



YMCA

Youth for Causes Programme

An Impact Assessment Framework for a youth development and social innovation programme with multiple stakeholders

CONJUNCT CONSULTING CASE STUDY SERIES



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The YMCA's Youth For Causes (YFC) programme is a community initiative which has been running successfully for the past 15 years. YFC is primarily a youth development and social innovation programme, building future young leaders and equipping them with critical social and personal development skills. YFC is a multilayered initiative with a number of important stakeholders including its young people; the programme's funder, Citi; its volunteers; and participating schools. To date, YMCA has conducted a basic survey to evaluate the programme; however, this was insufficient given the depth and complex nature of YFC.

Understanding this, and the need to measure true impact, YMCA engaged Conjoint Consulting to develop and beta-test a comprehensive impact assessment framework for YFC. The framework and key pillars were developed from 1) the data collected from key stakeholders, 2) industry best practice for youth empowerment programmes in Singapore, and 3) defined desired future state and impact goals for YFC.

This case study is intended to share the process and learnings from this first stage of the impact assessment project.

ABOUT YMCA

YMCA was established in 1902. It is a voluntary welfare organisation (VWO), affiliated worldwide, which seeks to serve and impact all members of the community, regardless of race, language or religion, through programmes, services and enterprises to develop the body, mind and spirit. Activities and programmes are organised with the aim of “touching lives and lifting spirits” among its members, community and beneficiaries in self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-actualization – towards happiness and wellbeing.

Mission Statement

YMCA of Singapore is a volunteer-based Christian organisation that seeks to serve and impact all members of the community, regardless of race, language or religion, through programmes, services and enterprises to develop the body, mind and spirit.



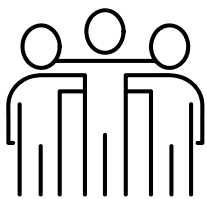


YOUTH FOR CAUSES PROGRAMME

Youth For Causes (YFC) is a community initiative, officially launched in 2003 in commemoration of the centennial celebrations of both Citi Singapore and YMCA of Singapore. Funded by Citi Foundation, the programme is a catalyst to promote social entrepreneurship and community leadership development among Singapore's youth.



Source: YMCA 2016



Open to youths 15 to 25 years old to champion a social cause they are passionate about.



Provides a platform which includes seed funding, training and volunteer mentorship



Execute self-initiated projects to raise public awareness, funds and mobilise volunteers for 14 – 15 VWOs (with IPC status).



Let the issues you face galvanise you into action; spearhead the change you want to see. Forge friendships, and when the going gets tough, remember why you first started!



*Chelsia Low, YFC 2015 Operation KIWI,
YFC 2016/2017/2018 Alumni Committee*



PROJECT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

Over the past 15 years, more than 1200 teams have benefitted from the YFC programme. However, YMCA and the YFC team were conscious that they did not have an effective process in place for measuring impact. Therefore, YMCA wanted an impact assessment framework that would provide a holistic assessment of the YFC's true value. The impact results would help to create more innovation and reduce the risk of stagnation after 15 years running. The results would also be used for better planning and to inform the strategic direction of the programme moving into the future.

