About our Fellows and their Research

Established in 2016, the New Americans Fellowship is a research based stipend program for DACA recipients. This summer, our NAF fellows have been placed in various county departments, and tasked with a research project that culminates in each fellow's final presentation of their research findings with their unique perspectives as DACA residents of Santa Clara County.

14 DACA recipients were selected for demonstrating academic excellence, research ability, an interest in the areas of human rights, immigration policies, public health access, and social justice. The following presentations are a collective of their research and findings on each of their own unique topics.

Due to confidentiality reasons, our Fellows’ last names have been omitted. If you would like to learn more about their work you can contact the our office at: OfficeofImmigrantRelations@gmail.com.
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New Americans Fellowship

Office of Immigrant Relations

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Challenges to accessing healthcare for young undocumented immigrants.
Challenges to accessing healthcare for young undocumented immigrants.

This research will focus on the challenges that young undocumented immigrants face when they try to enroll in state funded health care programs. Challenges such as fear, stigma, and lack of knowledge keep these young immigrants from enrolling health care programs such as Medi-Cal. In order to bring awareness of the importance of having health insurance at young age to help reduce the risk of chronic and infectious diseases, we need to identify what can it be done to help this vulnerable population overcome these challenges.

Not having health insurance has significant health consequences either physically or mentally since it limits the access to preventive care, delays treatment for serious illness and chronic diseases and interfere with daily activities. The undocumented immigrant community constitutes one the most vulnerable groups and faces many challenges in accessing health insurance. According to the California Health Care Foundation, in Santa Clara County there are more than 100,000 undocumented people who are uninsured. Within this vulnerable group, as a subgroup young undocumented immigrants between the ages of 19 to 25, has the highest uninsured rate of any age, according to Health Affairs.

One of the most recent health care programs available to immigrants regardless of immigration status is the new law SB-104. In July 2019 Governor Newsome signed the health care bill SB-104 into law and it was implemented on January 2020. SB-104 allows young undocumented immigrants between the ages of 19 and 25 to become eligible for Full-Scope Medi-Cal. Full-Scope Medi-Cal provides benefits such as preventive medical care, mental and dental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, and prescriptions drugs. This law made
California the first state in the nation to provide health care insurance to undocumented immigrants. According to UC Berkeley Labor Center there are about 104,000 undocumented young adults in California between the ages for 19-25 that could benefit from Full Scope Medi-Cal.

The methods used to complete this research were literature review, analysis of laws and documents, secondary data analysis provided by Social Services Agency, Santa Clara County interviews to subject matter experts, and surveys directed to the young population in two different colleges, San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College. The literature reviews and surveys helped me identify the barriers and challenges that the young undocumented population face when they try to enroll in health care such as Medi-Cal. The interviews helped me to better understand about what kind of outreach and health care services are available to immigrants regardless of immigration status.

Many young and uninsured undocumented immigrants avoid seeking medical care, until it becomes an emergency. Research has shown that the challenges that contribute to discourage many of these young immigrants from enrolling in health insurance are fear, stigma, and the lack of knowledge about the health care system. The fear and stigma associated with immigration policy and public charge, during the current Administration, have become major factors to intimidate many undocumented young immigrants. Public Charge causes a chilling effect on them and as a result they avoid using public benefits. Many of these young undocumented immigrants distrust the current government and they are afraid that public charge could affect their immigration status and their personal information could be shared with federal officials which could lead to a risk of deportation. The lack of knowledge about the health care system is
also, a major challenge. According to the National Institute of Health many of these immigrants
do not know what health care programs are available to them regardless of immigration status. It
is not new that for many immigrants the word “undocumented” signifies not eligible for public
benefits. Furthermore, many of these young people often do not know the process of how, where,
and when to enroll since there is a limited guidance about the transition from pediatric to adult
health care.

It is important to bring awareness of the importance of having health insurance at an early
age since most chronic diseases could start early in life and preventive services are critical.
According to Health Affairs, chronic health conditions have risen over the past years among the
youth population. And according to the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services, one in every
six young adults have a chronic disease. Asthma, diabetes, and hypertension are the most
common chronic diseases among young adults. Currently, during the pandemic of Covid-19
health care access is crucial to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. According to the
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the Latino community is being greatly affected by
Covid-19 since many of them work as frontline workers and do not have access to health care.
And more than 35% of all COVID-19 cases in Santa Clara County are registered among people
of 10 to 39, according to the Santa Clara County Public Health Department.

Currently, in Santa Clara County, there are 30,000 DACA recipients and only 883 are
currently enrolled in Full Scope Medical. According to the Migration Policy institute there are
15,000 adults between the ages of 19 to 25 and many of them could qualify for Full Scope
medical but as of Mid-January only 207 applications from undocumented young immigrants
were received. About 3,147 young adults between the ages of 19 to 25 that were transfer from
Restricted Medi-Cal to Full Scope Medi-Cal in Santa Clara County.

According to the surveys conducted in San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College more than 80% of young adults do not know what kind of programs are available to them. Some quotes from these young adults regarding challenges to healthcare are “I do not know where to go to apply” and “Need someone to take me through the steps of how to apply.” Many of these young adults do not the process of how to enroll in health care programs. There are others that are concern about public charge and immigration policy. Outreach in social media such as Univision news, platforms in Instagram and Facebook from the Public Health Department and Social Services Agency has been done but it is not enough. There is an estimate that only 1 out of 10 young adults apply for state funded health care programs.

Based on my literature review, surveys and interviews conducted, these are my outreach recommendations to overcome the challenges that the young undocumented population face when trying to enroll in health care programs and that way bring awareness of the importance of having health insurance at an early age and encourage young undocumented immigrants to enroll for health coverage.

**Outreach recommendations:**

- Spread the message about Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and confidentiality in a culturally appropriate way.
- Address the importance of public charge and refer people with concerns to local immigration agencies that practices public benefit law.
- Public Health Department must provide guidance when transitioning from pediatric healthcare to adult healthcare during the last month of pediatric office visits.
- Distribute information in different languages about preventive care, chronic diseases, and infectious diseases in high schools, colleges, universities and reinforce in social media, consulates, and community-based organizations.
- Promote educational YouTube videos and Snapchat key messages about how, where, and when to enroll in health insurance specifically Full-Scope Medi-Cal for Young Adults.
• Promote health fairs in theme parks.
• Public Health Department and Social Services need to invest money into an outreach campaign. People doing outreach for this specific population need to be people that fully understand their culture and language.

In Conclusion it is of utmost importance to help this vulnerable population overcome challenges such as fear, stigma, and lack of knowledge about the healthcare system. Research has already shown that greater and easier access to health care which includes preventive and primary care can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases at an early age and help stop the spread of infectious diseases. The Santa Clara County, representing the government must do something now and we can begin by educating the undocumented immigrant community, especially the youth population. Because no one deserves to be afraid when it comes to seek medical help. This will not only benefit the undocumented youth population, but it will benefit the entire community of Santa Clara County.
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Immigrant Student’s Access to K-12 Education During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Immigrant Student’s Access to K-12 Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

It has been proven that higher levels of education are beneficial for individuals and communities. Some of the benefits associated with higher levels of education include, higher earned wages, better health conditions, and poverty reduction (Chowdhury, 2018). Throughout history there have been advancements in the U.S. that have made K-12 education available to all youth regardless of race, socio economic status, and documentation status. However, there are many limitations today that prevent students from the immigrant population from accessing equitable education. Such limitations include poverty, student’s and family immigration status, school funding, and the tech divide. This paper will demonstrate how the recent Coronavirus response policies affected the immigrant youth and their ability to access equitable K-12 education during the coronavirus pandemic.

The coronavirus’ shelter in place policies and social distancing regulations have shifted the way students receive an education. To stop the spread of the coronavirus and to keep students safe, the department of education encouraged schools to carry out distance learning. Distance learning requires for students to attend lectures through video conferencing online instead of physically attending the school (Stauffer, 2020). For some students, the transition from the traditional proximate learning to distance learning was seamless due to accessibility and the appropriate support. For other students, like the immigrant youth, the proposed distance learning strategy was inaccessible and limited the youth from receiving adequate education during shelter in place (West, 2020). The inaccessibility to distance learning during the pandemic is just one example of how inequitable the education system is for immigrant students. Prior to the pandemic immigrant youth were already dealing with the inequities that exists in the education system, but the pandemic has furthered their disadvantages. To adequately educate all the youth
during the pandemic, and in general, the education system needs to acknowledge the limitations that immigrant students face and must implement changes that will support immigrant students in their pursuit of education.

**Immigrant Students & Poverty**

One of the limitations that immigrant students face in pursuit of education is poverty. Prior to the pandemic, it was reported that third of U.S. immigrant households were living in poverty due to the type of work or positions that immigrants fill (West, 2018). As a result, many immigrant students/ students from immigrant households were facing issues related to poverty including malnutrition, limited access to health care, limited access to education, and mental health issues (United Nations, n.d.). The current pandemic is furthering the poverty of the immigrant population and is leaving many students without access to basic needs.

The pandemic’s shelter in place policies, and closures of businesses have led loss of jobs or decrease in work hours for immigrant workers. Many immigrant families and their children are experiencing extreme levels of financial insecurity and have difficulty meeting basics needs like food and shelter. The lack of access to the basics makes it difficult for immigrant students and their families to prioritize other things, such as school. According to Page et al. (2020), the pandemic shutdowns have closed many service industries jobs in which immigrants work in and have resulted in thousands of immigrant families without employment or income. Unfortunately, the immigration status of these families excludes them from the social safety net that is available to U.S. citizens, and leaves them no form of financial support whatsoever.

In an interview with a key informant from the Santa Clara County Board of Education, it was discussed how among the low-income communities, to which many immigrant families belong to, the most common need during Covid-19 is financial support, food support, and
healthcare. The informant shared that the needs of the families during the pandemic have resulted in more older students taking on additional roles such as helping around the house more, getting jobs, and looking after siblings if the parents were not home. The key informant described that due to the needs of the family many students have difficulty engaging in academics and emphasized that unless the education system acknowledges the needs of a student in a holistic manner it would be unfair to ask the student to focus solely on education.

One way in which the school has provided support to students who are going through financial hardship is by providing free or reduced lunches through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program (NSLBP). However, the public charge rule placed in Feb 24, 2020, affected immigrant families and made them fear that being in programs like NHSLBP and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will hurt them when applying for citizenship or will lead to their deportation. As a result, many families have disenrolled from the NHSLBP and SNAP program along with health care (Page et al., 2020). Access to health care during Covid-19 is of most importance for the immigrant families as many working immigrants are in the front lines of defense against the pandemic and are disproportionately affected by it. (Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, 2020). It is estimated that there are approximately 7.2 million undocumented immigrants who lack health insurance and do not have the means for a primary care provider leaving the many individuals going untreated/undiagnosed (Page et al., 2020). The immigrant families’ decision to disenroll from health care, SNAP, and CHIP can further harm the health of immigrant families and students during Covid-19, as many students will not be able to receive the needed food assistance or health care during the pandemic.
When put into perspective, immigrant student/students of immigrant households in the United States have great disadvantages in their everyday life that can affect their education during the pandemic. Lack of access to basic needs like food, shelter, and health care should be the top priority for systems if immigrant students are expected to perform well in school. Furthermore, there should be more emphasis in creating an education system that addresses the needs of immigrant students in a holistic manner in order to support them in their education and prevent them from falling through the cracks due to their socioeconomic status.

**Immigrant Students & Status**

In addition to poverty many immigrant students/ students of immigrant families must live with the implications related to the immigration policies in the United States. The political rhetoric that states that immigrants are not wanted in the country, that immigrants are a burden, and that immigrant must be removed from the country brings on stress for immigrant students. Some immigrant students must live in fear of the possible deportation of themselves or a family member. For a child of an immigrant family/immigrant child the realities of deportation bring on psychological trauma (West, 2018). During the pandemic, the fear of deportation has increased in immigrant communities due to ICE raids happening across the country. For example, on the first day of shelter in place immigrant communities in Los Angeles, CA were raided by the US Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Lopez & Holmes, 2020). Immigrant communities in New York and other cities have experienced the unexpected raids as well. According to Lopez and Holmes, “Experiences of raids at any time produce increased stress at the community level, thereby worsening health outcomes, as well as distrust in public health institutions, leading to decreased utilization of important health services for [needed] treatment”. The ICE raids across the country are instilling additional fear to an already vulnerable population.
The fear and the stress that immigrant students are facing during this time is another limitation for the students when they are asked to perform well and focus on school during the pandemic. Yet, most K-12 schools do not have mental health specialists on staff or a way to support students with their mental health during the pandemic. The educational system should acknowledge the need for support of student’s mental health in order to ensure that the student is doing well when they step into an environment of learning.

**Immigrant Students & Education Funds**

The current education funding system is another obstacle that immigrant students must face in their effort to pursue an education. California for example, is home to about 6 million school aged youth and about half have at least one immigrant parent or are immigrants themselves (Johnson & Sanchez, 2019). California has one of the highest rates of youth poverty and English learners in the school system but, has among the lowest per pupil funding rates in the country (Harrington, 2019). This means that schools in California don’t have enough money to adequately serve students with basic needs. This also means that California does not have enough money to serve the immigrant youth, who make up a large majority of the poor and English learning population and need additional resources to perform well in school.

Although there have been efforts to adequately fund the schools across the country each state makes their decision on how to fund K-12 education. Seeing the need to adequately fund its schools, California passed the Local Control Funding Formula “LCFF” in 2013. The goals of the founding model are to allocate more resources to low income students, English learners, and foster youth (Californians For Justice, n.d.). The founding model also gives more flexibility to address specific issues that are being seen in the districts, encourages parents’ engagement in funding decisions, and focuses the system on continuous improvement over testing scores.
(Californians For Justice, n.d.). However, even with the LCFF in place, California’s per pupil funding remains below the national average. As a result, immigrant youth of a low social economic status continue to attend schools that are not adequately funded to fit their needs and continue to fall behind their peers.

During the pandemic it has become evident that schools do not have the means to adequately serve the needs of every student in the classroom. When speaking to a teacher from the Campbell Unified School District, she mentioned that one of the difficulties of distance learning is getting students the materials and technology they need to log into the online sessions (Personal Communication, July 16, 2020). Many students do not have access to The Internet, do not have the appropriate technology, or if they do, it may not be enough if there are multiple school aged children in the household. The Board President of San Jose Unified School District made similar comments and shared that the funding available required the schools to prioritize spending to adequately serve the student’s needs (Personal Communication, July 3, 2020).

During the pandemic, many districts had to choose between funding food support for families or hot spots and other technological equipment for the students. The Board President shared that given the circumstances it is better to invest in the wellbeing of the families and students first by providing food support (Personal Communication, July 3, 2020).

The coordinator of multilingual education services at the Santa Clara County Office of Education, made similar comments and expressed that the schools’ the top priority is the safety and the wellbeing of the students and then the academic aspect of school (Personal Communication, July 24, 2020). However, lack of funding does get in the way of academics when there is an obvious need for additional services for students, especially the immigrant and English learning youth. The key informant in this research mentioned that distance learning has
proven to be less effective for students who are English learners because they are unable to engage due to the language barrier (Personal Communication, July 24, 2020). Therefore, there should be more programs and engagement strategies that ensure the students participation in distance learning. In order to create those programs, there is a need for more funding to cover the appropriate training and resources.

**Immigrant Students & The Tech Divide**

The present shift towards the use of technology in schools is another obstacle that immigrant students must overcome to access adequate education during the pandemic. The growing use of technology in school has created a divide between students who can afford and access the required technology and students who cannot. Students who cannot afford and have no access to required technology are predominantly students of color and students of low socio-economic status (West, 2020). Many immigrant students are children of color and children of low socio-economic status. According to West (2020), prior to the pandemic nationally, about 17 percent of students are unable to do their homework due their lack of internet access. The digital divide that exists creates a “homework gap” among the students and it becomes evident who has access to the required technology and who does not. To do their homework and complete class work that requires internet services, students from low income communities depend on local libraries, restaurants, and coffee shops. Due to the pandemic policies, libraries and coffee shops are closed and that leaves the immigrant and low-income students without the necessary preconditions to do their schoolwork.

In California, 1 in 6 school aged children lack Internet access at home (West, 2020). For immigrant students the lack of Internet access is one among many other limitations that prevent them from participating in the school’s technological shift. During the pandemic, the student’s
home environment, language barriers, and the lack of knowledge from parents or caregivers to support the student are all limitations when the immigrant youth are asked to engage in distance learning. In the interview, the teacher from Campbell Unified School District mentioned that in distance learning there is a lot of support needed from the caregiver especially for younger students (Personal Communication, July 16, 2020). When the students are newcomers and don’t know the language, it is very difficult to help them learn. It is also difficult to communicate with the parents for additional support, if the parents are there to help in the first place. As mentioned, there are many parents from immigrant households who are working during the pandemic and some students may be under the care of older siblings or are taking care of their younger siblings.

In an interview with two mothers from the organization Somos Mayfair, it was discussed how difficult distance learning was for many students in the community. The mothers discussed in depth the difficulty around the language barrier that exists among the immigrant community and how many mothers and fathers did not have the capability to support students at home because they did not understand the language (Personal Communication, August 3, 2020). The mothers mentioned that some parents, to support their children, must seek help and rely on other members in the community who are willing to translate. The mothers discussed the feelings of guilt and frustration they sometimes feel as parents because they are not able to support their children in the ways they wish they could. The mothers acknowledge that the language barrier between the family and the school is a limitation to the students learning and they see how the parent’s inability to support the students can contribute to the students falling behind their peers during the pandemic.

The mothers also talked about the difficulty that many parents face when it comes to handling the technology necessary for distance learning. The mothers interviewed expressed that
in many homes the first obstacle for distance learning is having the necessary technology needed, but once the technology is bought or given, the second obstacle is knowing how to use it. One of the mothers mentioned that, like many others in her community, she had difficulty performing basic computer skills like checking emails and replying to messages. She expressed that being asked to help her seven-year-old daughter during distance learning was very difficult for her and to support her daughter she had to constantly ask for help. The mother mentioned that she was lucky enough to receive support from the community and the organization, but she emphasized that there are many other mothers and fathers that don’t have the support from anyone and therefore neither do the students. Both mothers discussed the need to support parents in immigrant communities who don’t know how to use the technology for distance learning and who may be learning English.

The last obstacle that the mothers discussed was the home environment. Both mothers talked about how they lived in small spaces with more than one child and how the environment at home distracts the students from learning while online. One mother shared that in the home there are young children who cry, run around, and make noise, and it is difficult to create a quiet space for students to fully engage without being distracted by the noise. Similarly, a key informant from Californians For Justice, shared that it was reported that some students would log in to distance learning from the restroom simply because there was no other quiet space at the house (Personal Communication, July 22, 2020). It was also mentioned that some students had difficulty logging into lessons because there were many students in the household and the household Wi-Fi/ hot spot was not good enough to have multiple children logged in at once. One mother asked, “How do I decide who gets to log in? All my children should have access to their education” (Personal Communication, August 3, 2020). The mothers emphasized that their
socio-economic status affects the type of education their children receive, and they wish to make a difference in their communities through their involvement in organizations like Somos Mayfair.

One mother discussed how communities of color have many obstacles to overcome and said, “I wish that it was just the education system that was broken because that would be easier to fix. The truth is that this goes beyond the education system. The issues that my community is facing are tied to various challenges. It’s low wages, lack of jobs, high living expenses, lack of opportunities for people like me and my children to get ahead” (Personal Communication, August 3, 2020). When asked how the mothers felt about the school to returning to proximate learning, they shared that within the community there is a lot of debate. One mother shared that she wants her children to go back to school. She explained that her inability to help her child because of her lack of education, the language barrier, her lack of knowledge of technology, the inability to provide a quiet space, her lack of money to pay for a sitter, and the need to go to work to put food on the table, are all reasons why her child is more likely to fall behind in school. This mother shared that because of her response to this question she’s been called a bad mother and people question why she would be willing to send her child to school knowing the consequences of the pandemic. This mother shared that it is the need that her family is facing that pushes her to choose this option.

The other mother agreed and shared that in her experience it is very difficult for parents in her community to be “good parents” in the eyes of the school. She went on to explain that if school stays in distance learning they won’t be “good parents” because they can’t adequately support the students and if they push toward proximate learning they won’t be “good parents”
because they’re putting their children at risk. Both mothers want more solutions to the challenges they are facing during the pandemic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is important to mention that prior the coronavirus pandemic immigrant students were already experiencing limitations that kept them from accessing equitable education. However, the decision to switch to distance learning during the pandemic has furthered immigrant student’s lack of access to equitable education due to various factors. Below are some recommendations that can help support immigrant students gain access to equitable education during the coronavirus pandemic.

