



# Youth-Led Participatory Action Research (YPAR) Orientation

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welcome

The image features the word "welcome" rendered in a playful, 3D style. Each letter is a different color: 'w' is pink, 'e' is light green, 'l' is orange, 'c' is blue, 'o' is yellow and shaped like a sun with rays, 'm' is purple, and the final 'e' is green. The letters are arranged in a slightly staggered, overlapping fashion on a plain white background.



## Our Mission

The Public Health Institute **Center for Wellness and Nutrition** is committed to increasing capacity through community change leadership for equity and wellness through research, policies, and practices for all.



## Our Work

The Public Health Institute **Center for Wellness and Nutrition** builds partnerships to change communities and create safer environments where healthy choices are accessible to all.

The **Center for Wellness and Nutrition** is a national leader in developing campaigns, programs, and partnerships to reduce obesity and promote equity in the most vulnerable communities across the country.

The **Center for Wellness and Nutrition** has over 12 years of experience guiding and supporting Youth Engagement, specifically Youth-Led Participatory Action Research (YPAR) Projects



## PHI CWN – Schools and Youth Engagement

The **Center for Wellness and Nutrition** supports underserved youth to systematically integrate nutrition and physical activity opportunities in school, after school, and community settings. We build genuine partnerships with trusted adults and young people as leaders and change agents to create healthy changes in their communities.

We work closely with health departments, extension offices, schools, community and youth serving organizations to change communities where poor diet, physical inactivity and obesity are the norm due to limited access to healthy foods and safe places to be active.

# BREAK THE ICE



Expectations,  
Ground Rules, And  
Group Agreements  
A HANDS ON ACTIVITY



# Defining Youth Engagement:

Youth engagement is the result when young people are involved in responsible, challenging actions to create positive social change.



# SPEED BRAINSTORM





## 3 Minute to Summarize

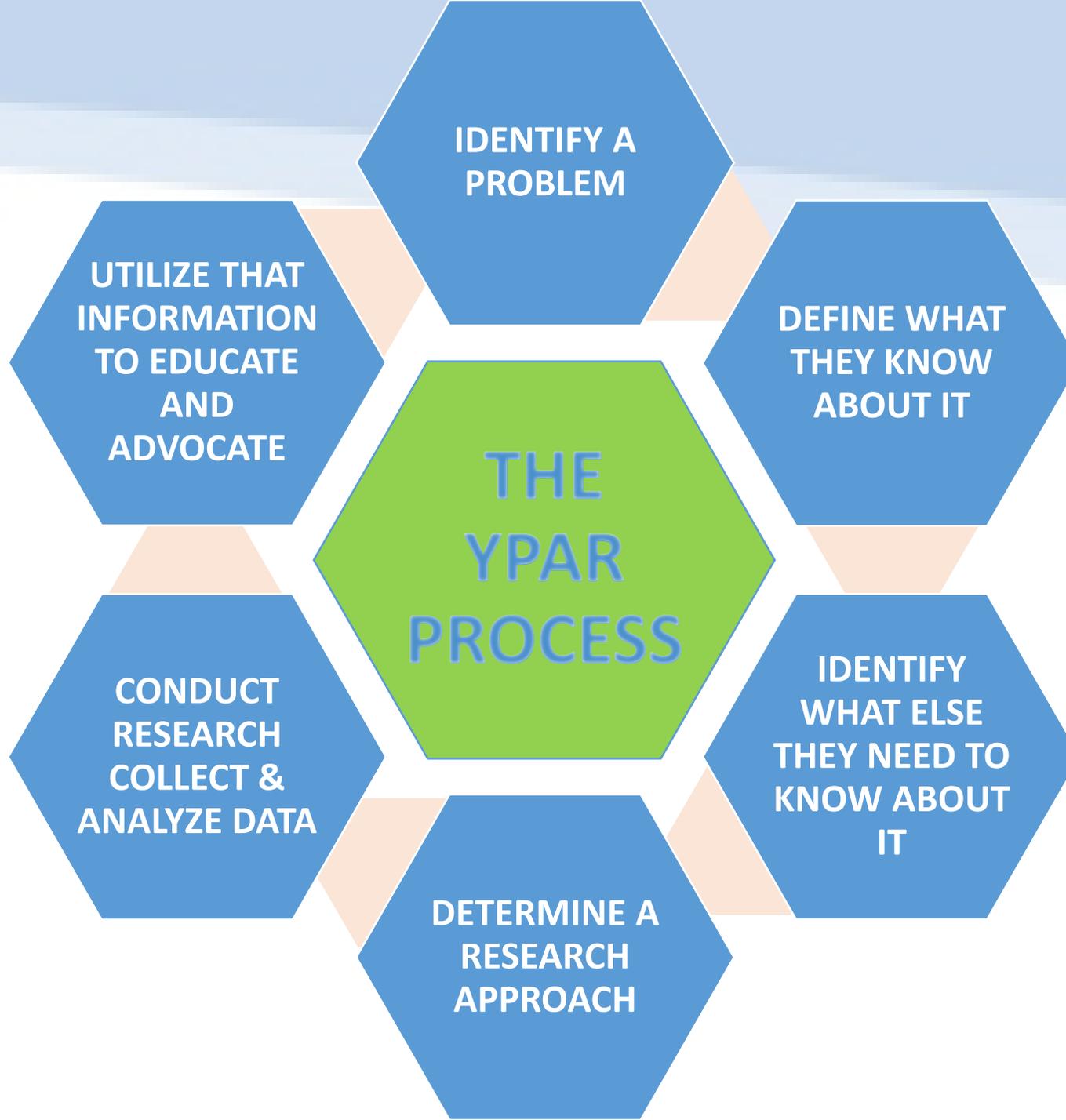


- As a group summarize the major points on your sheet from everyone input.
- Designate 1 -2 speakers to share our for your group.



# YPAR (Youth-Led Participatory Action Research)

- An inquiry process that includes critical thinking, information gathering, analysis and logical problem solving while building networks and strengthening authentic voice to address an issue.
- This framework leads to authentic and meaningful partnerships between youth and adults.
- YPAR projects have documented changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills of youth participants, as well as healthy changes in schools, community-based organizations, and built environments.



# Youth-Led Approach Matters

Building authentic youth/adult partnerships is a foundational part of the YPAR process and a “youth-led” approach is grounded in the following key principles.



- Youth opinions are solicited, respected, and applied.
- Youth identify their own issues, problems, and possible solutions.
- Youth initiate project ideas, carry out planning, and goal setting.
- Youth drive the process and are involved in all stages of decision-making.
- Youth teach other youth.

# Youth/Adult Partnerships

Youth/Adult partnerships are key to **successful** programs.

