

Capacity Building in Communities to Create Equity-Centered Educational Opportunities

By Latia White, Ed.D.
October 2022



From the series, *Emerging Findings from Inclusive Innovation: An Equity-Centered R&D Model*

Center for
Inclusive
Innovation



Suggested Citation

White, L. (2022). *Capacity Building in Communities to Create Equity-Centered Educational Opportunities*. Digital Promise. <https://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/capacity-building-communities-create-equity-centered-educational-opportunities.pdf>

Acknowledgments

Many people came together to form the foundation of Inclusive Innovation and as a team we collectively developed and evolved our ideas. Alexandra Merritt Johnson, Latia White, and Viki Young together lead the research across Inclusive Innovation projects. The Digital Promise team that leads, develops, and implements the Inclusive Innovation model include: Cassie Graves, Cricket Fuller, Jenny Bradbury, Kelliann Ganoo, Kim Smith, Kristal Brister Philyaw, Kristian Lenderman, and Sherenna Bates. We want to acknowledge the formative contributions of Digital Promise alumni: Adha Mengis, Babe Liberman, Colin Angevine, Donnaraé Wade, Karen Cator, Malliron Hodge, and Sarah Cacicio.

We thank the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for their support of the four pilot projects on which the research reports are based. The content does not represent the views of the funders.

Above all, we are extremely grateful to the Core teams and communities that piloted the Inclusive Innovation model for their commitment to equity-centered R&D, ongoing engagement, and willingness to share their insights about and their experiences with Inclusive Innovation. Without their trust in us and effort throughout our engagement with them in the Inclusive Innovation model, we would not be able to share these emerging findings on a model for inclusive and equity-centered R&D in education. Because of their contributions and their willingness to display empathy and vulnerability with us and with one another in sharing their lived experiences, we would not be here to present the Inclusive Innovation model as a promising approach to addressing and eliminating educational inequities.

Contact Information

Email: lwhite@digitalpromise.org

Digital Promise:

Washington, DC:

1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 935
Washington, DC 20036

Redwood City, CA:

702 Marshall Street
Redwood City, CA 94063

Website: <https://digitalpromise.org/inclusive-innovation/>

Contents

Introduction	1
Method	3
Core Teams	3
Data Sources	5
Capacity Building in Inclusive Innovation	6
Creating the Conditions for Capacity Building	6
Capacity for Considering Different Perspectives and Sharing Power and Decision-Making	10
Capacity for Valuing Student Voice and Honoring Context Expertise	13
Capacity for Co-Research and Co-Design.....	14
Extending Capacities to Personal and Professional Life	19
Reflections and Looking Ahead	20
References	21

Introduction

Inclusive Innovation is a new and radical approach to including community members, stakeholders, and individuals who have lived experiences with a challenge to be engaged in the process of co-researching the challenge and co-designing solutions from which they will directly benefit. Inclusive Innovation is a model and process where the voices of those historically underrepresented in education innovation co-research and co-design solutions to education challenges in partnership with school districts. The vision for the Inclusive Innovation model is to support the creation of a world where students who are furthest from opportunity can learn, grow, and thrive as their authentic selves (Digital Promise, Center for Inclusive Innovation, 2022). Through engaging community-district teams (“Core team”) in Inclusive Innovation we seek not just to engage the Core team members in a process to co-create and co-design solutions to their challenges, but to build their ability, knowledge, and capacity to use the ideals learned in Inclusive Innovation to sustain the work they start with us. We also aim for them to use these capacities and mindsets to apply the tenets of Inclusive Innovation to other equity-related challenges they may be facing in the communities.

This paper, one in the series *Emerging Findings from Inclusive Innovation: An Equity-centered R&D Model*, draws on Digital Promise’s key pilot projects with the Inclusive Innovation model and explores the mindsets and capabilities participants developed through their engagement in Inclusive Innovation. This paper will explore how participants developed mindsets for creating an environment that allows others to be vulnerable for sharing their lived experiences and how they were able to consider the perspectives of others and engage in co-leadership with one another. This report will also explore the knowledge, skills, and abilities for co-research and co-design that participants developed through their engagement in the Inclusive Innovation model.

Inclusive Innovation: A Model that Reflects Participatory Research and Design

In Inclusive Innovation, our intention is to work collaboratively with community-school district teams to center on the needs of their students who are historically and systematically excluded, including students who are Black, Brown, and Indigenous; those experiencing poverty, multilingual learners, and students experiencing learning differences (Digital Promise, Center for Inclusive Innovation). Inclusive Innovation community-school district teams collaborate with their community partners, teachers, students, and parents to create bold, innovative, and sustainable solutions to support the needs of students who are historically furthest from opportunity; Inclusive Innovation is an equity-centered research and development process that supports community-district teams in co-researching challenges and co-designing *with* those who will be the direct beneficiaries of solutions. In Inclusive Innovation, there is a co-construction of research between researchers and people affected by the issues and is a partnership between researchers and community members, stakeholders, and those who have lived experience with the challenge (Jagosh et al., 2012). Wallerstein and Duran (2008) state that when communities can engage in a partnership like the one created in Inclusive Innovation, it is believed there is an increase in a community’s capacity to identify and solve its problems; they develop capacities to

support being able to identify and solve their problems; be decision-makers on issues that are related to their lives; and enhance their professional growth.


In the Inclusive Innovation model, our goal is to co-research and co-design *with* those who are most impacted by a challenge; we recognize that the roles and responsibilities of community-school district teams, researchers, and designers are intertwined with individuals and groups taking on a lead role in different aspects of the work at different points across the stages. For this collaborative process to be a success, we recognized that both the researcher and the community stakeholders involved need to be aware of the dynamics and power structures that might exist between and among stakeholders as they engage in the process. Successful participatory research requires those power dynamics to be equalized and the researchers and community members to establish mutual trust before entering into a project (Lepore et al., 2021). Equity and mutuality checks are incorporated throughout the entire Inclusive Innovation model to always ensure that the needs, voices, and priorities of the community-district teams and students who are furthest from opportunity are prioritized throughout both the research and design processes.

Over the last two years, we piloted Inclusive Innovation with four school districts. This report focuses on the capacities teams developed as we worked with them to utilize the Inclusive Innovation model to address an equity-centered challenge in the community. This report will focus on three of the five stages, Connect and Commit, Inquire and Investigate, and Design and Develop (descriptions for all of the phases and a further description of the model can be found in the white paper [Designing a Process for Inclusive Innovation](#)). Throughout these three phases, community-district teams worked with Digital Promise staff and one another to increase their knowledge ability and skills to co-research and co-design solutions to challenges in their communities and increase their capacity to enact the Core tenets of Inclusive Innovation.

