

# Youth Voice



What it is and Why it Matters

NYC Youth Funders Steering Committee & Philanthropy New York  
October 2, 2019 ♦ 3:00 - 5:00pm

**"TTC has inspired me to take initiative in situations where I would otherwise allow my discomfort to overcome my participation."**

- Tiffani Torres, Teens  
Take Charge

**"The Rockaway Youth Task Force has been the catalyst to me finding my voice. Beginning as a youth organizer and now serving as the Board Chair of the organization. My roots as a Community Organizer give me the skills necessary to develop into a civically engaged and productive Rockaway Resident."**

- Dekendra Dazzel, 22

**"Sister Sol is my much needed haven. Sister Sol is the one place where I feel free to express myself, where I gain in self-worth and where I can constructively reflect on what actions I need to take in order to achieve my dreams and become the woman I was meant to be. Whenever I doubt my abilities as a human being and as a young woman, I think to myself, 'What would my sisters say or do?', and I become empowered and confident enough to proceed with the task at hand."**

- Shanoa V., Siempre

# Welcome

# Youth Participation

Frameworks and Outcomes



# Typical Ways that Youth Participate

YOUTH  
PARTICIPATORY  
ACTION RESEARCH  
(YPAR)

YOUTH  
PARTICIPATORY  
EVALUATION (YPE)