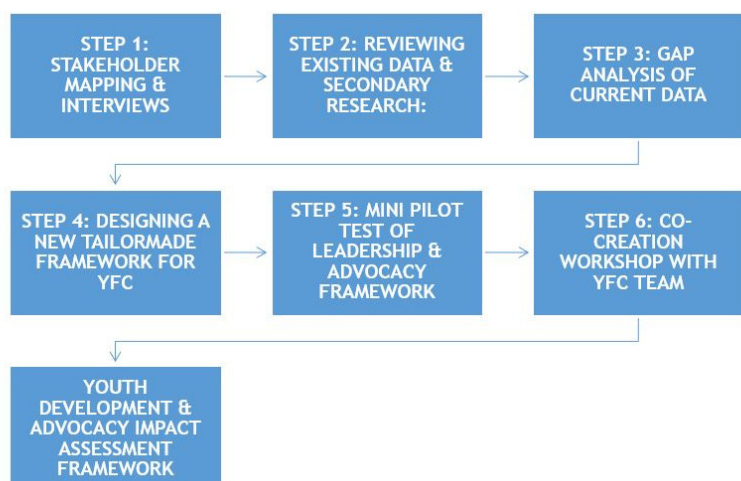


Measuring impact would also provide evidence-based data to help increase credibility and assist YMCA to promote the programme to its stakeholders. One of YMCA's goals is to increase its outreach efforts to more neighbourhood schools – currently, about 25% of YFC programme participants are from low-income families, and YMCA would like to increase this to 60%. However, YMCA experience some issues with how YFC is currently perceived. Some schools view YFC as a fundraising initiative instead of the far more holistic programme it actually is: a youth development programme building leadership, self-awareness, skills development, entrepreneurship and many other developmental attributes. Moving into the future, YMCA will use the impact assessment results to help change that perception. Building credibility with more schools will scale avenues for students to join, especially from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This is critical to ensure sustainability for YFC.



