La Cultura Cura: Working within the Cultural Space of Latino Youth
Tuesday, March 14, 2017
CYFAR Webinar

Reclaiming Sacredness!
Ollin Girls – Movement Girls

NOXTIN: Equal Justice for All
Reclaiming Girls

ELDERS BLESSINGS – OUR SACRED GIRLS
IN LAK’ECH

Tú eres mi otro yo.
You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti,
If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo.
I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto,
If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo.
I love and respect myself

L. Valdez and D. Paredes
La Cultura Cura: Working within the Cultural Space of Latino Youth! Reclaiming Sacredness: Ollin Girls – Movement Girls

1. Brief Demographics
2. Introduction to Ollin Girls
   • Youth Justice Transformation Leaders – beyond the binary
   • Changing institutional policies, practices for equity
3. NOXTIN: Equal Justice for All
4. Role of La Cultura Cura - in healing, leadership and change
Demographics

• Nearly half of U.S. born Latinos are under 18 years – 17.9 million

• Latinos are the nation’s youngest major racial/ethnic group

• Young Latinos are overwhelmingly U.S. born – 94% of young Latinos under 18 are U.S. born

• Seven in ten of Latino youth under 18 years are of Mexican origin, followed by Caribbean, Central and South American.

• One in five women in nation are Latina; of school aged youth, one in four is Latina = 12,500,000
What is Ollin Girls – “Movement” Girls?

The Ollin Girls focuses on preparing Chicanx/Latinx youth to become Youth Justice Transformation leaders with:

- a culturally-based healing perspective,
- formal/informal knowledge about the Juvenile Justice system
- leadership and advocacy skills
Inequity Across Institutions:  
The Impact on Latinx Girls and Youth of Color

- Impact of how we see and treat vulnerable youth.
- Impact of policies across institutions (detention, schools, etc.) settle on the lives of Chicanx/Latinx girls, boys and youth of color.
- Draws our focus onto individual youth rather than focus on inequities of systems and lived-legacies of violence, racism, classism and sexism.
Juvenile Justice Disparities in the United States: Detention

Compared to White youth:

- Black youth are 5 times more likely to be detained.
- Hispanic/Latino youth are more than twice as likely to be detained.
- Native American youth are 3 times as likely to be detained.

2013 Youth Detained (raw numbers)

Youth of color are disproportionately represented in juvenile justice systems across the country… and the rates of overrepresentation increase as youth go through the system.

Youth of color are one third of the U.S. youth population but two thirds of the youth in detention and secure placement.

Source: Dana Shoenberg Center for Children’s Law and Policy
School to Prison Pipeline
Zero-Tolerance Discipline Policies
Lead to Increased Latinx in JJ System

Latino students are 1.5 times more likely to be suspended and 2x’s as likely to be expelled than their white peers.

On any given day, approx 18,000 Latinx youth are incarcerated in America. Mostly for non-violent offenses.

Source: (NCLR, 2011; Arya, 2009)
La Cultura Cura
RECONNECTING TO CULTURAL TRADITIONS FOR HEALING
Tribal Maps of Indigenous Peoples of Americas pre-1500’s
Los Viejos Abuelos, our elder ancestors provided discipline with love.

Children were named with positive beautiful names; in Nahuatl, there are no bad words.

Children were raised with discipline and love; life, environment full of teachings.

Palo de enseñanza – teaching branch analogous to tree growing sideways, has an upright branch tied to it to help it grow healthy.

No crime existed, only minor offenses.
Our History: Indigenous youth responsibility in Anahuac

- **Ometeotl** = spark of life, balance and duality
- To be in balance, one must control the positive and negative forces within
- Self-discipline should be cultivated in children starting very early in life
- The foundation of self-discipline is respect - respect for oneself
- The parents’ responsibility is to instill in the child self-discipline and social responsibility
- True self-discipline cannot be imposed from outside; it must be nurtured from within
Not with envy,
Not with a twisted heart,
Shall you feel superior,
Shall you go about boasting.
Rather in goodness shall you make true
Your song and your word.
And thus you shall be highly regarded,
And you shall be able to live with others.

-Mexica poem, source: M. León-Portilla
Before the Juvenile Justice system...

Up till the 1500’s in the Americas youth were held accountable to youth misbehavior by:

– Elders circle or councils
– Making amends, working paying restitution – restorative justice
– Rites of passages
– Sent on journeys for quest for vision
– Severe response was banishment from the tribe
Latinx Girl Voices to Change the Disparities

• Data important to know what works and what doesn’t work and for whom
• Testimony of previously system impacted girls
• Interviews – qualitative data
• Focus groups
• Youth Participatory Outreach
Círculo Palabra
Noxtin Nomecayotzín