Tenets of Inclusive Innovation

Inclusive Innovation is anchored in a set of Core Tenets that embody an equity-centered approach to research and development.

Core Tenets of Inclusive Innovation

	<p>Co-Leadership</p> <p>The work is co-led by stakeholders who are reflective of the diversity of communities and schools to ensure mutual benefit</p>		<p>Center Equity</p> <p>The solutions are designed to address the systemic inequities that impact students — poverty, race, language, learning differences —and their intersections</p>
	<p>Co-Research and Design</p> <p>The education challenges are co-researched and co-designed to address issues the community deems important and build on what is already working within communities and schools</p>		<p>Reimagine Progress</p> <p>Progress measures must be multi-dimensional — access, participation and benefit — in recognition of the needs of the whole child</p>
	<p>Honor Context</p> <p>Context and context expertise is prioritized to center the history, culture, and perspectives of those with lived experiences relevant to the education challenge</p>		<p>Build Capacity</p> <p>The process resources communities to sustain the capacity for equity-centered R&D into the future</p>

These tenets define how Digital Promise engages and collaborates with community-district teams as they work to create bold, innovative, and sustainable solutions that specifically address the needs of students who are furthest from opportunity. These core tenets frame the knowledge, abilities, and skills that we seek to develop in community-district team members, to increase their capacity to use the Inclusive Innovation model to solve challenges they are facing in their communities.

Method

Core Teams

The Inclusive Innovation model is a process by which equity challenges are co-researched and innovative equity-centered solutions that center the needs of students who have been historically and systematically excluded from opportunity are co-designed with district and community stakeholders. Four school districts across the U.S. partnered with Digital Promise to pilot the Inclusive Innovation model and address district challenges related to adolescent writing, racial trauma and mental health, and racial discourse in the classroom.

In collaboration with Digital Promise’s Center for Inclusive Innovation, each district assembled community-district Core teams of district leaders, teachers, parents, community members and students in an intentional partnership to address a challenge area in their district using the Inclusive Innovation model. Each Core team was composed of 7–10 community and district stakeholders, two of which were named co-leads. The Core team co-leads were primarily responsible for guiding the course of research and design activities, recruiting research participants, and providing access to additional resources. Core team member participation in Inclusive Innovation varied across each district, including design activities, recruiting research participants, and providing access to additional resources. Core team member participation in Inclusive Innovation varied across each district.

The four district communities are in the eastern, Midwest, and southern regions of the country, ranging in enrollment from three districts with 15,000 or fewer students and one district approaching 50,000 students. The student populations across the districts are ethnically, racially, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1. Student Demographic Ranges in Four Communities Piloting Inclusive Innovation Model

Demographic	Range
Enrollment (students)	6,000 – 47,000
Free and reduced-price lunch eligible	49 – 80%
Race/ethnicity	
African-American	2 – 38%
Asian	Up to 9%
Latino	8 – 92%
Multiracial	Up to 10%
White	4 – 59%
Multilingual learners	5 – 22%

Data Sources

Inclusive Innovation Materials and Outputs. Along the Inclusive Innovation process, Core teams met at a regular cadence to build relationships, co-research challenges, and co-design solutions. The session agendas, session materials, and session outputs developed by the Core teams are all used as data in this project.

Interviews. As a research team, we developed a 26-item semi-structured interview protocol to explore interviewees' perspectives of their experience with the Inclusive Innovation process. Specifically, the protocol contains questions that were intended to elucidate the extent to which factors such as student voice, context expertise, capacity-building, and racial equity are central to the Inclusive Innovation process from the perspective of the interviewee. All Core team members were invited to participate in an interview; however, 18 were interviewed in spring 2022 (Exhibit 2). Interview respondents had participated in the Inclusive Innovation pilot projects for approximately 9 to 15 months.

Exhibit 2. Number of Interview Respondents by Role Type

Role Type	Number of Interview Participants
District Leaders	2
Teachers	4
Community Members	6
Parents	2
Students	4

All current and former Core team members ($N = 34$) were contacted via email by a Digital Promise researcher. If Core team members agreed to participate, an interview was scheduled to take place over Zoom. Before the interview began, the researcher explained that the participants' responses would remain confidential and that no data would be reported with any identifying indicators. Participants were asked for their consent to a recorded interview. All interviews took approximately one hour to complete. Except for one joint interview between two participants, all were individual interviews between Core team members and a Digital Promise researcher. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and participants were given a \$25 gift card in appreciation for their participation.

Post Inclusive Innovation Survey. All Core team members ($N = 34$) were contacted via email and asked during one of our regular sessions to participate in an Inclusive Innovation Post-Implementation Survey to understand their views of the Inclusive Innovation model. The purpose of the survey was to understand participants' beliefs about Inclusive Innovation and the knowledge, efficacy, and skills they

developed as a part of their participation in Inclusive Innovation. All participants ($N = 34$) completed the survey.

Capacity Building in Inclusive Innovation

Participatory research partnerships need to create conditions that are conducive to highlighting and including the voices, perspectives, and knowledge of community members, extended stakeholders, and those with lived experience with a challenge (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). These conditions include an environment of mutual trust and creating conditions where community members, stakeholders, and those with lived experiences are involved in decisions and are provided opportunities to lead and participate in researching about and creating solutions for a challenge (Young, 2020). Throughout their time in Inclusive Innovation, participants were supported in an environment of mutual trust and respect for one another, developed capacities for supporting a trusting environment for one another, and developed capacities related to the core tenets of Inclusive Innovation.

In the Inclusive Innovation model, we explicitly set out to create the conditions that allow for participants to be able to develop mindsets that allow for full collaboration of all participants.

Creating the Conditions for Capacity Building

To fully include people from communities who have systematically been marginalized, it is important to create conditions that allow for the establishment of trust and long-term relationships characterized by closeness and empathy, where participants feel that their voices, knowledge, and perspectives are respected and validated (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). In inclusive Innovation, before diving into co-researching the challenges and co-designing solutions, participants were engaged in the first phase of Inclusive Innovation, Connect and Commit, to help them understand their position and power and collaboratively develop their Core team's Equity Commitments and Community Charter (Exhibits 3 and 4). We also engaged them in a discussion to support their examination of power dynamics and how these dynamics could show up on the Core team. Lastly, the team created Community Agreements (Exhibit 5) to guide how we would interact with one another. The Equity Commitments, Community Charter, and Community Agreements supported the development of the mutual trust and respect that we were able to maintain among the Core team.