PROJECT ROADMAP

Six (6) Step Process to developing YFC Framework





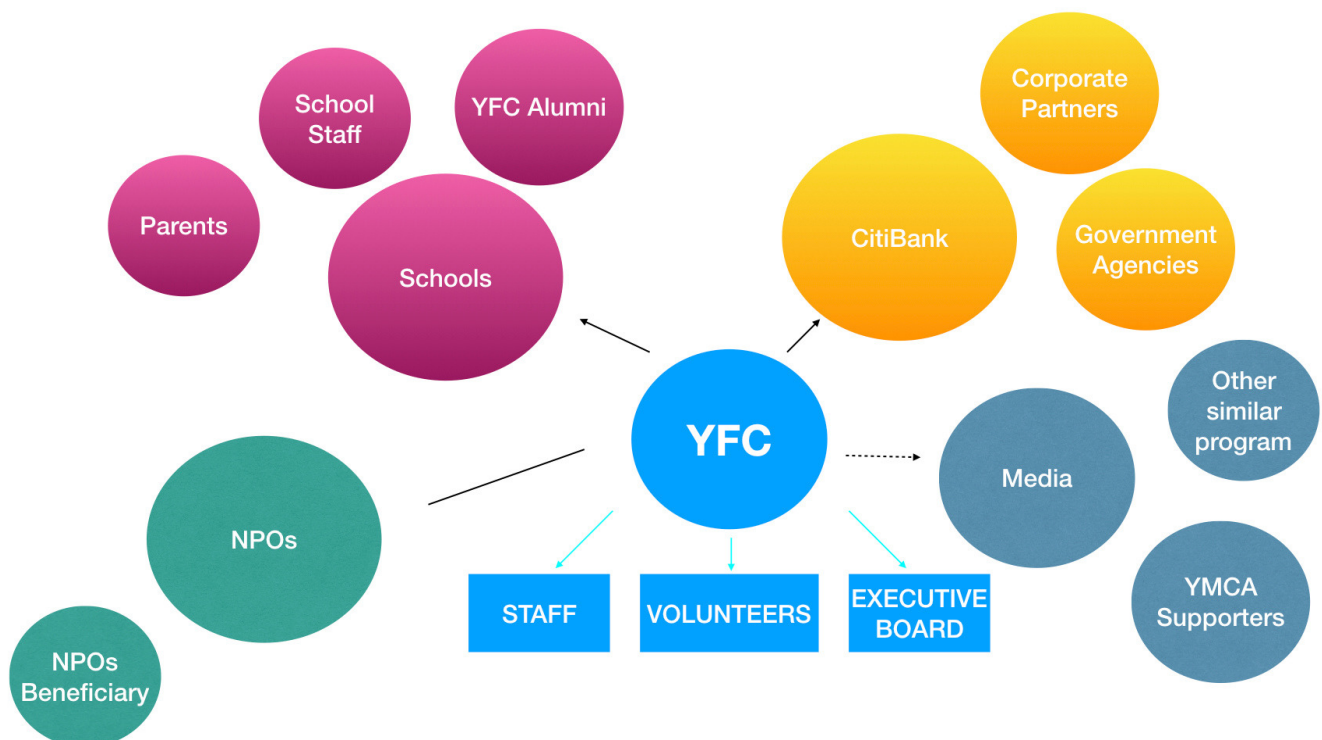
PROJECT ROAD MAP

STEP 1: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING & INTERVIEWS

The YFC programme is a multi-layered initiative engaging a number of important stakeholders at various levels. Its diverse stakeholder involvement is crucial to the programme, with each playing a key role in its successful delivery. One of the first principles of measuring outcomes, defined by Social Value International, is understanding what matters from stakeholder perspectives. YMCA must, therefore, engage all its stakeholders in the development of a successful impact measurement framework. Thus, the following process was followed:

- Stakeholder mapping was conducted, identifying all YFC stakeholders, with particular reference to key stakeholders. Interviews were then conducted with YMCA, YFC Board, Citibank, and YFC alumni.
- The purpose was to understand what constitutes programme success, desired impact and expectations from each group.
- The diagram below illustrates the stakeholder mapping for YFC.

Stakeholder Mapping - YMCA's Youth for Causes Programme



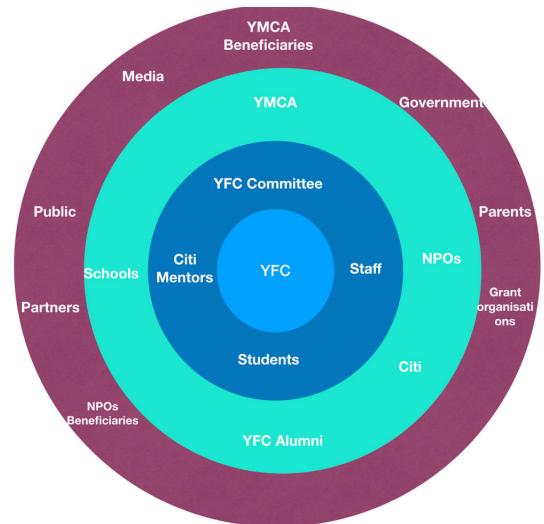


PROJECT ROAD MAP

Key stakeholders and their goals:

- **Citibank:** Provide funds and manpower as mentors. Citi proposes a holistic assessment of YFC's impact on the community that is grounded by governmental concerns. Citi aims to align YFC's objectives with the national interest. Its objectives for the programme are based in part on Youth Economic Development Indicators.
- **YMCA:** Primary goals are to develop participants' entrepreneurship and leadership skills and a passion to serve the community. To date, success is measured by quantity and quality of the projects every year.
- **YFC Alumni** (prime beneficiary of YFC): The students entered YFC with the aim of improving personal development, project management skills and to create a social impact.
- **Schools:** YMCA's target group is primarily underprivileged students and therefore aims to work with schools comprising students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. YMCA's challenge is that schools often have the perception that the programme is merely about fundraising and not aligned to the Value in Action objectives.
