



Youth-Centered Approaches to Meaningful Engagement: Engaging Youth in Program Evaluation

July 10, 2018

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

YouthREX's Provincial office is located at York University. Both YouthREX and York University acknowledge their presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

Source: <http://aboriginal.info.yorku.ca/>

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- We are recording this webinar and it will be uploaded to both the YouthREX website and to the eXchange.
- If you have trouble with the audio quality today, please try calling in with a phone.

ABOUT YOUTHREX

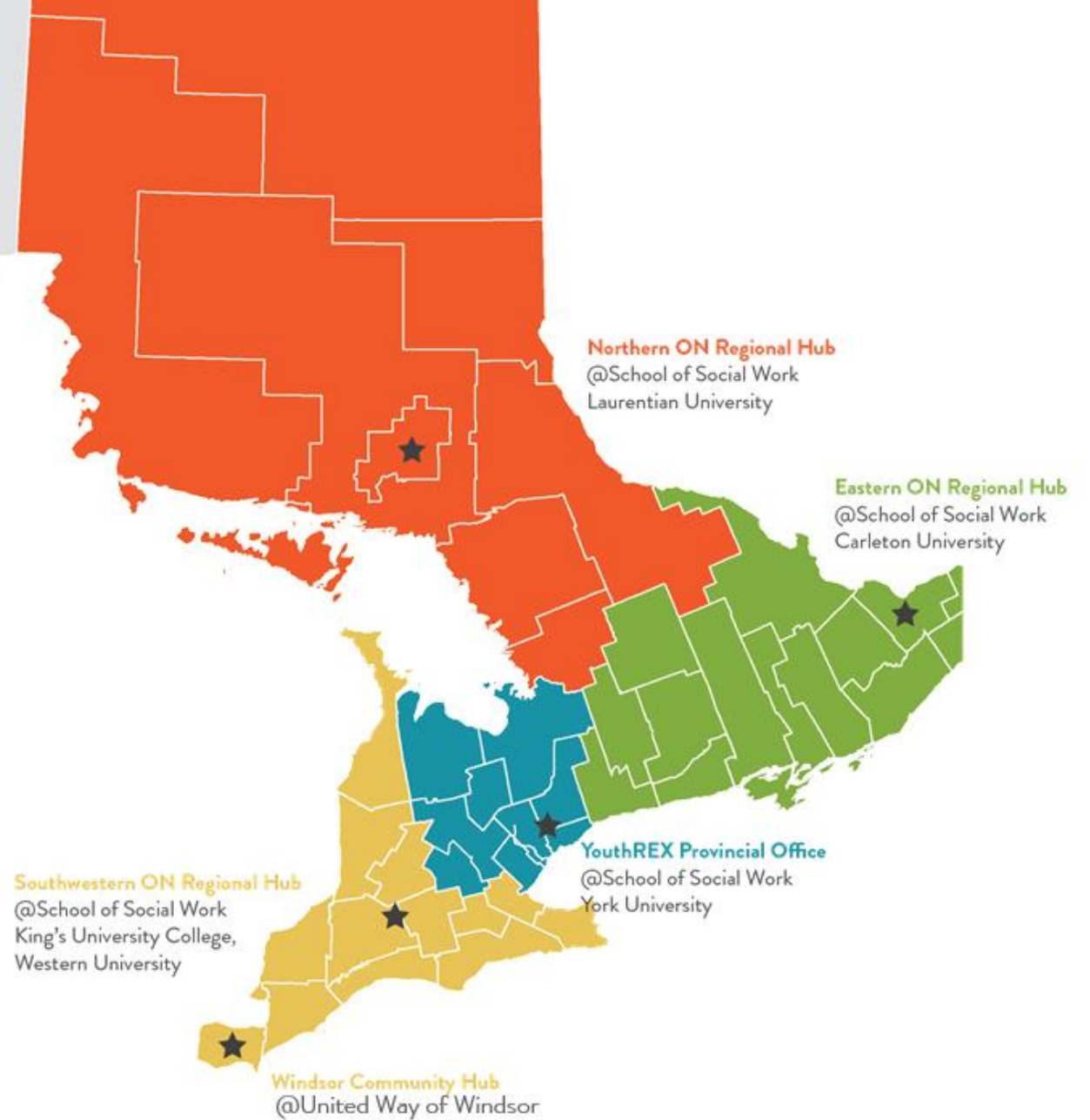
OUR VISION

An Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth.

OUR MISSION

To make research evidence and evaluation accessible and relevant to Ontario's youth sector through knowledge exchange, capacity building, and evaluation leadership.

WHERE WE WORK





**KNOWLEDGE
EXCHANGE**



**YOUTHREX
ED**



**YOUTH PROGRAM
SUPPORTS**

Today's Guests:



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**‘Growing Out: Evaluation and
Impact Youth Grown Tools’
Program**

Food  Share

SUSTAIN  ONTARIO

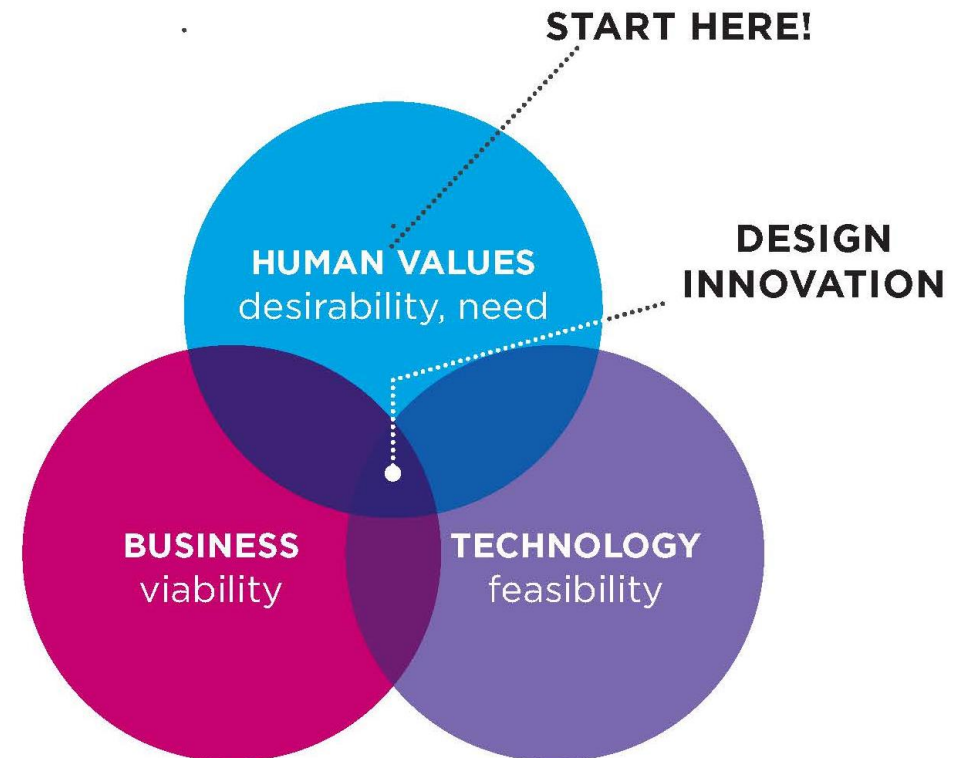
the alliance for healthy food & farming



Groundswell Projects is a Design Thinking company for good. We help clients understand, empathize with and design for people they care about most.