Exhibit 3. Sample Equity Commitments and Co-Leadership from One Inclusive Innovation Pilot Project

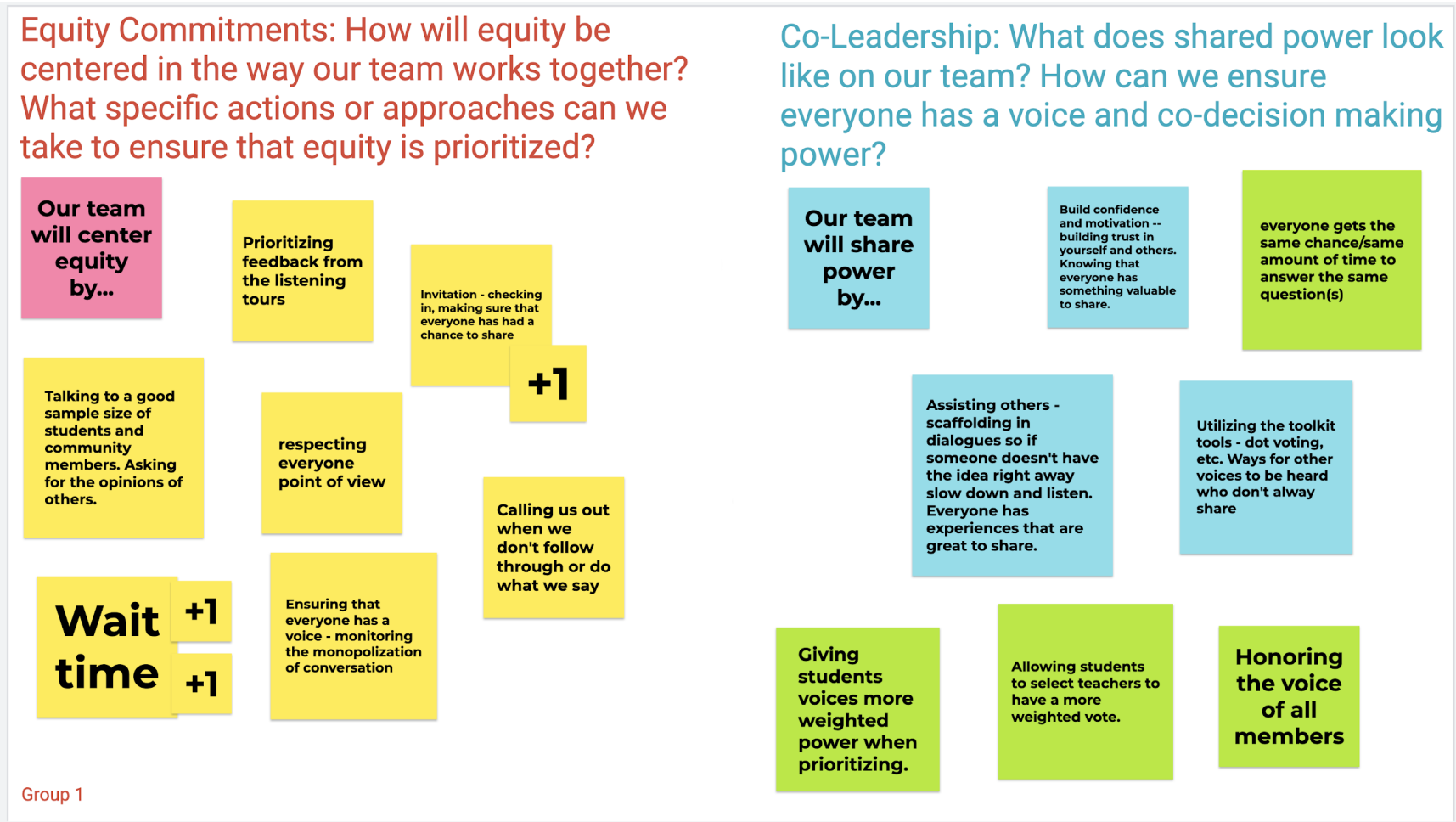


Exhibit 4. Sample Community Charter from One Inclusive Innovation Pilot Project



Core Values
What shared values can help guide how the team approaches your work and how you collaborate throughout the process? What does the team most care about?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Telling the truth! Receiving truth = honesty, integrity, authenticity● a flow of real info based on people's real experiences = empathy, authenticity● trust is at the foundation of it all.● Good communication● Being knowledgeable (asking people what they need with an open mind to understand how to effectively help people)● KEEP IT REAL → Authenticity (bring to the team and also create resources that are real and authentic; very important when going out to community and others; relatability brings trust; allowing others to be authentic and let their guard down)

Equity Commitments
How will racial equity be centered in the way the team works together? What specific actions or approaches can you take to ensure racial equity is prioritized?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Make sure everyone has a voice● Speak up for perspectives that are not at the table● Be inclusive in how we frame conversations● Purposefully seek a variety of perspectives● Identify what needs are so we can meet people's actual needs● We seek to have the perspective of Black men and boys and Nepalese folk included in the work we do● We will communicate well with one another which will help us adapt to the ever-changing nature of the work● Have alternative solutions so that there is choice. Choice in us deciding what we're presenting and also in how implementation happens (for everybody; teachers, students, and core team).● Honor community leadership● Make sure everyone has the same correct information and there is transparency about the process

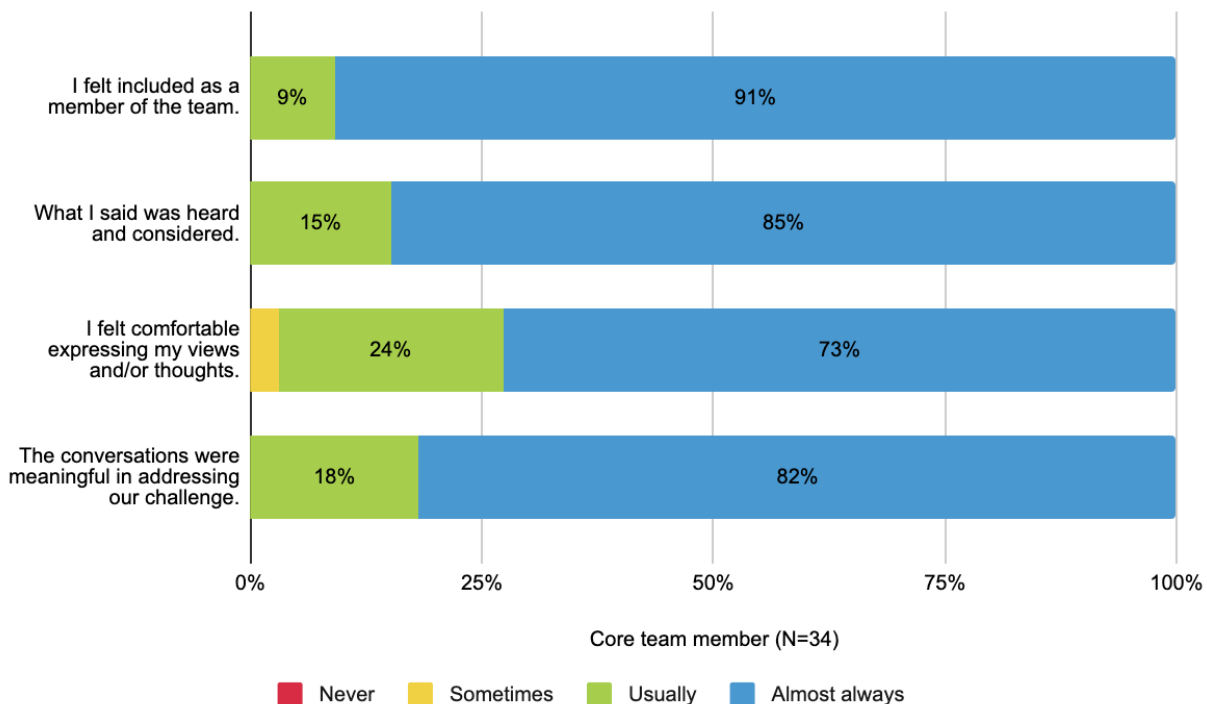
Exhibit 5. Sample Community Agreements from One Inclusive Innovation Pilot Project