YOUTH COUNCILS  
AND ADVISORY  
BOARDS

COMMUNITY  
PROJECT/SERVICE

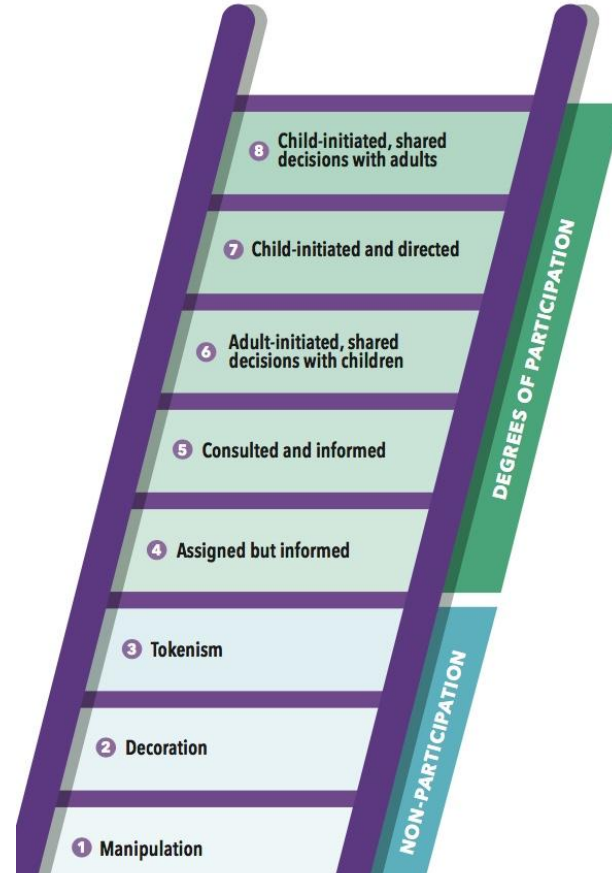
PARTICIPATORY  
PLANNING &  
BUDGETING

YOUTH  
ORGANIZING AND  
ADVOCACY

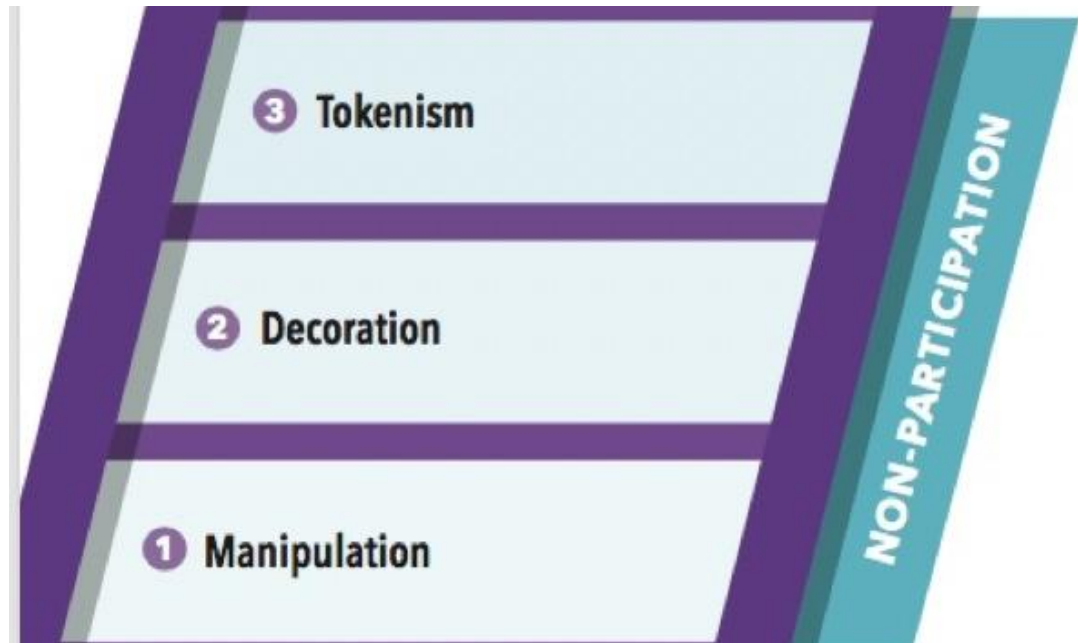
# Ladder of Participation

Roger Hart

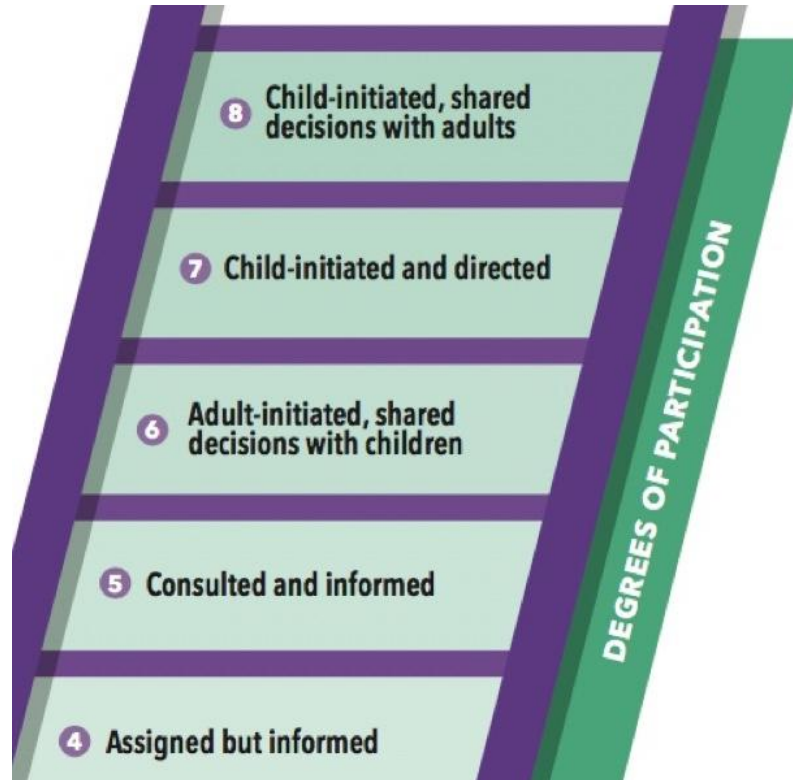
Figure 3: Hart's Ladder of Child Participation



## Non- Participation



# Participation



# Youth Engagement Trajectory

Funders Collaborative  
On Youth Organizing  
(FCYO)



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# Outcomes of Youth Organizing & Highly Participatory Programs

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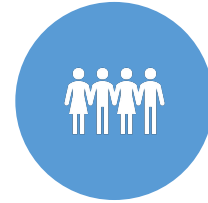
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



INCREASED CRITICAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS



STRONGER PROGRAMS &  
PROCESSES



COMMUNITY AND  
SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Significant  
Growth Than  
Typical PYD  
Programs