Areas of work:

- Futures
- Relevant Learning Experiences
- Culture of Wellbeing and Inclusion
- City-building for People with People
- Food



What is Growing Out

- Four organizations delivering community-based food programs for youth:
 - Toronto: Greenest City; FoodShare; Green Thumbs Growing Kids
 - Thunder Bay: Roots to Harvest
- 10 youth researchers – current or former participants of these programs
 - 4 collaborative learning workshops & 12 coaching sessions
 - Youth led all aspects of program evaluation and conducted independent data collection
- Adapted YouthREX evaluation framework to program need



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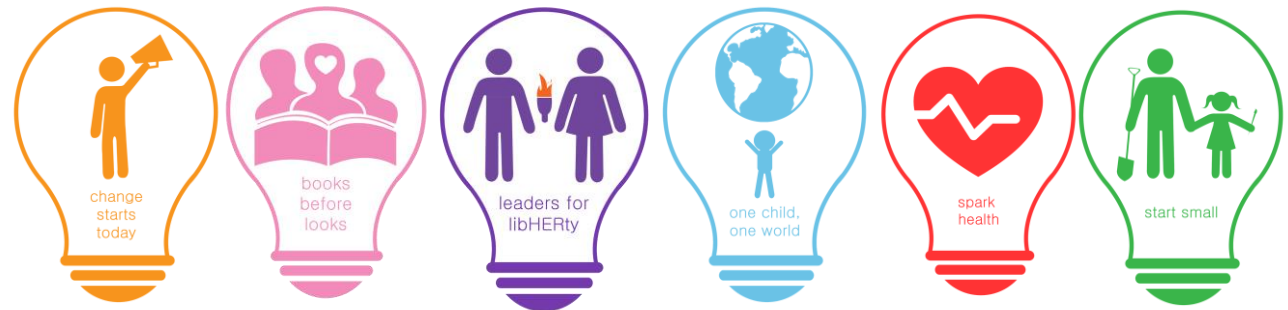
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Lead. Inspire. Grow. Hope. Transform.



Webinar Outline

01. Setting the Context

02. Evaluation Planning

03. Evaluation Implementation

04. Creation & Dissemination of Evaluation Findings

05. Lessons Learned

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Ontario's Youth Sector

Welfare State Retrenchment has shaped a climate of hyper-accountability, where funders are demanding evidence-based practice and programs

Funding is increasingly attached to ability to 'prove' whether programs, services, and interventions work

Reframe Evaluation as part of youth work and broaden how we view evidence

Why Evaluation Matters to the Youth Sector

By encouraging sustainable research and evaluation practices in Ontario's youth sector, youth organizations will:

- Be better positioned to measure and track if their programs achieve their intended outcomes and impacts
- Be able to determine areas of program success and how they can be improved
- Tell their stories to funders and each other to improve the overall quality of the sector

Evaluation supports youth programs to do what they do, better

What is Youth Engagement?

- **Youth Engagement:** when young people are involved in responsible, challenging actions to create positive social change. This means involving youth in planning, and in making decisions that affect themselves and others.
- **Youth Engagement in Evaluation:** engages young people in evaluating the programs, organizations, and systems designed to serve them.
- Program Design & Development can inform Program Evaluation