Community Agreements

- **Speak from the “I.”** We speak from our experiences instead of using generalizations.
- **We start from the premise that project members act from good intentions;** however, we commit to recognizing how our actions are experienced, to learn from situations, and to repair relationships.
- **Use respectful communication.** We offer mutual respect and acknowledge that we are all learners. We aim to receive and give feedback with love.
- **Make space.** Everyone has something valuable to contribute, so be cognizant of how much air time you’re taking.
- **No one knows everything, together we know a lot.** We don’t expect perfection, instead, let’s learn together.
- **We don’t share names or specific discussions within the project,** but we do take away and freely share learnings.

When asked how they felt about their sense of belonging and comfort with sharing their thoughts and ideas with other members of the Core team, almost all participants strongly agreed or agreed that they felt included as a member of the team (91% strongly agreed, 9% agreed); felt that what they said was considered (85% strongly agreed, 15% agreed); felt comfortable sharing their views and thoughts (73% strongly agreed, 24% agreed). Even though all participants indicated that they felt a sense of belonging and were comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions, 6% thought that there were almost always individuals who dominated the conversation, whereas 48% said that this only occurred some of the time, or never, 45% (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Survey Responses-Participant Reflections on Conditions



Capacity for Considering Different Perspectives and Sharing Power and Decision-Making

Engaging in a fully collaborative process that involves co-leadership, shared decision-making, and honoring student’s voice and context expertise requires all participants to understand the power, privileges, and perspectives they bring with them and how these perspectives and perception of power dynamics influence how they interact with others. In Inclusive Innovation, we explicitly wanted to engage teams in a process of examining their mindsets related to how they view themselves as holding context expertise and their willingness to see those with lived experiences with a challenge as having context expertise, to honor student voice, and being willing to engage in collaboration and co-leadership with one another, despite traditional power dynamics that may emerge due to their positionality within the K–12 education system.

Power-sharing and Considering Different Perspectives. In Connect and Commit, participants engaged in dialogue to examine how the team would center equity throughout the project and how they would navigate the power dynamics in the group and share power as a team. When asked if they agreed that having trusting relationships and working with teachers, community members, students, parents/family members is important in research and in creating solutions for students experiencing poverty and Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students in their communities, 76% of participants strongly agreed and 24% agreed that it was important in research and 76% strongly agreed and 21% agreed it was important for

creating solutions (Exhibit 7). When asked about their confidence in establishing trusting relationships with teachers, community members, students, and parents and family members to address the needs of students experiencing poverty and Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students in their communities, 61% expressed that they were very confident and 30% expressed that they were moderately confident. When asked about their confidence in establishing trusting relationships with stakeholders in their community to create solutions that meet the needs of students experiencing poverty and Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students in their communities, 58% expressed that they were very confident in doing so and 30% expressed there were mildly confident (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 7: Survey Responses-Participant Reflection on Developing Trusting Relationships