*(n=572)*



Contribution

Self Management

Significantly  
Greater SEL  
Growth Than  
Typical PYD  
Programs

*(n=572)*



Contribution

Significantly  
Greater SEL  
Growth Than  
Typical PYD  
Programs

*(n=572)*



Academic Self Efficacy  
Young men

Positive Identity  
Young women

Significant  
Growth in  
Critical  
Consciousness

(n=572)



Personal Action

Social Political Action

Confidence to Mobilize

Significantly  
More  
Research-Based  
Program  
Experiences

(n=572)



Positive Youth/Adult  
Relationships

Strong Peer Relationships

Interest Exploration

Goal Management

**The Brotherhood  
/ Sister Sol**

# Mission

Founded in 1995, **The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (Bro/Sis)** provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support services to youth who range in age from 8 - 22. Bro/Sis offers wrap around evidence-based programming. The organization focuses on issues such as leadership development and educational achievement, sexual responsibility, sexism and misogyny, political education and social justice, Pan-African and Latinx history, and global awareness. Bro/Sis provides 4-6 year rites of passage programming, thorough five day a week after school care, school and home counseling, summer camps, job training and employment, college preparation, community organizing training, and international study programs to Africa, the Caribbean and South America.

Our ***Theory of Change*** is to provide multi-layered support, guidance, education and love to our membership, to teach them to have self-discipline and form order in their lives, and then to offer opportunities and access so that they may develop agency.

# **Q: What is “Youth Voice” at Bro/Sis?**

## **A: YOUTH VOICES!**

“Sister Sol is my much needed haven. Sister Sol is the one place where I feel free to express myself, where I gain in self-worth and where I can constructively reflect on what actions I need to take in order to achieve my dreams and become the woman I was meant to be. Whenever I doubt my abilities as a human being and as a young woman, I think to myself, ‘What would my sisters say or do?’, and I become empowered and confident enough to proceed with the task at hand.”

*- Shanoa, Sister Sol Member*

“Join us in turning pain into liberation, joy, and inspiration. We want to create a society where everyone has equality, freedom, and safety regardless of race, religion, and beliefs. We will create a world in which people can be their true selves and not have to wear masks because of society’s standards. We want to encourage people to break out of the barriers of society.”

*- excerpt, 2019 Summer Liberation School members’ statement*

“This is my first [study abroad] so far and my knowledge of Cuba has grown. ... Cuba is a beautiful country that is trying to thrive even though the USA embargo is holding a tight grip on them and trying to put obstacles in front of them to make their government collapse. Today I learned that most people practice permaculture which is when someone is in harmony with nature and protects their environment. ... I’m glad I made the decision to do [study abroad with Bro/Sis] because there is no other group of people I would choose to make such memorable experience with.”

*-Jason, Brotherhood Member*

# Story of Action: LISTEN TO YOUTH!

"Today we are here, standing with all youth with the question: 'When do our humanity and our rights begin to matter?'"

- Heaven, youth activist & Bro/Sis member, as quoted in USA Today on July 17, 2019 at youth rally in front 1 Police Plaza calling for justice in the murder of Eric Garner



# Arts & Activism

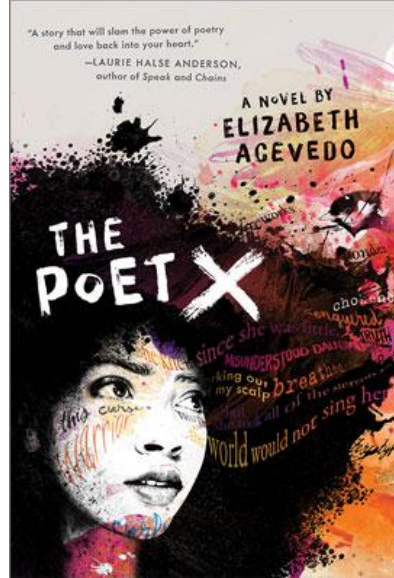
“I wrote this for Afro-Latinas, negritas and morenitas who are like, ‘I don’t see myself on TV, in the magazines, I most definitely do not see myself in books.’ And I wrote this for just young women who are trying to take up space and are repeatedly made small because they are told they have to be small.”

