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May Lin   ⓘD   R. Varisa Patraporn   ⓘD

ABSTRACT

Problem, strategy, and findings: Broader power imbalances across race, class, and age hamper anti-racism in planning. Here, we show how the youth of color–led Invest in Youth Coalition in Long Beach (CA; IIY-LB) pushed the city to implement co-production and youth co-governance in budget planning, strategic planning, and city program development. We drew from participant observation, semistructured interviews, and secondary sources to highlight youth organizing (YO) strategies, including leadership development, political education, electoral organizing, and storytelling. Youth leaders redefined budgetary agendas through participatory research and other strategies that highlighted disinvestment in, and criminalization of, youth and communities of color. They successfully won city attention and resources for positive youth development. Building on partnerships cultivated with the city, IIY-LB also secured more equitable representation and decision-making power of low-income queer youth and youth of color in strategic planning processes. The coalition amassed and flexed electoral power of systemically disenfranchized communities, winning a local ballot measure to secure and fund an Office of Youth Development. Finally, IIY-LB has collaborated with the city to enact youth co-governance in the office's implementation. This case study advances co-production and youth engagement literatures by illuminating specific YO strategies to achieve elusive models of authentic community collaboration and co-governance.

Takeaway for practice: IIY-LB shows how planners can concretely share power with youth and communities of color, especially YO groups, at all stages of planning. Funders and planners can divert resources directly to youth and community organizing groups, whether via multiyear, unrestricted grants or directly resourcing YO groups to lead capacity building. Planners should build longer, more flexible timelines and collaborative spaces to support substantive youth decision making. Planning educators can support promote service learning and internships with YO groups to develop planners' understanding of organizing.

Keywords: anti-racist planning, co-production, racial equity, youth organizing, youth participatory planning

Racial justice requires more than integrating communities of color into exclusionary planning processes. Rather, co-production (Rosen & Painter, 2019) and co-governance frameworks (Californians for Justice, n.d.; Flores et al., 2021) have asserted that planners and other decision makers must share power with marginalized communities. Yet broader systemic power imbalances have impeded substantive collaboration. We show here how the Long Beach (CA) Invest in Youth coalition (IIY-LB)[1] pushed city officials to enact anti-racist co-production and youth co-governance in the following areas of planning: budgeting, strategic planning, and city program design and implementation. IIY-LB illuminates how youth organizing (YO) groups—relatively underdiscussed in planning—are well positioned to advocate for and implement power sharing and racial equity.

IIY-LB is a cross-racial coalition centering youth leadership and *intersectionality*: how structural racism intersects with class, gender, and other systems of oppression (Collins, 1990). Anchored by Khmer Girls in Action (KGA), a Southeast Asian young women–led organization, the coalition is also led by low-income Black, Latinx, queer, and/or gender-nonconforming youth from eight other organizations. Youth leadership is central to intersectional visions of racial justice: Long Beach's youth are mostly youth of color disproportionately facing poverty, criminalization, and barriers to civic engagement (Invest in Youth, 2018). The coalition uses multiple strategies (e.g., leadership development, storytelling, electoral organizing, and political education) to enact systemic change.

Focusing on the coalition's work from 2017 to 2021, we show how IIY-LB won power over planning

processes. To do so, we first review challenges to more inclusive planning identified in participatory planning and youth engagement literatures. We summarize co-production frameworks that seek to address power imbalances and explain how YO can extend extant scholarship. We describe IIY-LB and Long Beach contexts and our methods, including 5 years of participant observation, 15 key stakeholder interviews, and analyses of more than 75 public records and secondary sources.

We then analyze five categories of strategies and their impacts. First, youth sparked public deliberation on budget priorities by connecting youth issues to broader systemic inequalities. Through strategies including action research and relationship building with city council members, IIY-LB won seed funding to develop a strategic plan for youth and emerging adults. Second, IIY-LB won equitable representation of youth from all city districts in the strategic planning process, countering over-representation of White, affluent, and older communities in budget planning. Third, the coalition won substantive youth decision-making power over the strategic plan's content, in contrast with prior superficial community engagement. Fourth, IIY-LB transformed the local electorate through integrated voter engagement (IVE) to represent more Southeast Asian, Black, Latinx, and younger voters. By amassing voting power to win a ballot measure, the coalition secured permanent funding for an Office of Youth Development and other city programs. Fifth, IIY-LB has collaborated with the city to implement youth co-governance in the office since 2021. We conclude with lessons for planners and funders to cede power to YO groups.

Background
Challenges Faced by Participatory Planning and Youth Engagement: Power Imbalances
Participatory planning and youth engagement literatures have argued for moving beyond consulting youth and communities of color and toward shared decision-making power (Arnstein, 1969). Participatory budgeting (where community members directly determine allocations of portions of municipal budgets) and youth engagement have fostered skill building and empowerment (Augsberger et al., 2017, 2019; Frank, 2006), engaged more diverse constituencies (Augsberger et al., 2019; Pape & Lim, 2019; Su, 2017b), and uplifted community concerns (Frank, 2006). However, scholars have argued that authentic collaboration and power sharing remain elusive due to broader power inequities across race, class, age, and other social systems (Karner et al., 2019; Su, 2017a).

