

# Creating meaningful youth engagement

Ensuring that we work with young people in constructive, inclusive, and transformative ways



CLICK TO START

# What does this module include?

In addition to this slide deck, this module includes:

- A transcript of the facilitation (Find it [here.](#))
- Activity sheets
- Readings to support your learning
- A resource list to extend your learning (Find it [here.](#))

You may wish to take a moment to find and download or print the additional resources.



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## Module focus question

What powerful actions can we take to foster the meaningful engagement of youth?

Take a moment to reflect: what are you and your organization already doing to attempt to engage young people in your work?



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# Your challenge

Throughout this module you'll use a reflective tool, a *Thoughtbook*, to help guide and build your responses to two questions:

- ***Thinking about myself:*** What powerful actions can I take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?
- ***Thinking about my organization:*** What powerful actions can my organization take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?

At the end of this module, you will be asked to share your reflections with the Young Experts: Tech4Health Youth Council.

**Your Thoughtbook**

Throughout this module you will reflect on and build your responses to the questions below. Please feel free to return to this Thoughtbook at any point in the module to refine or reconsider your answers.

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Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Thoughtbook



**Start your thinking:** Note your initial thoughts in your [Thoughtbook](#)



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# Part 1

## Introduction and setting the stage

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Who created this module?



## YOUNG EXPERTS: TECH 4 HEALTH

**THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT:  
OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2020**

As part of YET4H's ARAO policy, we are working closely with a training consultant to develop a training on meaningful youth engagement. The training aims to enhance how Transform Health and its partners work with young people. Using an ARAO lens, it will cover considerations in empowering young people by enabling them to develop skills and building authentic working relationships.

If you would like to read more about the Youth Council, [you can find out more here](#)



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# What are the most significant impacts when youth are NOT engaged?

- A. We might not gain insight into global youth concerns and experiences.
- B. We might not be able to effectively recruit young people or interest them in supporting your work.
- C. We might benefit from fresh ideas and innovative approaches that young people bring to the table.
- D. Other?



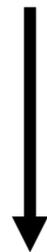
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# Why was this module created?

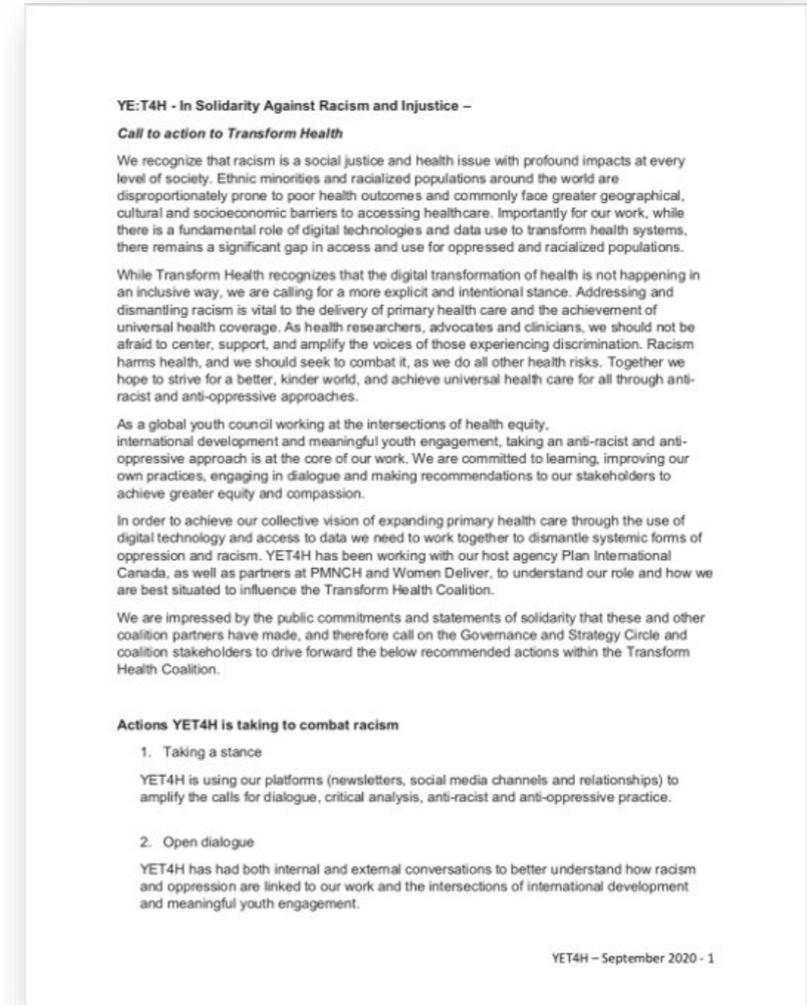
EXPERIENCES of young people supporting the work of with international development organizations



NOTICING a need for thoughtful training on how to engage young people in intentional, respectful and inclusive ways



ADVOCACY AND EFFORTS by the Youth Council and Plan International Canada to develop the Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Call to Action

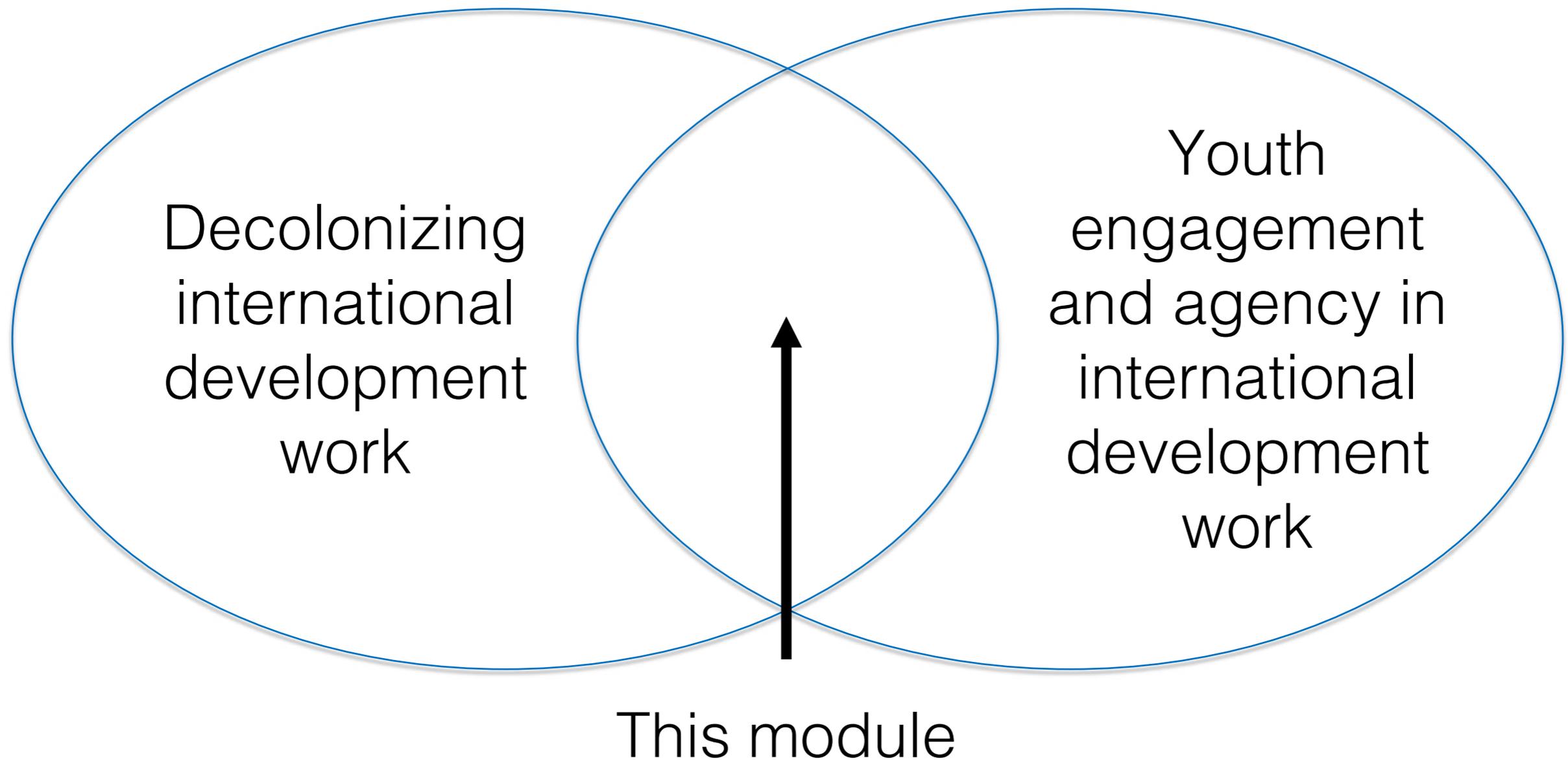


Read the [ARAO Call to Action](#)

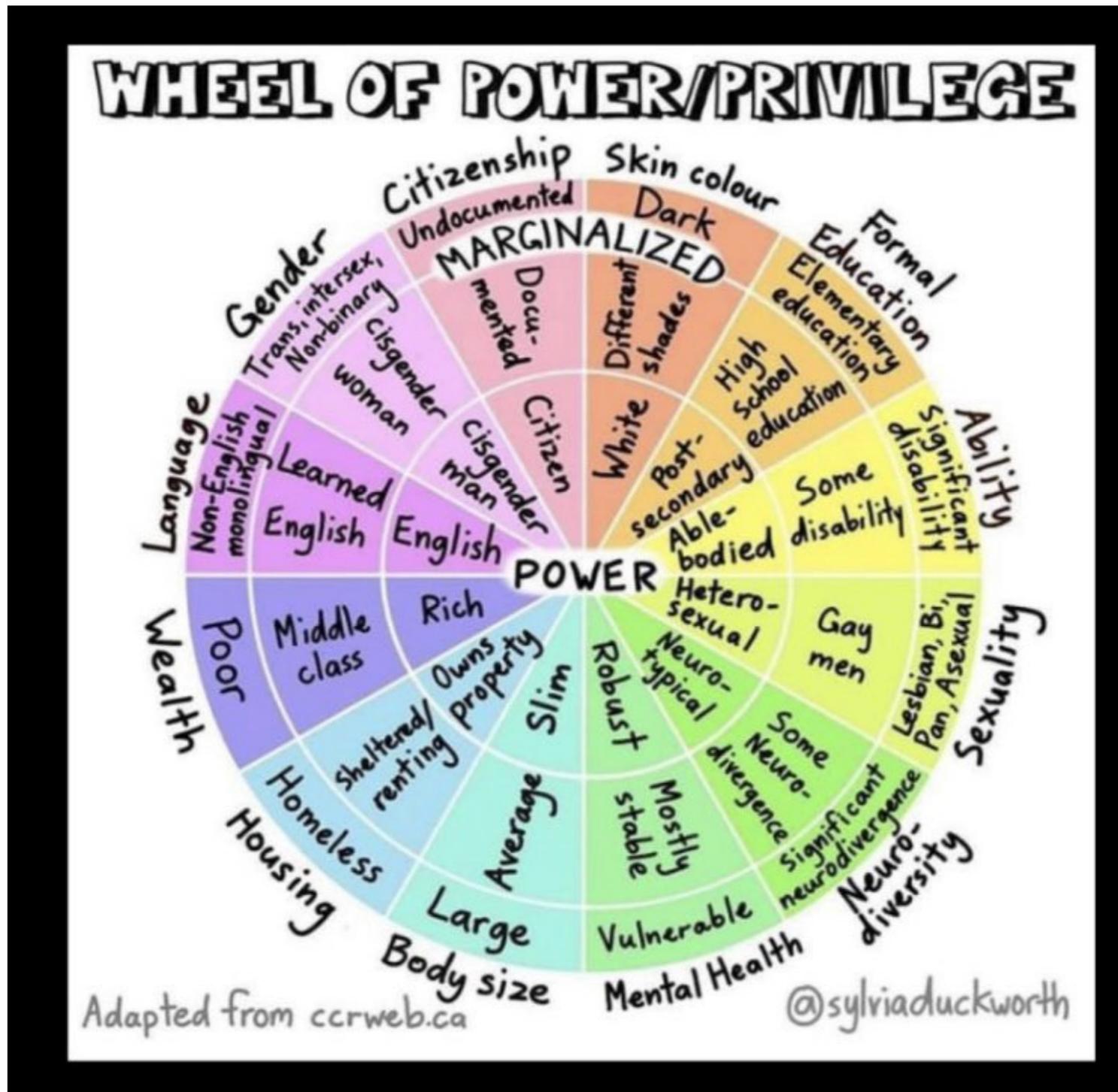


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# What does this module add to current conversations?



