The goal of this research, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, is to engage disaster-affected youth, their parents, and the community of Joplin in a participatory action research project focusing on youth recovery after the tornado. This study will empower youth through research and contribute to the development of youth-inclusive approaches to disaster recovery. We will use creative methods designed to engage youth collaboratively and creatively in individual and shared meaning making. This project will contribute to an understanding of the ways in which social, economic, and personal factors influence disaster vulnerability among youth and their capacity to recover and contribute to long-term individual and community resilience.

**Guiding Research Questions**

1. What is the story of recovery for youth in Joplin?
2. How did youth contribute to helping the community, and each other, move forward after the tornado?
3. What people, places, spaces, and activities have been most important for youth in recovery?
4. How were the needs of youth met and unmet in the recovery process?
5. What are the most important changes since the tornado for youth, families, schools, and community?
6. What advice do youth have for others who have experienced a disaster and are working to recover?
Youth Creating Disaster Recovery

Danielle Barker was raised in Joplin and now is a senior at the University of Oklahoma. In May, she will graduate with a B.S. in Geography and a minor in Meteorology. Danielle spends her free time with her husband and two young boys. As an R.A. for the project, Danielle was instrumental in helping the team establish contacts in Joplin as well as offering a local’s perspective on the impact of the tornado.

Local Research Assistant

Project Launch

Our first trip to Joplin was a tremendous success!! We met with so many wonderful people whose insight, creativity, and enthusiasm will certainly help shape our project over the next two years.

During our initial trip in January we:

1. Met with and conducted formal and informal interviews with over 40 people in Joplin.
2. Went on a driving tour of Joplin to see the damage, the rebuilding progress, and the beautiful way that art is being used to help heal the community.
3. Frequent local businesses, including one of our favorite’s—Hackett Hot Wings—YUM!
4. Visited the 9/10 and 11/12 high school campuses.
5. Met with representatives from community organizations that work with children and youth.
6. Spoke with inspiring young people and received feedback on our project design.

Key Insights

During this trip, we learned many new things, including:

1. Youth are interested in sharing their stories, especially when they know those stories will benefit others. Giving back has been a central piece of the recovery process.
2. Community groups want to know what helped with or hindered youth recovery—a sometimes overlooked population—so they can best serve the young people they work with.
3. Placing schools at the top of the priority list has shaped community recovery in countless ways.
Colorado Meeting

On February 11 and 12, the research team met in Fort Collins at Colorado State University to discuss what we learned in Joplin and to prepare for future trips. Specifically, we hope to recruit and involve approximately 15 youth in a multi-day workshop process in June. The sessions will focus on using photography, digital storytelling, writing, and other arts-based and mapping activities to explore disaster recovery from the perspectives of youth. Participants will also have the opportunity to offer their advice to other disaster affected populations on how to improve the recovery process, particularly for youth.

Next Steps

1. Return in June for our first participatory research workshop with youth leaders.

2. Return again in the fall of 2013 for a second round of workshop and research activities with high school youth.

Meet Our New Team Member

Cheryl Heykoop is a doctoral student at Royal Roads University, and a Child and Youth Participation and Protection Adviser with the International Institute for Child Rights and Development. For the last 10 years, Cheryl has worked with young people in Africa and Southeast Asia to understand their experiences and perspectives about issues that affect them, and engage with key adults to bring about policy and programmatic changes. Cheryl is really excited to be involved in this project, and feels it is critical to tap into the wisdom of young people around disaster resilience and recovery.
Thank You

It was such a pleasure to meet so many wonderful people in Joplin. The generosity and enthusiasm that we felt from each and every person was more than we could have hoped for. We look forward to building on these relationships and establishing new ones as we continue our work in your very special city.

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The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) provided funding for the Youth Creating Disaster Recovery Project. SSHRC is a Canadian government research funding agency that promotes and supports world-leading postsecondary-based research and training initiatives in the humanities and social sciences. Learn more at: http://www. sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.aspx

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