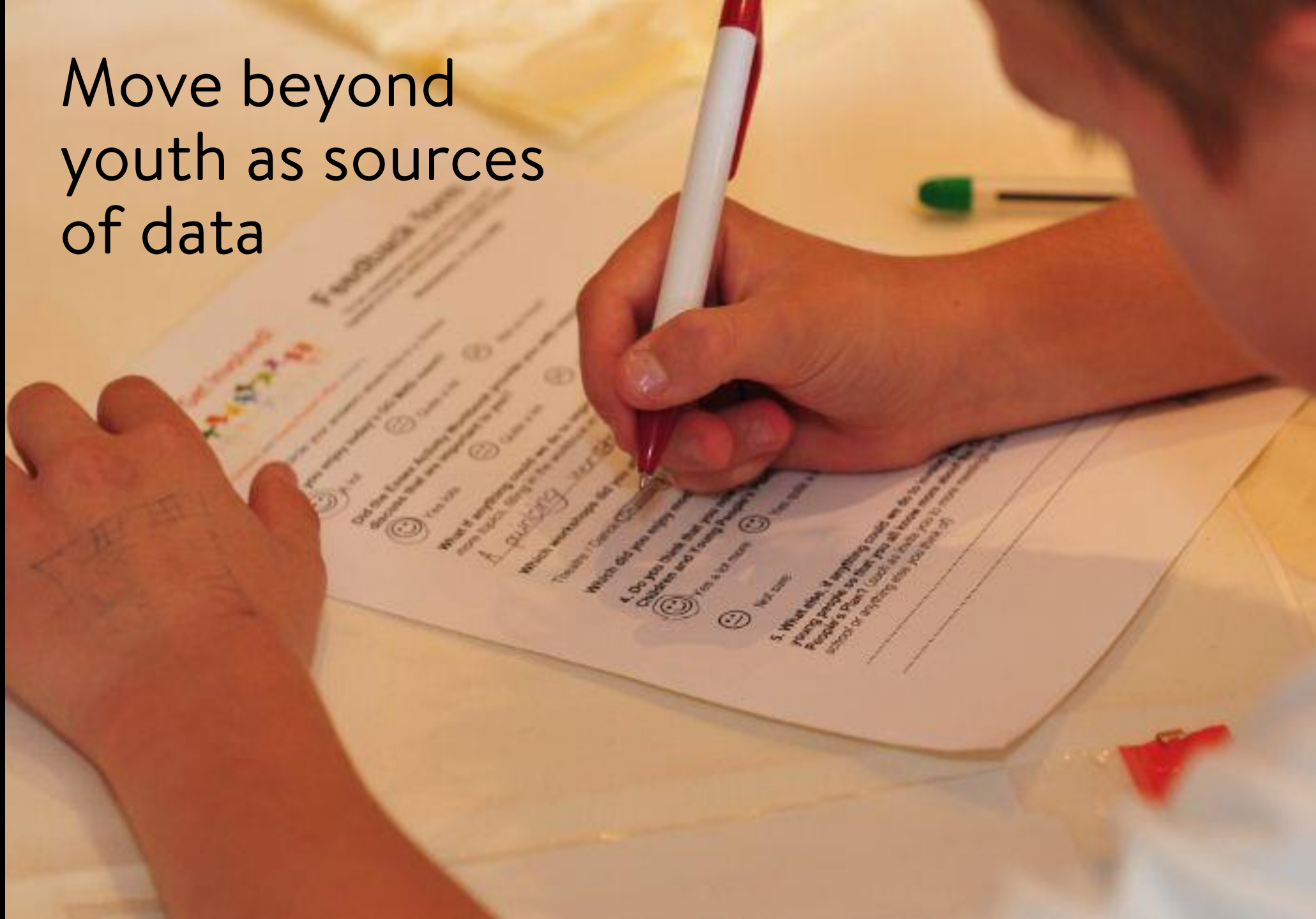


Youth Engagement in Evaluation

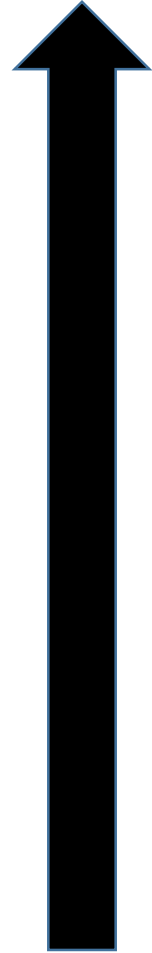
"Youth are not merely respondents of methods created by adults nor are they consultants on adult-led evaluations. Instead they are creators of knowledge, shaping their own methods, analyzing the data gathered, and reporting their findings."