# What is your social location?



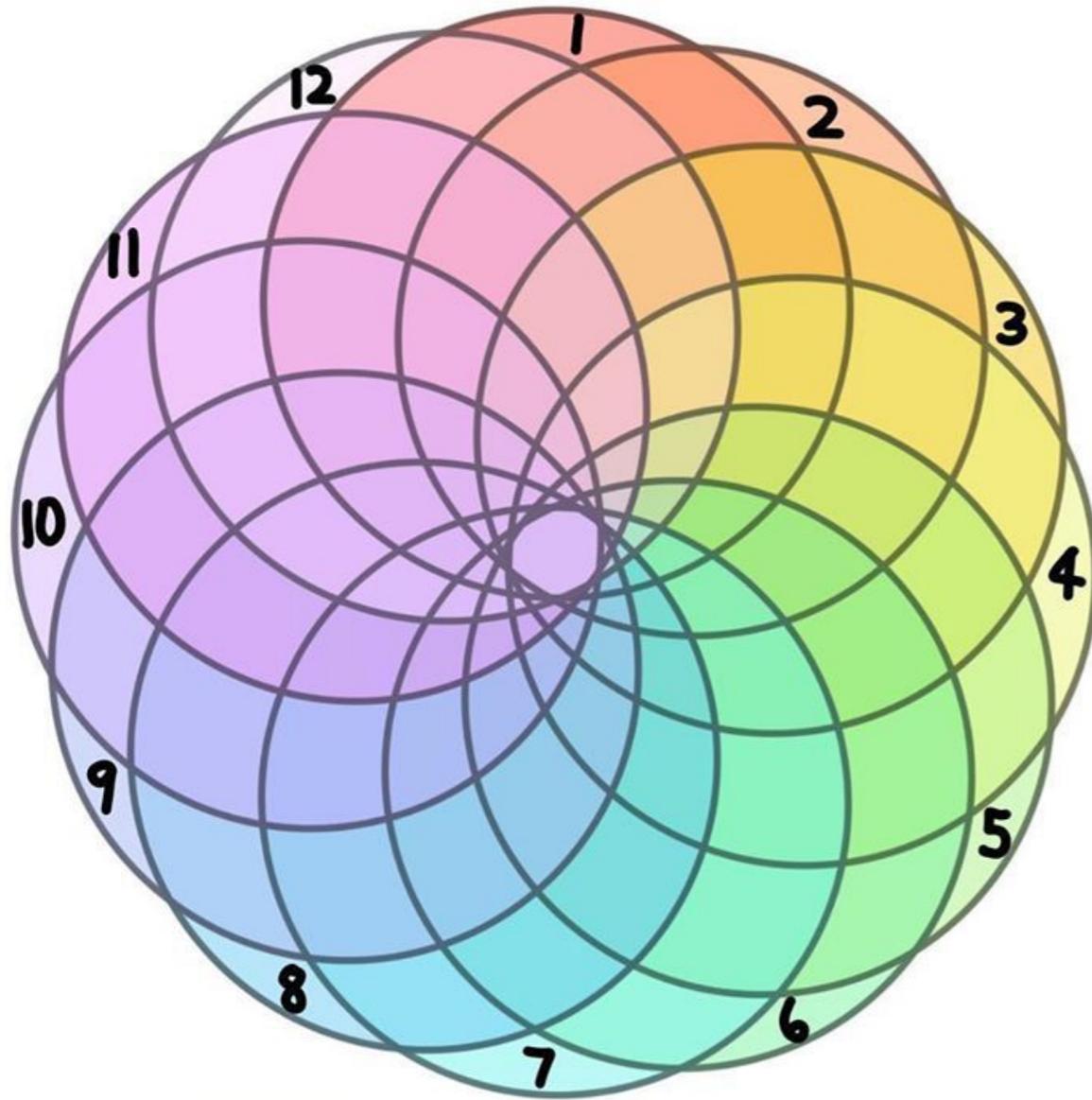
- Where do you locate yourself on the wheel of power and privilege?
- Where might the youth you work with locate themselves?
- How might your location on the wheel of power and privilege influence how you work with youth?

Take a closer look at the [Wheel of Power/Privilege](#)



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# INTERSECTIONALITY



- 1 Race
  - 2 Ethnicity
  - 3 Gender identity
  - 4 Class
  - 5 Language
  - 6 Religion
  - 7 Ability
  - 8 Sexuality
  - 9 Mental health
  - 10 Age
  - 11 Education
  - 12 Attractiveness
- (...and many more...)

To learn more about Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on intersectionality, [listen to her TedTalk](#)

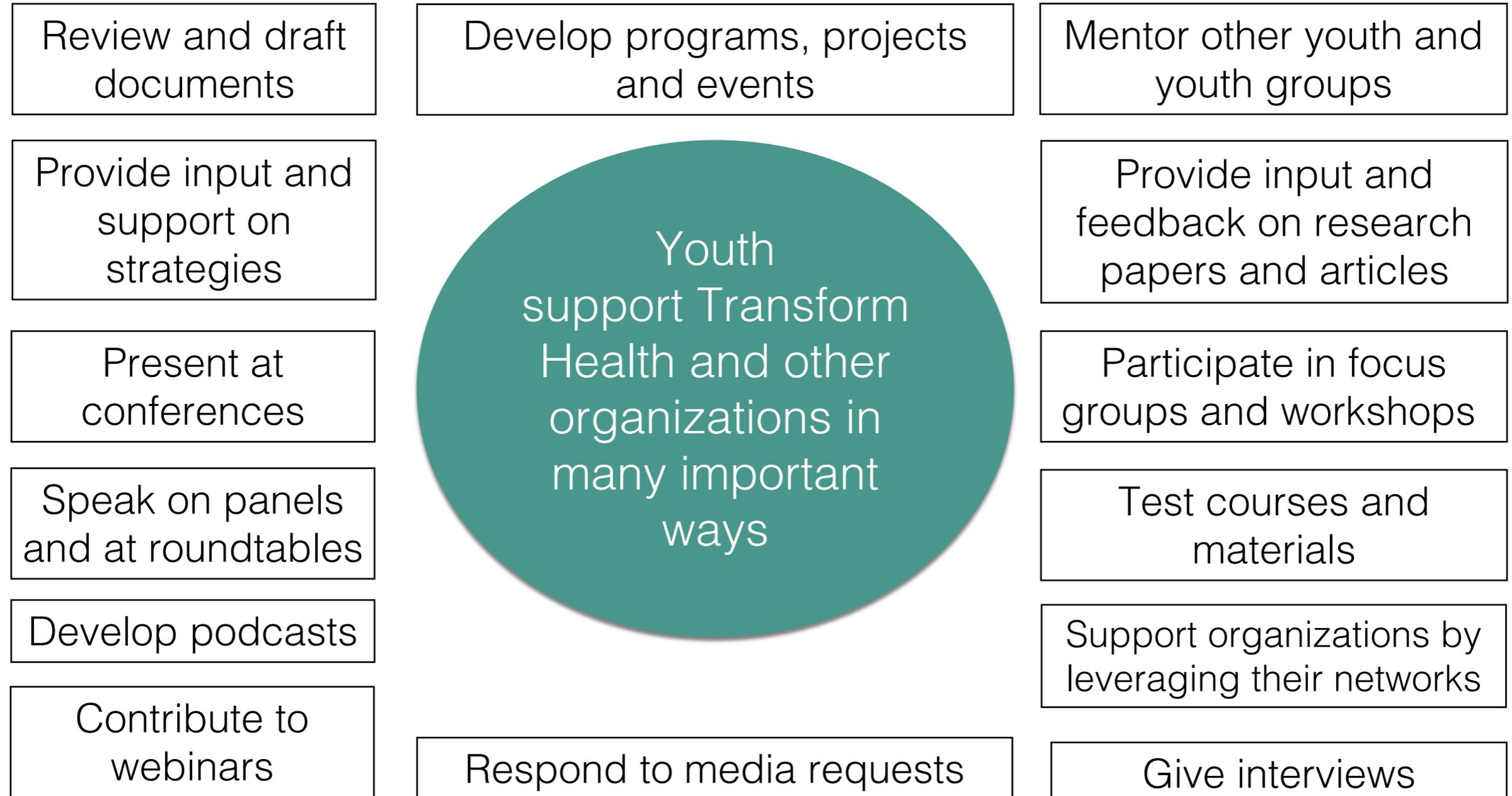
Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw -

@sylviaaduckworth

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# Why is this relevant for you?



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# Objectives

We hope this module helps you:

- ✓ build understanding about the importance of meaningful youth engagement;
- ✓ reflect on practices that interfere with and damage youth engagement; and
- ✓ develop strategies to work in productive, inclusive and transformative ways with young people.

**YOUNG EXPERTS: TECH 4 HEALTH**

**Transform Health**  
Health for all in the digital age

**OVERVIEW**

Today, young people aged 10 to 24 make up one quarter of the world's population. Yet too many of them continue to face challenges in realizing their health and rights. In 2020, Young Experts: Tech 4 Health (YE:T4H) was formed to provide independent insight and counsel to Transform Health, a global coalition on leveraging digital innovation to achieve quality healthcare for all. Alongside Fondation Botnar, the founders of the coalition include Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), PATH and Women Deliver. Learn more about the coalition [here](#).

**THE MEMBERS**

Click on the members below to read about their views on technology and health

**THE ISSUE**

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# How is this module organized?

**Part 1:** Introduction and setting the stage

**Part 2:** Why does youth engagement matter?

**Part 3:** What engages and disengages young people?

**Part 4:** What powerful actions can I take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?

**Part 5:** What powerful actions can my organization take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# What should you expect from this module?