- **NPOs:** The NPOs provide the social cause for student teams to work on. Each team selects a cause they are passionate about and works closely with their chosen NPO to develop and deliver their fundraising project.

Relationships of Stakeholders to YFC



STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES



YFC Funding Partner

Firstly, YFC is a youth capabilities enhancement programme and secondly, it raises resources for the social sector, addressing both community and national level needs. The information of impact assessment would be important to us to give us a broader picture of how our event has contributed to the social service sector in Singapore - to our local partners.



YFC Committee

The big picture is for the students participating in the programme to learn skills and continue to use them in adulthood. Furthermore, if they are involved in certain VWOs, we hope that they will be passionate about supporting them in the future.

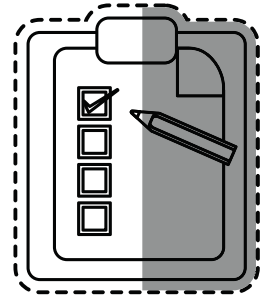




PROJECT ROAD MAP

STEP 2: REVIEWING EXISTING DATA & SECONDARY RESEARCH:

- YMCA had an existing data collection process in place, where a pre- and post- survey was completed with participating students. The survey was based on the Global Skills Competency (GSC) Framework. However, it was found that because the survey was not outcome focused, the results did not capture the true impact of the programme.
- A longitudinal study also existed with alumni from 2010, which had attempted to measure the impact that YFC had on 1) ability to progress to higher learning or 2) income and employment range or 3) involvement in volunteering/community work. However, the results were not analyzed in full and therefore did not give definitive insights.
- Evaluation frameworks and guidelines used by relevant government bodies were studied, and relevant benchmarks and metrics were Identified. Building best practice case studies from local and global secondary research is an important element to defining the right solution and in YFC's case, so also is understanding trends in youth empowerment programmes in Singapore.