One recommendation that would yield benefits to immigrant students during the pandemic and beyond the pandemic is the encouragement for schools to follow a Community School model. The community school model allows students to be seen in a holistic manner because it recognizes that students have needs beyond academics such as mental health and wellness needs. In addition, this model encourages schools to provides a range of services for the students and their families year-round such as health care, eye care, and social/ emotional services. The overall goal of a community school is to revitalize the entire community through partnership with its members. Although there are schools in certain counties that provide services like community schools, not all schools have the funds to practice it. Therefore, it is extremely important for school funding to be prioritized when community policies are being discussed by representatives.

Another suggestion encourages the partnerships with local facilities like libraries and community centers during the pandemic. Due to the pandemic shutdowns such facilities are vacant and would be perfect locations to host support sessions for students that need additional
support, like English learners. As mentioned, many times it is difficult to engage English learners through distance learning due to the language barrier. Having in-person support for these students would be highly beneficial and it would still be safe as these locations are big enough to maintain the social distancing policies.

The last suggestion is to increase support for parents in immigrant communities who are learning the language, are unfamiliar with technology, and are supporting their children in distance learning. There should be more workshops that provided tech support for parents at various hours in the week and in various locations within the community so that parents can attend them. A possible alternative, can be to assign a designated tech support assistant in the vacant community libraries so that parents know where to go in case they need help. In efforts to make tech support more accessible during the pandemic, there can even be pop up tech support tents in which parents can stop by and learn basic technology operations and ask questions. The popup tents can be in the communities that need most support and outdoors so that the social distancing policies are being followed.

These are just a few of the recommendations that were given by the key informants during their interviews. All key formants acknowledged the need to support the immigrant student population and all stated that the support strategies chosen should be beneficial during the pandemic and after the pandemic.
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INTO THE SHADOWS: THE STRUGGLES OF MIGRANT FARMWORKERS

Lizeth

“The hands that you see are the hands that harvest the lemons...the strawberries your children eat...the grapes you see in the market...were dying out there in the fields...This is the labor force of The United States. These are the people that nobody wants, earning their bread everyday these are the people that politicians don’t want, but while they sleep... all these people are working in the fields across California” – Roberto Valdez (Farmworker)
Introduction

I was placed at the Emergency Operation Center also known as the EOC in the County of Santa Clara and I have been working with the language access team as a public information officer. During my time at the EOC, I had the chance to work on COVID-19 messaging, helping the Human and Housing Services Unit making calls to Spanish speakers and helping at the testing sites. There was one day when we were sent to help at a testing site at Christopher Rancher which was only specifically for a department where migrant farmworkers had been exposed to someone positive in COVID-19. Being out there and seeing that sometimes information may be misleading or not given I decided to do my research focused on migrant farm workers. I want to know and be able to provide recommendations on how information and resources can be inclusive, culturally appropriate, and available to migrant farmworkers during pandemics or times of distress. Additionally, I will be looking at barriers and systemic inequities present when we work with this group of residents. To know this, I first need to find out how as of now the County, cities, or organizations are being resourceful and informative to our migrant farm workers that work or live within the county borders. This paper will contain information based on of what I read about farmworkers in academic and other types of sources, interviews with those who work with the migrant farmworkers, and the data collected by participant observation. I hope to learn from the farm working community on the importance of being prepared and well-informed during times of distress. I also hope to gather as much information for the county to use and build off my research and provide those resources to our vulnerable farm working community or even build a specific department/team to monitor and be out there providing preparedness and resources for them. I want to make a note that I use the term vulnerable community because they are out in the open during extreme heat, rain, fires, and pandemics and might be very well unprepared for an alarming situation making them vulnerable
to work exploitation, being exposed to various pesticides, injuries, extreme weather conditions, viruses and to misinformation.

Methodology

I was able to conduct two interviews. I have also protected the identities of my interviewees and will only provide titles of their work done in the County and for the community. My first interview was with an Emergency planning coordinator of the Santa Clara County. During this interview I wanted to find out how the AlertSCC System worked and if there was an alert system(s) created for farmworkers in the south County (Gilroy). Before my interview I looked at the AlertSCC system page, the Gilroy Community emergency Response Team (CERT) page and the Santa Clara County, and California Amateur Radio Emergency Services/ Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services also known as ARES/RACES. Both links for CERT and ARES/RACES are provided on the AlertSCC page. I really liked that the AlertSCC System page is available in four languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, English, and Chinese. For ARES/RACES I did not see anything specifying giving resource listings for agriculture work and farmworkers. Also, they do not have any information translated or link to a translated version, which would be very beneficial since they have great information, resources, and trainings available. For the Gilroy CERT page, I also didn’t see any programs that involve farmworker trainings provided or done in the past, no specific links to an specific alert system prepared for the city of Gilroy and all the great information is not available in other languages (not even in PDF forms). With this information I asked the emergency planning coordinator if maybe I missed or if he might know of a resource or system, I was not aware of yet. The coordinator answered no and that the alert system was design specially to alert of changes or alerts that was more general that affected the county. The coordinator also explained to me how the system works and how people get the alert systems. This was very helpful to understand and how it is used. Having just a general conversation I was able to see what I should look for and see what other resources are available. The coordinator also gave me great tips on where to look for my research.

My second interview was with an immigration lawyer. He has been a big part in helping the Farm working community as well as helping DACA recipients renew their applications
and fill new applications. He has about 800 clients in his firm for DACA applications. Before, having our interview I wanted to make sure I had read all my articles and come up with good questions to ask. He was such an amazing interviewee and I want to thank him for helping me highlight the basic needs that most of the migrant farmworkers should have and for giving me so much great information as well confirming what the daily struggles our migrant farmworkers face with in the county. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to interview him.

Having participant observation was a great addition to my research. Being able to see a few of the barriers present with the farm working community helped guide me to look more in depth if anything had been done or what could be adding to those barriers and struggles farmworkers were facing. While at the testing site in Christopher Ranch I was able to see the relationship of employer to employee. How the employer was handling positive cases in the workplace and what resources they needed. I was glad to see that there was an initiative to have that available for workers but in the other hand they did not allow other people from other departments to get tested. Which I wasn’t okay with because if this free service is available to the workers for that day and people want to take a little bit of time of their work to take the test to make sure they weren’t exposed then they should be allowed to. They said it was because they did not want to expose them to a potential positive case from the same department but that to me seems like an excuse to not find yet another positive case and confirm the statistics. They only wanted the workers who were in the department of the positive case found. The testing site in the Ochoa Migrant Camp I was able to observe how the day played out and If the day and time chosen was the best for the farm working community to go to. This made me gain more knowledge as well as be able to make recommendations to better assist and be a support to migrant farmworkers.

One of my biggest component and source was literature. There is so much information I was able to get and so many findings that I already had speculated, seen, and heard of the issues and barriers that farmworkers across the nation face. Having other studies and research done by amazing activists, professors, doctors, and public health departments truly guided my research and added important information that was crucial for my recommendations to the county. The literature chosen includes emergency preparedness, Medicare, daily
struggles, health studies, housing, mental health, work exploitation, support networks and heat stress.

Background and findings

Having safety and preparedness should be a priority and someone would think that farmworkers know how to stay safe in times of distress and be prepared for what mother nature throws. Specially since they are skilled agricultures and are out in the open but that is not the case. Like other immigrant groups in poverty, they often lack proper resources for emergencies and face transportation and language barriers. Many farmworkers do not know of resources available, don’t have any first aid kits, no internet access and do not have any evacuation plans. Many farmworkers are Spanish-only workers. This is alarming because being out in the open, working hard during the scorching sun and not have adequate preparedness and knowledge to know what to do is unacceptable. Specially here in California where we are known for Earthquakes and fires. People think Farmworkers are prepared and know what to do in case of emergencies, but the hard reality is that they do not. In the study done in 2012 by Burke, S., Bethel, J.W., and Britt A.F there was a participant that said that she was never told how to prepare for a disaster and to only grab important documents like the ones to prove she was legally in the U.S. There are many places that do not really care how a farmworker or immigrant may struggle just if at the end of the day they can prove they are legal that is all that matters.


Having landlords, renters, migrant camps, or employers that are not concerned of the safety or preparedness of a farmworker is a big issue that needs to be talked about more. This way of thinking dehumanizes and harms farmworkers because they are no longer seen as human but just some worker that if anything happens, they will be safe because of a piece of paper and there is not much they can prepare for or do. They are also seen as replaceable for any situation given. Also, during nearby fires, they are expected to continue working despite the harmful and toxic air. There are so many ways that farmworkers can benefit from having preparedness and being evacuated during emergency disasters. Specially if they constantly move from state to state or up and down a state. Learning what to do and other important things to have like canned food, water, and aid kits. As well be able to know what to do when a disaster arrives will help guide and even safe their lives. The Immigration lawyer whom I interviewed let me know that while working with the farm working community In the San Benito County during the pandemic we are currently having. He expressed that “the Employer isn’t giving much guidance and not providing any equipment to stay protected and safe”. This is not just in San Benito County but here in the Santa Clara county as well. During one of the testing sites in a migrant camp many migrant farmworkers whom I was able to ask about news, evacuation plans or safety preparedness most said it was through the radio or from other people. Not much from employers and are not quite sure what to expect of disasters or what truly the pandemic might bring. In general, migrant farmworkers are under looked, underrepresented and have very insufficient resources during times of distress.
Work during hot and humid conditions can result in health issues. The most common death related illness to hot weather is heat strokes. With heat waves and limited access to water, shade, and breaks. In the article “California’s Migrant Farmworkers: A Caste System Enforced by State Power” by Bruce Neuburger, He conducted an interview with a farmworker who talked about losing his sixteen-year-old son to heat stroke in 2005. There were also twelve other farmworkers who had also died because of a heat stroke on the same year. Heat strokes are not the only health issues that farmworkers face. Because of pesticide exposure they suffer from cancer, skin rashes, and respiratory diseases. Migrant farmworkers are six times more likely to have tuberculosis than the rest of the population. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about 300,000 farmworkers suffer from acute pesticide poisoning and have the highest rate of toxic chemical injuries which can cause neurological deficiencies and cancer. They also have injuries like back and knee problems, cuts and swellings and other types of injuries. The worst part is that 85% of migrant and seasonal farmworkers completely lack health coverage. When farmworkers don’t have health coverage they tend to endure any pain and health conditions that they may have because going to the doctors is no option and its costly. A cost they cannot afford and time they cannot take off. Since Farmworkers move constantly following various harvests, they do not have a stable residency and the residency requirements needed for Medicaid create an access barrier making then ineligible for health care. People who

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don’t have health care are less likely to go to the doctors or in case of an injury won’t seek medical help. One reason being is that it is too expensive the other they don’t want their immigration status known. “If migrant farmworkers do not have access medical care before a condition escalates to an emergency situation, they are more likely to adopt a ‘wait and see’ attitude”. This attitude can lead for them to become very ill and even cause death. In a study done by the American cancer society and Paul K. Mills PHD that of 139,000 farm workers in California, more than 3,600 cancer diagnoses were recorded between 1988 and 2010. While interviewing the immigration lawyer. He expressed that there has been a high number of cases for COVID-19 in the farm working community. I followed up with other articles that confirmed that cases were rising in the farm working community. In Monterey County, California, farmworkers accounted for 36% of COVID-19 cases. In Salinas valley the number quadrupled from 413 to 1,748 cases. Farmworkers are expected to work long hours in minimum wage and still be able to handle their health problems on their own and not worry about being prepared for emergency disasters. Farmworkers should be able to have the access to health care and be taken care of to be able to work and live a more healthy life as well as employers give more breaks and shade because they are a big part and work hard to feed the nation.

There are also two big barriers that farmworkers face and that is language and fear. During the first testing site I went to. Many workers did not speak English and many only knew Mixtec language (one of the native languages in Oaxaca) and knew a little bit of Spanish. She

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was having a hard time trying to talk to me and I did my best to talk with her and try to understand some of the language. Some of the words I was able to understand but mostly I was not able to. She did end up calling her son whom I spoke with. To be able to finish helping with her Testing demographic application. There were others who could not read or write and needed assistance with their application. Information can also not get to them. If they only get information in English and only Spanish, they will not even look at it and think it is not important. If they get the information in Spanish and do not speak Spanish, the same effect will happen. Many of the farmworkers were not aware of how to stay safe and were really worried about what would happen if they tested positive or what the testing would be like. After telling them how the test worked, how to self-isolate or quarantine and just having a genuine conversation, I saw the change in them and felt a lot more relieve and calm. Fear is not just about testing positive for COVID-19 and having to isolate, there is a great fear and mistrust for government agency. With the many attacks by the current Trump administration have done to the immigrant community. Many are fearful of information given or provided to be used by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE). Fifty-three percent of Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are undocumented.10 “Many migrant farmworkers have a justifiable fear that they will draw unwanted attention to members of their family or community who do not have legal status within the United States”.

Recommendations

With all the information I was able to gather and all the information provided by the interviewees. As well as the insufficient resources available to Farmworkers I want to urge the county of Santa Clara to invest more on the community of farmworkers in Gilroy in where about 8,000 farmworkers are being employed by creating a coalition or network that specializes in the migrant farm working community.

The members of this coalition need to be immigrant advocates, culturally proficient and understanding of the major issues affecting farmworkers lives. In doing this there will be more focus and farmworkers will be able to have more available resources and people to count on that will be advocating for them, in the county. The public health should provide pop up clinics twice a month that offers vaccinations, checkups, physicals, and aid kits to have at home or at work. The aid kits can include rash ointments, band aids and alcohol wipes or another necessary item needed. This will help them have some available and free health care. The public health, CERT and the coalition once created should also provide information workshops such as safety and preparedness, legal help, about public charge, and other informational workshops. These workshops will inform farmworkers on how to stay safe and be more informed about issues that affect them in their daily lives as well. The pop-up clinics and workshops should be done on Sundays when farmworkers have more free time to attend unlike work days where there can be a low turnout. The county also needs to expand the language access team to include more languages, interpreters, and translators. This will be very beneficial specially since there are more than 100 languages spoken in the county. Also, translators and interpreters are need in the pop-up clinics, testing sites and workshops for those who speak a different language other than English. Lastly for that county to have complete confidentiality with the information provided by the undocumented farmworkers.

Conclusion

During my research I was able to confirm the insufficient resources, the lack of support provided to farmworkers and how they live day by day afraid living in the shadows. They are not just afraid of losing their jobs, they also worry for their health, their families, if they have enough, what will happen to them. This is a constant battle. Working for unjust wages and having to have the mentality of I must put up with everything because that is the only way should not be the way. They should be treated with dignity and respect. They should be able to have access to health care knowing how dangerous and difficult their work is which can bring many injuries and health issues. I am hopeful that the county will step up and take my recommendations to make a change in the lives of our hard-working farm working community. They deserve to be heard and be giving the resources they need. I know that if we start here many other counties will follow, I will continue to advocate to see my recommendations be a
reality. I want to see the change in the county then in the state and finally across the nation. I want to end with a quote by Dr Ed Zuroweste “the health care of farmworkers is an issue of human rights. We’re exposing farmworkers to work-related health problems. We’re exposing them to these dangers and then not providing them with access to health care to identify and solve their problems. The health of a farmworker is a moral issue”.

References:


Marelyn

New American Fellowship 2020

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Introduction

Under the Obama administration, a 69-page National Security Council guidebook was created to prepare for future pandemics like COVID-19. The Donald Trump Administration eliminated this guidebook and the group of advisors that worked on it. The novel Coronavirus started to spread rapidly and quickly caught up with the United States’ inadequate response. Everyone that is living in this country is paying the price because the Trump Administration ignored the warning signs of the harmful virus. COVID-19 has impacted many lives, families, and communities, especially those that have been disproportionately affected by systemic racism and oppression. The virus and its aftermath especially impacted the immigrant community in terms of health, access to basic needs, employment, and lack of financial resources. Many immigrants have lost their jobs, lost hours that result in loss of income. Even if individuals were lucky to keep their job amidst the crisis, they are at an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 as essential workers-the majority of them being immigrants. Many essential workers do not have the option of staying home because if they are not working, they cannot financially support their families, meaning many immigrants have made the uncomfortable decision to continue working even if that means having a higher chance of being exposed to COVID-19.

Though there have been some resources to support the immigrant community, barriers exist to accessing the limited resources available. For that reason, some communities are organizing on their own to address the lack of resources and to coordinate access to those resources that are available. One of such examples can be observed in the Valley Palms Apartments. Valley Palms Apartments, a large, densely populated low-income apartment complex, is home to a community of over 3,000 individuals where the great majority of the
families are either immigrant or mixed with some immigrant members. As many as 80% of adults living in this complex identify as monolingual Spanish speakers. The neighborhood leaders, Valley Palms Unidos, and their partners, including the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit (NSU) of the Santa Clara County Probation Department, and SOMOS Mayfair, have leveraged resources to collaboratively respond to disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on their families, neighbors, and community.

In this research project, I present both general and local effects of COVID-19 pandemics on immigrant community members and the available resources that are created by different entities, including immigrants themselves. I present my findings and recommendations for local government officials and also analyze what kind of data is still needed and what future research needs to address.

**Background**

Since COVID-19 began to spread throughout the United States, Santa Clara County implemented guidelines to slow the spread of the virus and keep the community safe. Santa Clara County has led the efforts to fully shut down to flatten the curve of the virus’ spread in our community. However, it is important to acknowledge the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 in neighborhoods or communities that have, for generations, been affected by systemic racism. In low-income neighborhoods, like the Valley Palms/Tully-Ocala Neighborhood in the 95122 zip code of East San Jose, many individuals are more likely to be essential workers, more likely to have health conditions that contribute to the risk of suffering from COVID-19, less likely to have access to adequate healthcare, more likely to be living paycheck-to-paycheck where even the slightest change to monthly income is detrimental to housing and food security. Youth in
high-risk neighborhoods are more likely to attend schools in districts that have less funding available to address the burgeoning “digital divide,” and are more likely to be English-learners, thereby creating additional barriers to success in a distance-learning environment. In addition, youth and families in dense neighborhoods like Valley Palms have less access to open space and even when parks are available in the surrounding neighborhood, little thought is given to the other dynamics, such as gang violence, that prevent the use of parks and public spaces. The impacts of COVID-19 are greater in low-income neighborhoods where the majority of families are Black and Brown, many of them immigrants of varying statuses. However, despite the increased risk to the immigrant community, it is important to highlight how the immigrant community has also risen in response to this crisis. The focus of this research is to highlight the Valley Palms neighborhood as a case study for understanding the impacts of COVID-19 in the immigrant community in Santa Clara County and the simultaneous community-driven solutions that have arisen from neighborhood-leaders coming together to address the impacts in their community.

**Literature Review**

The coronavirus is an illness that is caused by a virus and can be spread from person to person. COVID-19 is spreading quickly and unfortunately, there is no vaccine for this virus, which makes it more difficult to manage the spread. The symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild or no symptoms to severe illness. In Santa Clara County, the Public Health Department has been tracking data to better understand where and how COVID-19 has spread. As news came out from the Governor of California about what needs to happen, in Santa Clara County some businesses had to be temporarily closed for the safety of everyone living in this
county. These businesses were closed immediately due to COVID-19, indoor closures include restaurants, bars and breweries, wineries & tasting rooms, movie theaters, family entertainment centers, zoos and museums, and card rooms, fitness centers, places of worship and cultural ceremonies like weddings and funerals, indoor protests, offices for non-critical infrastructure sectors, personal care services, hair salons and barbershops, and malls.

According to Magaña Lopez and M. Holmes (2020), raids on immigrant communities during the pandemic threaten the county’s public health, it explicitly says that ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) are violating public health recommendations. Having this information shared brings fear to the immigrant community. Unfortunately, this brings more stress to the community as the worry about COVID-19 and ICE. While we don’t have any indicators that ICE actions have happened in our County, seeing on TV and reading about enforcement instances elsewhere in the country, has almost equally chilling effects.

ICE is creating distrust in public health institutions. Trust was broken when local, state, and federal governments first ordered everyone to remain inside their homes to lower the curve of COVID-19, yet there is a continuation to raid immigrant and minority communities. In Santa Clara County many immigrants hear this news and cannot stop worrying about what would happen to their community at any time of the day. Additionally, ICE continues to endanger public health by continuing to operate detention centers where the spread of COVID-19 is rampant.

It is no secret that the immigrant community understands that the federal government has made zero acknowledgment of low-income immigrants who are struggling during this outbreak. Immigrants are afraid to access health care and other services and public benefits since the
updated rule on public charge that Donald Trump announced. The public charge rule declares that grounds of inadmissibility are reasons that a person could be denied a green card, visa, or admission into the United States. As well as when they are already in the US and using certain public benefits, that might trigger public charge at the time when they apply for a green card. In 2019, a report from Kaiser Family Foundation found that “23% of immigrants with legal status are uninsured” and there is 45% of undocumented immigrants are uninsured. The question that many should be asking is where these vulnerable immigrants can go to check if they have symptoms of COVID-19, after free testing sites, and if they tested positive whether all COVID-19 treatment would be provided free of charge as U. S. CIS declared in March. This question is important not only for those who don’t have health insurance but also for those who do have some insurance and wonder if long-term treatments would destroy their families financially. Some immigrants also do not want to use public benefits because that can ruin their chances of legalization, or permanent resident status in the United States.

