*“People are Demanding Justice”*

*Pandemics, Protests and Remote Learning*

*Through the Eyes of Immigrant Youth of Color*

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We are the School in the Square (S2) intergenerational participatory research collective. We write from “The Heights”, drawing on an expansive set of narratives gathered by young people who see themselves (ourselves) as researchers, activists, community members, social analysts and caregivers. Most of us are growing up in, as we are documenting, life in Washington Heights when racial uprisings and pandemic, economic fears, food insecurity, health disparities and endless videos of state-sponsored assaults against communities of color, by police and by ICE, have disrupted previous conceptions of “normal” adolescence. In this project, we are chronicling a history of the present by exploring how youth (age 14 – 16), largely Latinx, immigrant and rising juniors/alumni of S2, are surviving the pandemic, making sense of the racial uprisings and negotiating online learning in dramatically uneven contexts.

In this article, we focus on critical participatory action researchandyouth-led oral histories as an epistemological and ethical framework for pursuing anti-racist developmental science. We take seriously the perspectives and experiences, lines of analysis and forms of activism narrated and engaged by young people of color. We also take seriously the critical knowledge produced by youth of color, concerning our lives and dreams, our schools and social movements, our families, our anxieties, our communities, the rich mutual aid we see around us and the state violence we endure. We elaborate how we engaged anti-racist participatory inquiry *as* and *with* (not *about* or *on*) youth of color and how we are trying to move our findings into the hands of policymakers, youth activists and those engaged with public education redesign.

**Critical Participatory Action Research as Anti-Racist Public Science**

Writer Ta-Nehisi Coates ends his letter to his 15-year-old son, “My wish for you is that you feel no need to constrict yourself to make others comfortable…. I would have you be a conscious citizen of this terrible and beautiful world.” (Coates, *2015,* 107/108)

Critical participatory action research (CPAR), by adults and youth, about the pandemic, racial uprisings and online learning, offers a pedagogy and methodology for young people to become “conscious citizens of this terrible and beautiful world.” CPAR represents an epistemic framework for honoring the knowledge held, developed and co-produced by young people, documenting state violence and racialized inequities, and generating evidence to be of use in youth-led racial justice actions. Our work relies on long traditions of participatory action research (Fine, 2017), decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012), Black PAR (see Drame & Irby, 2016) and PAR-Entremundos (Ayala, Cammarota, Berta-Avila, Rivera, Rodriguez, Torre, 2018; Torre & Ayala, 2009). As producers of knowledge, documenting a history of the present, we have collaborated for over two years, using multiple methods, quantitative and qualitative, interviews, mapping, surveys and oral histories. And then COVID19 hit, and George Floyd was murdered. At that point, our inquiry shifted in real time to capture the experiences of young people in The Heights confronting the pandemic, relentless evidence of state violence, racial uprisings, stay at home orders and online learning. (see Anand, Fine, Perkins & Surrey, 2002 for another example of middle school participatory research)

During the first year and a half of the CUNY-S2 partnership, we gathered 43 oral histories chronicling our transition from a single middle school, School in the Square, into 37 wildly distinct high schools in a deeply segregated city, marked by test-driven high school admissions and overly-policed schools for Black and Brown students. In the second half of the alumni’s 9th grade year, we were interviewing, vlogging, completing surveys, making films, loving/hating/transferring from our high schools. Since COVID19 hit and our lockdown, we have conducted 48 additional interviews on zoom with our peers about their experiences of the pandemic, racial uprisings and online learning to understand how race, immigration status, class and circumstance affect our physical and mental health, our educational possibilities, our relationship to protests and BLM, our views of police, our activisms and our sense of radical hope (Mosley & Neville, 2020).

As we are building an archive of stories of youth from The Heights, we are also intentional about trying to convert our research into actions for racial justice. Our findings on mental health, desire for relationships and the significance of critical race history have been cycled back into our school curriculum and folded into counselling for high school selections. At the end of November, we presented our key findings in a zoom chat with Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson of New York City responsible for immigrant communities, the Black Male Initiative, and civic engagements, as well as representatives of the State Department of Education and the Board of Regents. In January we presented our findings to a new PhD program in Community Leadership at the College of Staten Island. In May, we presented on a panel of the Oral History of the Mid-Atlantic Conference. In the Fall, we will be collaborating with the People’s Theatre Project to perform the narratives we have gathered for and with our community.

Our project braids three strands of what we consider core to anti-racist developmental science: participatory inquiry rooted in the perspectives of youth of color; culturally responsive pedagogy and research oriented toward progressive policy and social activism. Our *critical participatory design* animates the liberatory aspects of Ignacio Martin-Baro’s commitment (1988) to research by and for the people, deeply influenced by the more recent writings of Jennifer Ayala and colleagues on PAR Entre-Mundos (2020) and synchronous with the works launched through The Public Science Project at the Graduate Center (Fine, 2017; Finesurrey, Lester, Fine and the S2 Collective, 2021; Finesurrey, Rodriguez, A., Contreras, A., Lam, A., Fine, M. and the S2 alumni research collective, 2021).

Our *conceptual framework* draws from a range of critical race theorists, writing on Black hope, Latinx epistemologies and indigenous ethics. Mosley, Neville and colleagues’ writings on “radical hope” (2019) sit in conversation with Ginwright & Cammarota’s commitment to consciousness and healing (2002) and Fernandez & Langhout’s (2014) re-crafting of “community” through the eyes of residents and neighbors. In our project, we designed an inter-generational, youth-led exploration of community, through a lens of racialized oppression and resistance, appreciative of diasporic roots, the vibrant forms of mutual aid sprouting up throughout the Heights and the freedom dreams narrated by young people of color bearing witness to collective rage and desire, throughout the nation (Adams-Wiggins, K. and Taylor-Garcia, D., 2020).

Our *dedication to action* resonates with Outley and Blyth’s (2008, 2020) call for developmental science that moves from awareness to action. In contexts of culturally responsive pedagogy and critical participatory inquiry, the brilliant but often muted voices already present in the bodies/souls of youth of color collectivize. In this article “we” – youth researchers collaborating with adult educators and researchers – speak as producers of knowledge, documenting a racialized history of the present and the freedom dreams of our generation (Kelley, 2003).