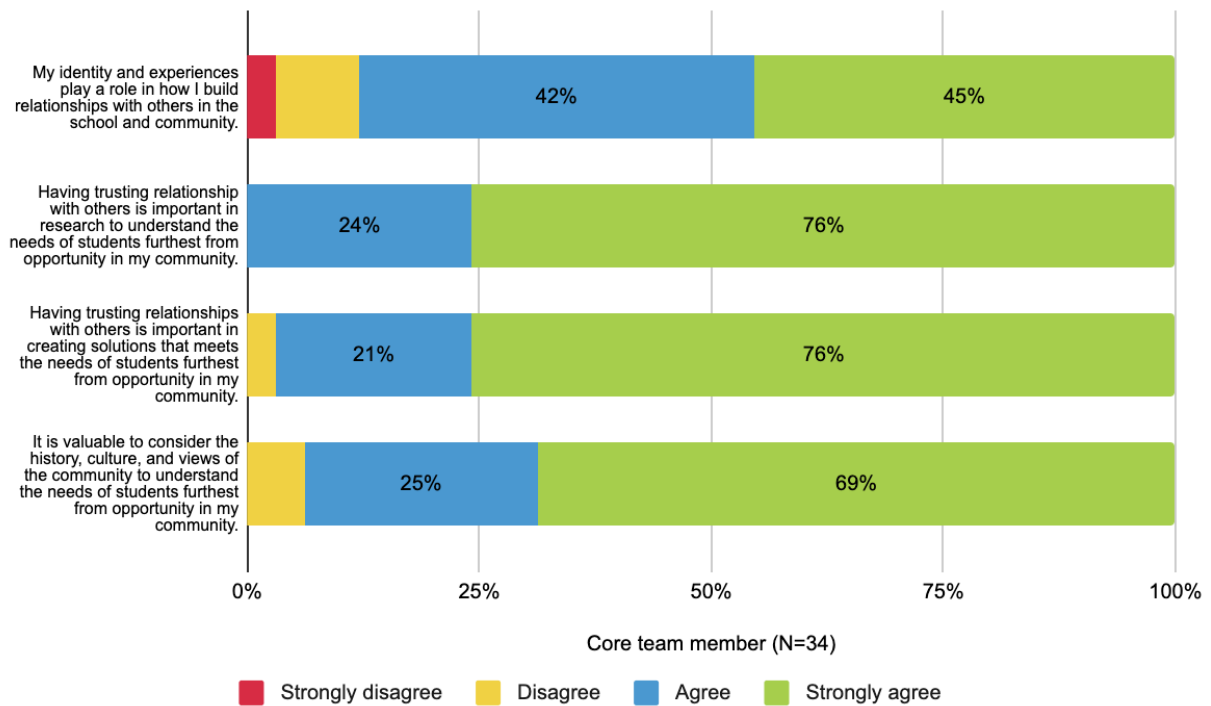
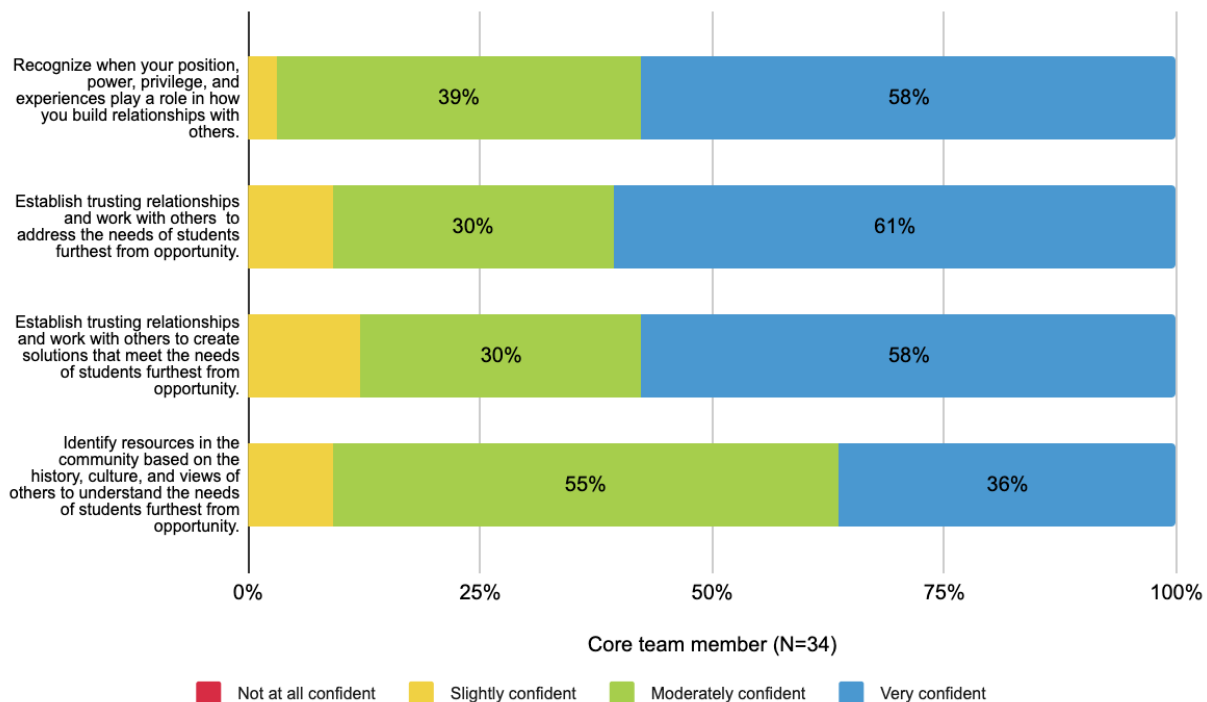


Exhibit 8. Survey Responses-Confidence with Developing Trusting Relationships



In interviews, participants shared their thoughts and reflections on their ability to engage in co-leadership and to honor context expertise and student’s voice. One district leader recognized that it was important to include those who have experience with the challenge in the solutioning process, stating:

I believe that it is more effective to have the collaboration of those closest and impacted by the issues engaged in the solution. Their experience more accurately can pinpoint a problem and create appropriate and desired solutions.

Another participant, whose role was that of a community member, reflected on how even though they may not have had the same opinions as other participants, it was important to listen to the perspectives of others.

And I probably felt like I got pushed out of my comfort zone a little bit during some of those meetings, but at the end of the day, it gives me such a better perspective of things to say, “Hey, there are other people that see things differently than I do. And although I may not agree with every aspect of it, it certainly doesn’t hurt me to hear those ideas.”

Another community member agreed, stating that:

And sometimes it's important that you're getting voices who are not the believers. [laughter] You want that dissenting voice from time to time so that you can figure out—it's like, well, how do we take that into account as we're planning? And maybe they bring up some good points. Well, now we know the way to phrase and educate to get more buy-in, especially from those that don't think the same way that we do.

Even though some participants felt that their perspectives, thoughts, and ideas were contributing to the process, others reflected that even though Inclusive Innovation was structured to allow for shared leadership and decision-making, as the final decisions were being made, the constraints from the school district started to emerge. One community member, who reflected the problem statement, outcomes, and solutions statements that were produced by their Core team stated, “I definitely felt like that all of our ideas came out and all of those things,” but that everyone’s perspectives were not incorporated “because there were more teachers in the group.” They continued their reflection, stating:

But then towards the end, you feel that even though there was an inclusive process for including all community members, the community-district team, and collaboration, that towards the end there were constraints due to the restrictions by actually putting the plans in place by the school district.

Capacity for Valuing Student Voice and Honoring Context Expertise

In interviews, students and teachers spoke of their experiences with Inclusive Innovation and how they felt, some for the first time, that their voices were being heard and considered by individuals who typically hold power, privilege, and decision-making authority. A teacher highlighted how the team was able to consider students and allow students to show up as their authentic selves. She stated that in this process, “students did not have to defend themselves against an adult, administrator, or teacher” and that they felt “empowered to come up with these great solutions.”

A student, reflecting on her interactions with the adult members of the Core team, said:

Just the ability to speak with adults, it made me feel like... my voice was being heard by adults that have more experience than me. Like they're working at [the university] and they're listening to me.

Teachers across all community-district teams expressed similar sentiments as the students. They discussed having a sense that district leaders were listening to and considering their ideas. Another teacher felt empowered to share experiences when district leaders were seeking out their opinions and ideas. She stated that initially, she was hesitant to share her experiences and appreciated that the school and district administrative leaders and a university professor were interested in her ideas, that when they asked for her perspective, she “felt that I was helped with solving the problem...that I was able to share [a perspective] that the students didn't have or the Core team didn't have.”

One member from this school district shared that they finally felt that they were being listened to, stating:

I believe I like the fact that they asked...I mean, they were open to really listen to us. So that is a huge part because you have some leaders who would listen, but pretend like they are listening and do something opposite...but it was like people were listening.