**In successful partnerships, adults believe young people:**

- Have a right to participate in developing the programs that serve them
- Have a right to have a voice in shaping the policies that will affect them
- Are an asset to the partnership and respect youth's contributions



# Youth/Adult Partnerships

## Adults must:

- Be willing to provide additional training and support when youth need it
- Share power and decision making with youth

**Youth** may need to understand the limitations and realities that affect a program's development, operation, and evaluation.

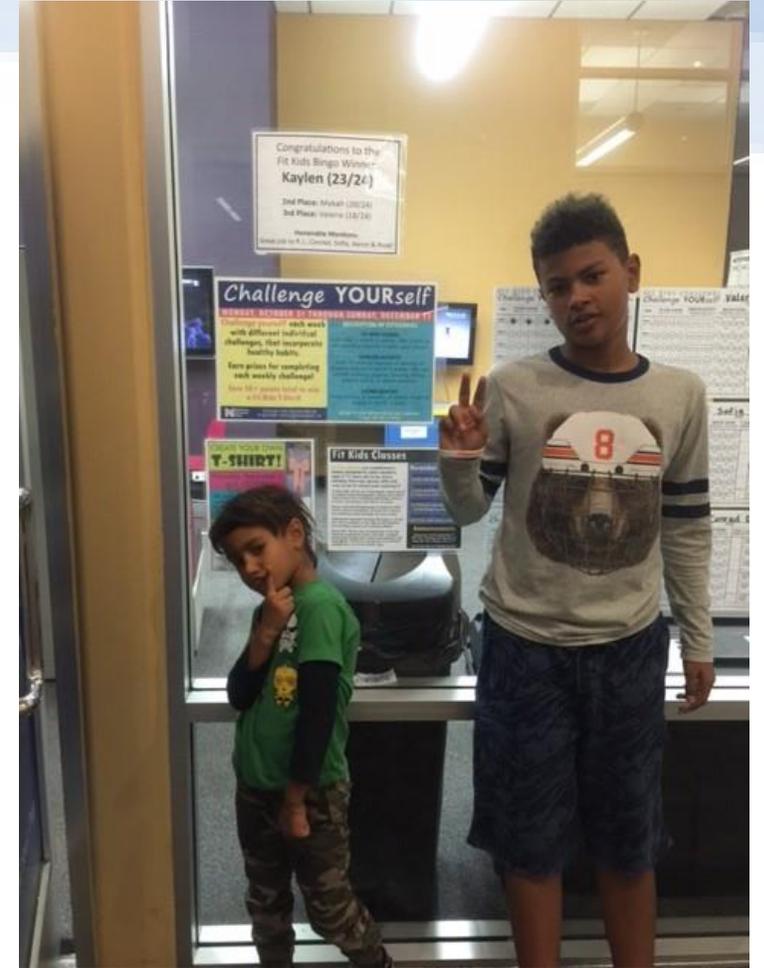
- SNAP-Ed limitations
- Other realities



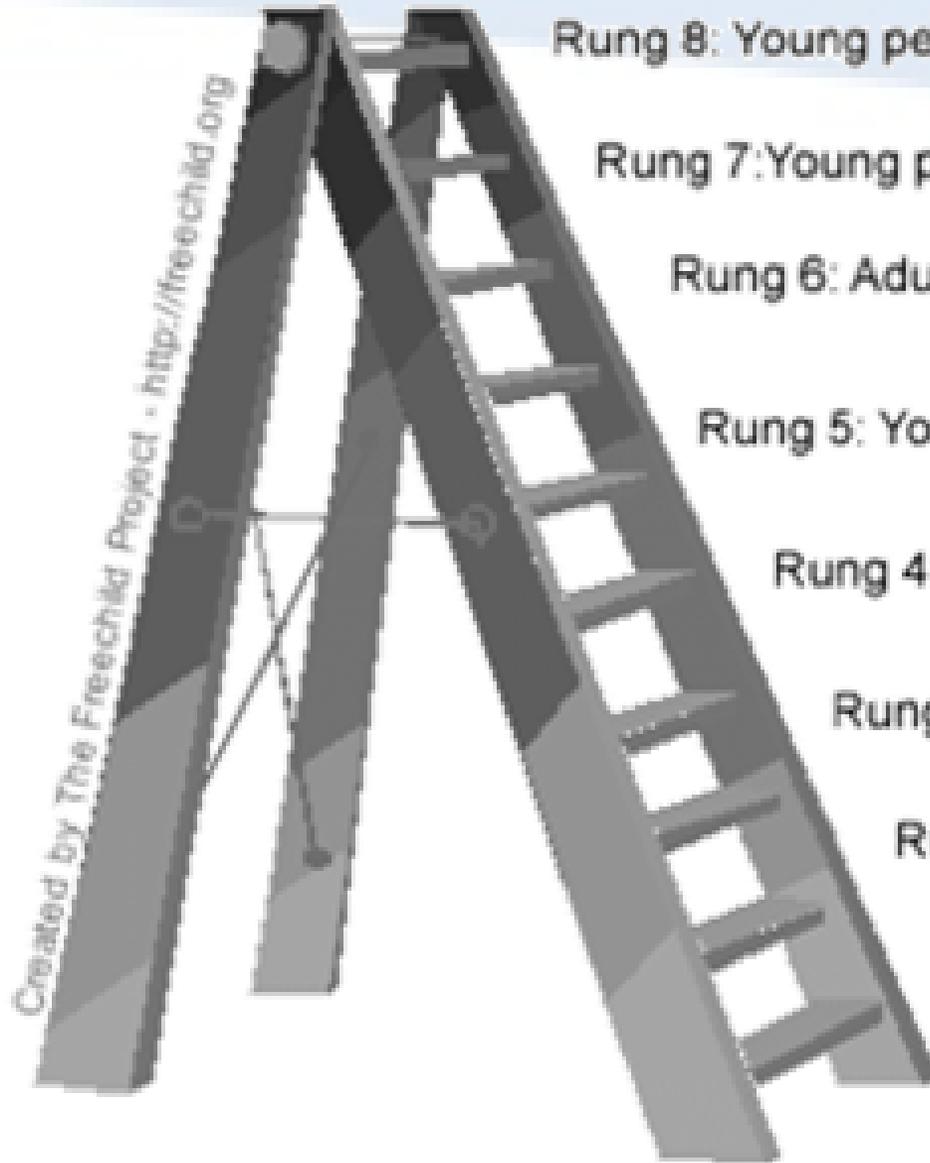
# Benefits for Youth Leaders

## Youth leaders:

- Increase confidence and self esteem
- Improve critical thinking and problem solving
- Develop, refine and practice new skills
- Influence positive behaviors
- Understand the power of their voice
- Create future societal leaders



# Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions  
with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

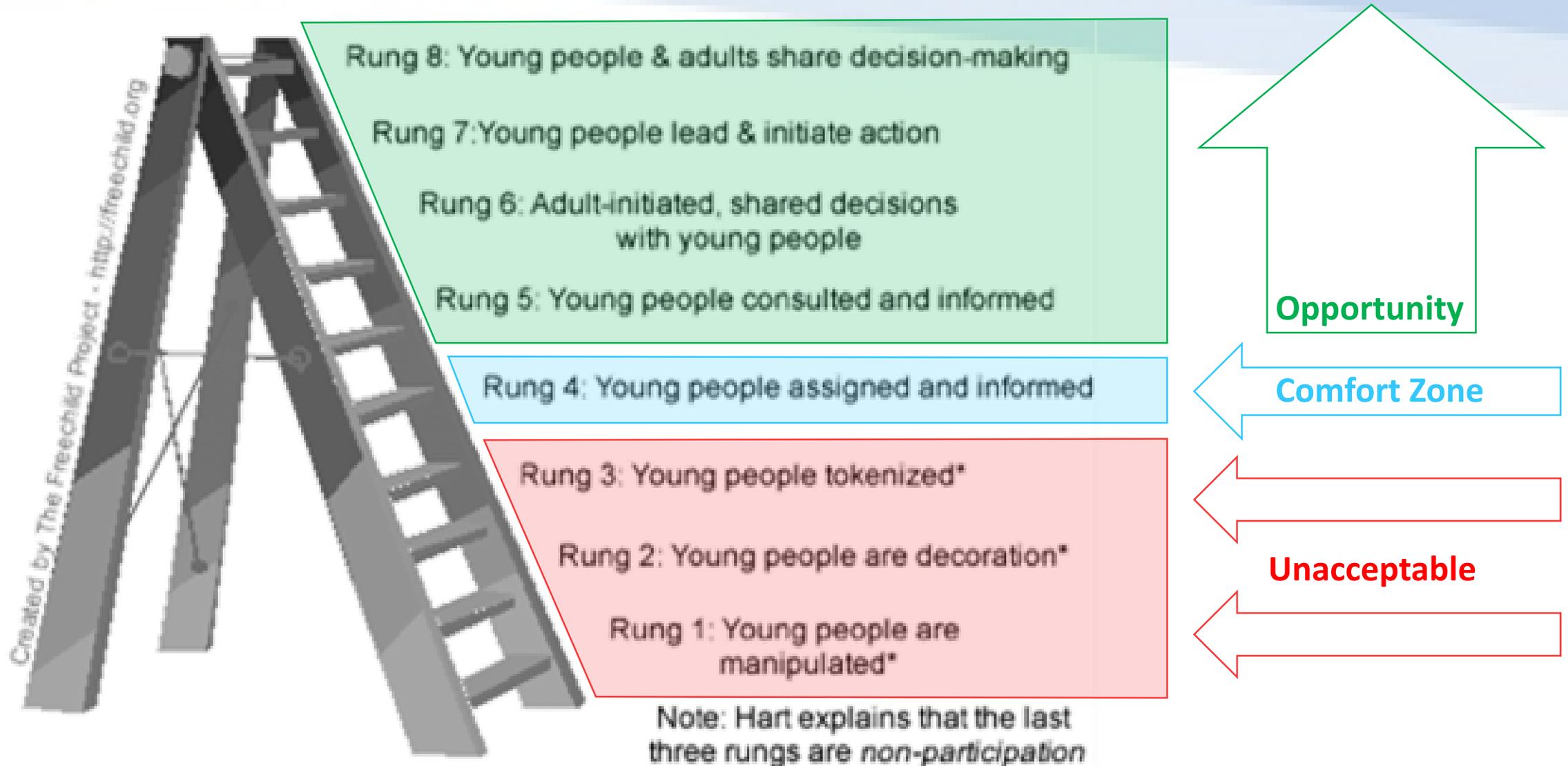
Rung 3: Young people tokenized\*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration\*

Rung 1: Young people are  
manipulated\*

Note: Hart explains that the last  
three rungs are *non-participation*

# Applying Hart's Ladder to Nutrition Education





You have 10 minutes to discuss the example and work through these steps:

1. Identify what rung is the Example currently at?
2. List 3 ways changes or strategies that could be applied to shift the engagement level to a higher rung
3. As a result of those changes being applied, what rung would the program be functioning on?
4. Identify a spokes person to report out for your group

# YPAR Curriculum Binder

- Structured as Project Stepping Stones (SS).
- Each Stepping Stone Overview outlines goals for adults and for youth and tips for success.
- Progress to the next stepping stone when the goals have been met.
- Most stepping stones include YPAR activities and many supporting resources.

## OVERVIEW STEPPING STONE 1 GETTING READY

Stepping Stone 1 is all about project preparation - hiring an adult site facilitator, hiring youth researchers, developing project details and planning logistics. The training with youth does not start until the next phase of the project. Adult facilitators will spend this stepping stone hiring and orienting new youth researchers, individually and as a group. This Stepping Stone should not be overlooked or under-emphasized. Full preparation of all participants is critical to project success.

This first Stepping Stone begins after a project partnership has been assessed and a project *framework* has been developed and agreed upon. By the start of this curriculum, an MOU should be in the process of being developed with all parties expressing buy-in on the project.

### GOALS FOR PROJECT PARTNERS:

- Inform all organizational stakeholders of youth-led action research projects.
- Work to design collaborative project calendar.
- Plan and coordinate project logistics, including recruiting and hiring youth team.
- Assess and support project logistics, including finalization of MOU
- Confirm project goals, roles, and structure.

### GOALS FOR YOUTH:

- Apply and interview for youth researcher position.
- Understand project frame, goals and outcomes.
- Form relationships with youth team members and organizational home.

**TIME:** 2 weeks - 2 months

**SS TIPS:** *This Stepping Stone is the pinnacle of project management. Developing structured process - goals, timeline, framework and communication- are vital in the stepping stone.*

# YPAR STEPPING STONES (SS)



# YPAR Curriculum Binder Review

## Stepping Stone 1 – Getting Ready

- This Stepping Stone is the pinnacle of project management.
- Hiring or partnering with an agency (School, After school, CYO) to work with;
- Hiring and orienting staff to work directly with youth.
- Developing a structured process - goals, timeline, framework and communication; and beginning the process of recruiting a youth team.