Limited Decision-Making Scopes and Dominant Ideologies
Participatory budgeting has enabled diverse community members to allocate funds for capital improvements and other specific projects (Karner et al., 2019; Su, 2017a, 2017b). However, limitations have stemmed from planning's emphases on feasibility and efficiency (Fung, 2015; Rosen & Painter, 2019) and greater resources needed to address racialized and class ideologies underlying budgetary decisions (Karner et al., 2019; Su, 2017a). For example, participants in Su's (2017a) New York City (NY) study reflected that their funded project, surveillance cameras, was a fraught solution to crime. Scholars have concluded that marginalized communities need broader decision-making power beyond discrete projects to further dismantle racialized poverty (Fung, 2015; Karner et al., 2019; Rosen & Painter, 2019).

Centering White, Affluent, and Older Communities
Planning processes have often privileged White, affluent, older residents (Harwood, 2005; Pape & Lim, 2019; Solis, 2020; Su, 2017a) with more time and cultural capital to navigate planning bureaucracies and advocate for their priorities (Augsberger et al., 2017; Pape & Lim, 2019; Su, 2017a). Targeted outreach to low-income youth and communities of color has supported more equitable representation (Augsberger et al., 2019; Checkoway et al., 1995; Karner et al., 2019; Pape & Lim, 2019; Su, 2017a). Yet youth participatory budgeting in Boston (MA; Augsberger et al., 2017, 2019) and 38 communities across the United States with youth master planning processes (Cushing, 2015) consistently encountered challenges engaging diverse youth. These studies raise questions about youth of color engagement strategies, especially because adults often perceive youth as incompetent, uninterested, or in some cases criminals (Horschelmann & van Blerk, 2013; HoSang, 2013).

Tokenistic Inclusion
Participatory budgeting and youth engagement have worked to counter superficial inclusion and limited decision-making power in planning (Augsberger et al., 2017; Cushing, 2015; Frank, 2006; Karner et al., 2019; Pape & Lim, 2019). Best practices have included caucuses for specific communities (Su, 2017a) and building capacities for authentic engagement (Augsberger et al., 2017, 2019; Frank, 2006; Karner et al., 2019). Participatory methods such as youth digital storytelling have connected planning to identities, local issues, and places (Napawan et al., 2017) toward high-quality, sustainable engagement. However, challenges persist for youths'

sustained, substantive decision making (Horschelmann & van Blerk, 2013). Compressed, inflexible timelines have hampered lengthier deliberation needed to resolve conflicting viewpoints for inclusive decision making (Karner et al., 2019; Su, 2017a). Frank's (2006) literature review of 18 studies showed that tokenizing youth participation in planning can undermine empowerment and fuel frustration.

Broader Political Exclusion

Systemic barriers to civic engagement for youth and communities of color, such as voter suppression, lack of outreach, and governmental unresponsiveness, have fueled broader political inequities that shape planning (Anderson, 2018; Dobard et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2011). Distrust based on government's past wrongdoings has rendered youth and communities of color understandably wary of participating in planning (Karner et al., 2019). Because decision makers are more accountable to likely voters, who are generally older, Whiter, and affluent (Yagoda, 2019), more attention should be paid to connections between electoral power and planning.

Thus, participatory budgeting and youth engagement has fostered more inclusive planning (Checkoway et al., 1995; Frank, 2006; Su, 2017a). However, North American models have faced challenges achieving authentic power sharing due to broader racialized power imbalances. Youth and communities of color, then, must lead the way to transform rather than conform to planning norms (Pape & Lerner, 2016; Pape & Lim, 2019). We turn to co-production and youth co-governance as frameworks for addressing power imbalances.

Toward Co-Production and Youth Co-Governance

Co-production has been a framework for planning theory and practice that shows how planners can redistribute power to communities across multiple contexts (Albrechts, 2013; Alford, 2014). Co-production has evolved since Ostrom's (1996) initial conceptualization recognizing the value of users in public goods and services provision. Recent iterations have argued that planners must share decision-making power and resources with communities at all stages of planning: from identifying the problem to designing solutions to implementation (Bovaird, 2007; Rosen & Painter, 2019). This has improved the quality of goods and services (Bovaird, 2007) and addressed power imbalances constraining and perpetuated by planning. Co-production has required building youth (Botchwey et al., 2019) and community members' skills, knowledge, and capacities to become partners in planning (Rosen & Painter, 2019).

Similarly, YO groups have advocated for youth co-governance, wherein youth build skills, collaborate with adults as equals (Californians for Justice, n.d.), and lead policy development (interview with Yanga, December 2021).

Yet co-production scholarship raises questions about specific strategies for accomplishing power redistribution. Extant studies have rarely addressed power struggles that likely arise when marginalized communities challenge planners and decision makers' roles in perpetuating inequalities in race, class, and age. Co-production focuses on planners, but YO literature has suggested how youth of color can dismantle these power imbalances.

Youth Organizing for Racial Justice

YO has identified how youth of color build power to make institutions and systems more racially equitable. YO groups have fought for and modeled co-governance: Youth and adults share decision-making power on matters such as campaign development and staff hiring (Serrano et al., 2021; Terriquez et al., 2016). YO groups have led policy change campaigns and provide holistic developmental supports (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Rogers et al., 2012; Terriquez, 2017). These groups have developed youth capacities to disrupt power inequalities that suffuse and surround planning. By cultivating critical analyses through political education, youth have linked personal experiences to critiques of systemic oppression (Lin, 2020), equipping them to redefine problems and expand solutions. For example, youth have reframed dominant narratives and supported anti-racist policies through arts and storytelling (Ortega-Williams et al., 2020). Furthermore, YO groups have developed civic skills such as public speaking, persuasion, and event planning (Terriquez, 2017). Youth have also increased voting rates in their communities through IVE, which connects voter education, outreach, and mobilization with long-term organizing (Bedolla & Michelson, 2012; Lin et al., 2019).