STEP 3: GAP ANALYSIS OF CURRENT DATA

- The data collected from step 2 (in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and a comprehensive assessment of the market landscape), was then used to define a clear understanding of the current programme gaps and subsequent desired future state and impact goals for YFC.

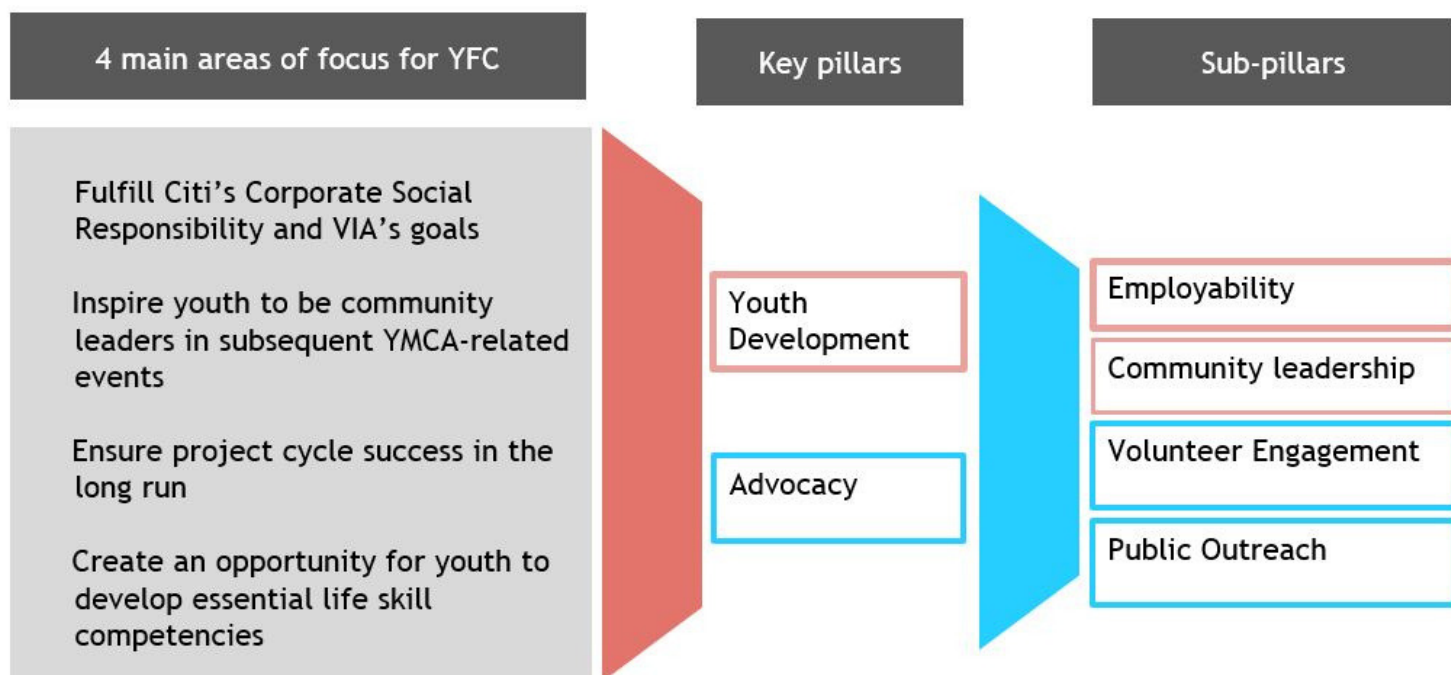
Summary of Gap Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. A need to conduct a more accurate assessment of YFC's impact on the social service sector, incl. (VWOs/Volunteers)ii. Assessment needs to be holistic & aligned with national benchmarks.iii. Community service aspect needs more focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Demonstrate better YFC's impact on youth development to schools during recruitment.ii. A need to measure long term impact for YFC alumni: (leadership, employment, skills development, volunteering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Align YFC with Value In Action (VIA) objectives from Ministry of Education.ii. Greater focus on core programme areas & less on fundraising: personal development, project management & creating a social impact.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. YFC has a measured positive impact on the social service sector in Singapore & is aligned with the national agenda2. YFC create an opportunity for participants to develop essential life skills and a platform to showcase their innovative solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3. YFC inspire participants to become community leaders for YMCA and other community related events.4. YFC shapes youth community leaders by developing their social entrepreneurship skills for the betterment of the community.	