This module is...	This module is not...
An attempt to support a mindset that centres youth engagement	A step-by-step "how-to" guide or a formula that will work in all situations
An introduction to an anti-racist anti-oppression approach that is foundational to youth engagement	A comprehensive background resource on anti-racism and anti-oppression
A learning opportunity to support personal and organizational reflection	A "train-the-trainer" opportunity that will equip with you with the ability to train others

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Pay attention to your emotions

As you work through this module:

- Identify emotions that might arise: Do you feel defensive? Afraid? Nervous? Angry?
- Consider how emotions might enhance or interfere with your learning in this module.
- Use a strategy to pay attention to your emotions, name them, and recognize them.
- When you're ready, continue with the learning.



What emotions do you anticipate you might feel?  
Are you already noticing feelings arising in response to the content thus far?

# Where are you on this journey?



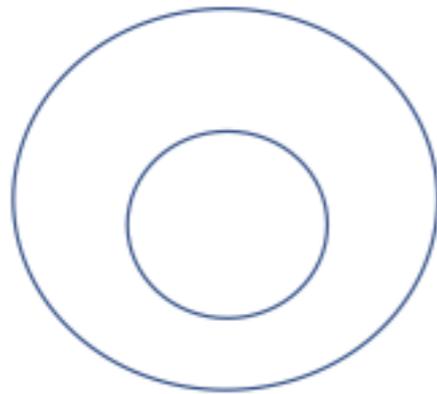
- At various points during this module, you'll revisit and reflect on your thoughts and feelings.
- Which zone are you currently operating in?

Take a closer look at the [Becoming Anti-Racist graphic](#)

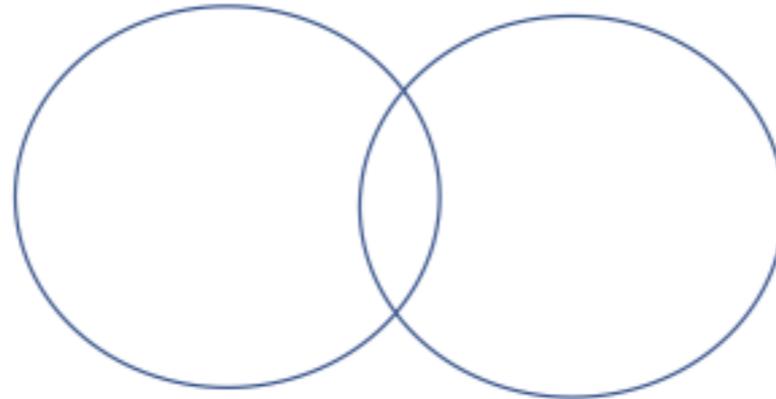


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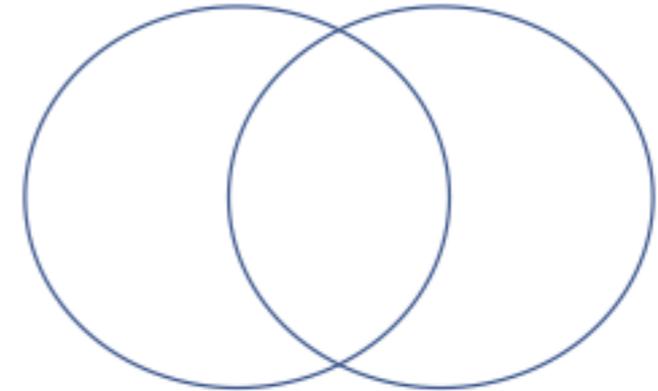
# Personal growth versus professional growth



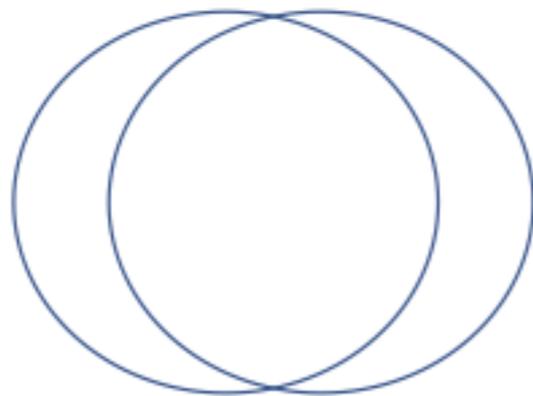
One is an example of the other (subset)



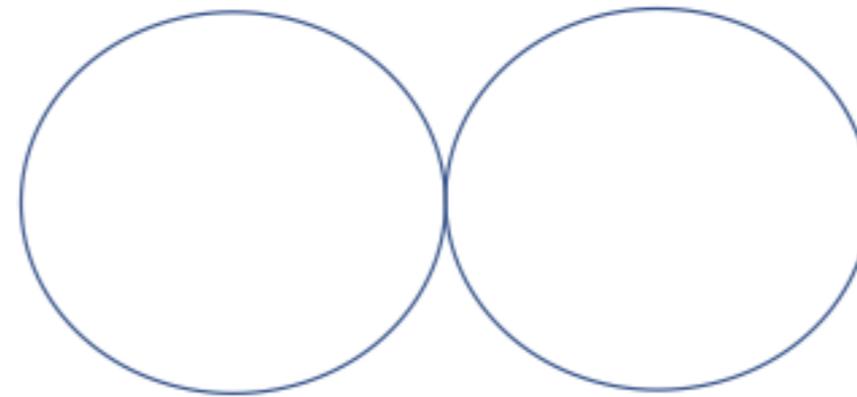
A little related



Somewhat related



Very related



Not at all related

Which diagram best represents the relationship between your personal beliefs, values and practices and your professional practices?



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# Revisit your Thoughtbook

- **Thinking about myself:** What powerful actions can I take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?
- **Thinking about my organization:** What powerful actions can my organization take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?

Revisit your initial ideas in your Thoughtbook. What would you like to add? Change? Revise?

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Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Thoughtbook



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# Part 2

## Why does youth engagement matter?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# How important is meaningful youth engagement?

Which option best reflects your beliefs about the importance of engaging youth?

- A. Meaningful youth engagement is crucial to my organization's success.
- B. Youth engagement is important.
- C. It would be nice if youth are engaged but it is not imperative.
- D. Youth engagement does not need to be high on our list of priorities.



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# Why does youth engagement matter?

- Meaningful youth engagement is crucial to achieving organizational goals.
- Young people are hungry for meaningful engagement.
- Meaningfully engaging youth demonstrates a personal and organizational commitment to building the future the world needs.

How important is youth engagement to the sustainability of your organization's initiatives?

Click here to listen to a young person's response to the question: why should youth engagement matter to international development organizations?



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# How does your organization position youth engagement?

Read your organization's mission, vision, or description of their work:

- How are youth referred to and positioned?
- How important or central are young people to achieving your organization's vision or mission?

The screenshot shows the 'Overview' page of the Transform Health website. The page has a pink header with the Transform Health logo and navigation links for 'Overview', 'How we work', 'Get involved', and 'Contact'. The main content area is white with a pink background for the text. It features three circular icons: a bar chart, a building, and a group of people. The text discusses digital technologies and data, the digital transformation of health, and the need for inclusive and equitable digital technologies.

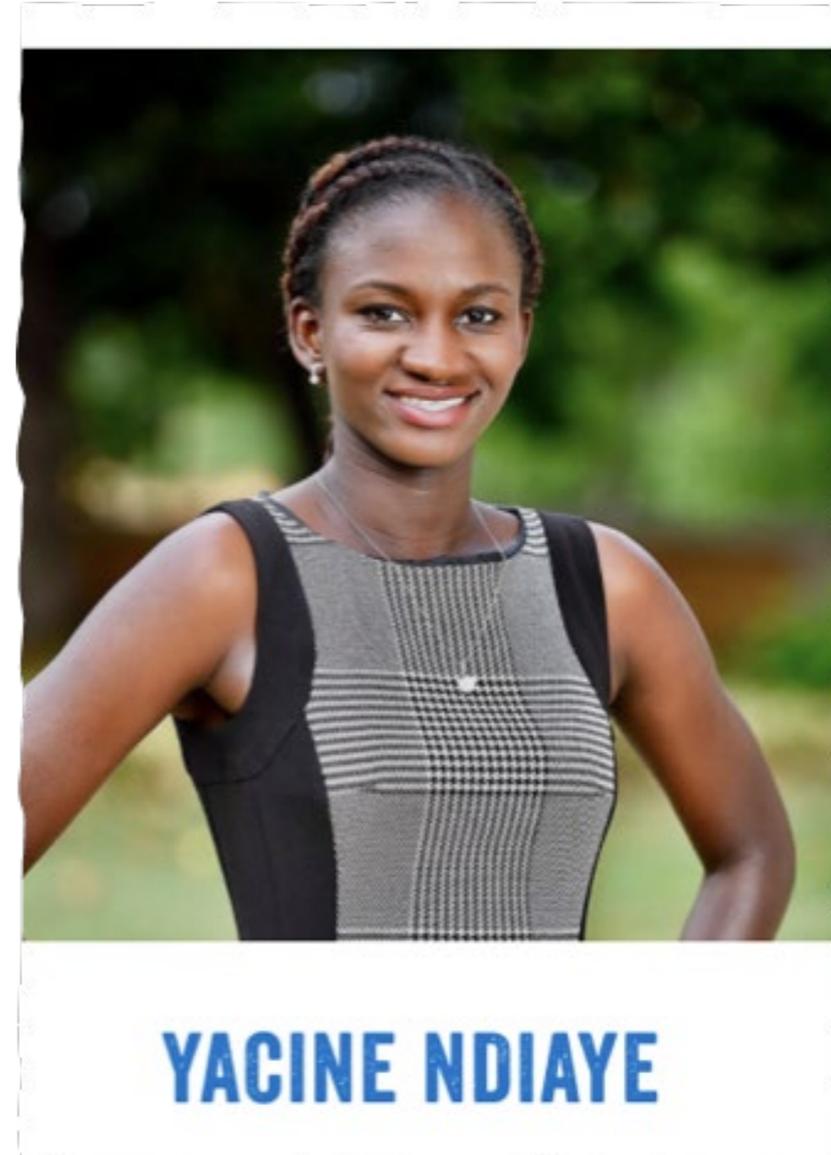
The screenshot shows the 'How we work' page of the Transform Health website. The page has a white header with the Transform Health logo and navigation links for 'Overview', 'How we work', and 'Get involved'. The main content area is white with a pink background for the text. It features four sections: 'ABOUT US', 'OUR VISION', 'OUR MISSION', and 'OUR OBJECTIVES'. The text describes the organization's coalition, its vision for universal health coverage, its mission to build a global movement, and its objectives for increased recognition of digital technology.



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# How does meaningful youth engagement affect your impact?

- We asked youth to respond to the question: why should organizations involved in international development care about youth engagement?
- [Click here to hear Yacine's response](#)
- [Click here to hear Richard's responses](#)



*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# What are you thinking now?

Which option best reflects your beliefs about the importance of engaging youth?

- A. Meaningful youth engagement is crucial to my organization's success.
- B. Youth engagement is important.
- C. It would be nice if youth are engaged but it is not imperative.
- D. Youth engagement does not need to be high on our list of priorities.



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# Revisit your Thoughtbook

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Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Thoughtbook



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# Part 3

## What engages and disengages young people?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Predict the level of engagement

An organization has been developing a strategy to create networks of youth activists in rural areas to advocate and educate community members on an issue. They have developed a robust plan and are now reaching out to the Youth Council for input. They will invite Youth Council members to volunteer to attend a discussion forum next month to hear about the strategy and solicit their help for implementing the strategy.