Some of the community member participants spoke how initially they were unsure of their role in Inclusive Innovation, or feeling out of their comfort zone, but as they continued engaging in Inclusive Innovation, they spoke to a feeling of empowerment and seeing the value in contributing their perspectives to the Core team discussions. One community member explained that when they were invited to participate in the Inclusive Innovation process, they were excited to be able to contribute to a change in their school district, but upon engaging in the team meetings, they were unsure of how they could contribute to the process, saying they were thinking, “I don’t think I’m supposed to be here because I don’t know what these people are doing.” They explained that initially, they were unsure of their role, but as they engaged with the process more, they realized that they were able to bring in “my knowledge and try to make it easier to communicate” with other community members who may not be able to connect with the professional language used by some of the participants. Another community member shared that they had similar experiences when they first started attending the Core team meetings:

I was not confident at all [laughter] because I didn’t know— like I said, I didn’t know what was going on and why they needed me...But towards the end, I [felt] confident. I actually see myself in a new light because [I was encouraged to] be open and not to be so shy...towards the end, I felt more confident as a [community member] in how I can see to be a part of the project.

Capacity for Co-Research and Co-Design

In the Inclusive Innovation phases, Inquire and Investigate and Design and Developed, Core team participants engaged in a variety of research and design related activities. In Inquire and Investigate they identified root causes to the challenge (Exhibit 9), set focus groups, created the focus group protocols (Exhibit 10), facilitated discussion with the extended community to hear their perspectives to the challenge, and synthesized the data gathered from the focus groups to create a priority problem statement and outcomes. During Design and Develop, the Core teams engaged in a process of brainstorming solution ideas, ideating upon and stretching initial solutions, and gathering feedback from the extended community to create a final solution to address the priority problem.

Exhibit 9. Sample Root Cause Analysis From One Pilot District

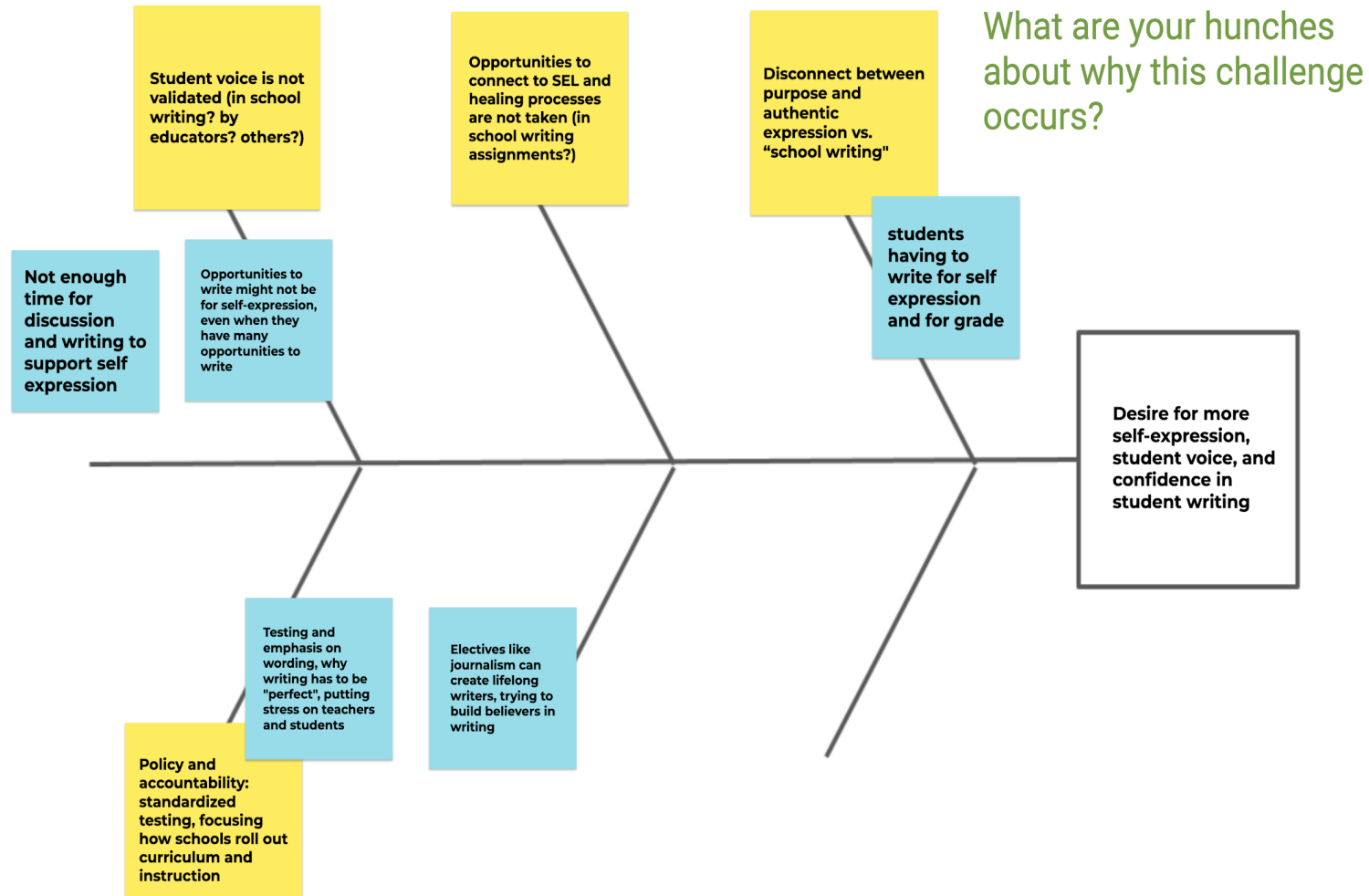


Exhibit 10. Samples from Focus Group Protocols Created by all Pilot Districts

Focus Group Protocol Questions Created by Core Team Members	
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -On a scale from 1–10, how enjoyable is writing to you? Why did you select this rating? How do you think it could be improved? -What are your goals related to writing? What purposes do you write for? -What parts of writing do you find enjoyable? -How can teachers make writing more enjoyable? -What have been your experiences with racism or micro aggressions?
Parents and Family Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What do you hope your child gets out of /learns in school? -Do you feel that [having conversations about race] is relevant to teaching? Why? -What are your fears about having conversations about racial equity in class? Why? -What connection do you see between reading, writing, and home? -What information do you need to become more familiar with writing expectations and processes at schools?
Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How do you see students engaged in writing? What do they find engaging? What do they find challenging? -What types of challenges do you see with these conversations [about race] taking place in the classroom? -What support do you think students should have to support for and process the experiences they have had with racism?
Teachers and Other School Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To what degree do you feel that the writing topics you assign are relevant to student success? -Sometimes we cannot control forced reading and writing in our classes because of how students are tested on it. How are you able to provide students a choice for what they are reading and writing based on their interests? -What are the benefits or damages if these conversations [about race] do not take place? -What do you see your role as being in developing relationships with students? -Have you personally experienced or witnessed bias or racism?