Kim Sabo Flores

Move beyond youth as sources of data



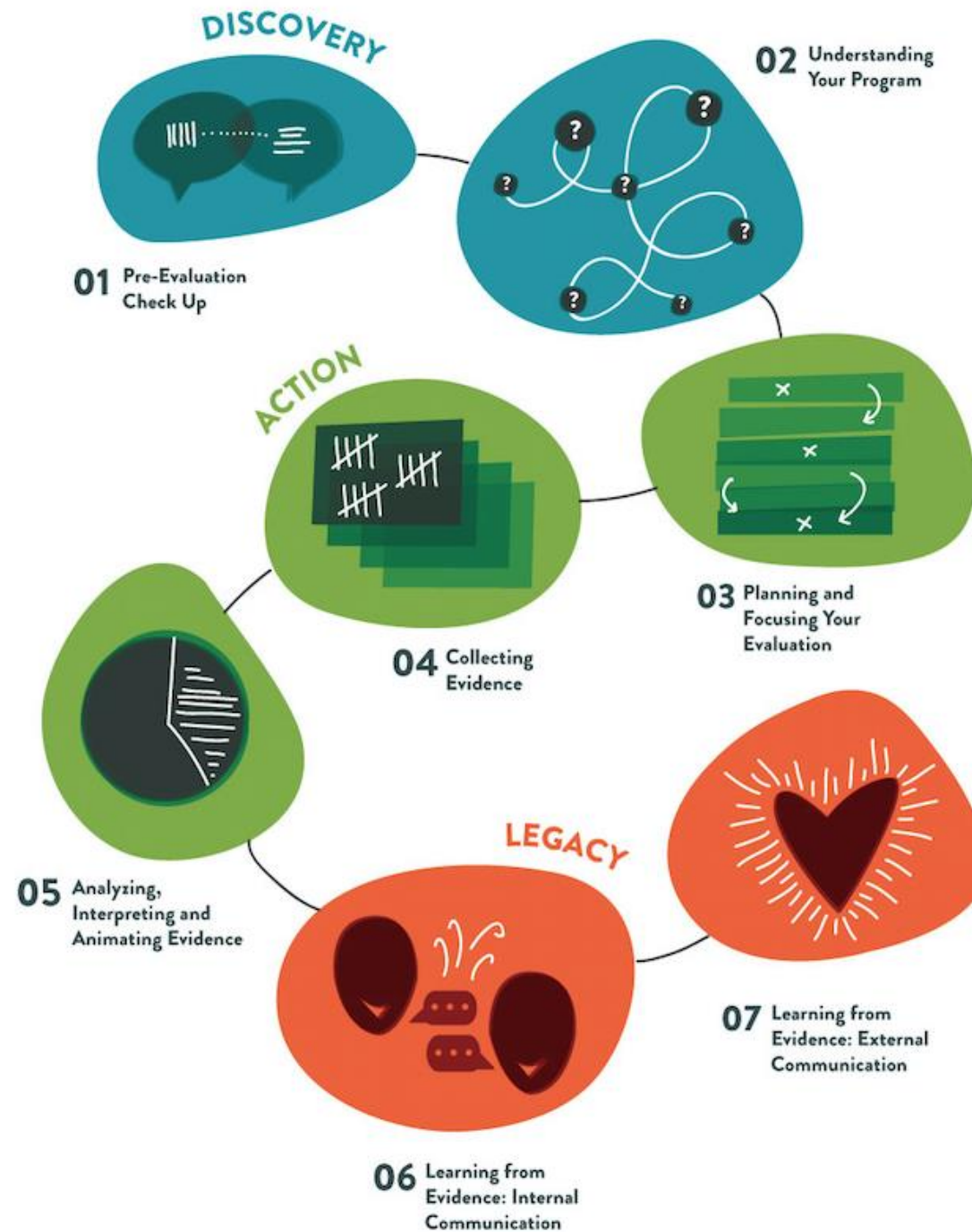
Continuum of Youth Engagement



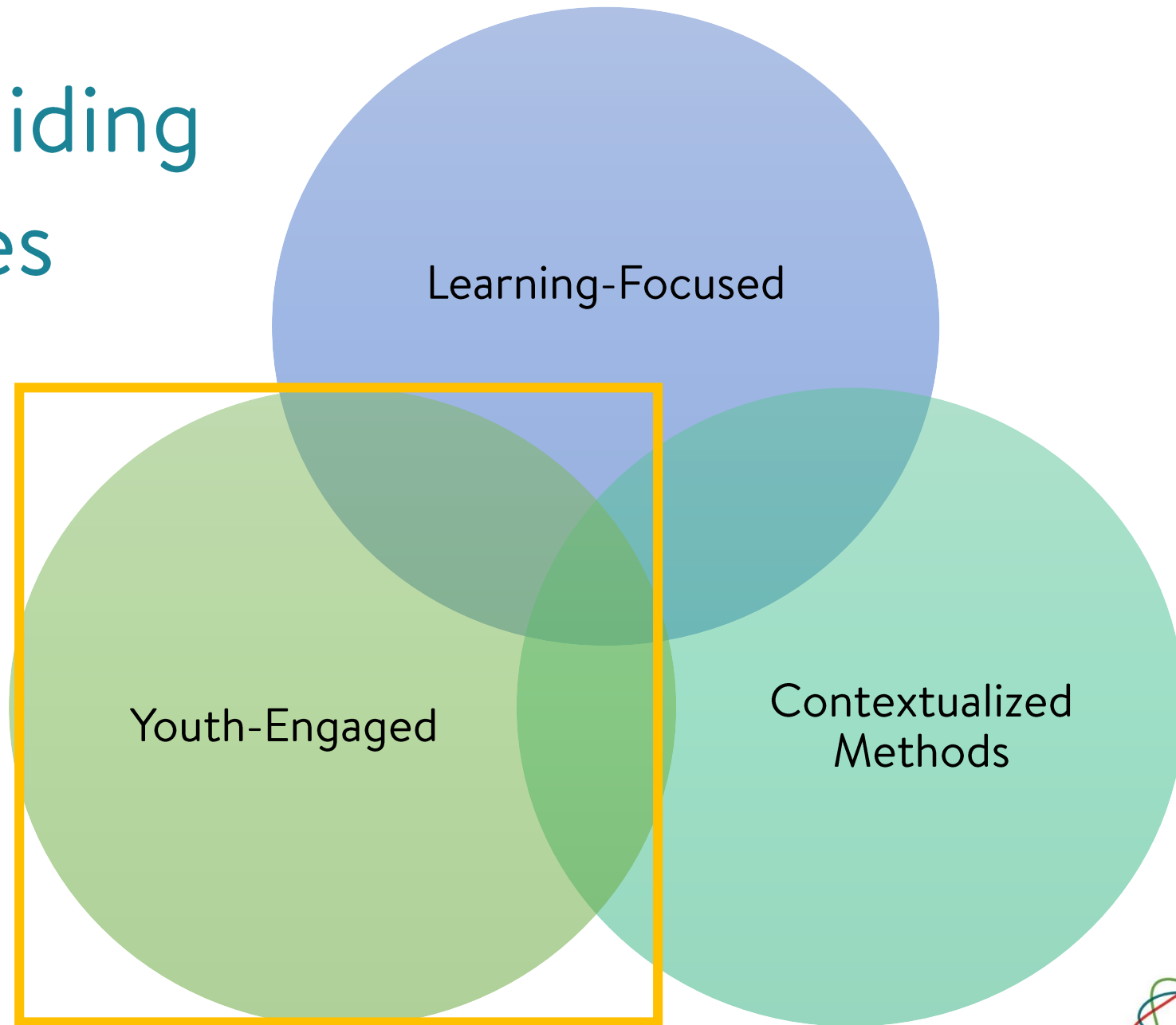
Youth Involvement	Process
Highest	Youth-led research/evaluation is part of organizational planning cycle; experienced youth act as peer trainers and are paid
High	Youth participate in research design, data collection, and analysis; youth report findings, implement change
Medium-High	Youth design and administer research instruments; adults analyze results, develop findings, implement changes
Medium-Low	Youth give input on process
Low	Youth collect data
Very Low	Information is collected from youth
None	Outside adult conducts research without collecting information directly from youth

(Sabo Flores, 2008)

YouthREX Framework for Evaluating Youth Wellbeing



Three Guiding Lenses



Benefits of Youth Engagement

For Youth

Skill development (e.g., leadership, communication skills, marketable skills)

Relationship building (with peers, adults)

Improved self-confidence

Identity exploration

Establish sense of ownership over program

Foster creativity



Benefits of Youth Engagement

For Youth	For the Evaluation (Stakeholders)
Skill development (e.g., leadership, communication skills, marketable skills)	Better access to data (access hard-to-reach samples)
Relationship building (with peers, adults)	Enables new perspectives
Improved self-confidence	Improved data collection process & tools
Identity exploration	Increased understanding/improved interpretation of results
Establish sense of ownership over program	Democratization of knowledge
Foster creativity	Validates diverse experiences of youth; equalizes power relations

EVALUATION PLANNING

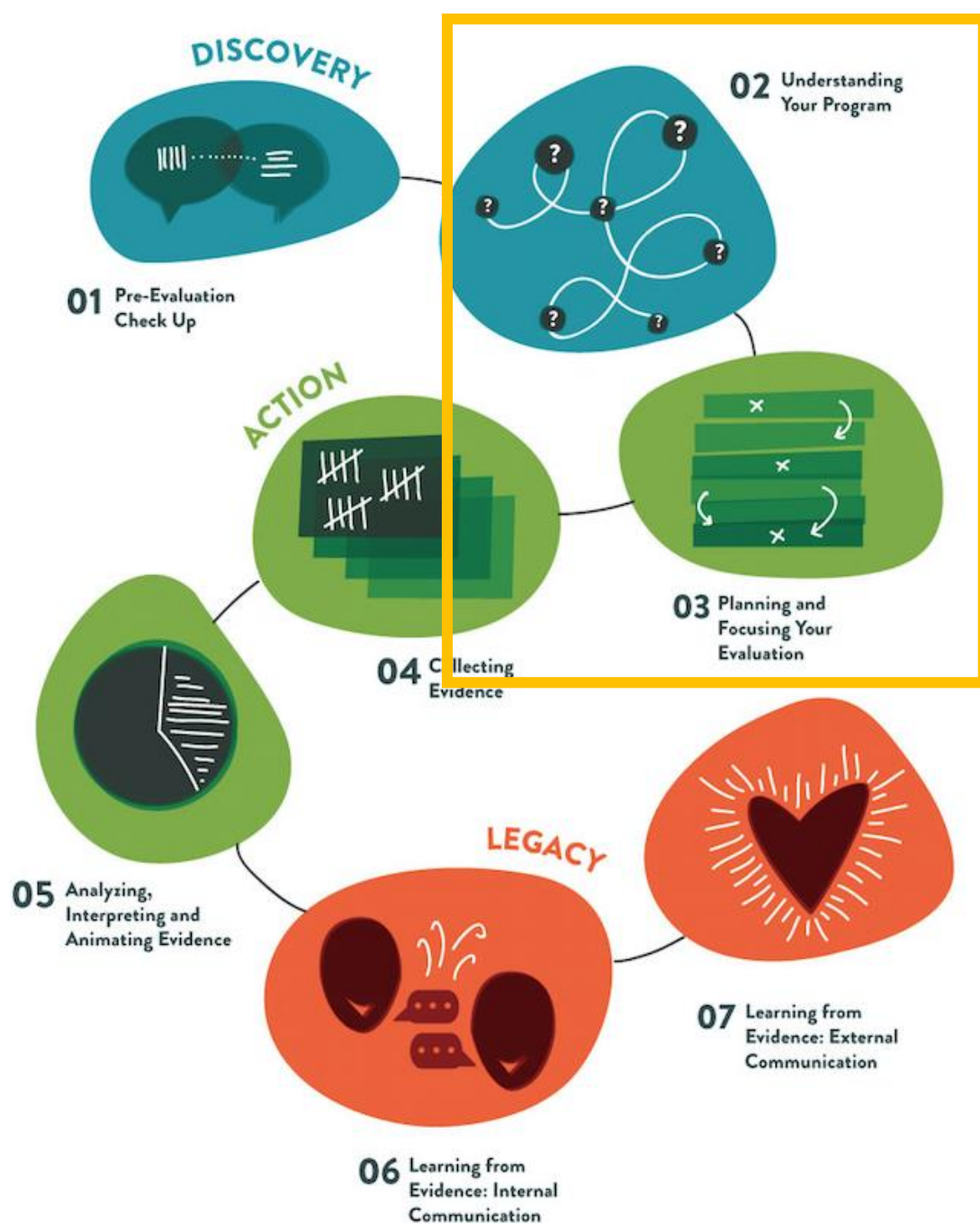
YouthREX Framework for Evaluating Youth Wellbeing

STEP 02: UNDERSTANDING YOUR PROGRAM USING LOGIC MODELING

What is your program theory? What are your program components and your intended outcomes? A logic model is a visual representation of your program and how it is intended to work.