PROJECT ROAD MAP

STEP 4: DESIGNING A NEW TAILORMADE FRAMEWORK FOR YFC

- The new framework and key pillars were developed from 1) the data collected from key stakeholders; 2) industry best practice for youth empowerment programmes in Singapore and 3) defined desired future state and impact goals for YFC.
- Youth Development and Advocacy were identified as the overarching pillars of the proposed new framework. These were further broken down into four sub-pillars to create a balanced and exhaustive impact assessment scorecard.



Youth Development Sub-Pillars

- **Employability Sub-Pillar:** Developed by evaluating the desired outcomes from YFC against 2 employability frameworks 1) GSC framework and 2) SSG framework (WSQ).
- The 'Psychological Scales' and 'Behaviour and Activity Tools' methods were adopted into a new survey.
- Psychological scales measure subjective feelings, beliefs and attitudes.
- 'Behaviour and Activity Tools' measure activities & behaviours.
- The survey is a series of statements, where respondents indicate on a 7 point scale how well they agree with each statement.
- There are 4 sub-sectors under employability: 1. Workplace Literacy; 2. Analytical, Conceptual and Evaluative Skills; 3. Interpersonal Skills; 4. Management & Development skills.

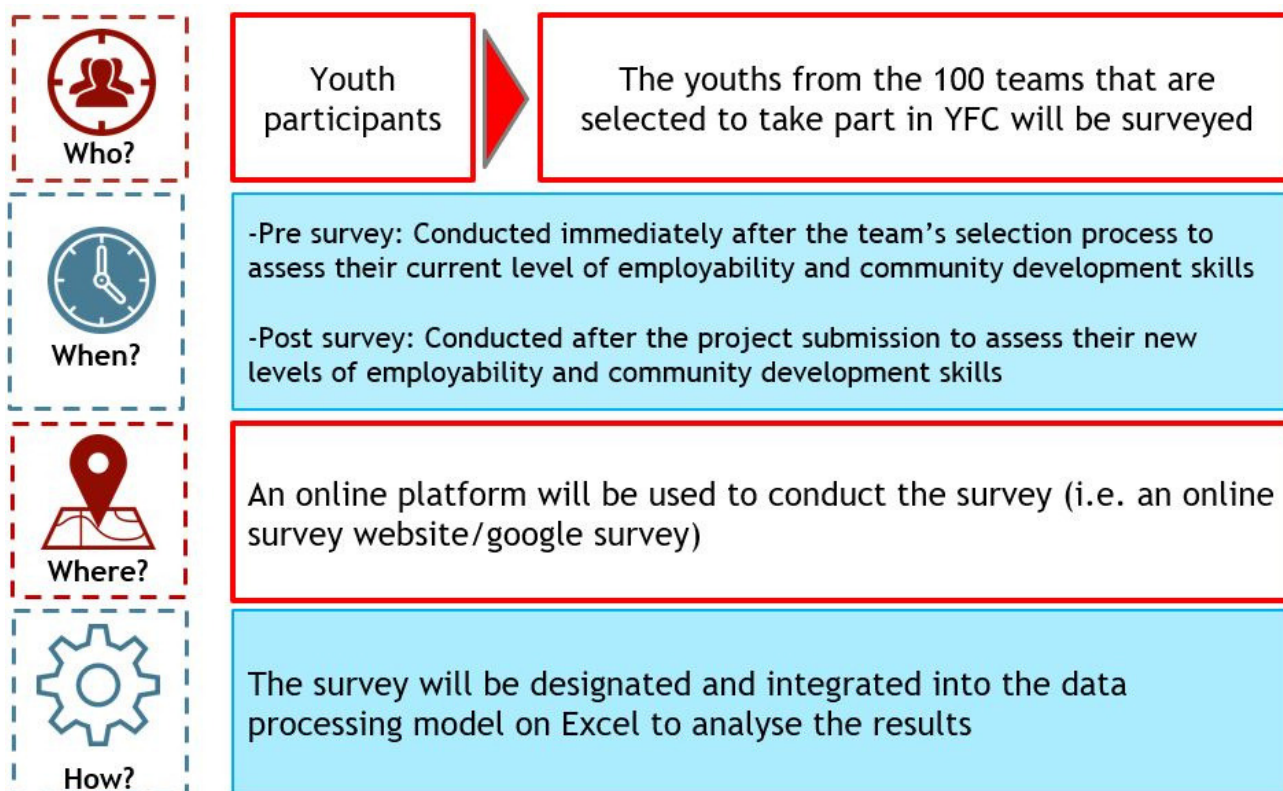


PROJECT ROAD MAP

Youth Development Sub-Pillars

- **Community Leadership:** Contains 3 sub-pillars based on the KAB framework: Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour. The KAB framework for YFC was developed based on the 'International Institute for Sustainable Development Framework' as industry best practice and the collated perspectives from each of the key stakeholders.
- Knowledge: Refers to what the students know about the social sector
- Attitude: Refers to what the students feel about the social sector
- Behaviour: Refers to what the students do for the social sector

Measuring Youth Development



- **Long-Term Impact:** a similar survey will be distributed 3 years later to past participants and alumnus to assess continued volunteering/social sector involvement.

