS GROUP TOPICS

- Experience with beverage ads
- Beverage message review:
 - » Message content & design pros and cons
 - » How messages influence beverage perceptions and choices
- Message voting to select winning messages
- Elements of a powerful and effective message

Youth participating in this project received a stipend to compensate them for time spent on the project at the City of Berkeley high school intern rate; focus group participants received a gift card as a thank you for their participation.

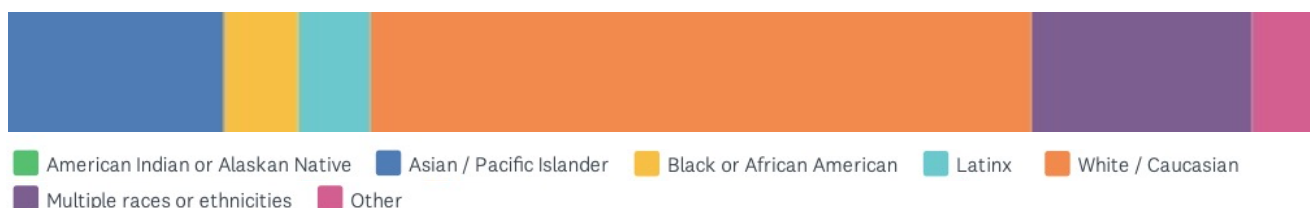
FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Focus group findings were gleaned from the notes taken by the youth notetakers. Notes from the groups were reviewed and key themes found across all three groups were identified.



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Three focus groups were conducted, two in English and one in Spanish. Each had between three and eight participants ages 14 to 17 years. Across the focus groups, 13 identified as women, 2 as men and 3 as gender queer or nonbinary.



Focus group participants viewed the youth created water promotion messages and were led through a series of questions to solicit their opinions on the effectiveness of the messages.



STILL IMAGES

- Few words and simple graphics are most effective
- Make an impression quickly and easily to get and keep attention
- Get across a clear message
- Only use negative messages (harms of sugary beverages) if combined with suggestions for positive action or solutions (drink water for better health)



ANIMATED VIDEOS

- Movement/animation helps get attention
- If the video moves too quickly, it is hard to read
- Comparison between sugary beverages and water needs to be clear and concise
- A clear color theme helps get the message across, for example green = good



LIVE ACTION VIDEOS

- Too many words or too fast: hard to absorb the message
- Opinions on spoken word messages were mixed, with some liking this format and others disliking this delivery as it "was so obviously aimed at teenagers"
- Appreciated seeing a young person featured
- Animation and graphics enhance interest and help convey the message

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING MESSAGES

The key themes were synthesized to develop the following set of criteria for identifying successful water promotion messages aimed at youth:

- Keeps viewer attention
- Viewer can easily grasp and remember the key message(s)
- Design (colors, graphics, lettering, music, etc.) gets attention
- Format is appropriate and interesting to youth
- Provides a positive action youth can take to choose water
- Balances the harms of sugary beverages with the benefits of water

Selecting Winning Messages

For Cohort 1, the youth focus group leaders and notetakers applied the criteria to select three winning messages. Youth individually assigned points for each criterion for each water promotion message and points were totaled across the youth leaders and notetakers to obtain the final selections. This process was designed to be fair and inclusive and ensured that diverse opinions were taken into account in the final selections.

For Cohort 2, the online survey integrated the criteria into a series of questions to facilitate selecting the three Cohort 2 messages.

The content creators of the winning messages received cash prizes that were equitably distributed.

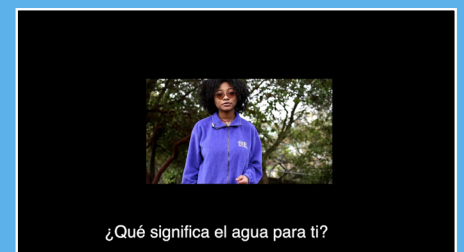


WINNING MESSAGES COHORT 1

Animated video, no sound



Live Action Video, with Sound



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CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Youth recruitment was challenging – especially during the COVID 19 pandemic. Low recruitment of content creators necessitated an additional content creation cohort that was not anticipated in project staffing or budgeting.
- Although the original intent was to have a Spanish speaking bicultural youth content creator, ultimately English speaking youth generated the social media messages, which were later translated by a Club Stride staff member. This approach may have reduced the cultural relevance of the messages for bicultural youth.
- A number of the messages had a similar look and feel, which made it challenging for youth to differentiate between similar messages and apply the criteria.

"I liked how we got to work as a team. I got a lot of feedback about my work, I got a lot of ideas and learned about Canva. I learned there has to be a message in order to create art."

- YOUTH CONTENT CREATOR

- Frequent (minimum weekly) communication was essential to ensuring that youth maintained engagement in project activities.
- Youth engaged in content creation were enthusiastic and productive – each producing multiple water promotion messages.
- Youth leaders and notetakers perceived the skills gained through the focus group experience as valuable for their academic and career aspirations.
- One youth content creator was selected to present their winning message at the 2021 annual meeting of the American Public Health Association.

"The most important thing I learned from this experience is that community health is very important. I learned a lot about how certain companies target minority groups specifically."

- YOUTH CONTENT CREATOR

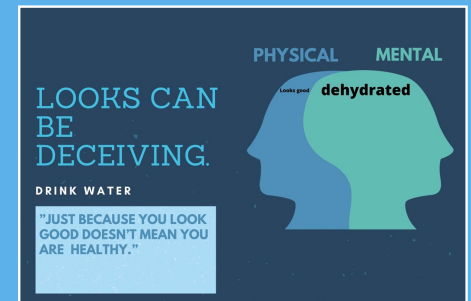
CONCLUSION

This project empowered youth through leadership and creative skills training and nutrition education. Youth were provided opportunities to use art to express a health message and to engage in evaluation activities. Youth participating in this project found the experience valuable and relevant for school and jobs. The youth appreciated the opportunity to contribute to creating the water promotion messages that the City of Berkeley will disseminate through a social media campaign and posters in local retail. The findings, lessons learned and resources from this project will be useful to other jurisdictions interested in implementing a similar initiative.



WINNING MESSAGES COHORT 2

Still Image



Still Image



Animated video, no sound