STEP 03: FOCUSING AND PLANNING YOUR EVALUATION

Before you set off on your evaluation journey, gather your stakeholders and develop a roadmap (evaluation plan) for your evaluation journey.



Growing Out

- Workshops and follow-up sessions
- Learning about evaluation methods
- Learning about process vs. outcome evaluation
- Learning about evaluation plans
- Developing evaluation questions & plans

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Observation







- Plan ahead
- Communicate honestly with youth in your program
- Ask youth what they need from the program

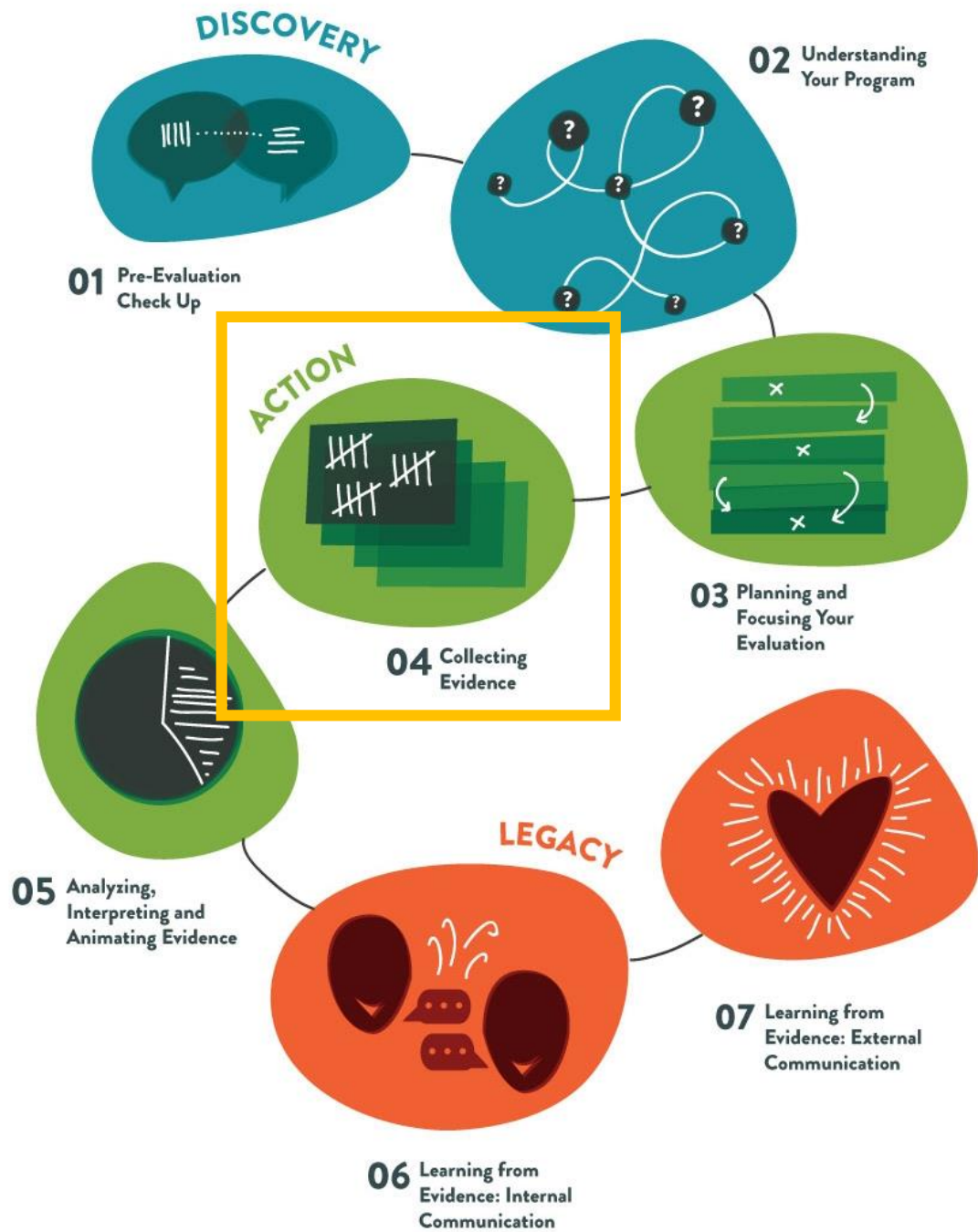




QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

EVALUATION

IMPLEMENTATION



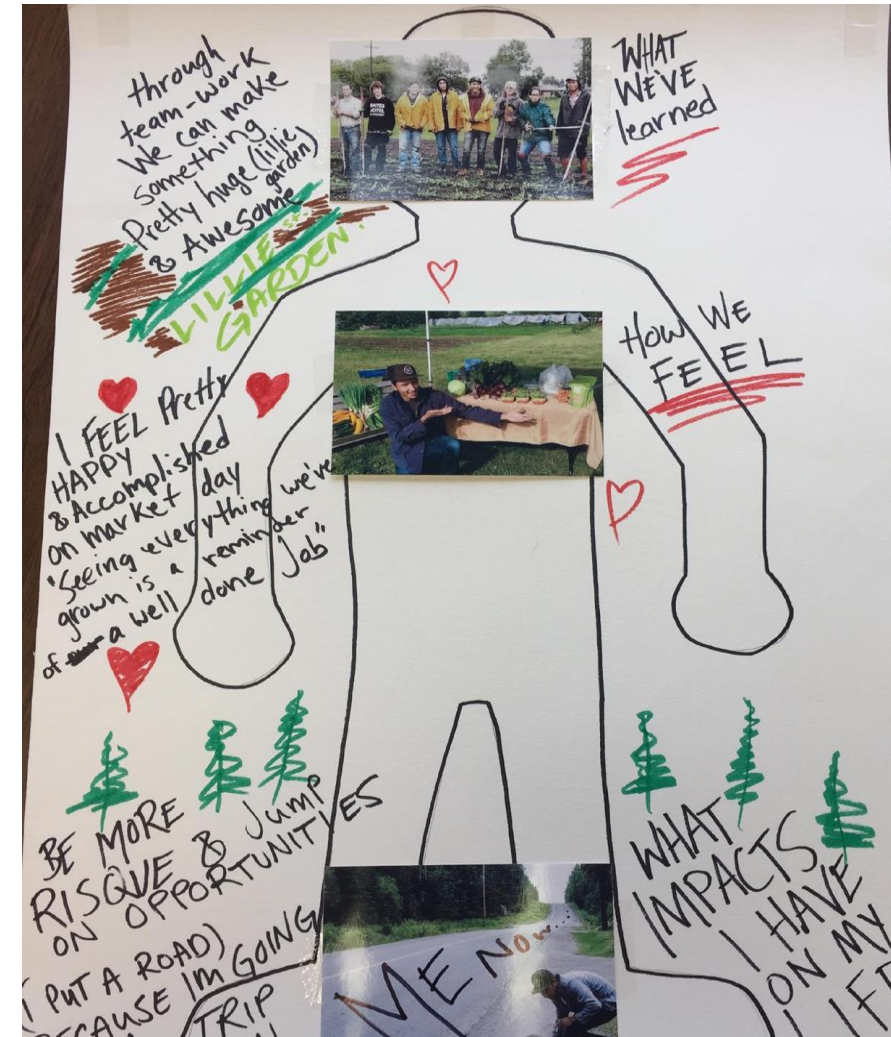
YouthREX Framework for Evaluating Youth Wellbeing

