

# Young Black Changemakers and the Road to Racial Justice



Presentation Materials:

<https://www.uclaybc.com/resources>

# UCLA Young Black Changers Research Team



Laura Abrams, PhD, UCLA



Mariah Bonilla, UCLA



Elena Maker Castro, UCLA



Elan Hope, PhD, NC State



Dominique Mikell, UCLA



Victoria Millet, UCLA



Jason Plummer, UCLA



Sara Wilf, UCLA



Laura Wray-Lake, PhD, UCLA



Domonique Henderson, UCLA



Channing Mathews, PhD, NC State



Kaylon Kenyon, NC State

# Goals for Today

*Thank you!*

- *Share* key findings from our research.
- *Hear* your reflections and feedback.
- *Invite* you & youth in your organization to be featured in our book.



# Why We're Doing the Research

- To challenge dominant narratives about Black youth in research.
- To learn from the voices and experiences of young Black civic leaders.
- To inform organizations that serve Black youth.
- To strengthen local and national investments in communities of color.



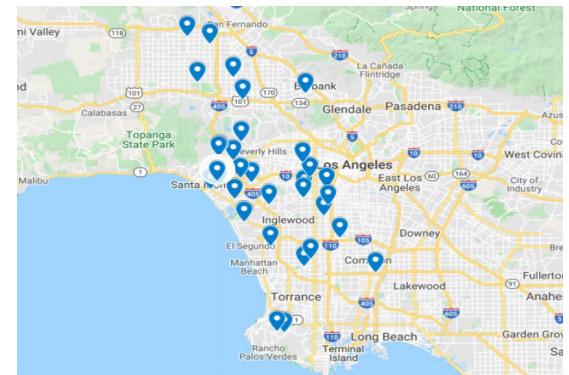
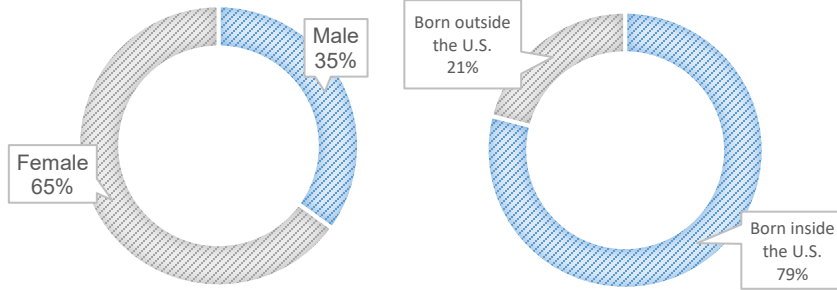
# How We Will Use this Research

- Publish book, academic papers, and present at academic conferences.
- Share findings with organizations and community groups.
- Present and report to AmeriCorps funders and national audiences.

# About the Young Black Changemakers Study

## 43 Black Youth in LA

- ..ages 13-18
- ..from 13 different orgs
- ..37 high schools
- ..interviewed remotely Feb-Aug 2020

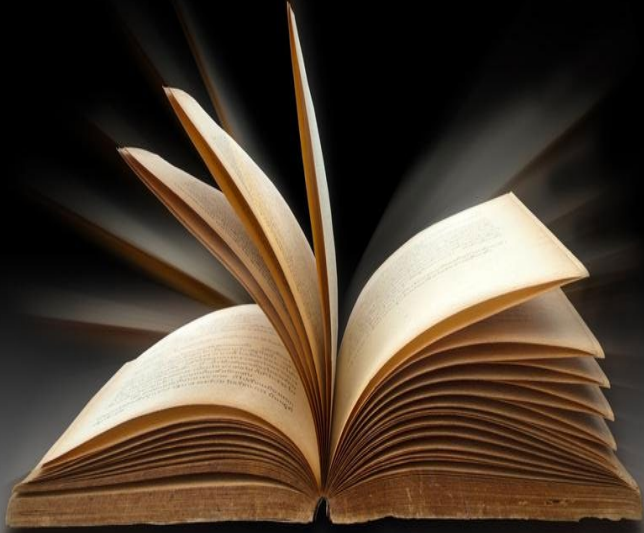


## Here's what we asked

- Tell me about some of your civic activities and how you are engaged.
- Walk me through your own journey of becoming civically engaged.
- What is unique about civic engagement for Black youth?
- How does being Black matter for your civic engagement?
- What other identities do you hold that connect to your civic engagement?
- Tell me what this current moment of political action means to you.