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) reports on how immigrants are impacted by COVID-19 as workers and frontline industries staff are being excluded from federal relief funds and other resources that can potentially help many immigrant workers. There are about 6 million immigrants who are risking their lives at the frontlines by working occupations, like health care, food production, and transportation. The other 6 million immigrants are working in industries like food services and domestic household services and have been economically affected. These immigrant workers are at the frontlines making sure that the rest of U.S. residents remain healthy and fed during COVID-19. It is important to visualize these hard-working immigrant workers
that are cleaning hospital rooms, staffing grocery stores, and producing food, but are left with very few resources themselves.

Immigrants were left out of federal relief and many have their personal opinion about whether they agree with this decision. This outbreak did not pretentiously affect one group of people, or one country, but has had devastating global effects. This should indicate that everyone no matter of social background should receive the necessary funds needed to survive during these hardships. On April 24, U.S. Congress had passed four bipartisan federal pandemic-relief packages. However, immigrants were excluded from the $2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. It is eye-opening to read the MPI reports stating that 15.4 million people were excluded from the stimulus payments and this group, there were 9.9 million unauthorized immigrants who were excluded again ignoring the fact that immigrants have families and need to provide for them. Even U.S. citizens and green card holders were excluded from this type of assistance if they lived in households with unauthorized immigrants and filed taxes jointly.

**Methodology**

I conducted my research by gathering articles and information that was being provided to me. While working at Valley Palms Unidos I was able to connect with the promotoras (leaders) of the community. I decided due to time to only interview two promotoras about COVID-19 and how they have responded to COVID-19 and what their neighbors have experienced or even said about this difficult situation due to COVID-19. There were couples reports, data, and articles that helped understand this pandemic outbreak that is causing hardship to the immigrant community
in Santa Clara County. Since this summer I was on site I was able to observe everything that was happening at Valley Palms with their community. This experience just made my research more clear about the hardships that these people among them being immigrants were facing due to COVID-19.

**Findings**

**Valley Palms Unidos and Partners at the Valley Palms Family Resource Center**

Through my placement as a New American Fellow with the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit (NSU) of the Santa Clara County Probation Department, I had the pleasure of working directly with the Valley Palms neighborhood leaders, Valley Palms Unidos. The NSU is a primary prevention unit within the Probation Department that uses a data-driven approach to partner with the community in preventing neighborhood-level violence. According to the 2019 NSU Annual Report, “NSU’s strategy is best described as the intersection between a public health and criminal justice approach to improving community safety and promoting protective factors that increase social connection and community resilience” (NSU, 2019). The NSU partnership and investment in the SOMOS Mayfair leadership development model over the last few years has contributed to the evolution of Valley Palms Unidos from a hierarchical neighborhood association to a collective of neighborhood leaders that are responsible for long-lasting changes in their neighborhood that will have generational impacts. This increased community resilience allowed for a community-driven response to COVID-19 in the Valley Palms neighborhood.

Since the beginning of the shelter-in-place, NSU and VPU have taken steps to respond to the
growing community needs resulting from COVID-19 by providing resources to increase food
access, housing security, and community testing.

Together, VPU and NSU addressed food insecurity by staffing the Valley Palms Family
Center after receiving permission from VPM Management to host essential services effectively.
The Valley Palms Unidos Promotoras leveraged their existing partnerships with Second Harvest
of Silicon Valley and the East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) to replicate their
mobile Summer Lunch Program to get hot, nutritious meals out to the community during
immediate school closures. The Valley Palms/Tully-Ocala Neighborhood is one of the County’s
pockets where all students qualify for and depend on, free school meals. By leveraging their
partnerships and recruiting community volunteers, VPU began safely serving up to 255 lunches
from the family resource center. Since the second week of March, VPU and NSU have served
over 20,000 meals to youth and adults in the Valley Palms lunch program, which operates 12
pm-1 pm Monday-Friday and requires at least two volunteers per day and daily reporting to
ESUHSD staff. Additionally, VPU expanded their existing monthly distribution program to more
effectively meet the growing need for food in their neighborhood as a result of COVID-19. The
VPU Promotoras, with the support of the Probation Department, implemented an additional
distribution in March thereby doubling the amount of food served from 28,000lbs. to 56,000lbs
for that month. Each subsequent month, VPU grew the number of families served from 280
(pre-COVID) to over 350 families served during the pandemic.

From the food access programs, VPU and NSU learned more about what neighbors were
experiencing as a result of COVID-19 and began to staff the onsite family resource center
accordingly. Initially, the family resource center was open four hours a day and then grew to
eight hours per day, depending on the requests for appointments and services. The most
commonly requested services were supported with housing requalification packets and with
tenant-property management concerns due to late rent payment agreements. For the entire month
of May 2020, the center was operating eight hours per day for 6 days a week to meet this need.
Due to COVID-19, many families were experiencing a loss of income which resulted in many
being nervous about no longer qualifying to live at Valley Palms Apartments since VPM
Management Inc., began the process of requalifying all households in mid-April. VPM
Management Inc., only provided the eight-page packets required by all adults in the household in
English, knowing that the majority of adults in Valley Palms households only speak Spanish,
Vietnamese, and Hindi. Keeping in mind that many of these individuals are immigrants or have
relatives living with them who are immigrants, there’s an added fear of being treated differently
because of their status. Thankfully NSU was able to recruit 15 community partners from
Catholic Charities, SCC Public Health Violence Reduction Program, SCC Office of Education
CTC, Council member Esparza’s Office, and VP community leaders to support and complete the
requalification packets in various languages. Having this sort of support so people can keep their
apartments, no matter what background they come from shows that this community has
achieved unity.

In addition to the housing requalification packets, Valley Palms tenants also requested
support for filling out the necessary forms and submitting them to receive permission to pay rent
at a later date. Tenants wishing to start a late rent payment agreement are required to show proof
of income loss due to COVID-19 and write letters requesting this agreement. The VPU and NSU
dedicated over 180 hour-long appointments to meet this growing need. In addition to the
appointments, VPU and NSU leveraged additional partnerships, like with the Silicon Valley Law Foundation and Vecinos Activos (Active Neighbors) of SOMOS Mayfair, to confirm that the information shared with their neighbors was up-to-date and correct. While rent payment was the greatest concern to the majority of Valley Palms tenants, VPU creatively leveraged partnerships with First 5 and Catholic Charities as well as dedicated at least $6,000 of their pro-social funding to ensure Valley Palms families had access to essential items. With the money saved from not purchasing soap, diapers, wipes, toothpaste, and more, Valley Palms families had additional money to save for rent and other costs. Additionally, recognizing that undocumented immigrants were left out of federal relief funds, VPU distributed an emergency relief fund for those that were not eligible for federal funding. SOMOS Mayfair received funding to distribute to the community and allocated $20,000 s to the Valley Palms community. SOMOS Mayfair appointed the VPU Promotoras (leaders) to develop a process to fairly distribute funds. It was decided that these funds were for those who were undocumented and ineligible for state or federal relief and loss of income due to COVID-19 with a preference for single-parent households and/or households where both adults lost their jobs. Following such criteria, 40 families were able to receive $500. Alongside that, Sacred Heart distributed State funds for the undocumented community and these were accessible through an online application process. The VPU Promotoras (leaders) learned the process of applying for these funds and then were able to support their neighbors in the application process during a walk-in resource connection. The onsite family resource center was instrumental in VPU’s efforts to safely respond to their community’s unique needs as a result of COVID-19.
Finally, VPU and NSU were asked by the County’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to host one of the first pop-up COVID-19 testing sites in East San Jose. The Public Health Department and EOC recognized the higher risk for COVID-19 in certain zip-codes of the County. Valley Palms is in the 95122 zip code where risk was high and the EOC, VPU, and NSU believed that the community was well-positioned to host a site given the organizing and leadership of the Promotoras. In the 95122 area, there has been a higher risk for COVID-19 and this caused great fear and misinformation about the virus to spread in the community. Rumors that “COVID-19 is a lie and it is a way that the government is trying to control us,” “the testing equipment is unsanitized, and already has COVID-19 and that is how they can get sick,” and many others rumors like these have been prevalent, especially given the common distrust in government amongst the immigrant community. Despite the grand effort to host one of the first pop-up community sites in East San Jose, VPU, NSU, and the EOC were surprised by the low number of folks who came to get tested at Valley Palms. In two days, only 180 individuals were tested but the VPU and partners learned a great deal about just how much fear and misinformation were spreading through the community. The lessons learned were valuable and although 180 is not a large number of tests, it is 180 people that might not have trusted any other location enough to go and get tested. VPU has since worked on sharing the correct information with their neighbors and also encouraging neighbors to participate in other pop-up testing sites in East San Jose.

**Interviews from Promotoras**
I had the advantage of interviewing two Promotoras from Valley Palms Unidos and get their point of view on the impacts COVID-19 has had on their community. These questions helped me understand how they felt about this hardship that everyone is facing.

In the first interview with the Promotora One, I wanted to ask where she received the information about COVID-19. As stated before, there have been rumors and fake news about COVID-19. Unlikely enough, she mentioned that she received news from tv news, messages alerts, and trusted friends. Promotora One expressed that at the beginning of COVID-19 her husband stopped working at his only job and brought many concerns and thoughts through their heads. They were not obtaining any sort of income in the first two weeks. As a leader, she is more aware of what her neighbors talk about regarding helping their community. She discussed a wide range of topics, from providing for basic needs, having a testing site in their community, to having a list of resources for those who may not know about it. Sharing information about disaster relief funds for the immigrant community was especially instrumental, in her own opinion. I asked if she wanted to share any ideas with the government about helping the immigrant community and her response was to remind them that immigrants are hard-working individuals who pay their taxes and help the economy. Just like any other person in this county, they deserve the same aid and funds during these difficult times.

In the second interview with Promotora Two, the same questions were asked and there were some similarities in their responses, as well as differences in the way the questions were answered about the community. When the question was asked about where she received information about the beginning of COVID-19 pandemics, similarly she said through news, flyers, County materials, TV, and social media. On a more personal level, I wanted to know how
COVID-19 had impacted her family. Her family was impacted by COVID-19 by the increased stress of not being safe and secure, the idea of the increased risks when being in contact with others. Also, her relatives are not employed anymore because of COVID-19. Promotora Two are well connected with many neighbors at Valley Palms, so I took the opportunity to ask what she had heard from her neighbors about COVID-19 and the impacts that it has brought to them. She mentioned how many are concerned about COVID-19 and others who do not believe that COVID-19 is real. Some examples that were gathered from Promotora Two, as to why some believe that COVID-19 isn't real were also indicating that they thought it was a manipulation from the government. “It can be that the rest of the people are making a show out of it or making it a big ideal,” they thought. Unfortunately, because many think this way, they are not taking care of themselves or others around them. Promotora Two knows someone that has tested positive for COVID-19 and has come to her and the community for help such as access to food and help with rent. It was clear that many from tents are not working and are facing the consequences of not paying all their rent. In the community where many are not aware of the resources or whether they qualified for certain funds and resources, additional support is essential. It was shocking to learn that some of her neighbors by chance were able to receive the stimulus check from the government, but the great majority didn’t receive the stimulus checks. In response to what VPU has done since COVID-19, she explained that all the Promotoras have worked tirelessly to help their community; advocating for them, having testing onsite for the community, have hot meals Monday through Friday, distributing baskets for basic resources like (soap, self-care products, and food), and having monthly food distribution from the Second Harvest Food Bank. Promotora Two shared her ideas on how the government could help the immigrant community. These ideas
include rent forgiveness for rent during these difficult times and allowing them to receive financial assistance funds like everyone else.

**Undocumented Relief Network Report**

According to bay Area Undocumented Cash Relief Network (2020), “Santa Clara County stands out for its strong public-private partnerships, which predate the pandemic…” Also being the most populous county in the region, it has nearly 200,000 undocumented residents. There were funds that were given out by the local chapter of Catholic Charities distributing state funds, Destination Home and its partners including Sacred Heart Community Service and Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and SOLO Fund, but was not communicated well enough for the immigrant community to hear and understand requirements for each one. There was a state fund and this was for residents of Santa Clara County. It functioned as a first come first serve basis with a capacity of serving up to 12,000. This also meant that it was a $500 flat amount per person or $1,000 per household and the organization selected to handle this fund was Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. The CIRF fund (SOLO Solidarity Fund) is for undocumented immigrants in Santa Clara County who are currently in removal proceedings or have an immediate family member in immigration detention. The amount of assistance per person is $1,000 and the creation and administration of this fund is a partnership of Human Agenda and the Rapid Response Network of Santa Clara. There were additional financial assistance funds during the past four months. For example, Destination Home’s COVID-19 Financial Assistance Fund was also for all residents for Santa Clara County who were low income and affected by the pandemics. This was divided into two phases, on phase one there was a $2,600 flat amount per household fund and only those with less than 80% median income could obtain this assistance.
COVID-19 is very real, and it has created a dramatic impact on many people’s lives, especially in the immigrant community. It was clear that this country was not prepared for a pandemic outbreak like coronavirus. Even looking back five years earlier, when former President Obama gave a speech warning the country that there could be a time where there would be some airborne diseases and that it was needed to plan an infrastructure globally. Now data is showing the number of people suffering in various ways, including shutting down their businesses, losing their jobs, loss of work hours, being more exposed to the virus, and so on. Many who are immigrants are dealing with these types of hardships due to COVID-19. There is limited help that this community has received even though they are having to deal with similar problems as everyone else in this county, in the state of California, and as a whole country. There needs to be more outreach to share the resources that are out there for people, especially for the immigrant community.

**Recommendations**

Based on research findings, there needs to be other ways that information is given out to the immigrant community. As well as to demand the state for an inclusive plan to be developed and ensure resources for the immigrant community and all sorts of communities for emergencies to recover from COVID-19. This can range from funds to cover rent forgiveness to having a food distribution. Also, we work alongside legislators to secure sufficient UndocuFund with the state, foundations, and private funding to recover from COVID-19. We all need to recognize that this needs to happen beyond COVID-19 because for far too long there has been limited support for the immigrant community.
Conclusion

COVID-19 has changed everyone’s lives and caused different effects. One thing is clear that no one was prepared for an outbreak like this and difficult times sprung up fairly quickly. Everyone was able to see the news about people going insane at stores like Costco and buying large amounts of water bottles, toilet paper, sanitizers, and much more. During that stage, many were in a panic mode because we were not prepared at all. Being able to see how Valley Palms Unidos in collaboration with NSU worked hard to supply, give, and support their community due to COVID-19, made me realize that this community is a great example for others to follow. Many other communities can benefit from doing the same collaboratively. This is fairly new and COVID-19 is happening now and hope that as a community we flatten the curve so many businesses can open, families to see each, and friends to gather without fear of COVID-19.
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The Implementation of Effective Interventions:
An Intersectional Look at Intimate-Partner Violence (IPV) & Child Maltreatment in Santa Clara County

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Abstract

This paper examines the implementation of a report that looks at both intimate partner violence and child maltreatment, along with better ways to help survivors and their families. The research focuses on the extent that Santa Clara County implemented the recommendations stated in the *Effective Interventions* report and its effectiveness thus far. The first part of the study looks at the guiding framework and analyses the importance of looking at this work in an intersectional lens. With data analysis and interviews, the paper investigates the changes made after twenty years since the implementation of the pilot began. Additionally, the research analyses ways that the immigrant community in Santa Clara County, both documented and undocumented, have benefitted but also exploring ways to assist them better. The final section of the paper includes the findings and recommendations for advocacy groups, courts, the county, and other essential stakeholders to consider. Ensuring that survivors of all types of gender-violence feel comfortable seeking resources and a continual assessment of ways to improve its services is vital. Becoming more trauma-informed and investigating the impact of COVID-19 are essential topics to prioritize moving forward.
The Implementation of Effective Interventions: An Intersectional Look at Intimate Partner Violence & Child Maltreatment in Santa Clara County

The well-being of all members of a family unit has been the goal for many communities all over the country. Ensuring that individuals who require dire assistance and resources can acquire them most safely and effectively possible is vital. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an issue that is still persistent in homes and can take form in economic, verbal, physical, or sexual abuse. Culture, gender norms, and the act of maintaining power in a relationship have been some of the reasons why domestic violence occurs. In some cases, children are witnesses or have also been subject to harm by the same perpetrators, leading to the removal of children from their homes. It is crucial to analyze further the ways to improve the way that institutions, community-based organizations, judges, agencies, and other essential stakeholders respond when this is the case. A report was written to increase awareness and propose policies that improve the well-being of families.

This paper will investigate the intersection of IPV and child maltreatment and examine the recommendations in the Effective Interventions report and its application in Santa Clara County. Additionally, the research will analyze the way that the immigrant community, both documented and undocumented, is affected and examine ways to address the new emergent needs.

Background

The Effective Interventions report, fully titled as the Effective Interventions in Domestic Violence & Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice, was initially published in 1999. Presented by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Family Violence Department, this created a conversation around ways that advocates, agencies,
and courts can better address family safety to create a system that better assesses their needs (Schechter, Edleson, 1999, p. 5). For example, it placed attention on the importance of cross-systems collaboration, coordination, and information sharing to better respond to survivors and child welfare, providing a framework to do so. It specifically focused on the work that the juvenile and family courts, domestic violence (DV) advocates, child protective services, and agencies can do to develop and improve their methods of addressing the intersection. In the case of Santa Clara County, they included law enforcement in the initiative. Overall, the report consists of a total of 16 principles and 67 recommendations that highlight the importance of responding to DV and child maltreatment and ways that the communities work towards family safety and child welfare.

In the early 2000s, the federal government chose six specific areas and counties that would implement some of the recommendations presented in the report. Santa Clara County was one that received funding towards the application of practices that aimed for the report’s goal and vision (Goodmark, Rosewater, 2008, p.5). Some of the major strategies that the report highlights were the importance of “trust-building, collaboration, and system changes” (Ibid.). For example, one recommendation in the report places attention to the collaboration between child protective services and child-welfare agencies with domestic violence organizations and courts to allow for better response and assessment of cases (Schechter et al., 1999, p. 57). Another essential focus is on the continual evaluation of the progress that these groups are doing and creating a more welcoming environment for survivors, especially those from communities of color. Being culturally competent and responsive is crucial in ensuring that individuals feel comfortable in seeking services.
Literature Review

Twenty years have passed since the implementation of the recommendations in Santa Clara County. An article that explores the changes in the county is titled “The Santa Clara County Greenbook Story: From Theory to Transformation,” written by Judge Leonard Edwards and Judge Katherine Lucero, and was published in 2019. Both were key contributors to this initiative and its implementation in the early 2000s, with Judge Edwards also consulting the report itself. The article looks at improvements that took place due to the recommendations in the Effective Interventions report. For instance, it details eight specific projects that the county focused on to make these changes possible. One of them includes the “development and training of domestic violence advocates,” which focuses on a shortage of advocates and the funding to ensure that agencies can “assist families 24/7” (Edwards, Lucero, 2019, p. 56). Other projects include “cross-training and building internal capacity,” “perpetrator accountability and services,” and “multidisciplinary response” (Ibid, p. 56). The report analyzed other changes that have taken place for over twenty years. However, the next step should be to investigate the experience of communities of color and immigrants, one which the report does not delve into detail.

Examining the experiences of survivors of IPV in the systems they navigate, like the courts, is central to recognize what needs to improve. An article titled “Minority Judges’ Recommendations for Improving Court Services for Battered Women of Color: A Focus Group Report” analyses the present obstacles when “minority and immigrant women go to court” and the “racial discrimination and bias [that] may prevent them from receiving appropriate treatment” (Williams, Jenkins, 2015, p. 177). There are added barriers when it comes to immigrant individuals who may not know English proficiently, may not know the court vocabulary used, or must deal with judges who are not culturally responsive. Santa Clara County
has addressed this need to some extent by working with “faith-based and culturally specific organizations to develop resources and solutions” that allowed for community input (Edwards, Lucero, 2019, p. 65). However, there are further steps that should take place to ensure that more individuals are comfortable seeking resources and without preconceptions.

**Methodology**

Data analysis and interviews took place to assess the current needs and to examine the efforts that have taken place. Two interviews were done to evaluate the implementation of recommendations in Santa Clara County. One of these individuals works in one of the five agencies of the county that offers services to survivors of gender-violence and was present at the beginning of the process. The other interviewee was one of the coordinators for this initiative when it first began and was a previous advocate for survivors of gender-based violence. Due to confidentiality, the name of these individuals has been changed to interviewee 1 and 2.

**Findings**

One of the first findings of the research was that this initiative raised awareness on the topics of IPV and child maltreatment. From the establishment and projects undertaken because of this initiative, there have been immediate changes but also long-term goals that took effect. For example, there has been a decrease in children removed from their home years following the initiative. The average daily population in shelters decreased from 133 to 30 in the years between 2000 and 2005 (Edwards, Lucero, 2019, p. 66). Additionally, more resources and the improvement of services were an outcome of this initiative. For example, the second interviewee talked about child welfare and how they made decisions in previous years regarding children in domestic violence cases.