**Theoretical Frameworks:**

**Learning to Read the World and Produce Knowledge through a Critical Race Lens**

From the beginning of this project, but particularly during the summer of 2020, it was clear that S2 alumni embody and communicate quite sophisticated “racial literacies.” As articulated by Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz (accessed 2020):

Racial literacy in schools includes the ability to read, write about, discuss and interrupt situations and events that are motivated and upheld by racial inequity and bias… [developing racial literacy is] an action-oriented process requiring love, humility, reflection, an understanding of history, and a commitment to working against racial injustice.

Like Rod Watts and colleagues (1996; 2015) who have written extensively about the development of critical consciousness in youth of color, Sealey-Ruiz argues that schools have an obligation to teach young people to read through and unpack the consequences of systemic racism, and then to engage action for racial justice.

Conceptually this research was rooted in a braid of racial literacies, social consciousness and critical participatory action research, in which those who are most impacted by social injustice are positioned to shape the questions, methods, analyses and products of social research. Dedicated to “no research on us, without us,” (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017; Fine, 2017; Torre, 2009; Torre & Ayala, 2009), the S2-CUNY research project recognizes that youth of color are agents in their own lives and communities, deserve to be educated K through college, as scholars of racial/class/gender/immigrant history and struggle, and they have a “right to research” (Appadurai, 2006). As producers of knowledge who have gathered narratives of racial injustice, struggle and survival from peers and elders in our community, we now have an obligation to share those stories and insights.

**Building a Participatory Project Design**

School in the Square (S2) is a small, progressive charter school in Washington Heights, New York City, grades 6-8. The school serves 300 students, many of whom are immigrants, or the children of immigrants mostly from the Dominican Republic living in the Bronx, Harlem and Washington Heights. In September 2019, the first graduating class of 96 fanned out to 37 high schools across New York City. Twelve alumni asked to join a longitudinal, participatory inquiry tracking their cohort into high school.

S2 offers an intentionally culturally responsive, community embedded and anti-racist middle school education. Our project design took on the same commitments. As a research collective we have centered youth perspectives, with a critical race and immigrant lens, but our research team is multi-generational by design. We drew on multiple methods including mapping (Futch & Fine, 2014), youth-led oral histories (see Ayala, et al; 2019), participatory surveys created by young people (Finesurrey et. al., 2021a), vlogs, letters to self, auto-ethnography, maps. We documented writing retreats, restorative circle conversations, and we have collaboratively produced a set of videos to expose the wisdom, struggles and desires of these students. We generated the interview protocols together, developed a process for participatory analysis and we created a set of ethical principles for sharing narratives while protecting the vulnerabilities of participants in times when many of our peers and families feel under surveillance. Most recently we gathered for two zoom hours to review this manuscript for lines of analysis, accuracy of quotes, use of names, issues of confidentiality, ethics, tone and representation.

Collectively we form what Maria Elena Torre would call a *participatory contact zone*, an intergenerational research collective shaped by the experiences and wisdom of youth of color coming of age in The Heights (Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2016; Torre & Ayala, 2014). We built in a rich layer of inter-generational mentoring such that three community college students from Latinx immigrant families were hired to teach 8th graders from immigrant families how to conduct and analyze oral histories. Knowledge production is of course labor, as such youth researchers were paid a stipend. Community college mentors were paid hourly for the training sessions, our research retreat and then additional funds for interviews conducted and transcribed through a grant secured by School in the Square. They/we are co-authors on our written work and are cited throughout–with their real names when appropriate. Creative and scholarly products, including videos and written products have been developed and reviewed collaboratively by the team (Hale, Calla & Mullings, 2017).

Beyond commitments to democratizing knowledge production with young (and older) scholars of color, the educators from CUNY’s Graduate Center and Guttman Community College, and S2 (Arnaldo Rodriguez, with founder Evan Meyers and consultant Sherry King) organized the project to support and build leadership among the young people materially, emotionally, financially and academically in their transition to high school. We consider this a crucial element of anti-racist research. That is, we anticipated that in our five inquiry years together, given historic and ongoing racial disparities and state violence, some of our co-researchers and alumni participants (and their families) might encounter difficulties with school, housing, health care, police or immigration, mental health or family concerns. We did not want to simply “document” these struggles. We made a commitment to help young people and their families avoid the cumulative consequences of structural dispossession. Thus, we built into the research design a form of structured support and policy shifts at the school. From the beginning, a transition counselor (Arnaldo Rodriguez) was available to young people and their families emotionally, educationally, socially, economically and, if necessary, legally. During COVID19, the school built a food pantry, hosted a school supply exchange space, checked in regularly with students, alumni and families, helped – to the extent possible – with housing, health and academic concerns. Most recently S2 sponsored a community wide conversation with health care workers from the local hospital to discuss concerns around vaccinations. Our commitments were not to simply chronicle inequity, but intentionally and lovingly to convert research into anti-racist action.

Our research questions evolved on three levels:

1. *Youth of Color Surviving and Resisting 2020*: How do working class immigrant youth of color experience the pandemic, the racial uprisings and online learning in a city rife with structural inequalities and in communities rich in culture, care, stress and mutual aid?
2. *The cumulative consequences of anti-racist education*: To what extent does a middle school education, dedicated to culturally sustaining pedagogy, paired with critical oral histories led by youth of color, enable critical race analyses and activism in students and alumni even after they graduate?
3. *The commitments and accountabilities of critical PAR by youth of color*: In what ways can we move the research findings toward policy and activism?

**Participatory Design and Analysis**

To build a participatory design and methods, the 12 youth researchers – working with Arnaldo Rodriguez (school counselor) and Samuel Finesurrey (oral historian) – collectively generated questions for the interview protocol, piloted the instrument, revised the protocol and then collaboratively analyzed the emergent themes. In year one, two 90-minute sessions were dedicated to building their capacity as researchers, introducing them to the techniques of oral history and the commitments of youth and intergenerational participatory action research. We held ongoing conversations about ethics, privacy, representation and confidentiality (Brown & Rodriquez, 2017; Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012; Torre & Ayala, 2009). In the third and fourth sessions, we were ready to start building our interview guide. Together, and in small groups we generated questions, piloted them on each other and learned to tape conversations. Then we debriefed, reviewed the protocol, edited questions, added and deleted. By November 2019, we had gathered 48 individual interviews, conducted by youth researchers, averaging 30 minutes in year one, and launched into our first analysis session in January 2020, coding the narratives into the eight themes we settled on:

1. Where do urban immigrant youth experience a sense of *home/belonging*?
2. How did you develop, personally, while a middle school student at S2?
3. Supports provided by S2 even after graduation to alumni and families
4. High school transition – freedom and struggles
5. Experiences of safety, fear, surveillance and policing in high school
6. The joys and burdens of living bilingually
7. Connections to community/identity/activism
8. Hopes for the future.