STEP 04: COLLECTING EVIDENCE FOR A PROCESS & OUTCOME EVALUATION

Collect data + stories to answer your process and outcome evaluation questions.

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- Collecting data:
 - Focus groups
 - Interviews
 - Questionnaires
 - Head/heart/feet
 - Photovoice
 - Journey maps
- Organizing and transcribing data



QUESTIONS

RESPONSES

7

Evaluation: Photo-Voice/Story Telling

Hi, thanks for checking out our survey! Please complete the following:



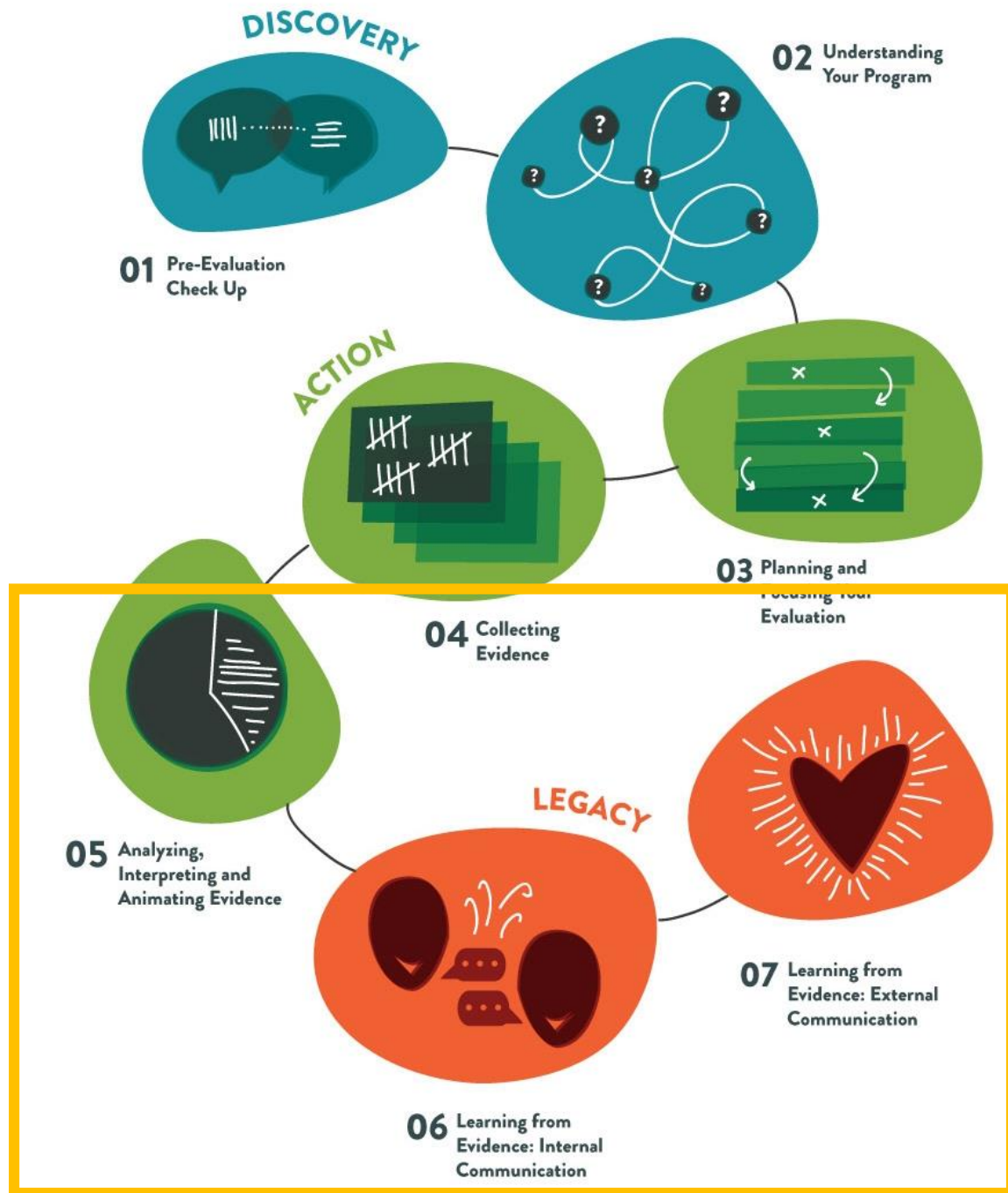
- Know your audience
- Be creative and make evaluation an active process
- Active evaluation examples:
 - Fire and Ice
 - Skill and Opportunities
 - Photovoice
 - Working with YouthREX





QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

CREATION &
DISSEMINATION OF
EVALUATION FINDINGS



YouthREX Framework for Evaluating Youth Wellbeing

STEP 05: ANALYZING, INTERPRETING AND ANIMATING EVIDENCE

Identify themes in your qualitative data, patterns or trends in your quantitative data and make sense of your findings.