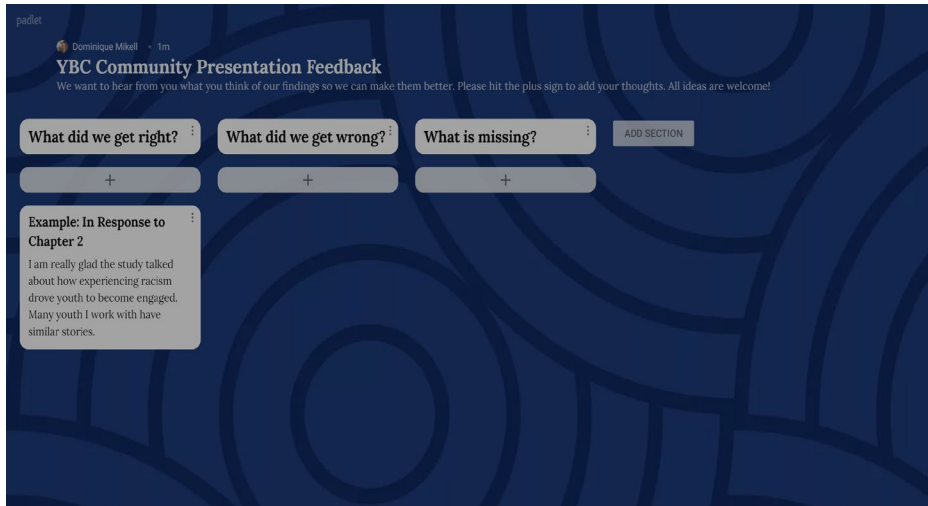
# Young Black Changemakers and the Road to Racial Justice

Cambridge University Press, 2023





# We want to know what you think!



padlet

Dominique Mikell · 1m

## YBC Community Presentation Feedback

We want to hear from you what you think of our findings so we can make them better. Please hit the plus sign to add your thoughts. All ideas are welcome!

What did we get right? +

What did we get wrong? +

What is missing? +

ADD SECTION

**Example: In Response to Chapter 2**

I am really glad the study talked about how experiencing racism drove youth to become engaged. Many youth I work with have similar stories.

Travel to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/YBCFeedback>



# TIME TO

A hand holding a crystal ball that reflects a sunset over a landscape. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a hazy landscape. The crystal ball is held in the center, reflecting the sun and the horizon. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

# REFLECT

How do you define a changemaker? Who comes to mind when you think of a young Black changemaker?





## Chapter 2: The Why and How of Young Black Changemaking

**Key Insights:** Three main goals guided Black youth's changemaking.



# Pursuing racial and economic equity

*Because I want to, I want to be able to have the same opportunities as everybody else. And I want people in my younger generation status, same opportunities too, like I don't, I don't want us to go through all these budget cuts and we not have books and all this stuff. I just want to, I want to have the same opportunity. So we have, so we have a better chance at doing what we want to do in the future.*

*- Quinn*

# Preparing peers for an anti-Black world

*We're very passionate about like...you need to know your rights and knowing...what happens if a police pulls you over.*

*Like a lot of kids don't understand how precious a Black life is or how precious their life is.*

*- Destiny*

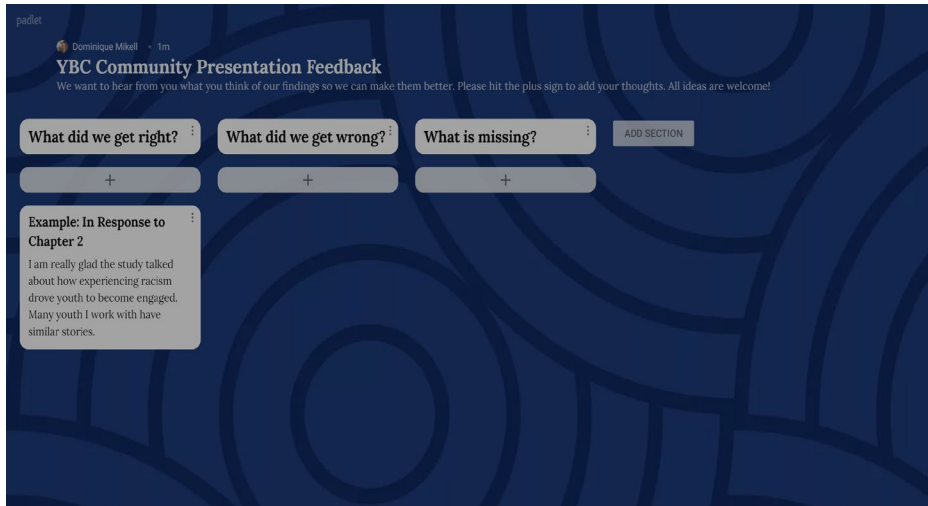
# Improving self to improve the community

*If I better myself with getting good grades and staying focused and on track, it can—and I start this mentoring program, it can show people like no matter where you come from you can always succeed and no matter what the color of your skin you can always succeed no matter what anybody tells you.*

*- Layla*



# We want to know what you think!



padlet

Dominique Mikell · 1m

## YBC Community Presentation Feedback

We want to hear from you what you think of our findings so we can make them better. Please hit the plus sign to add your thoughts. All ideas are welcome!