Our study extends co-production scholarship by illustrating specific strategies IIY-LB's YO used to address broader power imbalances to push city staff and officials toward authentic collaboration. We asked the following questions: What strategies did youth groups use to win meaningful power sharing and implement youth co-governance and co-production? How did they disrupt planning processes and enact racial equity?

Methodology

This institutional review board–approved research drew from a subset of the first author's field notes from

participant observation and interviews with IIY-LB organizations from 2015 to 2019. Observations relevant to the campaign totaled approximately 150 hours and involved about 20 youth, from coalitional and specific organizational meetings, retreats, events, voter canvassing, and city council meetings. Findings also drew from more than 75 formal and informal interviews, focusing on 10 semistructured youth leader interviews and 5 with organizational staff as a subset of approximately 10 adult staff and 15 to 30 youth leading the campaign over multiple years. We discuss *youth* here as reflective of coalition leaders aged 14 to 26. We list quoted youth and staff in Technical Appendix 2.

Semistructured interview participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling across all key IIY-LB organizations. We asked youth leaders and staff to reflect on anti-racist and YO strategies, specific roles, responses from decision makers and community members, framing, successes, challenges, and recommendations. We obtained written consent for all interviews and observations.

To analyze coalition work from 2020 to 2021, we attended, watched, and/or read transcribed event recordings including virtual city council meetings, town halls, press conferences, vlogs, and other publicly available social media videos. We conducted five additional interviews with organizational staff and youth leaders via Zoom in late 2021 to assess youth and staff perspectives on campaign stages not directly observed by the first author. Finally, we analyzed 75 secondary sources such as city planning budget documents, reports, op-eds, local newspaper and independent media articles, and social media posts to explore patterns in public discussions of budget priorities, youth and positive youth development, racial equity, capacity building and outreach strategies, and impacts. We analyzed documents to understand how the coalition disrupted planning process norms and addressed roadblocks, including contrasts between youth and city officials' framing of issues. We found secondary sources through the coalition's social media posts, local newspaper searches, and links provided by coalition staff members. We reconstructed the campaign timeline using IIY-LB's public timeline and confirmed additional details by consulting IIY-LB leaders and relevant news articles, city planning documents, and social media posts. The first author coded these documents, secondary sources, fieldnotes (including summarized informal interviews), and/or event and interview transcriptions using NVivo (QSR International, 2020) and conferred with the second author about emerging themes and subthemes from coding such as framing/narratives, discussions of racial equity, queer/gender justice, intersectionality, adultism, and time limitations.

Using multiple primary and secondary data sources improved the study's validity and reliability toward a more holistic analysis. We used participants' actual names (public figures identified in several secondary sources) with their permission. We asked participants to review their quotes and manuscript drafts so they could correct inaccuracies or request redactions, which none requested. This case study yields important insights on implementing co-production, but its generalizability is limited because long-term change has depended on broader political contexts (Karner et al., 2019). Long Beach benefited from some local elected officials' support and long-term philanthropic backing, particularly The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative: a 10-year, $1 billion place-based investment in 14 sites to cultivate health equity through policy and systems change (Long Beach Forward et al., 2022). Thus, successful strategies depicted here may not facilitate the same outcomes at different times or contexts (Fung, 2015) with less investment, more political hostility, and/or younger advocacy infrastructures (Karner et al., 2019; Yerena, 2019). This study was also limited because we focused on IIY-LB leaders and staff; future research should include perspectives (e.g., government officials) outside of the coalition.

Contexts: Long Beach and Youth and Community Organizing

IIY-LB reflects Long Beach's broader diversity, where 72% of the population are people of color, including African Americans, Filipinx, Khmer, Mexicans, and Central Americans; about one-quarter are immigrants (Policylink & the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity [PERE], 2019). KGA's role as an anchor organization aptly reflects Long Beach as home to the largest Cambodian population outside of Cambodia (Chow, 2019). The coalition uplifts youth issues connected with racial, economic, and gender justice. Black, Latinx, and Asian American youth come from communities in Long Beach with the highest proportions of low-income households, pollutants, and lowest life expectancies (PERE, 2019). A racial generation gap in which 86% of youth are people of color, compared with 47% of seniors, is associated with lower investments in education and other youth-supporting infrastructure (PERE, 2019).

Nine organizations focusing on a range of issues comprise IIY-LB (see Technical Appendix 1).[2] KGA has long addressed reproductive and health justice as well as criminalization, disinvestment, and intergenerational trauma affecting Cambodian and other Southeast Asian refugee communities (Pataporn, 2019; Sangalang et al., 2015). The coalition builds on local organizing

Table 1. Overview of strategies.	
Type of strategy/approach	**Description**
Action research	Youth helped design, collect, analyze, and report on surveys to highlight residents' beliefs on youth development and inform the strategic planning process.
Building relationships with elected officials and decision makers	Youth developed relationships with elected officials and decision makers, including through delegation meetings. These relationships helped secure key allies for support.
Co-governance in the strategic planning process/ Office of Youth Development	IIY-LB partnered with city planners and pushed for authentic youth power over decision making and racially equitable practices and structures in strategic planning and formation of the Office of Youth Development.
Edutainment	IIY-LB organizations, specifically KGA, put on entertaining political education events, such as their Annual House of Horrors (haunted house showcasing different issues) and Yellow Lounge (an arts and culture showcase).
Electoral organizing/integrated voter engagement	Through the Integrated Voter Engagement program, KGA alumni and other community members contact voters three times a year to build long-term relationships and transform the electorate.
Healing and self- and collective care	The coalition attends to mental and emotional health by centering supportive relationships and facilitating self- and collective care and healing (e.g., meditation, sound baths, and time in nature).
Leadership development	IIY-LB organizations build leadership, civic, and political skills of youth (e.g., speaking with and moving elected officials, communicating with residents and voters, planning events, and more).
Political education	IIY-LB cultivates youths' political analysis to link their personal experiences with critical analyses of structural contexts and root causes of broader social issues.
Storytelling/narrative change	IIY-LB builds the capacities of youth to tell their stories to move others and heal; framing, messaging, and building narratives that garner broader buy-in to equitable policies.

