

A group of young people, including a man and a woman, are sitting on the floor and reading books together. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source coming from the books they are holding, creating a focused and studious atmosphere. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the subjects in the foreground.

# SALINAS YOUTH INITIATIVE

FUNDED BY THE DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION.  
WRITTEN AND PRESENTED BY KARINA LEHRNER, CAPACITY CONSULTING.  
EDITED BY JOY RUBEY. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAY DUNN.  
ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY [HIJOS DEL SOL](#) AND [URBAN ARTS COLLABORATIVE](#).

2024

SEPTEMBER





# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

4

CHAPTER 1. ROOTS OF PLACE

6

CHAPTER 2. INITIATIVE DESIGN

21

CHAPTER 3. SALINAS YOUTH VOICES

31

CHAPTER 4. INITIATIVE INFLUENCE

38

CHAPTER 5. INSIGHTS

44

# Introduction

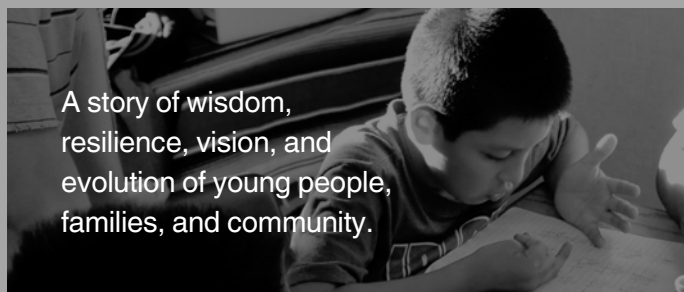
This is a story about a ten-year partnership between The David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Packard Foundation) and community leaders dedicated to uplifting the lives of young people in Salinas.

The Packard Foundation conceptualized the Salinas Youth Initiative as part of a long history of relationships and investments in the community. A catalyzing moment in 2011 involving youth violence in Salinas prompted the Packard Foundation to reconsider how they could do grantmaking differently in the community, and how they could strengthen their influence in a place with deep roots of generational, structural, and systemic inequities.

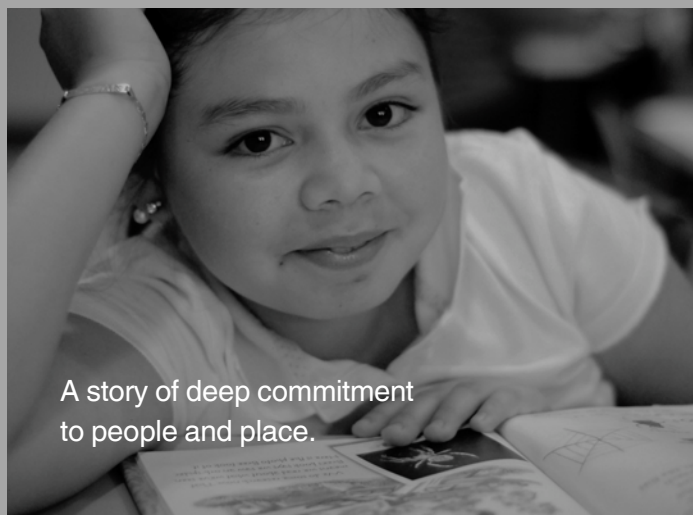
What unfolded was the design and realization of an equity-enriched partnership among fourteen community organizations that evolved over ten years and concluded in 2024.

Three essential ingredients guided the Initiative: critical inquiry of place and people, legitimization and trust in local leaders, and responsiveness to the complexity of influencing systemic change. The story shines a light on how sensitivity to place and people shaped the Initiative design and delivered fruits of relevant and lasting change for individuals, families, organizations, and community.

This story reflects an intentional contrast from more conventional evaluation findings about a place-based philanthropic investment in order to mirror the equity-enriched values that defined the Salinas Youth Initiative. It is our hope that the story of the Initiative inspires critical reflection, generates new chapters (in Salinas and elsewhere), and contributes to the deepening of partnerships among philanthropy and communities in pursuit of systemic change.



A story of wisdom, resilience, vision, and evolution of young people, families, and community.



A story of deep commitment to people and place.



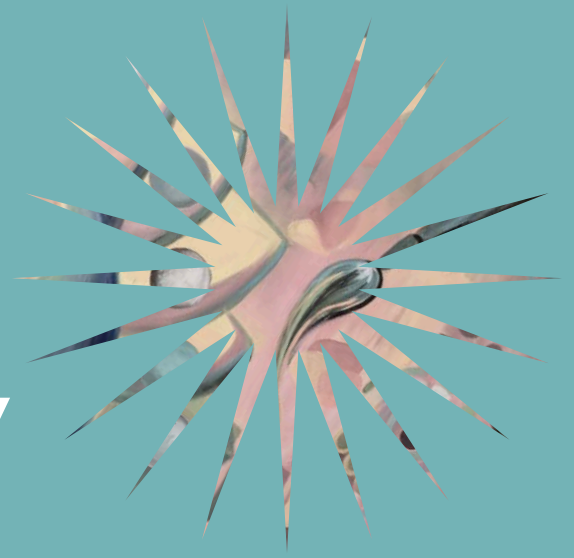
A story of caring relationships.



A story to inspire action.



# Chapters of the story



## 1. ROOTS OF PLACE

This chapter touches upon our connectedness to place, the interwoven cultures, aspirations, and struggles of Salinas, and its emergence as a city and its growth.



## 2. INITIATIVE DESIGN

This chapter highlights the core design elements of the Salinas Youth Initiative, which holds community at the center in a reshaped place-based grantmaking model.



## 3. YOUTH VOICES

This chapter elevates the wisdom of young people from Salinas, and demonstrates the power of place to deepen solidarity and unleash potential to dream of a better alternative.



## 4. INITIATIVE INFLUENCE

This chapter explores the contribution of the Salinas Youth Initiative on the lives of young people, which upholds a model that trusts local leaders to define and refine community success.



## 5. INSIGHTS

The final chapter is an invitation for dialogue and action for the deepening of partnerships among community and philanthropy, where humility and creativity enrich systemic change efforts.



# Chapter 1.



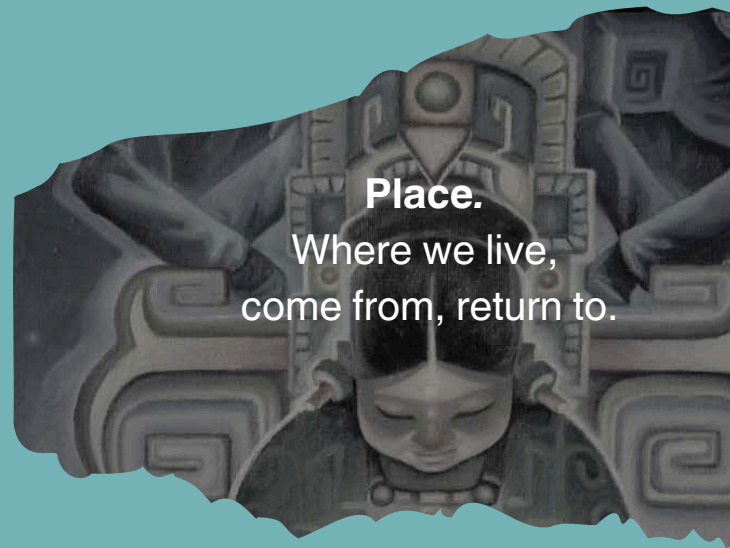
# Roots of place



# Roots of place

The Salinas Youth Initiative emerged as a rethinking of the role of the Packard Foundation in a place where it holds a deep commitment and history as a grantmaker, and a place where systemic inequities persist.

We begin this story with a brief reflection on the importance of 'place'. Place is where we live, come from, return to. Our place is where we receive our vital human need for connectedness. Place is where we should feel a sense of safety, hope, and belonging. A place to authentically be ourselves and have agency over our lives.



## Place.

Where we live,  
come from, return to.



## PLACE.

A powerful catalyst for  
emboldening  
communities  
to rise up.

Yet place may evoke complex and deep emotions, especially for immigrant communities. Place may require the blending of identities, cultures, languages, values, histories, and memories. Place may result in geographic separation and distance from families and loved ones. Place may be equated with the struggle for legal status and human rights.

*Place* can be a powerful catalyst for emboldening communities to rise up. Systemic racialization, marginalization, discrimination, neglect, and disinvestment of place calls on communities to organize and dismantle inequities.

These civic and political actions of place can elevate a collective voice, uplift and celebrate cultures, secure community improvements, and reshape and redefine a narrative and identity associated with people and place.

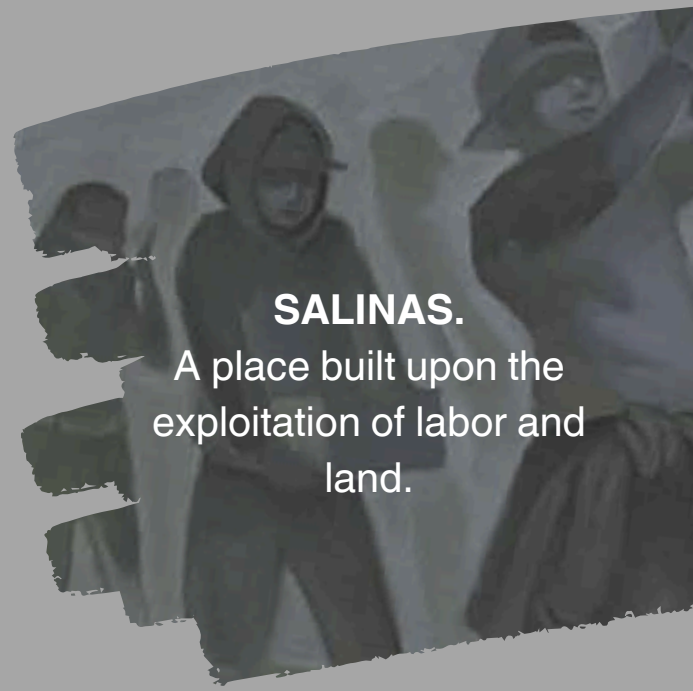


Salinas is a place of rich history that rises up from diverse and interwoven cultures, struggles, aspirations, resilience, and connectedness to land.