What did we get right? +

What did we get wrong? +

What is missing? +

ADD SECTION

**Example: In Response to Chapter 2**

I am really glad the study talked about how experiencing racism drove youth to become engaged. Many youth I work with have similar stories.

Travel to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/YBCFeedback>



# TIME TO

A hand holding a crystal ball that reflects a sunset over a landscape. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a hazy landscape. The crystal ball is held in the center, and the sun is visible within its reflection.

# REFLECT

Based on your experience, how do Black youth become changemakers?



## Chapter 3: What Launches and Sustains Youth's Civic Journeys?

# Three Main Launching Points

1. Influential People
2. Youth-Driven Journey
3. Encounters with Racism

# Influential People

## Who?

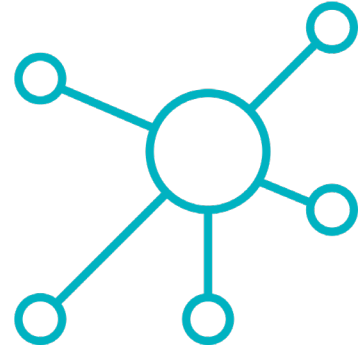
Family, Peers, Teachers, Counselors, Mentors

## How?

Being brought along (early family experiences)

Being asked or recruited

Being inspired by Black leaders



*I look at the Black women every day that surround me, and I be like, 'Dang, I wish I could be one of them,' but then I be forgetting that I am one of them. I feel like Black... history...made me really just kind of find myself and be like, "Dang, like, you really are one of these people," and like, "Dang, you really are like—you are. You should feel honored." -Unique*



# Youth-Driven Journey

Passion for a cause or issue sparked youth's civic engagement.

*I have faced struggles with access [to resources] at school. So the whole objective and the mission of the club is something that I was actually pretty passionate about. So when I went to my first meeting, and I saw how passionate that the President was about what she was advocating for. It really drew me in. -Mia*



# Youth-Driven Journey

Passion for a cause or issue sparked youth's changemaking.

*I have faced struggles with access [to resources] at school. So the whole objective and the mission of the club is something that I was actually pretty passionate about. So when I went to my first meeting, and I saw how passionate that the President was about what she was advocating for. It really drew me in. -Mia*

Desire for a life change was a launching point for some.

*I realized that I don't want to be...stuck, you know, in the same neighborhood not doing nothing, not being able to pay my bills and stuff because I didn't get an education. So, seeing my future and how it's going. It just made me want to change and join our community. All these...groups to help other people who realize their future, realize they need to, you know, get on it. -Quinn*



What Launches and Sustains Youth's Civic Journeys?

# Encounters with Racism

Interpersonal racism fueled youth's changemaking (more on this later).  
...But these experiences in civic spaces made some youth pull back.

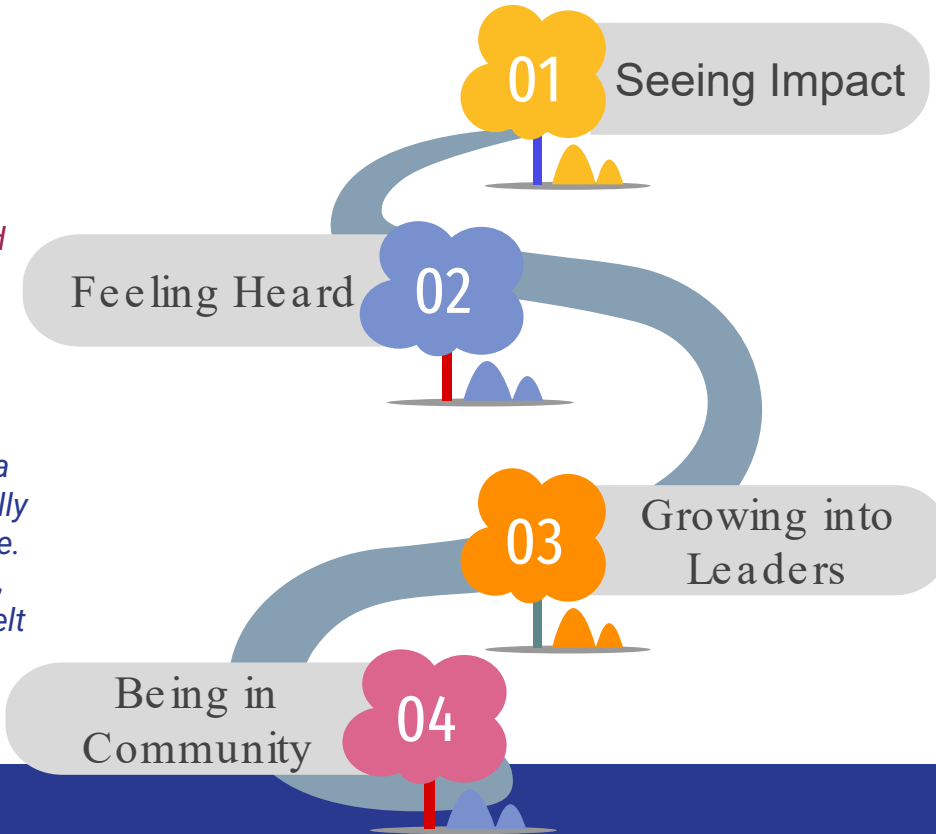
Institutional racism also sparked youth's changemaking, especially pertaining to police violence (more on this later, too!).