# What Does Success Look Like?

## YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

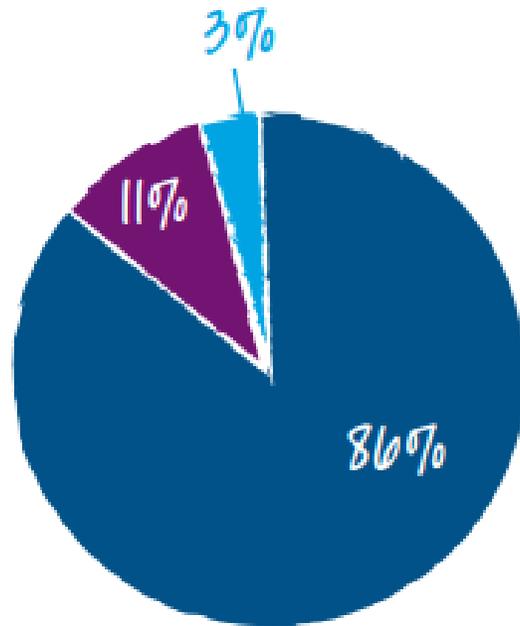
*"I think we influenced people who are not even born yet."*

YOUTH PARTICIPANT

YOUTH SELF REPORT  
AFTER PARTICIPATING IN  
THIS PROJECT

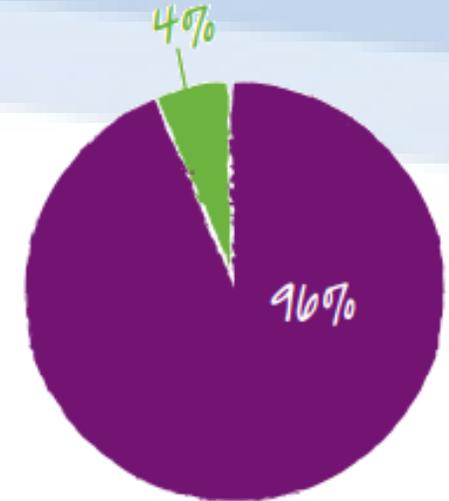
**"I HAVE LEARNED  
THAT I CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE IN MY  
COMMUNITY."**

- Yes, definitely.
- Yes, probably.
- Not sure.
- Not really.



94% OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS REPORTED THAT THEIR **ADULT ALLY** ALWAYS RESPECTED THEIR OPINIONS.

- Always.
- Mostly.
- Sometimes.
- Never.
- Not sure.



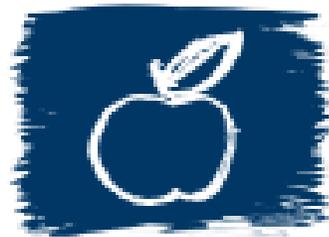
*"[The administration and teachers] love the program. It's an opportunity for their students to learn skills that they wouldn't have learned otherwise. They love that the students are engaged in the community, that they're doing a lot of college level research. We don't hold anything back, we throw everything at them and they respond really, really well..."*

ADULT ALLY

# What Does Success Look Like?

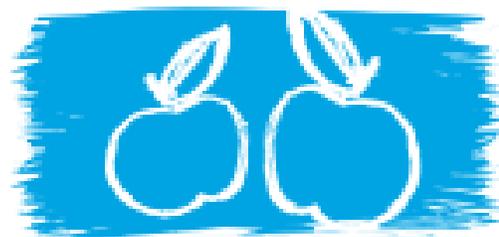
## YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT YOUTH SELF REPORT...



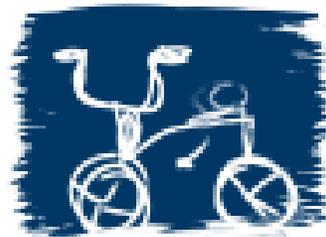
94%

"I eat healthier"



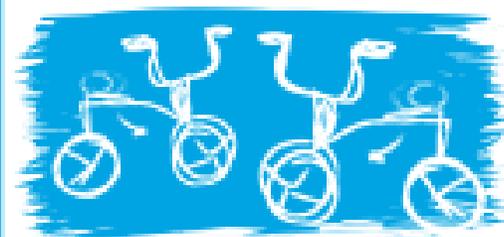
89%

"I can influence others to eat healthier."



86%

"I do more physical activity."



92%

"I can influence others on the importance of physical activity."

*"Being healthy is more than what you eat – it is about your lifestyle and working out and making healthier choices."*

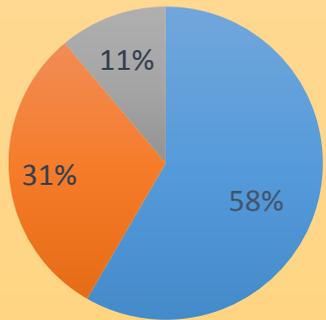
YOUTH PARTICIPANT

# What Does Success Look Like?

## YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

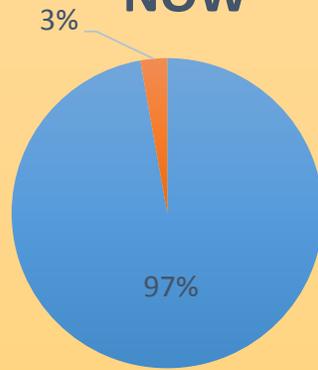
*"I want to make a difference in making my school/ community a healthier place."*

**BEFORE**



■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No

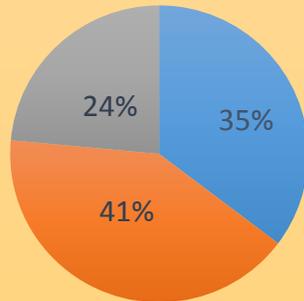
**NOW**



■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No

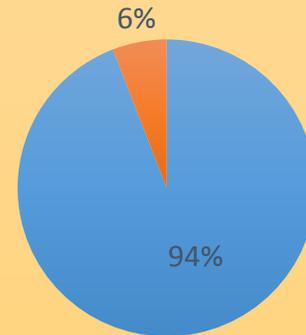
*"I can use research results to come up with solutions or recommendations for making my school/ community a healthier place."*

**BEFORE**



■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No

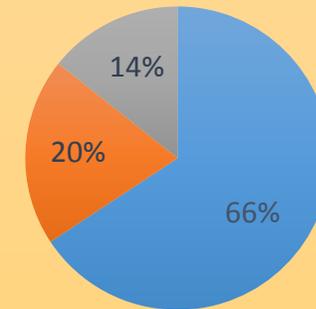
**NOW**



■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No

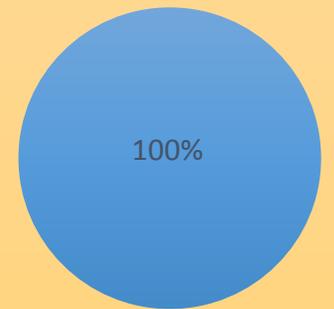
*"I understand how my surroundings affect my health."*

**BEFORE**



■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No

**NOW**



■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No

# What Does Success Look Like?

## COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

- Adopting a Complete Streets policy
- New bike lane
- Establishing community sports league
- Creating a healthy snack bar
- Implementing Instant Recess at school
- Joint Use agreements
- Running a free exercise program
- Conducting Market Makeovers
- Installing water refill stations at schools and parks
- Opening a new produce stand
- Establishing School Wellness Councils
- Re-modeling the school cafeteria
- Re-designing the Breakfast in the Classroom program
- Adopting a Healthy Celebrations policy
- And Much More...