How likely is it that the youth involved will be meaningfully engaged?

- A. Highly likely
- B. Likely
- C. Unlikely
- D. Highly unlikely

What are some powerful steps the organizer in the scenario could take to encourage meaningful engagement of the young people involved?



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# Levels of engagement

**Transformed**  
(empowered)

**Challenged**  
(caught up)

**Cares**  
(appreciates the  
value)

**Interested**  
(entertained)

**Complies**  
(on task)

Think of a time when  
you have experienced  
each level of  
engagement.



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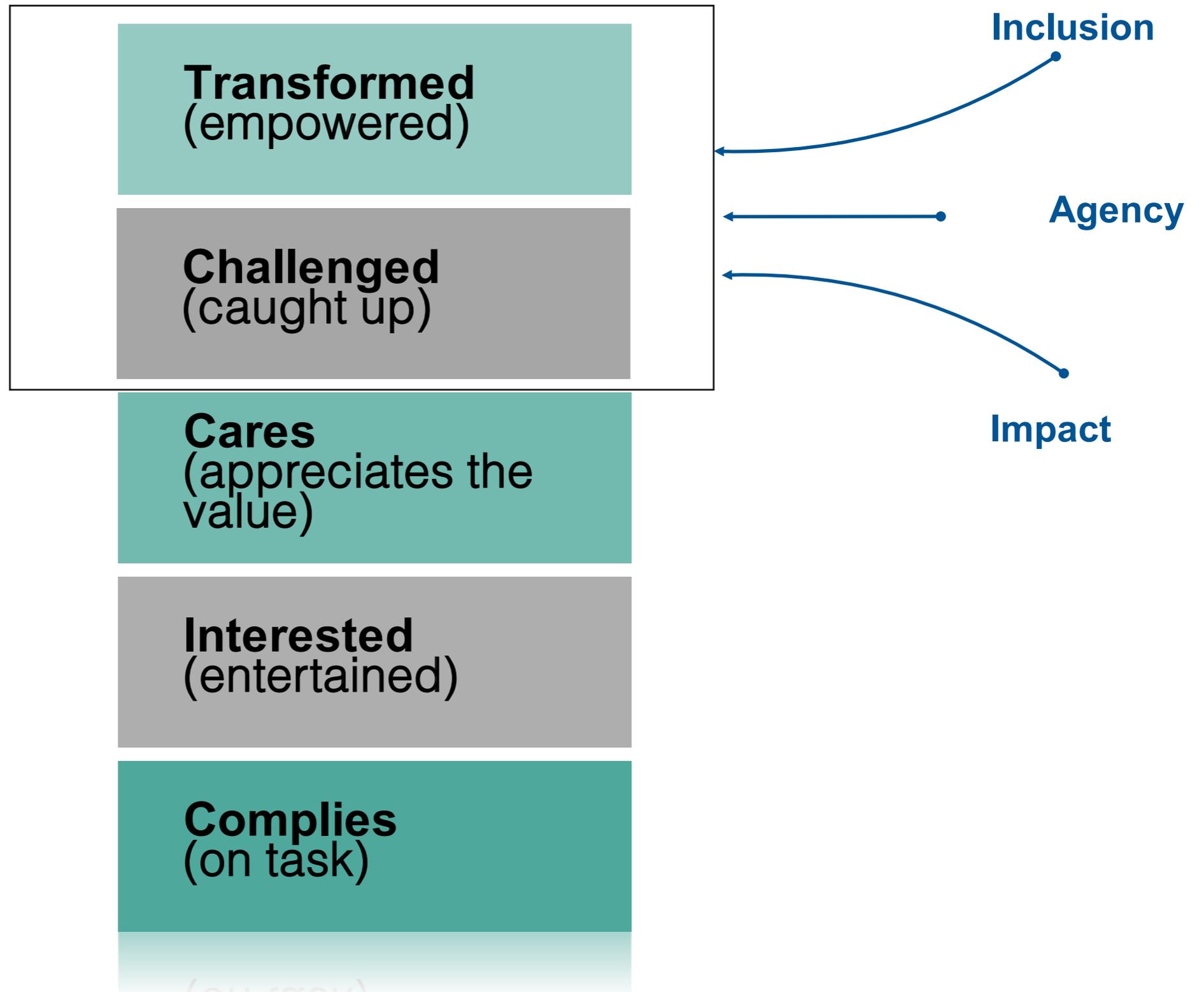
# Youth are *engaged* by...

- Inclusion
- Agency
- Impact



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# Levels of engagement



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# What's an example of meaningful engagement?

- We asked youth to describe a time when they were meaningfully engaged. What made that time different than others?
- [Click here to hear Richard's response:](#)



**RICHARD DZIKUNU**

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Youth are *dis*engaged by...

- Inclusion that is merely **tokenism** or has a deficit lens
- Agency or choice that is **irrelevant**
- Impact they might have that is **limited in breadth and depth**

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

Meaningful youth engagement



Inclusion

Agency

Impact



All are more likely when we adopt an  
anti-racist anti-oppression approach



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# What is at the heart of an anti-racist anti-oppression approach?

An ARAO approach is underpinned by deep understanding and self and social awareness of how power and privilege operate to marginalize and oppress groups, protect the status quo, and normalize and operationalize white supremacy.

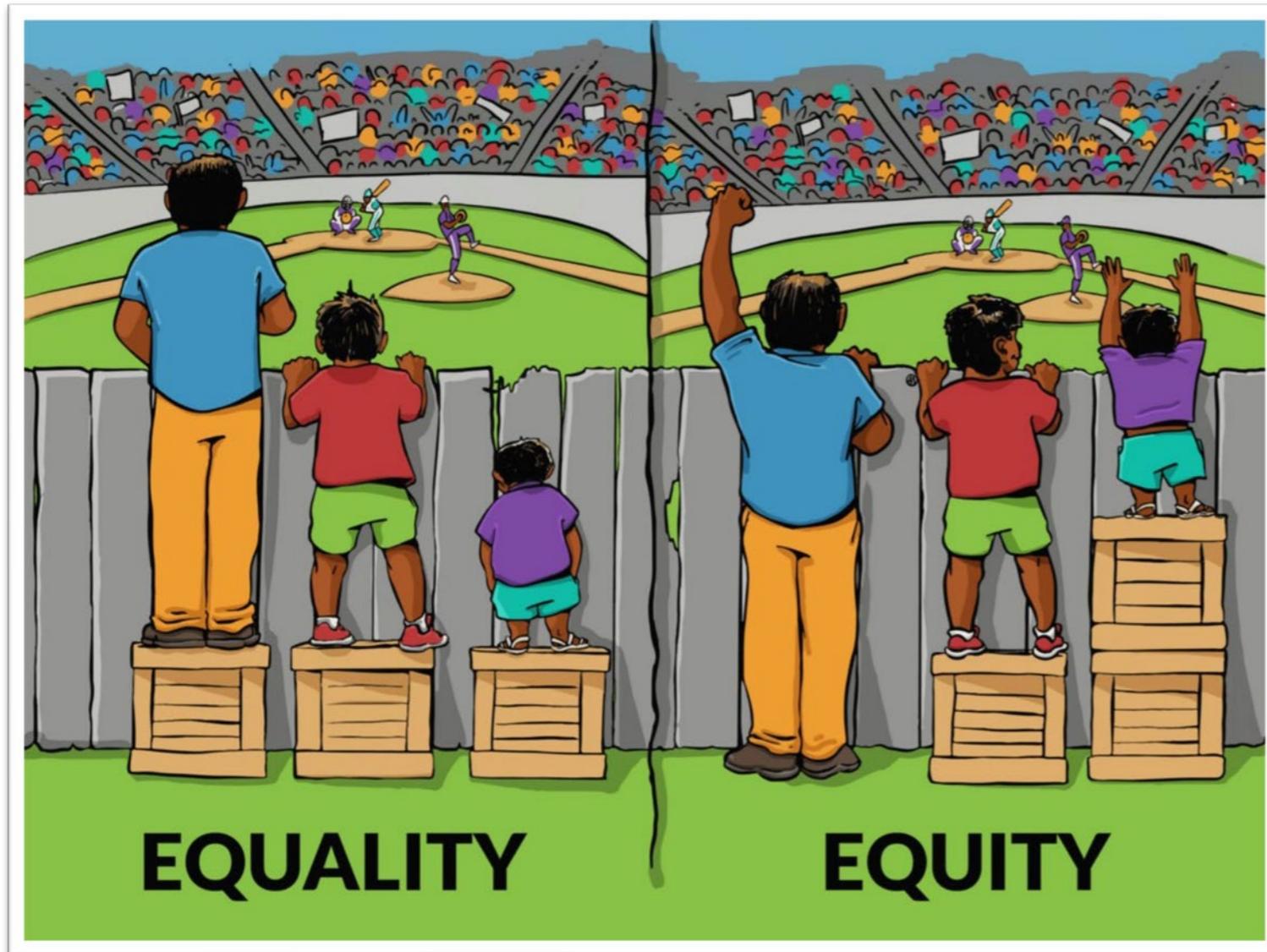


Read [more](#) about anti-racism and anti-oppression.



