

Meeting 7—Individual Meaning Making

Youth Engagement in Policy (YEP) Research Group

If you have questions about the [Authentic Youth Engagement in Policy Project](#), please contact co-Principal Investigators Amy McKlindon at amcklindon@childtrends.org and Samantha E. Holquist at sholquist@childtrends.org.

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ChildTrends.

AGENDA



- Welcome, Teambuilding & Norms ●
- Grounding ●
- Youth Roles/Policy Change Process Activity ●
- Outcomes Activity ●
- Organizational Practices Activity ●
- Wrap Up & Next Steps ●

TEAMBUILDING



TEAMBULDING ACTIVITY



**What's your favorite
winter comfort food or
drink?**



YEP Research Group Norms and Expectations

Collaborate so we can build upon each other and create the best possible outcome

Opposing views are welcome and should be shared with respect

Meet people where they are in how they want to engage and share their perspective

Honor everyone's unique experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds - we are all in this together

Hear what others have to say (e.g., listen to understand), respect their thoughts, ideas, and feelings, and strive to understand one another

Foster a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable and respected

Make decisions using democratic processes (e.g., discussions, voting)

When disagreements occur, keep lines of communication open and work together to resolve conflicts

Be curious, not judgmental

Set clear objectives and expectations (e.g., creating agendas for meetings, having a clear path of where we are going)



GROUNDING

PURPOSE FOR TODAY



During today's meeting, we hope to:

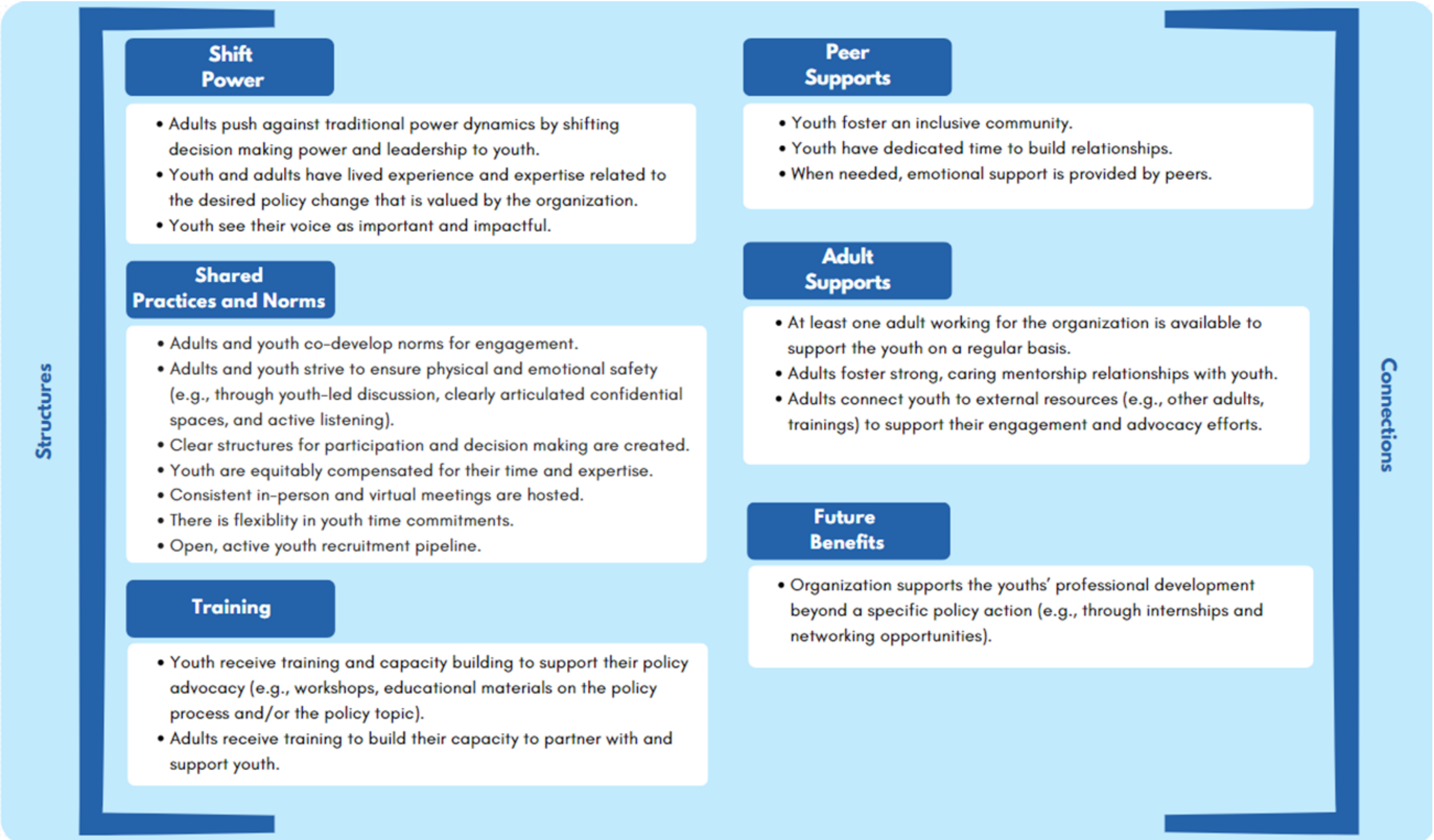
- Gather your feedback on the themes we found in your data
- Get prepared to write the case study for your policy win