# What Helps Youth Sustain Changemaking Over Time?

*[I see myself as] being an activist...being able to put my voice out there and letting people hear me and what I've got to say and take it in. -Jen*

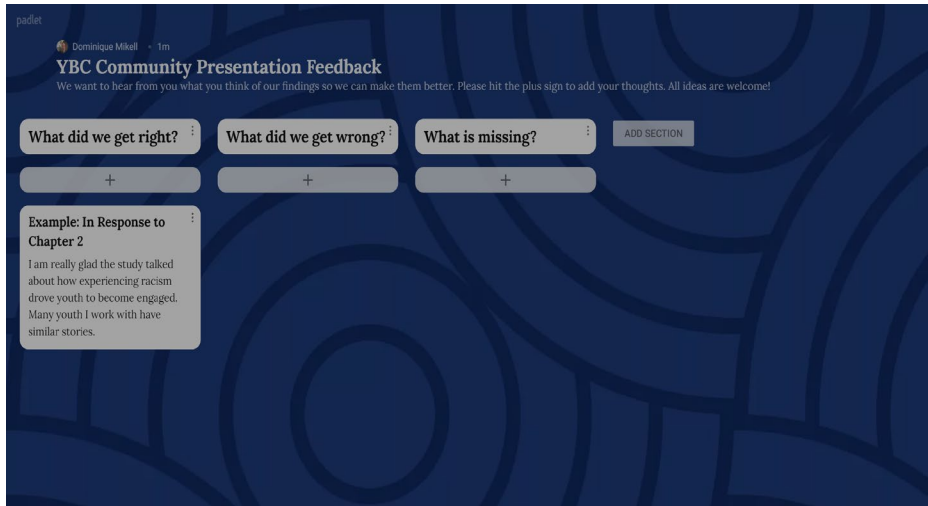
*Everybody there had like a good energy and they really wanted to just help people. And it was just, being like, they really uplift you... It felt more like I wanted to be there with those people. -Cory*



*So when that happened, I was like, 'Oh, we can really do this, like we're really out here.' So yeah, I feel empowered. Like, I felt unstoppable, I was like, 'Okay, Unique, you better go girl.' -Unique*

*It is like our job to organize it ourselves. And so as I've gotten older in [org], I've really gotten more of an appreciation for like doing civic engagement and stuff and like organizing it myself based on like what I care about. -Camille*

# We want to know what you think!



padlet

Dominique Mikell · 1m

## YBC Community Presentation Feedback

We want to hear from you what you think of our findings so we can make them better. Please hit the plus sign to add your thoughts. All ideas are welcome!

What did we get right? +

What did we get wrong? +

What is missing? +

ADD SECTION

**Example: In Response to Chapter 2**

I am really glad the study talked about how experiencing racism drove youth to become engaged. Many youth I work with have similar stories.

Travel to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/YBCFeedback>







## Chapter 4: Family as Essential Connectors and Supports of Young Black Changemaking

# Key Insights

Family Members Act as Essential Connectors to and Supporters of Changemaking for Black Youth

Interactions with Family Shape Black Youth's Civic Motivations and Intentions

Black Youth Use Changemaking to Support, Protect, and Honor Family



# Family Members Act as Essential Connectors to and Supporters of Changemaking for Black Youth

*So, when I was about eight years old, me and my mom started volunteering.*  
- Amir

*My grandma makes sure I'm in there with her, every morning watching the news.*  
- Unique

*Its' all my mom, because like, she's the one that pushes, puts me into programs.*  
- Muffin



# Interactions with Family Shape Black Youth's Civic Motivations and Intentions

*We [my parents and I] always have like talks. And they always tell me like it's important that you really get involved and stay focused and stay awake of what is going on, and that really helps me stay focused.*