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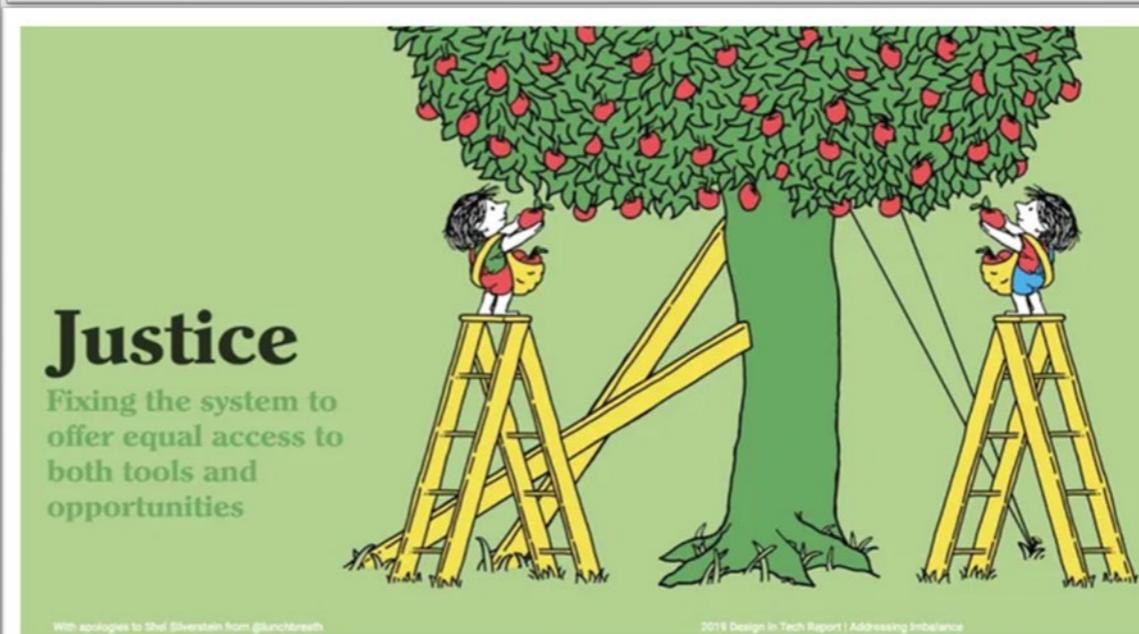
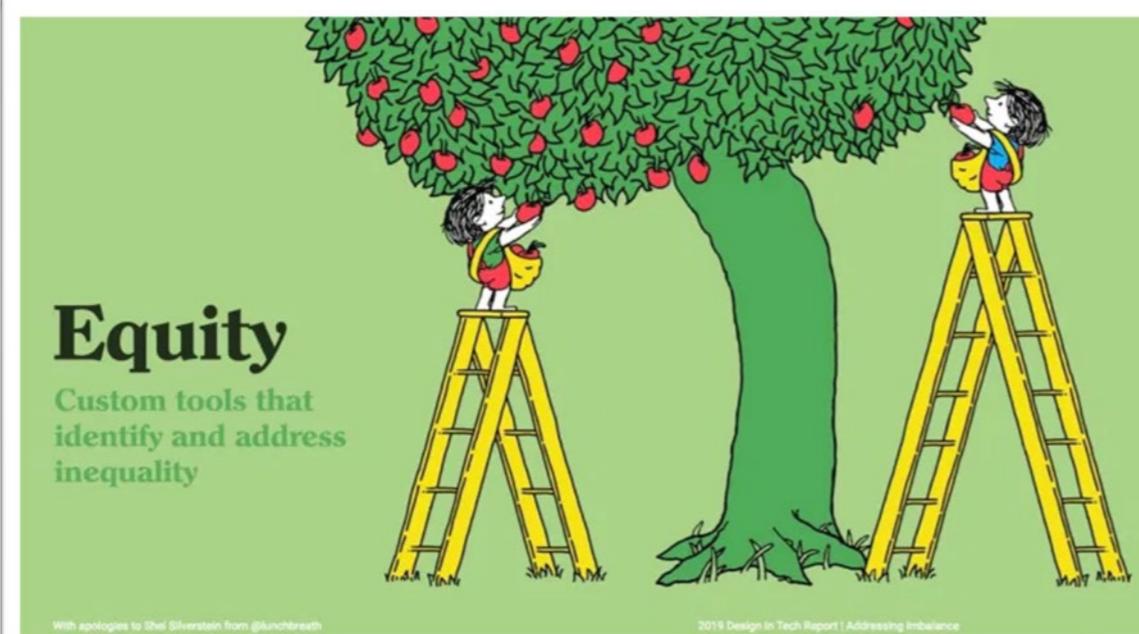
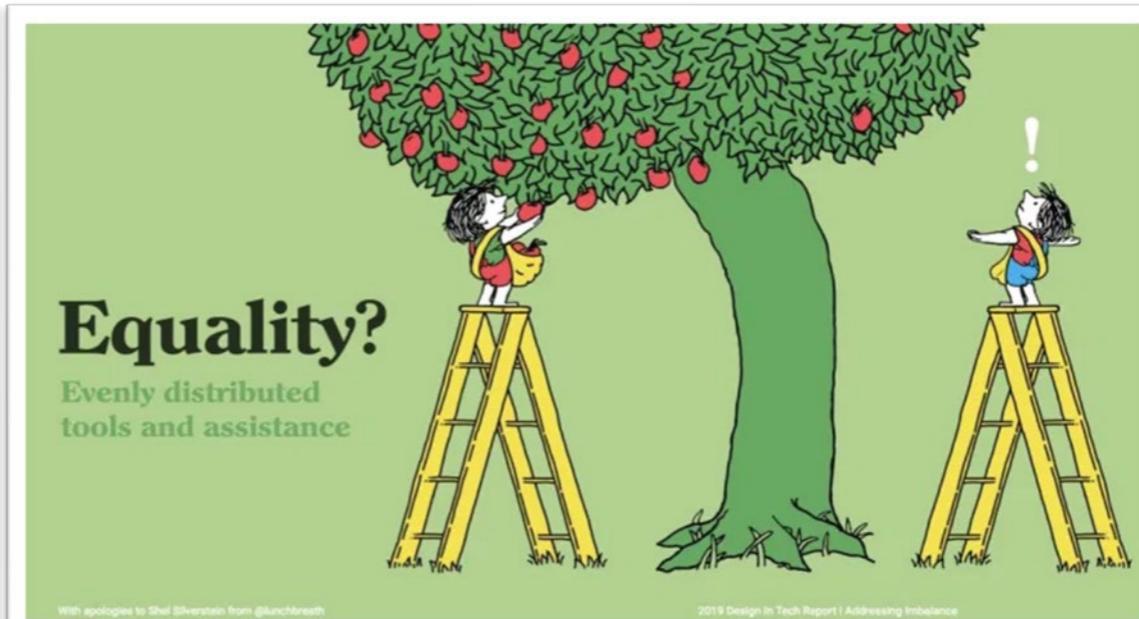
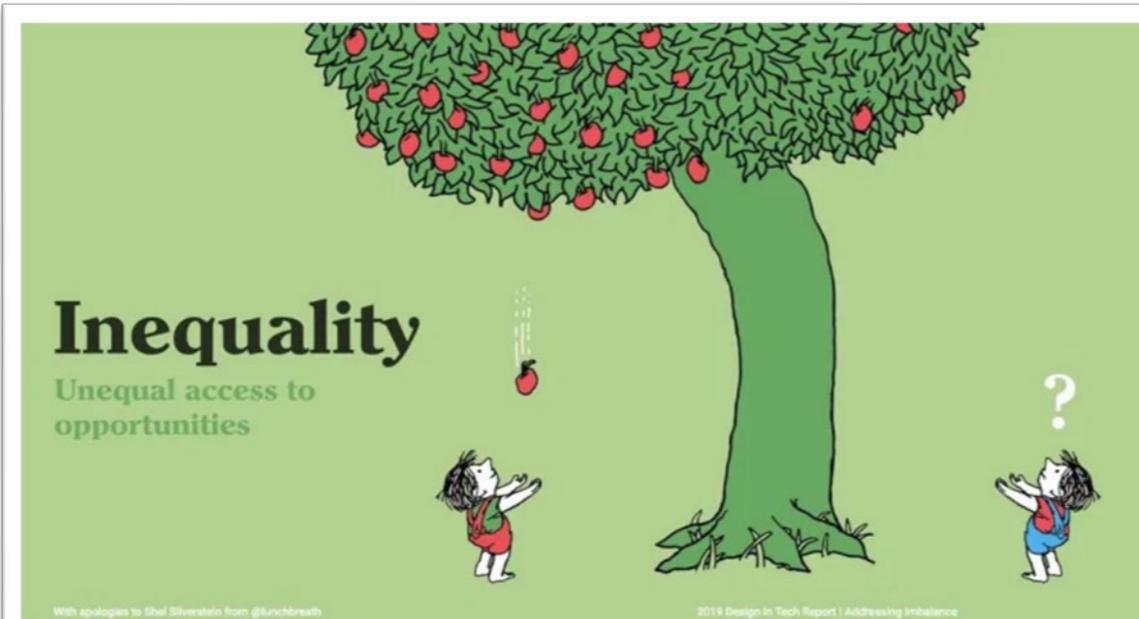
# Perpetuating a deficit lens



- What is the intended message of this message?
- What message might it inadvertently send?



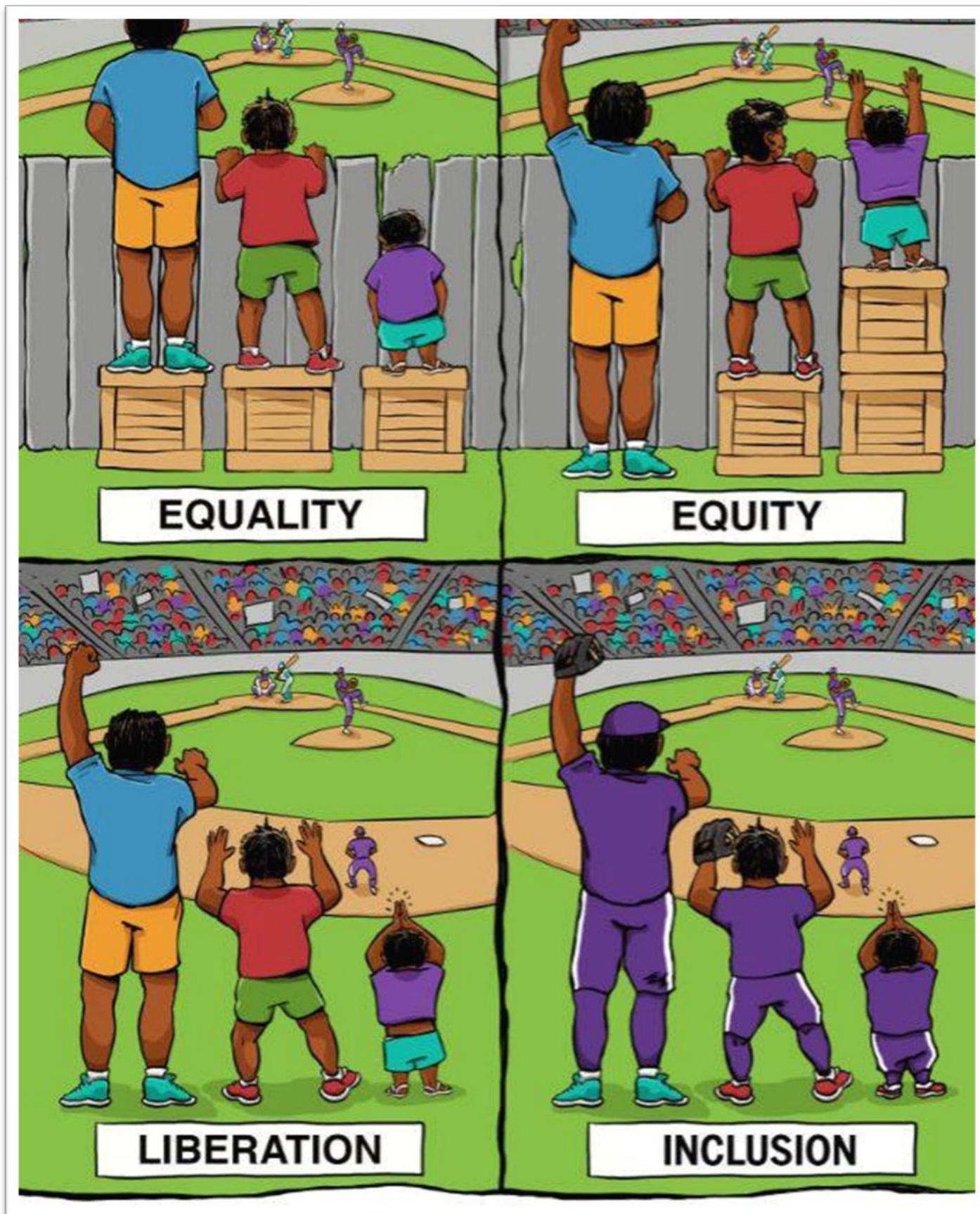
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- What is better about this visualization?
- What might still be problematic?



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What might this vision of inclusion mean for your organization when working with young people?

