

Making Youth Voices Heard

Community Youth Survey conducted by
the DELTA youth



Who We Are–The Partners



Who We Are–The Partners



Rachele Gardner

Melnea Cass Network

Mandela Residents
Cooperative Association

Why We Did This

The Background

Who We Are

Diverse &
Excellent
Leaders
Taking
Action
(DELTA Youth)





Why This is Important

YOUNG PEOPLE VIEWED AS RESOURCES

- Adults view young people as resources and respect the contribution young people can make
- Both adults and young people share leadership and decision-making roles
- Both may need to learn skills and attitudes
- Both have strengths to contribute

Why This is Important

- Youth are the future change agents
- Youth are developing critical thinking skills
- Youth are co-creators of project
- Youth learned community based research to develop action plans for some of the identified issues

Target Location & Population

Grant Parameters

- Youth ages 13-24
- Housing Complexes (Mandela Homes, Roxse Homes, Camfield Gardens, Lenox, Camden)
- Tremont to Washington Street, Northampton to Melnea Cass Boulevard



What We Did

YOUTH

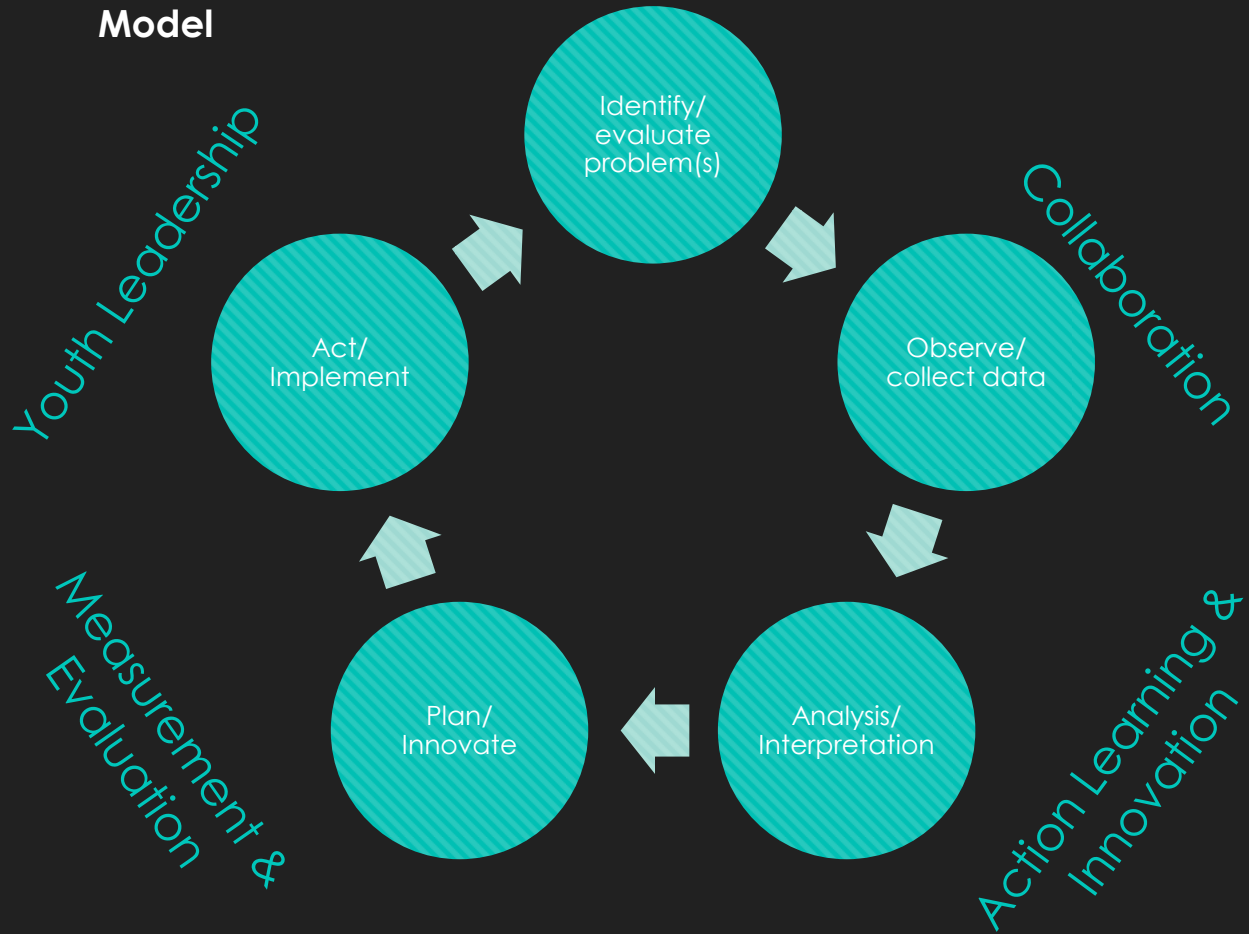
PARTICIPATORY

ACTION

RESEARCH

(YPAR)

