

Researching the impact of Youth Work (in Flanders)

SocNet98 International University Week
[Wednesday 21th April 2021]



RESEARCH &
EXPERTISE



DE AMBRASSADE
bureau voor jonge zaken

Welcome & thanks for "zooming" in on impact!



Who are we?



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RESEARCH &
EXPERTISE



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* No, we are not family! ;-)

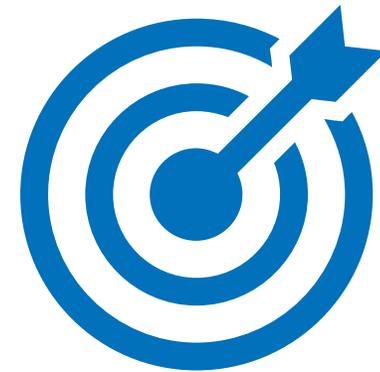


Why this workshop?

1. Collect ideas, opinions, knowledge on different views on "impact"
2. Share & collect experiences with "monitoring/impact tools"
3. Set up an international network

Why is (research on) impact important (in Flanders)?

- ▶ #Youthworkworks, #Youthworkchangeslives.
We are all convinced about the value, outcomes, effects and impact of Youth Work.
But the data and **'evidence'** is rather thin.
- ▶ Ongoing **discussion** on what **methodologies** are best suited to collect and process the **'evidence'**.
- ▶ Increasing **awareness**:
If we want that Youth Work will be **recognized on its value** and impact, but avoid instrumentalisation, we have to be able to **'prove'** and **make the impact of Youth Work visible**.



Goals of our research:



1 **Clarification of the concept “Impact of Youth Work’**

What is impact of Youth Work?

- › **Clarification of concepts:** quality versus impact? We will not focus on the question "What is quality youth work?" but on "What impact does youth work have?"
- › **Ask about objectives:** What purpose should making impact visible in youth work serve?
- › **Question about the finality:** What will impact monitoring be used for?
- › **Demand for demarcation:** broad exploration of impact (monitoring) or narrowing down to specific indicators on which research should be carried out (i.e. impact on psychological well-being, social skills or competences, ...)

2 **Translation into an application that should make the impact of youth work visible.**

What is a workable way to visualize and disseminate the impact of youth work at the local level?

- › **Assessment of monitoring systems:** we compare a number of systems that make impact visible abroad and compare these with the concrete context of youth work in Flanders.
- › We lay the contours for the development of a Flemish instrument to make impact of youth work visible.





In this workshop:

**3 main
questions**

1 What is "impact"?

2 What do you want to measure the impact of?

3 Why do you want to measure impact?

RESULT



Your blueprint for a tool



1 What is "impact"?

Describe what impact is for you?

Process of reflection and a change of the current status quo/situation

lasting

What it is doing with your mental health

Change

Sometimes it is visible change.

an effect or influence on something or someone

How well something is working. How strong of an influence something has.

To bring positive change

influence, change, results

Describe what impact is for you?

Being aware, realisation

impact could be good or bad

some sort of informations or things that could change my point of view or life living

To have an positive effect in youths life



Do you have experience in Youth Work ?



What "impact" had this "experience" in youth work on you?

eventually decided to study social work.

As youth who participated in the youth work, I got friends and had some amazing experiences

made social similarities and differences visible

It made me want to study more about the topic. Actually I applied to school because of that

I needed to work with hidden traumas and learned much about it

I found new friends and colleagues. And it has been good learning experience.

Everything is possible

Decided to study social work

good memories and got new friends

What "impact" had this "experience" in youth work on you?

I learned about NGO field and how sustainable the work is. So I benefitted to my future career since i know better now



Different views on "impact"

'Impact' is a term we use so often in so many different contexts, has it lost its meaning - and is it still useful?



to have an impact or effect on / a marked effect or influence / have a strong effect on someone or something

affect/effect - influence - causes - change - modify - transform - shape - make difference - result - outcome - impression - consequence - ...