WHAT WE'VE DONE WITH DATA



Once data is collected, we follow these steps:

- Put all data into Dedoose, an analysis software
- Coded the interview and document data
 - Coding is the process of labeling and organizing your data in such a way that you can then identify themes in the data, and the relationships between these themes.
- Found insights from the data that we'll be sharing with you today



What roles do youth hold within policy advocacy?

Leading/Designing

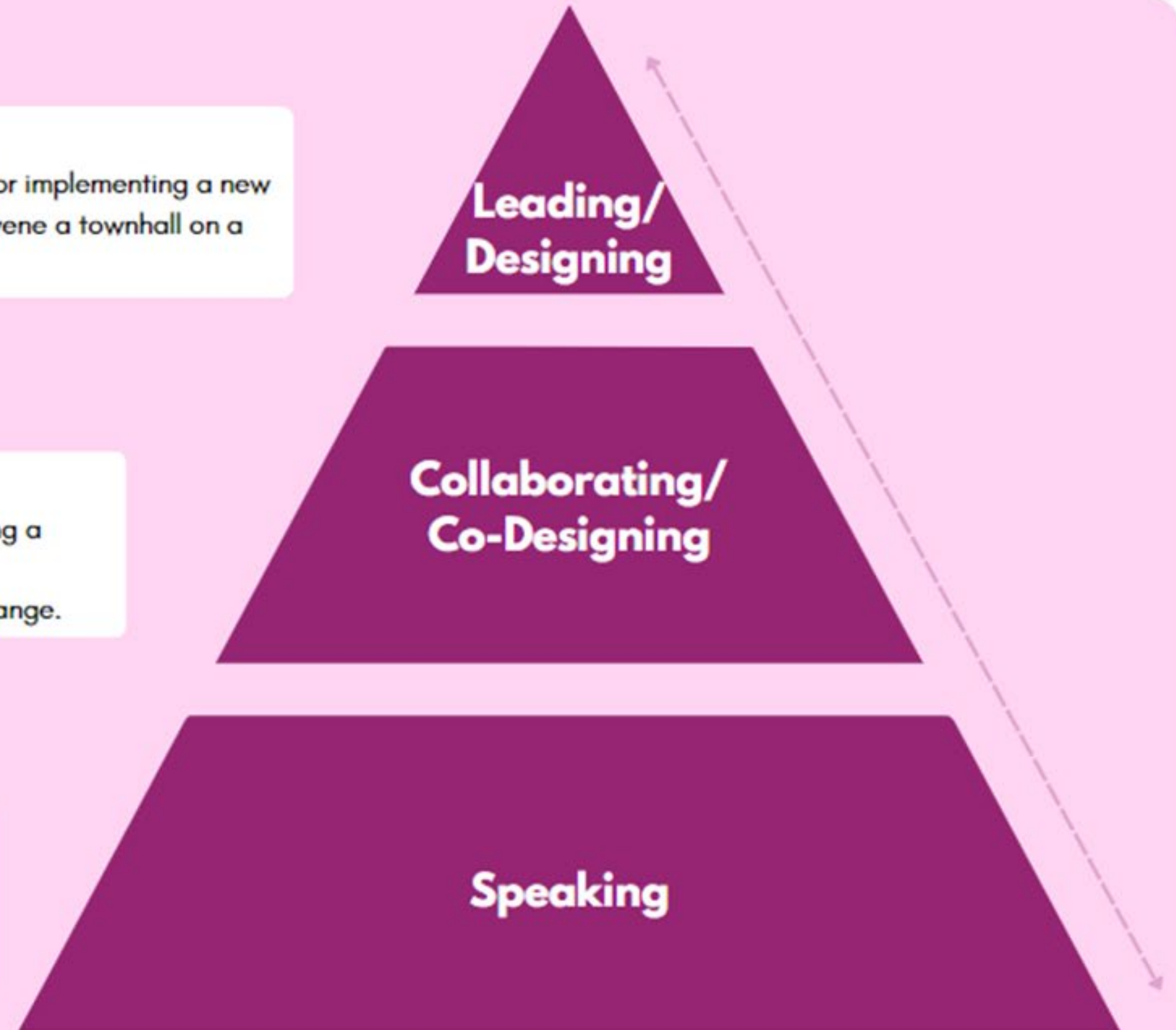
- Youth lead policy change while adults assist.
- *Examples:* Youth serve on a youth commission tasked with creating guidance for implementing a new policy. Youth organize an advocacy campaign for a policy change. Youth convene a townhall on a policy issue.

