

TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH

A workbook with strategies on how to conduct **community-driven research** to speak your community's truth to power.

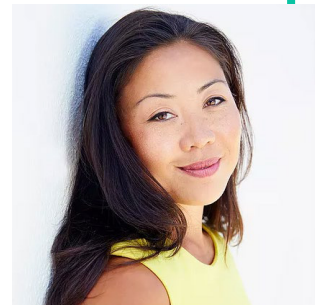
Connie Wun, Ph.D.

CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION 3
- DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN 5
- DATA COLLECTION 13
- DATA ANALYSIS 18
- TAKE ACTION 19

FOUNDER DR. CONNIE WUN

Dr. Wun's work is a reflection of her lifelong commitment to ending racial and gender-based violence. Her areas of expertise include community-driven research, violence against women and girls of color, school discipline and punishment. Dr. Wun is the Director of Transformative Research - a research, program evaluation, and training institute that works in partnership with community-based organizations to end racial and gender disparities.



INTRODUCTION

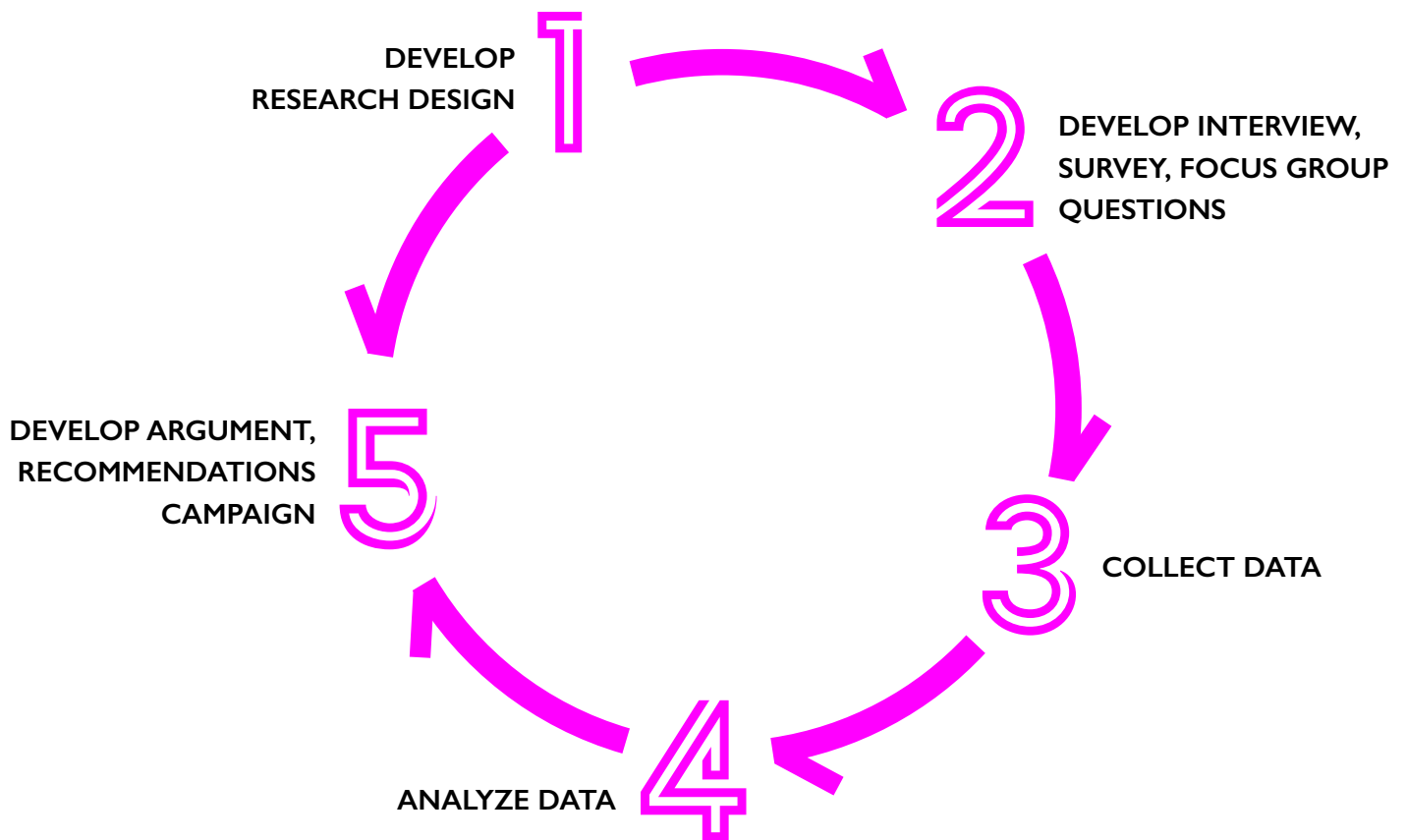
HOW DID TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH START?