Indigenous descendants, *Dust Bowl* migrants, and Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican immigrants form the rich 'soil' of the history and evolution of Salinas.

Deep generational and structural oppression, racism, and inequities are rooted in the history of Salinas. The vibrant communities of Salinas have risen up and continue to rise up from the exploitation of labor and land.

Salinas as place and people is a story in itself. It is a place that holds multiple perspectives and interpretations. What is shared, with care and intentionality, is intended to shine a light on collective experiences of a place and people, and how the Salinas Youth Initiative was designed and realized with sensitivity and responsiveness to these realities.



## **SALINAS.**

**A place built upon the exploitation of labor and land.**



## **The emergence of East Salinas / Alisal.**

A note on the name of place for this story. The Salinas neighborhood that was prioritized for the Initiative is known by two names. For some, the name East Salinas is used. That is a description of the neighborhood's geographic location in relation to the downtown portion of the city. For others, it is referred to as the *Alisal* or Sycamore tree in Spanish. This name emerged during the population boom of the *Dust Bowl* era. This story recognizes and uses both names: East Salinas / Alisal.

Prior to conversion of the natural landscape of Salinas into agricultural fields, the place was one of marshlands (*Salinas* is Spanish for salt marsh). Water from the Santa Lucia and Gabilán mountain ranges that surround Salinas flowed through creeks, lakes, and rivers in what is now Salinas, all the way to the ocean. In the Mexican era, present-day East Salinas / Alisal was sparsely populated with ranchos that belonged to a small number of Californiano families through land grants.

One large range, Rancho El Alisal, comprised what is present-day East Salinas/Alisal. (The ranch was originally granted to the Soberanes and Hartnell families, and then the Soberanes family sold their portion to the Bernal family, and the Hartnell portion was sold to a former student, Juan Alvarado.)

Salinas was a place of creeks, lakes, and rivers that flowed from the surrounding Santa Lucia and Gabilán mountain ranges all the way to the ocean.





Several decades later, conversion and subdivision of Elton Hebbron's ranch led to significant housing development in East Salinas / Alisal. This part of town later became known as Hebbron Heights.

Conversion of farmland and rapid housing development continued to occur in East Salinas / Alisal. This was in response to the need to house a growing number of migrant and immigrant agricultural workers.

During this time, East Salinas / Alisal was an unincorporated area of Monterey County. That led to the expansion of housing and infrastructure in East Salinas / Alisal in the absence of urban planning.

Streets were poorly laid out, lighting was limited, and sidewalks did not exist. The first houses built in East Salinas / Alisal by Dust Bowl migrants did not have indoor plumbing, electricity, or gas.

In the face of increasing population density, East Salinas / Alisal succumbed to decades of neglect, lack of maintenance, and inadequate infrastructure.

Four decades after the City of Salinas obtained official city status, the city annexed East Salinas / Alisal. As a result, the city doubled its population size, and opened the door to state and federal reinvestment and revitalization grants.

However those investments were directed to downtown Salinas and Highway 101. The new freeway served as more than a geographic division between East Salinas / Alisal and the rest of Salinas. It created a symbolic divide between the city of Salinas and East Salinas / Alisal communities by race, socio-economic status, and political representation.

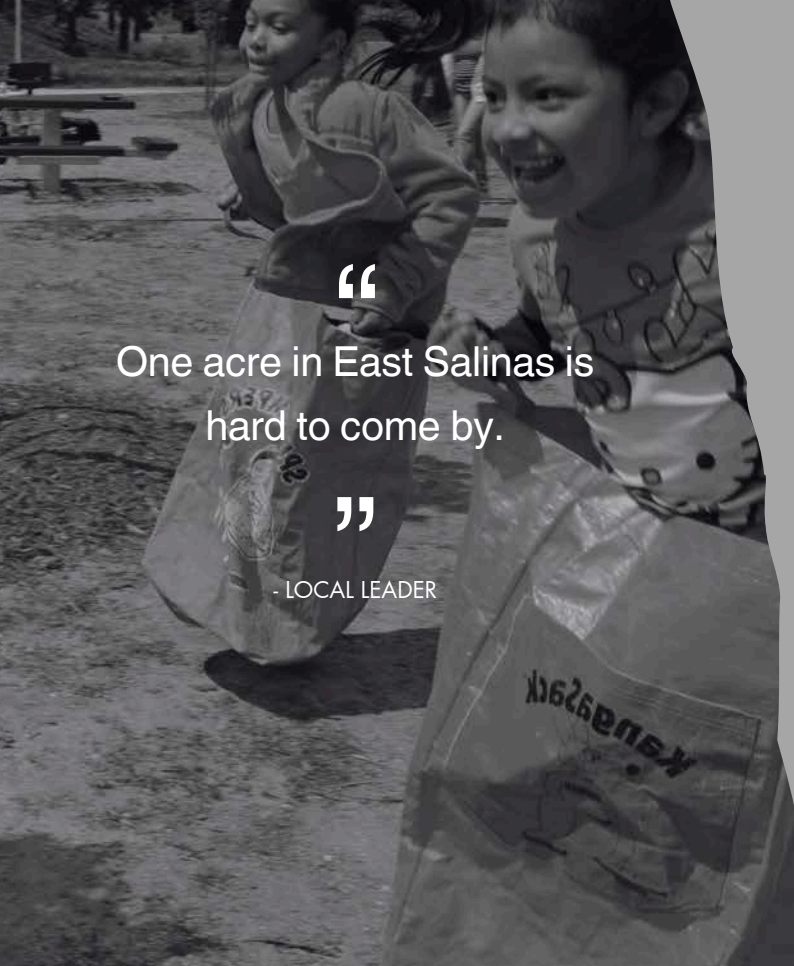
In spite of, or perhaps due to a history of racialized neglect and disinvestment, East Salinas / Alisal has been and continues to be a place of powerful community organizing.

Tireless local leaders (many who were part of the Salinas Youth Initiative), with support from philanthropic partners, including the Packard Foundation, are revitalizing and redeveloping East Salinas / Alisal through community-building efforts.

Some of these efforts include the City's Alisal Vibrancy Plan, Acosta Plaza's Sanborn Ranch House Community Center, and Big Sur Land Trust's Carr Lake Park development, among others.



East Salinas / Alisal experienced decades of neglect, lack of maintenance, and inadequate infrastructure.



“

One acre in East Salinas is hard to come by.

”

- LOCAL LEADER

While there is progress, inequities persist in East Salinas / Alisal. Although there is a great richness of family and cultural life in East Salinas / Alisal, the community continues to face racism, discrimination, and poverty.

Despite East Salinas / Alisal being home to a high percentage of young people, the community lives with overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of green and open spaces, and a lack of places for children and youth to play and for families to gather.

One year prior to launching the Salinas Youth Initiative, the Packard Foundation invested in four capital projects in Salinas: the Acosta Plaza Basketball project, the César Chávez Park improvement project, the César Chávez Library expansion project, and the Salinas Municipal Stadium renovation.

“

Many of our residents are immigrant farmworkers from rural Mexico. Value for the outdoors comes from experience with the *Zócalo* (plaza), walking together along the *alameda* (promenade) with its gardens and green space. These life experiences bring tremendous strength, to overcome obstacles, to overcome the odds.

”

- LOCAL LEADER







“

Capital opportunities seemed like a good place to start. Space was voiced as a constant need.

”

- THE DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION STAFF MEMBER

“

Spaces build community. They form the place for communities and families to come together, to connect, and to celebrate.

”

- THE DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION STAFF MEMBER





# Indigenous roots

FROM WHICH SALINAS RISES

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY [GUILLERMO ARANDA](#).

Indigenous tribes whose ancestral homeland encompassed present-day Salinas were, like many peoples throughout the Americas, stripped of their identities, cultures, languages, traditions, and land as a result of Spanish colonization and missionization. The impulse by Spanish colonizers and missionaries to define local indigenous tribes led to a host of externally-imposed identities and the erosion of traditional languages and customs.

The term 'Esselen' may have come from a village named 'Exse'ain' or 'rock', possibly present-day Point Sur Lighthouse in Big Sur. 'Esselen' was referenced as both the name of villages and the name of people that spoke the Esselen language. Multiple spellings of the Esselen people were used, including: Aschatliens, Ecclemach, Eslen, Eslenes, Excelen, Eslenajan, and Escelen.

Costanoan originally came from the anglicized version of *costeños* or coastal people. This term categorized local indigenous tribes by their spoken language within the Costanoan language family. Languages of the Costanoan language family include Esselen, Rumsen or Runsien, Mutsun and Chalon. Esselen and Rumsen were the most prevalent languages spoken locally. Mutsun and Chalon were less locally spoken languages among neighboring tribes).

Ohlone was also an imposed moniker of local indigenous tribes. The origin of the term is uncertain. It may have referred to a tribal village in today's San Mateo County, named "ʔolxon" in the Ramaytush dialect. Another theory is that it was derived from o'lo'no wit, or westerly direction in Southern Sierra Miwok.

Local indigenous tribes were also defined by the missions they were assigned to. Carmeleños were placed at Mission Carmel and largely constituted Esselen- and Rumsen-speakers. Soledad were placed at Mission Soledad and were mostly Esselen- and Chalon-speakers.

