

Youth Empowerment Programs in the Community: A Case Study

To Siu Ming

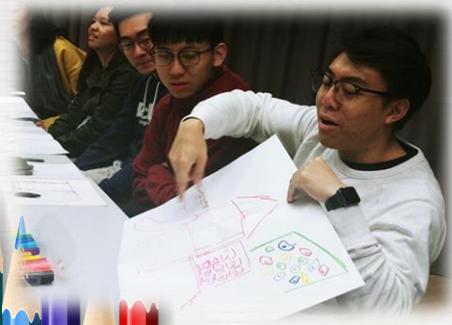


Rationale of the Study

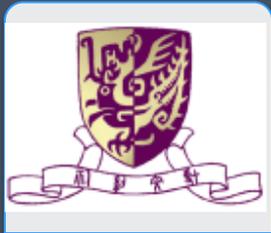
❖ Changing Landscape of Youth Service in Hong Kong

- *A shift of youth work model from a deficit approach to an empowerment approach;*
- *Integrated Children and Youth Service Centres (ICYSCs) share the responsibility of providing a supportive environment for youth initiation in actualizing their innovative ideas, and cultivate their community participation and social commitment;*
- *To empower and support young people to actualize their potentials in participating in the community, youth service organizations and youth workers were encouraged to engage in capacity building activities, and strengthen the collaboration with cross-sectoral stakeholders.*

<https://jcyouthcreate.hk/category/projects/>



Background of the Study



CUHK Research Team



16 ICYSC+1 YOT



4 Technical Partners & The Good Lab

Jockey Club YouthCreate Series

To enhance youth's creativity and actualize innovative ideas

To promote co-creation among youth and adults

To engage youth to address community needs

To enhance youth's social connectedness by connecting with cross-sector partners

Theoretical Framework

Synthesis of Youth Empowerment & Design Thinking

- ❖ **Community-based Youth Empowerment Initiatives Informed by Design Thinking**
 - *Youth empowerment as an innovative process that help young people at individual, organizational and community levels;*
 - *In line with the empowerment approach, Design Thinking is essentially a human-centered intervention tool that emphasizes the involvement of community and cross-disciplinary teams in the development of new processes, products, and services that address social issues and solve social problems;*
 - *Youth workers are being called to adopt Design Thinking and engage in cross-sectoral collaboration to develop community-based youth empowerment programmes; however, studies have documented or evaluated the impact of capacity building is generally lacking.*

