



HEARING THE SILENT:

Piloting An Alternative Means Needs Assessment that Considers the Experience of Marginalized Communities

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- Needs assessments are a way to obtain information from communities on their actual experiences and desires
- There is evidence that methods used in traditional needs assessments are subject to bias related to responses of those in marginalized communties (Hahn, & Cella, 2003)
- Biases often occur due to power differentials between parties and/or literacy issues (Gist-Mackey, & Kingsford, 2020)
- Caregivers of children with disabilities (CWD) seen as effective reporters for CWD (Windsor, et al., 2024)
- Response is creation of alternate-means Needs Assessment, 2010, Pilot initiated but incomplete
- Hearing the Silent needs assessment is based in visual ethnography- participants (Caregivers) take pictures of (believed) obstacles to participation
- Caregivers "lead" the process describing photos in semi-structured interviews.



The Pilot

Recruitment and Tool Us

- Recruited from caregivers of students at the International Academy of HOPE (iHOPE)
 - Expanded to "snow ball recruiting- IRB approve
- First Interview – semi-structured (virtual)
 - Gathered demographic data
 - Provided instructions
 - Identified predictive responses from participants
- Caregivers take photographs
- Second Interview- semi-structured (virtual)
 - Selects most meaningful of photographs
 - Open ended questions about photographs
- Respondant survey
 - Sent to participants after completion of process
 - 9 statement Likert Scale agreement

User Response and Data Analysis

For Pilot-

Data Analysis-

First interview

- Analyzed only for demographics
- Data available to analyze predictive vs. Actual responses

Second interview

- Categorize Deductively utilizing the Typology for Environmental and Contextual Factors (TECF) (Kirschner et al. 2023)
- Iteratively reviewed by multiple reviewers with discussion for discrepancies

For Respondant survey-

- Analyzed using descriptive statistice (Frequency, Mean, Median, Mode)

Results/Conclusions

Results of Pilot

Only two participants completed the pilot

Common themes emerged from the Pilot as interfering with participation including:

- High noise level in classrooms and other places
- Availability of transportation to get to school and activities
- The schedule of available, accessible meaningful activities was also found to be an obstacle to both participants

Results of Participant Survey

Survey items related to usability and process received high average ratings of 4.5 to 5.0 indicating that participants found the evaluation process easy, the questions clear, and the interview format comfortable.

Evaluators found:

- Considerable differences between the participants anticipated obstacles to participation and those selected in the second interview.

This supports the idea that this evaluation yields novel information.

The participant survey indicated:

- The process was easy/useable
- The tool yielded important information.
- They did not find that the tool yielded results that were unique to the tool, indicating that the tool doesn't yield novel information.

Limitations

- two participants took part in this, limiting the generalizability of the tool
- Both participants socioeconomically and linguistically did not represent the populations that this tool was designed for.