– **Elizabeth Acevedo, author, activist & Bro/Sis Alum**

**The Peace Poets (Bro/Sis Alum)** create poetry, rap and movement music that responds to social and political crises. The Peace Poets song, *I Can’t Breathe*, written in protest of *Eric Garner’s* murder by the *NYPD* continued to go viral as actor Samuel L. Jackson, recorded himself singing *I Can’t Breathe*, and was quoted by *USA Today* “challenging his fellow celebrities and others to sing what’s becoming the anthem of the anti-police brutality movement.”

“As a cultural worker who belongs to an oppressed people my job is to make revolution irresistible. ...for any artist your job is determined by the community you’re identifying with.”

– **Toni Cade Bambara, author, professor, activist**



# Impact

**Bro/Sis programs engage, empower and build the next generation of leaders that can make a positive impact in their communities today. Through participating in our programs, members:**

- Develop a personal self-definition that encompasses respect for themselves, their family and the larger community.
- Gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for their cultural and historical legacy as Black and Latinx people.
- Develop into critical thinkers who can analyze personal and societal issues and who are committed to self and community development.
- Broaden their knowledge of social issues and increase their participation in community activities.
- Find their creative voice.
- Develop a powerful sense of self-worth and belief in their ability to achieve.
- Improve their academic performance and develop a lifelong love of learning.
- Increase their involvement in the workforce, internships and travel.
- Learn the life skills essential for survival and success.
- Create a personal testimony of their values, beliefs, and goals that reflect an understanding of their moral responsibility to others.
- Refrain from addiction and avoid incarceration
- Graduate from high school, attend college or gain long term and secure employment
- Avoid teenage pregnancy and learn responsible parenting

94%

Alumni Graduated High School/ Earned GED

*Whereas the high school graduation rate in New York City is 70%, in Harlem the graduation rate is 42%, and the Schott Foundation found that the graduation rate of Black and Latino boys in New York City 34%.*

88%

Received High School Degree

## Critical Decision Making

2%

Bro/Sis Teenage Pregnancy Rate

*Whereas Harlem's teenage pregnancy rate is 15%.*

0

Bro/Sis Members Incarcerated and less than 1% have a felony conviction

*Whereas one out of three Black males, ages 20-29 are under supervision of the prison system - incarcerated, on probation or on parole.*

## Employment and Moving from Poverty

95%

Alum Enrolled in College/Working Full-Time

*Whereas 30% of youth in Harlem, ages 18-25, are either enrolled in college or employed full-time.*



# Rockaway Youth Task Force

# Mission

The Rockaway Youth Task Force (RYTF) is a grassroots member-led organization principally comprised of young women of color within the Rockaway Peninsula. RYTF builds power to secure social, economic and racial justice for residents of the Rockaway Peninsula and beyond. RYTF develops politically conscious youth leaders who are invested in improving themselves and their communities through member-led campaigns, leadership development, movement building, and cultural expression.

# ROCKAWAY YOUTH TASK FORCE

## THEORY OF CHANGE



### PROBLEM

Many critical issues disproportionately impact young people living in Rockaway and trap them in cycles of poverty - struggling public schools, police violence, lack of recreational opportunities, inadequate transportation, and lack of healthy food options.

### WHO ARE WE

The Rockaway Youth Task Force is a by-youth, for-youth organization of youth of color within the Rockaway peninsula that builds power to secure social, economic, and racial justice for all.

### OUR WORK

RYTF's work includes a variety of campaigns, programs, and curriculum to guide our youth towards successful leadership. Our main issue areas are educational equity, police reform and accountability, civic engagement, and food justice.

### OUR IMPACT

Our balanced approach to youth organizing seeks impact the lives of our youth on multiple levels. From political advocacy to professional development to urban farming, we seek to spark institutional change while personally empowering young people in Rockaway.

### OUR VISION

Our vision is a thriving Rockaway community that can shape its own future and respond to change and crisis with experience and historical knowledge, in partnership with larger city, state, and federal agencies, and in solidarity other social justice movements.