“We spent a lot of time looking at everybody’s protocol, policies, and forms. This was an important part of the project because we [found] that for child welfare...when deciding about
whether to remove children from [survivors], it was not about safety. This was the point where we were looking closely at how child welfare made decisions on removing children related to domestic violence.” - Interviewee 2 (personal communication, July 29, 2020).

Additionally, there was a greater emphasis on relationship building that has benefited those involved. The eighth project that was implemented in the county focused on a partnership to “ensure that providers and professionals working in the system had increased understanding of how each other’s systems responded” including identifying “threats to safety or wellbeing,” and “how support could be enhanced” (Edwards, Lucero, 2019, p. 65).

“Even though people disagreed, they got to know each other on a personal level. You need to have these relationships to support families in the community. You have, sometimes, frustration, but relationship building was a big key thing that happened.” - Interviewee 2

A second finding is that systems have become more aware of the diversity of the county. The “Respect Culture and Community Initiative (RCCI)” was the seventh project that Santa Clara County undertook; one of its goals was to address the “unique needs of the various cultures in [this] diverse county (Ibid., p. 65). The county is home to more than 100 languages and numerous cultures. For this, advocates working with survivors and the systems they navigate through must be as accessible as possible.

“[It is about] approaching culture with curiosity and respect. Even in the Latinx community, there are so many layers like being foreign-born, first-generation, younger, or older. It is approaching each person as an individual without trying to minimize any stereotypes or biases, which allows us to establish rapport with clients.” - Interviewee 1 (personal communication, July 27, 2020)

The third finding is on the present fear and insecurity the immigrant population feels when seeking or the inability to explore resources. This is also the case when they are discouraged from seeking services because law enforcement may “pose a threat of deportation
[due] to the person’s unresolved immigration status” (Williams, Jenkins, 2015, p. 177). Although the police state that they do not consider immigration status, it is still a significant factor in why survivors refrain from seeking resources.

“Even though the police say they do not ask people what their status is, it does not matter if they do not ask...people are still afraid of the police. The perpetrator can continue with false facts that you are going to get deported, and [that] you are going to lose your kids.”

- Interviewee 2

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, below are four recommendations.

1. **Ensuring the Collection and Reporting of Data**: Santa Clara County and stakeholders should continue to collect data on the progress of these initiatives.

2. **Joint-Trainings & Collaborations**: Continue to coordinate training with key stakeholders and promote collaboration to ensure that the non-offending parent and their children are safe.

3. **Convening with the Community**: Collect helpful information from community-based organizations that offer direct services to immigrant communities.

4. **Culturally Responsive**: Continue to attend to the large number of languages present in Santa Clara County and continue to improve the services offered.
   a. For courts: Ensure that judges are trained and are making decisions that are based on cultural competency.

The first recommendation refers to collecting data to see the mapped-out progress of what the work has been to identify what is working, what is not, and what we need to do to intervene. For
instance, looking at the data on child welfare cases that involve domestic violence and, if any, resulted in children taken from their non-offending parent. Data will inform if the current methods are successful in aiming that all decisions made are in the best interest of the child and their non-offending parent.

From the first five years of the implementation of the Effective Interventions initiative, there were discussions, meetings, and collaborations. The second recommendation will allow for dialogue to continue and will contribute to the element of relationship building. For instance, it is working with the Domestic Violence Council to continue the conversation about how to support systems. The Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention has already begun to do important stakeholder meetings that will inform the decision-making taking place.

The third recommendation will allow the county to have a better understanding of the current needs, especially due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Community-based organizations that work directly with the community have greater rapport. Discussing gender-based violence, especially in communities of color, is not easy. Those who offer direct services and have a closer relationship with the community will allow for better communication and understanding of the most pressing issues.

The fourth recommendation highlights the significance of continuing to improve the services the county offers. Language access, for instance, should always be provided and with translators who are reliable and proficient. Cultural competency and responsiveness in courts, domestic violence agencies, law enforcement, and others are significant to the experience that immigrants have with these systems. Having diverse staff, ensuring “well trained and available translators and translated materials,” and “friendly and helpful staff” makes a meaningful change and allows immigrant individuals to seek services comfortably and have a better experience overall.
For survivors who choose to take the legal route in seeking to open a custody case or other type of action regarding family matters, the ultimate decision lies with family court judges. It is crucial to ensure that judges are trained and informed of the implications of their transformative decisions. As recommended in a study that investigated ways to improve court services, culturally responsiveness should not be treated as “an ‘add on’ but…essential to making sure that all individuals who come before the court are treated fairly and have equal access to justice” (Williams, Jenkins, 2015, p. 189).

Conclusion

Given COVID-19, the county must become more conscious about the added barriers of being an immigrant. Obstacles they face include financial insecurity, stress, uneasiness about legal status, and the current political climate. The county should successfully reach and make these resources available to vulnerable communities. Due to COVID-19, there has been a decrease in the “number of victims seeking help” where “abusers may have an increased sense of control and power” (Zero, Geary, 2020, pg. 57). Adapting to a pandemic has been challenging for both providers and their clients. However, steps have been taken to ensure that we accommodate survivors and their children to the changing circumstances. The resiliency of survivors and their children should push the county to focus on becoming more trauma-informed and ensure long-term support. Even if we cannot stop gender-based violence right away, we can take steps to change the narrative.
References


Identifying Best Practices:
strategies to prevent gender-based violence within immigrant communities

Introduction and Problem statement:
As gender-based violence is increasingly impacting the immigrant community, the need to improve and foster an atmosphere that is culturally competent and culturally sensitive to meet the individual or group needs is important for a successful prevention program. By evaluating the effectiveness and components of several prevention programs that can serve as best practices—such as the MAITRI and the Compadres Network—will determine the best strategies/approaches that serve these immigrant communities.

It is important to acknowledge that COVID-19 cannot be ignored or overlooked. This pandemic has become the new reality, changing everyone's lives and the sense of normality in this society. As a consequence, this pandemic can hinder the process to disrupt cycles of gender-based violence due to social distancing and the mandatory enactment order to stay at home in order to slow the spread of the virus.

Research Questions:
What are some effective culturally responsive approaches prevention strategies when working with the immigrant communities to address gender-based violence? How culturally practices and community wealth building can improve our understanding of gender-based violence and prevention strategies?

Background and Definitions:
Across the board, gender-based violence is a violation of human rights. Anyone whose self-autonomy has been violated becomes a victim of this crime. According to Meghan Ott (2017), Gender-Based Violence is a manifestation of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs against someone’s sex and gender identity that results in physical, emotional, and psychological trauma. The most impacted are girls and women who are predisposed to this occurrence issue, in fact, 1 in 3 women will encounter a type of GBV in their lifetime worldwide (Meghan Ott, 2017).

There are various forms of gender-based violence that extend across the globe and in the United States. For instance, the common thread forms in Santa Clara County are domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. As reported by "Domestic Violence: MedlinePlus" (2020), these forms of violence incorporates the following: Domestic violence by a spouse or partner, sexual assault by a family member, acquaintance, or a stranger, and human trafficking made by a trafficker. All interconnected violating the consent of a victim through force/coercion methods, manipulation, or attempted/complete rape.

The connection between these common threads derives in the abuse of power and control. It has been cultivated and rooted in the continuation of harmful gender norms and the propagation of rape culture that exists in today's society. This generational trauma caused by gender norms has resulted in vulnerabilities at the workplace, in family households, and other unsafe environments overtime (Meghan Ott, 2017). As a result, rape culture has been socially normalized impacting many communities including the immigrant community, therefore, it dismisses to hold accountable the person committing gender-based violence especially against women ("Rape culture – Women's center," 2020) This dissemination of information, most of
which is done through the media, creates misconstrue degradation messages through objectification, trivial sexual assault, misogyny, and sexually explicit jokes ("Rape culture – Women's center," 2020). As a result, these perpetrated cases of gender-based violence may go unreported due to the stigma of blaming victims or the lack of cultural support systems oftentimes.

Gender-based violence prevention is an important process for the eradication of all forms of GBV. According to the UN Women website, the eradication of such violence should expand even into the early life prevention stages that promote youth work to form healthy relationships and gender equality, which is often overlooked ("What we do," n.d.). Thus, missing the opportunity to rectify past mistakes and investing in sustainable models that already exist to prevent more cases of gender-based violence from happening in the first place. Another importance of gender-based violence prevention is that it challenges the inequalities and social norms in a supportive and empowering way. For example, successful components consist of educational programs, advocacy support, community awareness and mobilization that reinforces tolerance, acceptance, and identification of the particular needs of a community, as well as to dismantle the root causes that belong to each community ("What we do," n.d.).

Literature Review:

The impact of COVID-19 has created major worries and a serious setback to GBVP services. Zero & Geary (2020) describes this to be an "opportunistic infection of COVID-19". In other words, the opportunity and leverage for all abusers to complete acts of domestic violence while holding their victim in mere confinement and isolation. This can discourage those at risk from seeking prevention services and, most importantly, locating a safe place before violence occurs. The fear of many people,
especially the undocumented population of women, do not know what the future holds living in near proximity to their abuser. According to Zero and Geary (2020), COVID-19 has multiplied the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) for undocumented women due to fear of law enforcement rigid behavior, misinformed on available resources, language barrier, and legal status. Although these factors are well known and experience daily, in times of COVID-19, it has overwhelmingly intensified with other factors such as food and financial shortages affecting their livelihood, making it difficult to report abuse or obtain GBVP care in advance (Zero & Geary, 2020). Such is the case of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence program, where the number of people using GBVP resources has decreased for a similar reason, including control of daily activities by abusers and separation of families fed by anti-immigrant rhetoric (Zero & Geary, 2020).

Navigating these unprecedented circumstances will be full of difficulties and complexities, however, subsequent prevention recommendations and implementation have been introduced. For example, some prevention programs are incorporating direct phone hotline communication that is strategic and tactical. For instance, Kaiser Permanente Family Violence Prevention Program is now connecting with individuals virtually through telehealth services for healthy relationships that include intimate partner violence screening, provision of resources, and mental health counseling (Zero & Geary, 2020). Although it is a great start, it’s also important to be consciously minded of potential discomfort that might appear. For that reason, both Zero & Geary, 2020; Kofman & Garfin, 2020, recommend a model that ensures the safety of victims and survivors away from raising suspicions during calls, such as using encrypted questions
that provide "yes/no" answers after appropriate funding to develop more gender-based violence prevention safeguards.

**Methodology/ Findings:**

My analysis collection was based on prevention programs that the Office of Gender-Based Violence Prevention supports and Interviews that I conducted with the MAITRI, an organization centered around the South Asian community, and the National Compadres Network, an organization that serves a large group of Latinx individuals including but not limited to men support. Both are rooted in cultural practices making a positive impact in their community. Some of the MAITRI services include but are not limited to helpline, mental health, and legal advocacy to name a few. While the National Compadres Network includes healing circles and La Cultura Cura “Framework” to name a few. This framework builds on the transformational of human development through indigenous methods.

The difference is that MAITRI gives direct provider services and the National Compadres Network focuses on healing work that nurtures the mind, body, and spirit with ancestral medicine traits. The goal of this research is to identify promising prevention strategies that improve the well-being of immigrant individuals and to further this research by identifying issues that are unique to the immigrant community. Throughout my research, I identified two key findings: vulnerabilities in the immigrant communities such as power inequities and harmful gender norms. Second, the need to remove the stigma that views immigrants as violent. It’s almost forbidden or taboo to speak about violence because oftentimes of the negative behaviors and patterns passed down to us from previous generations that prevent many to express their emotions. Above all, immigrant communities are found to carry an immense amount of
strength and resilience despite the circumstances. Successful strategies that are universally useful across the board, include but are not limited to: relationship connection, support groups, advocacy, and education of the subject matter.

Many prevention programs who aim to serve immigrant communities and diverse populations are tailored to meet specific needs. In the Vietnamese community, the International Children Assistance Network (ICAN), assists in strengthening family and youth structure to eliminate all forms of violence. In doing so, it focuses on understanding the dimensions influenced by Vietnamese traditional beliefs and cultural parenting practices. Components include early childhood, the transition between youth and young adults, and families to form specific prevention programs. All made with the purpose to teach Vietnam families skills and opportunities to succeed in America. These include language development through the “Sensitive Encouragement Development through self-image” (SEEDS) program, arts enrichment program, youth programs, and parent workshops to name a few. Similarly, Coaching Boys Into Men, is a transformative diverse approach model that empowers young male athletes to make positive changes outside the sport. Simultaneously, striving to end dating violence, sexual assault, and harassment. This prevention strategy encourages mentoring so that coaches are someone who changes the trajectory of each individual's life. Therefore, mentorship is a universal structure that can be express as a coach, a father, or simply a friend in any population. As a result, it's shown to decrease sexist jokes, increases dialogue about respect, and identifies scenarios of violence (CBIM, 2018).

Recommendations:
With those reasons in mind, I urge the following recommendations to be implemented and invested more in order to uplift the immigrant communities using
already existing strategies and programs that are often overlooked. First, the need to focus on family unity creates a bridge with the increase in prevention services. One of the most important shared characteristics is the collective approach. It is about knowing the right steps for the collective group rather than a temporary solution that creates damage or disconnection within the family through separation. In doing so, the GBVP office should allocate funds to agencies that help restore family unity and interact with county departments along with community organizations as primary sources to develop an awareness of deeper issues in immigrant families. This way it will resolve the fear of separation of families when prevention services organizations intervene than law enforcement.

Second, invest in peer education and mentorship programs that focus on black and brown youth in the immigrant communities. There is a need for culturally tailored peer education programs that focuses solely on the struggles, among other components like GBV, that target black and brown youth. To ensure these changes, the County of Santa Clara should adopt models from other counties, such as the Alameda County which implemented, the Youth Alive program in Oakland, CA. The Youth Alive Program empowers black and brown youth to reduce violence in their home, school, and in their communities by creating leaders and advocates to make the change they want. This model also incorporates the expansion of youth uplifting other youth going through similar experiences in various workshops taught by them which the Santa Clara County needs to integrate.

Third, establish supportive trusted partnerships that protect cultural identity. In particular, the protection of immigration status and other living conditions in the US. Undoubtedly, someone that is undocumented especially new to the US, is more
susceptible to labor exploitation which includes gender-based violence issues by a partner or sex traffickers. It is important to expand and the county to invest more in organizations that focus on the protection of the immigrants. For instance, pilot programs that enhances awareness in redefining gender norms to break the cycles of violence. It will require spaces of dialogue that explore the topic of immigration and the relation of gender-based violence. In other words, dismantling the misconceptions and myths in the immigrant community, the need to normalize the discussion around gender-based violence, and touching based more in the community strength and resilience components that demonstrates not talked enough in the immigrant community.

Fourth, integrate more practice on holistic healing methods in the immigrant community. This will require development on community development promotion programs. There is a thread pattern with prevention services but very few services that focus on nurturing the individual’s positive conduct and the continuous support in building healthy relationships should be equally important as prevention. It is also important to recognize that violence is not part of a culture value, and certainly not a value in immigrant communities. In order to do this, the County of Santa Clara should implement engagement with outside providers, clients, and staff to observe, assess, and formulate qualitative and quantitative data of the outcomes of holistic healing work approaches, as a requirement in their work. This includes, but is not limited to, healing circles that explore cultural identity, healing healthy relationships, and the power of self-reflection. This approach with the already established services can benefit the immigrant communities by adopting and investing in training to expand teaching on transformational healing work.
Conclusion:

Overall, serving immigrant communities is much more than providing gender-based violence prevention services. In order to provide culturally responsive gender-based violence prevention programming to the immigrant populations, it requires a deep understanding and awareness of a multifaceted culture. Also, doing more assessment and evaluation of the community needs is crucial. One approach does not guarantee the same results for all immigrant communities. Due to my limited time with this fellowship, a follow up of the recommendation and its outcome will need to be evaluated. Lastly, with COVID-19 in our lives, it is evident that the challenges already existing will bring a lot of difficulties in which requires more research.
References


New Americans Fellowship

**LGBTQ Allyship Program and Diversity Trainings: Benefits of Becoming an LGBTQ Ally and an Intersectional Approach to Diversity of SCC Workforce**

*Luis | New Americans Fellow | Office of LGBTQ Affairs*
**Introduction**

Diversity and allyship trainings in the County of Santa Clara play an important role in educating the employees that work for the County. The optional diversity and allyship trainings provide County employees the knowledge and understanding on how to co-exist and improve workplace relations. When considering making optional trainings, that are already offered in the County, to be required, there needs to be an understanding on why these trainings must be mandatory and why it is needed. In this study, the question explored included: How would the LGBTQ members of the County of Santa Clara workforce benefit from allyship and diversity trainings that is familiar with an intersectional perspective?

**Background**

According to a 2011 publication by the Williams Institute, three-point five percent (3.5%), approximately 9 million of adults in the United States identify as LGB (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual. In the same analysis, they estimate that around 700,000 people living in the United States identify as transgender, which is around point-three percent (0.3%). A transgender person is a person whose gender identity is different from what they were assigned at birth. Moreover locally, in Santa Clara County, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) adults makes up approximately 47,000 adults, roughly (4%). It is important to note that County of Santa Clara take into consideration the size of the LGBTQ population nationally and locally in order to examine their experiences regarding hiring bias, discrimination, and the potential establishment of support groups.

**Hiring Bias: Hiring Unconscious Bias**

When looking into hiring bias, Workable, a world leading hiring platform state that, “In the hiring process, unconscious bias happens when you form an opinion about candidates based solely on first impressions”. Survey data taken from a Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey shows that a large percentage of transgender individuals have higher educational completion compared to the
general population, but struggle at a higher proportion when it comes to landing a job due to who they are. “For example, participants described ways certain job expectations were added or removed based upon the way their LGBT identity is being sexualized and/or tokenized”. Furthermore, based on information provided by the National Center for Transgender Equality, one in four transgender people have lost their job due to bias and more than three fourths have experienced workplace discrimination. Transgender people also reported changing their job position to avoid workplace discrimination. Transgender people are also in a high-risk position as they are twice as likely to be unemployed compared to the general population. Further, transgender people of color make up four times the national unemployment rate when comparing lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight adults.

**Workplace Discrimination and Injustices in the Workplace**

As stated by the National Center for Transgender Equality, of the 6,450 respondents, nationally, ninety percent (90%) of transgender people surveyed reported experiencing harassment, mistreatment or discrimination on the job or took actions such as hiding who they are to avoid such experiences. Of the respondents in the survey, forty-seven percent (47%) said to have experienced an adverse job outcome, such as being fired, or not being hired, or not achieving a promotion because of being transgender or gender non-conforming. When the results are compared to members of the LGB (Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual) community there was a lower number of instances where they faced workplace discrimination due to their sexual orientation, with only (42%) reporting such occurrences. Moreover looking at a snapshot of the state of LGBTQ workplace equality in the United States provided by Out and Equal: Workplace Advocates, it shows that one in four LGBTQ employees report experiencing employment discrimination in the last five years, as well as 58.2% of LGBTQ employees reporting that discrimination negatively affected their work environment. When directly looking at local data from the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, 2013 LGBTQ Adult Survey, it was discovered that roughly 25% of LGB (female) people reported most people in their place of employment are not accepting of LGBTQ people, this increases to 42% for bisexual (male) and 38% for transgender people.
Trainings and Their Importance

Trainings are of course an easy and cost-effective way to give employees and communities knowledge on a certain topic. According to a piece written in 2016 by E. Joiner and A. Lyons, “In providing training to supervisors and employees regarding harassment, you should broaden your definition to include harassment based on any protected LGBT category. Also, many employers are providing specific training to supervisors on the issue of transgender transitioning employees as part of their annual supervisor training, even if there is not a transitioning employee currently in the workplace”. That is something important to highlight because trainings play that of an important role to each individual employee.

Methodology

The methodology in this research study consisted of literature review, document analysis, looking at County trainings, and interviews with Subject Matter Experts. The Subject Matter Experts that were interviewed for this research project were chosen based on their knowledge of intersectional community experiences, LGBTQ issues, and training expertise.

Literature review: The literature consisted on the review of articles that focused on discrimination, mistreatment, harassment, microaggressions in the workplace.

Document analysis: The document analysis consisted of reviewing case studies where the focus was microaggressions in the workplace as well as looking at the 2013 Status Health Report by the County of Santa Clara.

County Trainings: This consisted of looking at County trainings within SCC Learn that are offered now for all County employees as optional.
Interviews | SME: Subject Matter Experts take on an important role within this research project to identify areas where Santa Clara County needs improvement. All of the Subject Matter Experts in this study will all be named with Pseudo names to protect their identity and protect from any retaliation. All Subject Matter Experts are county employees stationed at different positions with the County.