Impact =

"The measured difference of a predefined indicator (e.g. school test score) with the intervention and without the intervention."

causes of an effect

"Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended" (OECD-DAC, 2002)

effects of a cause

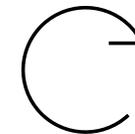
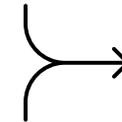
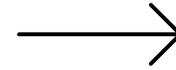
"The change that occurs due to your project in society or in the environment: that is your impact." ([Sociale Innovatiefabriek - Impact Wizard](#))

significant change



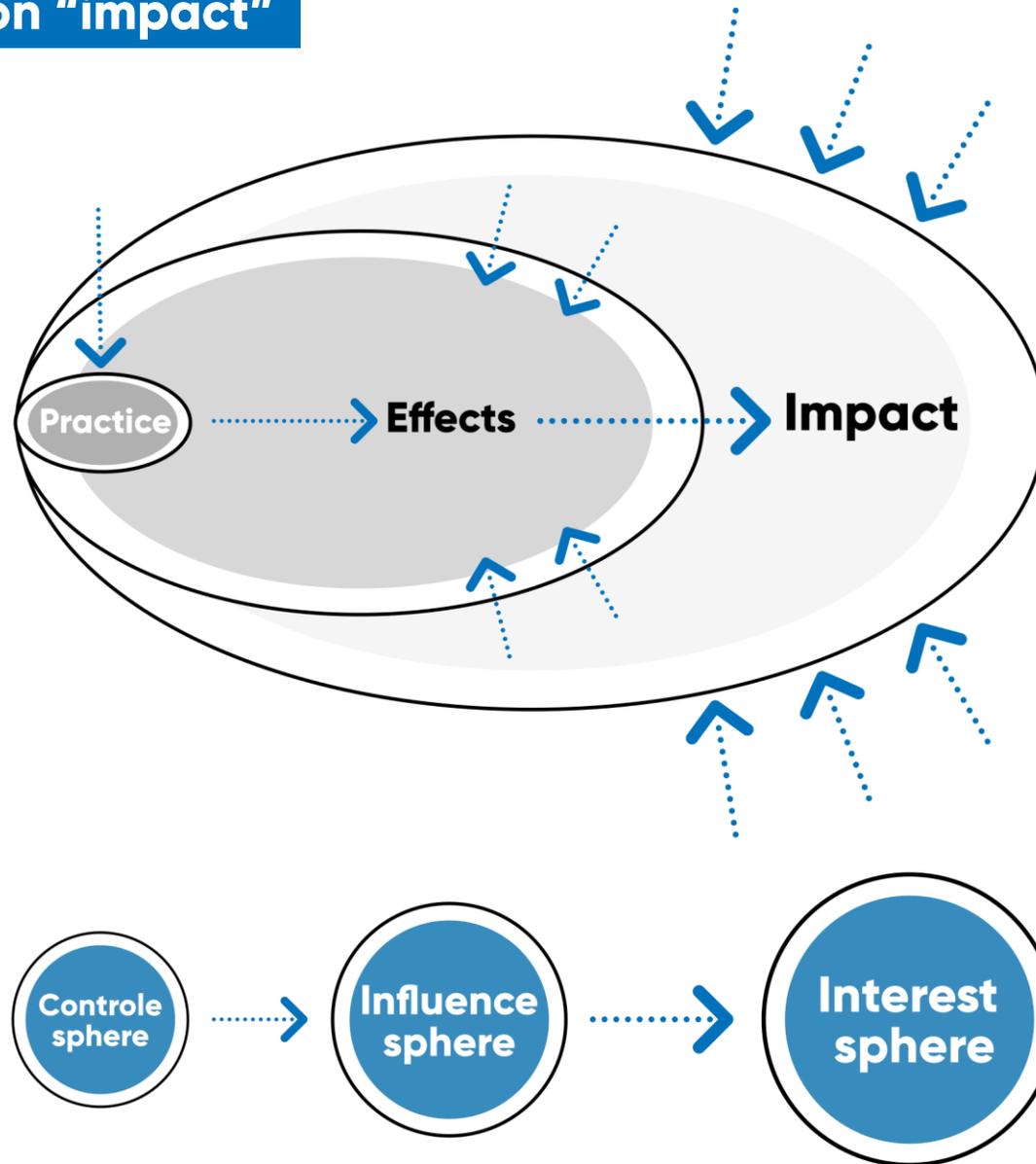
Different views on "impact"