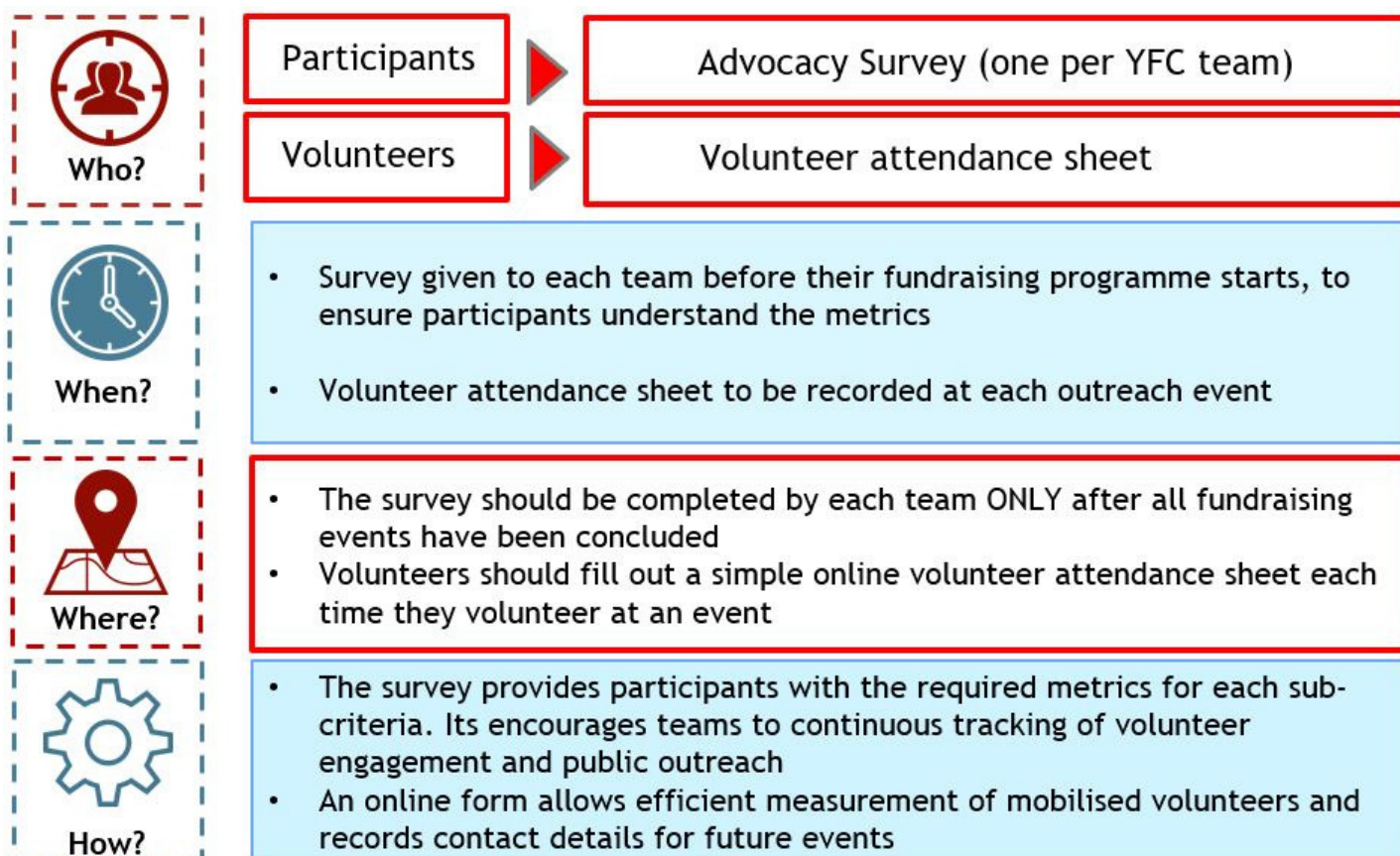


PROJECT ROAD MAP

Advocacy Sub-Pillars

- **Volunteer Engagement:** The Volunteer Engagement Scale (VES) (adapted from New York Cares) was used to develop this pillar. The VES scale has two volunteer engagement buckets: **1)Attendance of Volunteers** and **2) Demographic of Volunteers**.
- VES allows YMCA to quantify volunteers' level of engagement by using a 5 tiered scale and to also track changes over the years.
- Demographic records will help YFC to examine the profile of volunteers.
- **Public Outreach:** Public outreach was classified into four (4) main types: 1) Public Donation/ Street Sales; 2) Social Media Outreach; 3) Traditional Media Outreach and 4) Outreach Activities to achieve a more accurate and substantial measurement for this pillar.

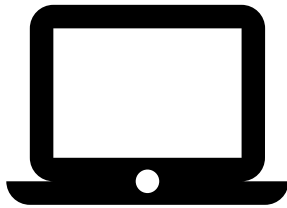
Measuring Advocacy





PROJECT ROAD MAP

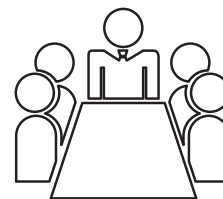
STEP 5: MINI PILOT TEST OF LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK



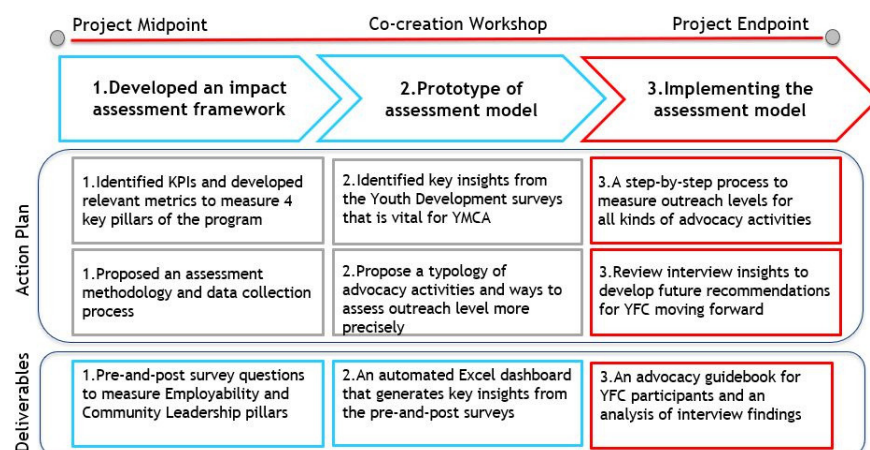
- The data collected was automatically fed into a tailor-made dashboard which analyzed the results. The dashboard is designed to allow an assessment of the socio-economic backgrounds of participants, to meet the requirement of serving underprivileged young people.
- The framework was pilot tested with 10 alumni to study the ease of collection and robustness of the data collected. A full pilot test will be conducted in Phase II.
- The pilot test included a step-by-step process to measure outreach levels for a variety of advocacy activities and a subsequent advocacy guidebook was developed. The Advocacy guidebook provides an introduction to best practices in achieving accurate measurement of YFC outreach efforts.