Empathy

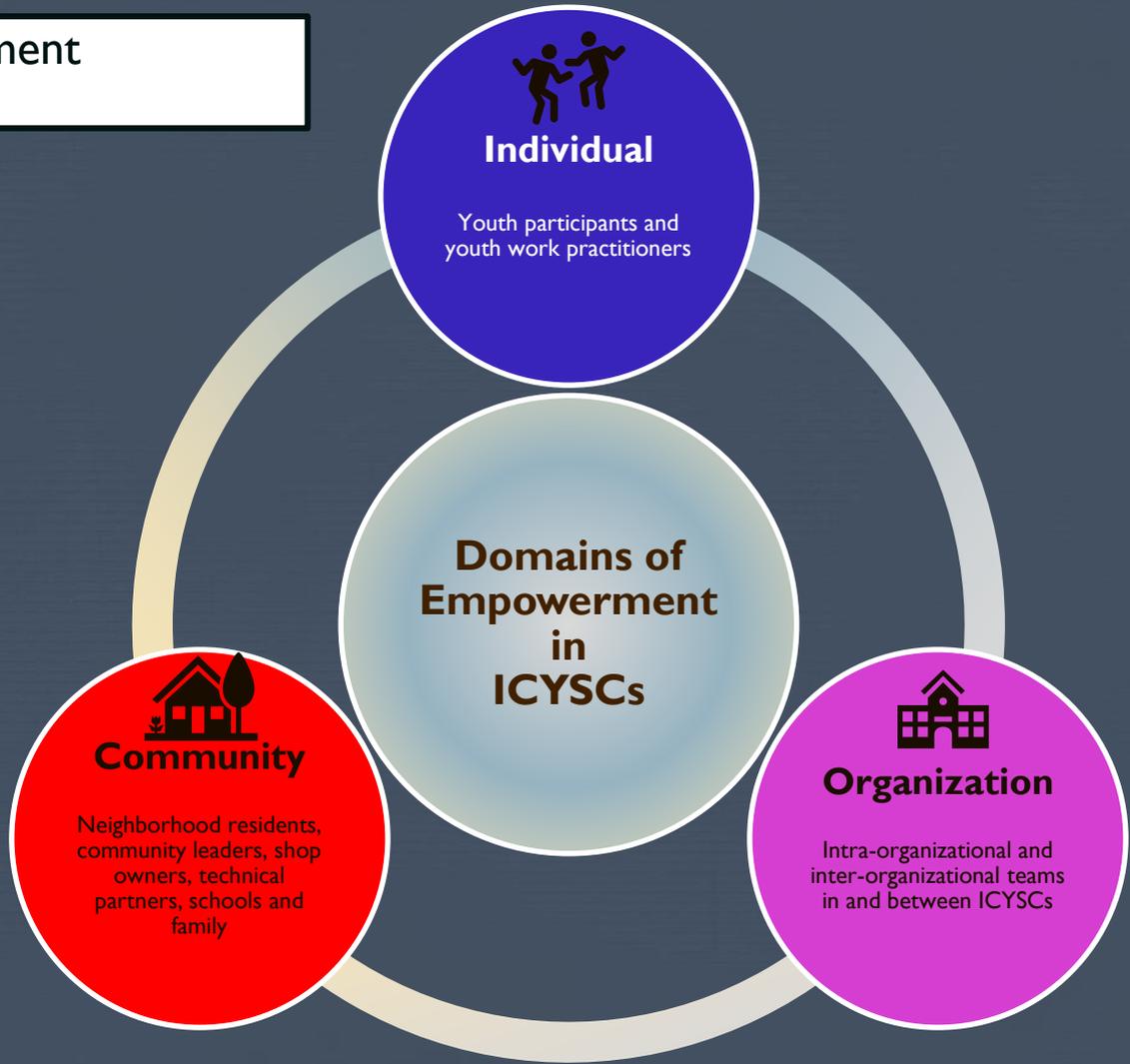
Define

Ideate

Prototype

Test

Actualizing Youth Empowerment in the Community



Actualizing Youth Empowerment in the Community

A Cyclical Process



Engagement Stage

Define & Research

- Stimulate youth's interest in trial programs
- Enable youth and practitioners in acquainting themselves with design thinking and innovative skills
- Explore the community with youth and raise awareness of issues in the community



Program Design

Ideate & Prototype

- Co-work with youth and build supportive YAP to define community needs
- Generate ideas of possible solutions through prototyping
- Cultivate youth's ownership and enhance their voice in the process of decision making



Program Implementation

Select & Implement

- Actualize the prototype into real products
- Test and refine the products while collect feedback from the community
- Learn and cooperate with peers, practitioners, technical partners and community stakeholders