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# What might you want to learn more about?

Remember: This module is not meant to be a comprehensive primer on anti-racism and anti-oppressions. Other questions we suggest you explore:

- What is white supremacy? White privilege? White fragility?
- How is race as a social construct?
- What are the key principles of critical race theory?
- What are the implications of these understandings for international development work and working with young people?

Select resources to read or watch to extend your learning. Find additional resources [here](#).

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# What does anti-racism and anti-oppression have to do with youth engagement?

- We asked young people: what does marginalization of youth voices sound like, feel like, or look like?
- Click here to hear Richard's explanation 
- Click here to hear Yacine's experience 
- Click here to hear Patrick's experience 

Reflect on the young people's responses.

What might have made them feel like their involvement was merely token participation?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Power, privilege and youth engagement

*“There can be very Western working styles and methods of engagement and participation: individualistic, merit based, show and tell, speak up to be heard.”*

Youth Council Member

- Listen to Yacine talk about the importance of reflecting on your own privilege.



- What's the connection to power and privilege?
- How might you take steps to be more inclusive?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Power, privilege, and youth engagement

*"Partners do not always consider or understand the intersectional contexts of global youth advocates. We are often in school. We are often struggling for money and may need to prioritize work. We may need for time off. We have competing life stage priorities."*

Youth Council Member

- What's the connection to power and privilege?
- How might you take steps to be more inclusive?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Power, privilege, and youth engagement

*“Youth are sometimes not given adequate space in meetings to raise their points. The conversation goes quickly. It is a very Western style of working that requires people to interject and raise points throughout the conversation.”*

Youth Council Member

- What's the connection to power and privilege?
- How might you take steps to be more inclusive?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# What are you thinking now?

An organization has been meeting to develop a strategy to create networks of youth activists in rural areas to advocate and educate community members on an issue. They have developed a robust plan and are now reaching out to the Youth Council for input. They will invite Youth Council members to volunteer to attend a discussion forum next month to hear about the strategy and solicit their help for implementing the strategy.

How likely is it that the youth involved will be meaningfully engaged?

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- B. Likely
- C. Unlikely
- D. Highly unlikely

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# Revisit your Thoughtbook

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Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Thoughtbook



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## Part 4

What powerful actions can I take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Reflecting on your personal tendencies, inclinations, and practices

Imagine yourself in this scenario:

Your organization has requested that members of the Youth Council attend a meeting to provide input on a new initiative. There are many stakeholders at the meeting and there is controversy and differing perspectives regarding the initiative.

How are you likely to engage in this situation?  
What are your individual tendencies, inclinations, and practices?



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# Are you most likely to...

- A. Try to calm people's emotions
- B. Encourage people to talk about their reactions and emotions
- C. Talk more than listen
- D. Listen more than talk
- E. Push to find a solution
- F. Try to slow down the push for a quick solution
- G. Be the first to speak
- H. Be the last to speak
- I. Be bold and encourage risk-taking
- J. Be cautious and encourage careful deliberation
- K. Ask lots of questions
- L. Answer lots of questions

Try to imagine the implications of any of these behaviours on the young people in the meeting.

What might be some positive or negative impacts they feel?



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# Thinking about our behaviours: the impact of microaggressions



What might microaggressions look like when working with youth?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# What powerful actions might you take?

Imagine yourself in this scenario:

Your organization has requested that members of the Youth Council attend a meeting to provide input on a new initiative. There are many stakeholders at the meeting and there is controversy or opposing perspectives on the initiative.

Reflecting on what you've learned thus far in this module, what might be some powerful actions you might take personally to ensure meaningful youth engagement in this opportunity?



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# Which powerful actions support youth engagement?

A **powerful action** to support meaningful youth engagement meets the following criteria:

- ❑ Reflects an understanding of anti-racist, anti-oppressive principles and approaches
- ❑ Is designed to intentionally disrupt problematic practices and to improve ways of working with young people
- ❑ Centres youth agency and is directed towards leveraging youth insights and nurturing their gifts
- ❑ Is based on evidence or data gathered from youth experiences, input and feedback



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# Assess an experience

A **powerful action** to support meaningful youth engagement meets the following criteria:

- ❑ Reflects an understanding of anti-racist, anti-oppressive principles and approaches
- ❑ Is designed to intentionally disrupt problematic practices and to improve ways of working with young people
- ❑ Centres youth agency and is directed towards leveraging youth insights and nurturing their gifts
- ❑ Is based on evidence or data gathered from youth experiences, input and feedback

Listen to a young person's experience. Reflect on what you hear in light of the criteria. What actions could have been taken to improve youth engagement in this scenario?



*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Assess another experience

A **powerful action** to support meaningful youth engagement meets the following criteria:

- ❑ Reflects an understanding of anti-racist, anti-oppressive principles and approaches
- ❑ Is designed to intentionally disrupt problematic practices and to improve ways of working with young people
- ❑ Centres youth agency and is directed towards leveraging youth insights and nurturing their gifts
- ❑ Is based on evidence or data gathered from youth experiences, input and feedback

Listen to another young person's experience. Reflect on what you hear in light of the criteria. What actions could have been taken to improve youth engagement in this scenario?



*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Rate the actions

Examine the actions on the activity sheet.

*How effectively do these actions support meaningful youth engagement?*

Use the criteria to:

1. Rate the effectiveness of actions intended to support meaningful youth engagement.

2. Suggest how you might improve each action so that it meets the criteria and more meaningfully engages young people.

## How effectively do these actions support meaningful youth engagement?

1. Use the criteria below to rate the effectiveness of actions intended to support meaningful youth engagement.
2. Then, suggest how you might improve each action so that it meets the criteria and more meaningfully engages young people.

A **powerful action** to support meaningful youth engagement will meet the following criteria:

- Reflects an understanding of anti-racist, anti-oppressive principles and approaches
- Is designed to intentionally disrupt problematic practices and to improve ways of working with young people
- Centres youth agency and is directed towards leveraging youth insights and nurturing their gifts
- Is based on evidence or data gathered from youth experiences, input and feedback

Actions	How effectively does the action support meaningful youth engagement? Indicate your rating by placing an "x" on the continuum	How might the action be made more powerful? Use the criteria listed above to create possible improvements for each action (if warranted)
Youth are asked to attend a high-level event but not given a role in the meeting.	←————→ Not very                      Very	
Youth are asked to present a specific topic or viewpoint but seem to be the "token youth attendees."	←————→ Not very                      Very	

Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Activity Sheet

1



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# Where can I take powerful actions to improve youth engagement?

- Who controls the agenda?
- Who controls what questions are asked?
- What strategies are in place to prioritize which voices are heard?
- Who decides when a decision has been reached?  
How is a decision reached?
- How do I gauge agreement or disagreement?
- Who controls the pace of change or the level of discomfort?

- What are your current practices in these areas?
- What might you do differently to better engage youth in meaningful ways?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*



Intent does not supersede impact

Ella F. Washington



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# How might I determine the impact of my practices?

Be genuinely curious:

- Did I get that right? Or, how close am I to understanding...?
- Do you think this will work for our purposes?
- Are you comfortable with my interpretation? Or, how comfortable...
- What parts of that meeting worked well from your perspective? What parts need to change?
- I notice that...
- I'm wondering whether...
- How are you feeling about...

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# What are you thinking now?

Your organization has requested that members of the Youth Council attend a meeting to provide input on a new initiative. There are many stakeholders at the meeting and there is controversy and differing perspectives regarding the initiative.

Reflecting on what you've learned thus far in this module, what might be some powerful actions you might take to personally ensure meaningful youth engagement in this opportunity?



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# Revisit your Thoughtbook

- *Thinking about myself:* What powerful actions can I take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?
- *Thinking about my organization:* What powerful actions can my organization take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?

Revisit your initial ideas in your Thoughtbook. What would you like to add? Change? Revise?

**Your Thoughtbook**

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Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Thoughtbook



## Part 5

What powerful actions can my organization take to support the meaningful engagement of youth?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Examine a real-life opportunity for youth engagement

Select a youth opportunity your organization is planning. Use the criteria to:

1. Assess your approach to determine how likely it is to meaningfully engage youth.
2. “Tweak and fortify” your approach to make it more likely to meaningfully engage youth.

Criteria:

- Reflects an understanding of anti-racist, anti-oppressive principles and approaches
- Is designed to intentionally disrupt problematic practices and to improve ways of working with young people
- Centres youth agency and is directed towards leveraging youth insights and nurturing their gifts
- Is constructed based on evidence or data gathered from youth experiences, input and feedback



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What do you believe are the most significant factors contributing to lack of meaningful youth engagement in your organization?

- A. We don't plan carefully for youth engagement but often simply invite youth at the last minute
- B. We don't know how to engage youth in meaningful ways
- C. We don't really know if the youth we work with are engaged or not so we haven't really considered what we might be doing that is disengaging.
- D. Other?

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

# Assess your organization's approach

## HART'S LADDER OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION



Meaningful engagement  
Not engagement  
Not meaningful Engagement  
Harmful engagement

Assess your organization's efforts thus far to involve youth:

- Which rung of the ladder do efforts often land on?
- What are some examples of lower or higher rungs that you have seen or planned?

Take a closer look at [Hart's ladder](#)

*[there is no facilitation recording for this slide]*

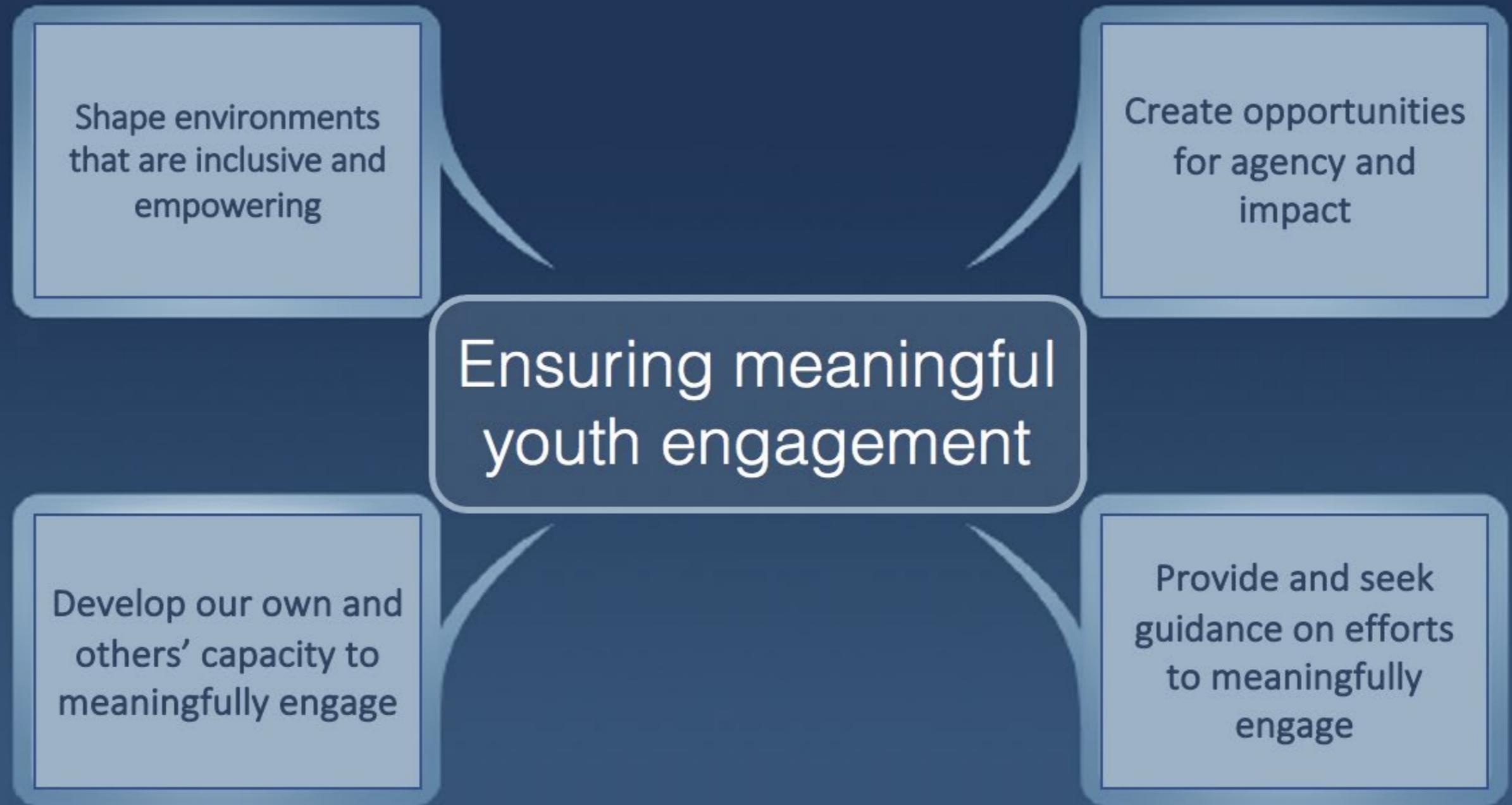
# How might a framework support your planning?