From these Year 1 interviews (see Design Chart below), eventually we published two essays (see Finesurrey et. al. 2021a, and Finesurrey et al 2021b) and presented them at AERA and at the Oral History of the Mid-Atlantic Region Conference.

But in March 2020, the project shifted dramatically. The Heights was hit hard, and the families of our students/alumni/researchers were growing sick and still working, ironically considered “essential”. We were living with Trump’s ramped up anti-immigrant threats and rhetoric. COVID19 hit, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor were murdered by police, racial protests could be heard out our windows and on our screens. Schools had moved online and we were on lock-down.

At our next collective gathering, on our zoom “check in,” it was clear that issues of mental health, stress, fear, loss, schooling, lack of technology, health inequities, economic precarity, police violence and racial protests were on everyone’s mind. Particularly the youth researchers. S2 set up a food pantry, coat exchange, school supply station at the site and many of the students lifted boxes, delivered meals, prepared groceries for family pick up. We knew that our research, and our plans for action, would have to be far more targeted, responsive to the local crisis and attentive to the immediate needs of the community.

With much care, many check ins, and active outreach by S2 counselors to students and alumni, neighbors and local activists, the CUNY-S2 collective decided it was important to document this moment in the Heights, from the perspective of youth of color. We worked across generations and zip codes to shift our interview protocol toward a focus on Pandemic and Protests, with some attention to online learning. Each of the youth researchers was interviewed again, this time for 45 minutes to an hour, with a lengthy protocol that addressed education andyouth generated questions about family members as essential workers, racialized violence by the police, experiences with racism, access to technology and internet for remote learning, reaction to the Movement for Black Lives, longings for family “back home,” fears of ICE and deportation, and lots of questions that sounded like, “How are you coping?”

In April Michelle received an invitation from the Deputy Mayor of New York City to “consult” with the Mayor’s office on educational impact of COVID19, the mental health of youth of color and immigrants and the racial disparities of COVID19. Michelle recommended that our research group present on our findings. When the full team was asked about this idea, six youth researchers volunteered to present and others to review the materials.

To prepare for this emergent policy audience, we decided to work in three sub-groups for data analysis of our narratives: mental health and loss; police violence, systemic racism and activism, and online learning. Each sub-group, with one educator and two–three students, reviewed the narrative excerpts related to the topic. We pulled out themes but also significant and compelling outliers (e.g. “all my friends hate the police, but my mother is a police officer so I don’t say much…”). In addition, each youth researcher who was going to present wrote an auto-ethnographic account about loss/stress/mental health; police violence and youth activism, and the joys and struggles of remote learning while in lock down. We practiced our presentations twice with the full collective, making sure we had a good balance of wisdom from personal experience and knowledge gained from aggregate analysis of the collective database of youth interviews.

As we detail in Table 1 below, our project evolved over time, affected deeply by experiences of the youth researchers as well as shifts in political and economic climate, always attentive to how our research could be mobilized toward social change.

**Table 1: School in the Square: Longitudinal Design Years 1 & 2**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Year 1 2019 - 2020*** | ***Year 2 2020 - 2021*** |
| Youth Researchers | **N = 12**  Age 13 – 15  8 Latinx (6 female/2 male – some check multiple race/ethnic categories)  2 African American (1 female/1 male)  3 identify as Afro-Latinx (3 female)  1 White (male)  10 Immigrant or child of immigrants  4 Students with an IEP/ disability  10 eligible for free lunch  No one identifies as LGBTQIA+ | **N = 14**  2 New 9th graders  Both Immigrant or children of immigrant  One Female  One Male  One Latinx  One Haitian American |
| Survey Sample | **N = 75** out of a class of 96  89% Latinx  80% free lunch  13% ELL  24% disability  7% homeless | No survey |
| Interviews Conducted by Youth Researchers | **N = 48**  12 Interviews of Youth Researchers  36 Interviews of S2 Alum | **N = 96 (total)/84 (by youth researchers)**  24 Interviews with Youth Researchers  60 Interviews by Youth Researchers of S2 Alum  12 Interviews by Youth Researchers of non-S2 High School Peers  NOTE: Unfortunately, no parental consent for high school peers that did not graduate from S2, thus these data cannot be used for analysis |
| Themes | **N = 8**   1. What is “home” 2. Personal development 3. S2 continued support 4. High school transition 5. Safety and surveillance in HS 6. Living bilingual lives 7. Community/identity 8. Future   **Audience: Peers and Educators at S2** | **N = 3**   1. Pandemic 2. Protest 3. Online Learning   **Audience: Government Officials & Higher Education** |

**Table 2: School in the Square: Longitudinal Design Years 3, 4 & 5**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Year 3 2021-2022*** | ***Years 4 and 5*** |
| Youth Researchers | We hope to maintain our original group – we are now providing a Certificate of Inquiry and Research Skills from CUNY in addition to the stipends paid the youth researchers.  Our inquiry follows their academic trajectory and the economic, racial, political and structural precarities and opportunities that impact their lives and activisms. Document support for college preparation. | Year 4: We hope to build in an internship with the Public Science Project with any student who wants more activist-research experience in their senior year  Year 5: Tracking students’ journeys into their first-year college, first year post-graduate or last year in high school for some who may have lost a year/  credits. |
| Survey Sample | We hope to launch another survey of the original 96 graduates. | A final survey to evaluate experiences after high school will be created by the youth researchers and launched during Year 5. |
| Interviews Conducted by Youth Researchers | We expect to conduct longitudinal interviews with the original 48 interviewees.  Additionally, we intend to add youth conducted oral histories with elders and activists in the community to prepare for a performance with People’s Theatre Project. | We will be conducting interviews with S2 alumni as they create plans for life after high school in Year 4 and then again as they attempt to execute those plans after graduation in Year 5. |
| Themes | We will focus on education and plans for college, but the youth researchers are interested in more questions about life after COVID19 and evolutions in the fight of racial justice—on the street and online activism.  **Audience:** Local Community, Activists, Neighbors, Families and the Academy. | The pace of change for these youths in their first two years of high school has created a desire to remain flexible in pick themes in advance of years four and five. However, the transitions from high school to college or the real world will be highlighted.  **Audience:** Our Local Community, Activists, Neighbors, Families and the Academy. |

At every stage, we considered questions of purpose – to whom are we accountable? What kinds of actions and activisms do we want to undertake with our findings? And who are the audiences we seek to influence? In year 1 we chose to present our findings back to the 2020 graduating class and the faculty of S2. In year 2 we wanted to press the city government and higher educational settings to appreciate the collective voice and analyses of youth of color researchers. In year 3 we intend to collaborate with a local People’s Theatre Project to perform our narratives back to our neighbors, activists, families and community members in The Heights.

