National Voices Project

Understanding barriers
Measuring opportunities
Informing initiatives for change

For children - through the voices of adults in their communities

Impact Report:
Engaging Native American Youth
Introduction

In February 2016, the National Voices Project conducted a survey in partnership with the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY). The survey research questions were designed to examine the level of public awareness of Native American Youth and their needs.

The National Voices Project (NVP) is conducted in partnership with GfK, an international survey research organization that maintains KnowledgePanel®, a nationally representative web-enabled panel of adult members of households across the United States. Survey respondents included 2,134 adults from 48 states and D.C. 1,152 respondents have jobs that affect education, healthcare, economic opportunities, or community and civic engagement for children. Another 982 respondents volunteer in ways that affect education, healthcare, economic opportunities, or community and civic engagement for children.

The February 2016 NVP survey was also fielded in Spanish via a supplemental panel who preferred to answer in Spanish. Overall, 1,073 individuals participated by using the Spanish-language version and 247 were eligible to complete the full questionnaire.

Background

In collaboration with CNAY, we developed a series of questions to examine the level of public awareness of Native American Youth and their needs. Respondents’ awareness of strengths and challenges of Native American Youth were analyzed against their reported amounts of interaction with them in their work and/or volunteer efforts. Additionally, respondents were asked whether they thought more information and more access and exposure to Native American Youth would help engage with them in their work and/or volunteer efforts.

Respondents’ interaction with Native Americans in their work and/or volunteer efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>At least once a month</th>
<th>Once a year/never</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children 0-12</td>
<td>16% (n=338)</td>
<td>84% (n=1,760)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens 13-17</td>
<td>16% (n=338)</td>
<td>84% (n=1,764)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults 18-24</td>
<td>18% (n=356)</td>
<td>82% (n=1,747)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All age groups</td>
<td>24% (n=531)</td>
<td>76% (n=1,597)</td>
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</table>
Do you think more information and more access and exposure to Native American youths would help you engage them in your work or volunteer efforts?

**Key Findings**

Across the U.S., about 1 in 4 adults who work and/or volunteer on behalf of children and adolescents say that they interact with Native Americans in their work/volunteer efforts at least once a month. Within specific age groups, this proportion was 1 in 6 adults.

Respondents whose work/volunteer efforts lead them to interact with Native American youth at least once a month were somewhat more likely than other adults to say that they thought "more information" and "more access and exposure" to Native American youths would help engage the Native American youth community further.

Overall, respondents were more likely to say that "more access and exposure" would lead to more engagement with Native American youth, compared with "more information."

Respondents who interact with Native American youth once a year or less frequently were more likely to say "don't know" about the impact of "more information" or "more access and exposure" on increasing engagement, than to say "yes" or "no."

**Analyses**

Only 6% of respondents said that they have "very good understanding" of the strengths and challenges of Native American youth; 26% said they have "some" understanding and 48% said "little or no" understanding.

About 1 in 5 respondents said their "awareness of the challenges facing Native American youth" has increased over the last 5 years, while 3 in 4 respondents said that their awareness had stayed the same.

Similarly, about 1 in 6 respondents said that their perceptions of Native American youth had become "more favorable" over the last 5 years, while 3 in 4 respondents said that their perceptions were unchanged.

**Future Research**

Additional research could focus on the types of interactions that current respondents have, and whether the type of engagement (e.g., in educational versus healthcare settings) is perceived as promoting engagement more than other types of engagement.

Other surveys could inquire about the type of engagement that Native American youth would like to have with education, healthcare, and civic service organizations, and what types of communications and outreach they would welcome as ways to increase engagement.
Mission of the National Voices Project

Led by researchers at the University of Michigan, the National Voices Project is an effort to bring the perspectives of thousands of people in communities across the United States to the national dialogue about opportunities and barriers for children related to race/ethnicity. For more information, visit the project website: NationalVoicesProject.org.

The National Voices Project team is grateful for the support and collaboration of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, through the America Healing Initiative.

For this survey on Native American youth, NVP partnered with the Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) at the Aspen Institute. The CNAY is dedicated to improving the health, safety and overall well-being of Native American youth through communication, policy development and advocacy.

The NVP Team

**Director**
Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP

**Faculty Collaborator**
Kathryn L. Moseley, MD, MPH

**Faculty Collaborator**
Susan Woolford, MD, MPH

**Project Manager**
Dianne C. Singer, MPH

**Data Analyst**
Amilcar Matos-Moreno, MPH

**Web & Communications Specialist**
Anna Daly Kauffman, BA

**Research Associate**
Sara L. Schultz, BA

The CNAY Team

Ryan Ward
Josie Raphaelito