# ROCKAWAY YOUTH TASK FORCE

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES



WE BELIEVE IN THE  
TRANSFORMATIVE POWER  
OF YOUTH ORGANIZING TO  
SHIFT STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS  
AND POLICIES



WE BELIEVE THAT OUR YOUTH  
MEMBERSHIP MUST HAVE  
MEANINGFUL ORGANIZATIONAL  
AND DECISION-MAKING POWER



WE BELIEVE BASE BUILDING IS  
THE FOUNDATION OF OUR  
COLLECTIVE POWER AND  
ACTIVELY ENGAGE AND  
INVOLVE YOUTH OF COLOR  
IN SOCIAL CHANGE



WE BELIEVE THAT  
INTENTIONALLY CENTERING THE  
LEADERSHIP OF YOUNG WOMEN  
OF COLOR AND GENDER  
NONCONFORMING YOUTH IS  
NECESSARY FOR  
SYSTEMIC CHANGE



WE BELIEVE THAT BUILDING  
COLLECTIVE POWER THROUGH  
ORGANIZING MUST BE BALANCED  
WITH BUILDING POWER WITHIN  
THROUGH SUPPORTING SOCIAL,  
EMOTIONAL, AND  
PHYSICAL WELLNESS

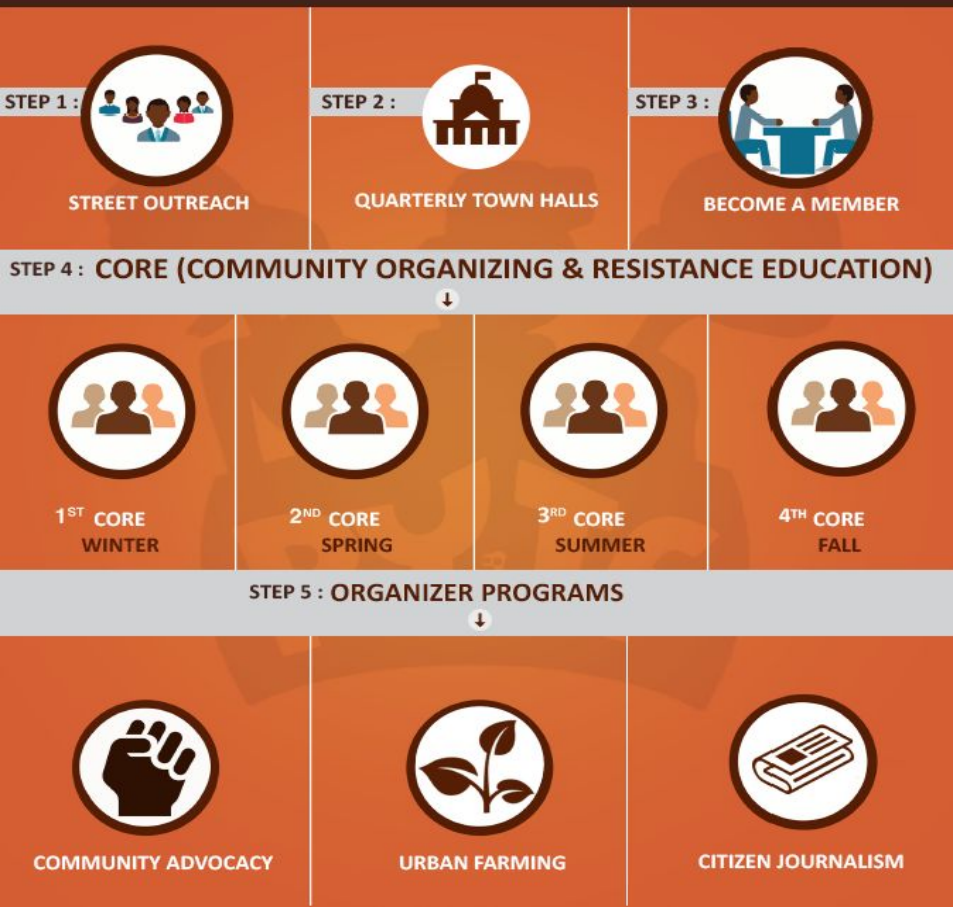
# ROCKAWAY YOUTH TASK FORCE

## ORGANIZING MODEL



# ROCKAWAY YOUTH TASK FORCE

## PARTICIPANT PROGRESSION



# ROCKAWAY YOUTH TASK FORCE

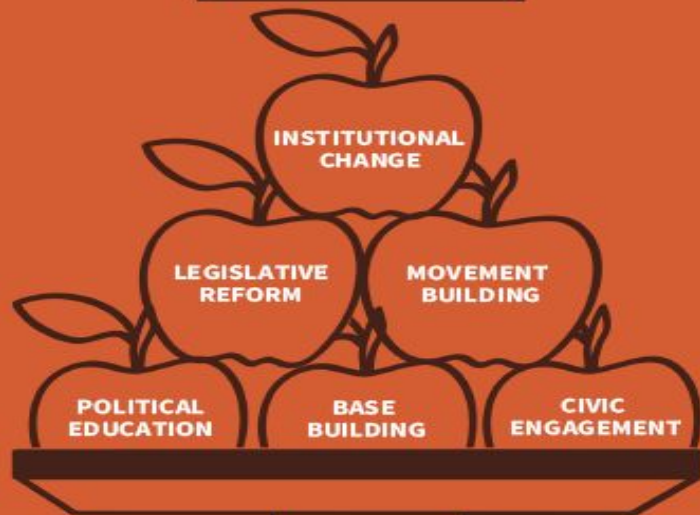
## ADVOCACY STRATEGY



# **ROCKAWAY YOUTH TASK FORCE**

## **A BALANCED APPROACH**

### **ADVOCACY**



### **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**



# OUR Campaigns



# Our Impact (Macro)



# Our Impact (Micro)



# **The Bell: Teens Take Charge**

# Mission

The Bell amplifies the voices of students in the education conversation and empowers them to lead the fight for their futures.

We do this through two student-led programs:  
the [Miseducation podcast](#) and [Teens Take Charge](#).

# What is Youth Voice at The Bell?



# Story of Action

**Issue 1: Lack of student voice in  
NYC DOE decision making**



**Student Voice Working Group**



**Issue 2: Segregated enrollment  
in NYC high schools**



**Enrollment Equity Campaign**

'Mr. Mayor, we cannot afford to wait.' Teen group says New York City diversity plan doesn't move fast enough.