infrastructure (supported by The California Endowment as previously described), which facilitated resource sharing, buttressed existing organizing capacities, and fostered collaboration. IIY-LB organizations previously partnered on the Every Student Matters campaign addressing racial injustice in school discipline. IIY-LB thus extends these long-term relationships between youth, staff, and organizations, which are especially critical because some organizations are not explicitly politically oriented (interview with Joy Y., December 3, 2021).

Campaign Overview (2017–2021)

Youth leadership development, relationships, and holistic approaches have always been central to IIY-LB's victories and sustained leadership and wellbeing in a long, winding process. Youth and adult allies supported mental health through self and collective care practices (e.g., checking in on each other, safe spaces to vent, meditation, nature retreats). Table 1 summarizes strategies including political education, leadership development, storytelling, IVE, participatory research, and healing. The following narrative summarizes key milestones depicted in Table 2.

2017–2018: Winning Seed Funding

In 2017, the coalition found that the 2018 Long Beach budget would spend only $204 per youth on positive youth development compared with $10,500 on suppression. Youth worked with California State University, Long Beach to collect 757 surveys through doorknocking, phone banking, local events, and school-based outreach. Youth found that Long Beach residents believed the city should prioritize youth employment, mental health, and parks and after-school programs rather than police. Youth planned public education events and regularly met with city council members to garner support. The council voted to receive their research as official city data. As a result, the mayor and city council approved one-time funding of $200,000 for a youth-led strategic planning process to develop a blueprint for a future office and fund for children and youth.

2019–2020: Shaping an Equitable Strategic Planning Process

KGA and other IIY-LB organizations consulted with city staff to shape a more racially equitable and youth-led

Table 2. Campaign key events and milestones.	
Date	**Milestone and description**
2010	Youth-led and -serving organizations begin partnering on the Every Student Matters campaign, part of the Building Healthy Communities Long Beach youth workgroup.
2017	Youth-led organizations begin Invest in Youth campaign
2018	Invest in Youth joins a People's Budget coalition of multiple organizations fighting for budget allocations to fund Black liberation and immigrant, language, and housing justice.
2017–2018	Youth partner with Cal State Long Beach researchers to collect and analyze 757 surveys about city residents' budget priorities.
February 2018	IIY-LB shares action research at press conference. Respondents prioritize youth employment, mental health, parks, and after-school and community-based programs rather than funding city police.
2017	Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) program begins, conducting three voter outreach phone banking sessions per year.
2017–2018	Youth leaders conduct delegation meetings with city council members to demand a Children & Youth fund.
August 2018	Youth host the city's first Young People's Budget Hearing, using skits, personal stories, art, and writing activities to call for funding.
June 2018	Youth action research is received and filed by city council as official city data.
September 2018	Mayor and city council approve $200K of seed funding for a youth-led Strategic Plan for Youth and Emerging Adults.
2018–2019	Youth leaders help shape the strategic planning process, including leading a focus group.
Fall 2019	Youth-led strategic planning process begins with KGA as a consultant. IIY-LB shapes incentives, recruitment, and selection of youth ambassadors (YAs).
August 2019	Youth leaders create and share performances about why investing in youth matters at annual KGA Yellow Lounge.
January–April 2020	YAs lead planning process through trainings, collecting and analyzing surveys, interviews, forums, and shaping the key strategic plan priorities.
2020	Delegation meetings with decision makers continue.
November 2020	The campaign puts Measure US initiative on city ballot, which taxes local oil companies, to fund the Office of Youth Development.
November 2020	Contacting more than 10,000 voters, IIY-LB secures 57% of Long Beach voters' approval for Measure US.
Fall 2020–winter 2021	Youth leaders meet with city council members. IVE program asks voters to send mayor and city council letters to ensure Measure US funds go toward youth.
February 2021	Long Beach city council members vote unanimously to adopt the youth strategic plan and use Measure US revenues for the Long Beach Youth Fund.
Spring 2021–present	IIY-LB continues to implement youth co-governance in the Office of Youth Development, including shaping the Youth Advisory Council and grant process to address youth priorities.

strategic planning process. The coalition ensured that youth ambassadors (YAs) leading the process represented youth of color and queer, low-income, and disabled youth from all city council districts and advocated for monetary compensation. In 2020, 19 YAs, including several IIY-LB leaders, participated in strategic planning training, conducted 71 key informant interviews with youth-serving organizations and city council members, co-designed survey instruments, planned 10 community forums (including one on COVID-19 and Black liberation), and collected 787 online surveys. Meanwhile, IIY-LB supported youth capacity to shape and challenge the process. The strategic plan, released in the summer of 2020, identified key youth priorities for the Office of Youth Development.

