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BACKGROUND

- **Youth Enrichment Services (YES)** is a non-profit based in Pittsburgh, PA that strives to empower youth by centering their voices. Students are taught to become their own best resource through creative opportunities that utilize student-driven leadership.
- This summer, YES aimed to incorporate photovoice as one of their creative learning opportunities for teens. This innovative and adaptable research approach encourages adolescents to deeply examine their lived environment, serving as a tool for them to develop heightened social awareness.^{2,3}
- The theme for YES' 2025 Summer Scholars Program was "Work for success, learn by doing." The goal of this study was to develop an engaging summer apprenticeship curriculum to understand: **"How does a justice-focused enrichment course influence youths' understanding and willingness to advocate against social injustice?"**

OBJECTIVE

Design an apprenticeship curriculum **integrating photography and graphic design within health equity frameworks** to increase and assess youth engagement in social justice advocacy.

METHODS

- Developed a comprehensive apprenticeship experience through the implementation of **photovoice as a youth participatory action research method (YPAR)**.
- Facilitated **discussions and apprenticeship sessions over four weeks** to guide youth through the ideation and composition of a final interactive photovoice exhibit.
- Conducted **peer surveys to capture outsider perspectives** surrounding the portrayal of social injustice and health inequities through photographic activism.

Youth engagement in a photovoice apprenticeship increased their motivation and willingness to advocate against social injustice.



Figure 1. Vision to Voice Apprenticeship – Finalized Photovoice Exhibit

RESULTS

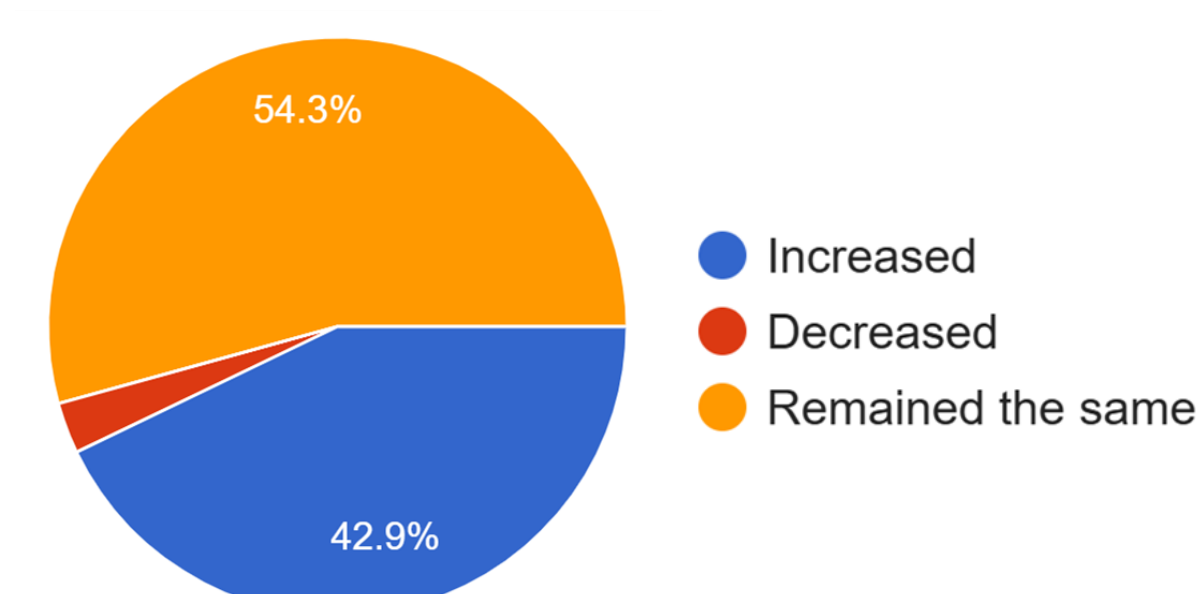


Figure 2. "After seeing these photos, my motivation to address these issues has..."