Transformative Research was created to combine advocacy and organizing around issues of racial and gender justice with community-driven research. Through TR, we co-conduct research, train and consult on racial and gender justice research projects that work towards ending racial and gender violence against Black, Indigenous, communities of color. Contents from the workbook come from Dr. Connie Wun's experiences as an organizer, teacher, professor, and researcher. It also draws from the historic work of multiple participatory action research groups and the The Data Center, which existed for 40 years before it closed its doors. Dr. Connie Wun, founder of Transformative Research, had the great honor of learning from and being a Director of Research for the Center.

The objective of community-driven research is to combine multiple forms of knowledge, including mainstream materials (e.g. academic publications, mainstream newspapers, the news), community-based experiences (e.g. everyday experiences), and traditional/community-based practices (e.g. gut feelings, spiritual knowledge, intuition) for the purposes of creating systemic, institutional, and interpersonal change.

Organizations and groups that have participated in community-driven research use the research that they've created and/or participated in to lead multiple types of campaigns not limited to policy reports, the development of community centers, political campaigns, and community-centered conferences. Through the process of community-driven research, researchers learn more about themselves, their communities' experiences, needs, and power. They identify, name, and document the problems that impact their communities as well as the solutions to these problems. Through community-driven research, community researchers identify, name, and document the resources that their communities have and need in order for multiple levels of change to take place.

RESEARCH STAGES



DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN

WHAT ARE SOME ELEMENTS OF RESEARCH DESIGN?

Design your research so that it is geared towards identifying a problem, what are trying to find out about the problem, and what are the components of the problem, and how you can solve/address the problem. Here is a basic outline to identify three important parts of your research.

IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL

What is the problem that you're trying to solve?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What are you trying to find out and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What do you want to change or impact?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

you

- IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH QUESTIONS.
- IDENTIFY METHODS.
- IDENTIFY RESOURCES.
- IDENTIFY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH POSITIONALITY.
- IDENTIFY STORAGE FOR COLLECTED DATA

? ACTION ITEMS

- *Problem*
- *Information*
- *Motive*
- *Change*
- *Impact*

DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN

IDENTIFY METHODS

What research method or methods will help you to best answer your research questions?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

According to your goal, how many research participants will you need for the study? Outline your demographic.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Where will you be conducting this study to answer the questions and reach your research goal? Consider logistics for your team and participants.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

- IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH QUESTIONS.
- IDENTIFY METHODS.
- IDENTIFY RESOURCES.
- IDENTIFY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH POSITIONALITY.
- IDENTIFY STORAGE FOR COLLECTED DATA

METHODS

- *Focus groups*
- *Interviews*
- *Document analysis*
- *Case study*
- *Ethnographic*
- *Participant observation*

DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN

IDENTIFY RESOURCES

What resources do you have to make this study happen?

What resources will you need?

What are the time restrictions or timeline for study?

- IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH QUESTIONS.
- IDENTIFY METHODS.
- IDENTIFY RESOURCES.
- IDENTIFY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH POSITIONALITY.
- IDENTIFY STORAGE FOR COLLECTED DATA

? RESOURCES

- Time
- Experienced Researchers or Research Consultants
- Supplies (recorders, fieldwork journals, software)
- Budget

DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN

IDENTIFY RESEARCH POSITIONALITY

To identify any potential biases, what are your racial, gender, class, sexuality identities/experiences that may inform the way your research participants will see or relate to you?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What are your racial, gender, class, sexuality identities/experiences that may inform how you will engage with research participants?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What are your racial, gender, class, sexuality identities/experiences that may inform how you will analyze the data?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

- IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH QUESTIONS.
- IDENTIFY METHODS.
- IDENTIFY RESOURCES.
- IDENTIFY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH POSITIONALITY.
- IDENTIFY STORAGE FOR COLLECTED DATA

QUESTION MARK POSITIONALITY

- Race
- Ideology
- Gender
- Class
- Sexuality Identity/Experiences

DEVELOP YOUR DESIGN

IDENTIFY STORAGE FOR COLLECTED DATA

Where will you securely store your files?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Who will transcribe the data?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH QUESTIONS.
- IDENTIFY METHODS.
- IDENTIFY RESOURCES.
- IDENTIFY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.
- IDENTIFY RESEARCH POSITIONALITY.
- IDENTIFY STORAGE FOR COLLECTED DATA

AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDINGS

- *Hard Drive*
- *Paid subscription for cloud services*

TRANSCRIPTIONS

- *Excel*
- *Google sheets/Notebooks*
- *Paid subscription for cloud services*

CONSENT FORMS

- *Drive*
- *Paid subscription for cloud services*

TRANSCRIBING DATA

- *Paid transcriber*
- *Research team members*

OVERVIEW

THE BIG PICTURE

- WHAT IS THE GOAL FOR YOUR RESEARCH?
- WHAT ARE SOME ARGUMENTS THAT SUPPORT OR CHALLENGE YOUR GOAL?
- WHO OR WHAT RESOURCES CAN GET YOU THE INFORMATION NEEDED?
- WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE AND WHY?
- WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO DISSEMINATE YOUR FINDINGS?
- WHAT ARE IMPORTANT DATES TO CONSIDER? TIMELINE?

GETTING YOUR RESEARCH DOWN

- WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS THAT WILL GET YOU TO YOUR GOAL?
- WHAT METHODS AND TOOLS WILL HELP YOU ANSWER THE QUESTIONS?
- HOW MANY INDIVIDUALS WILL TAKE PART IN YOUR STUDY?
- WHERE AND HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE COLLECTED?
- HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED?
- WHAT TYPE OF RESEARCHERS WILL BE HELPFUL?
- WHAT SKILLS WOULD BE USEFUL TOWARDS YOUR RESEARCH?

ANALYZE YOUR RESEARCH

- WHAT WILL THE METHOD BE FOR DATA ANALYSIS?
- WILL YOU USE ANY DATA ANALYSIS SOFTWARE?

Now that you have drafted your research design, the next step will be to collect the data. Keep in mind the guidelines of community-driven research!

DATA COLLECTION

INTRO TO DATA COLLECTION

Here we will explore methods and data collection. In order to collect data, you will need to use one or a combination of methods not limited to interviews, focus groups, surveys, and document analysis. These methods will help you to collect information such as stories, numbers, historical accounts, or testimonies that allow for you to answer your research questions. They will help you and others to better understand the nature of the problem. They can also help to identify solutions to the problem. Through community-driven research, you learn from communities what their problems are and the best way to solve them.

Before you begin to collect data, consider which research methods will best help you to answer research problems. Do you need a lot of information or evidence? Do you need many ideas for solutions? Do you need detailed evidence or understanding of the problem? Will having many answers prove the importance of the problem or will detailed answers provide more support? Do you have more time to do one on one answers or would a group setting be more manageable? Would looking at historical documents provide the insights and answers you need?