BY SARA WIDLE • FEBRUARY 15, 2019



NEWS

**Op-Ed: NYC High School  
Admissions Creates Winners And  
Losers. I Lost.**

BY MUHAMMAD DEEN

MARCH 19, 2019 3:41 P.M. • 111 COMMENTS

EDUCATION

**Students Rip de Blasio for Missing Meeting on School  
Segregation while in Iowa**

BY JILLIAN JORGENSEN | MANHATTAN

PUBLISHED 3:18 PM ET MAY. 19, 2019 | UPDATED 3:41 PM ET MAY. 19, 2019

**NYC teens stage sit-in at City Hall to protest  
'segregation crisis' at public high schools**

POSTED 8:06 AM, JUNE 27, 2019, BY ANDREW RAMOS

# Early Impact of Teens Take Charge

EDUCATION NEW YORK  
NYC students to get new 'voice' in school policies

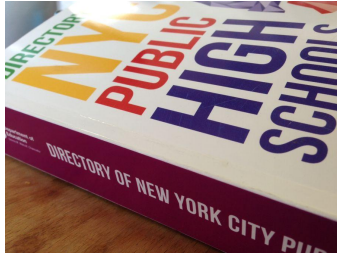
By BEN CHAPMAN  
EDUCATION REPORTER | JAN 04, 2019



6 newly approved policy recommendations to expand student voice opportunities across NYC public schools



School integration rally with 400 students from approx. 100 high schools



New verification system for information in NYC high school directory



TTC voices in 43 media stories since beginning of 2019 (22 different students)

# Early Impact of Teens Take Charge



4 student-led community education events with combined 1k attendees featuring testimony from 60+ students



Alumni on college campuses across the country continuing to make an impact

**Website: [teenstakecharge.com](http://teenstakecharge.com)**  
**Social Media: @TeensTakeCharge**

**[taylor@bellvoices.org](mailto:taylor@bellvoices.org)**

# NYC DOE

Student Voice Manager

**“When there is  
conversation  
going on, you can  
teach and learn.”**

Georges, *Flambwayan*

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# Goals

1. Engage youth as primary stakeholders in educational transformation.
2. Promote promising practices that advance equity.
3. Increase platforms for student voice and youth-adult partnership up to the highest level of decision making.