*-Mea*

*I think a big part of it was just like family values, like my mom coming home and talking about her job, and me realizing that I could make an impact like that too. My mom's like a psychologist for the county.*

*-Sara Vaughn*

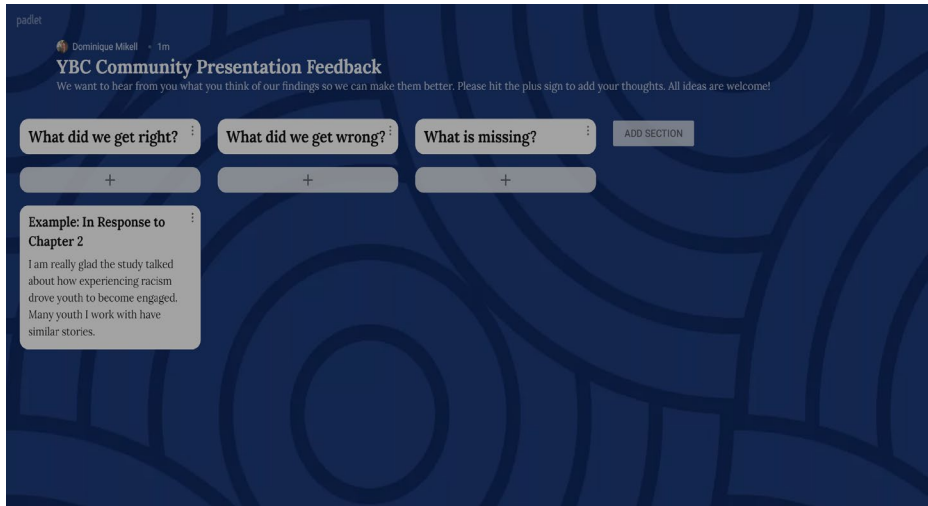


# Black Youth Use Changemaking to Support, Protect, and Honor Family

*You know, he [my little brother], I feel like he watches me a lot. He always looks at me whenever he needs help he-he comes and asks me for advice. I try my best to be there for him at all times so he never feels like he's alone...I always just try to be a good role model for him like never doing anything bad so he won't get influenced into that type of life and go down a bad road.*  
- Damian



# We want to know what you think!



padlet

Dominique Mikell · 1m

## YBC Community Presentation Feedback

We want to hear from you what you think of our findings so we can make them better. Please hit the plus sign to add your thoughts. All ideas are welcome!

What did we get right? +

What did we get wrong? +

What is missing? +

ADD SECTION

**Example: In Response to Chapter 2**

I am really glad the study talked about how experiencing racism drove youth to become engaged. Many youth I work with have similar stories.

Travel to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/YBCFeedback>







# Chapter 5: Being Black in Black and Non-Black Spaces



# Key Insights

- Black youth experience significant racial harm in non-Black spaces.
- Black youth are often silenced and experiences of racism are ignored.
- Black youth work to create safe Black spaces and challenge racism collectively.



# Black youth experience significant racial harm in non-Black spaces.

I was sitting in class [with two other Black girls]. Everybody else in the class was [white] ...And it was one boy and he had said the N-word. . .So, I told him “You can’t just go around saying that type of stuff.” And he was like, “Or, what?” ... I brought it up to the school and they were like, “Oh, well, we’ve never had to experience this, and we’ve never had a child of color come out and speak out about this.” So, then I asked some of my friends if they’ve ever experienced stuff like that and they were like, “Yes.”

– KJ

*The whole school is just for them (white students). The white administration just doesn't understand that.*

*-Camille*

*“It's like, as a Black person, like, I can't afford to have my - my mental health, uh, you know, just completely deteriorated, um, because I've been constantly waiting for, you know, somethin' to happen to me.”*

*-Joe Cornell*



# Black Youth Voices are Often Ignored and Become Silenced

*“Um, well, as far as being Black and being civically engaged in this world, I feel like oftentimes, our voices and our actions are shut and put on the back burner.”*

*-Success with Lex*

*“Well, I just feel like from my personal experiences that a lotta the times, like, in my elementary school and even sometimes in my current middle school, I feel like just overpowered, and a lot of the—I know that’s the case for a lot of the Black youth. A lotta the times, we are the minority, and it feels that way, like, a lot, and we feel all alone and overpowered, so yeah, so youth engagement really helps to make us feel like we have a voice, and we can make a change.”*