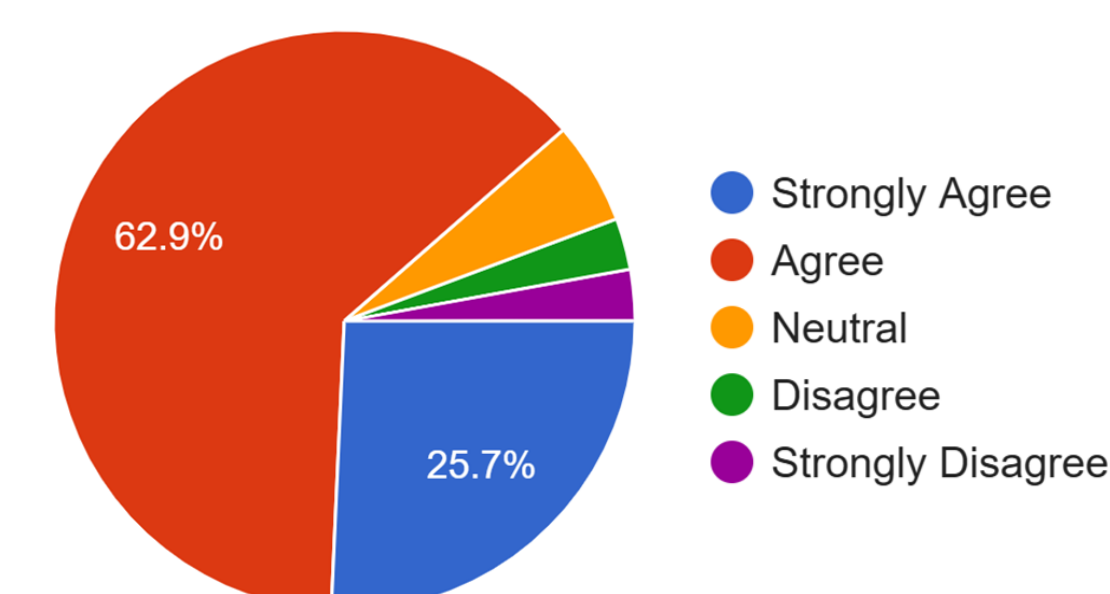


Figure 3. "Photography is an effective medium for bringing awareness to social issues."

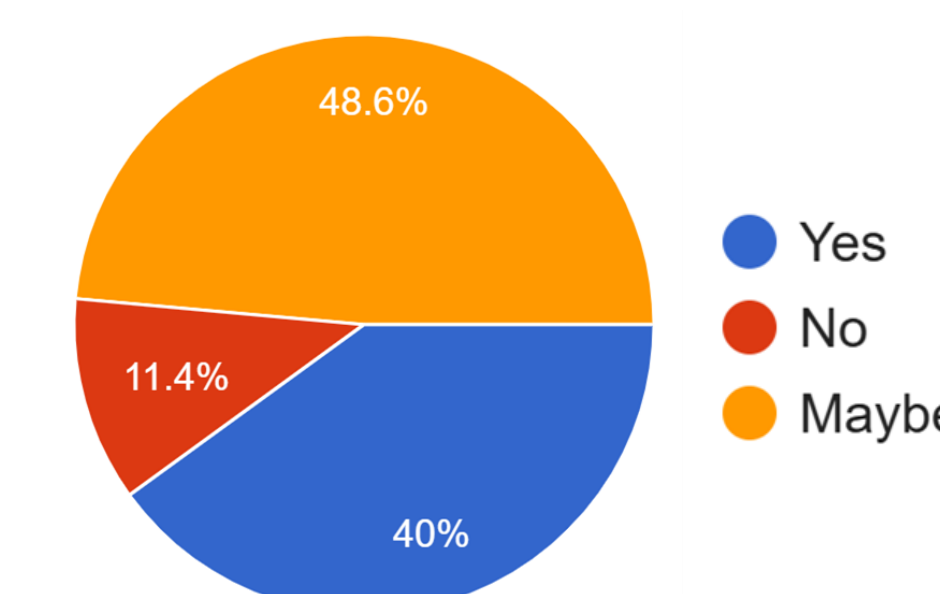


Figure 4. Does knowing that your peers identified these issues make you more willing to advocate?

CONCLUSIONS

- The survey highlighted that the student photos stood out among peers as a form of expression to convey impactful messages.
- 43% of the 35 teen respondents reported an increased motivation to address such issues through advocacy, particularly in the forms of volunteering, researching, and creating art.
- Willingness to advocate was influenced by peer involvement, with 40% of teens indicating increased willingness in knowing that their peers identified these challenges.

LIMITATIONS

- Inconsistent student attendance
- Limited geographical area to capture photos
- Survey unable to capture in-depth themes

PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE

- Incorporating community "voice" in research can aid in increasing engagement that ensures proposed interventions are culturally relevant and ethical.^{1,5}
- This approach allows adolescents to become "critically conscious" adults as they refine their ability to recognize social injustice.⁴

Future Work should aim to overcome limitations by (1) implementing long-term engagement tracking, (2) expanding photographic scope, and (3) incorporating qualitative interviews.

REFERENCES



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