STEP 6: CO-CREATION WORKSHOP WITH YFC TEAM

- A co-creation workshop was conducted with the YFC team to examine the proposed framework, refine any details and develop an effective implementation strategy for moving forward. The co-creation workshop allowed the YFC team to actively participate in developing and refining the project deliverables.
- The pre-and-post survey questions to test the Youth Development pillars were agreed. In addition, a 7-point Likert scale with descriptors to measure changes in Employability and Community Leadership was also agreed.



Project Stages: Midpoint to Endpoint



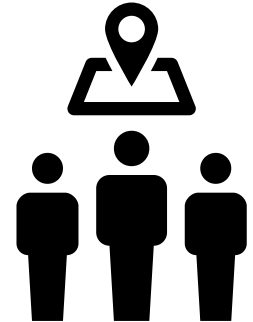


LEARNINGS

1

Stakeholder Mapping for Multi-Stakeholder Programmes is an Essential First Step

- The YFC program has been running successfully for 15 years and has attracted more than 1200 teams over that period. However, YMCA and the YFC team were conscious that they did not have an effective process in place for measuring the true value and impact of the programme. Since YFC is a multi-stakeholder programme, it was important to ensure key stakeholder perspectives were included in the development of the impact framework for YFC. Therefore, stakeholder mapping and the identification of the key stakeholders was an important 1st step for the success of this project.



2

Collect Key Stakeholder Perspectives to Inform the Impact Goals, Gaps, and Future State

- Conducting interviews with the identified key stakeholders was essential. Some useful insights were collected which allowed the project team to define the desired impact goals and current gaps for YFC. This process ensures that the true value of YFC, and the data collection method developed to measure it, is informed by those directly involved. For YFC, this includes both those who are affected by the programme (the participants and volunteers) as well as YMCA and Citi. The overall result will benefit YFC by providing a more holistic presentation of impact and accurate flagging of areas that need to be addressed.



3

Use Co-Creation to Develop a Framework

- A number of specific impact goals have been identified by YFC stakeholders. The challenge was ensuring that a framework was developed which would encompass all of these goals and thus measure and reflect the true value of the programme. Co-creating solutions were, therefore, an important element to the success of this project. Co-creation avoids making wrong decisions based on assumptions and has a strong positive impact on the quality of the result. Given that the process & results are continuously endorsed throughout the project, the quality of the output is high and sustainability better secured.



CONCLUSION



Having run successfully for 15 years, YMCA was ready to develop a comprehensive framework to measure the true value of the YFC programme. YMCA wanted to investigate areas for improvement and opportunities for innovation and creativity, now and for the future.

YFC is a complex programme, with multiple parties involved. Therefore, stakeholder mapping, key player interviews and co-creation of solutions played an important part in the success of this project. Moving forward, volunteer management, outreach to schools and engagement with alumni will be some key areas of focus to ensure YFC's long term success and sustainability. The implementation of this Youth Development and Advocacy Framework will help to evaluate these key parameters, defining the best strategic direction moving forward.

Phase 11 of this project will see a full pilot test conducted to 1) validate the framework; 2) streamline any issues in the data collection process 3) certify the robustness of the data collected; 4) ensure the outcome focused results provide meaningful insights to the true impact of the YFC. This will empower YMCA to achieve its overarching objective of increasing the maximum social impact created through the YFC programme.