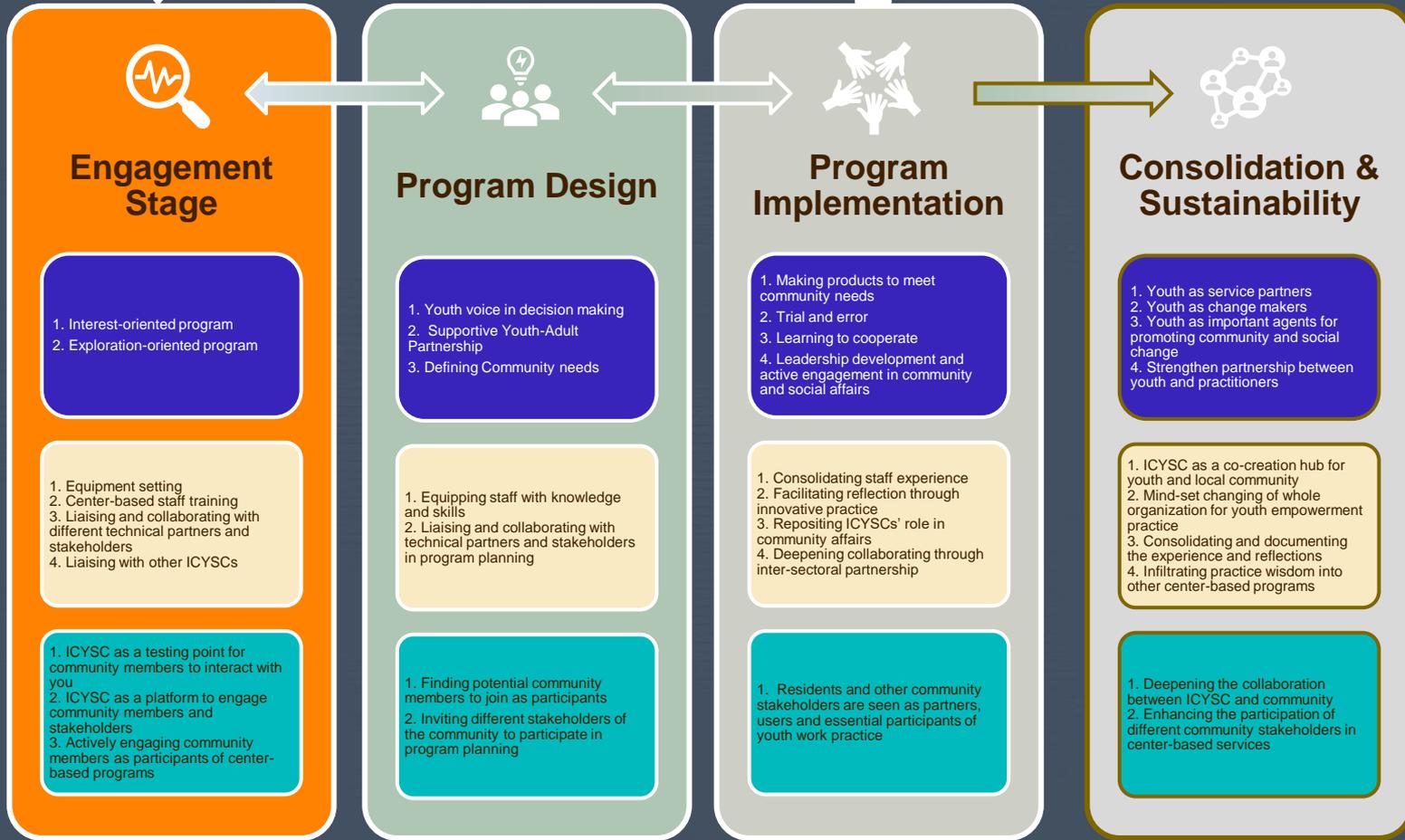


Consolidation & Sustainability

Learn

- Consolidate and document the learning experience
- Share the experiential knowledge with other youth workers and stakeholders
- Consolidate youth's experience as important agent in promoting community and social change
- Strengthen the partnership between youth, practitioners and community stakeholders

A Cyclical Process



Programme

Practitioners and young people were assigned to one of four tracks (maker education, new media, visual and performing arts, and social technology), each led by the respective technical partner from each track. The practitioners and young people in the four tracks received training from the respective technical partner and co-worked through the seven stages of design thinking (i.e., define, research, ideate, prototype, select, implement, and learn) as part of the program.

Then, the practitioners and youth of each ICYSC needed to consider their Design Challenge in the community.