Findings | Subject Matter Experts

In the County of Santa Clara, there is a unique representation of the LGBTQ community, being the first County in the nation to implement an Office of LGBTQ Affairs. This being an accomplishment that was celebrated by many, bringing more inclusivity and support to the well-being of LGBTQ individuals that reside in Santa Clara County. When discussing diversity trainings, County of Santa Clara has optional trainings that cover diversity and LGBTQ inclusion in the workplace, but there is little to no knowledge of these trainings among County staff for that reason, that they are optional and not mandated.

Relevant Trainings Exist, But Are Not Being Fully Utilized

Trainings is a learning tool that helps identify areas worth of conversation, for example public health, LGBTQ issues, and sexual harassment. While looking through the County’s SCC Learn database of courses, I searched for the terms “diversity”, “allyship”, and “LGBTQ” and found that a total of 37 courses with an LGBTQ lens that focus on different topics. These optional trainings that highlight the LGBTQ community are scarce within the County and not easily accessible for the employees thus deterring them from enrolling in such courses. One Subject Matter Expert, Sierra (Pseudo name), stated that there was little she could find within SCC Learn regarding diversity and allyship trainings that include an LGBTQ lens. The optional trainings include:

Building a More Inclusive Workplace: LGBTQ: Learning how to create a more inclusive work environment where LGBTQ staff and clients feel safe, valued, and respected. Practice having a professional conversation with a person who identifies as LGBTQ and understand how to address biased language in the workplace. This training is a 30-minute module that provides both didactic instructions on
LGBTQ terminology as well as two conversations that help create a participant’s capacity to support LGBTQ coworkers and County residents. The goal of the Kognito simulation is to create a bias- and harassment-free workplace where all employees and clients are welcome and celebrated for being their true, authentic selves.

*Your Role in Workplace Diversity:* To understand and appreciate diversity in the workplace, you must develop a deep understanding of yourself, as well as any unconscious bias you may have. Your ability to use a variety of strategies to effectively deal with diverse situations is very important. Equally important is the ability to share these effective strategies openly and leverage the diversity that exist within an inclusive organization. In this course, you’ll explore how to become aware of your attitudes towards diversity, understand the source of any cultural bias you may have, and increase your acceptance of diverse cultures, people, and ideas. You’ll also discover how to become an advocate for diversity and inclusion within the workplace.

Through speaking with the Subject Matter Experts there was a clear consensus on the trainings and why they had to be implemented as mandatory or highly recommended for some. “Doing trainings that are focused on expanding peoples understanding of diversity, of inclusion, of equity does not only help the employees understand each other but it also helps employees understand the people that they are serving”, stated Ryker (Pseudo name), a Subject Matter Expert. It is important to keep in mind that trainings are only a part of the solution when it comes to achieving workplace diversity and a welcoming environment for all LGBTQ employees and allies.

**Recommendations**

*Diversity and allyship trainings:* The diversity trainings in question are already part of Santa Clara county but only as optional trainings, for employees to be part of if they want to. What this recommendation is looking for is to make these said trainings, mandatory, if not (highly) recommended that all county staff be part of these trainings. As for intersectionality with gender, race, class, sexual
orientation, and immigration status being part of these trainings, the trainings are meant for county employees regardless of all those characteristics. These trainings are important for the county employees as it not only brings in the diversity in the workplace that every workplace strives to have. Having more of these trainings improve the relationship that the employees have with each other because they will be able to understand their fellow patrons.

**Building on Intentional Allyship:** What this recommendation is seeking is for the creation of a County-wide LGBTQ employee internal support network (or Employee Resource Group) to further build an allyship program. This internal support network would consist of County employees after they have already completed the diversity and allyship trainings. The purpose of this group is to essentially implement what they learned from the trainings and putting their knowledge into direct action. The goal for this would be so that the County of Santa Clara’s work culture and environment is supportive and welcoming for all LGBTQ employees.

**Conclusion**

Based on what was presented, the need for the trainings already available to become mandatory is high. Existing and future employees need to understand how to make a workplace diverse and comfortable so that Santa Clara County can provide its best to the residents of Santa Clara, as well as set an example for other counties in the country. Santa Clara County has grown drastically over the past decade accomplishing the implementation of community celebrations and the establishment of the Gender Health Center and the New Haven Inn, where they provide an inclusive shelter for LGBTQ individuals. More work has to be done that is focused on the level of intersectionality of the trainings and assessing how all efforts to be LGBTQ inclusive for employees can be intersectional.
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Santa Clara County Division of Equity and Social Justice, Office of Women’s Policy

Civically Engaged Female DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) Recipients

New Americans Fellowship

Mariana
8-18-2020
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Introduction

Civic engagement is more than just voting, it includes participation in your community, in government and advocating for political, economic, civic environmental and quality of life issues. The purpose of this research paper is to highlight the work female DACA recipients are doing to be civically engaged. My recommendations attempt to offer methods to include the undocumented immigrant communities in the County of Santa Clara in civic engagement as well as methods to assist this community.

Over the fellowship, I worked with the County of Santa Clara’s Office of Women’s Policy. Given that 2020 is the 100th year anniversary of some women being granted the right to vote, through my fellowship I learned more about women’s involvement in historic social movements. Historically, women have been at the forefront of social movements while being denied the appropriate recognition. Therefore, this research paper focuses on women.

The guiding questions for this research paper are: How are female DACA recipients mobilizing their communities in response to social issues/federal policies? How are they navigating their identities and their responsibilities to their communities and themselves? What can be done to help progress their efforts?

Background

DACA’s future remains uncertain given the current presidency’s attempts to end the program. Although there was a recent win with the Supreme Court Decision on June 18, 2020 blocking the administration’s plan to dismantle the program, uncertainty remains as the presidency attempts to limit DACA’s reach (Totenberg). Furthermore, an election year presents even more uncertainty as candidates share different policies on immigration. Another issue that presents itself is the
political exclusion of over 643,000 DACA recipients, as of 2020, and an estimated 11 million undocumented people in the country (USCIS). These are people that help the country run yet are excluded from the most basic right of equal representation.

**Literature Review**

**Why women?**

By researching literature on women’s participation in social movements spanning various countries, I hope to lay down a historical framework of women’s involvement in movements. Women have always participated politically and civically in society, using alternative strategies, even if the means were less visible in dominant historical accounts, even if the venues were less politically overt. Much of the literature explores the contradiction of the female as a social actor, since females typically have been associated with the private sphere and women activists have a very public existence. In China, women utilized written word as a form of political dissent in the 1898 Reform Movement against Manchurian occupation and again, during the Japanese occupation in World War II, to voice opposition against the institution while operating within it (Qian 2003, Smith 2004). More recently in the 1990s, the popularization of cyberspace brought forth new public, yet private, terrain for Iranian women to express political dissent and to legally mobilize (Ghorashi 2006). Though historians now acknowledge that women, particularly African Americans, were pivotal in the critical battles for racial equality in the United States, Rosa Parks’ death highlights the fact that she was one of the very few female civil rights figures who are widely known. Most women in the movement played background roles, either by choice or due to bias, since being a woman of color meant facing both racism and sexism. Today, as my findings will reveal, female activists that are DACA recipients use social media to advocate for
DACA, for the undocumented community, and other social justice issues they’re passionate about.

**Female DACA Activists**

By researching female DACA activists, I am laying the groundwork for my interviews. In 2018, San Jose high school students held a rally in support of DACA. Hundreds of high school students rallied outside of San Jose City Hall, demanding that Congress act to protect undocumented immigrants – and their families – from deportation. Most of the students in the rally walked from local high schools, including San Jose High, Lincoln, Cristo Rey and Downtown College Prep. Most of the students that attended were either undocumented themselves or have older siblings or parents that are (Sanchez). The leaders and organizers of the rally, young female DACA recipients, gathered such a large crowd by sharing the rally on social media. They posted flyers that were then reshared thus bringing together a large crowd of youth passionate for this issue. The use of social media bringing out a large group of youth can be further explained by a study that concluded that social networks allow young people to channel and extend their social commitment to others. The study concluded that 50% of youth believe that networks play a positive role in their lives, insofar as these networks have allowed them to develop a commitment that did not exist before, or to channel previous civic concerns (Munoz). The study is further shown through Melanie and Sheila Morales, DACA recipients. Melanie and Sheila lost two uncles to COVID-19 and used social media to bring light to the health care system’s failure to serve their uncles and on a bigger scale, Latinx immigrants. Their story-sharing on social media led to national attention including interviews during which the sisters shared, “the American health care system absolutely failed us” (Baum). Aside from social networks, other methods are employed. In 2010, Gaby Pacheco and three other DACA activists
led the Trail of Dreams, a four-month walk from Miami to Washington, DC. She is credited for spearheading the efforts that led to the announcement of the DACA program (Pacheco). Like Gaby, many more leaders have made themselves public with their demands. In 2018, as a government shutdown was to take place, protestors in the U.S. Capitol pressured lawmakers not relent on their promise to reject any spending bills that did not protect a vulnerable group of immigrants (Rhodan). They carried signs and donned hats demanding a vote on legislation that would give immigrants brought to the U.S. as children a legal pathway to citizenship. The group faced risks as DACA recipients, yet they stood their ground and told lawmakers that they are “here to stay” and “unafraid” (Rhodan). These are some of the civically engaged female DACA recipients that guided this research paper.

Methodology

The methods used to conduct this research are document analysis and interviews of female DACA recipients involved in activism as well as participant observation. My lived experiences being a female with DACA that has been involved with activism helped guide my research.

Document Analysis

I analyzed documents that discuss historical involvement of women in social movements. I also read over case studies performed on DACA recipients and their experiences to educate myself in the topic I am researching. The document analysis was meant to guide my understanding of the topic, guide my interviews, and build the policy recommendations.

Interviews

I conducted interviews with 10 female DACA recipients that are involved in activism, 9 of them from the County of Santa Clara. The interviewees were contacted based on their connections to
community organizations and/or public activist efforts. The age range among the interviewees was 21-30, a representation of the majority of DACA recipient’s age group (USCIS). I approached these interviews as casual conversations with the goal of capturing stories from my interviewees. The interviews ranged in length depending on the interviewees’ availability and length of responses. Overall, I conducted these interviews over two weeks and did not ask the same questions to each person. Rather, the person’s story shaped the interview.

Findings

Based on my research, the following is a summary of my key findings. The lack of access to opportunities in education and ineffective policies as well as the criminalization of undocumented people motivated my interviewees to take action in their own hands and engage in activism. My 10 interviewees shared that the need to fight for themselves, their families, and communities pushed them into activism for DACA and for other social justice issues they see affecting their communities. Among my interviewees was a counselor at a high school, she shared that the lack of support in her high school for undocumented students or students in mixed families led her to her career decision.

Methods

Among my interviewees, the use of social media was the most prominent method for organizing and promoting their activist efforts. One of my interviewees created a mobile application to provide DACA recipients with resources for scholarships in higher education. Another created a website with resources in Spanish for her community – such as day cares nearby, food
distribution sites, and free English courses. Many worked directly with community organizations and members to organize and fight for their communities’ needs.

"Taking action into our own hands because a lot of my community - undocumented folks with no protection - were afraid to speak up to avoid police presence and risk of deportation."

"I have to fight for my family, my people, my life."

Navigating their identities

Regarding navigating their identities, my interviewees shared a disconnect between who they are and who they are perceived to be given the continuous uncertainty about their place in their home as well as lack of ability to be fully participating citizens.

“I am quite confident and have a regular social life. But some days, I am just drained.”

“I struggled with learning how to be okay with not sharing all of myself with people. It definitely affected my mental health and my relationships. I mean, I knew I was safe because I have DACA, but my parents are not. So, I just preferred keeping that to myself”

“I have to deal with my culture’s machismo, fear for my own safety and my families’, and uncertainty about my future, my job security, my mental health and physical health, being taken seriously in my career in STEM as a woman. And still having to keep fighting for my community, organizing, reaching out to people, trying to improve my community. It’s difficult.”

“Since I was in middle school, I felt myself disconnecting. I was already struggling with finding my identity as any regular pre-teen but I had a lot of other things going on and not being able to
talk to my immigrant parents definitely affected my confidence early on and I still see that in myself now as I am a professional woman.”

Policy Recommendations

Community Outreach

I recommend that the County of Santa Clara implement a program of partnering with local organizations to train leaders on how to appropriately reach out to their neighbors, identify their most pressing needs, bring those needs to the attention of county officials. The conversations between the leaders and local officials would then occur in a safe and respectful environment to collaborate on improving these communities – such meetings would also be open to all residents. The goal is to have these communities’ needs heard while also overcoming barriers presented through fear of deportation or repercussions for speaking up through a liaison. This is increasingly important given that the distrust between this community and government continues to grow as a result of recent attacks on people of color and negative immigrant rhetoric that becomes even more prevalent during election years.

Financial Assistance in response to COVID-19

I recommend that the County of Santa Clara provide financial assistance to individuals that are undocumented in response to the pandemic. The pandemic disproportionately affects this community given that they are excluded from federal aid and local organizations’ funds for these individuals are limited. Although California included disaster relief assistance to undocumented adults under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, it is not enough. The one-time assistance gave $500 to qualifying individuals with a maximum of $1000 in
assistance per household. That amount is not enough to make up for the loss of work over the last five months since the shelter-in-place orders. Therefore, the County should provide some sort of financial aid for these individuals.

**Conclusion**

Completing my fellowship with the Office of Women’s Policy introduced me to policy work created around serving women from all walks of life. Women face challenges that come with societal expectations and oppression due to their gender, they face the same economic challenges as everyone, and they continue to be at the forefront of social movements. Women that are DACA recipients face the additional challenge that comes with their legal status. It’s increasingly significant that their efforts be recognized and local government attempt to put their activist efforts into direct policy work.
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How have female DACA recipients with insufficient support prevailed to be leaders?

Stephanie

Office of Women’s Policy Santa Clara County

Author’s Note

Page 2: Abstract and keywords
Page 6-9: Findings and Results
Page 10: Recommendations
Page 11: OWP and researcher contact information
Page 12: References / additional research articles
Abstract

One of the topics that is frequently discussed in newspaper articles, social media, public discourse, and in the privacy of homes around the country is DACA-Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals. DACA program is a result of an immigration policy that continues to be challenged by those opposed to it while polls show the majority of the U.S population supports DACA youth and favors a permanent solution that includes a path to citizenship. This tension, court interventions and frequent changes keep the youth and adults under DACA at a constant edge. The objective of this research paper is to analyze examples of female DACA recipients and their allies who have obtained college or graduate degrees and exemplify other indicators of success, empowerment and community involvement.

Keywords: DACA, evaluation, comparative analysis, successful women, leadership, empowerment, community involvement
How have female DACA recipients with insufficient support prevailed to be leaders?

Did you know that many underrepresented communities such as DACA recipients do not have enough resources in their schools, work environments, and communities to assist them? After analyzing several studies about DACA recipients, interviewing several female DACA recipients and their allies, and conducting surveys, we can conclude that society does not give enough support to Dreamers and DACA recipients. The main topic of this paper is “Successful DACA Women” with an open interpretation of what success means to each interviewee. Also discussed in this paper are indicators of success, empowerment, and community involvement.

Method

Participants

Why women? The focus of this paper will be focused on women. We are not limited based on sex assigned at birth, but rather include one’s own gender identity; the term women is a gender expansive word, including LGBTQIA+ community. According to research conducted by Migration Policy Institute “DACA-recipient men are more likely to be employed than women (64 percent versus 48 percent).” This demonstrates the importance of inequality through gender gap in employment along with other barriers that women face on a daily basis. With no surprise to many, all women, including female DACA recipients, face sexism, discrimination, racism. They are also less likely to complete their schooling or get a professional job due to child-care duties. Women are an essential part of Macro society, however they are not given the proper
representation they deserve. By focusing on women, we make comparisons and see gender disparities among DACA recipients.

Three Different Communities

This paper discusses research results about DACA recipients and their allies. DACA recipients selected for this study have continued their education beyond high school, have obtained one or more degrees, and continue to show leadership through their work or volunteering efforts. The term ally is used to represent three different communities examined in this paper include: broader immigrant community, and U.S citizen women. The purpose of including allies in the survey was to make a comparison of resources offered to each research participant within each category, specifically focusing on limited opportunities as well as disparities between DACA women and other immigrant women compared to women who are U.S citizens. These comparisons are used to formulate recommendations for local governments and broader communities to improve resources and reduce inequalities.

Assessments and Measures

Selection

The total number of people interviewed was nine. This number includes three from each category: three successful DACA women, three successful immigrant women, and three successful U.S citizen women, who were all asked the same questions with the exception of the status related question. These questions were selected to measure indicators of success, empowerment and community involvement, as well as accessibility of resources. The interview material is used to discuss employment opportunities after attaining a degree, knowledge of resources, and acknowledgement of gender limitations if any.
Interview Questions:

How do you as a (DACA recipient/ immigrant/ U.S citizen) define success?

How has being (DACA/immigrant/U.S citizen) contributed to your empowerment?

Has perception of empowerment changed and how?

Besides getting a degree how do you help the community?

How do they define community engagement?

Where do you volunteer/assist in community efforts?

Has gender influenced opportunities or limited possibilities? If so, how?

What does the end of DACA mean to you?

Opportunity you recommend to young DACA recipients?

Were there enough resources in your college/university for DACA if any versus resources for U.S citizens?

What is your job before graduating versus career/current job?
Findings and Results

Indicator of Success

Society’s expectation of success is seen on the chart above. I have expanded the category to include a visual representation of three different educational levels achieved per participant category. Keeping in mind that there was a total of nine participants split evenly per status category which include: three U.S citizen, three DACA and three Undocumented. It is important to note that for the purpose of this research paper all nine women have had to continue their education beyond high school that is why the light orange is at the same level for all three status categories representing that all women either earned a Bachelors of Art or Bachelors of Science. As well as pursuing other higher degrees such as earning a Masters of Arts or Masters of Science as well as some earned doctoral degrees.
DACA RECIPIENTS WITH INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT

Indicator of empowerment

This chart above is a visual representation of how the women have not affected, affected but not limited and limited their empowerment based on their status. Taking a closer look at DACA and undocumented areas, compared to Citizens, empowerment has had limitations because of their status but does not discourage them from moving forward. An important finding when looking over at the U.S citizen category is that the light blue color represents that one out of the three participants in that category had limited limitations specifically that women had parents who were immigrants. The primary difficulties that DACA and Undocumented women talked about only one women from U.S citizen category was able to relate to those same struggles which include humble beginnings, machismo, and various other limitations which include mental, physical, and emotional well being taking a toll not had opportunity for self-care.
DACA RECIPIENTS WITH INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT

**Indicator of community involvement:**

Community involvement for all nine participants is seen in four different areas: self-employed work, community based jobs, disaster relief, and volunteer. The dark orange represents the smaller ten percentage of the women whose work contributes to society by giving out personal scholarships to the community and colleges specifically for students that continue to expand in their volunteering efforts. Going clockwise the forty-six percent represents the larger percentage of the women whose work contributes to society, such as in the medical field, non-profits, and organizations in Santa Clara County. The light orange represents twenty-two percent of the women who live in Santa Clara County but due to being a natural disaster relief worker they are constantly relocated to different states within the U.S. The last percentage represents the women whose work is not hands-on with people in a community but volunteer.
Survey: Knowledge of resources

This graph is based on a survey of the women's knowledge of DACA resources during their college years from 2010 to the last participant to graduate in 2018. An important aspect to point out is that the interviewees all attended college at different points of undocumented student rights movements as some of them went to college when only AB540 existed, and others are recent grads who had DACA throughout her whole college experience. Undocumented resources in school have limitations before DACA. When DACA came around, there was not enough resource outreach with their school, county, and community for undocumented students, and it is also important to note that many resources only applied to those in a particular program that under qualification say “U.S citizen.”
Recommendations

Local Government and Other Support Services

Three important things to do moving forward is for Office of Immigrant relation within the Division of Equity and Social Justice to create a broad network outreach within college/universities in Santa Clara county, work with already established programs that support several documented/undocumented students, and create a safe student support center for each institution that allows the students to come back even after graduating.

Timeline for Additional Recommendations

- Ensure programs are inclusive and expansive
- Begin to analyze data of what worked/needs to improve/what did not work
- Adapt to new policies that are meant to benefit students
- Implement resource outreach of programs K-12

Timeline for Additional Recommendations

Here is a timeline for additional recommendations to ensure resources, programs, and outreach efforts sway away from channels of known networks and go directly towards students with limited to no opportunities to really exemplify change. This year we can ensure programs are inclusive and expansive regardless of status. In 2021 we can begin to adopt new policies that
benefit students in furthering their education. In 2022 local government and support services can
begin to analyze what worked/what did not work/make improvements overlooking at the past
two years as a reference and, finally, in 2023 begin implementing the various resource outreach
that worked to High schools and Middle Schools.