- 1 Impact as a long-term effect of one specific practice**
This view of impact presupposes that there is a **direct, simple causal relationship** between one practice and a specific effect.
- 2 Impact as a long-term effect to which a practice can contribute**
A second look at impact starts from the assumption that the relationship between a practice and its impact is more complex. In other words, youth workers assume that a specific long-term effect is the **result of different practices and context factors that can interact with each other.**
- 3 Impact as meaning and value**
The **purpose of the practice is the practice itself.** It does not always seem appropriate or desirable to talk about such practices in terms of impact. Thinking in terms of causal relationships between practices and effects, and thinking in function of an intended or unintended change, does not fully do justice to the value or individuality of these types of practices.





Different views on "impact"



Based on Earl, Garden & Mutylo (2001) en Montague (2000)

Translated from: [Peilen naar de impact van sociaal-culturele praktijken \(2014\)](#). M. Berghmans, S. Deprez, H. Celis en J. Vandenabeele m.m.v. Adinda Van Hemelrijck



2 What do you want to measure the impact of?

Give an example of 'what' you want to measure the impact?

marginalization
wellbeing
self reflection
changed self perception
amount of accomplishments
amount of participants
participation
financial resources
motivation
inspiration
sociality
trustworthy



Impact on different levels

1. Application

When you use the term impact: are you describing the goals; are you forecasting what kind of effects might be expected; or are you describing actual observed or measured change?

2. Scope

Are you narrowing your description of impact to one or a few pre-defined variables (for instance, economic growth, household income, school test scores) or are you taking an open perspective of impact and looking at as many variables as makes sense so as to make a useful judgement?

3. Subject and level of change

Where are you looking for impact: at the level of individual citizens, households, sub-groups or communities, at organisations or institutions, at sectors, at the environment?

4. Degrees of separation.

How direct is the link between the intervention and impact as you define it; can impact occur close to the intervention or is it always several steps removed? How certain is the causal link: does there have to be existing theory or empirical evidence for causal links or can impact occur in completely unexpected places?

5. Immediacy, rate and durability of change.

Is your understanding of impact static (that is, 'this project had *this* much impact') or can impact vary over time? And is it always a long time before impact can be observed?

6. Homogeneity of benefits.

Is impact a uniform or 'average' property, or does it vary across population groups or institutions with different experiences of benefits?



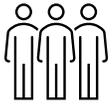


Impact on different levels



Personal outcomes [human capital]

Individual competences, social & emotional skills, ...



Social outcomes [social capital]

Attitudes, values, behavior, health & wellbeing, employment, education, ...



Political & Civic outcomes

Political engagement, policy making, ...
Civic engagement

STUDY ON THE

SOCIAL VALUE

OF YOUTH

ORGANISATIONS

Final country codes	Overarching theme
New friends (Estonia)	Relating to others
Enhancing friendships (England)	
Finding new friends (Finland)	
Sense of belonging to the community (Italy)	
Enhancing sense of group belonging and participation (France)	
Relating with others and valuing diversity (Italy)	
Creating bonds (France)	
Enhancing self-confidence (France)	Sense of self
Increased self-confidence (Estonia)	
Increasing confidence (England)	
Experiencing positive emotions (France)	
Improved sense of wellbeing (England)	
Self-determination (Italy)	
Increasing resilience (England)	
Encountering an empathic youth worker (Finland)	Creating places and spaces for young people
Cool atmosphere (Finland)	
Mutuality (England)	
Development of relationships with adults (Estonia)	
Filling the gaps (Finland)	Social inclusion
Developing autonomy (France)	
Participation in innovation and change (Italy)	
Reducing risky behaviours (England)	
Development of pro-social behaviour (Estonia)	
Increased interest in learning (Estonia)	
Improvement in job chances (Italy)	
Increased sense of responsibility (Estonia)	Experiential learning
Development or discovery of new personal skills (Italy)	
Discovering activities or new people (France)	
Diversity of youth work arenas (Finland)	
Broadening of the spectrum of experiences (Estonia)	
Acquiring and transferring skills or abilities (France)	
Increasing awareness (France)	
Improvement in social and communication skills (Estonia)	
Learning opportunity (Finland)	