<https://jcyouthcreate.hk/category/projects/>





綜合青少年服務中心夥伴：東華三院余墨緣綜合服務中心

尋常的事物往往容易被大眾忽略。我們每天都會接觸不同聲音和影像，但入暮時我們又記得多少？若以錄音及影像重現，又能否喚起被大眾遺忘的場景，體驗那未曾聽過的故事？



綜合青少年服務中心夥伴：香港基督教女青年會屯門綜合社會服務處

不知道大家對香港人有什麼印象？「追求速度」大概是十分典型的一種吧。然而在這個急促的城市中，卻有一班喜愛木工的中二學生，願意花無數個日與夜去製作一件成品。

綜合青少年服務中心夥伴：香港仔街坊福利會社會服務中心賽馬會綜合服務處

香港仔坊會去年推行為期一年的「新媒體」計劃，希望透過共創共學，以各種電子媒介回應社區需要。計劃亦重點推動年青人與成年人之間的合作（youth-adult partnership），一共招募了 30 位青少年和 6 位成年人，讓兩代在平等的學習環境下切磋交流。

<https://jcyouthcreate.hk/category/projects/>



綜合青少年服務中心夥伴：香港小童群益會深井青少年綜合服務中心

青少年發現深井部份地區（如公園）於夏天期間蚊患嚴重，影響兒童及長者享用公園設置。於是他們透過上網學習及自造技術，製作誘蚊器放置於公園內以作滅蚊之用。



InstaMag
筲箕灣
4月30日, 2019

walking in the street
holding your hand



Jockey Club YouthCreate Series Symposium
Youth-Adult Co-creations in the Community: Challenges, Opportunities, and Innovations
賽馬會青創社區系列研討會
社區青成共創：挑戰、機遇與創新

日期 Date: 2021年4月23日 (星期五) / April 23, 2021 (Friday)
時間 Time: 上午9時30分至下午5時正 / 9:30am – 5:00pm

地點 Venue: 香港灣仔軒尼詩道15號溫莎公爵社會服務大廈禮堂 / The Auditorium, Duke of Windsor Social Service Building, 15 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

語言 Language: 廣東話 / Cantonese
*English for Interpreter Speech 1

費用 Registration: 全免 / Free of charge

參與對象 Participants: 綜合青少年服務中心 / The Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs)
青年工作者 / Youth workers
主修社會工作的大專學生 / Tertiary students who major in social work

查詢 Enquiry
香港中文大學社會工作學系 / Department of Social Work, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
電話: Tel: 39433256
電郵: Email: myandchen@u.hkust.hk

*參加者必須遵守大會防疫協議及安排。
Participants must follow the anti-pandemic measures and arrangements by the Organiser.
*本活動有視乎任何情況及政府防疫措施而變動，主辦機構將保留最終決定權，如活動參加者數目不足，概不另行通知。
The activities may adjust according to the pandemic development and the government health measures, the Organiser reserves the right to make a final decision, thank you for your understanding.

Designed program

三十輻，共一轂，當其無，有車之用。
埴埴以爲器，當其無，有器之用。
鑿戶牖以爲室，當其無，有室之用。
故有之以爲利，無之以爲用。
(老子 道德經)

只有適當無為，才能釋放更多空間與人連結

唔做嘢都係一種做嘢！

Capacity Building vs. Capacity Releasing

和社工的關係，不會有那種由上而下，好像吩咐你做事的感覺。社工會變成是同輩，不會有成年人那種感覺。因為出來工作，就會覺得外面的成年人會將他們的經驗，認為是一種對的東西，灌輸給你。會叫你跟隨他們，不然就是不對。社工會開導你，找一條屬於自己的路。不同之處在於這裡。