'Gente de razon' or 'people of reason' was a term used to define local indigenous tribal descendants that intermarried and raised children (often with Spanish soldiers). Marrying (white) Spaniards was considered reasonable, but holding on to traditional customs and values was punished.



Apart from a loss of identity and way of life, local indigenous tribes and their descendents suffered from inhumane living, working, and health conditions, and they were confronted with brutal suppression against attempts at resistance. Their connectedness to land and loss of land remain a struggle to this day.

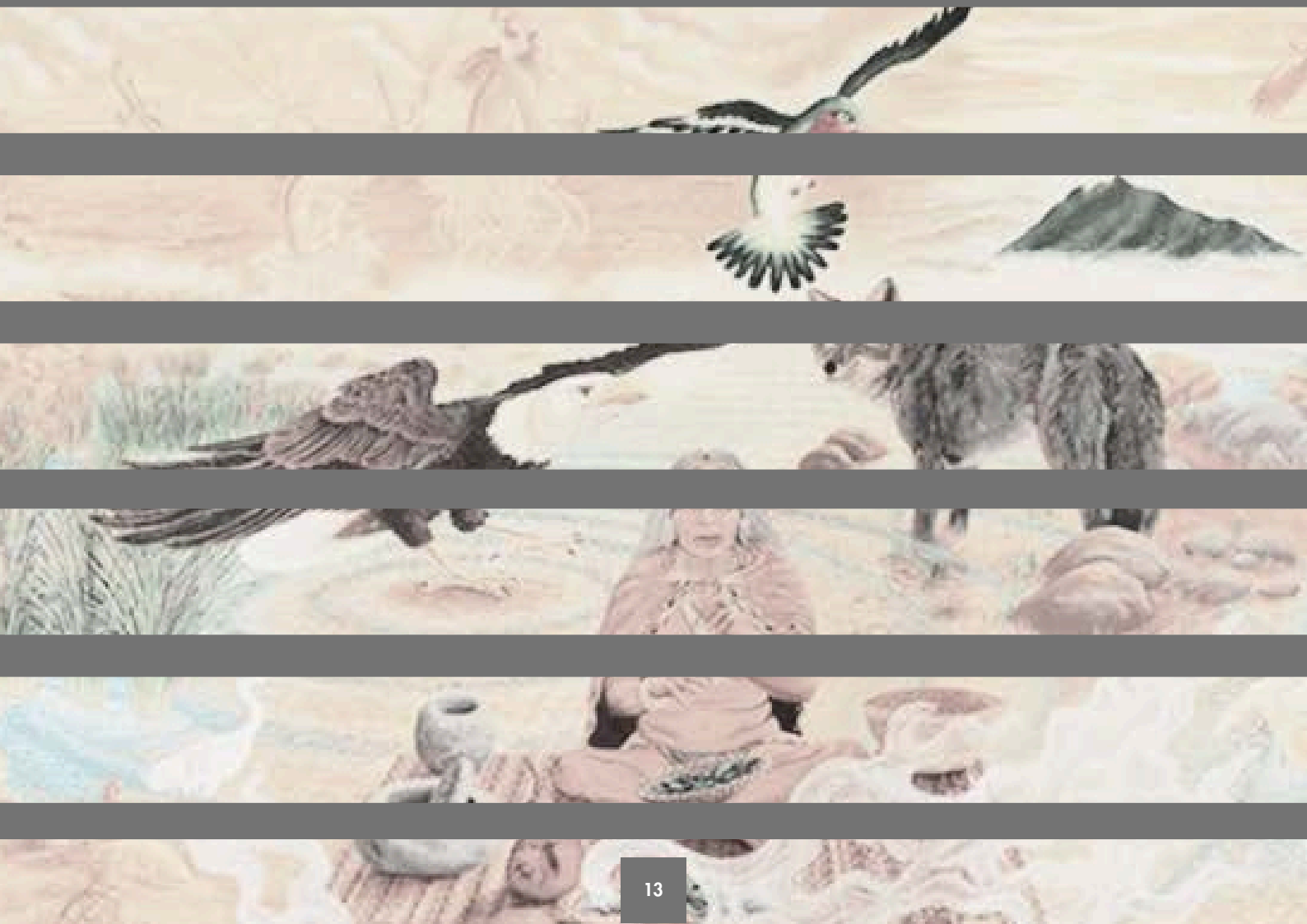
In spite of promised land reparations, land that was expropriated from local indigenous tribes and their descendants was never returned,

During Spanish and Mexican rule, small plots of land were supposed to be granted to local indigenous tribal descendents. However, most land was converted into large ranchos and deeded to a small number of prominent Californiano families (Spanish-Mexican descendents, or, in the case of Englishman, William Edward Petty Hartnell, through marriage into a Mexican family).

Small land grants that were supposed to be transferred to local indigenous tribal descendents under Spanish and Mexican governments were written into the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at the end of the Mexican-American War when the United States took over California. However, the U.S. violated the treaty and neglected to recognize the land entitlements.

A subsequent lawsuit to recuperate land for California indigenous tribal descendants excluded local tribal descendents as a result of their complex history. The common oversimplified and misunderstood narrative about indigenous populations fails to account for their forced loss of identity, language, culture, land, and traditional way of life.

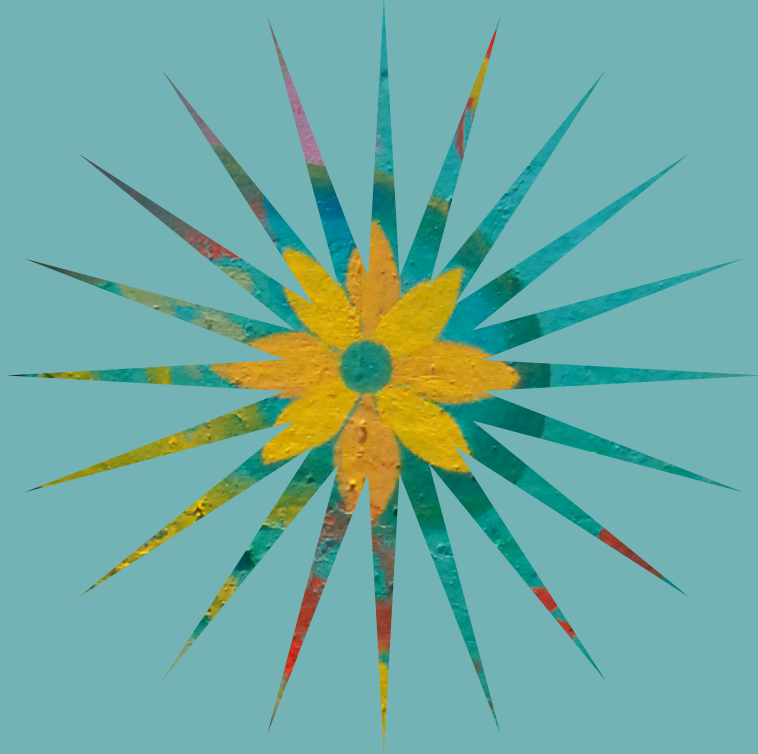
This externally-defined narrative continues to contribute to current struggles by local tribal descendents in their pursuit of federal recognition of their tribal status. This status would afford them a legal path to exercise their full rights to ancestral lands, to social and cultural rituals, and to political participation.





# Chinese immigrant roots

FROM WHICH SALINAS RISES



Chinese immigrants formed a critical labor force during the early days of land conversion in Salinas. Their labor contributed to the drainage of Salinas marshlands and the development of agricultural fields in the late 1800s.

Their subsequent labor as farmworkers contributed to the early era of grain production in Salinas, followed by cultivation of lettuce and other crops, for which the Salinas Valley is renowned to this day.

The large Chinese immigrant farmworker population resided in a largely segregated neighborhood in Salinas, which grew into the second largest Chinatown in California, after San Francisco.

Racist legislation (U.S. Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882) would eventually curb Chinese immigration in Salinas. The law banned foreign-born Chinese immigrants with the right to nationalize as U.S. citizens, and blocked U.S. entry for nearly all Chinese people.

The law remained active for sixty years.

It was finally repealed as a political move during World War II, when China was a U.S. ally against Japan. Covenants against Chinese ownership of residential property were active in several Salinas neighborhoods, well into the post-WWII era.

Nonetheless, small businesses and Chinese immigrant culture made a lasting mark in Salinas.





# Japanese immigrant roots

FROM WHICH SALINAS RISES

With Chinese immigrant labor reduced as a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese immigrants replaced them as a predominant labor source for Salinas agriculture. Japanese-immigrant farm labor contributed to the expansion of the second largest sugar-beet refinery in California (Spreckels Sugar Refinery). Many Japanese immigrant farmworkers lived in Spreckels labor camps upon arrival, and then moved on to lease and own small ranches, farms, and businesses in Salinas. Japanese-immigrant farmers would go on to contribute to the introduction of agricultural techniques that increased the profitability of lettuce, berries, and other crops in Salinas.

Racist legislation once again arose, as it occurred with Chinese immigrants. This time with state rather than federal legislation. In 1913, the Alien Land Law of California attempted to prohibit Japanese immigrant farmers from owning or leasing land. Some Japanese immigrants placed the titles of their ranches and farms under their children's names in an attempt to bypass the California Alien Land Law.

The law remained active for forty years (before the state deemed it as unconstitutional).