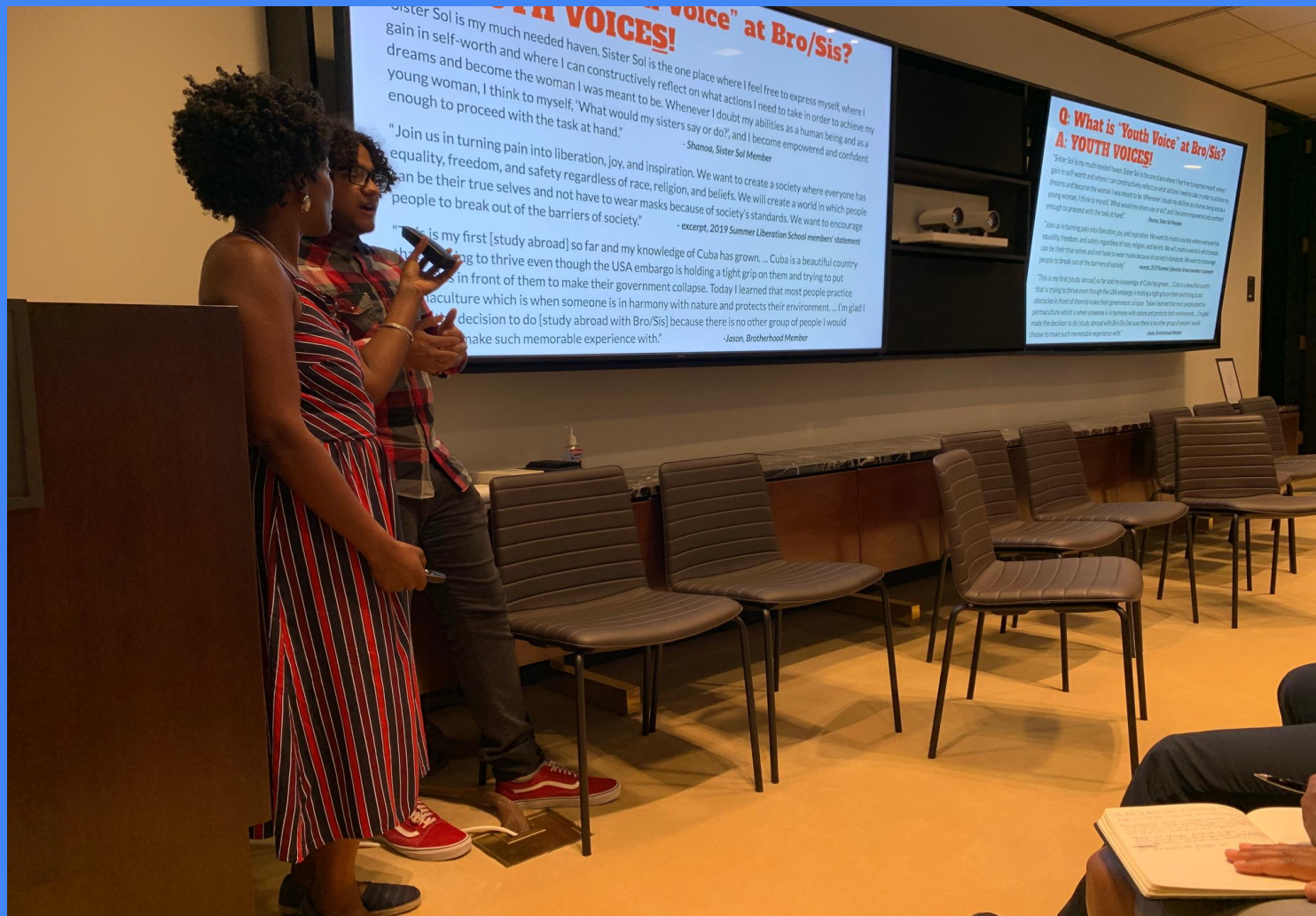
**studentvoice@schools.nyc.gov**

# **Panel Discussion**

**Thank you!**



# Event Photos



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-excerpt, 2019 Summer Liberation School members' statement