Building Mass Political Power to Institutionalize the Office of Youth Development
The coalition built political power to pressure city council and win resources to institutionalize positive youth development programs. Leveraging IVE, IIY-LB successfully contacted more than 10,000 voters and won 57% of the vote to pass Measure US, a local oil tax increase. The coalition also secured Vice Mayor Rex Richardson's commitment to allocate part of the Racial Equity and

Table 3. Transformation of planning process.			
Category/theme	**Established practice**	**Forms of disruption**	**How? What youth activities or strategies?**
Redefining the budgetary agenda	City budgetary narratives and agendas focus on scarcity, policing as an unequivocal priority, and limited conversation about youth needs.	IIY-LB youth spark broader public deliberation over budget priorities and need for positive youth development as connected to larger social systems. They win $200K in seed funding for strategic planning toward positive youth development.	Youth received political education, learning how to critique the budget. Youth developed and leveraged leadership skills in storytelling, writing op-eds, delegation meetings, and action research.
Power players and voices represented in budgeting	Budget decision-making processes are dominated by city council members representing predominantly White, affluent, older districts, with little representation from districts with low-income youth of color.	Youth won racially equitable representation in the composition of the Youth Ambassador program by ensuring representation and compensation of youth from all city council districts.	Youth continued to build relationships with council members. KGA becomes a consultant to shape recruitment, selection, and structure of the YA committee.
Decision-making power in strategic planning	Process for community engagement is superficial and comes late in the decision-making process. Meetings/budget hearings typically exclude youth, parents, working people, and immigrants.	Youth changed key content and guiding framework of the strategic plan, some of which contrasted with the original draft by city staff.	Youth organizations put pressure on planners and slowed down the process for greater deliberation. Adults supported youth leadership so they could challenge the process.
Community accountability: Transforming the electorate	Elected officials are more accountable to "likely voters": older, Whiter, more affluent residents.	Youth increased voter engagement of younger, Southeast Asian, Black, Latinx communities, including 40,000 voters' contacts and mobilizing 57% of voters to support Measure US. They change political conditions and power balances that shape planning.	Integrated Voter Engagement program woven into Invest in Youth campaign (regular phone banking, registering voters, canvassing, asking voters to sign on to letters). Public events encouraging civic engagement.
Long-term funding and institutionalization	Very little funding in the budget for youth development, no dedicated space in the city/budget planning for youth decision making, and no official local government office for youth issues.	Dedicated funding for positive youth development, including from Measure US ($1.3 million in fiscal year 2022). A permanent Office of Youth Development guided by youth co-governance, such as decision making over staff hiring and a Youth Advisory Council shaping funding priorities and plan implementation.	All youth organizing strategies listed in Table 2. Relationship building with city staff and key council members to build trust and support for authentic partnership.

Reconciliation Initiative toward the youth fund. Finally, leveraging voter pressure and ongoing meetings with city council members resulted in the city council's adoption of the strategic plan and allocation of Measure US revenues toward the Office of Youth Development.

   We delve more into IIY-LB's strategies and impacts here, summarized in Table 3.

Redefining Budget Agendas and Racist Ideologies Through Youth Narratives

IIY-LB reframed narratives about city budgets by connecting positive youth development to systemic issues and winning an unprecedented $200,000 in seed funding for a youth strategic planning process. They confronted dominant budget narratives that legitimate disinvestment in—and criminalization of—youth and

communities of color in three main ways (see Table 3, row 1). First, the city manager, mayor, and council members consistently defined budget deficits as a primary problem (Long Beach City Council, August 7, 2012; Long Beach City Council, August 6, 2013; Long Beach City Council, September 4, 2018; Munguia, 2021). They identified the solution as budget cuts from city departments except for public safety (Long Beach City Council, August 2, 2016). The first author observed a meeting where council members argued that more youth spending required "better budgetary times" (Long Beach City Council, September 4, 2018). Second, city budget documents prior to fiscal year 2019 rarely discussed concerns about under-resourced youth services and racial equity. One city council member told youth leaders that they were not the only ones who deserved funding because "there is need across the board" (Long Beach City Council, September 4, 2018). Such agendas have implications for racialized class inequality: Long Beach's youth are mostly youth of color disproportionately facing high poverty rates (IIY-LB, 2018). Finally, council members and city staff refused to debate police budget allocations comprising 40% to 50% of the city budget (Dennis, 2020). In another meeting observed by the first author, a council member described police as "wholeheartedly and unequivocally" the city's highest priority (Modica, 2018). Years later, another council member argued that reallocating police budgets would "not be smart or responsible" (Ruiz, 2021, para. 6). These sentiments were reflected in city budget documents consistently defining police as a top priority (Long Beach City Council, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

Through IIY-LB and partner organizations' political education and leadership development workshops (see Table 1), youth leaders learned how these budgetary decisions fueled systemic inequities targeting Black and Brown, low-income, and queer youth and communities. IIY-LB youth connected personal experiences with policing and criminalization to disinvestment in City Hall testimony, op-eds, public events, and social media. California Conference for Equality and Justice youth leader Noah argued in their summer 2018 city council testimony that "[You're] sending us to prisons—instead, [we need] money for programs to do something better.... [You're] getting rid of our youth instead of helping them." KGA youth leader Alexis explained in an op-ed that many 1.5-generation Cambodian Americans facing deportation were "not given a chance to grow" amid heightened criminalization of Southeast Asian refugees and societal failures to fully support their resettlement (Chem, 2018, para. 6). Noah and Gender and Sexualities Alliance Network youth leader Mac wrote in another op-ed that "completing high school was supposed to be our only job, but it's not easy to stay on

track with instability at every corner.... It's hard to survive off of $24,000 for a family of five while dodging policing and gang activity outside our front doors" (Harris & Santiago, 2019, para. 2). Youth sparked broader public deliberation by engaging residents in conversations during their action research and finding that they prioritized positive youth development over policing (Table 2, 2017–2018).