With the Alien Land Law still in place, the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of World War II occurred. All Japanese-immigrant families in Salinas, regardless of citizenship status, were forced to leave their ranches and farms. They were first detained in a temporary assembly center in today's Salinas Sports Complex, and then sent to internment camps in the desert of Poston, Arizona. Most Japanese immigrants remained in the camps for three to four years. During internment, Japanese immigrant farms were confiscated by the U.S. government. Most of those who were sent to the camps lost their land during confinement, as it was taken over, bought, or had its ownership transferred. Upon release from internment camps, some Japanese immigrants returned to Salinas, and to farming.

# Filipino immigrant roots

FROM WHICH SALINAS RISES

Filipinos became a dominant source of farmworker labor in Salinas as a population to replace Chinese and Japanese immigrants due to anti-Asian laws. The racist legislation that was placed primarily on Chinese and Japanese immigrants did not apply to Filipino immigrants.

This is because Filipino immigrants were classified as non-citizen American nationals at the time. The Philippines became a U.S. colony after the defeat of the Spanish in the Spanish-American War, which was followed by the defeat of the Philippines in the Philippine-American War.

The recruitment and import of primarily male Filipino immigrants as agricultural laborers contributed to the growing sugar beet and lettuce industries in Salinas. They were mostly housed in labor camps. Over time, local Filipino families also became small business owners in Salinas.



Racist measures that were used against Chinese and Japanese immigrants were once again enacted against immigrant laborers. This time, however, the legal status of Filipino immigrants required distinct tactics.

California amended interracial marriage restrictions to specify the illegality of Filipino immigrants marrying white Americans. In addition, Filipino immigrants were subjected to widespread employment and housing discrimination in Salinas.

While Chinese immigrant labor may be recognized for their contribution to the conversion of Salinas marshlands into agricultural fields, and Japanese immigrants for the introduction of increasingly profitable farming practices in the Salinas agricultural industry, Filipino immigrants contributed to the farm labor movement in Salinas.

Filipino immigrant farmworkers, largely lettuce crop workers, represented by the Salinas chapter of the Filipino Labor Union, engaged in several labor strikes to improve their wages during the Depression era.



They took part in joint strikes with the Salinas Vegetable Packers Association (composed largely of *Dust Bowl* migrant packing-shed workers) and with the Fruit and Vegetable Workers Union (representing mostly *Dust Bowl* migrant lettuce packers and truck drivers).

Striking Filipino lettuce workers eventually achieved a historic victory in California. As organized ethnic workers, they negotiated with growers to increase their wages, improve their working hours, and obtain formal recognition of their union. However, Filipino immigrant-led lettuce strikes in Salinas brought some of the most violent repression against organized labor in California history.

Filipino striking lettuce workers were subjected to tear gas, shootings, and beatings from the police, armed mobs, and the California Highway Patrol. One strike was forced to end after a Filipino labor camp, just south of Salinas (owned by the co-founder of the Filipino Labor Union), was burned to the ground, killing a Filipino. Monterey County eventually halted the era of Filipino lettuce strikes with the passage of an emergency anti-picketing ordinance. It would be another thirty years until Salinas immigrant farmworkers would take part in the farm labor movement.



U.S. anti-Filipino sentiment was growing during this time. In response, the federal government passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act, paving the way for Philippine independence (over a ten-year period).

Nonetheless, the passage of the legislation immediately removed the U.S. non-citizen national status from Filipinos living in the U.S. This caused an immediate legal status change for Filipinos without U.S. citizenship to that of alien.

As a result of this move, Filipinos living in the U.S. were susceptible to deportation. Simultaneously, the U.S. established a restricted quota system to reduce U.S. entry for new Filipino immigrants.



# *Dust Bowl* migrant roots

FROM WHICH SALINAS RISES

During the era of a growing Filipino immigrant labor force in Salinas, a new migrant population was drawn to work in the region. Families from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, and Colorado were forced to leave their lands due to a combination of two simultaneous crises - severe drought and an economic depression. This exodus of what became defined as *Dust Bowl* migration to Salinas was first established by families living in their trailers, pitched tents, and makeshift shacks. At the time, the land was sparsely developed with some ranchos. Over time, these migrant families purchased small parcels of land, and built modest homes. The land parcels belonged to the ranch that was owned and subdivided by Elton Hebron (in the area known presently as Hebron Heights).

Throughout the history of Salinas and the region's growing agricultural economy, diverse labor forces contributed to specific needs at specific times. Chinese immigrants contributed to the drainage of marshlands into agricultural fields. The Japanese immigrants contributed to the refinement of agricultural production practices. Filipino immigrants contributed to the enrichment of the sugar-beet industry. *Dust Bowl* migrants also contributed to the agricultural industry, while also arriving at a time of population expansion in the region. As a result, *Dust Bowl* migrants played a significant role in the emergence of the neighborhood of East Salinas / Alisal (at that time, the place became known as the Alisal).

While not all *Dust Bowl* migrants worked in agriculture, a large number became farmworkers. They contributed to the sugar-beet industry and played a significant role as lettuce packing-shed workers and truck drivers. Together with Filipino immigrant farmworkers, *Dust Bowl* agricultural workers took part in labor organizing for better wages.

Racism against *Dust Bowl* migrants demonstrated that Salinas was a place that not only discriminated against immigrants of color. It was a place that discriminated against poor, working-class whites as well.





# Mexican immigrant roots

FROM WHICH SALINAS RISES

Salinas has a long history with a Mexican population. In the eras of Spanish and Mexican rule, and finally under U.S. rule, Mexican labor has played a major role in the transformation of land and the production of agriculture in Salinas. (Prior to the U.S. takeover of California at the end of the Mexican-American War, Mexicans living and working in California were not immigrants.)

Over the years, laws were established that built up the Mexican immigrant farmworker population as the dominant source of agricultural labor in Salinas. This remains true to date. The Mexican immigrant farmworker community in Salinas contributes to the region's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry.

During World Wars I and II, the U.S. voiced a narrative that the country was experiencing an emergency, war-driven, labor shortage. This led the way for the U.S. to construct guestworker programs that imported contract laborers from Mexico. Salinas was a beneficiary of this arrangement.

A second era of a guestworker program was installed as a *temporary labor contract between the U.S. and Mexico*. More than twenty years later, this guestworker program - the *Bracero or Strong Arm Program* - remained in place.

Braceros in Salinas contributed to the agricultural production of lettuce, strawberries, and other crops. The all-male workforce was housed in substandard labor camps, with military-style barracks, and were set in geographically and socially isolating locations.

Braceros experienced unsafe working conditions that worsened as Salinas agriculture became increasingly industrialized, and with the introduction of pesticide application in the fields.

At the end of World War II, there was a four-year pause made by Mexico before renewing the Bracero Program. During that time, agreements between Mexico and U.S. growers maintained the flow of Mexican immigrant guestworkers. That time also marked a rise in Mexican immigrants entering the U.S. without legal documentation.

The U.S. government finally terminated the Bracero Program after public outrage over a fatal accident that involved nearly two dozen Braceros. A labor bus transporting Braceros without safety protocols (a common occurrence) crashed into a train just outside of Salinas, in the small neighboring town of Chualar.

Twenty-two Braceros and one undocumented Mexican immigrant were killed. Only twelve Braceros were identified (they were often known only by work numbers and not by their names).

The funeral for the Braceros was attended by nine thousand people in the gymnasium of Palma High School in Salinas. The one undocumented Mexican immigrant was buried separately.

While the incident was not the first fatal labor-bus accident involving Braceros, the number of deaths called attention to widespread, exploitative, and unsafe conditions, and produced nationwide protests. A year after the crash, the Bracero Program was discontinued. However, Braceros were still brought into the country years after the U.S. officially terminated the program.

Exploitation of Mexican immigrant farmworkers led to the return of labor organizing in Salinas. Nearly three decades after the organized labor strikes led by Filipino immigrants and *Dust Bowl* migrants, a legal victory won by Mexican immigrant farmworkers set the stage for a new era of farm labor organizing. The lawsuit was brought forth by Mexican immigrant strawberry and carrot farmworkers in Salinas and guaranteed them with the right to unionize under the California Labor Code.

What was to follow in Salinas was one of the largest agricultural strikes in U.S. history. Seven thousand, mostly Mexican immigrant farmworkers, went on strike against forty Salinas grower-shippers (as members of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee under the leadership of César Chávez). Lettuce and berry crop sales suffered and violence erupted. Some negotiations were achieved. A small number of growers agreed to offer wage increases, prohibit certain pesticides, and provide medical insurance. However, improved labor measures were short-lived.

Undocumented Mexican immigration would increase again with the amendment of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. This reduced the number of legal visa holders from Mexico. In addition, the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994 deepened the dislocation of Mexican farmers.

In response to anti-Mexican immigrant rhetoric, racist policies and practices were employed in the U.S. The explicitly racist U.S. deportation policy, *Operation Wetback*, led to intimidation and fear. Immigration and Naturalization Service officers raided public areas apprehending Mexican immigrants in Salinas, in the fields, at labor camps, at bus stops, and on the streets. This terrorizing instrument of racialized discrimination against Mexican immigrants in Salinas was deployed even though the majority of undocumented Mexican immigrants were employed in Salinas agriculture.

Mexican guestworkers continue to be a part of U.S. immigration and labor policy. The U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986) amended the H-2A temporary agricultural visa program to, once again, import labor. Mexican immigrant farmworkers have been the majority of these visa holders.

Today, most farmworkers in Salinas are undocumented Mexican immigrants. A rise in female farmworkers has increased cases of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. Growing numbers of indigenous Mexican immigrant farmworkers raise their vulnerability to discrimination. Exploitative working conditions for immigrant farmworkers continue with unlivable wages, long working hours, little to no days of rest, pesticide exposure, lack of health insurance and protections, among others.