Youth-Led Participatory Action Research and Innovation Model



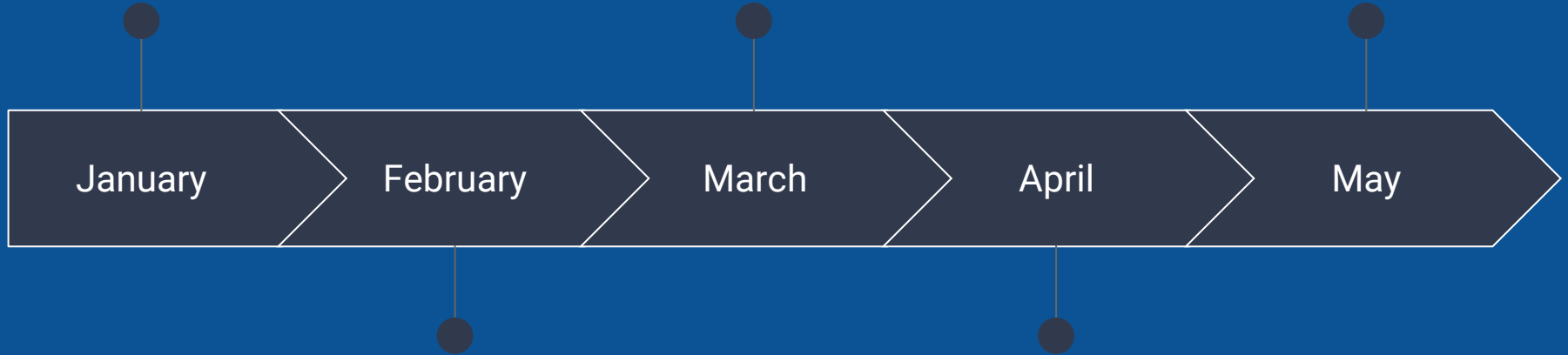
YPAR Project Steps

1. Building a team & setting expectations
2. Framing the project
 - Understanding our context
 - Identifying an issue of focus & framing research question
3. Conducting research
 - Exploring existing research & refining research question
 - Designing the research project
 - Practice and role plays
 - Implementation
4. Analyzing data
 - 1. Discovering trends
 - 2. Creating visuals
 - 3. Draw conclusions / additional questions
5. Presenting data
6. Action planning
 - 1. Creative strategies
 - 2. Invite partners
 - 3. Set short-, medium-, long-term goals
7. Taking action!
8. Evaluation

- Team Building
- Intro to YPAR
- Community Assets & Challenges

- Survey Design
- Role Playing

- Survey Analysis
- Presentation Prep



- Issues Map
- Research Question

Survey Implementation

Identifying the Problem

- How did we choose an issue?
- Challenges in choosing an issue
- How we came to do an assessment survey:
 - Education
 - Poverty
 - Drugs
 - Violence
 - Employment

CAUSES

Revenge

Betrayal
community

Drugs

Drugs
DRUGS

Gov't

PEER
PRESSURE

Gang

Street
STEALING

Poverty

Tertiary
Territory

Why would
you get in
a gang in
the first place?

VIOLENCE

GUN/
weapons

GANG

EFFECTS ON individuals (youth)

4
SUICIDE

4
HOMICIDE

4
ISOLATION

Prapping

Death/
crime
rate

dropout

EFFECTS ON others

Mental
health

Loneliness

Drinking
to
cope

Schools

Better
Cities
Budget

loss of
family
members

Business

EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY

6
Diviso
n

6
Trauma

6
Home
less
ness

labeling
community

Seared
to be
in com.

incarceration

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

start w/
little kids

college

program
for kids to
get jobs

parent
education
jobs

therapy

safe
zone

Collecting the Data

Designing the Survey

- How the survey was created
- The questions we wanted to ask
- Deciding where and how to conduct the survey

drop-out → gangs → gun violence

Schools & Drop Out X4

Revenge

Alcohol & Drugs 4xX

STEALING X

Poverty

Guns & Gun Violence X

Solutions

Why dropout?
Why not stay in high school?

How does Revenge Make you feel?
Why do people seem revenge?

Why do people turn to drugs?
Why Drugs?

Why steal?
How does stealing make you feel?

Are any of your friends in poverty?

How do youth get ahold of weapons?
Why Guns? Why not words?

Who can you go to for help?

Is it avoidable?

Why drink?
How does it make people feel?

If no one was in poverty, would violence still exist?

Are there solutions available to youth in the community?

Are there solutions available to youth in the community?

Who are the targets?

Pressure 1

Who knows

How often do you get pressure?

Do school know?

Do youth see anything wrong with violence?

Could there be better youth organizations, programs, and services for the young with parents and the community?

Is it cool to be in a gang?

Do parents know?

How does violence make youth feel?

Who is selling the guns?

