Take our survey

Noise pollution is disproportionally concentrated in low-income communities that have higher proportions of Native American, Asian, Black, and Hispanic residents.
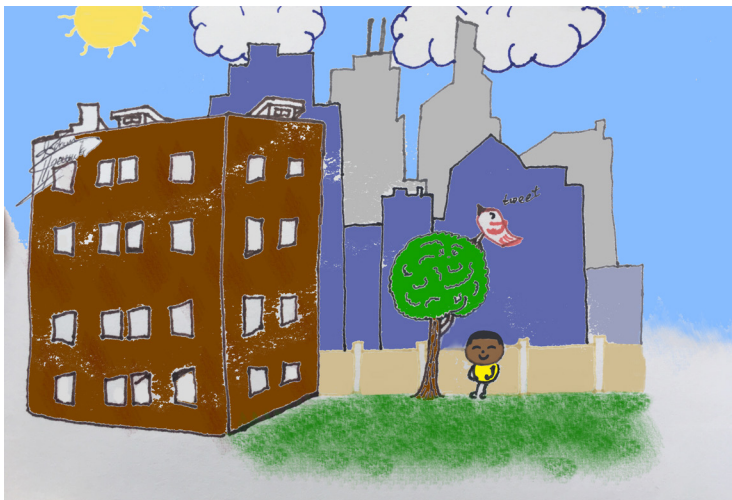

Illustration by Adam Spaulding-Astudillo

Illustration by Brigid Lucey

What is the

NOISE PROJECT

This is different. It's a research project funded by the National Science Foundation that is led by communities that have been historically excluded from the sciences. Our goal is to understand how noise pollution affects our communities, our ecosystem and our health so we can create real change.

We are raising awareness about noise pollution and promoting wellbeing and connection with nature - starting in our communities and moving to a national and global scale! We will identify loud areas, and create "noise refuges." We'll also record our levels of stress and wellbeing in those soundscapes.

To be most effective, we must change the way science is done so it includes our community voices. Collaborating in an equitable way means that this research isn't being done "traditionally." It's co-created and co-led by community members so our communities benefit directly.

We're consciously prioritizing the values and strengths of our communities. We abide by our co-created working agreements and community review board non-negotiables.

YOU RISK PERMANENT HEARING LOSS AND OTHER HEALTH HAZARDS IF YOU ARE EXPOSED TO:

85+ dB(A) regularly (8+ hours per day)

100+ dB(A) regularly (15+ minutes per day)

110+ dB(A) regularly (1.5+ minutes per day)

Effects of Noise

Excessive noise causes negative health effects like heart disease, diabetes, lower birth weight and learning difficulties in children. Many residents living in noisy areas report an inability to concentrate and a higher level of irritability due to noise pollution.

The source of noise (natural or man-made) matters! And, if you can control the noise it can make all the diference.

Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately affected by noise they're not producing, and cannot control.

In order to address this inequity and work towards policy change, we need to learn more about the impacts of noise on our communities.
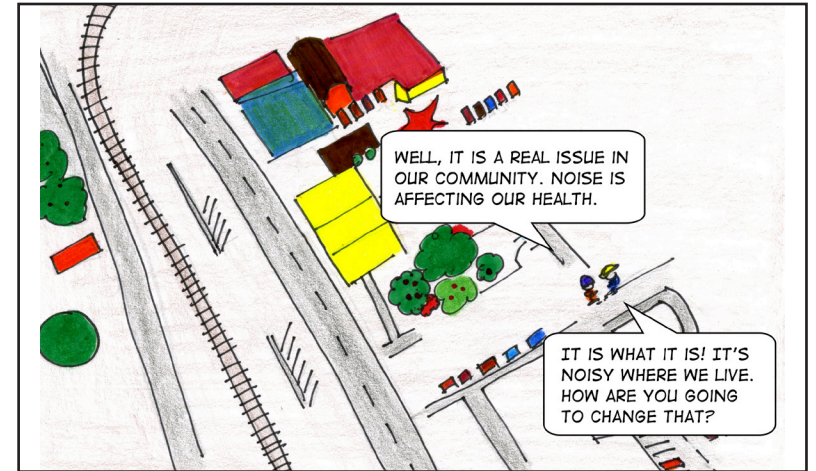

Illustration by Marilú López Fretts

Benefits of Sound

Our project is also interested in the ways sound can improve our community's health and quality of life. In fact, we can build soundscapes that soothe, de-stress, and even heal.

We are creating concerts focused on plants to promote sound healing, deepen connection to nature, and soothe our stress. We are exploring the value of silence and nature by creating "sound refuges" for inner city youth, and we are focusing on connecting to birds, because birdsong is linked to positive feelings, and can improve mental wellbeing and help people relax.

Not ur dominant culture
RESEARCH PROJECT

Our research shows that community-based organizations don't feel like they can be honest with partners when they see institutional racism. They feel like they are "walking on eggshells," because addressing inequity might harm their organization or community.

"Excessive noise can have negative health effects like heart disease, diabetes, lower birth weight and learning difficulties."

Who leads this project?

The NOISE Project is a collaboration between community-based organizations located in historically underrepresented or marginalized communities throughout North America and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

How we work

Our framework evolved from researching working relationships between science institutions and community-based organizations. Our findings reveal key themes, including: Power and Privilege, Trust and Transparency, Realities and Relevance, and Commitment and Collaboration.

More than 30 community-based organizations worked to develop an equitable methodology that uses community-based participatory research methods, including Grounded Theory and Critical Race Theory, with the goal of doing research that represents our communities' perspectives.

Illustration by José González