# Initiative design

## Chapter 2.



SALINAS YOUTH INITIATIVE

# Design

The Salinas Youth Initiative was designed with three essential ingredients that transformed place-based grantmaking into an equity-enriched partnership: ***critical inquiry, trust in local leaders, and responsiveness to complexity.***



HIJOS DEL SOL



# Critical inquiry catalyzed the Initiative

*Critical inquiry* catalyzed the Initiative by reimagining the role of philanthropy in a place rooted in historic and systemic inequities.



PARTNERS FOR PEACE



CHISPA

The Packard Foundation conceptualized the Salinas Youth Initiative as part of a long history of relationships and investments in Salinas.

A catalyzing moment in 2011 involving youth violence in Salinas prompted the Packard Foundation to reconsider its role and purpose in the community. They reflected upon their prior youth-focused funding and the overall landscape for young people in Salinas.

Fundamental questions by the Packard Foundation involved how they could do grantmaking differently in Salinas, and how they could strengthen their influence in a place with deep roots of generational, structural, and systemic inequities.

# Trust in local leaders defined the Initiative

The Salinas Youth Initiative represented a bold reinvention of place-based grantmaking guided by *trust in local leaders*.



ARTISTS INK



CHISPA

Trust in local leaders placed community wisdom at the center of decisions for how best to create relevant and lasting community change.



The Salinas Youth Initiative emerged out of a yearning by the Packard Foundation to reimagine their role as a grantmaker in a place where they hold a deep connection and a long history.

Through this internal reflection, the Packard Foundation integrated dedicated Salinas leaders as part of a co-design team to support them in reimagining their place-based grantmaking. This “power-sharing” model where community and philanthropy genuinely co-created an innovative Initiative also embodied the equity, trust, and humility that would define the overall Initiative experience.

The legitimization of community leaders to guide the Packard Foundation’s reshaping of their identity and narrative in the community was then extended to the organizational partners of the Initiative.

The focus of funding for dedicated grassroots leaders was based on the premise that they hold innate capacities to shape, refine, and influence relevant change in their communities (if they are given the autonomy and resources to do so).

Intentionally absent from the Initiative design was a top-down agenda. In contrast to externally-projected expectations often imposed onto communities by philanthropy, local leaders were trusted to creatively experiment and guide change on their terms.

As such, the Salinas Youth Initiative emerged as a design based on trust in deeply rooted and committed grassroots leaders. The Initiative would build upon the notion that strengthened confidence among trusted community leaders would translate into their willingness and desire to take greater risks in experimenting and delivering constructive experiences and opportunities for young people.

This approach of philanthropy inviting community leaders to hold a lateral place in the rethinking of their investment strategy marked a distinct departure from a more conventional power imbalance that exists between philanthropy and communities. There is a tendency for decisions to be made about communities rather than with them.

The inclusion of local wisdom delivered. The Packard Foundation embarked upon a radical redesign of their grantmaking in Salinas. A principal lever of change involved the prioritization of social justice-oriented, grassroots leaders as the grantee partners of the Salinas Youth Initiative. For this purpose, *grassroots* was defined as groups and organizations with community leadership assets - authentic connection and grounding in community. This decision represented a substantial shift from the Packard Foundation’s history of funding larger, established institutions in Salinas.

The Salinas Youth Initiative’s uplifting of grassroots efforts charted new territory for the Packard Foundation. It also challenged more traditional decision making by philanthropy where start-ups or small community groups are overlooked or excluded for being either too “high risk” or ineligible based on selection criteria.

For the Packard Foundation, the Initiative presented a moment of intentional risk, experimentation, and learning. Philanthropic “business as usual” appeared a much greater risk.

Trust in local leaders turned out to be a solid approach. Alignment with many of the hopes independently voiced by young people in Salinas were met by the efforts of organizations in the Initiative.



EPICENTER



ARTISTS INK

As stated by one of the Initiative’s local co-designers: “The David and Lucile Packard Foundation sees this effort as a way to redesign and reinvent the grantee-funder relationship.” The local co-designers realized that the Initiative’s intention would require grantees to believe in this shift away from a traditional relationship with philanthropy. In their words: “The challenge for these groups is to understand that we are honoring who they are and what they do, and not expecting them to become something else.”

In support of the grassroots-centered model, a Packard Foundation staff member shared: “The Initiative works with organizations where they are, and builds them up in a non-directive way, catapulting organizations toward their vision, not our vision.” They continued, “It is exciting to see organizations develop and evolve on their own terms. To witness them recognize their sense of strength and power, as individual organizations, as individual leaders, and as a collective voice. We didn’t force that. We asked questions. They arrived there organically.”

“

No philanthropic institution does this.

”

- INITIATIVE ORGANIZATION



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ADVOCACY



# Time, funds, and tools enriched the Initiative

*Responsiveness to the complexity for influencing systemic change* enriched the Initiative.



EPICENTER



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

The Salinas Youth Initiative was responsive to complexity - particularly in a place of historic disinvestment - by infusing it with *ample time, funds, and tools for learning and evolution*

The Salinas Youth Initiative was designed as a **multi-year commitment**. It was originally created as a three-year effort with a single cohort. However, it grew into a two-cohort Initiative, each engaging in a total of five years. The initial cohort was invited to remain a part of the Initiative for the entire ten years, though with financial support for the first five years only.

The intentionality of a multi-year design was based on an understanding of and appreciation for the time it takes to influence systemic change. This is especially true for a place and people that have faced deep generational and structural inequities.

Time within the Initiative was designed to also cultivate trusting, meaningful relationships among organizational peers, with their mentors, with the Packard Foundation (who was present as a relatively frequent partner), and with capacity building supports that formed part of the Initiative.

The value of a longer-term investment was emphasized by the Initiative’s mentors. One stated: “Any multi-year funding commitment is going to be stabilizing for local leaders accustomed to unrealistic and extremely limiting one-year grant cycles.” Another mentor reinforced the reasoning of the Initiative design: “What business would thrive with only one year of investment? No business would start with that short-term investment.

The multi-year commitment of the Initiative pointed to the experiential wisdom of the design team to apply a developmental model that recognizes the slow and uneven growth of individuals and organizations that builds over time.

Community leaders were afforded the time to organically evolve their leadership, organizational identity, culture, values, structures and practices, strategic partnerships, and influence in the community. The relative spaciousness of time was intended to stimulate an environment of creativity and innovation.



SALINAS PUBLIC LIBRARY



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

The Salinas Youth Initiative was designed **with multiple streams of funds** available in three categories: program and operational; small capital; and capacity building.

Funded partners decided on an annual basis whether to request funds from one, two, or all three pools of funding. This would become a guiding value of the Initiative - that funded partners would determine their needs for best advancing change to “on their terms.” A Packard Foundation staff member described this as: “Trust in having people ask for what they need.”



The small capital resources appeared to offer a valuable contribution to the partner organizations. As an Initiative organization shared: “Appreciate we need simple resources like chairs and a whiteboard. Can you imagine functioning without these items?”

A staff member of the Packard Foundation voiced their surprise with the small capital piece. That said, they pointed to the importance of this particular funding. In their words, “Salinas youth are deserving of access to the same level of equipment and materials as others.”

They went on to state: “The private sector does this. Why doesn’t the nonprofit sector? Grassroots leaders should have what they need, beyond survival mode.”

The Salinas Youth Initiative was also designed with ***diverse tools for intentional learning***. Dedicated mentors were employed for continuous and comprehensive one-on-one accompaniment. Mentor-facilitated, funded partner-guided, peer-to-peer convenings were offered at frequent intervals. Reflective sessions with the Initiative’s embedded evaluator were held throughout the Initiative. These intentional learning supports were available to all organizational partners, though none of them were mandatory.

As the Initiative progressed, the Packard Foundation invested in the creation of spaces for Salinas youth to voice their experiences and hopes. Multiple opportunities were offered for young people to engage, and organizational partners were invited to learn about what was voiced.

Echoing this sentiment, in the words of an Initiative mentor: “Selling tacos, washing cars...to buy supplies for kids. That is systemic. There are all these symptoms about how people get access to resources. Having full time jobs, not ever having enough money. Beautiful to have parents volunteering, but at some point that is not going to be sustainable.”



CHISPA

The Initiative mentors remarked on the evolution and value of the comprehensive and integrated learning throughout the Initiative. In the voice of a mentor: “The evaluation evolved dynamically. We didn’t plan it but it became essential for the developmental model of the Initiative.”

Initiative organizations also appreciated the learning spaces created by the Initiative. In the words of one organization: “The space and the flexibility that the Packard Foundation allowed the organizations, as they grow, learn, and shift, in order to serve our community as their needs shift and evolve, is invaluable.” Another organization shared: “Although the program funding piece is crucial and fundamental, the learning resources have provided the nourishment that has contributed to the success of our programs.”



PARTNERS FOR PEACE



CESAR CHAVEZ FUTBOL ACADEMY

A Packard Foundation staff member reflected on the mutual benefit of the investment in learning as part of the Initiative. In their words: “The Salinas Youth Initiative is enabling the Foundation to do new things. It has been reciprocal. Giving back to us in so many ways. We are learning and benefiting so much in our work. Grantees are shaping what we do. The role that they play is two-way. They have an influence on our work.”

In all, the Initiative reflected a comprehensive environment of resources. The integration of multiple components, and the way they were delivered, is what made the Initiative unique. As an Initiative organization highlighted: “It’s the package. You have the tools to succeed. Can’t imagine a better model.” Another organization of the Initiative emphasized this sentiment by stating, “This is the only grant we have or have had like this.”

“

Everyone has what they need to pursue systemic change.