Instead, youth foregrounded positive youth development as a solution. IIY-LB found in an early focus group that residents responded negatively to teenagers because youth of color were stigmatized as "troublemakers" (interview with Yanga, December 2021). In response, youth argued that these conceptions were rooted in racism and ageism and used to justify scarce resources for youth development. Youth leaders shared their own IIY-LB organizations' work to exemplify how youth can bloom when supported. Alexis argued that KGA's programs showed that "with more positive support, there will be less youth on the streets getting caught and profiled by the police" (Chem, 2018, para. 8). Youth leader Janice reflected that Californians for Justice cultivated her skills to enact change, "bring[ing] out qualities I didn't even know that I have" (Invest in Youth Press Conference, February 22, 2018). Youth thus asserted that council members needed to shift budgetary priorities and increase investments in positive youth development.

Youth advocated for seed funding for a youth-led strategic plan through delegation meetings with council members, public events, and city council budget hearings (see Table 2, 2017–September 2018). As KGA organizer Omar reflected in a Facebook Live interview:

> We just inserted ourselves into the conversation 'cause no one was inviting us into the table.... [W]e had to empower ourselves to demand that seat at the table [and] show up prepared, informed, and ready to engage and stay consistent … [so that] young people can't be ignored. (Long Beach Forward, 2018, 23:45)

IIY-LB staff trained youth to understand the budget and effectively communicate their stories, research, and demands. Janice explained that staff encouraged youth leaders' confidence, which was especially critical "at [our] young age … [by] stay[ing] in the office no matter how long it took.... [W]hen it came to the delegation meetings, we always felt very prepared, and we always felt like we had it in the bag" (interview with Janice M., December 9, 2021). As a result, Vice Mayor Richardson stated he had never seen "a group of young people so well organized and prepared to talk about the budget" (Long Beach City Council, August 4, 2018). Another council member concluded at this meeting that youth leaders had won a budget allocation that "funds

programs we've never funded before, never looked at before, because of the youth who have come and talked with us." These reflections, along with city council's adoption of youth survey results as official city data, further illustrate how youth shifted public budget narratives and won new resources.

Power Players and Voices Represented

IIY-LB won representation of low-income, queer, Black, and Brown youth from all city council districts in the strategic planning process (see Table 3, row 2). The coalition pointed out that racial inequity was enshrined in the city's geography and perpetuated by over-representation of older, Whiter, and wealthier districts in city council and the Budget Oversight Committee. Unsurprising, council members from affluent districts with the lowest concentration of youth told IIY-LB youth leaders that their districts did not need additional resources (interview with Mac H., December 9, 2021). Thus, youth argued that the strategic planning process needed to represent most youth of color who lived in West Long Beach (Flores et al., 2021). As KGA Executive Director Lian pointed out, these neighborhoods have less youth development resources and bear the brunt of disinvestment and criminalization, which fuels vulnerability to gang involvement, homelessness, and educational disconnection (Invest in Youth Press Conference, February 22, 2018).

IIY-LB leveraged relationships with city council members and secured roles as consultants shaping the process starting in 2018 (see Table 2). Youth successfully demanded that YAs and focus groups represent each district and receive monetary compensation for their labor, which is critical for participation of low-income youth (J. Heng, personal communication, August 24, 2022). Organizations also conducted targeted outreach in 2019 to help recruit youth of color, queer youth, low-income youth, and youth with disabilities. Finally, IIY-LB asked council members to nominate youth from their district, which helped secure their vote for the strategic plan because they would be reluctant to critique youth they had recommended (interview with Lian C., executive director, KGA, November 9, 2021).

Decision-Making Power

IIY-LB youth won substantive decision-making power to shape the strategic plan's guiding framework and content. This contrasted with the city's public engagement in budgeting processes (Table 3, row 3). IIY-LB and allied organizations critiqued how feedback opportunities (e.g., surveys and community forums) usually took place close to the budget adoption deadline, after decisions had already been concretized through internal conversations between the city manager, council, and city departments. Public comment periods at city council meetings often run late at night, which is especially exclusionary for youth, who have school early the next day, and working people.

IIY-LB youth leaders demanded and modeled youth co-governance in the strategic planning process (see Table 2, fall 2019–April 2020). First, adult staff helped youth leaders fully understand the process to make informed decisions, consistent with prior studies highlighting youth–adult partnerships (Augsberger et al., 2017). Adults helped youth process vast amounts of data they collected by guiding them to focus their analyses. Second, YO groups applied expertise in engaging pedagogies to shape more interactive workshops. Third, IIY-LB had already cultivated youth leaders' critical and intersectional analyses of inequality. As such, youth understood the consequences when city staff's early draft of the plan imposed a public safety priority, proposing that youth partner with the Long Beach Police Department for youth and community policing programs. Mac reflected that this was a shock because youth had not voiced this priority in their focus groups and surveys. Rather, partnering with police would be fundamentally at odds with "who and what we were fighting for … we've been centering youth of color, LGBT youth" (interview with Mac H., December 9, 2021). As Lian reflected in an interview: "Very little gets away from [youth leaders], because they have already been trained up by us." Youth highlighted their personal experiences, research, and summer 2020 Black liberation uprisings to emphasize how youth of color disproportionately experience police brutality and mass surveillance.