*-NA*



# Black Youth Work to Create Safe Black Spaces and Challenge Racism Collectively

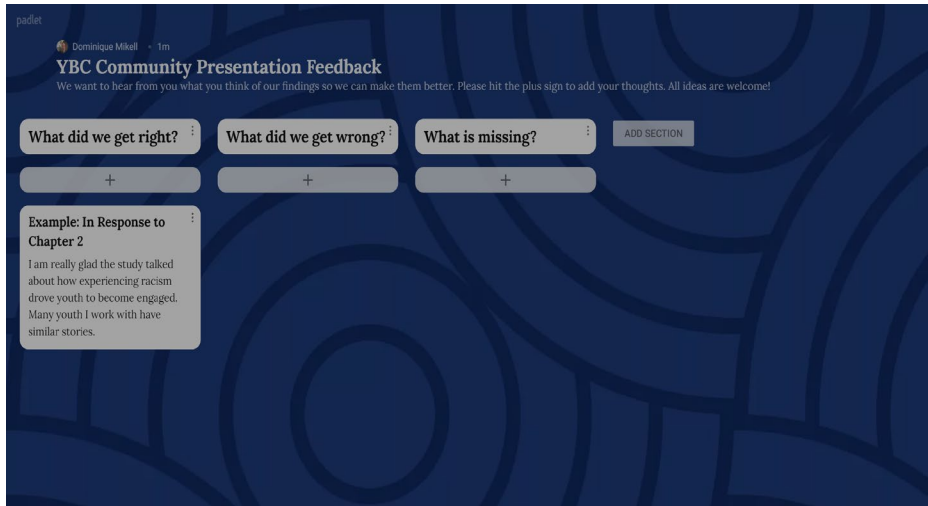
“I've definitely experienced that kind of fear of getting involved in an activity where I see no other black faces in the entire club, or I walked into a 50-person meeting and there's not one other Black face in there. So, I want to be kind of that force of comfort and relatability for other Black youth who may not feel comfortable getting involved in an activity that's 98% white or they're the only Black face in the entire room. I want to make sure that I'm there to demonstrate how, no matter what skin color you are, you can become a leader in whatever you want to do.”

– Mia

“Kinda like at my school 'cuz I go to a predominantly white school. So, like when we have our Black history festival and stuff like that. It's kind of not Black. It's watered down, I guess. So, we don't really have anything that's Black so me and my friends try to stay involved with that so they could understand what it really is or what we do it for.”

- Jen

# We want to know what you think!



padlet

Dominique Mikell · 1m

## YBC Community Presentation Feedback

We want to hear from you what you think of our findings so we can make them better. Please hit the plus sign to add your thoughts. All ideas are welcome!

What did we get right? +

What did we get wrong? +

What is missing? +

ADD SECTION

**Example: In Response to Chapter 2**

I am really glad the study talked about how experiencing racism drove youth to become engaged. Many youth I work with have similar stories.

Travel to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/YBCFeedback>





# Chapter 6: Black Identity and Community as Sustaining Forces for Black Youth

# Key Insights

Black youth develop individual and collective identity through changemaking.

- ❑ Building knowledge of historical injustices and legacies of Black changemakers strengthens youth's identity as a Black person and Black community member.
- ❑ Changemaking is one way that Black youth resist stereotypes.
- ❑ Racial awareness and identity can shift broad civic engagement to racial justice changemaking.





# Collective identity is rooted in understanding historical injustice and the legacy of Black changemakers

*Our rights, our liberty, our equality. Always been a big thing. We have always been as people, you know, to a degree civically engaged. **It's kind of been I guess a tradition that's been passed down.***  
-Martin

***So I feel like it's our-our—oh, what's the word—our duty to carry the torch and pass it on to future generations.** And then also in the midst of carrying the torch, um, making more differences at the same time.* -Layla

*Yes. Definitely seeing that the Black Lives Matter movement has grown bigger than that movement is, like, crazy to me because the Civil Rights Movement just invoked so much change. Uh, the Martin Luther King era-era. The Malcom X era. All of that has invoked changed but seeing that in this day in time our movement is bigger than that, I feel like we're on to something, and this decade might just be the decade where we finally get to change that. We've been fighting for it for 201 years.* -Success with Lex

# Changemaking is one way to resist Black stereotypes

*It like it sets a positive image on on us. Because, like, you know, how, like the news, they portray us in like, a bad way, like they, like they don't show the good stuff we do in the community. And if there's like a bunch of people like doing good things, and then they're gonna have to show that like, you know, they're like, we're creating a change over here.*