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are great for learning details from your interviewees, about the problem and potential solutions. Interviews can be done with a small group of unexpected responses. Depending upon the time and the purpose of the project, there should be no more than 12 questions. Interviews allow for researchers to be able to build upon and nurture relationships with interviewees. They also allow for researchers opportunities to learn more about the interviewee and their stories.

Before deciding upon this research method, consider the researchers' relationships with community members and individuals. Do they have a known relationship? What is the likelihood that individuals will want to share their stories or perspectives with the researchers? This research method, especially when done one on one, may require that the researcher or the research team have an established relationship to the community or interviewees. For many communities, the issue of trust is an important one. Since traditional forms of research has often included mining or taking knowledge from communities, some individuals or communities may not want to participate in interviews. This may change if researchers can explain that this is a community-driven research led by community members who want to identify and help to solve the communities' problems. This research method will take more time to implement than others.

Before choosing this method, it is also important to assess time restraints and/or develop a clear timeline. Remember, you will need to transcribe the interviews.



Interviews are most useful for communities and individuals that prefer in-person conversations. There are individuals and communities that may prefer to talk with individuals in person, where eye-contact is an option, in lieu of surveys that may be a bit more impersonal. Use discretion.

INTERVIEW TIPS

COMMON ETIQUETTES

Remember to explain the objective/purpose of the interview to your interviewees. Explain the purpose, the kind of information you are looking for, and how the information will be used. During the interview, you should keep in mind the guidelines of the research and confidentiality agreements. You should also tell the interviewees how long the interview. You should also keep in mind any language barriers. If you are recording the interview, you should make it known that you are doing so. After the interview, there are some common practices that include thanking interviewees and asking if they have anymore questions. Then explain that if it is necessary, you will follow up with them. - *DataCenter*

OPEN ENDED

Ask open ended questions. Unless this is a survey, try to stay away from questions that will yield "yes" or "no" answers. Consider asking questions that begin with "how," "why," or "describe."

KEEP IT GENERAL

Begin interviews with general questions (e.g. not too personal or intimate), then progress into questions that will require more details or potentially personal information. This is to ease interviewees into the process and will allow for more flow to the process. Sandwich these questions with more general questions so as to not continue to "put the interviewee on the spot."

FOCUSED

Organize the questions into categories (e.g. home, school, community). This will help the interviewee and the interviewer stay focused.

EVALUATE

Try your questions out on friends or other researchers. Check for flow and sense (e.g. Do the questions make sense? Does the order of the questions flow?)

ALLOW ROOM

Allow room for follow up questions (e.g. "tell me more" or "why do you think this occurs?") but try to stay away from questions that are too intimate, especially if you're research project will inquire or will invoke sensitive feelings or memories from your interviewee.

CONCISE

Keep your questions short. You probably don't want more than 10 questions for an in-depth interview, because interviewees can be draining, you may lose your interviewees attention, you want to leave room for impromptu follow-up questions, and you want to stay within the time frame of no more than 90 minutes.

If you or your interviewee has less than 90 minutes, limit the questions to 5 or 6 at most.

STAY MINDFUL

The way you've written the interview questions will serve as a guide for the interview process. You may need to change the language of the interviews based upon your relationship to the interviewee, their expectations or preferences, etc.

WHAT YOU SHOULD AVOID

⦿ Avoid intrusive questions. If you're interviewing individuals about sensitive topics, avoid questions that will dig into details of their experiences. This is out of respect for their privacy and as a researcher, your job is to identify general answers that will help you to solve or understand the research project's problem.

⦿ If individuals begin to tell you sensitive responses, consider moving them away from extreme details - you will not be able to publish these details nor should you. If there are challenging responses, pause and ask if they feel safe. You can offer to help get them resources (by talking to your research team or supervisor). Explain that there is a healing practitioner that you can talk to to possibly help them.

Avoid leading questions that may direct interviewees and their responses into particular directions. Try to ensure that the

⦿ interviewees responses are genuinely their own and that of what they think you'd like to hear.