”

- INITIATIVE MENTOR





# Chapter 3.



## Youth voices



SALINAS YOUTH INITIATIVE

# Youth voices

A core investment of the Initiative *uplifted voices of young people from Salinas* to learn directly from them about their realities and their hopes.

ORIGINAL IMAGES FROM SALINAS YOUTH VOICE INSTAGRAM, DRAMA SCULPT, AND WISH TREE INQUIRIES.



Youth expressed a *love for Salinas*. They described Salinas as a place with fields of fertile land surrounded by mountains. They demonstrated a deep relationship to the land of Salinas.

In their words: “Agriculture defines who we are, defines our families, working in the fields, sacrificing under sun and rain, to provide a better life for their family.” In spite of their sense of connectedness to place, some youth dream of leaving Salinas, but also of returning.



Youth also exposed *deep roots of inequities* that they face as young people growing up in Salinas. Youth described growing up in Salinas as hard, frightening, and dangerous. They shared frequent exposure to gangs and drugs, and suggested that the city has become numb to the violence. In fact, a shooting occurred a day or two prior to one of the listening sessions with Salinas youth.

In spite of fears associated with their neighborhood, Salinas youth demonstrated empathy toward youth that make negative choices. They pointed to the need for supportive adults and role models. They stated how “some youth do not have outside support and end up making bad decisions. They become part of gangs because they feel like that is where they belong. That it is their only family.”

Salinas youth called out the injustice of neighboring cities that have local places for young people. This point is even more disheartening when considering that nearly half the population of East Salinas / Alisal is under twenty-five years of age.

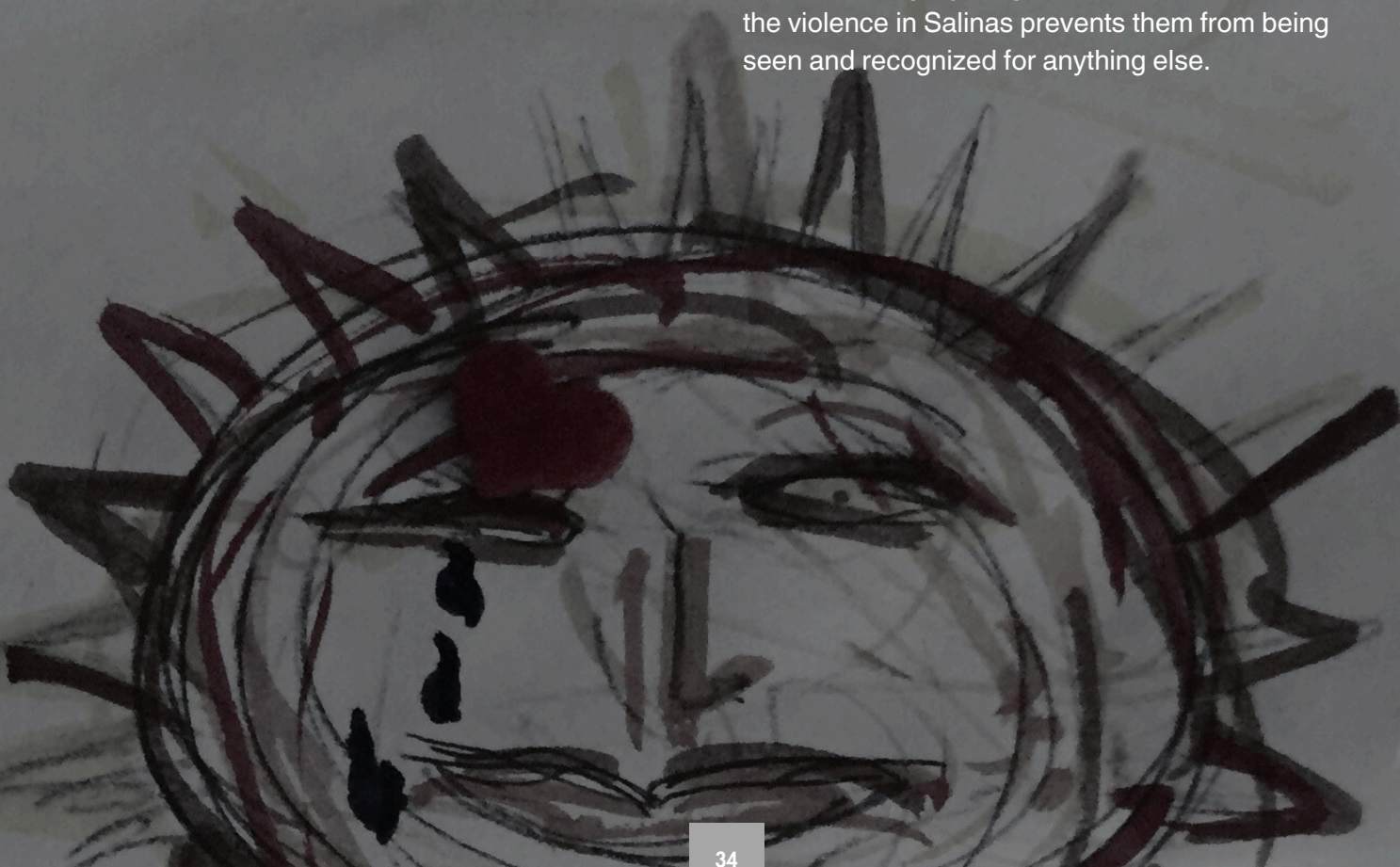
Youth also identified the absence of local places for them as something that contributes to negative choices made by some young people. In their words, “there is a lot of violence because there is nowhere to go.”

Local adult leaders agreed. They articulated that Salinas youth should not have to go to other communities to find places that offer them an alternative to the streets. Places where they interact differently with each other. Places that shape a narrative of how to come together as a healthier community. As a community leader described: “East Salinas is all asphalt. Rows and rows of housing. Kids don’t have a place. The place becomes a street. The street becomes their playground.”

Salinas youth spoke of the exploitation of their hardworking agricultural families. They expressed that the treatment of their families produces shame of where they come from and how they are portrayed.

They lifted up the need for social justice and revealed their experience with discrimination based on race, economic status, gender, and LGBTQ+ identity. They asserted it is unfair that they have lower quality health care, education, and housing.

Salinas youth voiced how they are stigmatized, stereotyped, and automatically judged as young people growing up in Salinas. They resent how adults place low expectations on them because of where they are from. The persistent connection between being a young person from Salinas and the violence in Salinas prevents them from being seen and recognized for anything else.





“

Others don't live with the fear of wondering if your family will make it home safe.

”

- SALINAS YOUTH





Salinas youth shined a light on their wisdom and ***re-envisioned Salinas as a place rooted in equity.***

In this reimagined place, young people from Salinas uplifted these hopes: “Their culture, history, traditions, and ancestors are honored and celebrated. Their families and communities are unified and supported, with rights to education, health, and housing, with safe spaces for people of all ethnicities, genders, and intersectionalities.”

Young people from Salinas voiced their hopes to live in a place where: “All young people are valued and positively portrayed, with loving people they can trust in their life.” They envision local places where they: “Interact as peers, engage in discourse and social justice inspiration...build support systems, help each other, listen to each other, and motivate and influence each other.”

They offered descriptions of “honest, safe, healing places” for young people in Salinas where they “say what they feel, be who they want to be, feel understood, and not feel alone.” They seek places where they: “uplift their self expression, self confidence, self esteem, self love, hope, excitement, well-being, and joy.” Local places where they can: “have fun with friends, relax, and connect with other youth.” Youth pointed to the need for places in Salinas that are specifically for teens, and where they can be outside, in nature, with trees, lakes, and playgrounds.

In their vision for Salinas, youth imagined a place where they have: “inspiring, reliable, and positive adults that accept and reassure us, recognize our accomplishments, motivate us for our future, and support us so we don’t end up making bad decisions or support us with second chances.”

They imagine Salinas as a place where they have: “meaningful, relatable, and relevant experiences,” and where they: “build solidarity, lead change, and become the best versions of ourselves.”





“

We have a lot to give but that gets lost in the violence.

”

- SALINAS YOUTH

# Initiative influence



## Chapter 4.



SALINAS YOUTH INITIATIVE

# Influence

The Packard Foundation's Salinas Youth Initiative transformed *place-based grantmaking into an equity-enriched partnership with community.*



[PARTNERS FOR PEACE](#)



[HIOS DEL SOL](#)

The Initiative uplifted the lives of young people in Salinas by nourishing *local, relevant, meaningful places* for them.

In these local places, young people from Salinas were *surrounded by reliable, positive, motivating, inspiring, loving, and supportive adults.*



[EPICENTER](#)



EPICENTER

“

The best thing about these places is the people. They help us to push through the tough times, to strengthen our mentality to never give up, to work hard, to pursue success, and to achieve anything we set our minds to.

”

- SALINAS YOUTH

Dedicated leaders of the Initiative bolstered local opportunities for Salinas youth to ***build solidarity.***



ARTISTS INK

“

I feel hope. That what we said will lead to actual change.