Collaborating/Co-Designing

- Youth and adults partner to lead policy change.
- *Examples:* Youth and adults serve on a committee that is tasked with developing a policy change. Youth and adults co-lead a coalition advocating for a policy change. Youth and adults co-design a communications strategy for a policy change.

Speaking

- Youth share their ideas and opinions for policy change. Adults interpret the information and possibly act on it.
- *Examples:* Youth are invited to testify before a legislative committee. Youth attend an advocacy day event organized by adults.



In what ways do youth engage in the policy process?

Policy Identification

- Identify problem for policy change.
- Collect data to understand the problem.
- Gather community input on the problem.
- Research the local and historical context, including the existing policy landscape.
- Identify the goals and priorities of decision makers responsible for policy change.

Policy Implementation

- Monitor how the policy change is being enacted (e.g., through data collection and analysis).
- Participate on implementation teams to provide guidance on how the policy change is enacted.
- Develop trainings and/or tools to support implementation.
- Evaluate and report on whether the policy is achieving its intended goals.

Policy Design

- Conduct listening sessions or focus groups with other youth to design a policy that addresses the identified problems.
- Draft policy.

Policy Advocacy

- Identify resources (e.g., time, money) available for policy advocacy.
- Create a plan for advocating for policy change.
- Build a coalition of individuals and organizations who support the policy change.
- Secure a key decision maker (i.e., champion) to support the policy change.
- Speak to decision makers about the policy change (e.g., plan or attend a State Capitol Day, testify before decision-making bodies).
- Build awareness and rally local support around the policy change (e.g., developing a social media campaign, writing for the media, hosting events).
- Review policy change documents (e.g., bills, administrative changes) and make recommendations.
- If necessary, negotiate with key decision makers (and potentially make concessions) to achieve the policy change.



How does youth engagement in policy advocacy influence outcomes?

Youth Outcomes

- Increased self-esteem, self-efficacy, feelings of belonging in the community, and civic engagement.
- Deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.
- Development of skills (e.g., leadership, self-advocacy, research, problem solving).
- Increased social capital.

Community Outcomes

- Establishment of public leadership pathways.
- Increased contact between youth and adults.
- Shifting norms, mindsets, and narratives related to the problem.
- Equitable access to public services, resources, and programs.
- Cross-organizational learning and modeling of best practices for youth engagement in policy advocacy.

Organizational Outcomes

- Increased youth involvement in advocacy efforts.
- Changes in advocacy priorities and strategies.
- Shifting power from adults to youth.
- Organizational culture shifts to value diversity of perspectives.
- Increased awareness among organizational leaders of youth priorities.
- Inclusion of youth priorities in organization's strategic plan.
- Increased credibility.
- Increased effectiveness.
- Increased funding.
- Creation of a more welcoming and comfortable environment for youth.