⦿ Stick to one question at a time. Make them short. Don't combine questions so that you don't confuse interviewees and are able to transcribe and code more clearly.

SURVEYS & FOCUS GROUPS

SURVEYS

Surveys are great for “getting the numbers” on something and reaching a large group of people. Though it is a good way to get numbers, the people taking the survey can only go into detail as much as you let them. That means they won't be able to provide personal details.

If you need tons of information, this may be your best option. Surveys are great to keep identities private and anonymous. As you create your survey, make sure to ask identity/demographic questions (e.g. ethnicity, race, nationality, age, gender pronoun, etc), ask less intrusive questions up front, sandwich hard “triggering” questions especially about violence in the middle of the survey, provide warnings and resources for questions about violence and trauma. Also, provide encouraging remarks throughout the survey- if it is long - to keep survey takers engaged.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are similar to interviews but happen more in groups. They are sometimes called “listening sessions.” Some of the ideas around interviews will be overlapped here. Focus groups can be anywhere from 5-10 people but 6-8 is normally the best.

When you're hosting a focus group, there will typically be 1 or 2 moderators. The moderator will ask questions that are open-ended, not “yes” or “no” questions. This way, you can allow for your participant to tell their story. If you do happen to ask a “yes” or “no” question, you can also ask a follow-up question to get more detail on why the participant feels this way. A possible followup question would be what influenced the person to have that reaction.

Sometimes focus groups use butcher paper that allow for participants to write their answers on the sheet. This may help with transcribing data and may make the focus group more interactive.

KEEP IN MIND

- ⦿ **Language barriers**
 Make your research questions accessible to your audience. If needed, provide translated versions of your research questions available for the participant. Center disability justice. Does your participant need support to participate in the study, including ASL interpretation or transcriptions?
- ⦿ **Expectations**
 Explain the purpose and what the research is trying to do and why the participant's involvement is important. Share how long it will take and where the info will go.
- ⦿ **Confidentiality!!!!**
 Be clear on Community-Driven Research and remind the participant about confidentiality.



FOCUS GROUPS



MODERATOR/ASSISTANT MODERATOR

To conduct a focus group you need a moderator that can make the participants feel comfortable and ready to answer the questions. The moderator should also be good at asking follow-up questions. Make sure there is also a note taker who could also be recording the session (though the participants must consent to being recorded).

STARTING YOUR FOCUS GROUP

At the start of the focus group/listening session, welcome the participants and tell them what the purpose of the focus group is and how the data will be used. It is important to let the participants know that they are in a safe space to share their stories. Before beginning, go over ground rules and confidentiality agreements. Snacks are always helpful!

Then begin asking questions. Give time for participants to answer each question either verbally or visually (using butcher paper or notes). Wait for everyone to share their responses (unless they pass) before you go on to the next question. Sometimes it is helpful to have handouts of the research questions available for participants to fill out on their own - in case they prefer to engage quietly or want notes to read from.

Have someone circulating or nearby to check in on participants in case they want individual support. Let participants know they can leave the space anytime (create a break room or offer space for participants to take a break).

Throughout your meeting, you should make sure you keep on track and not stray off too much. To keep participation from everyone level, questions such as "Does anyone have anything else to add?" should be asked from time to time.

ENDING YOUR FOCUS GROUP

Summarize the main points of the focus group. If time permits, ask the participants what they thought and reflect on the main ideas. Thank them for coming and collect notes or recordings.