**Why Participation Matters as an Enactment of Anti-Racist Science**

There are many ways participatory projects with young people, in schools, can go wrong or be appropriated by administrators to suit institutional – and not youth – needs (see Lac & Fine, 2018 for how things can go awry in school-based PAR; see also Tyranny of Participation, Cook & Kothari, 2001). In this section we detail how we scaffolded participation, and why it matters. At every stage we were committed to participatory epistemologies, reading/discussing critical race theory and obligated to translate findings into action.

* Participatory Design of Interview: Early in the formation of the S2 collective, Samuel Finesurrey as well as undergraduate students from Guttman Community College, facilitated a discussion with the 12 youth researchers on interview design – what should we ask? What’s too private? What do we need to know? What might be useful to the school and to the young people?
* Building a Space of Care, Dignity, Respect and Support: As we were crafting this participatory design, students and families were beginning to shelter in place and worry about kin who were deemed “essential workers”. With an incredible commitment to “critical care” (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006), S2 administrators and staff were in touch with students, alumni and families, assessing/responding to needs and concerns.
* Modeling Oral History: As we decided to pivot our focus onto pandemic, racial protests and online learning, Finesurrey, an experienced oral historian, interviewed each youth researcher for their individual stories and as experts on their peers to model deep and respectful oral history methods. Each youth researcher then interviewed three peers.
* Participatory Ethics Session: As the narratives accumulated, we began to realize we were gathering sensitive materials about families and schools. Consent forms were completed by students, alumni and families at S2, and the Graduate Center IRB approved the project with an expedited IRB review, classifying the project as evaluation/quality review. In the second round of interviews, however, the material was more obviously delicate as more and more crises struck the youth and their families. Rodriguez and Finesurrey facilitated a participatory ethics discussion in which the group – on zoom – addressed questions about anonymity, confidentiality, privacy – particularly for mixed status families or families struggling. We discussed the ethics of naming schools when we have good experiences, but should we name schools if our experiences were harmful? We shared our hesitancies about making the interviews “open access” for fear that they might be analyzed in ways that could hurt or misrepresent our communities or families, here or in our home countries (Guishard, et al 2020). Thus there were four distinct “consent” moments: from students/families at S2; Graduate Center IRB; at the opening of each oral history and then in the collective review of the document when the youths approved, amended, removed, and anonymized their own quotes.
* Revising Protocol for Online Interviews: Rodriguez and Finesurrey then worked with the youth researchers to generate the interview protocol and to figure out a sampling strategy and appropriate methods during lockdown, e.g. vlogs filmed in school were cool, but the young people wanted us to drop vlogs filmed at home; some decided to author auto-ethnographic accounts of their lock down experiences and a few wrote letters to grandchildren, as if written in 2050, about their 2020 experiences.
* Preserving Oral Histories: Finesurrey trained the young people on interviewing through zoom, recording, and sending the files to a common online space.
* Preliminary Participatory Analysis: Once we had a core of interviews, and an invitation to present to the Deputy Mayor we organized into three analysis sub-groups.
* Preparing for a Policy Briefing: In preparation for a policy session with city government, we worked in these three groups to analyze the data from more than 50 interviews and integrate our own experiences. The three themes of Pandemic, Protest and Online Learning outlined above became the key pillars of our talk.
* Reading Our Articles Aloud for Participatory Critique and Contributions: For every presentation and publication, we schedule a zoom session where we read aloud, pause for comments, critique, questions, revision and where we might clarify and explore ethics of names, privacy, confidentiality, representation.

Our design, as noted above, is longitudinal. We are now in year two. As reflected in the Design Chart, across five years, we hope that the research collective will remain stable with a sustained focus on educational trajectories. At the same time, we will be nimble and keenly attuned to shifting political, economic, cultural and educational dynamics, the research topics, sample expansion and the targeted audiences shift every year. We turn now to our findings.

**Results**

We present below an analysis of these narratives, gathered as individual interviews. You will notice how they reflect Sealey-Ruiz’ notion of *racial literacies* developed in middle school; Rod Watts’ conceptualization of *critical consciousness* embodied and enacted during the pandemic and protests, and Mosley and Neville’s belief in *radical hope* evident in the young people’s commitment to on the street and online activism, policy change and educational transformation. The analyses are presented below as we did for the city: presenting on urgent topics that affect youth of color, in the Heights and beyond.

**Loss, Fear and Emotional Distress during the pandemic**

When asked, “How has this virus changed your life?” these young adolescents spoke about loss, family separations, fear, depression and boredom. Aiden spoke both literally and metaphorically about the emotional experience: “When they took off the rims for basketball I [felt I] was very limited. I felt like I was on technology all the time, either playing video games or doing work…. It made me lazy as well.” Alyssa and Mya have witnessed family members and close friends fall ill, some die. “My grandpa, my grandma, they were really paranoid at first…. People started dying and it kind of started to scare me. And I didn’t want to live in fear…” Mya told us: “A lot of my family members got sick, like a large majority of my family members. I even lost family members.” The death of family members can seem even more stressful when they can’t be buried or can’t be returned to the Dominican Republic. Siarra “lost my uncle due to COVID, which was very hard…. we didn't have a funeral. I think my aunt was trying to figure out if we could and we couldn’t have it. So we cremated him.” And for Sheylany, “My brother’s, best friend...he actually passed away…. They were supposed to send him to bury him in the Dominican Republic, but due to the virus, they couldn't do that.”