*-Damian*

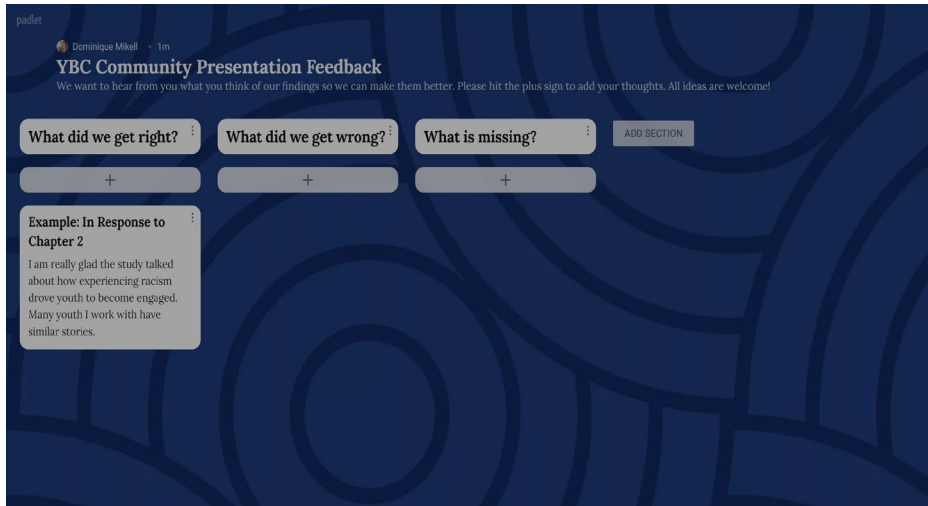
*I feel like society puts us in this like, box where we're either in a gang, we're poor, we're just in the very like, lower class or whatever. So I feel like black people especially—or even people of color in doing like, civic engagement I feel like it showed them that we're not these people that society puts us in this little box. We're not those people. - Her*

# Racial awareness and identity can shift broad civic engagement to racial justice change making

*Um, so that was sort of an epiphany moment for me in a sense that, um, Black people, organizers in general, like, I feel like so often we play defense in, uh—in a sense that just, like, everything that we do is as a reaction to white supremacy or acts of bigotry. And I realized, like, that really influenced the way that I wanna move forward in this work. And I don't wanna play defense. **I don't wanna wait for somethin' to happen to me or some sort of damage to be inflicted to me or my, you know, psychological emotional mental health, you know, before I do somethin' or say somethin'.** - Joe*

*I said, the-the black experience in America and what happens from when we're born basically really does shape how we're able to get engaged in our communities and, and change, change what we see is wrong or what we want to change the world. So, yeah. - Mia*

# We want to know what you think!



podlet

Dominique Mikell · 1m

## YBC Community Presentation Feedback

We want to hear from you what you think of our findings so we can make them better. Please hit the plus sign to add your thoughts. All ideas are welcome!

What did we get right? +

What did we get wrong? +

What is missing? +

ADD SECTION

**Example: In Response to Chapter 2**

I am really glad the study talked about how experiencing racism drove youth to become engaged. Many youth I work with have similar stories.

Travel to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/YBCFeedback>

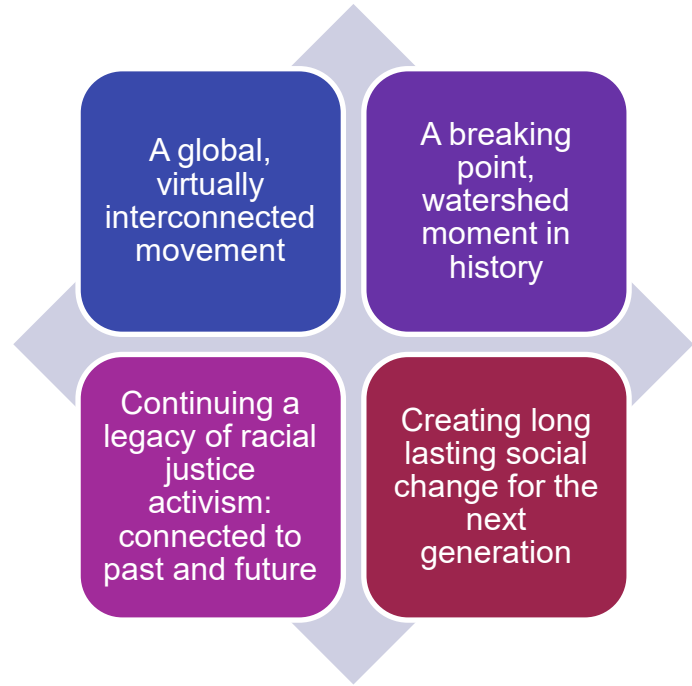




# Chapter 7: Young Black Changemakers Confronting Racial Injustice in Summer 2020



# What did Summer 2020 mean for Black Youth?



*It's really inspiring. I think it's because of the fact that this went global. Like, you see people that protest all around the nation. I think that means that that's, it proves to me that if we really fight for what we want and use our voice that we can make a change." -Mea*



# What Emotions Did Summer 2020 Spark?

They felt compelled by sense of real urgency for justice.