Fenway

of Fine bound

entworth
stitute of
chnology

Hallick St
Mi



Collecting the Data

Conducting the Survey

- Survey experiences
- Challenges & Successes

SHAWMUT GROCERY

THE
FINE CLIP
Coca-Cola

AT

OPEN

Shawmut Butchery
Carniceria

La Nacional
AUTHORIZED AGENT

NO PARKING

JOLLY rancher
UNTAMED FLAVOR!
SLASH

NO SPIN





What We Learned

Analysis & Interpretation

Analysis Process

General

- Demographics
- Three Open-Ended Questions

Five Categories

- Education
- Poverty
- Drugs
- Violence
- Employment

Two Categories

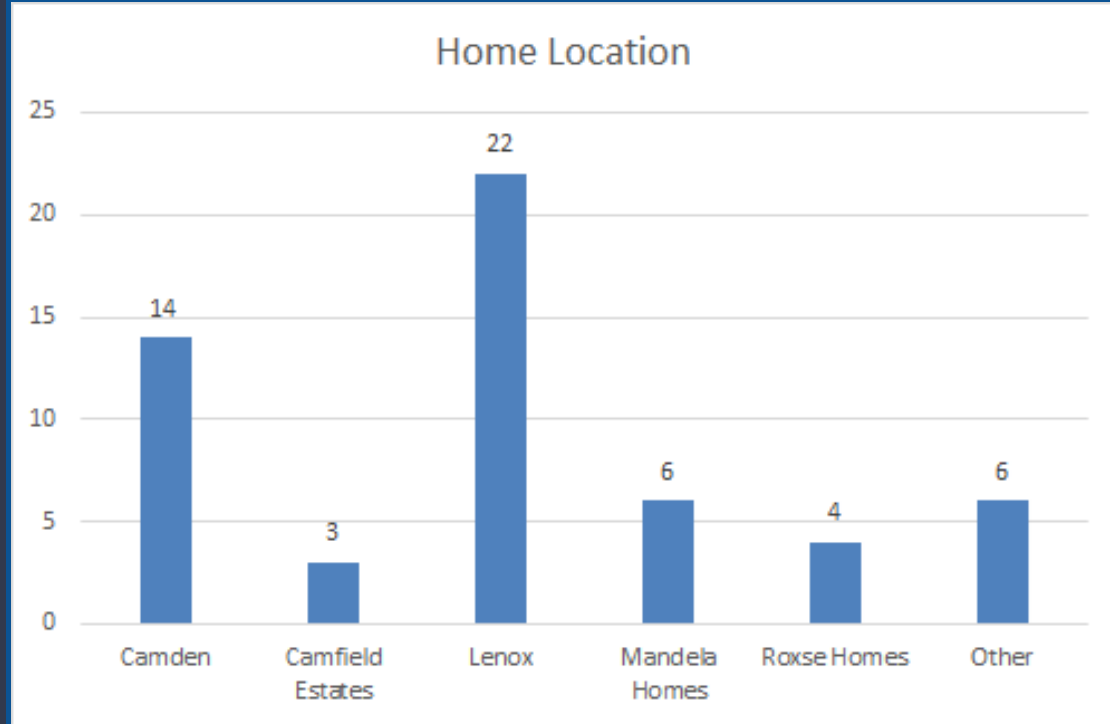
- Employment
- Violence

Recommendations

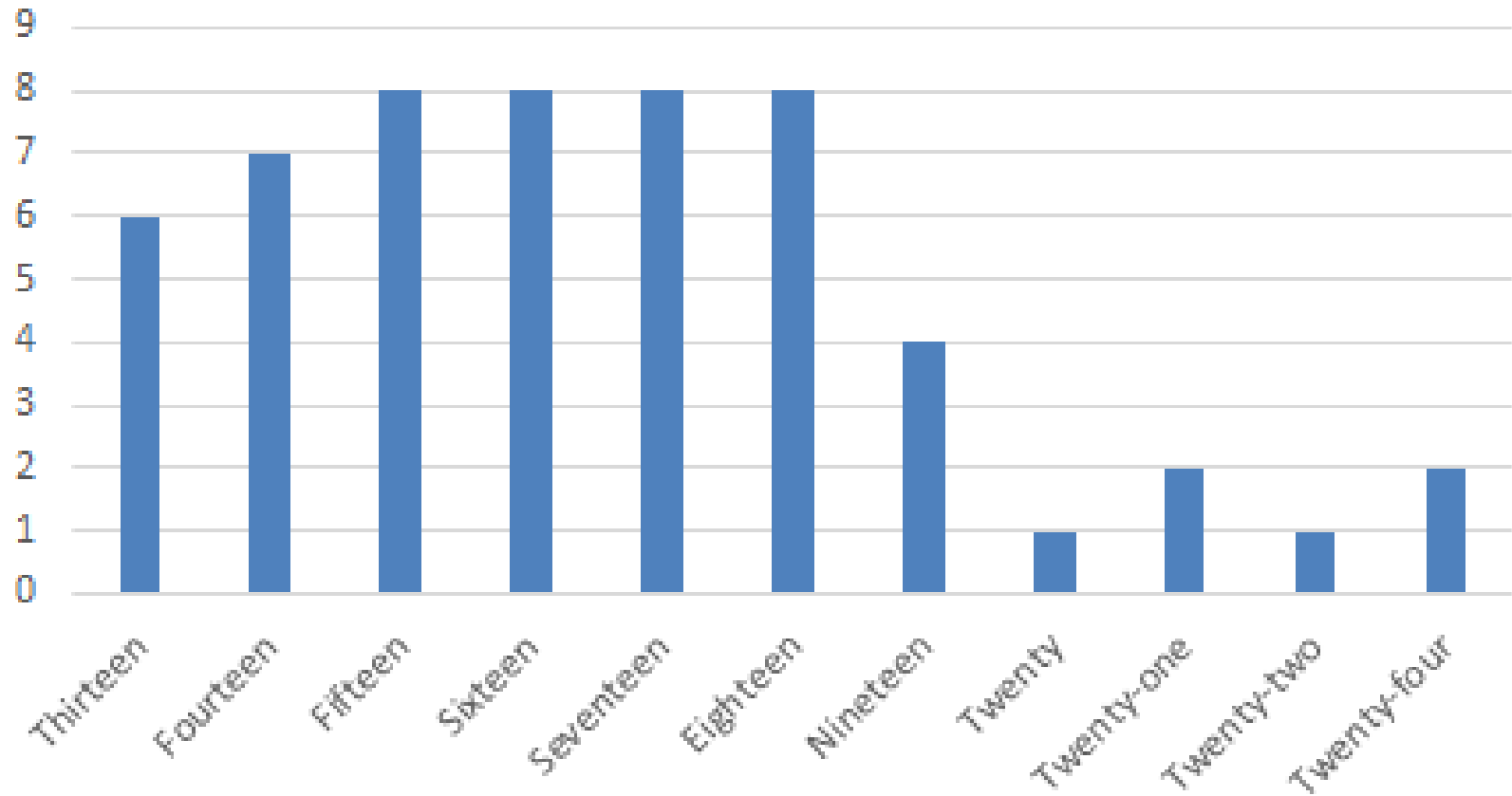
Demographics

55 Survey Responses

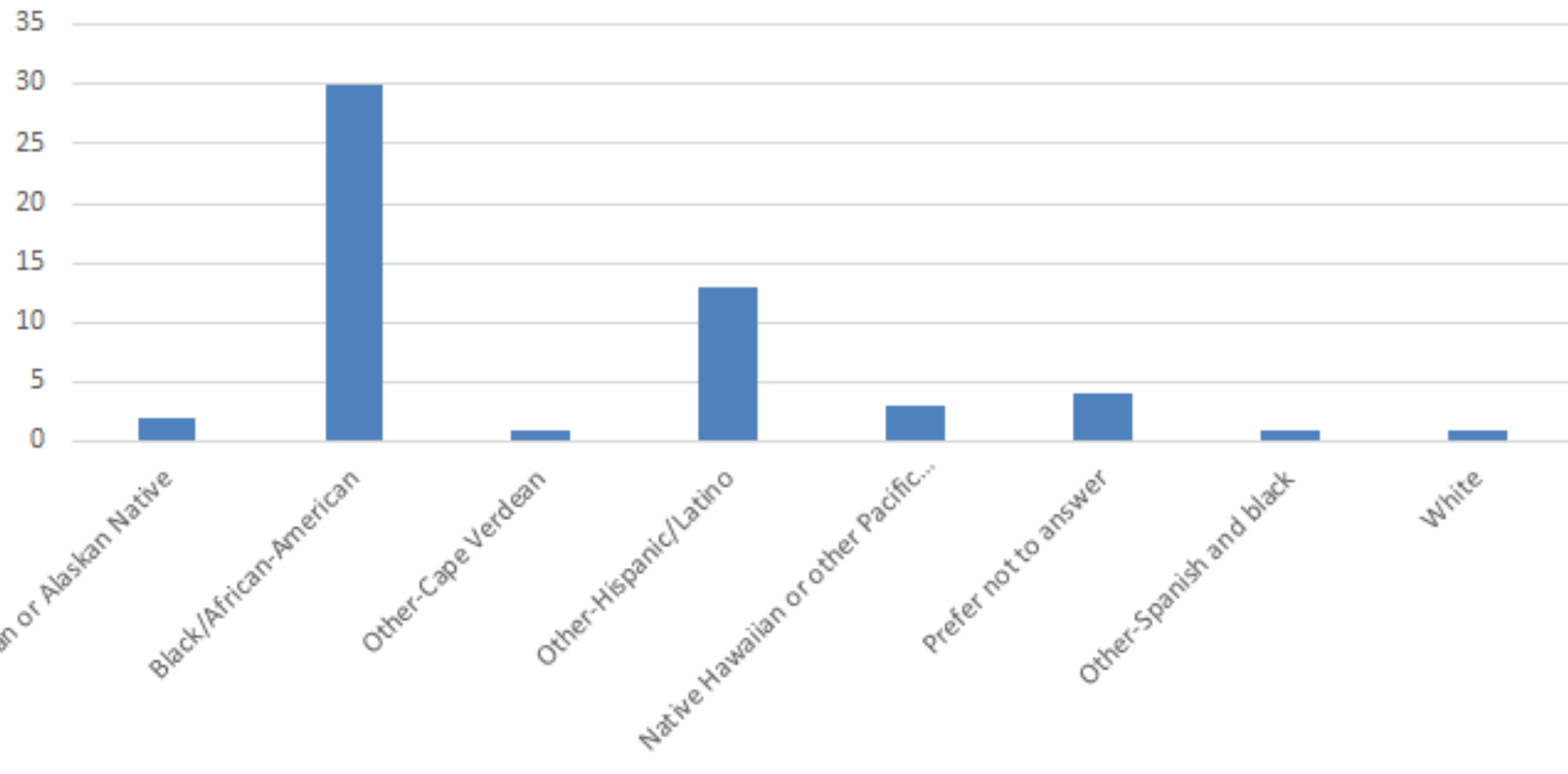
- 51% Male
- 44% Female
- 5% Prefer not to Answer