For these young researchers, loss included health and death, loss of friends, sports, lack of motivation, loss of a high GPA, fear of losing family members, and insecurity with regard to food, income and housing. They narrated mental health struggles, tumbling into academic troubles. Mya told a story many others repeated,

I kind of went through a few like I guess like depressive states.... Staying home really does take a toll on you like your mental health and then you just like sitting thinking by yourself. And for me, I didn't have much interaction with other people. So I'm kind of sitting and living in your own thoughts. And that’s stressful.

Aiden explained the mental fog manifested academically as a generation of young people found themselves frozen in time:

So during school I was like an honor roll student, doing very well. My grades definitely dipped a little bit during the pandemic and online learning. I feel like staying active is one of my goals now; I don't want to stay put for too long. I want to exercise and go out now. It wasn't really like that before because I was just incorporating my day, but now I have to work on stuff like that.

Of great concern to the Deputy Mayor’s task force on mental health, these anxieties and health concerns, we learned, are magnified in multi-generational immigrant homes, where worries about “a cough from my grandpa in the next room” can be stressful, along with concerns about “relatives back home.” Family members without official papers endure even more stress. Mya offers, “Most Immigrants, they have work like they have to go into work and do certain things. And right now during the pandemic, they can't really do that.” Alondra raised the political risks:

I feel like it's harder for people who are immigrants, who are undocumented, then like people who are documented...because a lot of people who are undocumented...if they go to the hospital, they think ICE might be called on them. And like a lot of them, like just don't get the proper medical care that they need or, you know, the type of...pills and medication that they need.

Young people growing up in transnational families enjoy a rich sense of belonging in both worlds. Anchored across, they also worry in double. Jesslin explained how she was separated from her father:

So in December, I went to DR for Christmas and I came back January 7th, but my father unfortunately stayed because he had to work.... So I feel like it impacted me as an immigrant family because... COVID didn't allow him to fly from the DR to the United States.

Noel reflected on how his grandparents have been preoccupied with relatives in Venezuela:

They're more worried about their home country because, like…. Venezuela, they're not really doing that good right now…. The impact on them, is like ‘I'm here in the US and have better opportunities than the people, in my home country.’

Across these interviews, we hear a deep sense of relationality and responsibility voiced by early adolescents, caring for elders, home country, relatives, younger siblings. They embody and are embedded in networks of family and community, circuited in connections of concern and joy, rarely separating themselves from rich entanglements of family, history, struggle, vulnerabilities and desires for a ‘better life’. One of the interviewed students narrated the family tensions so many of us have confronted:

My uncle is not home all the time...he was always outside with his friends without a mask. And I thought it was like, you know, like, OK, you're not protecting yourself, but at the same time, you're not protecting us...sleeping in our house, you know?... it bothered my grandparents, too, especially my grandpa, because he suffers a lot from, like, being sick and yeah. We didn't want them to get COVID…. It really concerns me...my family's health, like I don't want anything to happen to them or go through anything traumatic.

Another S2 alumni told us about his experience as the virus came home with his mother, from work, and threatened his sense of security:

My mom went to work and then she came back. She got sick. She stayed in her room for 14 days. And then eventually she got better…. For that time period while she quarantined herself, we stayed away from her family. After that we started getting closer to her because staying away from her for that long was freaky….I basically just hid in my room the whole time because I couldn't stop thinking about it, I was worrying too much, in a panicked state… I wasn't really able to think straight and stuff like that.

Siarra tied her anxieties about kin to her own well-being:

I felt...like a really depressed time. Like you couldn't go out, you couldn't do anything. You were always home 24/7. And like it was also that fear that I had that my loved ones can get it and I don't know what can happen to them. So it was just really scary.

Brandon, son of “essential workers,” speaks through fear and hope:

Both of my parents [were working outside of the home].... It makes me worry, you know…. I was thinking, like, wow, they're taking a train?!? They may catch it.... But right now I'm pretty confident they're going to be OK.

All noted that COVID19 has afforded young people more time with family. Many were deeply appreciative of sweet moments for gathering stories of home, kin and histories of struggle. Aidan spoke about newfound connections with kin: “It really helped me connect with my family…you find out more about people’s lives when you spend that much time with them.” Jesslin offered: “I feel like I've gotten to learn more about my family, like of more of who they are and what they do on a daily basis, what their facial expressions mean.” Naomi was relieved that: “[My mom and I] thought it was going to be really bad for both of us, like we thought maybe a lot of issues, but it was really calm and we ended up like finding new things to do together in the house.” Brandon used the time to gather up family histories:

[Because I had more time with] my mom, my dad, I learned more about their past, so like their history... and my [younger] sister, I mean, I got to know her a bit better, you know, like what she doesn't like what she likes…. we got bored and we just talk.

But too much time with family, some reminded us, can also be trying. One young person explained:

I love my family a lot, but they're very annoying. So it was very stressful to do 24/7 and let's just say, I’ll be on my computer, trying to do my work and my grandma will go telling me to do something for whatever I'm like….It's just not compatible. Home and school, no bueno.

Another concurred with the assessment that family members often failed to realized that the new normal meant being home did not equate to being available: “I moved in with my grandmother…. she sent me to do things. I was already like doing work”

While family was a source of strength and struggle, community in The Heights was mentioned as a space where young people felt a sense of “I got you.” Brandon was most thoughtful about what he viewed as shifts in community cooperation:

In the beginning...people were fighting for everything, like for toilet paper, people will kill for that. So, you know, the community in that part was really bad. But then, like I said, right now, like, everybody's helping each other, you know, like people are thinking about the future. You know, they think, oh, like you need food. I got you. You need money. I got you.

Noel spoke with pride about people “taking care of each other”:

I think my community handled it in a calm manner, like no one was really panicking…they weren't really being like, let me buy everything in the store. They were more like they'll let me get a few things, so in case other people need stuff…. People started taking care of each other, basically.

**Uprisings and Critical Consciousness**

As a research collective we wanted to learn about how alumni responded to the racial uprisings. The responses of young people—both the youth researchers and the peers they interviewed—were well informed, engaged and inspired by the movement for Black lives. Bearing witness to the protests out their windows, through social media or news-blasts about an S2 activist at a rally in the Heights, they were joyous that “finally someone is standing up.” They were activist mostly online, and a little annoyed that “my mother won’t let me go out to protest.” As a cohort of young adolescents, educated well and watching from racialized and immigrant spaces, they appreciated that private pains and wounds were spilling into the streets as public protests. Their attraction to the uprisings sometimes created tensions with family, for instance with relatives who would voice their own racism and respond to these students “We aren’t Black.” Many families worried about grandchildren getting entangled with the police.