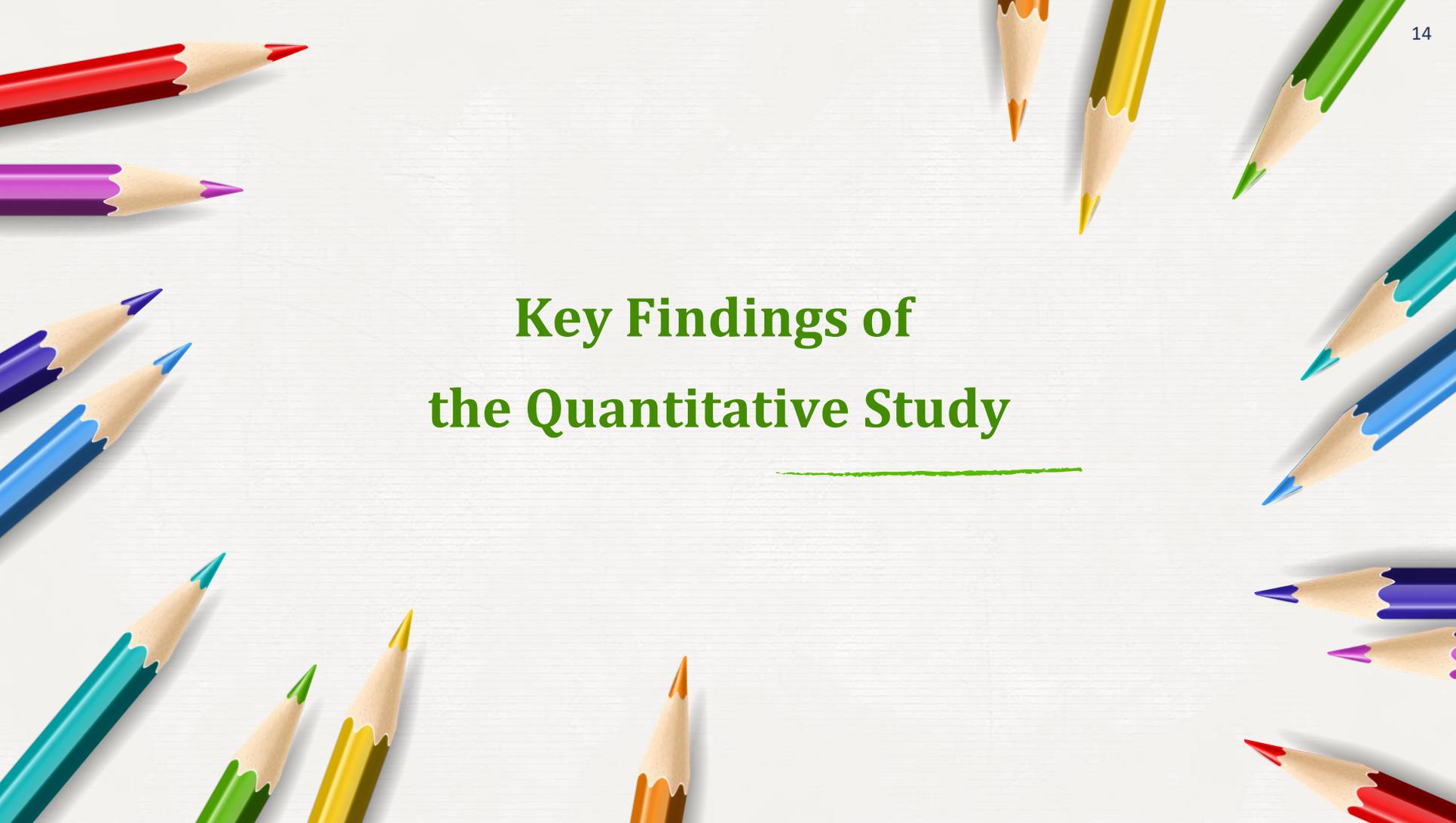
虛與實、有招與無招、思考與
實戰、專業智慧與街坊智慧
的交錯

Youth Empowerment Programs in the Community: A Case Study

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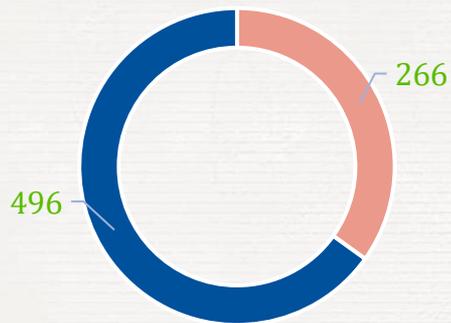