IIY-LB's leadership development and long-term mentorships supported youth to challenge the process. Youth turned first to trusted adult staff to express their discomfort. Adults encouraged youth to voice their dissent and leverage power by refusing to endorse the initial draft and demanding more time for discussion. Thus, IIY-LB shaped frameworks reflecting many of the coalition's values, including an expansive understanding of positive youth development connected to issues such as housing, health, and transportation and a commitment to collaborating across city offices and school districts (J. Heng, personal communication, August 24, 2022). Youth also pushed for language about collective care and the idea that all young people should be "healthy and empowered with the necessary resources to develop into their true authentic selves" (Long Beach Health & Human Services, 2021, p. 1). YAs thus modeled and enacted youth co-governance by substantively shaping both process (including timelines) and outcomes (strategic plan content).

Community Accountability: Changing the Electorate

IIY-LB has built political power by engaging systemically disenfranchised voters, including youth, Southeast Asian, and other communities of color. IVE helped win mass support to fund positive youth development and other city programs. IIY-LB transformed broader electoral inequalities shaping city staff and officials' decisions (see Table 3, row 4); for example, only 37% of Southeast Asians registered to vote turned out in November 2016, and Latinx communities comprise 42% of all residents but only 27% of the electorate (Po, 2020). Youth votes can also be harnessed to address political consequences of the racial generation gap: Youth of color are 75% of voters under 25 in California (Power California, n.d.). Youth and staff reflected that low voting rates are rooted in historic disenfranchisement and racialized harms by elected officials' policy decisions. As Mac and Noah wrote in the *Long Beach Post*:

> Growing up in Long Beach as black and brown youth from low-income families has taught us to be distrustful of the decision-makers in our city. The decision-makers are the ones who are supposed to look out for the interests of the people and the community. But it's never felt like that for us. (Harris & Santiago, 2019, para. 1)

This context has created a cycle wherein elected officials are not held accountable for their decisions, which consistently dissuades marginalized communities from civic engagement (Karner et al., 2019).

Through IVE (see Table 1), IIY-LB has turned systemically disenfranchised communities—including youth and Southeast Asian and Latinx immigrants and refugees—into likely voters, so that elected officials will reflect their priorities. KGA's IVE program created more than 40,000 voter contacts between 2017 and 2022 (Give in May & Gift Empowerment to KGA!, 2022). In addition to registering and pre-registering voters, IIY-LB youth leaders, alumni, and other community members developed skills and built long-term relationships by contacting voters three times a year, including non-election years. Canvassers have engaged residents in deep conversation and connected them to services to navigate the pandemic, housing shortages, anti-Asian violence, and other issues. As KGA's Executive Director Lian reflected, youth under 18 cannot vote, but they can share information and persuade peers, family, and community members to vote. This is especially critical for non-English speakers and those who may be understandably wary of U.S. politics (Cheun & Tirona, 2021).

The campaign also leveraged IVE to pressure elected officials at key times, which was essential for securing and allocating long-term funding for the Office of Youth Development. Using a sophisticated database and technology, the coalition identified key voters to build relationships with and to mobilize for elections and actions. This infrastructure also enabled the coalition to present survey respondents' priorities by district to targeted council members. Twice, campaign phone bankers persuaded 700 Long Beach residents to send letters to city officials, the mayor, and the city manager supporting the allocation of Measure US toward a youth fund (see Table 2, November 2020–February 2021). This facilitated council members' quick agreement to delegation meetings.

In fall 2020, IIY-LB mobilized mass numbers of voters to vote for Measure US, which would fund the office and related programs, building on these long-term relationships with voters and youth leaders' ongoing meetings with council members. Lian reflected in her interview that this victory showed how they were a serious political force: "Now we [can] have conversation[s] with our council members or our mayor at a different level than before [because] now they also know [we] can move a ballot measure." Furthermore, youth have built consciousness around the allocation of public resources (Cheun & Tirona, 2021). Beyond voting, youth have planned and implemented creative public educational events such as KGA's annual House of Horrors, which plays with the genre of horror while encouraging civic engagement. In 2019, youth engaged participants with facts about disproportionate investment in incarceration versus education and offered raffle tickets for participants to write a letter to their council member. Thus, the campaign has shifted broader civic and political contexts beyond electoral politics.

Institutionalized, Long-Term Change: Funding and Structures for Youth Co-Governance

Finally, youth disrupted planning processes by winning long-term, institutionalized structures and resources: an Office of Youth Development and corresponding $1.3 million in funds, guided by equity and youth co-governance (Table 3, row 5). The IIY-LB campaign has built power by "literally shifting the institutions working with young people and having young people shape what those institutions will look like" (Cheun & Tirona, 2021, para. 5). The Office of Youth Development is now embedded in the city's governance structure and cannot be easily dissolved by changing whims of different administrations or ostensible financial precarity.

The strategic plan voiced commitments to youth co-governance as advanced by IIY-LB, including a vision that "youth are valued and empowered as decision makers … to lead long-term change and solutions for the betterment of youth [for] now and future generations" (Long Beach Health & Human Services, 2021,

p. 7) The plan also included commitments to support youth and community organizing groups and to create accountability systems requiring youth participation in a broad range of city and planning processes, including "community level work, city departmental actions, and legislative and policy decisions" (Long Beach Health & Human Services, 2021, p. 43).

In 2021, the coalition began collaborating with the city to implement youth co-governance, wherein youth "play a central role in shaping [the Office's] culture and operational practices" (Cheun & Tirona, 2021, para. 8). For example, youth and community organizations successfully advocated for hiring staff from the community, including a young adult from a predominantly low-income, community of color neighborhood (J. Heng, personal communication, August 24, 2022). A youth advisory council, representing nine council districts and two equity seats, was implemented in August 2022 to hold the office accountable, make decisions on funding priorities, and implement the strategic plan. IIY-LB representatives sat on interview panels for staff and the youth advisory council.