When asked, “Explain to me, why have these anti-racist protests erupted now?” their responses were thoughtful and informed. They knew the history. Most expressed sympathy for neighbors, family members, and people on social media who are “tired of this happening” and “just wanted justice.” Alyssa spoke, as many did, about George Floyd, but also the cumulative witnessing of state sponsored violence against Black lives:

It started with police brutality, police killing innocent black lives, like, I guess it provoked it. And I guess like, you know, people of color and black people, they were tired of it. They were tired of this happening and they wanted justice. And I think they started off with a protest for that man that died and then the girl that died.

She understood the protests as expressions of rage, despair and desire, and as a strategic tactic: “They were just trying to bring attention to the cops… ‘look what you've caused.’”

Mya spoke of the long-standing brutality of state violence, and the provocations by police in this round of uprisings: “So obviously, people of color are...getting mad. It's been happening for a long time, and yet we haven't seen any change.” Another student reflected on how the pandemic, as a space for reflection and social media engagement, might have accelerated the pace and velocity of uprisings: “[Because of the pandemic] a lot of people had time to reflect on things and then being able to do that just opens like a sense of what's right and what's wrong....”

Perhaps most powerfully, for these youth from immigrant families, the protests functioned as a form of popular education. The uprisings also opened up memories of racism they had experienced, heard about from people in their own social circles and witnessed in their community. It was as if they were stitching themselves into the fabric of a movement growing down the block. We have been impressed that the uprisings functioned as a form of political, popular education—an echo of W.E.B. DuBois’ pageantry genre (Du Bois & Aptheker, 1985), where he curated parades and performances of Black struggle and resistance, on the streets, for his community to watch, engage and metabolize.

Jesslin offered that the protests converted private and painful encounters with the police into public, racialized struggles for justice.

How George Floyd was killed, well murdered was like brutal. And people decided not to stay shut and fight back and speak out on what they thought was right. So when me or my community are sharing stories, I feel like it's more effective now because we now have a voice and know that people in our community have the same thoughts.

Noel concurred that the protests “taught” the community: “I feel like some people who don't really know that much about black history….[the protests] really taught them.” For Siarra, her eyes were “opened” and the silence about systemic racism ruptured: “I know racism was a thing and it's always been a thing, but with all these protests happening, like, it really opened up my eyes and really realized what's going on in the world and how certain situations aren't being talked about and they should be talked about.”

Many of the interviewees were frustrated that their friends from other schools were blaming the protestors and that families wouldn’t allow them to join protests on the streets. Alyssa told us, “My mom wouldn't let me protest. She's a party pooper." Noel offered: “I did want to join the protest, but my mom told me no, because she was so scared in case something happened to me, in case the police came.” Sheylany opted for online activism: “Of course, I've signed petitions and yeah. And I've shared stuff on social media.”

Aidan spoke eloquently about the significance of the protests to reveal the long-standing racism within the U.S.:

I mean, I haven't really been in contact with my friends, but I think so because a lot of my friends I do talk to, we talk about it sometimes about how crazy things are going on. I feel like a lot…knew about it, but just didn't really like face it. They didn't see it was kind of probably in the back of their minds. But this like these protests have really drawn it out because this country really is.

Alyssa elaborated on the role of social media, during the pandemic, and the power of her activist friend:

I feel like social media really brings the awareness and lets you know what's up. And I think that was my biggest source of like I guess you say, inspiration. And that's what really inspired me to continue supporting Black Lives Matter…. Alondra, a person in our group, she says, really inspiring words. And she educates me and she reassures me and things that like I don't know, like I genuinely don't know. And I'm like, thank you. Thank you for letting me in on that.

Of course, an online presence does not guarantee community or solidarity. Cyber-activist Alondra told us: “Little white kids on social media calling me and my friends the N-word. But like, I just have to laugh it off because I'm not going to stress out about it.” Samantha echoed the experience, noting: “I've had a lot of encounters with racism…. [Me and my friend are] really outspoken and like every time I show my face online, I feel like I get this hate...like really, really bad, bad comments. But like even then, I don't really take them seriously….”

Aidan has been particularly about how schools can suppress or activate racial consciousness. He was particularly appreciative of the culturally relevant education at S2.

I have a friend, Alondra, and...before this whole pandemic in eighth grade, she was very outspoken about these things to her. She really taught me a lot. And I went to like a predominantly white elementary school. And a lot of the stuff, it was pretty much general biased history. And I was talking to her about it. And she told me, like basically we were talking about history, like she was showing how things are changed, perceptions are changed. And if you change, like the perspective of the narrative, how clear it becomes.

Reflecting on his high school friends, Aidan commented:

Most social studies classes in American history have had the same traditionalist perspective. Historically, this was very common in middle and high schools throughout the nation, and whitewashed history taught through the lens of white men is still present in some schools today. However, S2 was not one of those schools.

In our interviews, we heard quite a bit about Ms. Pfeifer, a seventh-grade history teacher who offered the students of S2 what Aidan called “an awakening experience.”

This curriculum has changed many of our lives including my own. Going into 2020 and high school, we/they were prepared to deal with the problems that arose around us. From the interviews conducted by the S2 research collective, it became clear that culturally responsive classes, particularly in History courses, prepared students to engage in conversations about systemic racism sparked after George Floyd’s murder.

A number of the alumni referenced their racial justice history curriculum at S2, and the powerful educator Ms. Pfeifer. Joel remarked,

Social studies, that class was amazing, they taught us so many things. It was really one of the main classes that taught us about the real world…. And we just learned a lot about racism, discrimination...police brutality. We just learned a lot about that in S2.

Aidan continues, “not only did these conversations prepare us to think critically about race relations in U.S. history, but they empowered us to deploy that knowledge to engage in conversations about racial injustice taking place all around us.” Another student recalled: “[Ms. Pfeifer] taught me about history and like important things that happened...she also taught me...how to talk about them, how to think about them.”