Table 13.4 Table of overarching themes and associated final country codes

[The Impact of Youth Work in Europe: A Study of Five European Countries \(2018\)](#)



The Impact of Youth Work in Europe: A Study of Five European Countries

Edited by Jon Ord with Marc Carletti, Susan Cooper, Christophe Dansac, Daniele Morciano, Lasse Siurala and Marti Taru





2 What do you want to measure the impact of?

- ▶ **Individual** level (competences, skills, attitude)
- ▶ **Community** level (human interaction, common values, wellbeing)
- ▶ **Society** level (employment, health, education)
- ▶ **Policy** level (engagement, participation, policy making)

Do you prefer to measure the impact, outcomes, effects of youth work on the





1

Researching the “Value of Youth Work”

Ongoing research in Flanders (AP Hogeschool)

- › Which “most significant change” participants of Youth Work report?
- › Based on “Transformative evaluation” ~ Storytelling
www.kenniscentrumisos.be/portfolio/de-waarde-van-het-jeugdwerk (Els de Ceuster)
- › Inspired on European Study:
The Impact of Youth Work: A study of Five European Countries (2018)
www.humak.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/The-Impact-Of-Youth-Work.pdf

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- › Collecting & coding “most significant change” stories can be a good starting point to decide on what you want to measure impact.

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- › While it does say something about the ‘value’ it doesn’t give an objective view on the real ‘impact’. Stories are collecting only ‘+ outcomes’ and are ‘selected’.





Impact wizard

Social Innovation Factory



Impact Wizard guides you through the impact assessment process step by step. You'll find everything you need to prepare and execute an impact assessment: from a handy, online template for a theory of change to a whole range of methods to actually measure and analyse your impact.

On top of that, you'll get tips about communicating your impact.
This will enable you to maximize your organization's impact.

impactwizard.eu



- ▶ It's an overall tool to maximize the impact of the organization from settings the goals, to measurement, to evaluation,



- ▶ It's a time and energy consuming process. It has no 'out of the box' measurement tool. You have to design everything by yourself. Organizations sometimes drop out during the long process.





3

The Logbook

KEKS

- › Web-based system for continuous documentation and follow up of youth work and quality development.
- › Observing and developing youth work practice and outcomes
- › It supports Youth Workers in their everyday documentation by gathering information and creating the reports needed to analyse their work.

www.keks.se/the-logbook

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- › Used by more than +70 youth work organizations.
- › Focus on reflection and learning within the organizations and thus on quality development.
- › Opportunity to compare with other organizations.

-

- › The tool doesn't speak about 'impact', but about 'documenting', 'analyzing' and quality development.
- › It is not yet possible to see changes within the sector, or outcomes on a sector level, but they have the ambition to do this.





4

Street Smart - Impact *Mobile School*

StreetSmart
Powered by [mobile phone icon]

An all-in-one combination of a data registration and case management app for youth workers, a remote digital coaching for youngsters and a user-friendly web-based platform, developed to provide essential information about your impact!