When asked if they agreed that students, teachers, parents and family members who are most affected should guide the solution to the problem, 58% strongly agreed, and 33% agreed that they should (Exhibit 11); when asked about their confidence in including school district and community stakeholders in the process of creating solutions to challenges, 50% were very confident in their ability to do so, and 44% were moderately confident in their ability to do so (Exhibit 12). In response to whether they know how to collaboratively conduct research and develop solutions with multiple stakeholders, 45% strongly agreed, and 48% agreed that they knew how. When asked about their confidence in conducting research and developing solutions with multiple stakeholders, 50% indicated that they are very confident in their ability, and 44% stated they were moderately confident.

Exhibit 11. Survey Results-Participant Reflection on Knowledge of Collaboration with Stakeholders

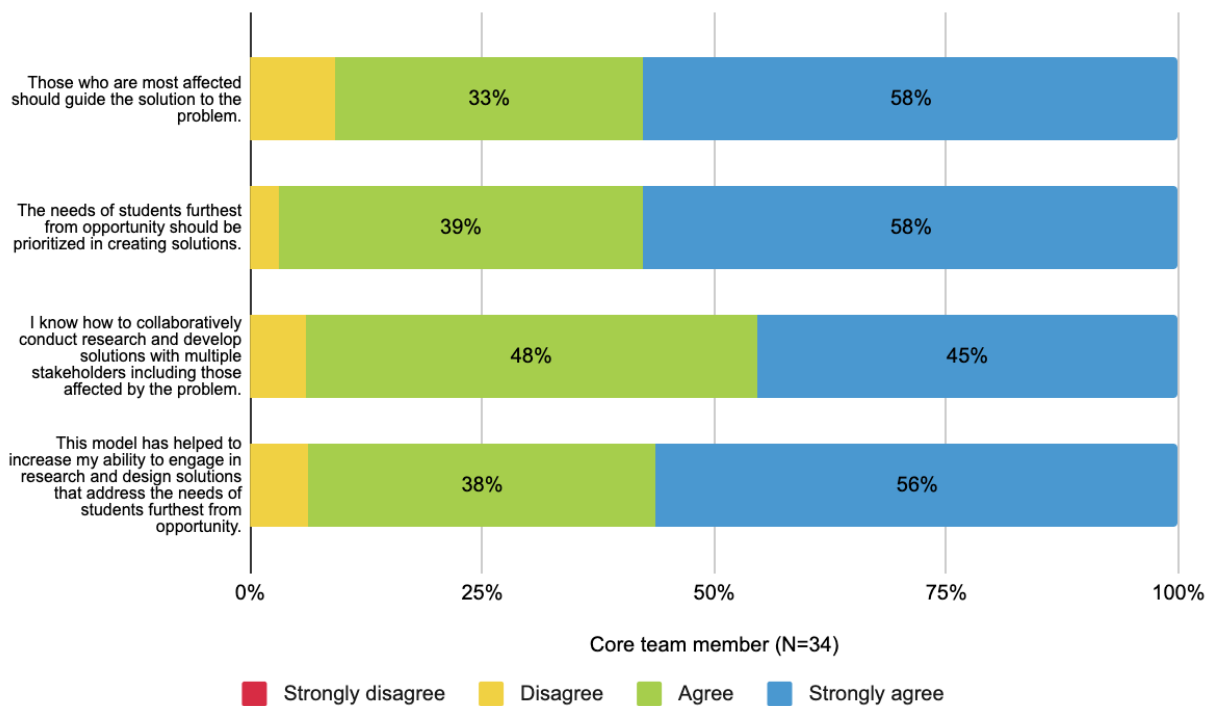
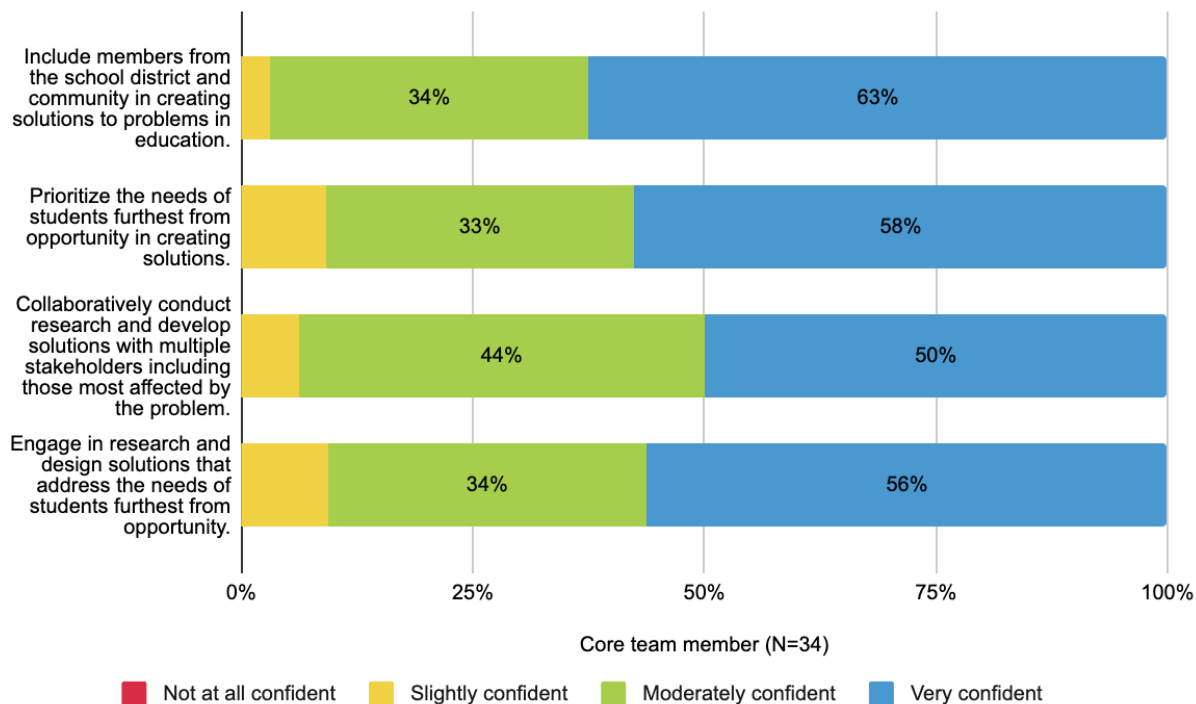


Exhibit 12. Survey Results-Participant Reflection on Confidence in Collaborating with Stakeholders



Even though participants overwhelmingly felt confident with co-researching challenges faced in their communities, some participants indicated that the inquiry process was the most challenging aspect of Inclusive Innovation due to the specific technical knowledge that was required for data collection and management. They also spoke about understanding how to co-create solutions to challenges, but not being fully confident in their ability to do so independently.