# More YPAR Successes and Lessons Learned

Documents successes, challenges, tips, and lessons learned since 2006

Experiences, examples, and recommendations from the voices of youth and implementing adult allies

Available electronically at:

<http://centerforwellnessandnutrition.org/ypar>

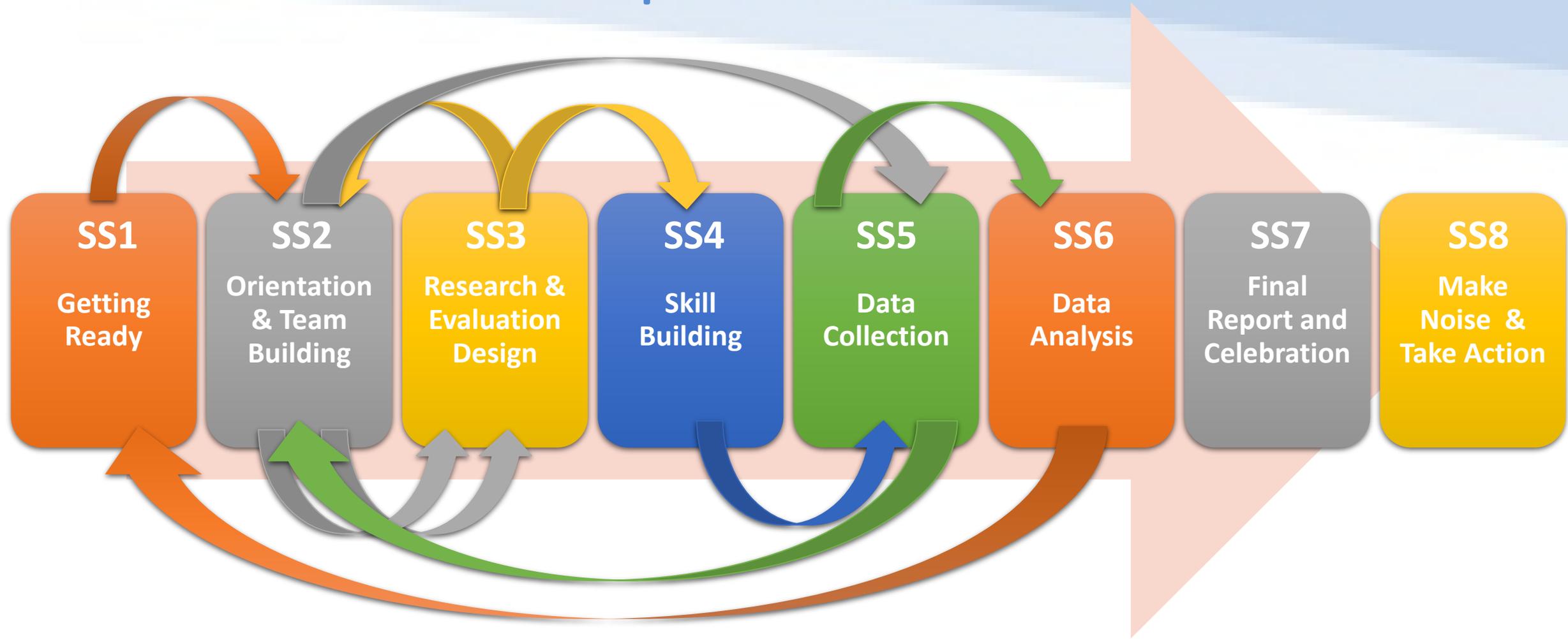
# YPAR Curriculum Binder Review

## Stepping Stone 2 – Orientation and Team Building

- Staff first meet and interact with their youth team, introduce the project and structure and gain buy-in from the youth participants.
- Teambuilding, developing group dynamics and simply getting to know each other are key components that start here and are embedded throughout the curriculum to achieve the most success within the YPAR process.