STEP 06: LEARNING FROM EVIDENCE: INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

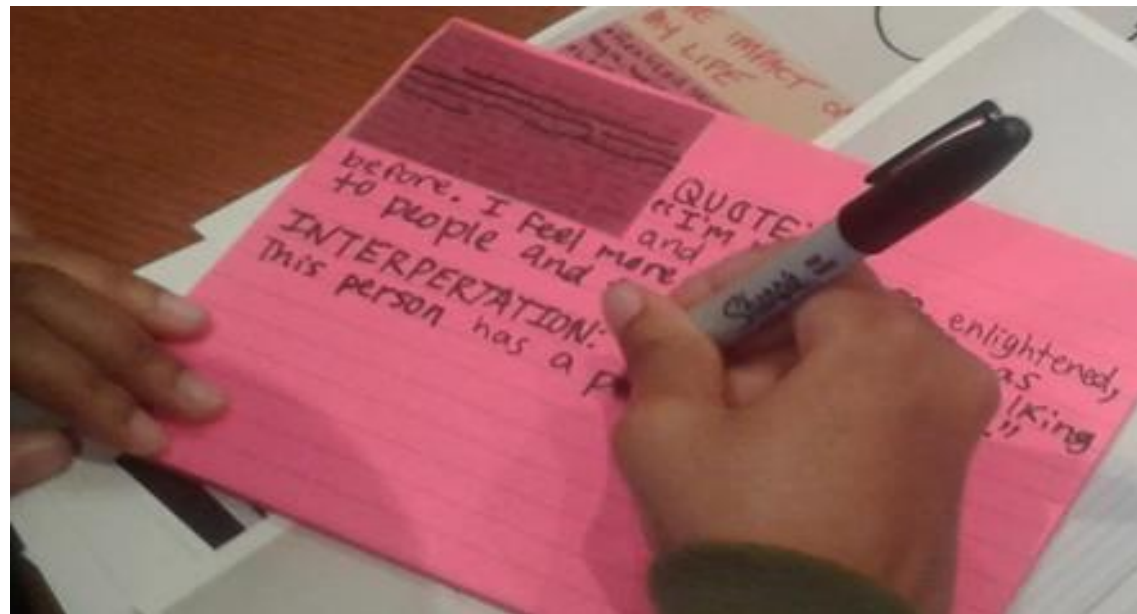
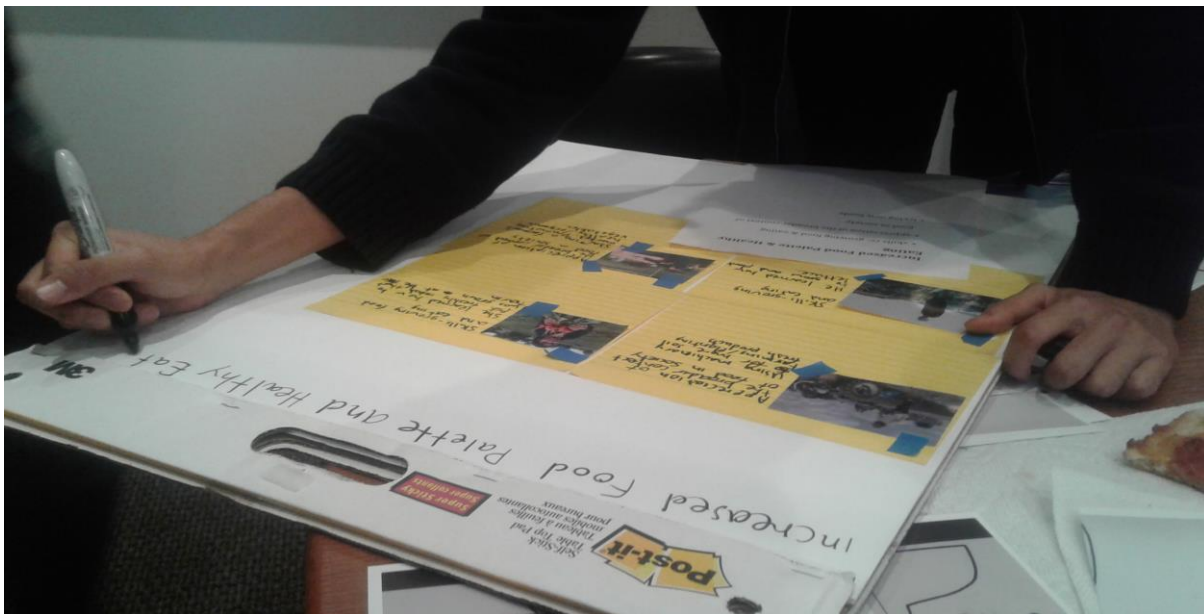
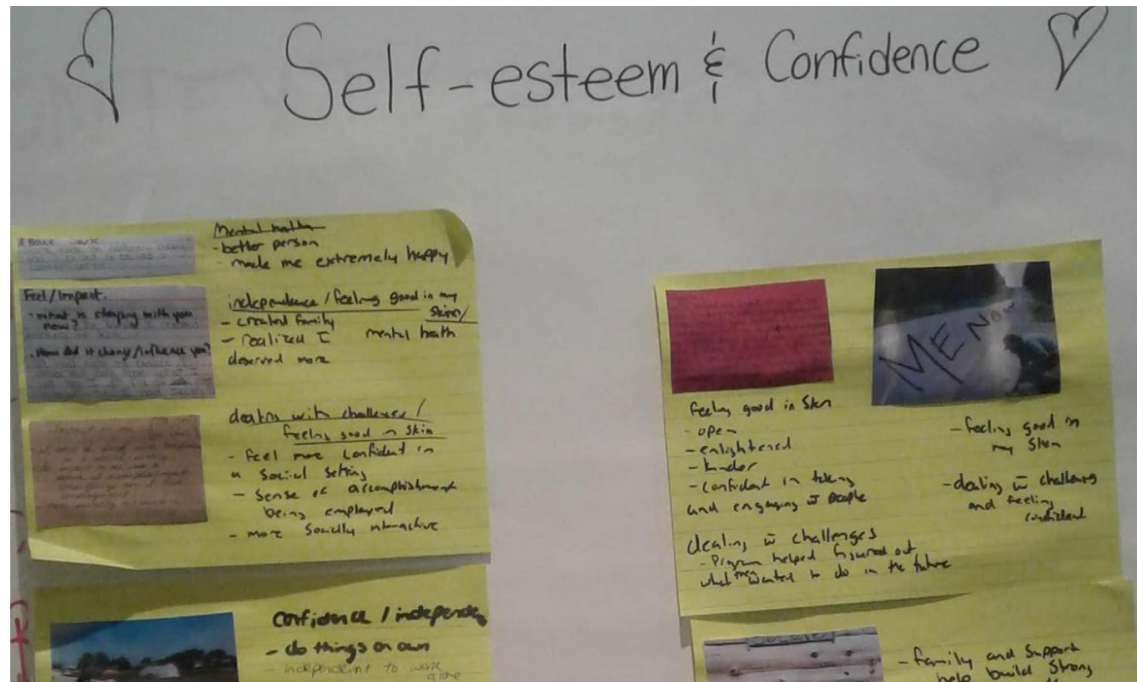
Turn the sense making into learning that strengthens your program and improves the well-being of your youth participants. Use your evaluation insights and findings to inform decisions that improve your program.

STEP 07: LEARNING FROM EVIDENCE: EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Share your evaluation findings in a variety of oral and written formats tailored to different audiences to help stakeholders understand the REAL story about your program.