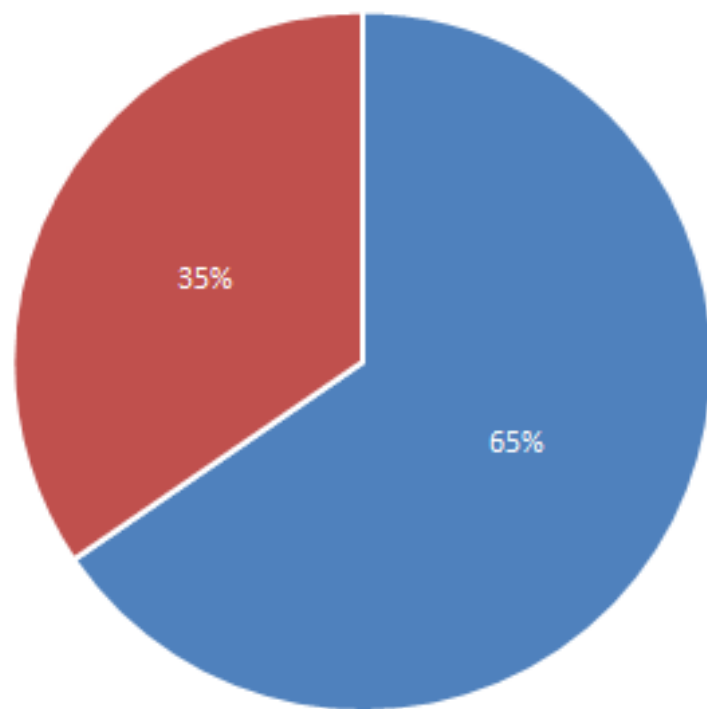
Age of Respondents



Race

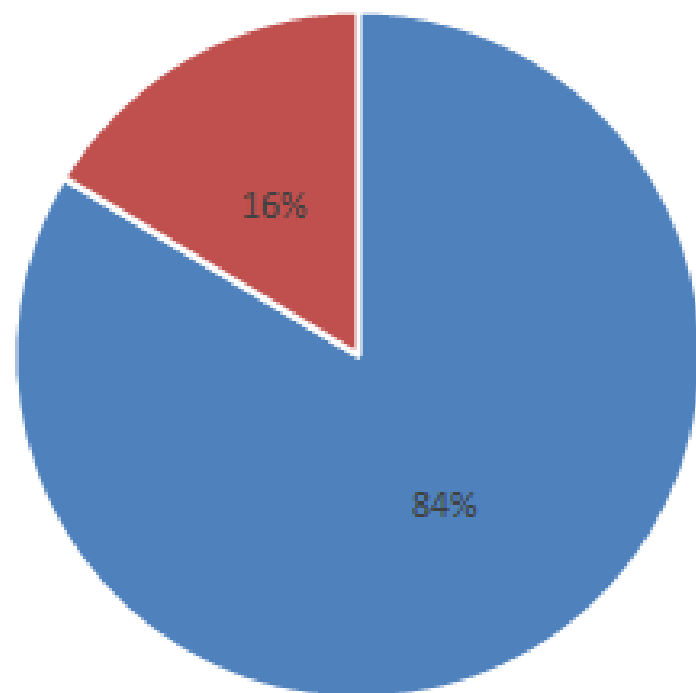


Hispanic or Latino



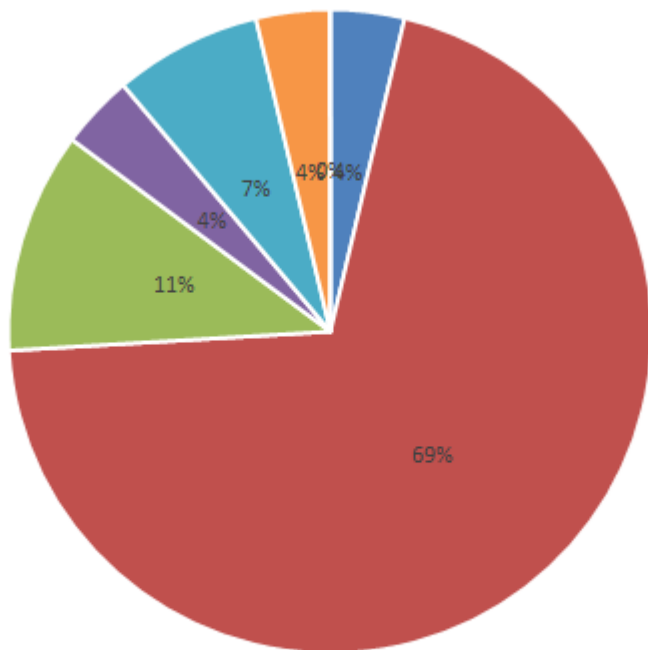
■ yes ■ no

Length in the US



■ I have always lived in the US ■ More than 4 years

Who do you live with



- Adopted parents
- Grandparents
- Other adult family member (aunt, uncle, older sibling, etc.)
- Other unrelated adult
- Biological parents
- I don't live with an adult parent/guardian figure
- other

Education

Are you currently in school or other educational program?

	Frequency	Percent
No	11	20.0
Yes	44	80.0
Total	55	100.0

Those in School

- Schools most cited: Madison Park (7), Snowden (4), Timilty (4), Charlestown (3)
- 52.7% feel that they are doing ok in school, 27.2% don't
- 47.3% don't receive any help with school and homework
- 43.5% very much enjoy or somewhat enjoy school
- 63.3% always or most of the time feel safe in school

Those Not in School

- 6 out of 11 didn't make it past 9th grade
- 4 out of 11 had completed high school
- Only 3 out of 11 expressed they were in school or another educational program
- 5 out of 11 want to go to college

All Young People

- 70.9% want to go to college
- Concerns about achieving future educational goals:
 - Grades not being good enough (40%)
 - SAT scores not being good enough
 - Cost of education
- About half participate in a program outside of school and half don't

Poverty

60% Receive Public Benefits (such as Food Stamps, MassHealth, Heat Assistance, Section 8, etc.)

- Most believe poverty is a big problem
- Most answered “homeless people” or “I don’t know” when answering how poverty affects their community

Drugs

Substances Consumed

- Alcoholic Drinks
- Marijuana
- Tobacco, including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or cigars
- Electronic cigarette or similar device
- Any drug other than marijuana

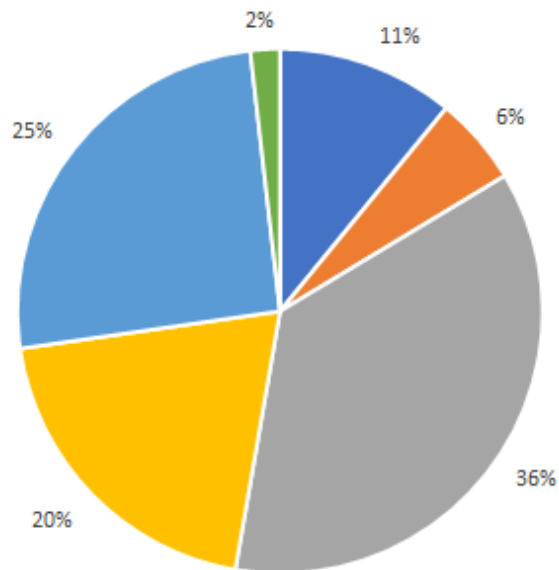
Drugs

- 43.6% say they have not used any before; 20% preferred not to answer
- Marijuana and alcohol were the top substances youth have tried at least once
- 58.1% think drugs are a big problem or somewhat of a problem in this community
- Majority could or did not name a program, service or person they could go to for help

Violence

45% feel safe always or most of the time

How often do you feel safe in your community?

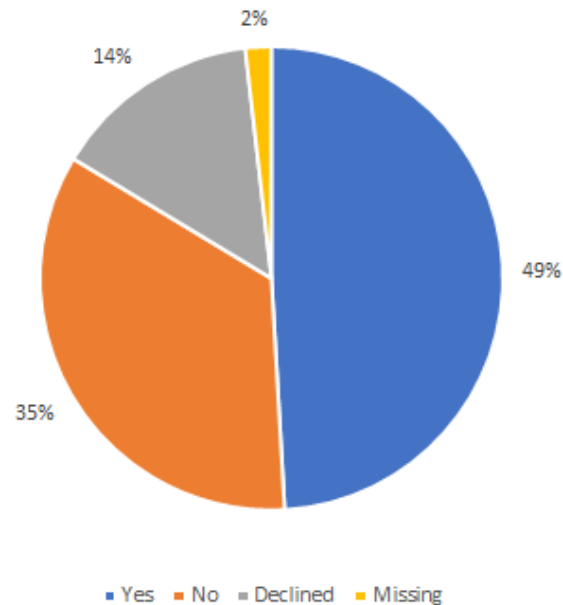


■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Sometimes ■ Most of the time ■ Always ■ Missing