**Connection to Office of Women’s Policy Santa Clara County**

The connection between the topic and the department I worked closely with is that The
Office of Women’s Policy hosts Girls Advisory Team Program open to all expansive girl youths
in Santa Clara County every year, through interviews, and as we get to know one another, some
of the girls have been vulnerable enough to share that they are first generation immigrants,
and/or their mom or grandma is an immigrant. This is how the Office of Women’s Policy
promotes leadership within the immigrant community and mixed status families.
References


Lee

New American Fellowship 2020

Juvenile Probation: Neighborhood Safety/ Services Unit

Participatory Arts and Immigrant Community Engagement in South County
It has been one year since the shooting of the Gilroy Garlic Festival, and resilience as much as pride, has engaged residents of Gilroy during these times. This mass shooting left a majority of Gilroy’s immigrant community targeted as the shooter’s motive to invade this space. In fact, its is a person of color who is illustrated in a poster reading, “Gilroy Strong” as the emblem of unity. The contest winner for this poster, funded by the newly formed Gilroy Strong Resiliency Center, is a high school student name Ana-Gabriela Cadena from Abraham Lincoln High school. She was moved by the victims of this horrible incident and used this energy to create and give a voice to immigrant agricultural workers, illustrated in the image. The original sketch then was modified to highlight and encourage art as a form of healing. The Office of District Attorney announced the three high school winners with the grand prize of $1,500, $1,000 for second place and $500 for third place. The South County Youth Task Force has also collaborated with the Gilroy Strong Resiliency Center to make numerous copies of posters to hand out to Gilroy residents. Here we notice how art can be an advocacy for justice, resilience, and engagement to its community members. Similar to this case, I will discuss the importance of immigrant representation among Gilroy residents. Government departments and organizations such as the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit out of the SCC Probation Departmet and South County Youth Task Force also play a role on how history preservation should involve community members. I was honored to discuss these topics with Gilroy residents and artists as I include their perspective on how local government has engaged its residents and allows for creative expression. Space can also be impacted, regarding specific locations where murals have an ability to transform an environment. San Ysidro Park located in east Gilroy is a prime example of how immigrant representation and cultural preservation can bring awareness, belonging, and unity to a community. The giant mural displayed at this park named “Gigantes”, brings together unity and safe heaven for residents which I will also expand on. To understand why there needs to be community engagement to resolve a division between governments and communities, I dove into literature that broadened my perspective on cultural representation and
preservation. The Division of Equity and Social Justice from Santa Clara County has provided DACA recipients the opportunity to participate in the New American Fellowship. This is an awarded stipend and internship that allowed me to research and work alongside the Department of Juvenile Probation for a period of 10 weeks. As one of the New American Fellowship recipients, I was paired with the Neighborhood Safety/ Services Unity to work precisely in South County in the town of Gilroy. Here is where my attention to murals and public art sparked my interest in relationship to representation in a community. I related most of my findings with my own experiences as an artist and person of color, primarily and immigrant. Sharing these stories with local artists and residents, gave me a sense of belonging which is what ultimately communities strive for. As a result of my research, I acknowledge the lack of funding Arts are provided but furthermore want to amplify the voices of the Latinx immigrant community in South County. Cultural development affirms the living Latinx immigrant communities while also solidifying their new connections toward the community.

My deep concern and appreciation toward the Latinx immigrant community in Gilroy, drove my interest in this research toward proper representation and preservation of this community. As I began my internship with the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit, I needed to find a research topic of my choice that could relate my findings with the program. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many resources and events hosted by the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unity had been canceled to eliminate the risk of spreading the pandemic in the town of Gilroy. I quickly learned that the Neighborhood Safety/Services core components included community engagement, violence prevention and enhancements toward the youth through positive school climate initiatives. The Neighborhood Safety/Service Unit works alongside various County departments, City, community-based organizations and San Ysidro Nueva Vida to improve the safety and activation of San Ysidro Park. They provide leadership training to the community while also administering activities for both youth and adults. These pro-social services all
volunteer led included physical fitness classes, health and wellness workshops, as well as access to sports and extra-curricular activities throughout the year. What impressed me the most was the partnerships with schools that ensured youth violence prevention programs or activities. These are for non-justice involved youth who need additional supports per the tiers 2 or 3 of the PBIS system which many GUSD schools implement. To get the youth to participate in the program and have them be interest in participating they get to choose an activity of their choice. Connecting my research with the Neighborhood Safety Services Unity then became a tool to identify what was important for me to continue a research project. NSU’s role to strengthen existing community assets and resiliency among residents then became a key contributor to how I wanted to approach my research. I believe that acknowledgment of all individuals and bodies are important for creating unity among all especially those marginalized. The Neighborhood Safety/Service Unit also develops and sustains capacity within its focused neighborhood to address racial and economic inequity. Leadership development, economic development, and capacity building include pro-social and resident engagement programming. This vision includes safety and a thriving neighborhood. That includes providing educational housing linkages and anti-displacement for residents with outreach and advocacy. School partnerships include walkability to schools or safe spaces, bike safety, and food security as an activation of space and improvements to build a safe environment. Gun safety and gun violence prevention is also a role NSU leads while bringing awareness and campaigns on gun-safety. These are successful community change efforts and initiatives that NSU utilizes to promote leadership while building resident capacity as an action that strengthen its communities. What captures most my attention was the encouragement of protective factors like social connection, trust, and self-efficacy to address detrimental effects on the lack of safety in a neighborhood. Ultimately the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit strives to empower and engage residents with leadership strategies, community organizing efforts, civic engagement, and building strong social networks. While exploring my research interests, these initiatives that the Neighborhood
Safety/Services Unity practice, I knew that community engagement played a role on how I wanted to approach my topic questions.

To understand what community engagement represents, I turned to my literature findings to expand on this idea. Cultural anthropologist Dr. Pia Moriarty did a research project herself, in Silicon Valley where she invested a year in participatory arts and its effects on the larger immigrant communities. Without prior knowledge of what these "participatory arts" consisted of, I looked forward to investigating what these practices may include. To my surprise these initiatives are example of activities I was already familiar with as a child. Dr. Moriarty defines participatory arts as, "artistic disciplines and forms that continue to be created and shared by groups of people." These disciplines include community led dance groups, literature reviews such as book clubs, outdoors activities at events, and much more. As a child, I always participated in church choir, summer festivals, and holiday activities led by organizations. These are only a few examples of community led activities that welcome all to participate. There is not a specific culture or religion that creates this initiative, but that goes to show the variety and multidisciplinary appreciation of many valued traditions. Participatory arts are “forms of artistic expressions in which everyday people actively engage in the process of making art…” as explained by Dr. Moriarty. The act of “participating” also includes observing professional performances, visual arts, media arts, and literary arts. Dr. Moriarty gave great examples of organizations and community led groups throughout Silicon Valley which included spaces such as Movimento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana, high schools, churches, town festivals, and much more. Acknowledging these spaces helped provide a bridging between communities and governments not because its role is to have audiences participate rather than promoting consumerism. Gathering my thoughts and interests I then understood how murals and public art can contribute to community engagement as a form of participatory arts. Gilroy is site of the annual Garlic Festival which is another great example of participatory arts in the form of a
festival where community members and the local government share pride among its residents. Gilroy does host events and resources for its residents therefore the interest of community bonding leads as the motive to unite and keep its residents safe. Therefore, I expanded on the idea of how local government and organizations support more community engagement and creative expression while investing in community art. I also began to ask myself, what could be done to preserve immigrant history and community unity though murals and street art.

The methodologies used to conduct my research included literature review, interviews with Gilroy residents, along with observations and participation while documenting my findings. I first set off to find murals throughout downtown Gilroy and then analyzed the locations of these murals. While interning with the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit, I was honored to work at events such as food distributions, Census outreach, the Gilroy Strong Anniversary events, and distributions and coach ups of Chromebooks to parents of students in Gilroy Unified School District. These experiences helped me identify certain reasons why participatory arts are significant to residents and how they should be amplified to create more change. As I participated in these efforts, I also began conversations with residents that resulted in unstructured interviews of locals who assisted me while trying to find particular murals and street art. While scouting murals, as a form of participation and observation methods of my research, I documented a variety of murals located in downtown Gilroy. These murals are essential to my research because they hold representation, community identity, and preserved community history. I also participated in San Ysidro Nueva Vida meetings, a resident led community group based in San Ysidro Park, where I heard valuable input from residents that solidified my reasons to pursue research on the importance of murals. San Ysidro Park has history of gang violence, drug use, and juvenile delinquency behaviors, which then transformed into an example of a successful community engagement, when the park was restored in 2014. Not only is the park host site for community workshops, events, and participatory engagement
among residents and Nueva Vida. Residents claim this park as a historical landmark of cultural belonging and representation. “Gigantes” originally painted in 1978, holds that sense of traditions and uniformity with residents as it depicts Aztec warriors in a game of ball. In my literature findings, “Wall of Empowerment: Reading Public Murals in a Kanaka Maoli Context”, by A Matara Keteriki Tamaira shares the importance of indigenous representation and collective preservation. The Kanaka Maoli natives of Hawaiians share their traditions by creating murals that invite their ancestors, all while shinning light on the colonization of their Islands. Similarly, a group of Chicano artists in the Gilroy area, created an Aztec calendar, painted on a 50 foot wall in downtown Gilroy. As I asked residents of murals around Gilroy, “Aztec Calendar” was the first to be mentioned by all. This giant mural has led many Gilroy residents mesmerized within the last three decades. It embodies the rich symbolism and representation of Aztec traditions and history. Recently the mural underwent restoration but did not have sufficient funding to pursue and finish the restoration of the entire piece. Artist, advocate, and organizer Armando Franco led the project to restore the mural and has brought attention to the restoration of murals. He elaborates by introducing us to the question of how we as cultural conservators, can exercise cultural values and traditions, in our own communities for ourselves and our future descendants. Therefore, it is vital to restore one’s culture when usually it is being erased or dismantled by white supremacy or lack of funding.

Along with my findings, I conducted interviews that gave me a unique perspective from Gilroy artists and gallery owners which repeated what others have brought to my attention. My findings gave clear understanding that many residents and artists know that there needs to be sufficient fundings for arts and community engagement. One particular artist named Ignacio “Nacho” Moya, gave me a bittersweet response when I asked what inspired him to create art. Nacho mentioned that as a child, he did not have the resources to pursue any form of art expression but when he had the opportunity to create his visions, he felt unstoppable and inspired to share that feeling of belonging and support by adults that believed in him. He opened
his own studio and gallery in downtown Gilroy and now shares his craft and beautiful gift of
teaching to youth. Nacho precisely mentioned that there is not enough attention or awareness in
the ability of transforming the youthful minds of those who want to pursue art. The other artist
and gallery owner interviewed also mentioned that art uplifts the creative minds of individuals
and precisely could be used as a tactic to engage community residents with its local
government in art projects. Creating murals or restoring them, are acts of participatory arts and
should be practiced more frequently to ensure unity among organizations with its local
government. Local artist Berenice Hernandez specifically mentioned, if local government
invested in projects such as these, then the number of participants would continuously grow.

As a result of my findings I valued the deliberate awareness of these issues. Many
people I interviewed suggested that there is an important factor in representation when
depicting "culture." This leads to understanding that the lack of immigrant representation erases
tradition, values, and communities, particularly the Latinx immigrant community. When Latinx
culture is represented, then it should encompass all Latinx culture and their values. For
example, in the murals located in downtown Gilroy, the Aztec imagery only represents one
culture. Members of the San Ysidro Nueva Vida mentioned that "Mexicans" should not be the
only representation of Latinx culture. In addition, all Latin American traditions should be included
and depicted in future murals because in reality most immigrants are not simply Mexican but
represent a variety of Latin Americans. I also uncovered that intentional preservation
acknowledges the significance toward community structures, values, and traditions. Therefore,
when murals are vandalized, covered, or left untreated, it is assumed that artists, their creative
expression, and their representations are not valued. It is believed that one’s culture is
purposely being erased. It is also an act of rejection if a mural is intentionally vandalized. That is
why it is important to uplift all the voices of those in the community of Gilroy.
My recommendations consist of what the local government and residents of Gilroy already practice. Community members want to participate in activities such as contributing to the beautification of its local park and neighborhood by creating mural art. As I sat in a San Ysidro Nueva Vida meeting, I heard the members unanimously vote to continue a project that was postponed earlier this year, due to Covid-19. This project included the sponsorship of local artists who would gather participants and collectively paint a mural, all while creating community engagement. Due to certain safety regulations, the residents are now working on managing how that could still be possible.

Here are my recommendations after all my research. One short term proposal that can be implemented during this pandemic in regards to San Ysidro Nueva Vida’s postponed mural project would be that there should be time frames where volunteers have a limited time frame to establish the mural. In order to avoid large crowds, conducting a volunteer sign up and registration would be ideal and professional for the sake of everyone’s safety. I also recommend that the County of Santa Clara, actively promotes and invests in civic community building though participatory arts. The county should also utilize organizations such as The Gilroy Strong Resiliency Center, The Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit, South County Youth Task Force, and CARAS. The Community Agency for Resources Advocacy and Services (CARAS), is another organization in which could enhance community organized classes among visual, literacy, and performing arts. These organizations can also host art poster contests where youth are encouraged to apply. Mural proposals and mural restorations are also projects that can be led by these organizations that promote artists. The county should also routinely provide scholarships and internships in local galleries or among these organizations, which can lead to better investments in the community.
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Youth as Leaders, Resources, and Bridges Between Immigrant Families and the Larger Community

Emergency Operations Center

Daniela

August 18, 2020
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INTRODUCTION

While participating in the New Americans Fellowship Program, I had the opportunity to work at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) through the Office of Immigrant Relations of Santa Clara County. The Emergency Operations Center of the County of Santa Clara serves as a “hub for emergency management activities in support of large-scale emergencies or planned events.” During my time in the New Americans Fellowship Program, the EOC was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, Santa Clara County has a total of 1,487 confirmed COVID-19 cases with a total of 209 deaths. With these high numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, it is important that the County ensure that all vital information is provided to all vulnerable communities, especially the immigrant community. Some people in the immigrant are a disadvantage because they do not speak English, or their English is limited. It is important to provide vital information in a culturally and linguistically relevant way.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This qualitative study aimed to answer the following research questions: (1) How are young community members sharing information and resources with their immigrant families during COVID-19? (2) What leadership skills are immigrant and U. S.-born youth displaying in connecting their families with resources and accurate information? and (3) How are they serving as bridges between the immigrant and larger community in Santa Clara County?

LITERATURE REVIEW

My research questions led me to examine a qualitative study titled, “Language and Non-linguistic Brokering: Diversity of Experiences of Immigrant Young Adults from Eastern Europe,” written by Vanja Lazarevic, Marcela Raffaelli, and Angela Wiley. This study focused
on Eastern European immigrants who were between the ages of 18 and 28 and were considered first-generation. and their “involvement in, and feelings about, language brokering and procedural brokering.” The study found that there were more positive feelings associated with procedural brokering than with language brokering. According to the study, a possible explanation for the findings could be attributed to what procedural and language brokering entails. Procedural brokering requires youth to educate their parents about the new culture and provide knowledge, placing them in the educator role while language brokering “most often involves relaying information to a third party via translating.”

Additionally, I examined Washington State’s Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Language Access Plan, written by the Washington State Emergency Operations Center, and last updated on April 28, 2020. The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Language Access Plan was created to “help state agencies meet the language needs of Washingtonians experiencing significant barriers to accessing state services related to COVID-19 due to the lack of materials and information translated.” The document outlines minimum standards that agencies should meet to ensure “that the information and services [that] are provid[ed] to the public are accessible to all communities, regardless of language, disability status, or other factors.” The document also outlines recommendations that agencies should consider to ensure meaningful access. According to the document, “Some communities and language groups across Washington have indicated a preference for receiving information in audio or video format.” As a result, agencies are recommended to reach out to linguistic groups that are listed in Section 4.2 of the document. It is important to note that, as stated in the document, the list of linguistic groups in Section 4.2 is not an exhaustive list.

METHOD
To understand how youth are serving as leaders, resources, and bridges between immigrant families and the larger community during the COVID-19 pandemic, information was collected through various means. First, information was collected through a survey that was created with the intention of collecting responses from participants 25 years old or younger. Through Instagram, potential respondents were invited to take part in the survey with a link to the survey website. The survey had a total of four responses. Before participating in the survey, the respondents were informed about the goals of the research and information pertaining to confidentiality. Second, information was also collected through interviews. I interviewed two individuals that have been aiding the immigrant community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, information was also collected through on-site observation while working at various COVID-19 testing sites and at the Housing and Human Services Branch.

**FINDINGS**

**Survey**

The various methods I utilized to collect information, lead me to identify a few key findings. First, when asking survey respondents, “How [they] learn about resources that are being offered to the immigrant community during the COVID-19 pandemic?” I discovered that all the respondents learn about resources that are being offered to the immigrant community during the COVID-19 pandemic through social media. I also discovered that when respondents were asked about “How aware [they are about] the different resources that are being offered to the immigrant community?” a majority of the respondents (75%) reported that they are somewhat aware of the different resources that are being offered to the immigrant community while a lower percentage of the respondents (25%) responded that they are not aware of any resources that are being offered to the immigrant community. Additionally, respondents were
also asked to check all the items that they have had to explain since the COVID-19 pandemic. They were given four options: the COVID-19 Social Distancing Protocol, the shelter-in-place order, information related to COVID-19 testing, or none of the above. All the respondents reported that since the COVID-19 pandemic, they have had to explain the COVID-19 Social Distancing Protocol while 75% of the respondents have had to explain the shelter-in-place order and 50% of the respondents have had to explain information related to COVID-19 testing. Finally, when respondents were asked about which brokering tasks they have had to perform frequently during the COVID-19 pandemic, all respondents reported that they have had to translate and/or interpret frequently.

**Interviews**

I interviewed two individuals that have been aiding the immigrant community during the COVID-19 pandemic. In one of the interviews, the interviewee stated that “even elementary kids are helping their parents, especially with translations.” The interviewee added that when there is a language barrier “children … do the translations, help out with how to send texts, emails, how to copy documents and attach it to emails.” The interviewee then stated that “the young children are helping out their parents who are not technology savvy.”

**On-Site Observation**

While working at the EOC, I was given the opportunity to help at various COVID-19 testing sites where I noticed that there was a lack of interpreters. For example, at some of the testing sites, there were few or no Spanish interpreters. There were also no Vietnamese or Chinese interpreters at any of the testing sites. I also noticed that some youth accompanied their parents to the testing sites and helped them fill out the forms or filled out the forms on their
behalf even though the form had already been translated. While at a testing site in Gilroy, I learned that some of the people at the testing site did not know how to read or write. Also, some of the people at the Gilroy testing site mentioned that their Spanish was limited because their first language was Mixteco, a language spoken by “indigenous inhabitants of southern Mexico.”

I was also given the opportunity to help at the Housing and Human Services Branch where I provided assistance to Spanish speakers who had been impacted by COVID-19. While working there, I noticed that there was a lack of readily available, in-person Spanish speakers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings discussed above, Santa Clara County should consider the following recommendations.

1. **Broadening the work of the Language Access team.** The County should have the Language Access Team also focus on disseminating critical information to the vulnerable populations, such as the ones who cannot read or write. The Language Access team can provide information to these communities in audio or video format. The Language Access team should include more languages to provide their services to more people and also hire more interpreters and translator.

2. **Hiring more certified interpreters and translators from the community.** These interpreters can help at the COVID-19 testing sites since there is a lack of interpreters. These certified interpreters and translators can also work in the Language Access team to help craft messages for the vulnerable population who are not receiving information in their language.
3. Empower the immigrant community to make sure that the County is providing vital information in a culturally and linguistically relevant way. Sometimes people do not want to speak out because they do not speak the dominant language or can feel marginalized.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the goal of my research project is to bring awareness to the current reality of some immigrant families and youth. It is critical that the County further examine the extent to which the youth have been helping their immigrant families because if the youth “are the ones assuming excessive brokering responsibilities, immigrant families may not be receiving the services and supports that they need.” It is important that these recommendations are implemented because it will lift a burden off the shoulders of the youth. Currently, from my personal experience as a youth who has also assumed these brokering responsibilities at a very young age, it can be stressful assuming these responsibilities, especially during our current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is difficult balancing these brokering responsibilities, while also having to adjust to online schooling, and the stress of the pandemic. As mentioned in the qualitative study, brokering could have potential detrimental effects on a child's well-being, so it critical that the County further examine the effects that brokering can have on a child's well-being in general and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Electronic Monitoring and Immigrants in Santa Clara County

by Cesia
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A. Introduction

My paper will look at the use of electronic monitoring devices within the immigrant community through a culturally competent lens. I will then proceed to make culturally competent suggestions for Santa Clara County’s Pretrial Services regarding electronic monitoring.

Researching this subject is important to understand the needs of the immigrant community within the criminal justice system. In a system that can easily strip away someone’s humanity, the immigrant experience must be considered. Additionally, this research is of utmost importance due to the new role of technology within the criminal justice system. As technology continues to take an important place within the system due to convenience, we must remember to keep questioning its contribution and effectiveness to the system-impacted community. Finally, this report is essential as it highlights the importance of cultural competency in government work and especially within the criminal justice system.

