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EYD Newsletter

Fall 2020 Edition

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Welcome to the Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities Newsletter



Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities (EYD) is a five year, NIDILRR-funded research project designed to create opportunities for youth with disabilities to start and run their own business. By targeting transition-aged youth from low-income communities, the project seeks to design, implement, and evaluate a multi-faceted intervention that not only engages youth in self-employment, but offers a real opportunity for young people to explore skills, abilities, interests, and motivations that may have otherwise been untapped.

Year 1 Progress

The project was launched in 2019, and as we get close to the first year, our research team has completed the first of three phases. An advisory team, whose purpose is to support, inform, and guide the project, started meeting in fall 2019 and is composed of leaders in entrepreneurship from government, community, and educational entities.

Data collection began in January 2020, when we started interviewing community members to identify personal and contextual factors that help or hinder efforts at self-employment. We have completed twenty interviews with individuals with disabilities who have started or attempted to start their own business. In addition, we have interviewed six service providers and five school administrators who serve youth with disabilities.

In preparation for Phase 2, we are planning to recruit students from several high schools in Chicago for the pilot testing of the entrepreneurship program for the 2020-21 school year. In light of the COVID pandemic and widespread remote learning anticipated for the fall, the curriculum will be designed for 100% online delivery, with opportunity to integrate in-person activities when this becomes possible. Delivery of the curriculum is slated for spring 2021.

This newsletter will keep stakeholders updated on the progress of the project, as well as profile key partners and entrepreneurs who have been instrumental in our learning.

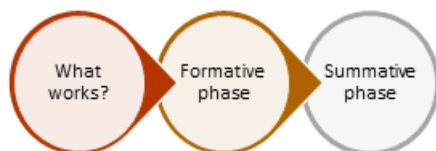
We are currently finalizing the analysis of the interview and developing the curriculum as a part of an intervention that will support and educate aspiring young entrepreneurs with disabilities who are in pursuit of self-employment.

Project timeline

Phase 1 What Works? Identify specific practices and supports that can improve entrepreneurship outcomes for youth with disabilities from low-income communities. Develop an intervention based on identified practices supports.

Formative Phase Deliver the intervention to youth via partnerships with schools and service providers. Collect feedback from all participating students, teachers, and administrators.

Summative Phase Evaluate the intervention and make modifications as needed to maximize impact. Continue to collect feedback and outcome data. Analyze and disseminate findings to maximize the potential for positive impact of entrepreneurship for youth with disabilities.



Research Team

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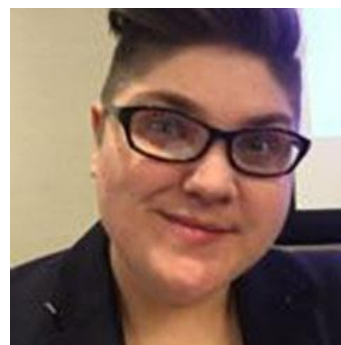
Fabricio E. Balcazar, Ph.D, is a Professor in the Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Balcazar's primary research interest is in developing effective strategies for enhancing consumer empowerment and personal effectiveness among individuals with disabilities. Dr. Balcazar is leading this current effort to promote entrepreneurship skills among minority youth and young adults with disabilities. Dr. Balcazar is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA), and former president of APA Division 27 – Society for Community Research and Action. Dr. Balcazar has published over 90 peer-reviewed journal articles, various other publications and chapters.

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