Violence

49% have witnessed an act of violence in the past 12 months

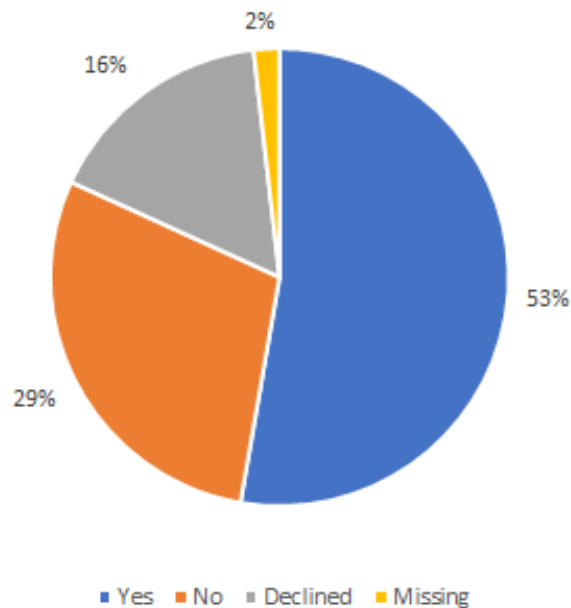
In the past 12 months, have you witnessed an act of violence?



Violence

53% have had a close family member or friend killed in violence in their lifetime

Have any close family members or friends been killed in violence?



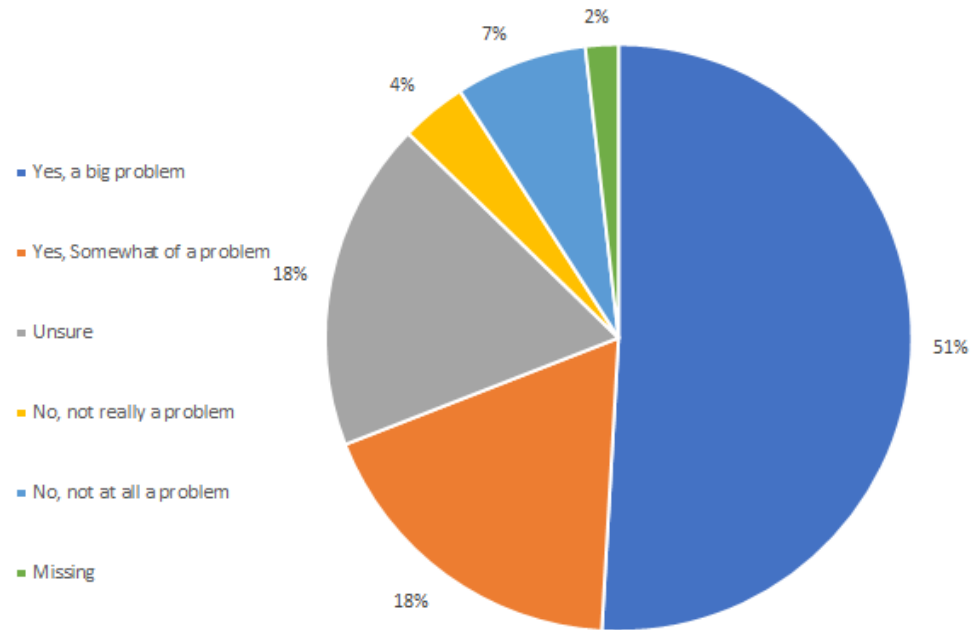
Have they personally been victims of violence in the past 12 months?

- 41.8% say they have never been a victim of violence or threatened with violence in their community
- 36.4% preferred not to answer
- Of those who have been victims of violence, most were threatened or shot at by a gun

Violence

69% think gangs are a big problem or somewhat of a problem

Is gang presence a problem in the community?



Violence

- 41.8% personally know a youth in the community who is involved in a gang
- Mass majority say they would call 911 if they witness a crime
- Out of 36 young people who live in Lenox or Camden, 39% feel safe always or most of the time
- Out of 13 who live in Mandela, Camfield and Roxse, 38% feel safe always or most of the time

What would help the community feel safer?

