# Action Learning Group Cycle #2

## Collective Priority Area Topic & Action Learning Questions: Cross-Stakeholder Measurement of Youth Partnership

September 2022

(Source: YIELD research findings and YIELD Theory of Change (ToC))

**Background**

Youth Investment Engagement and Leadership Development (YIELD) research (see [Young People Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health: Toward a New Normal](https://yieldhub.global/resources/yield-full-report/)) informants expressed certainty that youth contributions have a meaningful impact on AYSRHR efforts. But the field is currently measuring only a small fraction of these impacts. Efforts to measure the impacts of youth partnership[[1]](#footnote-1) are hindered by three interrelated problems: one, the limited resources available for monitoring and evaluation; two, the splintered, disconnected nature of the field; and three, a lack of overarching agreement on purpose and methodology, which prevents the field from developing consistent indicators or metrics.

YIELD informants highlighted an overarching lack of alignment on how to measure impact, which inhibits current monitoring and evaluation efforts. The field’s efforts in this area have failed to coalesce around a particular set of methodologies – meaning that many are being piloted simultaneously. This is not surprising, as many of our respondents reported that the field is not aligned around primary objectives. There is, in other words, no central agreement on the larger categories of impact that the field is trying to make.  As an example, youth partnership can be considered a process or an approach to meet objectives – or it can be regarded as an outcome or an end in itself. Without a central, overarching focus – or a common understanding of the fundamental research questions that the field is seeking to answer – it is difficult to imagine how to effectively assess the impact that youth contributions are having on the AYSRHR space. In the absence of broad agreement on what constitutes “impact,” the field cannot develop common metrics with which to assess the results of youth partnership. Of course, even once these metrics exist, they will not be a panacea, as much of the work of assessment will by necessity be local and contextual.

In response to the YIELD research findings, and building upon them, a [YIELD Theory of Change](https://yieldhub.global/resources/yield-project-theory-of-change/) was developed and evolved based on multiple rounds of cross-stakeholder feedback. The YIELD Theory of Change captures the value of both youth contributions and youth partnerships. Youth partners act to build youth capabilities and encourage youth agency—but are most effective at doing this when their efforts are informed and influenced by young people. Young people’s contributions to SRHR are similarly strengthened by partnerships with both peers and adult allies. Neither group is dependent on the other. But both adults and young people exert the greatest possible impact when working together in complementary ways. The result of these reciprocal and mutually-reinforcing efforts are positive changes in individuals (youth and adults alike)—that drive outcome-level changes in both the SRHR ecosystem and broader society. This is the world as we want it to be. *To make this vision a reality, SRHR stakeholders must align around shared goals—as well as shared commitments to equity, inclusivity, and safety. Youth SRHR must also be supported and resourced in ways that mainstream youth participation, while catalyzing and sustaining youth-driven initiatives.*

**Collective Action Learning Questions: Toward Common Field-Building Theory of Change & Shared Measures of Success**

1. Based on YIELD Hub and other experience, what are we learning about theories of change focused on or including youth partnership as a measurable outcome?
2. How can such tools support cross-stakeholder alignment, coordination and overall progress toward making youth partnership a normative way of working in SRHR?
3. What do we know about what it takes to align stakeholders around a common theory of change and related indicators?
4. How can we (the Hub + community) support collective uptake of shared indicators and metrics focused on quality youth partnership?
5. What are we learning about indicators and methodologies for measuring quality youth partnership?
6. What else do we need/want to learn to advance practice in the tracking and measurement of quality youth partnership in SRHR?
7. What are new research methodologies to measure quality youth partnership? What is the role of technology in M&E around youth partnership?

1. The Hub is using the term “partnership” to reflect the nature of relationships between all actors, including young people. It connotes equitable, mutually respectful, and beneficial relationships that allow stakeholders to work together and make complementary contributions to processes that lead to achieving the Hub’s shared vision. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)