Recall your thinking about what steps your organization could take to better engage youth.

- What helped support your thinking?
- How might an implementation framework help?

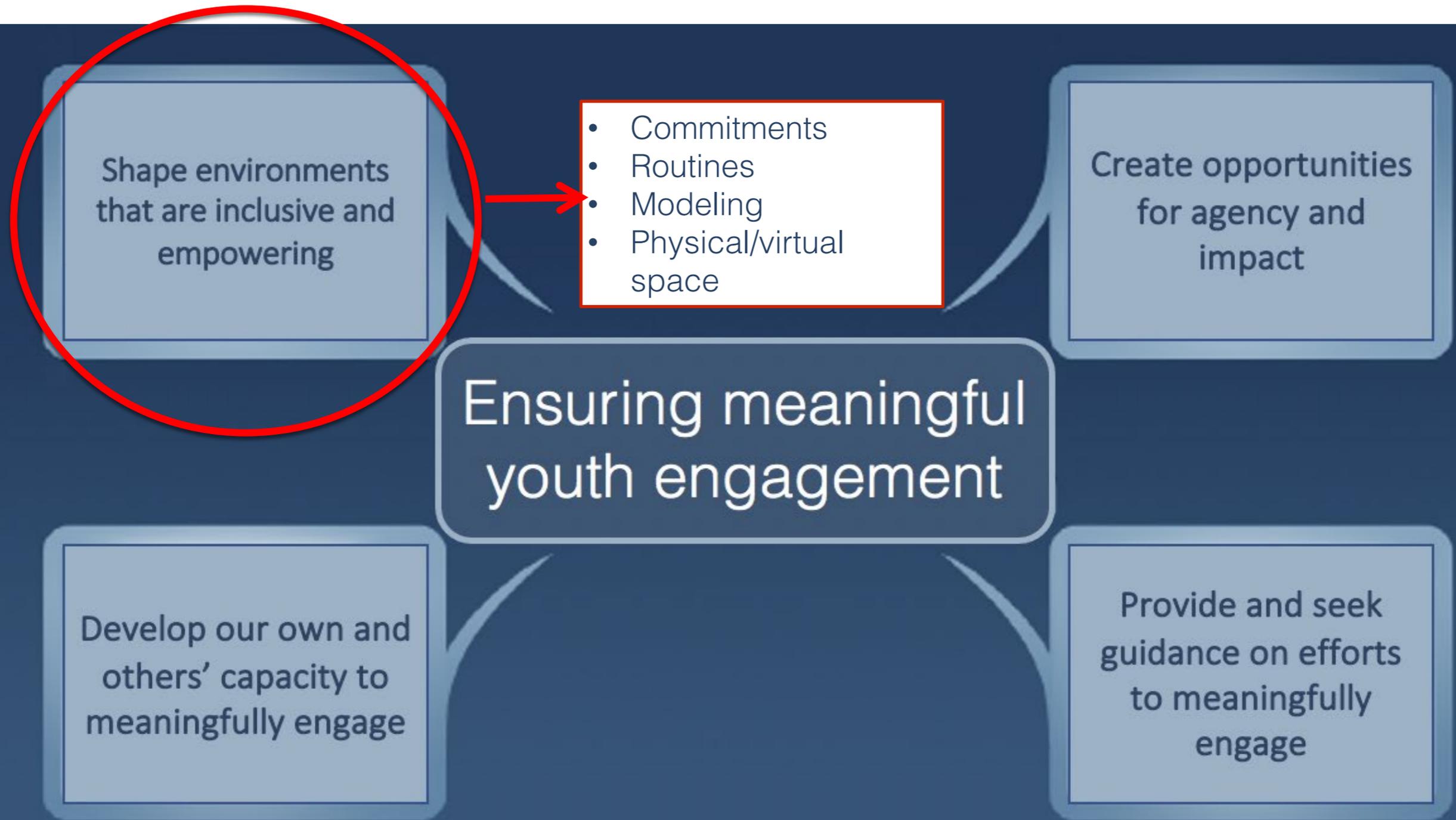


# A framework to support your planning



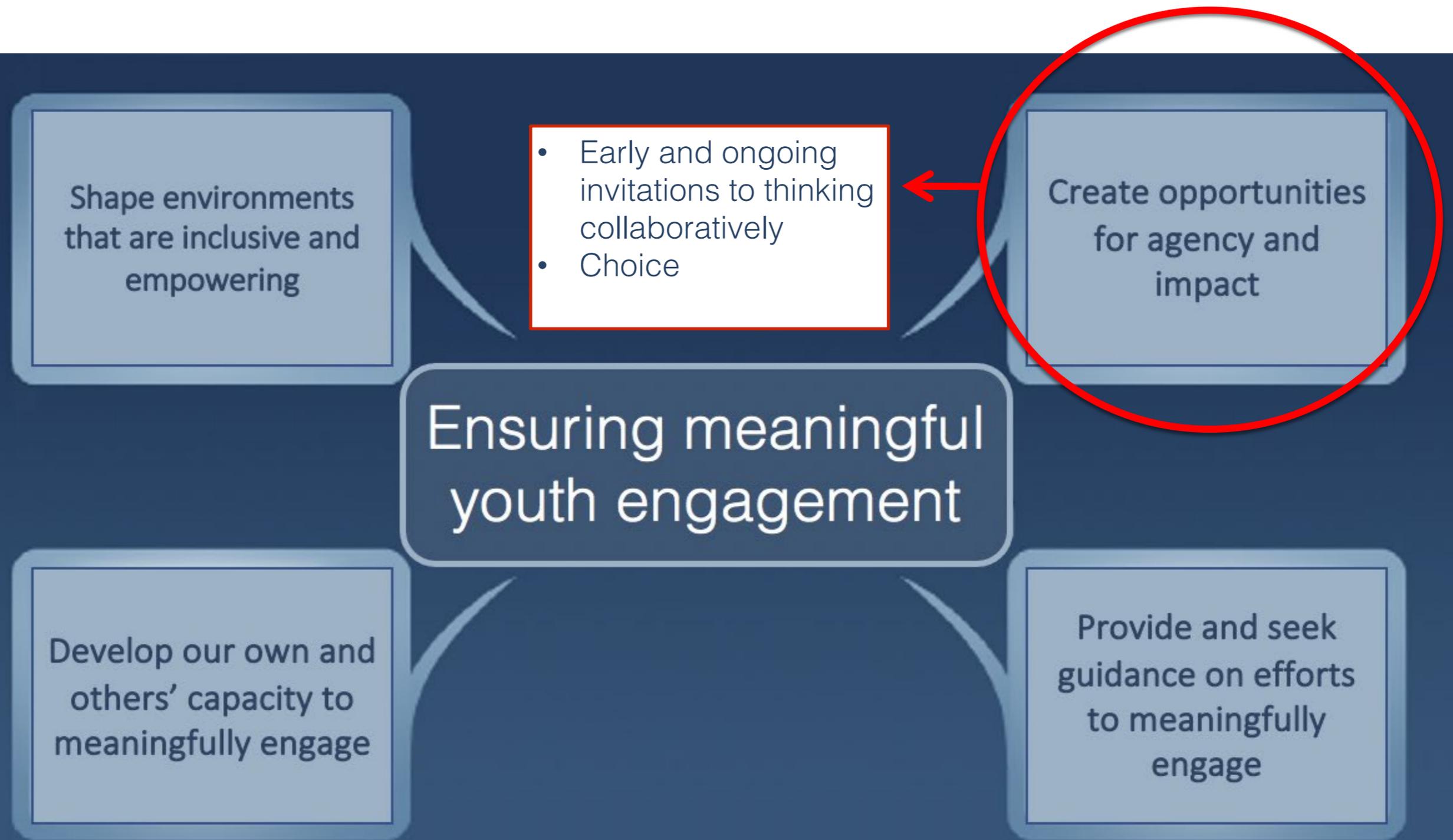
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# A framework to support your planning