When asked about the most challenges parts of inclusive innovation, one Core team member stated what they thought would be the most challenging to do:

I think the investigating part because I don't think we— at least me, I didn't know a lot about what was going on then. So I think having more support in that part would have been helpful. Also because I'm not a statistics person, I don't like data and analyzing it. So I was really confused during the whole thing.

Another Core team member indicated that they would have like more support with understanding the data, but that with the support they received through the process, they were able to understand it:

I think I would have liked maybe more support in I think maybe understanding the data pieces. I think it was pretty easy to understand once we had it shown to us. But I think maybe understanding how exactly those things were shaped, like how was the thing that they had done with the money, how exactly that came to be or why exactly we did that

or— I think maybe understanding that a little bit more would have been a little bit more helpful.

In the interviews, participants spoke to their specific activities to identify multiple stakeholders, for example through community asset mapping, to engage in the research and solution development process. One participant spoke of having confidence with locating community stakeholders to contribute to the research and solutioning process but felt they were mildly confident with creating the solution.

So I think I'm mildly confident. So I think I really understood how to implement different perspectives [and] how to find those different perspectives. I know that at the beginning, we did diagrams of what kind of people students have access to, whether that be within school, outside of school or families. So I think I really gained an understanding of how to find those contact points. But I think actually shaping a solution and I think getting feedback, I think is definitely something that I'm not exactly confident I feel like I would be able to do. But yeah, but I'm mildly confident.

Extending Capacities to Personal and Professional Life

As we were asking participants to reflect on the knowledge, skills, and abilities they felt they had developed through their participation in Inclusive Innovation, many of them were able to make a connection with how they could use parts of the Inclusive Innovation model in their personal or professional lives. They spoke about how they could see using parts of Inclusive Innovation to identify assets in their community through asset mapping; how they could use part of the inquiry method to listen to different voices through focus groups, and use a democratic voting process to ensure participatory decision-making. Participants reflected on the Inclusive Innovation process and spoke about how excited they were about the process.

One participant spoke extensively about focus groups, that they liked how the focus groups allowed them to hear from different people in the community and they were now sharing with colleagues how they could use focus groups to hear from the students they were trying to serve.

So I actually feel very confident in that because I love the process. And one thing that I really love most of all, even though I was not there for much of it, the focus groups. The focus groups, I think were amazing, especially when you're addressing a problem or you're trying to find a solution that serves people. I was actually talking to somebody about it...She's writing a book ...And I was like, "Oh, you should have a focus group." And I was like, "You should gather some parents and some students." And I was like, "You can review some of these and ask them how they feel about how this would meet their needs and things like that.

Some spoke to how comfortable they were with the model and how they can use different parts of it in their professional life:

...I think having gone through the process now makes me feel a little bit more comfortable with trying to implement that within the work that we do, because I can see a lot of crossover with the work that I do use some of these strategies and trying to make sure that we're having to incorporate that authentic student voice, the authentic teacher voice, the authentic parent and community member voice to inform the work that I do because it is kind of similar in trying to serve students, try and build that pipeline and make sure that students are prepared to enter the world beyond the K-12.

A student spoke to how they used what they learned during Inclusive Innovation in the work they do in a group they are part of.

So I used the stuff I learned from Digital Promise about diversity and inclusion and all that to answer a lot of the questions and to teach my others [in a group I am a part of] about what it is to be welcoming, what it is to have diversity within your group, so yeah. I was promised the presentation if I go back and staff next year.

And another participant, whose role was that of a community member, was able to make connections between the Inclusive Innovation model and the work they do in their community stating:

So going to something like this and seeing the process of something that's very important in the community I work in, which is the school system, and the wide variety of people that are involved in all that, yeah, absolutely. Invaluable to me to not only see all those different perspectives, but to apply it to what I'm doing here.

Reflections and Looking Ahead

The objectives we were seeking to understand through the piloting of the Inclusive Innovation model were two-fold. First, we wanted to support community-district teams in their pursuit of creating an equity-centered solution to a challenge they are facing in their community, and we wanted to build the capacity of the community-district teams to address a local problem of practice. Preliminarily, we achieved our goals. All the Core team members developed the mindsets needed for engagement in participatory research and design. When examining how they perceived their capacities, knowledge, and skills for using Inclusive Innovation to collaborate with stakeholders from the school district and the community, most agreed that they would be able to co-research and co-design to address a need in their community. When asked about their confidence with co-researching and co-designing, participants reported high levels of confidence, but their confidence was lower than the knowledge they felt they had gained in co-researching and co-designing.

At the time of this report all of the pilot projects are in various stages of finalizing the design or development of their solution or are at the beginning stages of implementing prototypes of their solutions with their priority students. As stated in the beginning of this paper, one of core tenets of Inclusive Innovation is to support community-district teams in creating equity-centered solutions to meet the needs of students who are furthest from opportunity. Looking ahead, it would be important to see how well community-district teams have been able to continue to use the knowledge, skills, and capacities they developed through Inclusive Innovation to support implementation of the solutions they created and scale the solution to benefit more students in their communities.

References

- Bertold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 13*(1). Art. 30. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41756482>
- Digital Promise, Center for Inclusive Innovation. (n.d). *Center for Inclusive Innovation*. <https://digitalpromise.org/inclusive-innovation/>
- Jagosh, J., MaCaulay, A. C., Pluye, P., Salsberg, J., Bush, P. L., Henderson, J., Sirett, E., Herbert, C. P., Seifer, S. D., Green, L. W., & Greenhalgh, T. (2012). Uncovering the benefits of participatory research: Implications of a realist review of health research and practice. *The Milbank Quarterly, 90*(2), 311–346. <https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fj.1468-0009.2012.00665.x>
- Lepore, W., Hall, B. L., & Tandon, R. (2021). *The knowledge for change consortium: A decolonizing approach to international collaboration in capacity building in community-based participatory research, 42*(3), 347–370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2020.1838887>
- Wallerstein, N., & Duran, B. (2008). The theoretical, historical, and practical roots of CBPR. In M. Minkler & N. Wallerstein (Eds.) *Community-based participatory research for health: From process to outcomes*. pp 25–39. Jossey-Bass.
- Young, V. M. (2020, October, 21). Where is the research in Inclusive Innovation? *Digital Promise*. <https://digitalpromise.org/2020/10/21/where-is-the-research-in-inclusive-innovation/>