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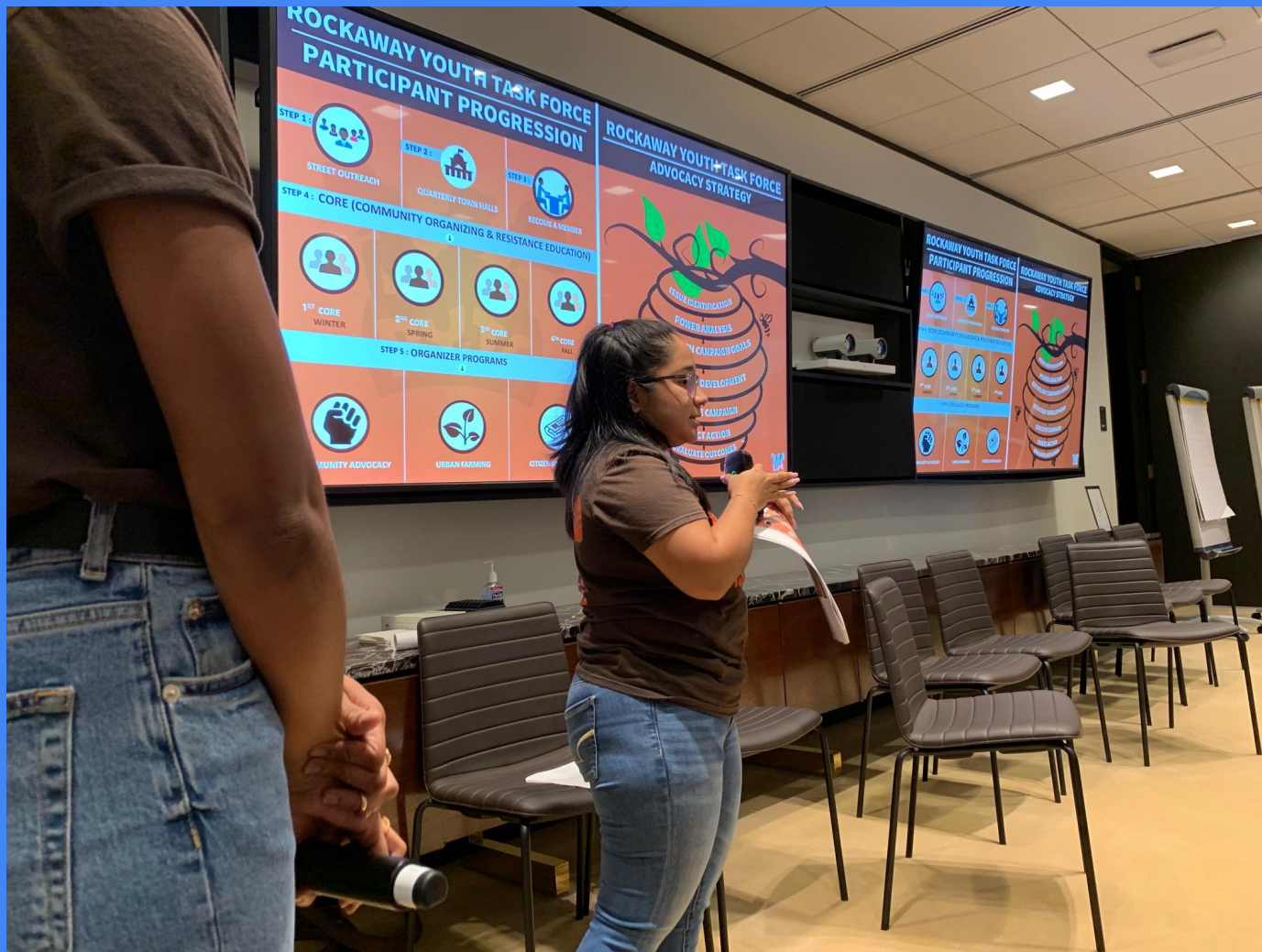
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**End of  
Presentation**