”

- SALINAS YOUTH

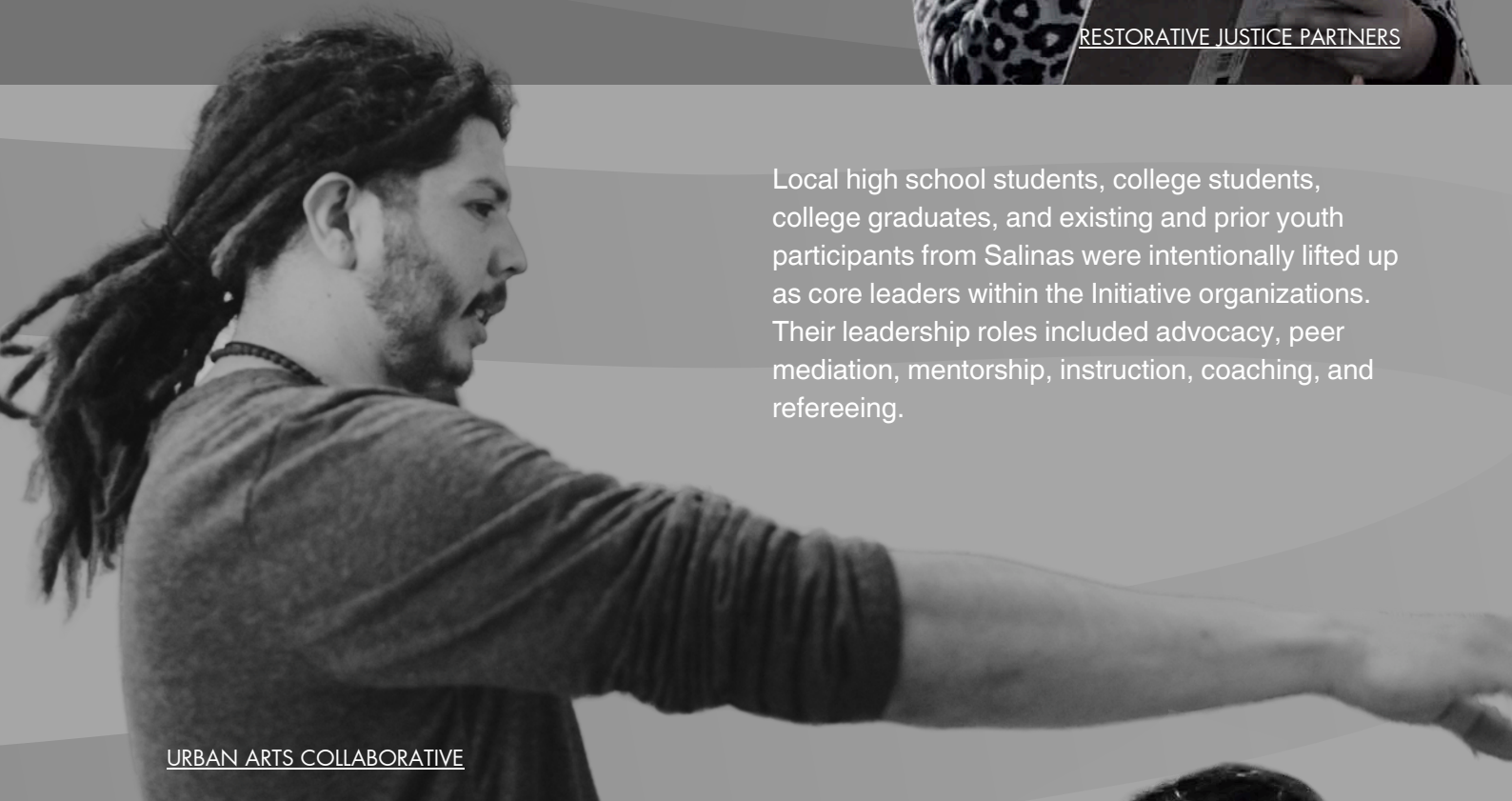




Young people from Salinas *cultivated their leadership* in local places nourished by the Initiative.



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PARTNERS



URBAN ARTS COLLABORATIVE

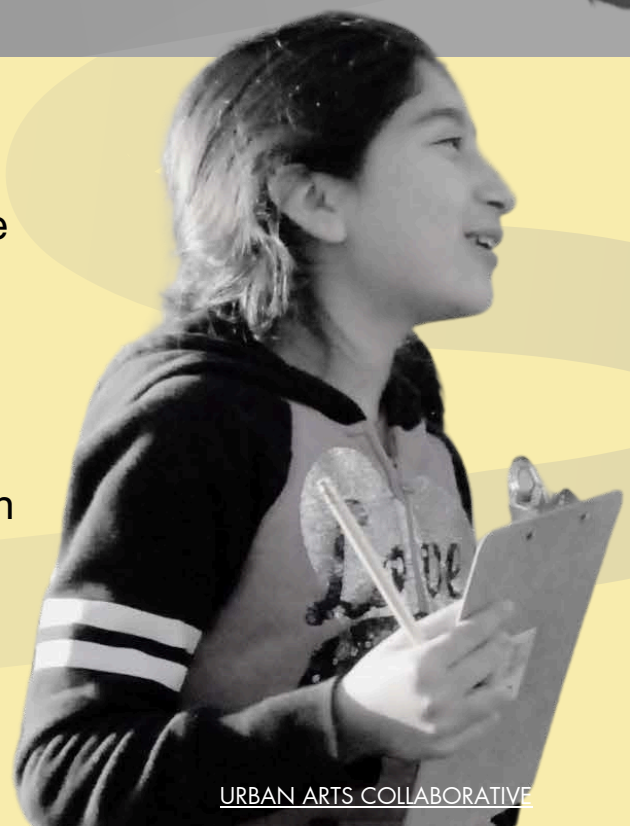
Local high school students, college students, college graduates, and existing and prior youth participants from Salinas were intentionally lifted up as core leaders within the Initiative organizations. Their leadership roles included advocacy, peer mediation, mentorship, instruction, coaching, and refereeing.

“

Being a role model for the next generation is one of the best feelings ever. I feel like they know they are free to do the things they like without being judged or criticized. We learn from them and they learn from us. Since we are not their teacher authority, they feel a different connection with us and they feel more equal to us.

”

- INITIATIVE YOUNG ADULT LEADER



URBAN ARTS COLLABORATIVE

“


Youth were not seen as service recipients. They were leaders, staff, and partners.

”

- INITIATIVE MENTOR



SALINAS PUBLIC LIBRARY



Young people from Salinas *attained academic victories*, with relentless support from the Initiative’s committed leaders.

CESAR CHAVEZ FUTBOL ACADEMY

Salinas youth in the Initiative’s organizations improved their high school attendance rates, obtained higher grades in high school, and graduated from high school. Many youth succeeded in achieving their higher education goals by applying, entering, and graduating from colleges and universities. Most of them earned scholarships, and remained involved in the Initiative organizations all the while.

These academic successes shine a light on the tireless pursuit of equity by the Initiative’s leaders. They played key roles in navigating first-generation youth and their families through the complex system of higher education. Their support to families contributed to them overcoming heavy emotional and financial burdens in order to take life-changing actions.

Young people from Salinas *elevated their confidence, imagination, culture, and identity* in the local places of the Initiative.



ARTISTS INK



HIJOS DEL SOL

“

I think about what I identify with...about my culture. I don't always see things in the ways others have depicted them, and I like to see my own interpretations. For example, Mother Mary is often depicted as a Western, white woman, and I wanted to create her as more ethnic.

”

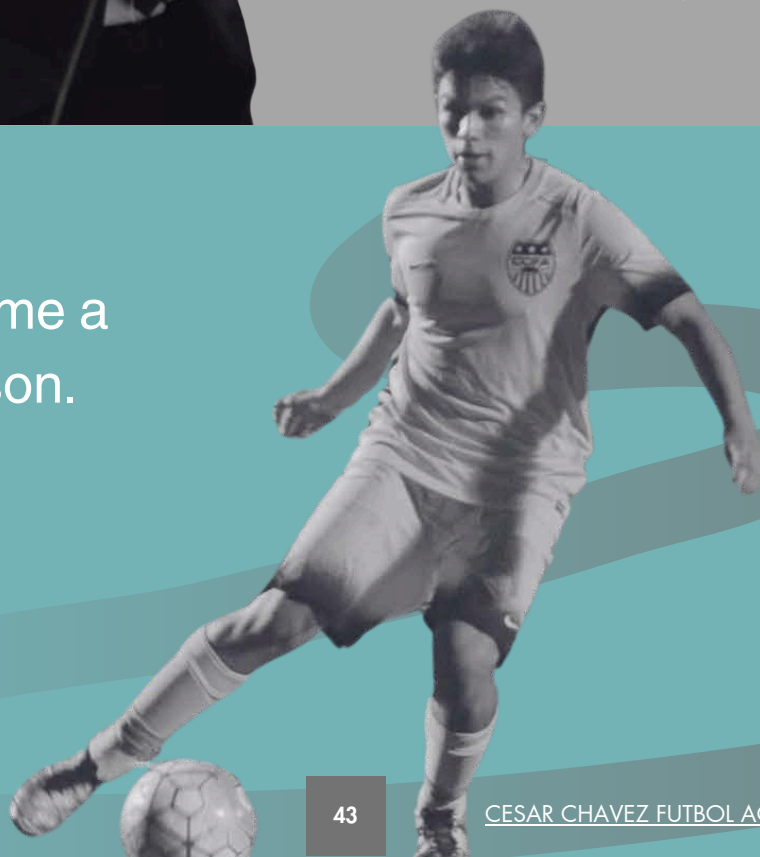
- SALINAS YOUTH

“

I have become a better person.

”

- SALINAS YOUTH





# Chapter 5.



# Insights

SALINAS YOUTH INITIATIVE

# Insights

The Packard Foundation's Salinas Youth Initiative **radically transformed place-based grantmaking** into a partnership with community in pursuit of equity and systemic change.



GIL BASKETBALL ACADEMY



The Salinas Youth Initiative represented a humanizing, liberatory, and responsive approach for advancing systemic change (while modeling equity in practice).

The lens for which this community-centered effort unfolded is one of relative abundance. In contrast to a more dominant paradigm of deficiency (of time and resources), the Initiative embodied a nourishing environment of relative amplitude.

**Ample time, trust, and tools** shaped and defined the Initiative, and championed its growth into a partnership, with a collective identity and a shared vision for uplifting youth, families, and community.