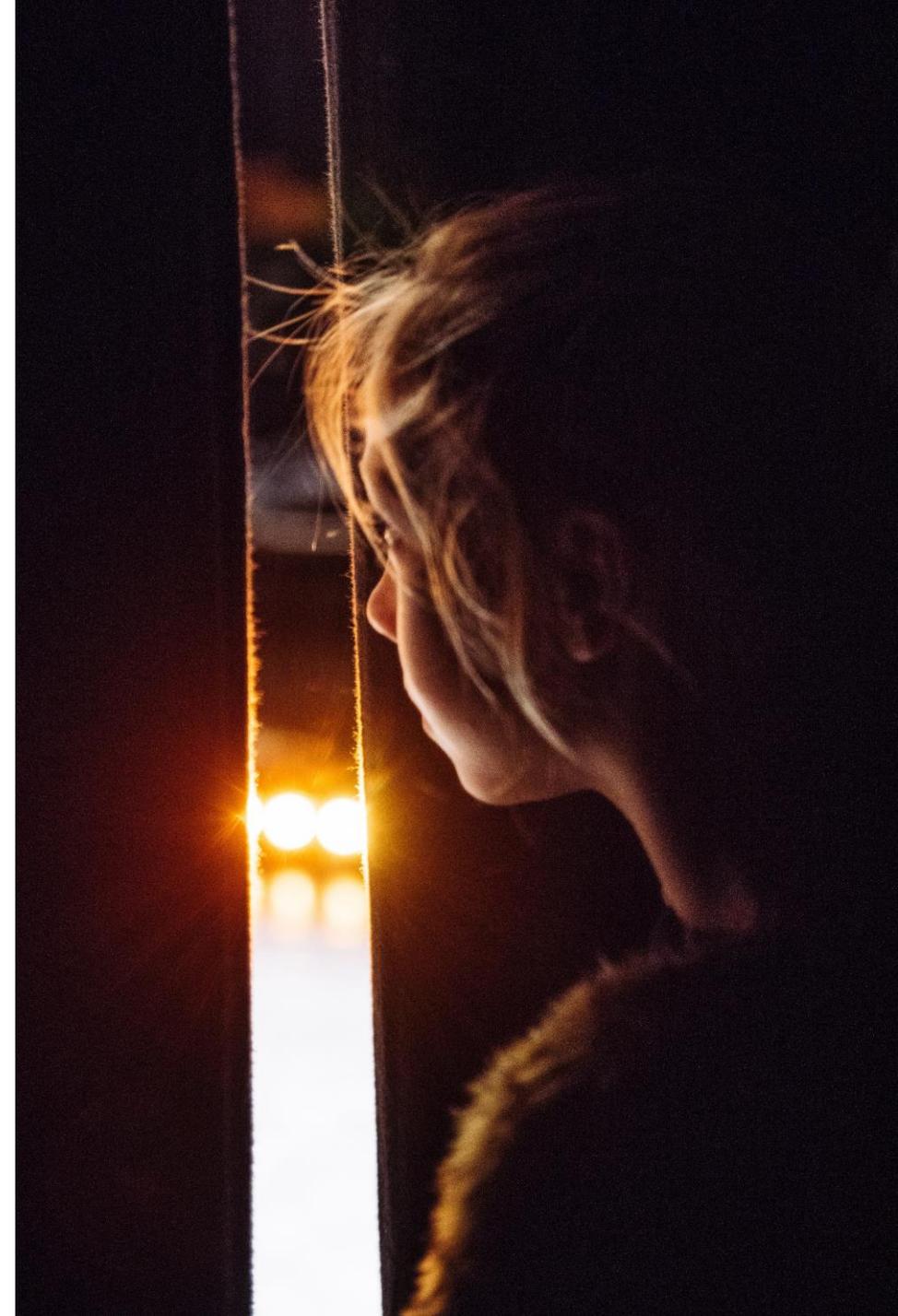
www.street-smart.be/products/streetsmart-impact

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- › Web & smartphone application. Friendly and good-looking user interface.
- › Track mood, skill monitoring, goal setting, network tracking.

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- › Starting point: simplify administration (for organisations working with street children).
- › Not yet clear what kind of 'impact' you can measure.
- › Still in the initial phase of implementation.