Policy Outcomes

- Increased decisionmaker awareness of the problem.
- Formation of new alliances and coalitions.
- Formation of new relationships with decisionmakers.
- Improvement of existing policies.
- New policies enacted.
- New policies are more effective and have an increased chance of successful implementation.
- Increased cross-system coordination to support youth.
- Increased allocation and use of public resources to benefit youth.
- Creation of and increased number of youth serving on local boards and councils.
- Youth and community-centered and designed policies become standard practice.



**YOUTH ROLES/POLICY
CHANGE PROCESS
ACTIVITY**

YOUTH ROLES & POLICY CHANGE PROCESS



Youth Roles	Policy Change Process
Speaking	Policy Identification
Collaborating/Co-Designing	Policy Design and Formulation
Leading/Designing	Policy Advocacy
	Policy Implementation

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS



In Miro, we'll map some data excerpts onto which youth role and which policy change process it exemplifies.

This will help ensure we have shared definitions of each youth role and each component of the policy change process so that we correctly write up your case study.

You'll have 20 minutes to work together on this.



OUTCOMES ACTIVITY

OUTCOMES ACTIVITY INSTRUCTION



1. In Miro, we have six outcomes excerpts for you to review.
2. Read each excerpt and organize them into the types of outcomes they represent.
3. We'll discuss where you placed each excerpt.

You'll have 20 minutes to work together on this.



ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES ACTIVITY

THEME 1: ADULT SUPPORTS



Definition: How an organization creates an environment in which youth are supported by adults (e.g., at least one adult working for the organization is available to support the youth on a regular basis; adults foster strong, caring mentorship relationship with youth; adults provide youth with learning and training opportunities; adults connect youth to external resources to support their engagement and advocacy efforts).

Number of excerpts coded: 52

Example: *"...[program] gives you opportunities with people that they're aware [of], that they have a connection with and work with, but they're also the organization who, if you do your own research, they will try their hardest to find something that fits you with their connections."*

THEME 1: ADULT SUPPORTS DISCUSSION



- What forms of adult supports stand out to you as critical throughout the program?
- Connecting youth to external resources and partners to promote youth engagement and leadership seems like a significant role/aspect of the adult supports provided. Is that accurate? What are some ways youth and adults work together to take these connections further (i.e., opportunities after the program)?

THEME 2: PEER SUPPORTS



Definition: How an organization creates an environment in which youth are supported by their peers (e.g., youth have dedicated time to build relationships, youth provide mentorship and training opportunities to one another, emotional support is provided by peers, youth foster an inclusive community).

Number of excerpts coded: 20

Example : *“We do different bonding activities together. Some of us have formed our own like family bonds within the [program]. So we, you know, we connect with each other out there. We also support each other at different events that our jobs are having or you know things [like] just always be there.”*

THEME 2: PEER SUPPORTS DISCUSSION



- Youth learning from one another, connecting, and supporting each other throughout and beyond the program seems like a unique aspect compared to others. What strategies and practices do you engage in that stand out as critical to youth building these strong bonds with one another?
- Is this something you recommend other organizations do to build youth's capacity to engage in policy advocacy and change? Why?

THEME 3: TRAINING



Definition: How an organization prepares both youth and adults for policy advocacy efforts including workshops, sessions, resources, and materials provided (e.g., building adults' capacity to support and collaborate with youth in leading policy advocacy; adults providing youth with learning and training opportunities about topics such as policy issues, understanding policy advocacy, how to engage with local decision-makers).

Number of excerpts coded: 17

Example : *“They go through a critical analysis two -week training, you know, because that’s big for them. You know, you have to be able to [analyze these topics] ‘cause it’s critical, these are not baby topics. These are not little topics that, you know, we’re touching on and trying to well, putting them in positions to be a part of”.*

THEME 3: TRAINING DISCUSSION



- What aspects of the trainings and workshops you offer are most effective in preparation for policy change work?



WRAP UP & NEXT STEPS

Full Group Meeting: We are already working on scheduling a full research group meeting for December to make meaning of everyone's data together. Please fill out the Doodle poll!

Case Study: We will start working on a draft of your policy win case study, which should be ready for you to review during the first two weeks of February.

Extending Consulting Agreements: We were initially scheduled to complete our work in January 2025, but we'll need another few months to finalize everything. We're working with the Foundation to extend our grant through June 2025, which means we'll need to update your consulting agreements.

Feedback: Please complete the exit ticket!