## T I M E . T R U S T . T O O L S .

*Time to reflect* on the place and people of Salinas, as a means for conceptualizing the Initiative, was integral for the Packard Foundation. They took the time to reimagine and reinvent their role as a grantmaker in the community.

This time for reflective inquiry produced an Initiative profoundly connected to people and place. Purposeful actions arose out of this critical thinking space that were pivotal for the Packard Foundation's reframe of their place-based grantmaking. They engaged, with intention, as a philanthropic partner that contributes to the dismantling of systemic inequities, rather than unintentionally perpetuating them.

The generative gift of time that gave rise to this model fed the entire Initiative experience. The multi-year approach of the Initiative afforded the people of place to organically evolve their leadership and their change efforts over time.



HIJOS DEL SOL



The multi-year commitment of the Initiative demonstrated the Packard Foundation's recognition of and responsiveness to the slow and uneven unfolding of systemic change, particularly in a place steeped in historic and structural inequities.

Funded partners were equipped with time to experiment, learn, and adapt their efforts. They benefited from the time to develop and deepen strategic relationships, and to cultivate trusting, honest, and constructive support systems among their peers and allies of the Initiative (Packard Foundation staff members, mentors, and capacity building partners).



## TIME . TRUST . TOOLS .

An equally vital component of the Initiative involved the Packard Foundation's *trust in local leaders*. This trust was first extended to two local leaders (with a long and respected history in Salinas) during the initial rethinking of how to do place-based grantmaking differently in the community. The Packard Foundation's recognition of both their role and limitations resulted in a genuinely innovative model of co-design. Local leaders were legitimized as critical partners to shape the Initiative with the Packard Foundation.

The trusting partnership among community and philanthropic leaders bore fruit in the form of a nutritive Initiative design. Core to this design was the integration of trust in local leaders as a guiding principle that was practiced throughout the Initiative.



CESAR CHAVEZ FUTBOL ACADEMY



Fundamental to the unconventional grantmaking model of the Salinas Youth Initiative was the deliberate absence of an externally imposed, top-down agenda, with a predetermined set of indicators that spell out what success should look like.

Rather, the Salinas Youth Initiative's trust-based model envisioned its funded partners as those best informed to identify what their youth, families, and community deserve. The critical function of the Initiative was to optimize the capacity of these leaders as they relentlessly pursued their vision.

The Packard Foundation's courageous move to center local leaders as key decision makers delivered. Funded partners guided experiences for local youth and families with deep relevance to their cultures, histories, struggles, and aspirations.

The grassroots approach was described by a local leader co-designer, "You can't come in and tell people what they are going to do. Honor who they are and what they do, and not expect them to become something else."

“

When an organization deconstructs the notion of power, its function is redefined with the community. Honesty, trust, and relationships are built.

”

- LOCAL LEADER CO-DESIGNER



EPICENTER



HIJOS DEL SOL

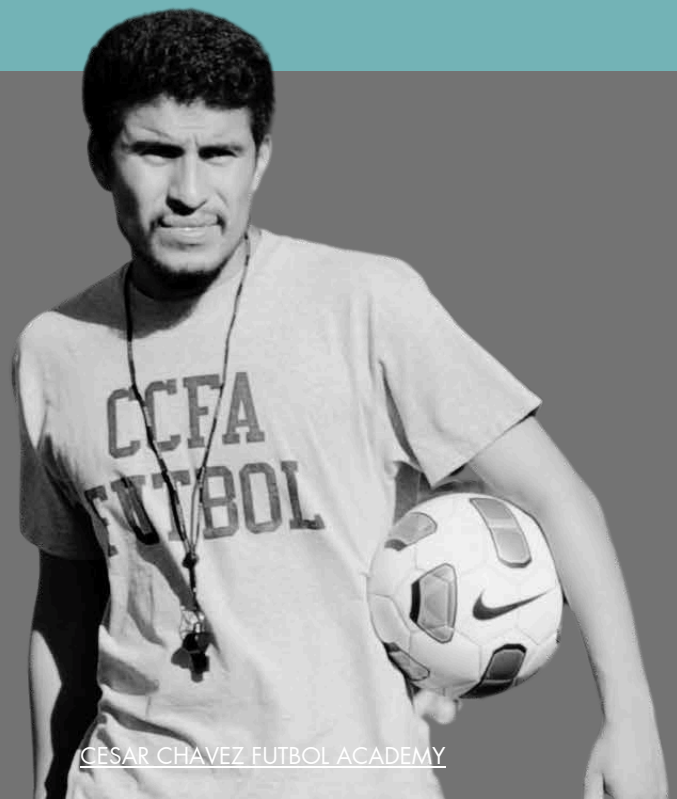
## T I M E . T R U S T . T O O L S .

While time and trust are essential ingredients, local leaders require **adequate tools to influence change**. The Salinas Youth Initiative exemplified a model in which funded partners can and should have what they need.

Multiple and simultaneous funding streams recognized and responded to the need for programs and operations to develop and function, for small capital purchases to be made, and for capacities to continue to evolve and strengthen. The comprehensiveness of these financial tools enriched the funded leaders, their organizations, and their youth and families with a sense of professionalism, dignity, and equity.

In addition to financial support, the Salinas Youth Initiative uplifted multiple spaces for intentional learning. They involved ongoing, dedicated, one-on-one mentorship, facilitated peer learning spaces, and critically reflective sessions with the Initiative’s embedded evaluator.

The Packard Foundation also invested in the creation and upholding of safe and authentic spaces for young people to express themselves. This deliberate and direct support for the uplifting of youth voices simultaneously cultivated social capital among an intergenerational team of local leaders who stepped up to guide these spaces.



CÉSAR CHAVEZ FUTBOL ACADEMY

# How might insights from the Salinas Youth Initiative invite dialogue and action?



CESAR CHAVEZ FUTBOL ACADEMY

We could embrace a *paradigm of abundance* as how we choose to advance systemic change. We could uplift insights from this story as a form of collective critical reflection, and take action by deciding that the environment for pursuing systemic change can and should fully nourish our capacities (and model equity all the while). This would shift us from a more common paradigm of scarcity, where philanthropy and communities struggle with inadequate time and resources. This produces unnecessary stress and unrealistic expectations, and results in unattainable fruits of change.

A shift toward a paradigm of abundance involves a reevaluation of our relationship with time. With time, we can recognize and uplift cultures, aspirations, histories, and struggles of people and place. With time, we can unleash the power of creativity, experimentation, learning, and innovation. With time, we can cultivate enduring partnerships for jointly leveraging change within systems. This is particularly important given the fragility of relationships in the context of persistent structural and systemic exclusion and marginalization of community leaders. Simply put by an Initiative mentor, “Grantmakers leave too early.”



A shift toward a paradigm of relative abundance would have us rethink the notion of quantifying the amount of time we should remain in a place before concluding a change effort, especially in places with deep roots of inequities. Instead, we could counter decades of systemic and structural disinvestment, neglect, racism, and oppression of people and place (that persist) with decades of commitment to restore, repair, reinvest, and engage in communities as relentless allies.

A new paradigm would respect the natural flow of developmental change - a slow, evolving, and nonlinear path, with (predictable and desired) learning curves, with uncontrollable yet changing contextual factors. It would meet people and place where they are at. As stated by an Initiative mentor, “Systems change is a whole new game to learn, and it is hard. The isolation, the discrimination, is still going on. Same old game.”





CESAR CHAVEZ FUTBOL ACADEMY

“  
Funders in this community  
say goodbye all the time.  
The question is always,  
*‘when are you leaving?’*

”  
- INITIATIVE MENTOR

Explicit in our paradigm of relative abundance is the richness of cultivating and nurturing mutual trust. We could recognize, legitimize, and uplift local wisdom and lived experience by centering community in decision-making for how to best design and deliver relevant and responsive experiences and alternatives to the status quo. This would support a move toward power-sharing and away from a more traditional imbalance of power where decisions about communities are made without them. Where local leaders engage with philanthropy as passive recipients or beneficiaries rather than as experts.



GIL BASKETBALL ACADEMY



In parallel to the Salinas Youth Initiative and the illustrative possibility of a new paradigm, this story deliberately seeks to reinforce and value our collective pursuit of equity. Rather than conclude a ten-year, place-based grantmaking initiative with a more traditional evaluation report, this is a story to honor and uplift people and place.

In an alternative paradigm, we could humanize more conventional data findings. We could narrate stories that replace (or at least supplement) data points and sterile numbers that tend to reduce lived experience, reinforce negative narratives, and fail to tell the full story of systemic injustices (the stories behind the numbers).

Finally, our paradigm of relative abundance would fully equip partners in pursuit of equity and systemic change. We could adequately resource the work (programs and operations), the things that are needed to do the work (small capital), and the skills that enrich the work (capacity building).

We could embrace this holistic approach. We could move away from inadequacy and restrictions (that there is not enough or there is exclusive criteria in place). We could eliminate either/or dynamics (distinct funding for programs, operations, planning, and capacity building rather than seeing all parts contributing to a functioning whole). This could move us away from the status quo, as described by an Initiative mentor, “Leaders doing it all still. Work tirelessly - that is the problem. Stuck in poverty mentality. No access to capital.”

We could be sure that communities have adequate resources to authentically uplift voices of lived experience. That they cultivate social capital of local leaders and compel mutual learning and action. In the words of an Initiative mentor, “Give us the time, the people, and space to learn, and the funding to do it.”



URBAN ARTS COLLABORATIVE



This story concludes in the words of Salinas Youth Initiative partners. While the Packard Foundation is “sunsetting” the Initiative, they see this moment as their “sunrise.”