The research project’s goals are to understand the needs of the immigrant community, educate public officials and the general populace on the need for cultural competency in the workplace, and to analyze the effects of electronic monitoring on the immigrant community.

B. Literature Review

a. What is cultural competency?

Cultural competency ensures that a service provider is able to effectively interact with people across different cultures. It requires service providers to be open to differences across cultures while also being aware of how experiences and views relating to race, ethnicity, and religion might interact. More specifically to this study, immigrant communities have historically had a turbulent relationship with the government which will be discussed in depth in the
following section. This important dynamic might manifest itself in many ways and instances within the criminal justice realm.

b. History of electronic monitoring

Electronic monitoring was first developed by a Harvard psychologist who tried to find a cost-efficient and humane alternative to imprisonment. (Di Tella and Schargrodsky 2013) In 1983, it was used for the first time when Judge Jack Love of New Mexico was heavily inspired by a Spider-Man comic book and put a man on house arrest. ("Electronic Monitor Turns Into Home Jail" 1984) Electronic monitoring grew in popularity in the ’80s as people sought ways to reduce the jail and prison populations. (Payne, May and Wood 2014) Recently, the use of electronic monitoring has rapidly expanded, it was reported that between 2005 and 2015, “the number of accused and convicted offenders monitored with electronic tracking devices in the United States increased 140 percent.” ("Use Of Electronic Offender-Tracking Devices Expands Sharply" 2016) (Figure 1)
In pretrial services, electronic monitoring has gotten traction as a solution to avoid money bail which is increasingly perceived as “discriminatory, ineffective, and unconstitutional.” (Hopkins, Bains and Doyle 2018) Eligible clients are given conditional release in lieu of pretrial incarceration.

c. Financial costs of electronic monitoring

Electronic monitoring has been heavily criticized because many offices across the country require individuals to pay a monthly fee for these devices. This is a point of contention as a failure to pay could result in a technical violation which has become a pathway back into jail for many people. (Markowitz 2015) Alarmingly, a recent research report found that “when questioned about the financial impacts [of electronic monitoring], 63%... said they have a difficult time paying for it.” (Arnett 2018) Henceforth, this device has the potential to contribute to the disadvantages that minority populations already face within the criminal justice system. It should be noted that Santa Clara County does not face this particular problem as electronic monitors are provided to clients free of charge. (Dhugana Sainju et al. 2018) However, it is also worth acknowledging that the population under electronic monitoring faces other financial
challenges as a result of this device. When surveying 5,000 individuals on ankle monitors, “22% said they had been fired or asked to leave a job because of the device.” (Kofman 2019) These concerns are important to keep in mind when acknowledging the US immigrant population who is more likely to live in poverty when compared to US natives. (Chapman and Bernstein 2003) (Figure 2)

**Figure 2: Poverty rates are higher within the immigrant community**
(data gathered from Chapman and Bernstein 2003)

![Poverty rates for U.S. natives, immigrants, and recent immigrants, 2000](image)

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d. Immigrant communities and the fear of government

The government surveillance of immigrant communities has been prevalent in US history but was significantly heightened as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, these attacks led to “harsher immigration policies, rhetoric, news media coverage, and vigilante groups.” which have significantly affected the immigrant community. (Koslowski)

Currently, the relationship between the immigrant community and government continues its rocky trajectory. This negative sentiment towards the government has only grown throughout the current presidential administration. During his first presidential campaign, President Trump infamously promised to build a wall between the US and Mexico and perpetrated many negative
stereotypes about immigrants through his rally speeches. During his first term as president he has tried to rescind, significantly reduce, or temporarily stop programs that are essential to the immigrant population such as TPS, asylum, the diversity visa, employment-based visas, student visas, and DACA as well as increase the use of immigration enforcement in the US. While his predecessor, President Obama, prioritized deportations for hardened criminals, “Trump’s Executive Orders instructed law-enforcement agencies to broaden the range of deportable offenses. Even acts that might warrant future criminal charges could be cause for removal.” (Rhodan 2017) Additionally, President Trump has toyed with the idea of mass deportations which has heightened the anxiety of many people within the immigrant community, especially the 10.5 million undocumented people currently residing in the US and 138,000 undocumented people living in Santa Clara County. (Profile of the Unauthorized Population: Santa Clara County, CA)

A combination of the current political climate and the historical context of this relationship has led many immigrants to believe that they should have limited interaction with government entities in order to remain in the country. Consequently, a recent report stated that “70% of undocumented individuals are less likely to contact the police if victims of a crime.” (Theodore, 2013) Additionally, the same study reported that the majority of the undocumented and foreign-born Latino population agreed that they would feel more comfortable contacting a community leader instead of the police about a crime. (Theodore) Furthermore, one in six immigrants in a separate study stated that either “they or a family member avoided situations where they’d be asked about their citizenship status-- routine acts like driving a car, renewing or applying for a driver’s license, or reporting a crime.” (Holder 2019) Some of these individuals are also wary of medical and educational professionals as well as public places. (Jordan 2020)
This hypervigilance has led to “severe psychological distress” in one in five of the participants who is said to have avoided certain places or instances out of fear. (Holder)

Additionally, navigating the criminal justice system as an immigrant is difficult because “Non-Citizens are often subjected to disparate treatment in bail and sentencing because of their immigration status. (Ruvalcaba v. Nevada 2006) The threat of removal looms large in the criminal proceedings.” (Cruz 2012) Similarly, a study focusing on the immigrant Latino population found them to face “more punitive sentencing” when compared to native-born Latino individuals. (Muñoz 2004) Regardless of this difference, however, native-born friends and family members of immigrant individuals also grow to distrust the government in a phenomenon referred to as the “social ripple effect.” (Cruz, Theodore)

e. Electronic monitoring compared to detention for immigrants

There are varying opinions pertaining to the effectiveness of electronic monitoring. This section will attempt to acknowledge the literature in favor of electronic monitoring as well as the literature that raises concerns pertaining to these devices while focusing on the needs of the immigrant population.

**Effectiveness of Electronic Monitoring**

Electronic monitoring has proven to effectively reduce “the likelihood of failure under community supervision” by about 31% when compared to people placed under other forms of community supervision. (Bales et al 2010) Additionally, electronic monitoring prevents overcrowding which has been known to contribute to bad conditions and can “cause or exacerbate mental health problems, and increase rates of violence, self-harm, and suicide.” (Prison Overcrowding - Penal Reform International 2020) Most importantly, electronic monitoring allows people who otherwise would have gone to county jail to remain in their
Consequently, clients can work if they choose to do so and maintain family ties to some extent.

**Concerns About Electronic Monitoring**

Referred to as “grilletes” or shackles by undocumented immigrants, electronic bracelets seem to be perceived as a “virtual extension of prison with real consequences” by some. (Arnett) The impact that electronic monitoring has on families is notable with 32% of respondents stating that the device negatively impacted their familial relationships. (Bales et al) Electronic monitoring also contributes to net widening, a term which refers to a process where a greater number of people are controlled by the justice system, as a result of technical violations. (Dhugana Sainju et al 2018) In fact, there is “more than a three-fold increase in the likelihood of getting revoked back to jail for a technical violation” (Dhugana Sainju et al 2018) Additionally, there is significant shame associated with electronic monitoring, it is believed that electronically monitored individuals feel as if “they are stigmatized in a way that [does] not represent their actions” which is considered to be a detriment to “obtain employment and remain employed.” (Bales et al) Therefore it is no surprise that in a study, “the vast majority of those interviewed considered their electronic surveillance experience a form of punishment.” (Arnett) Additionally, a study focusing on convicted individuals found that people of color had “significantly lower odds” of preferring electronic monitored devices over prison. (Irizarry et al 2016)

**C. Methodology**

The qualitative data for this study was collected through one phone interview with a PTS foreign-born client currently under electronic monitoring and through PTS on-site observations over the course of a month. I was able to reach my interviewee through the office of Pretrial
Services. They randomly selected 10 individuals under electronic monitoring and gave me their phone numbers. This client was the only individual who fit the criteria I was looking for and was willing to answer my questions. He asked to be referred to as Albertson for the sake of the research project. Because a level of disclosure is necessary within the criminal justice field, I will be omitting the details of the situations I describe.

This research was conducted during the COVID-19 lockdown. I am aware that my observations and the experiences of both the clients and officers might have varied under different circumstances.

D. Findings

a. Interview

i. Client Interview

Albertson believes that living with electronic monitoring “has its ups and downs” but the positive components seem to be outweighed by the negatives. For one, he believes that electronic monitoring helps to “keep [him] in control.” However, Albertson also believes that being under electronic monitoring brings him “bad attention.” He doesn’t like that people tend to assume that he is imprisoned simply because he wears an ankle bracelet. Consequently, this has caused him to feel ostracized and “not part of a group.” He also believes that this device has dissuaded potential employers from hiring him. Finally, Albertson stated that under electronic monitoring, “You feel like an animal. You’re tied up… I don’t think I want to be tied up.”
b. On-Site Observations

On-site observations were conducted to supplement the report's interview. They were conducted over a period of a month both virtually and in person at the Office of Pretrial Services in Santa Clara County. I mainly shadowed an officer assigned to four electronically monitored clients many of whom are immigrants. I was notified that this is a small client load and that officers monitor around 100 clients on average. The officer is fluent in Spanish and English and has a background in mental health.

One of my first impressions of the PTS clients was that they are astoundingly diverse. There are varying reasons why individuals are placed under electronic monitoring and clients have very different professions and cultural as well as ethnic backgrounds. I did not get to meet all of the officers at Pretrial Services. However, the officers that I did meet also seemed to be fairly diverse. Additionally, I noticed that the officer in charge of applying the ankle bracelets was bicultural and bilingual.

During my first week there, I shadowed the officer as he held phone check-ins with his clients. Before one of his check-ins, the officer gave me some background on his client, he mentioned that the client had a mental illness. The officer was very up to date on his client’s pressing needs and helped him effectively accomplish his tasks for the day. The client was treated with respect and empathy. After hanging up, the officer mentioned that he believed that his background knowledge in mental health was really helpful as he went about his work. However, he did not receive this training at Pretrial Services.

On another occasion, he faced many other deadlines. On top of his busy workload, he had to tend to a client who showed suspicious behavior while being monitored. This officer traced the exact whereabouts of the client on the date of the suspicious behavior. I noticed that the
technology they use is a bit slow and somewhat complicated. The officer was able to obtain the information he needed and decreased the perimeter of this client.

Also important to mention is that during my time shadowing the officer I was also informed that over the past year, as the number of people under electronic monitoring has tripled, the number of officers working at Pretrial Services has stayed the same.

E. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the information I gathered from the literature review, interviews, and on-site observations. These recommendations are directed specifically to Pretrial Services in Santa Clara County and are meant to help the immigrant population they serve. However, they could also be useful to other offices in the criminal justice system within and beyond this county.

**Recommendation #1:** Hire more officers to improve the 100:1 ratio of clients to officers in PTS

**Recommendation #2:** Keep in mind that electronic monitoring is not for everyone

- Administer a mental health assessment that gives a prediction of how individuals will fare under electronic monitoring

**Recommendation #3:** Ensure that officers are aware of the trauma embedded in the immigrant experience

- Be aware that for certain immigrant and refugee groups electronic monitoring triggers past traumatic experiences
- As much as possible officers recruited should be bilingual and bicultural
**Recommendation #4**: Individuals on electronic monitoring should have a clear understanding of what to expect before being monitored to minimize potential problems

- Individuals should be given training where they are informed of the differences between incarceration and electronic monitoring. They should be informed that:
  - Electronic monitoring is controlling
  - Electronic monitoring might have effects on their family relationships
  - This sanction might affect the way they are perceived by others
  - They might experience financial repercussions due to employment issues
  - How this experience differs from incarceration

**Recommendation #5**: Ensure that clients are directed to resources they can use to be successful

- Interview clients to assess their immediate needs
- Create a pamphlet of resources that immigrant PTS clients can use in the top five languages spoken in Santa Clara County other than English which are Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Hindi.

**F. Conclusion**

In conclusion, electronic monitoring might not be suitable for some immigrant clients who carry trauma associated with government authorities. Additionally, while there are great benefits to electronic monitoring such as the ability for clients to stay in their communities, there are also disadvantages to electronic monitoring. This includes strained family relationships, potential job loss, prejudice, and potential trauma induced by government surveillance within the immigrant community. Therefore, clients should be clearly informed about what to expect under electronic monitoring and should be
informed of how this experience differs from incarceration through training. It is also necessary that clients receive supplemental help through a needs assessment while under electronic monitoring. Creating a pamphlet specifically for immigrant clients could also be helpful. This pamphlet should at least be translated in the top 5 foreign languages spoken in Santa Clara County. (Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Hindi)

Additionally, the PTS department is severely understaffed, PTS officers are assigned an average of 100 clients. Meanwhile, the officer I shadowed had a smaller client load and was able to have an effective relationship with his clients. That is, this officer was completely up to date on his clients’ needs and worries which made their interactions flow effectively. It is therefore pertinent that PTS hire more officers. Finally, it is important that PTS continue to hire bicultural and bilingual individuals that understand the trauma embedded in the immigrant experience.

I understand that due to current events discussed previously, my research was limited. Future research within this realm should conduct more interviews with PTS clients in order to more clearly understand the issue at hand. It should also conduct PTS officer interviews to understand their needs and experiences.
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In Santa Clara County (SCC) we have a variety of cultures, religions, and languages. Based on some estimates, county residents speak more than 100 languages, and it is normal to hear these languages wherever we go. The majority of our population respect and love to hear people speaking in their native languages. When we walk or drive within the county borders, we see signs, posters, and billboards not only in English, but also in several other languages. Because SCC is very diverse, we have a goal to offer culturally competent services when someone goes into the Pretrial Services department. It is necessary to have these services to help clients feel respected, understand fully what is communicated to them, and be helped correctly.

I focused on culturally competent services in Pretrial because I understand the feeling of not having competent services provided to you. To this day my family and I still have situations of those sorts and it doesn’t feel good to be given services that you don’t understand or don’t even get because of not knowing where to get them. Living in Santa Clara County and our diversity in our area being provided with support in a language that you understand is important for people in need of desperate help to be able to know how to get the services and how to apply. Competent services help with the communication within our community and having a community of majority being immigrants it is a necessity for our County and something we cannot have.
I was able to collect data from the Office of Pretrial Services by the supervisor, Matthew Fisk and his assistant Joan. With their help I was able to see and receive important information about services provided. An important part of the culturally competent services provided to the clients in pretrial comes from Reentry Services. Clients in pretrial get connected to the Office of Reentry by the Office of Pretrial. Reentry provides various programs for clients for example legal, home, mental, and substance abuse services and various other programs. On the online website of Reentry they show the services they have and also they translate it into other languages besides English.

While conducting my research I was also provided documents by Pretrial that they give their clients translated in my first language, Spanish. I had the opportunity to read them and the documents provided were translated pretty good but had some incorrect grammar and some documents were partially translated. I asked who or how these documents are translated and the Office of Pretrial is associated with a translation and interpretation agency that the County of Santa Clara obligates them to have. I was able to see the grammatically incorrect areas since I graduated this year from Evergreen Valley College and got my translation and interpretation certification, and from that I learned translation and interpretation with paperwork and between people to provide good and informative communication. I believe the translating agency they use needs to be changed in order to help with the communication between the clients and the Office of Pretrial.
The Office of Pretrial conducted a needs assessment survey this year while I was interning with Pretrial. I was able to find out that they sent text messages to them to fill out the survey of what they needed. In the needs assessment survey it asked them what services they are in need of for example: housing, food, medical, mental help, transportation, etc. Unfortunately the needs assessment survey was only conducted in English and due to that the whole variety of clients who don’t speak English for obvious reasons were probably not able to take it and or understand what they were filling out. Even though the needs assessment survey was not conducted in other languages, this was the first assessment they have done and in the future needs assessment surveys they'll conduct will be in other languages.

For my research I conducted two interviews with Pretrial clients to gain knowledge on their experience with Pretrial and what they recommend to improve other clients' experience with Pretrial. The people who I interviewed were chosen at random by the Office of Pretrial and the interviews were completely voluntary. The Office of Pretrial provided me with a total of 10 people to contact, and out of those 10 I was only able to contact 2. During those interview I asked if they have had resources provided to them, John #1 said he was only given resources that were applicable to their case and it did help them but they weren’t aware of the other resources provided. I asked if the resources that were given to him were given right away or if it took a while for someone to get back to him, John #1 said that the resources he applied for contacted him the next day and “...if it weren’t for those resources I wouldn’t be where I am today.” The second Pretrial client, John #2, I interviewed had a very different experience, he was not
aware of the services that were provided. John #2 stated “I wasn’t given any services provided to me, or even knew there were any available.” I was surprised to hear how to people in the same office had two completely different experiences. I believe that one possibility of that outcome was perhaps having different Pretrial Officers. While I was in the Office of Pretrial I did find out that there is a 1:100 ratio when it comes to how many officers there are in Pretrial and how many clients each get which from what I have listened to most officers have more than 100+ clients.

A recommendation that I believe would make a drastic impact in the Office of Pretrial is to hire more officers, so that the officers have a lesser workload to be able to work on each client efficiently and be able to provide their clients with everything or the majority of what they need in order to succeed. If there aren’t enough officers, clients will be neglected and not helped in the correct way or enough for them to succeed. Due to the paperwork I reviewed, which are given to the clients to read and sign saying that they agree and understand what they are reading, that was not translated correctly orhalfly translated which can cause clients to get confused and not understand what they’re reading and signing. That can cause confusion between client and officer and also can cause the client to have a difficult time to succeed in their situation/case.

Another recommendation I would suggest to help Pretrial clients succeed going into Pretrial is that their officer that they are assigned to could have a website or pamphlet of the resources Pretrial and Reentry or other services/places can give them help. That would help clients have the services and information at hand since officers have many clients that sometimes it could be tricky to keep up with clients. Also having
information like email and or phone number from someone the clients can contact directly for services would help a lot so that therefore communication is two ways not just one, it will also prevent clients from having to wait for someone to call them. Lastly I would recommend for Pretrial Officers to get monthly or quarterly trainings so that they can learn about different cultures and different backgrounds, also so they can know how to handle and help clients of different backgrounds and cultures.

Based on my research I understand how important culturally competency is all around the world and specifically in the justice system. Culturally competency isn’t something someone can understand and know how to do from one day to the next, they need specific knowledge, training and most importantly personal experience to be able to be helpful to people of different cultures and backgrounds. In pretrial there are things that need to be changed and there is always room for improvement. The Office of Pretrial is doing as much as they can based on their amount of officers, budget, and based on the amount of clients they have. It is definitely not easy to do so. I hope that this research will continue to help the immigrant community feel more heard and to feel comfortable enough to be able to reach out or ask for help. Coming from an immigrant family I know that asking for help is difficult to do sometimes because of pride or just being scared to ask for help and having it not work out or have bad consequences at the end for them.
NEW AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP RESEARCH PAPER
THE PRACTICE OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CIRCLES

Alba
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The Practice of Restorative Justice Circles

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a practice that builds community, develops a space for dialog that develops trust, and the services as a foundation that will eventually serve as a safe space to help repair harm that has happened between two parties. Also, a space to make important decisions that will further the vision of a neighborhood, as was used in east Gilroy. RJ aims to address conflict between two or more parties alongside of key members of the community who are supportive to the parties addressing the harm that happened. In this paper, community refers to a concept of connectedness, meaning that they are connected to one another to form, and function as a circle, through the different spaces where they chose to spend time together and issues they decide to undertake. RJ can be practiced in a community setting with a large group of individuals, where many issues can be addressed using this practice. This paper will focus on the practice of RJ through community circles that work toward a connected, cohesive, and unified community. The goal of a circle community is to create a common ground space, safe and open, where everyone is equal, no titles exist, and everyone is an important part of one, united community. Following two years of restorative justice training and circle incorporation, a unified community in east Gilroy brings concerns and resolves challenging concerns for the wellbeing of all. In a circle, community members, of all ages and genders, are welcome and gather to address difficult realities of disparities that exist and affect individuals or groups representing different entities. RJ circles has become an important platform for the community to be able to unite and resolve issues, as a way of “how they do things”. These circles have become the way in which members of different
communities, such as immigrant families, first generation youth, city and county personnel, law enforcement, and faith-based members, come together and are granted a safety net to feel empowered to ask questions and speak honestly, while addressing challenging concerns dividing them from the greater Gilroy community.

In this paper I first begin describing the Restorative Justice Circle (RJC) practice and all the steps that make it a Restorative Justice Circle. The paper then begins to examine and address why restorative justice circles are needed as a shared understanding and active practice of distributing voice, space, and equity. The literary review supports the process, success, and empowerment of those who are involved with the practice of RJC. The focus of this paper will be based on a quick overview of the ONE program led by the South County Youth Task Force in East Gilroy. It addresses how to dialog, troubleshoot, and ultimately unify disconnected perspectives by providing RJ programming among other very much related services, that as a result, truly empowered the community, who are undocumented immigrants, in unimaginable ways. This paper will conclude by highlighting new projects the South County Youth Task Force will embark on, using the RJC practice to continue to build safe and equitable discussions and to further cultivate new relationships while deepening and solidifying existing ones.