Finally, IIY-LB raised $1.3 million additional tax revenues through Measure US (fiscal year 2022) and pushed the council to designate funds toward a youth fund and grants for programs addressing strategic plan goals such as an annual Long Beach youth festival led and planned by youth, direct grants to community organizations, and support for libraries, community health, climate resiliency, and more. As KGA organizer Jenn stated, "The coalition has helped to break down barriers for city funding to go directly to the community via community grants, breaking down bureaucratic practices, and making the process more accessible" (J. Heng, personal communication, August 24, 2022). The coalition thus built power to win resources that challenge persistent claims of a lack of youth funding.

Discussion and Conclusion

IIY-LB illuminates how YO groups can enact anti-racist, youth-led co-production and co-governance, addressing challenges identified by participatory planning and youth literatures (Augsberger et al., 2019; Frank, 2006; Karner et al., 2019; Su, 2017a). Such groups are well positioned to dismantle power imbalances via strategies including cultivating youth leadership, shifting narratives, and electoral organizing. As youth leaders Alex, Janice, and Mac asserted, planners must listen deeply to those most affected by their decisions. Youth identified, proposed, and implemented solutions to injustice that contrasted with previous norms of budget planning and youth and community engagement. We now summarize lessons and recommendations for how planners and funders can cede more resources and power to YO groups.

Implications and Recommendations for Planners in Other Settings

First, IIY-LB shows how YO groups can equip young people to critically analyze planning processes, confidently communicate concerns, and thus define broader problems and solutions needed in budget planning. This contrasts with persistent challenges with limited decision-making scopes in youth and participatory budgeting (Karner et al., 2019; Su, 2017a). Rather than the norm—establishing priorities through an internal conversation and then soliciting community feedback—planners could proactively build relationships with youth and community organizing groups and go directly to them to understand their perspectives and proposed solutions. This would support initiating and shaping planning at all stages from youth of color (Rosen & Painter, 2019).

Second, IIY-LB demonstrates how youth and community organizing groups' deep relationships and critical analysis can shape outreach structures and incentives, fostering more equitable representation: a counterpoint to over-representation of older, affluent, White residents in planning (Pape & Lim, 2019; Su, 2017a). Thus, planners elsewhere could work with youth and community organizing groups to establish new policies requiring equitable representation and monetary compensation of marginalized groups, communities, and geographies.

Third, IIY-LB successes in winning decision-making power over the strategic plan process and content showed how YO groups can build key capacities, including youths' skills and confidence to understand, meaningfully engage, and challenge city staff when necessary. City staff had to willingly listen to dissenting voices, engage in politically contentious issues, and accept longer timelines proposed by youth for further deliberation. Planning education could better equip planners to listen and engage with demands in other settings by supporting them to understand organizing while developing pathways to planning careers for individuals with youth/community organizing backgrounds. For example, planning schools could create funded career pathways in which YO alumni can become planners informed by their organizing perspectives. Planning students could be required to intern or engage with youth and community of color–led organizing groups (Botchwey & Umemoto, 2020; Das et al., 2020; Lung-Amam et al., 2015). Planning programs could also resource youth and community organizing groups to shape curriculum connected to organizing.

Fourth, IIY-LB changed Long Beach's political landscape by leveraging the more diverse electorate they cultivated to vote for Measure US and contact elected officials. As such, they countered historical, ongoing political distrust hampering community engagement in

planning (Karner et al., 2019). They showed how organizing can secure new funding and resources, in contrast with council members' consistent deferral to budget deficits. Because youth and community organizing groups often face scarce funding, planners and local governments could divert resources to these groups by, for example, building budget line items for such groups to run capacity building and leadership development within multiple forms of planning. More broadly, funders could better support these groups by committing to multiyear, flexible, and unrestricted grants. The strategies we outline here require long-term investments (Cheun & Tirona, 2021; Long Beach Forward et al., 2022). Unrestricted funding supports organizations' holistic approaches and strategic pivots to overcome multiple frustrating setbacks. Especially needed is funding for approaches that directly take on governmental power such as IVE (Cheun & Tirona, 2021).

Broader Takeaways for and Beyond Planning

The implications of IIY-LB extend beyond planning by showing how youth of color–led organizing can dismantle broader societal power imbalances. Planners must learn from how IIY-LB youth and community organizing groups have transformed inequitable institutions and processes that cause harm. Even if these cases seem disconnected from planning as narrowly defined, their efforts shape the broader landscapes of power that suffuse planning. For example, IIY-LB has transformed civic and political inequities through strategies including IVE and political education, holding planning and other institutions accountable to the whole public, not just the few. Youth's power, creativity, and imagination in establishing and implementing the new Office of Youth Development has reframed and prepared youth as long-term change-agents (Cheun & Tirona, 2021). Meanwhile, building youth leadership capacity can cultivate empowerment and confidence to confront how planning and other institutions resist change. Youth of color thus illuminate pathways to anti-racist futures. As many have pointed out, they are not only the future: Their present power and pain matter, and they are paving the way now.

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NOTES

1. We refer to this as IIY-Long Beach to distinguish from other Invest in Youth campaigns in cities such as Los Angeles, San Diego, and Santa Ana (CA).

2. Because KGA anchors the campaign, we devote more attention to describing this organization. KGA's work is also central because Long Beach is home to the largest Cambodian population outside of Cambodia (Chow, 2019).

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