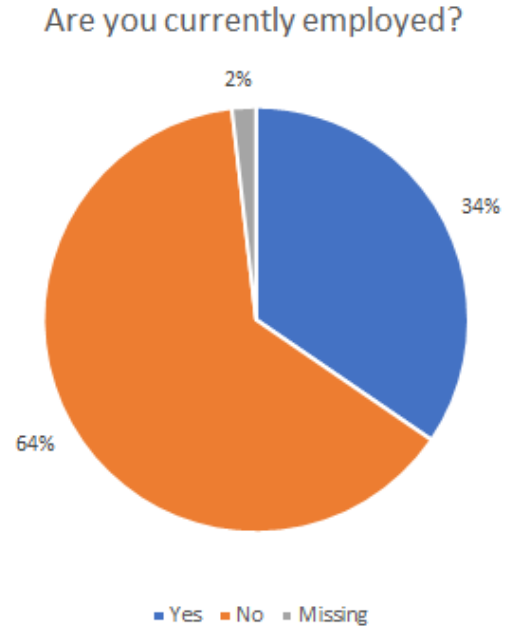
- Less drugs and violence
- More police and security
- Better training for officers
- Basketball program
- Not being near Lenox
- Parents being more aware
- Adults, friends, less guns, more funding
- Don't know

Deeper Discussion on Violence

- Unsure about accuracy of the numbers of people experiencing or witnessing violence (should be higher)
- Feeling safe: Summer is when the gangs get out of prison, so people's feeling of safety might be different before the summer violence starts up
- Safety responses might depend on where they live (Analysis showed no difference)
- Jobs won't solve violence

Employment

74% of the employed
work part-time jobs



Those Not Currently Employed

- 60% never had a job before
- The ones who had a job before were previously employed less than a year ago
- Majority of the youth want to be employed

Those Employed

- Most work to provide for family/basic needs or to save money
- Majority not currently employed through programs like ABCD or SuccessLink though some have had those jobs in the past
- Faced unemployment in the past due to lack of time, family reasons, getting rejections when applying

All Youth

- 40% have never used any services to help them get a job
- Top services that have been accessed (random order):
 - ABCD
 - Career Centers
 - SuccessLink
 - Guidance Counselor
 - PIC

All Youth

- 63.6% think there are enough or somewhat enough jobs available
- 49% would like to be employed year-round
- 36.4% believe getting a job helps them reach their future educational or career goals because it helps them to save money, build experience/character/skills, and be prepared for adulthood

Barriers to Getting a Job

- Majority say they don't know where to search for available jobs
- Many do not feel like they have the quality resume, the education, experience or confidence in their ability to get a job

Majority of all youth want to have a job

Deeper Analysis on Employment

- Only 34.5% currently employed yet 54.5% say that it's important to work
- Lots of people are not employed by the large organizations (like ABCD), but they know about their employment opportunities; they say they want jobs, but they don't take advantage of the opportunities. Why?
- 20% said it's important to get a job, because it builds character and prepares for future

Deeper Analysis on Employment

- They need motivation: understanding how getting a job helps your future, provides money
- Competition from drug dealing as a job:
 - People work with what they can so they take any job; they can't afford college anyways
 - Drug dealing-Perhaps they have a family to care for, and maybe due to criminal records, they have to get money this way since they can't find jobs any other way

Education vs. Employment

- Of those who are in school – 33% are employed
- Of those who are in school-67% are not employed
- Of those who are not in school-45% are employed
- Of those who are not in school-55% are employed

Note, much smaller segment of the sample is not in school (20%) than in school (79%)

Deeper Analysis on Employment

- In schools, students have to initiate to go to a counselor in order to get help for college or to get a job.
- Few schools offer classes on finding a job, interviewing, going to college, and financial literacy for all students.
- Schools should set graduation requirements regarding plans after high school.
- Students don't know the difference between having a career vs. having a job

Suggestions for Further Research

What additional questions are we left with?

- How do we get youth in the community to utilize resources they have?
- What are some of the reasons why they aren't using the resources?
- What role does the government play in helping with certain issues?

Suggestions for Further Research

What additional questions are we left with?

- Why have some youth dropped out?
- Why are some youth unmotivated to pursue further education or get a job?

Limitations of the Data/Survey

- Legitimacy of some of the responses
- Additional questions could have been asked
- Unclear questions
- Optional questions were often skipped
- Way more Lenox & Camden results than other three complexes
- Not getting 100 surveys

Limitations of the Data/Survey

- Employment question asking why youth were not employed had a mistake in the logic

What We Recommend for Change

Plan and Innovate

Employment

Mentorship

- Don't give up on these people, mentor them.
- Reach them when they're younger.

Schools

Graduation requirement:
Have a job or be enrolling in college.

Schools

Have classes that help students prepare for college or get a job.

Violence

Cameras

Look into how security cameras are used and not used

Meetings

- Have check-in meetings with police
- Have more meetings with BHA

Events

Have community events for police to engage with residents

Donor Acknowledgements

Rachele Gardner

Pamela King

Yung Liu

Betty McGuire

Grace Tuyiringire



Foodie's[®]
Markets



BOSTON COLLEGE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL WORK



GOOD EATS
"It's all in the name."

Acknowledgements

All the Partners

Interns

Rachele Gardner
rachelej.gardner@gmail.com

YPAR Consultant

Q&A and a Call to Action