AVOID

- Reading questions verbatim
- Finishing other's sentences
- Allowing one or two people to dominate the discussion
- Side discussions
- Taking sides
- Sharing your opinion
- Favoring a participant
- Using jargon or technical terms

DATA COLLECTION

- 1 IDENTIFY PARTICIPANTS
- 2 IDENTIFY WHO WILL COLLECT THE DATA
- 3 COLLECT DATA (STORIES, SURVEYS, ETC)
- 4 STORE DATA FOR ANALYSIS (EXCEL, DATA ANALYSIS, SOFTWARE, ETC)



DATA ENTRY TIPS (informed by DataCenter)

- **Prep Texts**

 - Each participant/transcript will have a alias assigned to them to protect anonymity.
 - Make sure each research team member has a packet/collection of all transcripts with codebook.
 - Keep original notes and/or recordings until end of project or designated date by research team.
- **Codes to organize and protect identity**

 - Go over transcripts separately and identify themes that consistently show up or seem important base upon research needs.
 - Go over themes with research team (compare and contrast).
 - Once you agree on themes, give these themes "codes" and provide a description + example of the codes.
- **Cross Check Codes**

 - Go over documents to find evidence of codes/themes. Take notes to help you understand why you coded this way (e.g. how is this evidence?)
 - If you need a new code, decide with group if new code applies or is necessary.
 - Create a process (butcher paper/google docs) to agree on primary codes, which inform findings.

DATA ANALYSIS

Here we will go over the next step in your research project. After you have finished collecting data and have organized the information, your next step would be to look through the data to find patterns and information that would help you to best understand the research project problem and its solution. You may consider hiring a transcriber to input all information or make sure there is time in research timeline to enter collected data.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Analyze data and identify common themes.

Cross-check this with research team.

Decide on 3-4 main themes that become your findings (don't leave out outliers).

Identify data that will back up the themes.

Quantify the themes. How many times did this come up? What is the percentage?

What theoretical framework helps you understand these themes?

Summarize analysis and implications of findings with team.

Cross-check findings with community + organizers.

CONSIDERATIONS

There are other strategies for coding and data analysis. This has worked with different teams but can be modified based upon group's needs, methods, and objectives.

The group will create something written/in print that will synthesize research process, collected data, findings, implications, and suggestions.



TAKE ACTION

DISSEMINATE YOUR FINDINGS AND TAKE ACTION

After you've figured out your findings with your group, you should consider what kind of campaign you'd like to launch and how you'd like to distribute your findings. Do you want to do a policy report? A book? Would you like to host a conference? Is your campaign going to be about a creating new legislation/laws?

Use your findings, which is essentially the most important answers (or concerns) that your participants across the nation agreed upon. What kind of campaign could you create based upon these findings? How will your findings and campaign lead to systemic, institutional, and interpersonal change?

As you begin to finish your research project, it is also important to reflect and evaluate so that if you do another research project, you will be better prepared.

ASK YOURSELF

What new skills did you learn? How can you improve your skills for the next research project?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What research practices worked and why? Which practices did not work and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....


.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

 **EVALUATE** – Measure your outcome against your goal and see how it went.

TIPS

HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR REPORT AND FINDINGS

Think of important dates and adjust your timeline so you can put your findings out there when it will be the most effective.

◎ TRENDS

- Keep track of trends and deploy your work when it is in the spotlight.

◎ TIMING

- Think of important dates where your findings could be most effective and adjust your timeline as needed.

◎ COMPARISONS

- Look at people who have done similar research as you.
- Look at what others did and what was successful and what they struggled on.
- Potential collaboration could lead to larger press coverage.
- the spotlight.

◎ PERSONNEL

- Think of important dates where your findings If there is anyone who is also a big activist on your research topic, it could also be helpful to have them join you in disseminating your work. If the person gives a speech, keep in mind good practices so the speech will empower people. Ex. not reading verbatim.

◎ CELEBRITY

- A celebrity could help get your message out the door. However, you should make sure that the person is well knowledgeable about your research or has rehearsed the information.

◎ COMMUNITY & EDUCATION

- Present your findings through a community celebration with participants, community members, and partner organizations who are directly affected by your research. Invite news media to help spread the word.
- Incorporate your findings into educational discussions with your community. Identify guiding questions around your project, and invite community members to discuss about your research.

◎ ARTS & MEDIA

- Develop a media project based upon your findings i.e. a mural with key statistics and quotes, a podcast, a film or video.

Suggestions from DataCenter.