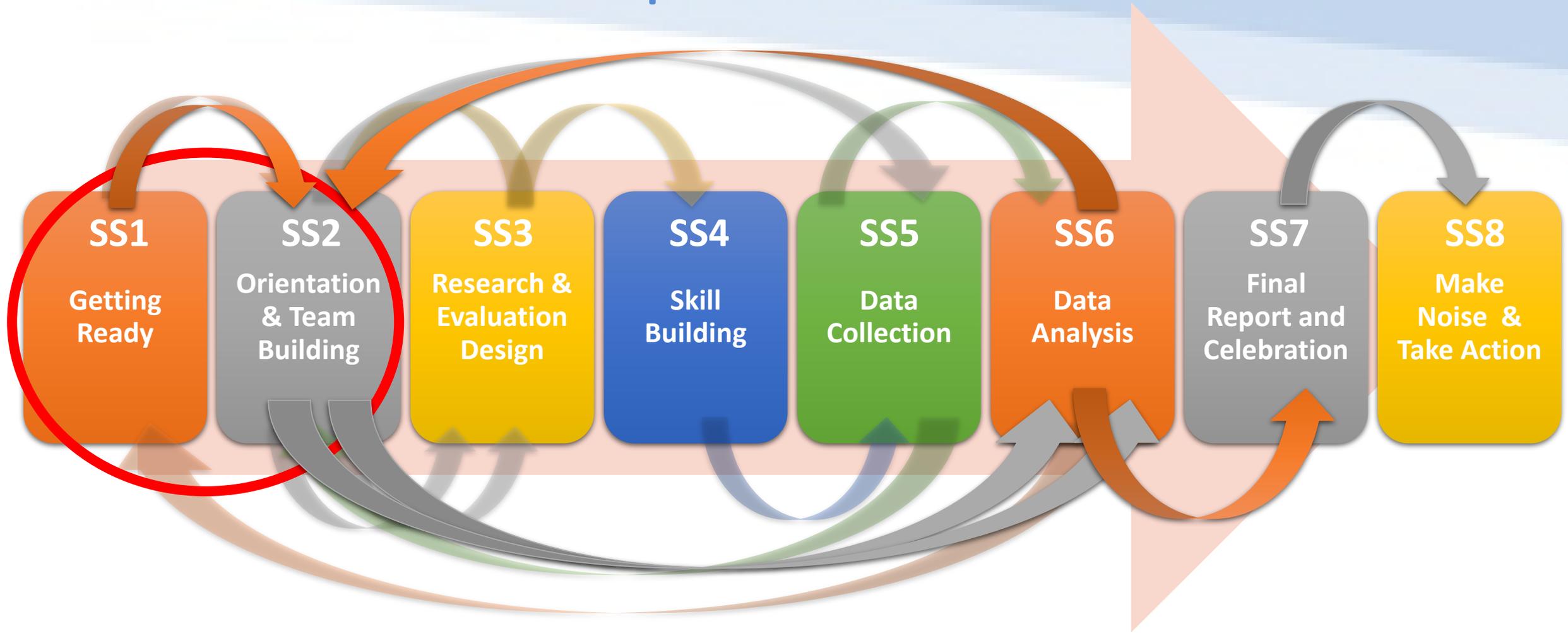


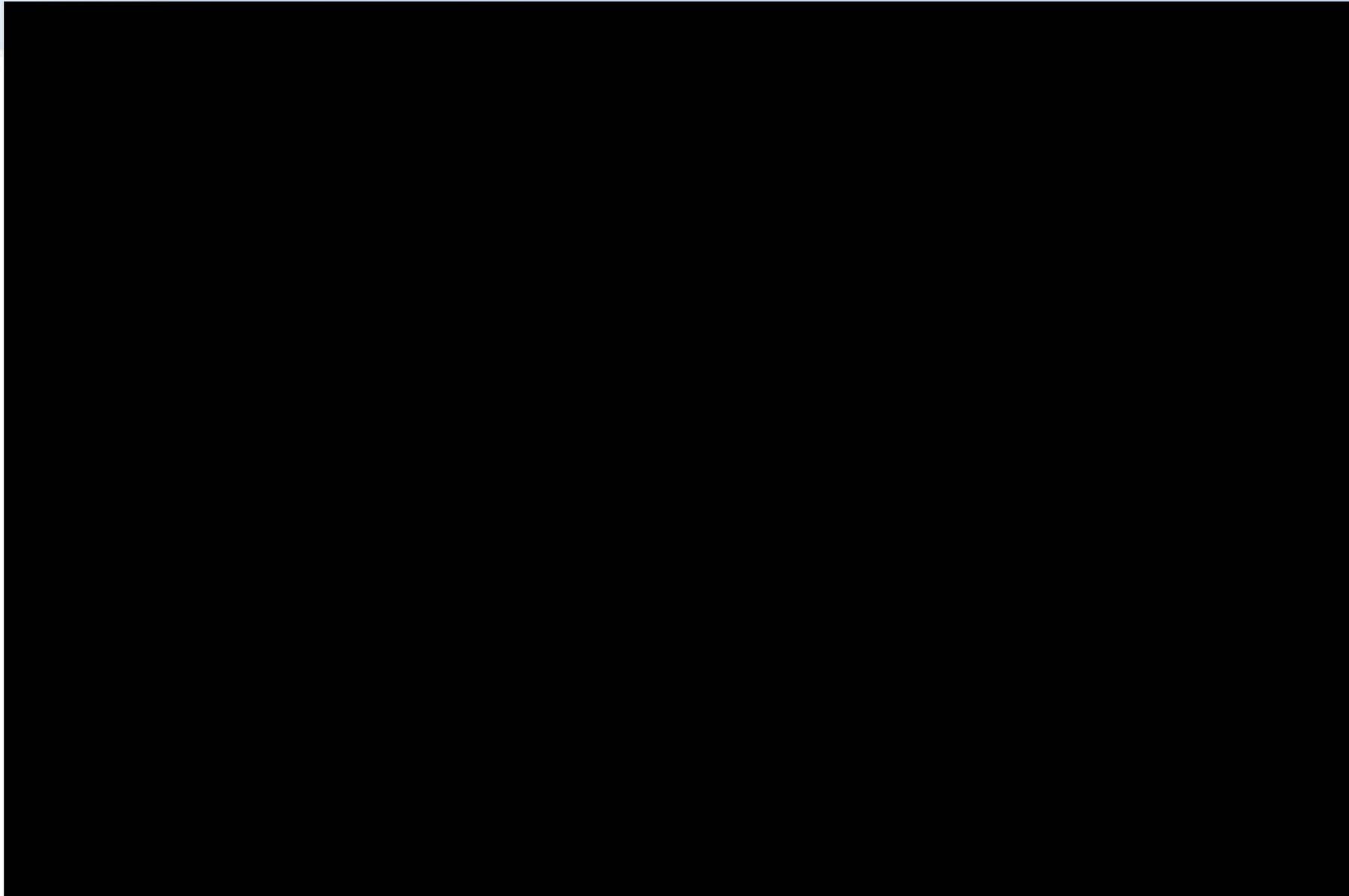
# A YPAR Process Example



There are  
many types  
of  
CHANGE

# A YPAR Process Example – Year 2





# Success & Next Steps

## Year 2:

- Students Traveled & Presented across the state
- Successfully raised the match funds to install water stations

## Year 3:

- 2 New water stations successfully installed (ribbon cutting ceremony)
- Students successfully advocated for a District Policy to support maintenance, repair or replacement of drinking fountains district wide