They felt sad that it took this long for people to wake up.

They were exhausted and angry at times.

*People are tired, and exhausted, and angry, and, um, you—we're just kinda done with it, with being mistreated, for the past 400 years. And that-that's too long. – Soleil*





# What types of Changemaking Behaviors Resulted?

Leveraging social media as a widespread form of activism

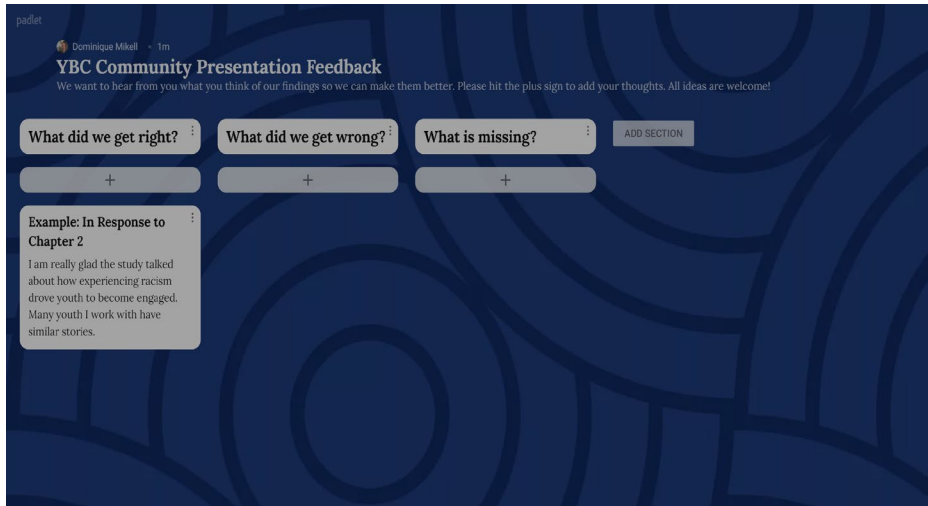
Acting with new intention and for some, the first political activity (marches, demonstrations)

Drawing on personal experience to motivate and deepen their racial justice activism

Seizing this moment to "be the change"

*I feel like I wanna be a part of the change, not just watch the change – Destiny*

# We want to know what you think!



padlet

Dominique Mikell · 1m

## YBC Community Presentation Feedback

We want to hear from you what you think of our findings so we can make them better. Please hit the plus sign to add your thoughts. All ideas are welcome!

What did we get right? +

What did we get wrong? +

What is missing? +

ADD SECTION

**Example: In Response to Chapter 2**

I am really glad the study talked about how experiencing racism drove youth to become engaged. Many youth I work with have similar stories.

Travel to:  
<https://tinyurl.com/YBCFeedback>



# Invitation for Black Youth

## CALLING ALL BLACK YOUTH ARTISITS! GET YOUR WORK FEATURED IN A BOOK!

### WHO CAN ENTER?

Any one between the ages of 13-18 who identifies as Black and has a perspective to voice

### WHAT CAN I SUBMIT?

DRAWINGS  
PAINTINGS  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
POETRY  
SHORT ESSAYS  
AND MORE

### WHAT CAN I WIN?

1 ARTIST  
will win the Cover Spot  
on the Book and \$200

14 OTHER ARTISTS  
will win a spot in the  
Book and \$20

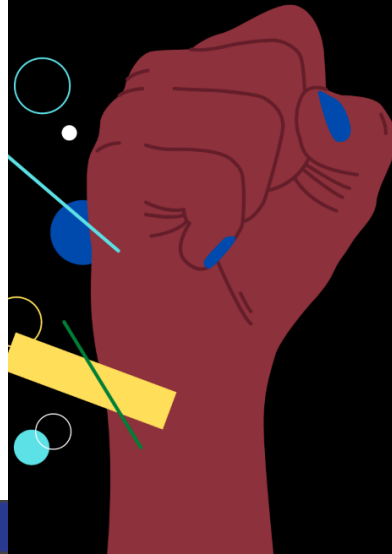
### HOW DO I ENTER?

Visit

[uclaybc.com/art](https://uclaybc.com/art)

Submissions are due  
**05/01/2022**

Can you  
share this  
opportunity  
with Black  
youth in  
your  
organization  
or network?



# **Invitation for Your Organization: Be Spotlighted in Our Book!**

Submit a brief description of your organization's work, with emphasis on opportunities and support you provide for Black youth's changemaking.  
(100 words max)

Nominate another organization whose work you think should be featured.

<https://www.uclaybc.com/orgspotlight>



Email: [wraylake@ucla.edu](mailto:wraylake@ucla.edu)  
Website: [www.uclaybc.com](http://www.uclaybc.com)