With great appreciation, young people from S2 consistently named Ms. Pfeifer as a teacher who provided them the opportunity to grow a critical race lens, or what Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz (2020) would call “racial literacies” which they imported onto the streets, into their homes, back into their new high schools and online to “make sense” of the uprisings. One student commented: “I think in S2, especially history, we learn a lot about racism. It wasn't like the typical American history where everyone's the good guy.” Jesslin broke it down:

As a graduate from S2 in my social studies class and we talked about the Little Rock nine, all those different cases that were involved, the racism, the. And I feel like my teacher from social studies, Miss Pfeifer, prepared me to do to speak about racism and encourage people to talk about it to.

Mya also credited Ms. Pfeifer for modeling respectful disagreement and harm: “We were always on top of it, like we always got educated on this stuff. And, you know, like Ms. Pfeifer, specifically, if she ever saw somebody not falling in line or like doing something that obviously wasn't right, she would put you in line.” Alondra appreciated the culturally responsive curriculum across disciplines and teachers: “Yeah, my school is really outspoken about that because it's the Facing History High School. A lot of the same curriculum that's in S2 they do it over there, too.”

The alumni elaborated on the skills they gained, including the ability to talk about race and racism critically, as well as to speak up in an informed way, and with evidence. Noel explained “Not only did [Ms. Pfeifer] teach me about history and like important things that happened...she also taught me...how to talk about them, how to think about them. ” For Brandon, this pedagogical approach encouraged him to engage with the global community: “[the teachers] prepared us to be really open to the world, you know, to not be afraid to talk about thing...not be afraid about talking things we believe in..... So basically, they just told us to not be afraid of speaking out and not be afraid of people.”

Aidan has noticed in his high school that students who didn’t have culturally responsive middle school education may have been under-prepared in understanding the uprisings as popular discourses in the U.S. began to confront the nation’s historical—and current—racial injustices.

I know some schools remained silent…. I think that’s very wrong, especially as kids or teenagers and children growing up, especially in high school in New York. You see a lot of these things around you and things like the wrong approach because people aren’t learning about it. It’s better to be open with your students.

A few others noted, with surprise and joy, the inter-racial solidarities in the struggle. As Alyssa noted:“You know, there's more like a lot of white people, like they're genuine about this and they're like using their privilege to help support the Black Lives Matter movement. I think that's great.”

In the presentation to the Deputy Mayor, Aidan focused on the power of culturally responsive pedagogy, and the obligation of schools to address racial history, injustice and resistance while Alondra addressed the activism of youth, working in solidarity and listening hard to the needs, desires, vision and radical dreams of other young people. In her interview she elaborated on what is learned from engagement on social media:

I have gone to protest. And I also have been trying to educate people on what has been going on in America. So, yeah, like I've also been using social media to talk to people from around the globe and stuff like that. And it has been interesting because a lot of people have different ideologies.

Since the murder of George Floyd, Alondra has noticed that political conversations have been sparked between youth.

Our education at S2 prepared us not only to become leaders, but also active listeners, for this moment. I personally learned how to have conversations with peers in persuasive ways using historical context that I learned, in large part, from my experience at S2. From my work in the S2 research collective, I now know I was not alone.

Drawing from the narratives of peers Alondra continued:

I feel like most of my friends and some of my family went on Instagram and they posted a lot of information on Black Lives Matter. On their bios they would put the George Floyd gofund me. So they donated to the family and they would post like the black screen with the caption Black Lives Matter with the different artist.

It wasn’t just that S2 students learned the historical context of racism in America, but how to engage with other people’s experiences in a serious, respectful and proactive manner. Aidan explained, “My mother took me to a protest in New York…. When you hear people speak about their past experiences, it’s very awakening….I feel...this whole movement, generally, has really shown how prevalent racism is in our country…”

Difficult conversations periodically erupted within family, with members who did not see their own liberation tied to the liberation of others. As Alondra told the Deputy Mayor,

S2 students received a culturally responsive education denied to our parents and grandparents, many of whom immigrated to this country. So, some tough conversations were also taking place within households.

Quoting one of the narratives offered by a youth researcher from a Dominican immigrant household:

The people in our country originated from Africa. And I see that as Dominicans, they are…only Black when it’s needed. Like they’re only Black when they want to say the N-word. I’m like, look at these protests. Like support something…say something.

This student continued, with some frustration, “My family don’t consider themselves people of color, like being Dominican. They’re like ‘I’m Spanish like, what are you saying?’

Indeed, we were surprised to hear from a number of interviewees about the deep commitment to the movement for Black lives, and the responsive flares of tension erupting at home, across generations, where elders were much more reluctant to identify with Black struggles. After a similarly tense discussion across generations, another student told us she was exasperated: “I [had to] sit down thinking, like, ‘Grandma, you're Black!’”

Aidan and Alondra closely reviewed the connections between anti-racist education and young people making sense of racism and the over-policing in communities of color. Aidan argued to the Deputy Mayor, “Our generation, especially those lucky enough to receive a culturally responsive education, are increasingly recognizing structural racism in our everyday lives, particularly when it comes to encounters with law enforcement.”

Alondra added her personal story with aggressive policing:

I’ve had many experiences with over-policing, especially in school. Before the pandemic, every morning I would pass through metal detectors. Sometimes I would have to take off my earrings and other accessories, which can take a lot of time. This would result in getting to class late. I would sometimes be patted down, which made me feel like a criminal. I just wanted to get to class and expand my education. I have noticed that in many schools with a demographic of predominantly white kids they do not go through metal detectors. Beacon is a great example. It is close to my school and both buildings have about the same amount of students. The only difference is that my building has 5 different schools while Beacon is the only school in that building. My school and Beacon are both public schools. If one public school has metal detectors all should. Every public school should get the same treatment. Why are Black and Brown children always criminalized? We have to deal with police in our schools and in our neighborhoods because we are seen as a threat to society due to our physical characteristics. When people like myself speak against over-policing in public schools, our arguments are always dismissed. People say things like we are preventing school shooting, to keep us safe, and stop fights. This is completely understandable, but every school shooter has been white. School safety agents are also able to use deadly force. That doesn't make me or other students feel safe. It makes us feel like criminals.