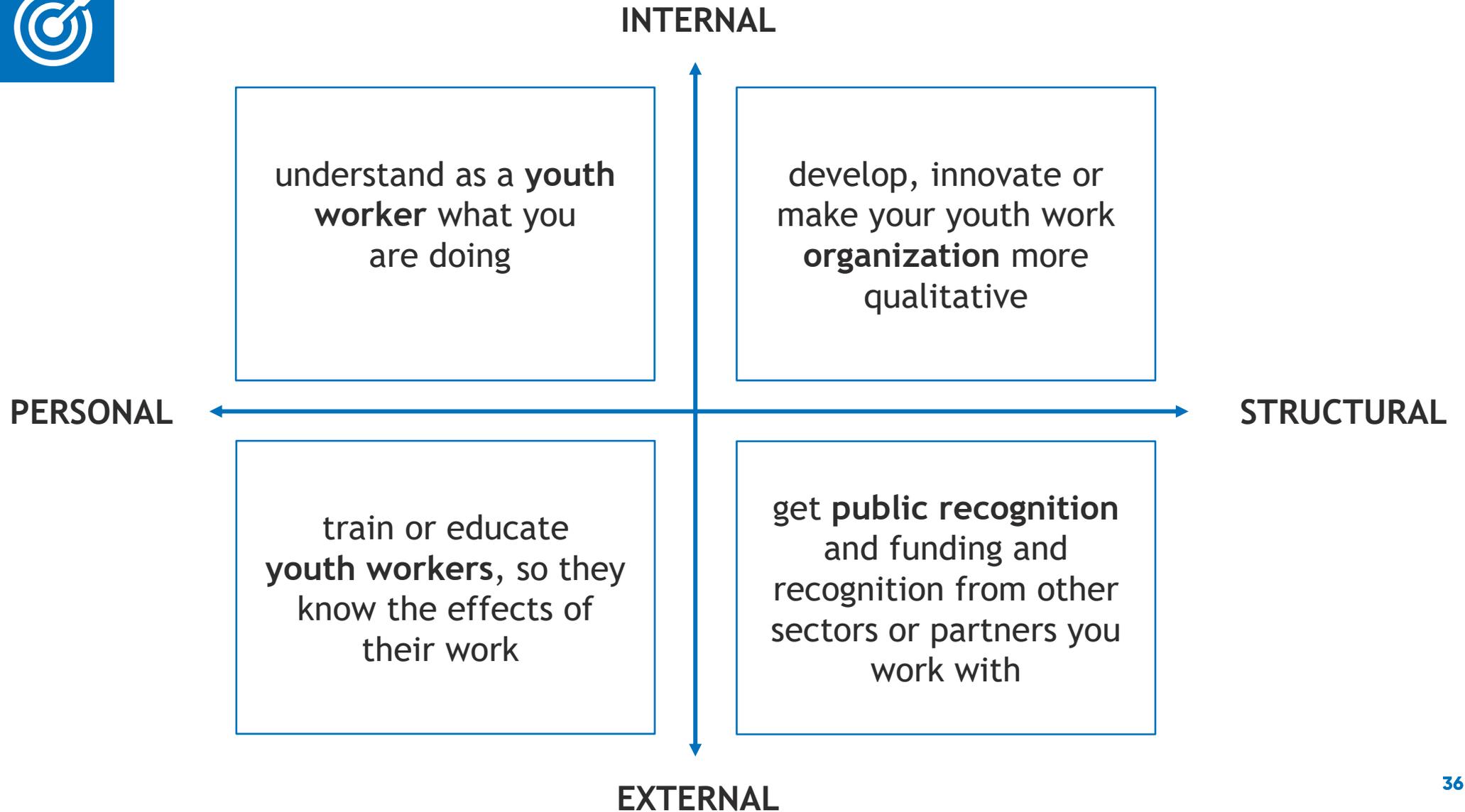


3 Why do you want to measure impact?

Why do you want to measure impact?



**OBJECTIVES
of making
impacts
visible?**





Your blueprint for a tool ?

REFLECTION

Join our padlet ...

https://padlet.com/timmy_boutsen/impact



"Who are we, if not measured by our impact on others?"

That's who we are! We're not who we say we are, we're not who we want to be.

We are the sum of the influence and impact that we have, in our lives, on others."

[Carl Sagan]

Curious for more on this topic?

Collaborate? Ideas – experience – opinions – research - projects

CONTACT US



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FOLLUW US (in dutch)



ambrassade.be/nl/kennis/artikel/impact-van-jeugdwerk