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- Reflecting on data collection
- Analyzing findings
- Identifying key messages and recommendations





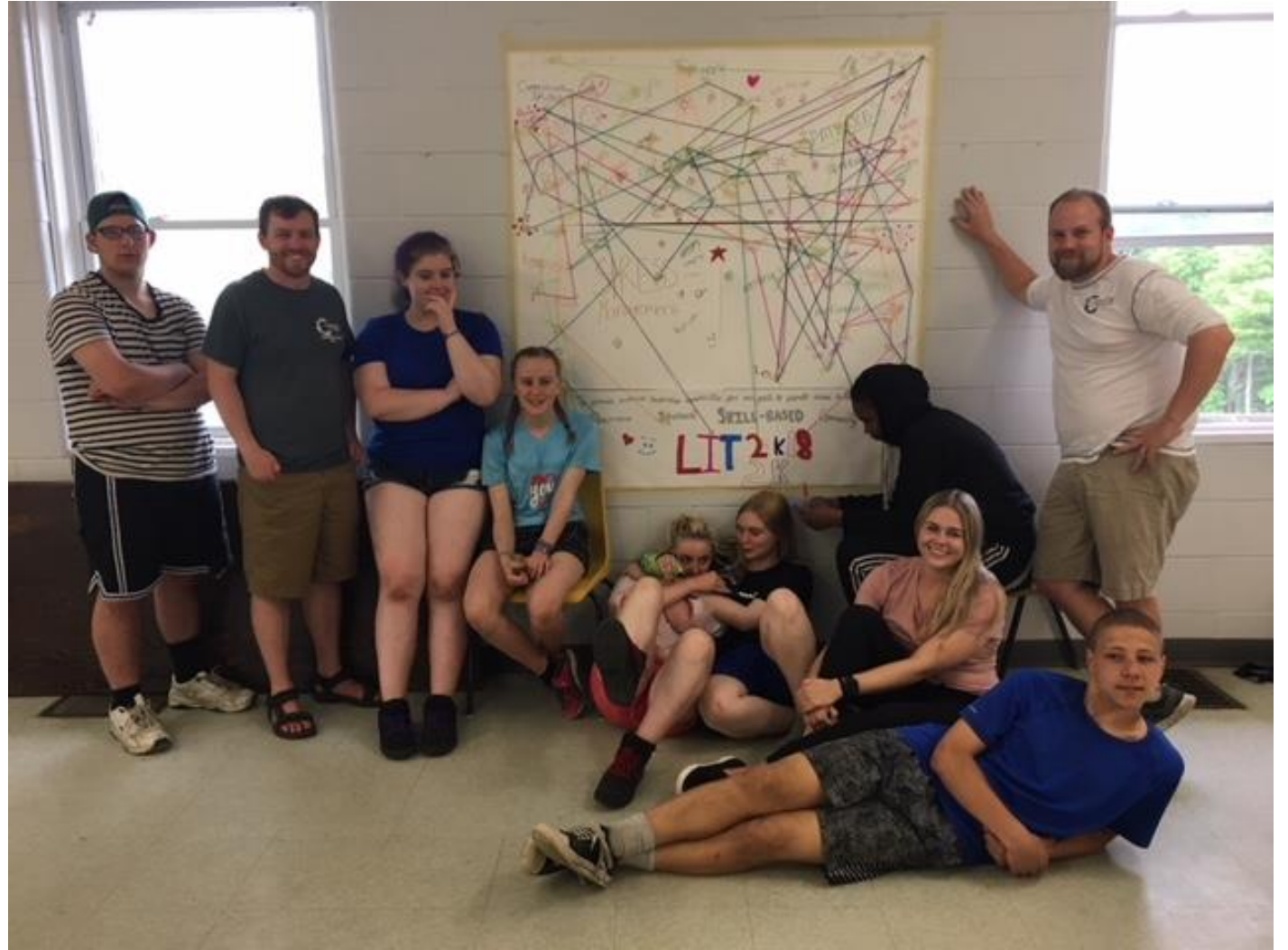
Preparing and presenting at Sustain Ontario's “Bring Food Home” Conference

Developing communication
plans to share findings and
recommendations





- Keep youth informed
- Integrate evaluation into your program structure





QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons Learned

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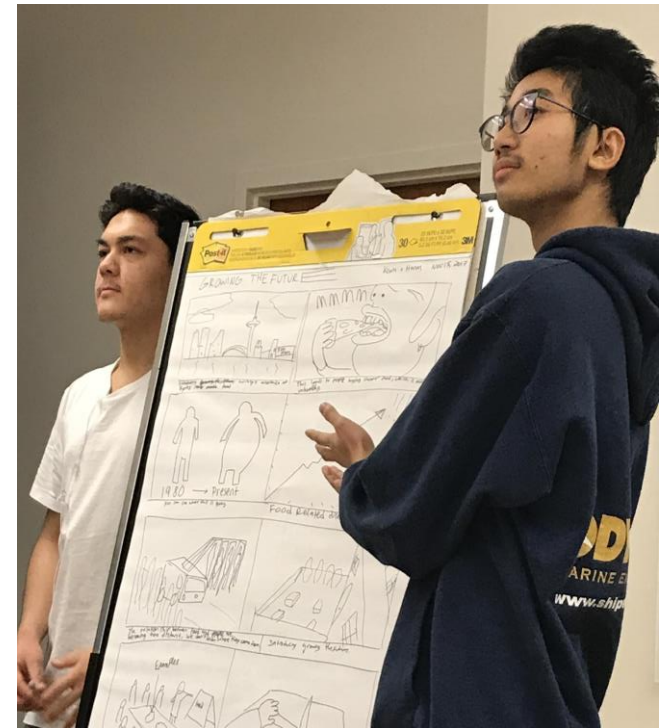
- Reflect on the process
 - Focus group: Youth provide feedback about their experiences as evaluators
- Integrate more coaching sessions and action-learning activities
- Establish a regular schedule between workshops
- Build youth ownership over the evaluation process to ensure commitment
- Engage program managers in training workshops alongside youth researcher



Lessons Learned

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- Use hands-on learning to bring youth into a knowledge-based process
- Foster cross-organizational collaboration; creates a rich learning environment & rewarding experience
- Work towards a significant milestone, (e.g., knowledge translation event) helps to focus energy and maintain momentum
- Ensure organizational commitment to youth-led approach



Lessons Learned



- Plan ahead
- Be honest and open with your goals
- Plan for your audience
- Look for the hidden opportunities



Lessons Learned

- Create an evaluation plan together from the start, and discuss your collective vision for evaluation journey
- Show and explain a variety of data collection tools, and ask for alternative methods
- Provide in-depth trainings (e.g., on importance of evaluation, how to host focus groups, write reports)
- Analyze findings together as young people may be able to provide context for some results
- Allow youth to lead the dissemination plan



QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

Take Home Messages

- Youth Engagement happens on a continuum and can occur in multiple phases of the evaluation process
- Meaningfully engage youth
- LISTEN
- Be creative—and allow youth to do so, too!



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

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