Across our interviews, these young people were deeply critical of or, for some, conflicted about policing. Many have witnessed the brutality; most have heard stories, and a few are “confused, because I am related to police.” Alyssa described the dynamics of fear she experiences in the presence of police: “We can't run away from the officer because we don't want to be targeted. We don't want to give another reason for them to want to shoot us or kill us.” Mya shared a similar sentiment: “There are people who actually are very fearful....they get pulled over by a cop. And that's not OK. We shouldn't be in fear of that. Nobody should be in fear of that.” The uprisings encouraged one young woman to alter her future plans: “I actually wanted to be a police officer…. not now...You can't even trust them because even your own race, even your own race, be going against you ...Black officers going against their own race, you know, that’s messed up.”

Joel voiced concern over what he considers excessive police power and abuse in the city:

The police...they have so much power and they see colored people as an excuse to use that power, and...they’re overusing their power. They think they're so much more powerful than everybody. They think they could do whatever they want. And in the worst part about it is that if they think you're doing something wrong, it doesn't matter. They could stop because they have the power to do it and because colored people have always been discriminated and talked bad about…. People are demanding justice....

With a sense of vulnerability, Joel described a fear in his own body: “When I see police, I feel scared. I feel scared because you never know what could happen, what they could do.” In the same breath, he reminded us, “But I also realize that there's good police, I cannot not say all police are bad.” Much later in the interview, when asked about his vision for the future, Joel explained that he hoped to sustain his activist focus on police accountability. “I want there to be more justice, but I also want to open the police … to open their eyes and fix it for the better.” Like so many others we interviewed from S2, Joel traced his insights and his passions back to middle school:

In social studies, that class was amazing, they taught us so many things. It was really one of the main classes that taught us about the real world…. And if something happened with Trump, we will end the lesson and start talking about Trump…. And we just learned a lot about racism, discrimination...police brutality. We just learned a lot about that in S2.

The impact of a strong “facing history” education reverberated across these narratives (see Finesurrey et. al, 2021b, for a deep analysis of the impact of culturally responsive education, 2021). Those who attended S2 in particular credit their middle school teachers for giving them a “lens” for seeing and understanding the uprisings. There is much evidence in these interviews that a culturally responsive education is pedagogically essential as young people are navigating racism, uprisings, state violence and engaging in movements for racial justice.

**Building Critical Racial Consciousness Through Pedagogy and Participatory Inquiry**

This volume of JAR is dedicated to anti-racist developmental science. Toward that end we have tried to explore how youth-led critical participatory action research, rooted in critical race theory, can honor the wisdom that young people hold and amplify a deep consciousness about lives entangled in dynamics of historic oppression, ancestral desires and political resistance. As an epistemology that assumes young people of color harbor deep and insightful knowledge about social systems and a thick desire to understand historically and collectively the design of current inequities and resistance, participatory inquiry organized through surveys, interviews, vlogs, maps and oral histories has been powerful for documenting and building critical consciousness and activism. The findings generated largely by young people drew upon their full selves—racialized, immigrant, gendered, growing up within the working class, in a nation and city deeply divided and unequal. As producers of knowledge, our research collective now understands that we do not simply speak for ourselves but our peers, a generation, a fraction of the city typically unheard. We understand ourselves as researchers and advocates, responsible for the narratives we have gathered and for change borne of our inquiry.

As we argued to the Deputy Mayor and have been writing since, three guiding questions anchor our work. First, we know much about the extreme emotional toll that COVID19 has had on immigrant youth; that anxieties and experiences of loss sit beside the joys of spending time with family and gathering stories from elders. Second, we have learned much about the power of a culturally responsive and sustaining education in helping youth make sense and make justice during the pandemic and the protests. With a critical history education in middle school, the alumni of S2 – both youth researchers and their peers -- were able to understand/appreciate and work in solidarity with the movement for Black lives. Now we are committed to educating our peers, teachers, politicians, neighbors and even our family members. Third, across our varied presentations, we witness the power of critical participatory research as a tool of social movements. Narrating their own stories and analyzing the stories of their peers, presenting to educators, government officials, academics and soon, through theatre to community, the S2 alumni have grown a confident sense of responsibility to speak truth to power.

Of course, there are limits. COVID19 shut down our face-to-face meetings, and some lost motivation. We gathered interviews from peers in high schools who did not attend S2, and could not get parental consent, so the interviews can’t be used. There are topics we didn’t discuss. Even in the intimacy of our collective some issues were taboo, drenched in fear and shame: perhaps anxieties about being undocumented, fearing eviction, being hungry, family struggles. We were supposed to track academic progress by gathering transcripts across schools and time, but the partnership relationships, and permissions, could not be established. We will never fully know the mental health trauma endured by these deeply impressive young adolescents. We never were able, ultimately, to track down the full graduating class over 37 high schools, because so many moved, left the city, or stopped communicating with S2. And yet we held tight as a research collective and press on as we prepare for 11th grade and imagining the college application process.

The research was designed, implemented, archived and is soon to be performed by young people who carry the dreams of their/our elders and forge new pathways of activism in a deeply unequal city. As young people, as students, as researchers and now as evidence-based activists, they/we know how to read, analyze and mobilize against racial injustice and imagine a different tomorrow, to speak to policymakers, shift (at least locally) educational policy, collaborate with adults in positions of power, fold research into organizing campaigns and soon how to perform stories back to the community that has carried us thus far. As a collective we have gained many skills—and now we need policy makers to listen and act as attentively as we have.

After our presentation to city and state political officials, one state level policy maker placed in the chat, “Great job! Speak truth to power.” We intend to and hope that persons in positions of power will listen.

**Refusing a Return to Normality:**

**Contributing Toward an Anti-Racist Developmental Science**

Whatever it is, coronavirus has…brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to “normality”, trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it. (Arundhati Roy, 2020)

As Arundhati Roy, the writer and poet, has argued, the pandemic is a portal, an experience that has devastated all of us—even as the impact has been undeniably racialized and classed. We learn from these interviews that the impact—and access to help—has also been profoundly affected by race, class and immigrant status in the United States. Roy asks us to consider how we might “walk through [the portal] lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.” Social inquiry designed by, with and for youth can tell us quite a bit about how to move forward, out of the pandemic. Informed by the experience and analysis of youth of color, we now know that schools must embrace culturally sustaining pedagogies and that the consciousness and expertise of those most adversely affected—youth of color—must be at the center of anti-racist developmental science.

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