# Review

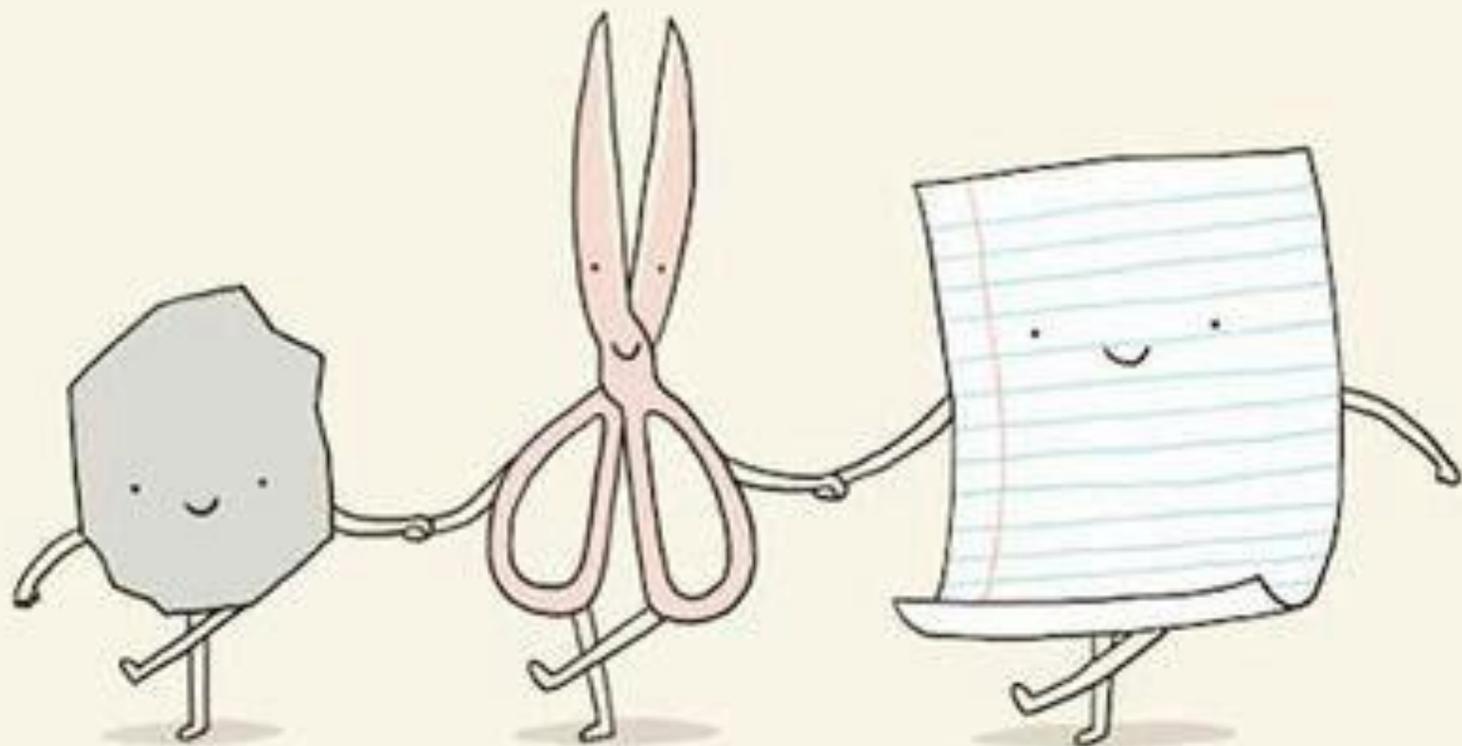
- These projects require adults allies who are willing to challenge and be challenge by young people.
- Youth Voice, Choice, and Leadership is Required
- This is not a Cookie Cutter Curriculum
- Every Project is Different
- Sustainable Change Doesn't Happen Overnight
- Team Building is Key
- ↑ Includes Youth & Adult Partnerships



**TIME  
FOR  
LUNCH**



# Biggest Fan



The graphic features a background of a white line-art city street grid on a light blue gradient. In the foreground, there is a colorful illustration of a city skyline with various buildings in blue, orange, and red, interspersed with green trees and streetlights. A red car and a red bus are also visible at the bottom. The text 'Community Assessment' is written in a large, red, rounded font, and 'Group Activity' is written below it in a smaller, blue, rounded font.

# Community Assessment

## Group Activity



# YPAR Curriculum Binder Review

## Stepping Stone 4 – Skill Development

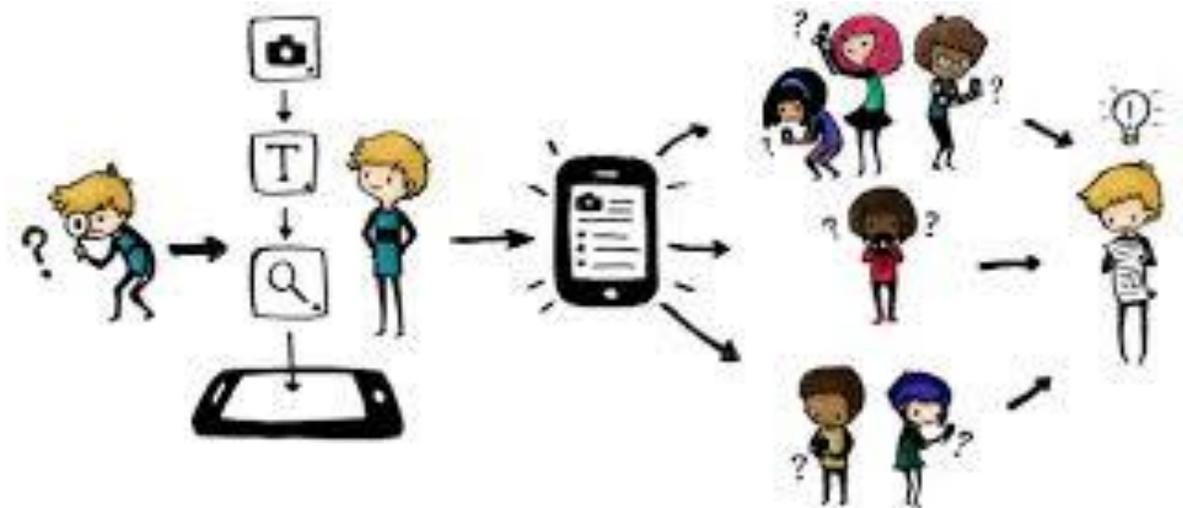
- Stepping Stone 4 includes many interactive activities that build youth researchers' abilities in note-taking, listening, asking questions and facilitation.
- Now that the research design is complete, it needs to be implemented. In order to do this, youth researchers will have to have the knowledge and skills to conduct research that yields accurate, reflective and meaningful data.



# YPAR Curriculum Binder Review

## Stepping Stone 5 – Data Collection & Documentation

- Stepping Stone #5 takes a lot of self-discipline and accountability by youth team members. The project can move far away from its timeline if everyone doesn't watch their deadlines and commitments.
- Stay focused and check-in weekly in order to stay on track and try to collect thorough and efficient data.



# PA Shuffle



# PA Shuffle

**OBJECT:** As a team preform the same physical activities on demand in a contest of team coordination. **Be the last team standing for bragging rights!**

When the facilitator points to your team every team member should immediately begin doing the same PA move (one that has not been done) until they point to the next group.

The Facilitator will eliminate teams until we have only one team left standing.



## Rules

- Do not repeat a move
- All members must be doing the move with-in 3 seconds
- All members must be doing the same move the entire time the facilitator points to you.