The Circle Practice

The Circle Process takes many steps to complete. First, the function of the circle formation is to have everyone face each other, creating a shared equal concern and equalization. Everyone can see one another, speak to one another from any seat because, there are no sides, no beginning or end, just a circle. A circle connecting all its participants
to one another. Secondly, the circle starts with, a mindfulness moment where one of the circle keepers can take a bell or make a noticeable sound that communicates to all participants to listen, to disconnect from anything else surrounding them and to begin grounding for the reason behind the current circle. Third, the circle will have an opening ceremony, where the circle keeper facilitates opening a space for participants. Depending on the type of circle as there are many, everyone can drop any identifiers or titles and become an individual without any safeguards to limit them from connecting with themselves, each other, and the moment. For the fourth step, the circle will have a centerpiece, which will lay in the center of the circle. This is a reminder to listen and speak from the heart. This centerpiece will have a cloth or mat representing inclusion because they usually will include items that represent the individuals in the group granting each one value as part of the whole. Another great way to use inclusion can also be that the participants are told to bring an item that represents an important aspect of their lives, and share its meaning with the group and place it in the centerpiece component of the circle as part of an introduction or community-building circle.

The fifth step is to have and use a talking piece, an item that is passed around by the participants in a respectful manner, not bounced around, to share the ability to speak equitably. This talking piece allows everyone to have a turn to speak, with a focus on listening to the person talking while holding the talking piece, while also showing a physical representation of distributing ownership of the circle to all the participants. The talking piece represents something important to the group, usually a symbol of the group values (that will be created as a circle), and because those are important, it makes the
talking piece a powerful tool to maintain the integrity of the circle and the goals for having the circle to be accomplished. Sixth, the group will identify values for the whole. Participants can share a value and explain it when they have the talking piece. Once shared, all values will be placed in the centerpiece. The group also generates the values and additional guidelines for the circle around the central focal point as the seventh step to the practice.

Seventh, the circle keeper will have guiding questions to fuel the conversation around the issue or topic. If there is a time constraint, the circle keeper can share already generally established guidelines to follow that the group can choose to accept. Basic guidelines can be: Respect the talking piece; Speak from the heart; Listen from the heart; Personal information shared is confidential (unless safety is at risk); Remain in circle.

When addressing conflict, three goals are a part of the harm repair or healing circle that needs resolutions before breaking circle. Those are: 1) Generating a plan for a positive future, 2) making agreements moving forward, and 3) setting clear expectations.

Lastly, the closing of the circle is marked by focusing all of one’s senses to the bell or the noticeable sound that was used to mark the opening of the space, and as a reminder to focus on breathing, setting those intentions can be a powerful way to conclude the restorative justice circle practice.

**How the Disconnect Comes to Be**

One single act does not define us. How we behave or feel is not who we are or represent, and unfortunately our best is not always reflected by our actions or choices all the time. We are after all, humans, and we learn by making mistakes. At the time of
learning, these actions become teachings that we carry forth and help us to discern. We are all connected in one way or another, and that is often forgotten as we become busy and move forward in our lives. As we are moving forward, we give the respect we get, and this is where we might not always address everyone with the respect deserved and this is when typically, conflict begins to develop. We may lose the sense of belonging, of feeling respected, and may assign meaning when a sense of belonging or feeling respected has not been granted. In turn we may also lose sight of the value we all have to each other as a community; the feeling of contributing to society or feeling valued. This loss can lead us into a different entity path that we think is welcoming, not realizing that our desire to belong can lead us into negative circumstances and choices. This paints the picture of how we can easily miss that we are all connected, and how respecting and valuing everyone’s voice in our communities can lead to a conflict free community and in turn unification as community building.

The circle in RJ is anchored in old indigenous practices where values and teachings from our elders are the core of our belonging and being together, and we turn to these ways when tensions rise, to ground us back to what is important to all the participants involved. An African Proverb explains it best, “If youth are not initiated into the village, they will burn it down to feel it’s warmth”. Therefore, we must come together as a village to celebrate the good times and to support collectively during the difficult times. Harms can become a teacher when collectively we assess the significance of what was done and how the action made community members feel. This then opens a space
for what can be done to make amends in a space that did not exist prior to the dialog held within the circle.

Another philosophic cornerstone of the Restorative Justice framework is establishing relationships. It is said that hurt people hurt people they do not know, and healed people will heal people. Generally, people have a difficult time hurting people they know, which is why it is important to have intentional time and space for circles, especially as neighborhood groups, clubs, and in schools. A classroom of students who comes to know more of the teacher and of each other are less likely to pick on each other or bully one another. They become part of something important where they feel valued, acknowledged, and even sacred. Statistically speaking, when Restorative Justice was introduced to Solorsano Middle School in 2015, and furthered all the way until 2018 school year, Solorsano saw massive reduction of school discipline issues and less referrals of youth made to the office. In the summer of 2018, South Valley Middle School, the high-referral-making middle school located in east Gilroy had their new Vice Principal and a select group of youth trained in Restorative Justice. What resulted was a 50% decrease of discipline-based referrals in 2019 school year. What made for this drastic change? Active Restorative Justice Practices.

**Need for the Restorative Justice Practice in Schools and in the Community**

The school system often turns to suspension, expulsion, and citations as disciplinary practices. These disciplinary measures often punish minor infractions, and are applied arbitrarily, or go together with referrals, which seem to display a disproportionate higher number of colored youth in trouble in comparison to white youth. These actions work
against the goal of fostering school safety and academic achievement and in turn increase youth disconnect with school, increase likelihood of illegal activity involvement, and can lead to dropping out, or as many say, being pushed out. Suspended youth fall behind on schoolwork and their behavior typically remains unchanged, decreasing chances of making up work or remaining engaged in school. A report states that, “In the 2011-2012 academic year, U.S. students lost about 18 million instructional days due to exclusionary discipline policies” (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015). Youth tend to end up in the streets when they are not in school and the likelihood of them ending up in the criminal justice system increases. This is more so true for minority youth that are marginalized, already experience poverty, violence, malnutrition, and unemployment from a system working against their communities. Research states that low-income and minority youth are more likely to experience unequal and intense security in their schools than other students (Nance, 2013; Payne & Welch, 2013).

In a school environment, the focus of restorative justice lies in the strategy to build, maintain, and repair relationships among the community of youth, their families, teachers, and administrators. RJ in the school system will address external factors that impact youth and provoke their misbehavior. Addressing and alleviating external factors will aid in creating a sense of community because everyone involved will be part of the circle, not just the disciplinary entity. Incorporating Restorative Justice Circles can also create a safe environment, promote academics, and keep youth engaged and connected to school activities. Also, the inclusion of the family plays a huge part, because it builds transparency with the system that educates the youth and is inclusive to the family who in other
instances, would just be notified of an issue and/or might not understand what the issue is if a language barrier exists.

On July 29, 2020, immigrant Spanish-speaking community members who have organized themselves as San Ysidro Nueva Vida (SYNV) from East Gilroy, CA, gave feedback during an impromptu Q&A segment and focus group. They shared their thoughts as it related to the Gilroy Police Department. Each of these SYNV members participated in a Spanish Community Police Academy program where the class was facilitated using the restorative justice dialog circle practice. The Community Police Academy is a space in which police officers present about various topics like, different departments within the police department, patrolling, SWAT, use of force trainings, and answers to difficult questions like immigration policies, in an attempt to build an understanding with the community members as to their responsibilities and conduct when in active duty.

The first question asked was around their thoughts about how their perspectives have changed due to the classes and circle practices, and the work around restorative justice circles as it relates to the Gilroy Police Department and their interaction with the community. Community member Leticia states, “I was able to participate in the academy and it helped me a lot and would like to see it available to youth as well. It was fruitful and now I trust more, and can talk to police officers, because now they know us a little more. Before [the academy], community members would be afraid to talk to officers and now not so much”. Another community member shared that active participation in events like the one mentioned above, helps her get to know her community members more, and to
build a trustful relationship with others without jumping to assumptions on what they are like. She continued to say, “I learn to simply see them as they are, and it has helped with the relationship one has with the community and the police department as well. With the classes and the police academy, we have built a stronger bond between the community and the police”. Due to the Community Police Academy shared in Spanish, which is the native tongue of the people who attend, these community members have created a better relationship with the local police department, and every three months continue to gather with an officer or two to practice the circle, to continue asking questions and continue to strengthen their relationship as community member and protector of the community. Many of these residents do not have “papers” and have stopped being afraid of their city police department as a direct result of participating in the Community Police Academy and quarterly circles. Instead they feel they can call on them for support.

The Empowerment that Occurs through Circling Up

We have let the criminal justice system deal with conflict long enough, allowing our communal voice to get lost in translation. Most of the time the victim gets little to no room to speak or be heard as the focus is on the aggressor and the State acts on behalf of the victim. RJ aids in empowering our communities to take back the power that they somehow lost through our traditional criminal justice system. Addressing challenging concerns in a safe and respectful space can lead to empowerment and strengthening of communities. Time and time again we have seen our system fail to address conflict, or it gets perpetuated even more. RJ comes about to offer an alternative way to address challenging concerns and affords community the opportunity to get rid of the problems
within the community. As a community, through restorative justice, the goals are to: 1) own and address the problem, 2) strengthen the individuals as a way to strengthen the community, 3) develop skills to build capacity and empower community members to address issues themselves, and 4) develop supportive tools to aid in the process for everyone involved. Successful RJ practice should result in community members taking an active role is justice, justice systems pulling from community input while also investing in their capacity building and strengthening, and last, allowing preventive measures and interventions to be implemented to address any surfacing needs in order to resolve the issues that occurred in the first place.

During the impromptu Q&A focus group with San Ysidro Nueva Vida community members that was previously mentioned, residents responded to the second impromptu question that asked them to voice their experience with restorative justice circles and differences, if any, noticed from meeting in the typical format without the RJ training and framework to meeting as a circle with the RJ training and framework. Community member Sylvia says,

“Personally, I have changed a lot, because of the trainings, meetings, and the circles have helped me a lot. The first time you [SCYTF] offered a restorative justice course, three years ago, was when I began to participate and it has been very beneficial, personally, morally, and culturally. Now, while in the pandemic, we cannot be in person, but we continue to be active and participate through zoom, and still join efforts with other community organizations, thanks to you [SCYTF], because you give us access to all the information needed to connect with other organizations”.

Sylvia felt empowered and over the course of three years, continues to come back to meet, engage civically and be an active participant in reshaping her community. She even went with SCYTF Coordinator and Community Coordinator to a statewide
conference in Los Angeles, CA. for Promotores called, “Vision y Compromiso” where she
met Jerry Tello of the National Compadres Network and creator of El Joven Noble
Character Development- Rites of Passage for youth. Sylvia and her husband have become
leaders and volunteer for pretty much everything they can.

Another San Ysidro Nueva Vida leader states,

“The difference is big, because of everything accomplished and that now exists, not
only by the volunteers or the committee. For me, one of the biggest satisfactions is the
quantity of organizations that have come and brought programming to San Ysidro as
it is not easy. That makes me feel happy because I know that a lot of those
organizations had tried countless times and perhaps, they were able to come in once
or twice, but none would stay [to continue offering services]. Thanks to the
coordinating group of volunteers that have worked very hard, along with the assistance
of other organizations, especially Bernice (SCYTF Program Manager), we have been
able to establish something that I believe will be long lasting in San Ysidro. From the
looks of it, we are going to continue to grow. I know if we were working [back at San
Ysidro Community Center pre COVID Shelter in Place], we would have them [other
CBOs] right along with us. To have new people come in… I like it, because that is an
indicator of growth that we are advancing, new ideas are coming in and it is all very
motivating. The relationships we have created are many, not only with the police, the
city council, and leaders of other organizations that work with us”.

Community members are seeing the difference that RJ has made with their own
organization attempts and requests for services. Working along side of Neighborhood
Safety Unit (NSU) and South County Youth Task Force (SCYTF) feels incredibly different
for them than how they attempted to organize in years prior. They now feel capable and
comfortable inviting GPD Chief of Police, the City Administrator, City Council members
and County departments to come and speak with them. Because they sit as a circle, no
one has more “power” over anyone. They have a circle keeper and the leadership body
meets prior to the circle to prepare the agenda that is then approved by the whole at the
beginning of the meeting. Educational attainment or economic standing plays no role.
Everyone, regardless of citizenship, age, gender, or language, is equal in the space. Community-based agencies also take the voice of SYNV more seriously and come ask them for feedback and guidance whereas before, agencies would come with a grant to offer a service or write San Ysidro in a County grant, but did not ask the residents for their feedback.

The third impromptu question was framed around the benefits they may or may not have seen with the circle practice. Community member Teresa states that, “the circle is a type of ice breaker, we let go of what the day may have brought, we make a connection among us all, and that helps everyone relax and connect with the other people and you feel part of the group, I have never felt discriminated against, or perceived in a bad way, nothing like that, I feel safe and I welcome everyone’s kindness”. When asked: How do you feel when the Chief of Police is in the circle with you? Teresa responds, “marvelous, because that is another human being that we do not have to see in a different way, even if he has a higher rank. You feel the same, relaxed and connected with him also.

Rosa responds to the third question,

“I think that it [circle practice] has changed our way of thinking, we are looking into the future [it] has opened many opportunities to express ourselves, communicate with each other and even though I was not able to attend the Community Police Academy, I thought maybe this year I could, but not anymore [due to the pandemic]. In the future I will try again. The circles have helped me a lot, we have used them with all the people in San Ysidro Nueva Vida and to get to know all the people that have helped and supported the group, I am very fortunate to know the entire group”.

There were eleven participant evaluations, and in the program evaluation the following data was gathered:
• Seventy-two percent (72%) felt well informed of policing activities in their community;

• Seventy-two percent (72%) believe that the officers are genuinely concerned with issues and problems affecting the local community;

• Seventy-two percent (72%) of the participants felt familiar with various programs and divisions within the community about the police department;

• Ninety percent (90%) feel more confident and informed in communicating and interacting with Gilroy Police Department; and

• One hundred percent (100%) believe the Community Police Academy was effective in informing the community about the innerworkings of the police department.

**Restorative Justice with South County Youth Task Force:**

**One Neighborhood Empowered (ONE)**

The South County Youth Task Force (SCYTF) is a regional collaborative of community members, schools, parents, community-based organizations, governmental agencies, and faith-based organizations. SCYTF in 2012 enacted their first Strategic Plan committed to the best interest of the south Santa Clara County youth and their families. Utilizing their resources and collaborative funding, SCYTF has been able to deliver and develop new programming for youth and their families in south Santa Clara County, referred to as “South County”. One of the many resources employed is the CalGRIP ONE Project, by way of a $1,500,000 grant by California's Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) between 2015-2018. The One Neighborhood Empowered (ONE) Project follows
the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) model and looks to fill in the service gaps in South County. The OJJDP model envisions a nation where children are free from crime and violence. Should youth encounter the justice system, the interaction should be just and beneficial to all involved. SCYTF employs a three-tiered approach with the ONE Project, prevention (wider foundational net), early/intermediate intervention (more narrow body of a triangle), and high-level intervention/chronic targeted suppression (top point of the triangle). The ONE Project reflects the SCYTF Strategic Plan and has the following goals: 1) increase/improve service coordination and effectiveness, 2) expand and enhance support services for youth in multiple “hot spots”, and 3) change systems and improve capacity and expertise of CBOs, law enforcement, parents, faith-based organizations, youth and school personnel with evidence-based programming’. Key findings of the ONE Project Evaluation for the Restorative Justice Program (one of many programs offered under the ONE Project) are:

- Seventy percent (70%) of youth reporting their willingness to recommend the program and services, as helpful to a friend or schoolmate.
- Fifty percent (50%) of youth participants indicate that because of the ONE Project programming, they were participating in more positive opportunities and services in their community.
- A little over sixty percent (60%) of the youth involved in ONE Project programming are connecting with caring, supportive adults they trust. This demonstrates that youth who feel supported by caring adults, role models and through the relationships they are building, are more likely to develop a positive character
and make healthier choices. Over sixty percent of the youth also reported an increased ability to have healthy relationships with their family and community because of the ONE Project programming available. Furthermore, the relationships and positive connections created in the community make it less likely that youth will want to engage in negative activities when in school, home and in the community. To finish key findings of the ONE Project for Restorative Justice, seven out of ten youth reported an increase in knowledge of their self. This allows them to identify their strengths and weakness, and as a result enable their opportunity to advance in positive change while believing in themselves, realizing their talents and setting future goals in life.

Restorative justice is only one part of the ONE Project programming that aids in the positive outcome of the project. SCYTF employs restorative justice to emphasize building relationships within the community and repairing harm caused by negative/disruptive behavior. This is accomplished through the cooperative process that includes all parties involved and can lead to a transformed community with stronger relationships. The restorative justice applied by the SCYTF is promoted as free training to anyone interested within their community-based organizations partnerships, in schools to support middle school youth and with district administrators and highly encourage school resource officers to attend and to be part of the paradigm shift.

Methodology

Supportive research has been gathered through peer review articles; review of existing data collected by the SCYTF and partners for the One Project Evaluation Report. The data collected for the One Project derived from survey collection, participant
evaluations, site visits, focus groups, and data provided by community partners on behalf of their organizations and services. Also reviewed, were participant evaluations that assessed the post-reaction to the entirety of the Community Police Academy program facilitated and fully conducted in Spanish for Spanish speakers. Also, responses from a focus group Q&A session with immigrant community members in East Gilroy is included in this research, that ultimately further supported the narrative of empowerment and relationship building as a result to having restorative justice circles.

Future Endeavors with the Practice of Restorative Justice Circles

The current climate places us in the COVID-19 pandemic where social distancing would not allow individuals within six feet of each other. The South County Youth Task Force mobilized to address the current climate on top of the pandemic to address race, equity and leadership with youth utilizing the restorative practice of the circle virtually. These types of pro-social opportunities are made possible through the past success the practice has had in together addressing racial, economic, and attainment to services disparities that empower and unify the community.

Restorative Justice Recommendations

For the school system, Districts should grow the allocation of funding to support the Restorative Justice movement and facilitate its incorporation into a traditional school-based practice. The school board of education (SCCOE) can mandate restorative justice to be set in place throughout the whole school system as part of their day-to-day school practices, or as an alternative method to address incidents. With a mandate, their board would need to be trained and they would help train all of SCCOE staff and ensure it trickled
Restorative Justice practices can become part of the policy in place to manage K-12 school grades and data can be collected to see if youth referrals to the office, suspensions and expulsions are decreased, stay the same or become elevated.

Community-based agencies should all be trained in the RJ practice to further support the cultivation of a restorative paradigm. These individuals can also be the liaisons to support the RJ practice movement in places like public libraries, community centers and any other spaces that facilitate meetings to also facilitate RJ Circles. Having these trained RJ Circle keepers can aid in reaching more communities because they would facilitate and create community with other community members in their native language, deepening the connection to the practice and the other communities.

The creation of a Restorative Justice Office or department at the Santa Clara County level would be incredibly helpful to help spear head the Restorative Justice movement. Permanently giving it a permanent space and office at the County level would help CBOs, schools and different County departments with technical assistance and support to neighborhoods, agencies, and schools throughout the County. The rest of the recommendations can happen effortlessly if proper fund allocation is created for a Restorative Justice office at the county level. Once the office is created also having a representative available to single-handedly oversee and direct a Restorative Justice Team to outreach and share wins and victories at the various local levels, and help elevate and uplift the rest of the recommendations by leveraging relationships and dollars throughout the county infrastructure.
Concluding Thoughts

Based on the research conducted, the more implementation there is of the practice, the more useful it becomes to all the parties involved. RJ has the power to decrease the disengagement there may be from youth and create consciousness around other aspects impacting youth and causing youth misbehavior, and in turn increase relationship building, empower youth and community to create relationships and mend harmed ones. Pertaining to the current climate, Restorative Justice Circle practices can also lessen the instances of colored individuals, groups and communities being targets of racial disparities that exist in our society. A Restorative Justice County Office can be the first step that, Santa Clara County takes toward providing the funding, tools and services needed throughout the County to aid schools and neighborhoods that are affected by violence. Utilizing the Restorative Justice process county-wide would help build, maintain, and mend relationships that have been broken, including the lack of trust between South County communities and the County and the overall feeling within marginalized communities like East Gilroy that feel they are neglected by the County in comparison to communities in San Jose and North County that have more accesses to Silicon Valley non-traditional funding streams. If Santa Clara County wants to seriously help change the trajectory in Gilroy, there is a lot of restorative dialog that needs to happen with community members in Gilroy, and what better way than to have circles with community members where the playing field is equalized.
Bibliography

Peer Reviewed Articles
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Books
- Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community, by Carolyn Boyes-Watson & Kay Pranis.

Surveys
- SCYTF Community Police Academy Participant Evaluations|2019

Other
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