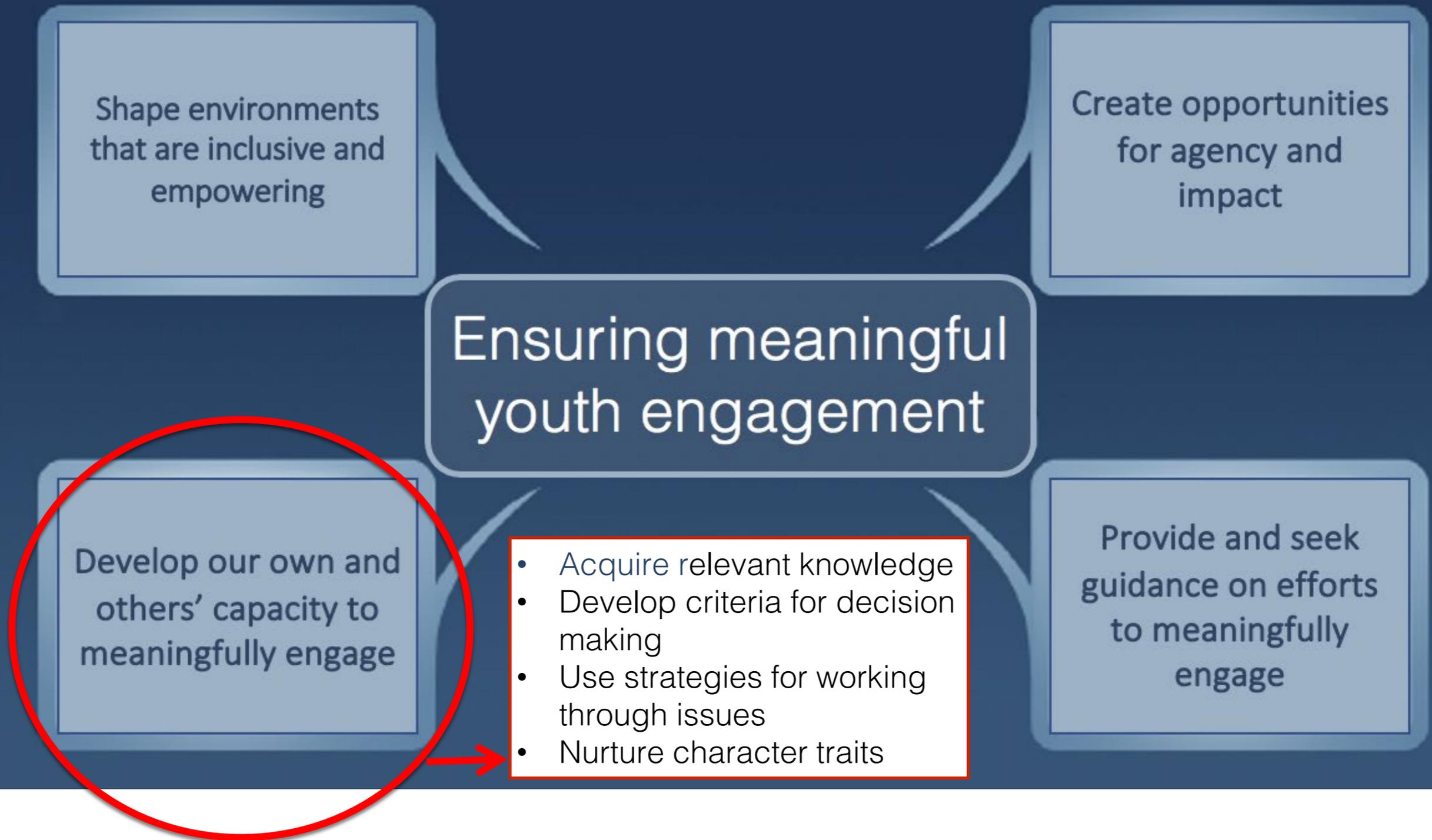
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# A framework to support your planning



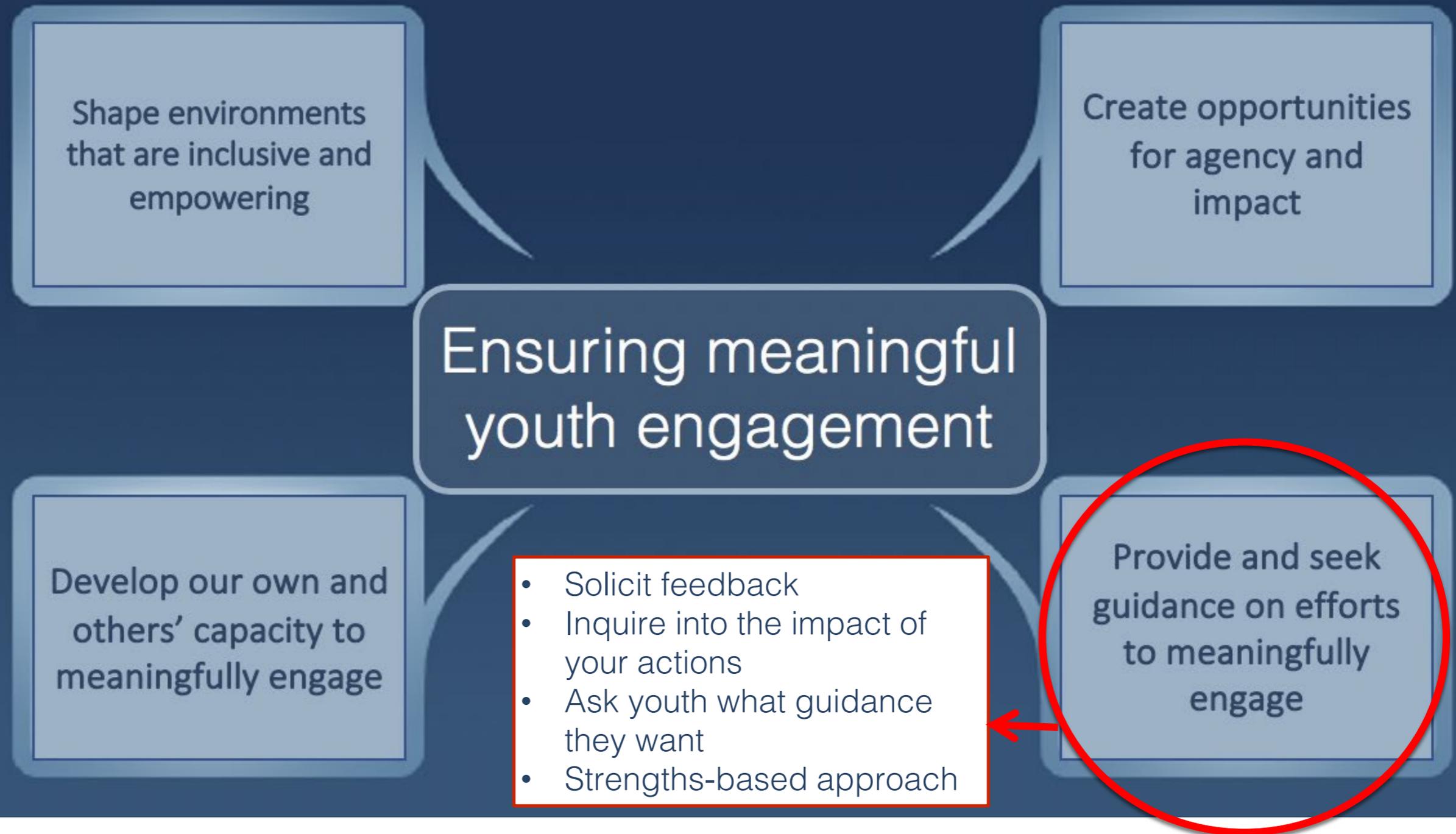
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# A framework to support your planning



Click to hear the facilitator

# A framework to support your planning



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# What are you thinking now?

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Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Thoughtbook



# Consolidating your learning

Please take some time to reflect on your learning throughout this module.

Share your thoughts with us by sending us your Thoughtbook or a short reflection based on what emerged in your Thoughtbook.

Send your final reflection to: [info@yet4h.com](mailto:info@yet4h.com)

**Your Thoughtbook**

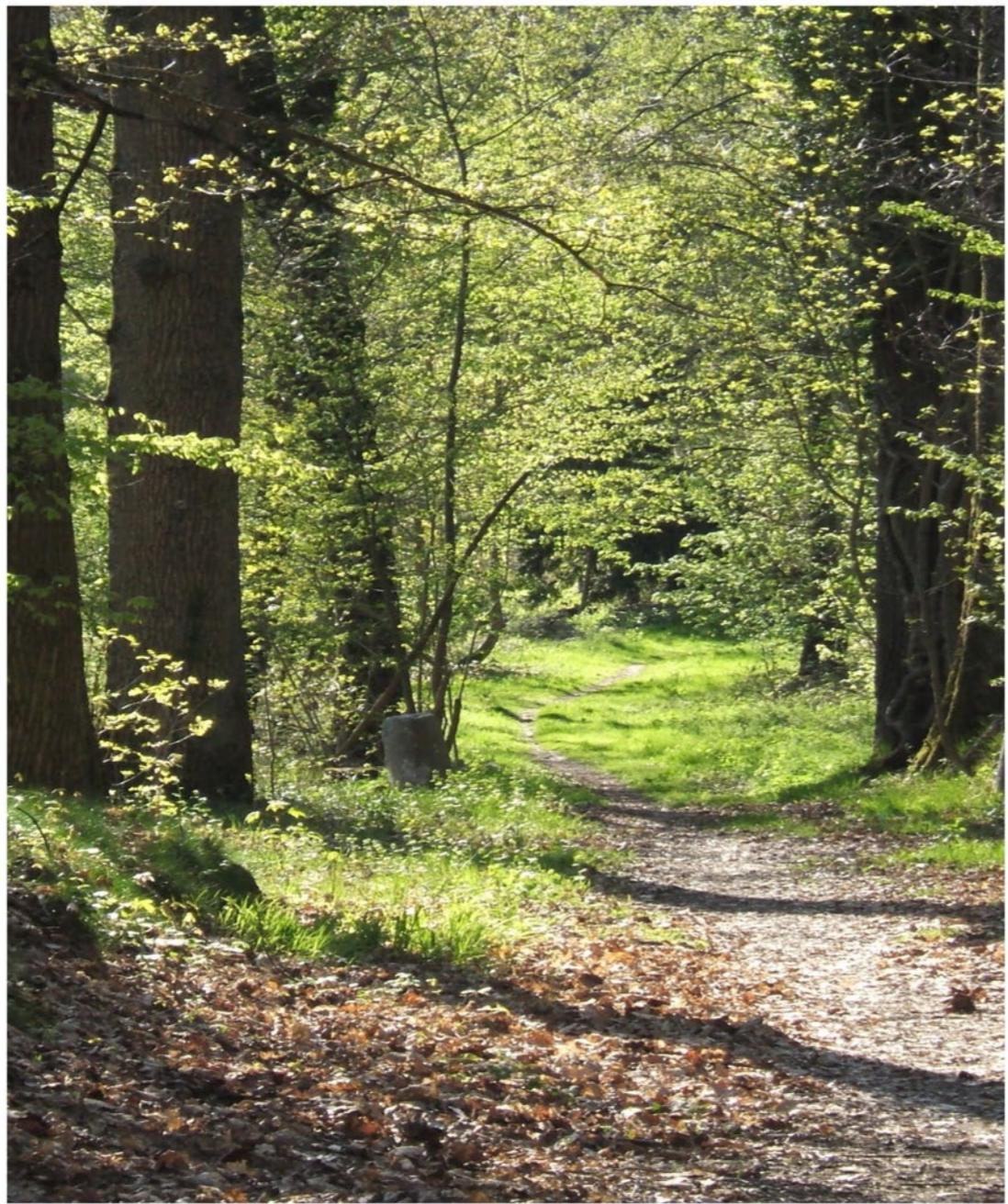
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Creating meaningful youth engagement  
Training Module Thoughtbook





What are your  
next steps?



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# Thank you!

## YOUNG EXPERTS: TECH 4 HEALTH

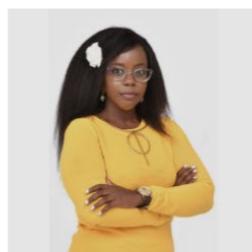
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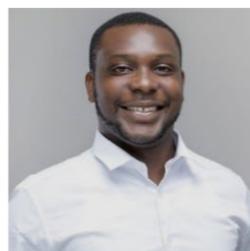
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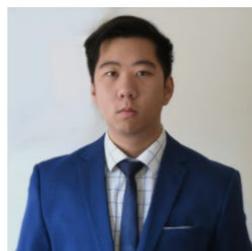
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