# YPAR Curriculum Binder Review

## Stepping Stone 6 – Data Analysis

- Stepping Stone #6 can be frustrating at first since youth have to wade through large amounts of data but the goal is to produce clear and thoughtful analysis.
- Adult staff must assist and guide around biased and unsupported analysis.
- Use the power of their own data to support findings and recommendations.



# YPAR Curriculum Binder Review

## Stepping Stone 7 – Final Report & Celebration

- Stepping Stone 7 focuses on taking all their information and analysis and compiling them into a cohesive end of project report that signifies all the hard work that the young people have accomplished.
- Youth Researchers take all of their information, analysis and next steps and complete them into a cohesive report. With the support of adult facilitators, you design their report from cover to conclusion writing in their own language and using graphics they create or choose.

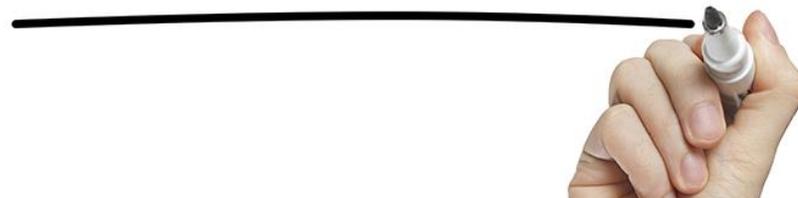


# YPAR Curriculum Binder Review

## Stepping Stone 8 – Next Steps & Action

- Finally Stepping Stone 8 prepares youth for action using various platforms (media, social media, meeting with elected officials, etc.) and their report as a leverage piece to organize their schools, afterschool programs and/or community to improve policies systems and or environmental elements that support healthier eating and physical activity.
- It is the action part of YPAR and by prioritizing their findings and recommendations, the youth can create a strategic plan of action to present their findings to different audiences.

ACTION PLAN



# PSE Definitions

- **Policy Changes:** Include written rules, regulations, ordinances, and procedures designed to guide behavior
- **System Changes:** Alters “how we do business” across a network of agencies, providers, or institutions
- **Environmental Changes:** Include changes to the physical, social, or economic environments



# PSE Distinctions:

- **Policy Changes**: New rules or regulations must be written down at organization, local, state or federal level
- **System Changes**: Systematically alters how business is conducted at an organization-wide level
- **Environmental Changes**: Noticeable changes to the physical, social, or economic environment. Can be at one location.



# Youth Engagement and PSE

- Engaging youth to discuss community challenges and help identify solutions
- Identifying youth leaders and influencers
- Fostering youth capacity and ownership
- Setting up a plan for long-term sustainability and change



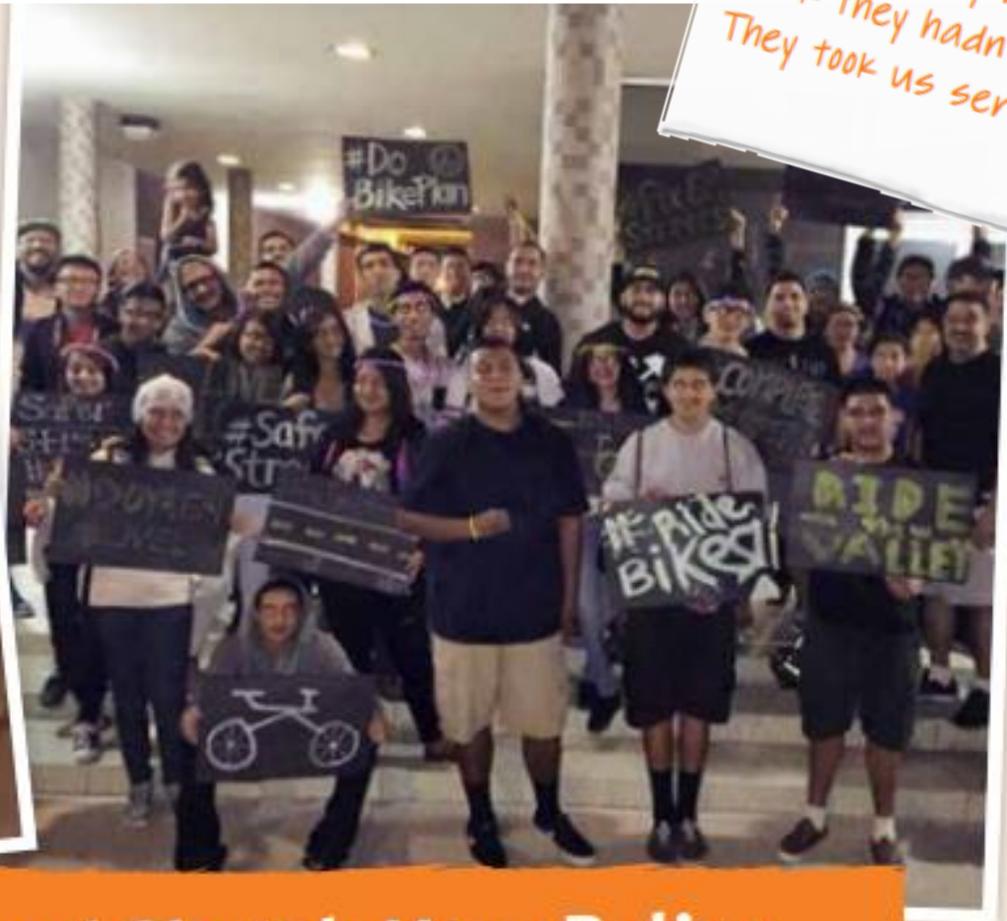
# Youth Engagement and PSE

- Youth acquire critical thinking and research skill identifying solutions to nutrition and physical activity problems in their community
- Youth create strategic plans and community change
- Youth develop leadership skills and exposure to careers



# What Does Success Look Like? COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

"We went to City Council meetings - they were really boring- because everyone that comes just complains. When we presented, I felt like they all woke up. They were paying attention. I think they hadn't seen so many youth. They took us seriously."  
YOUTH PARTICIPANT



Complete Streets and Sketch Up a Policy

# What Does Success Look Like?

## COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

"This opportunity shows us a different way to see life. Like in the neighborhood where we grow-up, all we see violence but NEOP is positive."

YOUTH PARTICIPANT

"It teaches you to take care of your health, be physically active every day and teaches you to help others be healthy."

YOUTH PARTICIPANT



Health Academy's Mini Farm Stand Project



TIME TO PLAN

# Time for Questions



WRAP UP

The image features the words "WRAP UP" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are filled with various colorful patterns, including stripes, polka dots, and floral motifs. A vertical black bar runs through the center of the word "UP", extending from the top of the page to the bottom of the letters. The background is a light blue gradient at the top, transitioning to a white gradient at the bottom.