Key Findings of the Quantitative Study



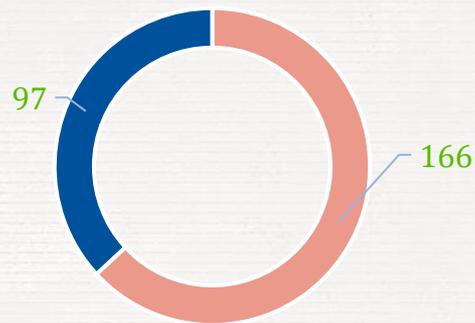
Two Groups of Participants of Two Waves of Assessment

Baseline + Intermediate



- YouthCreate Participants (YCP)
- Non-YouthCreate Participants (NYCP)

Intermediate + Post-intervention



- YouthCreate Participants (YCP)
- Non-YouthCreate Participants (NYCP)



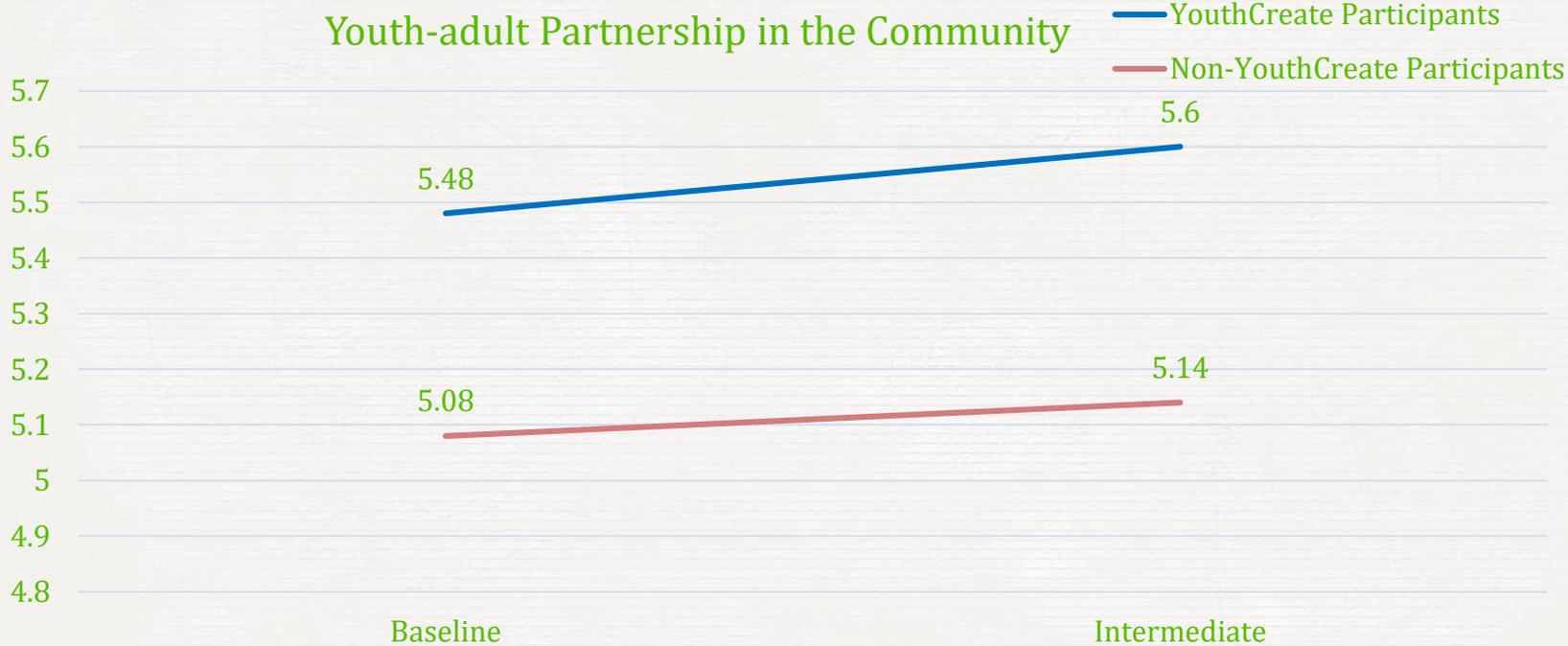
Outcome Indicator: Primary Outcome

Youth-adult
Partnership

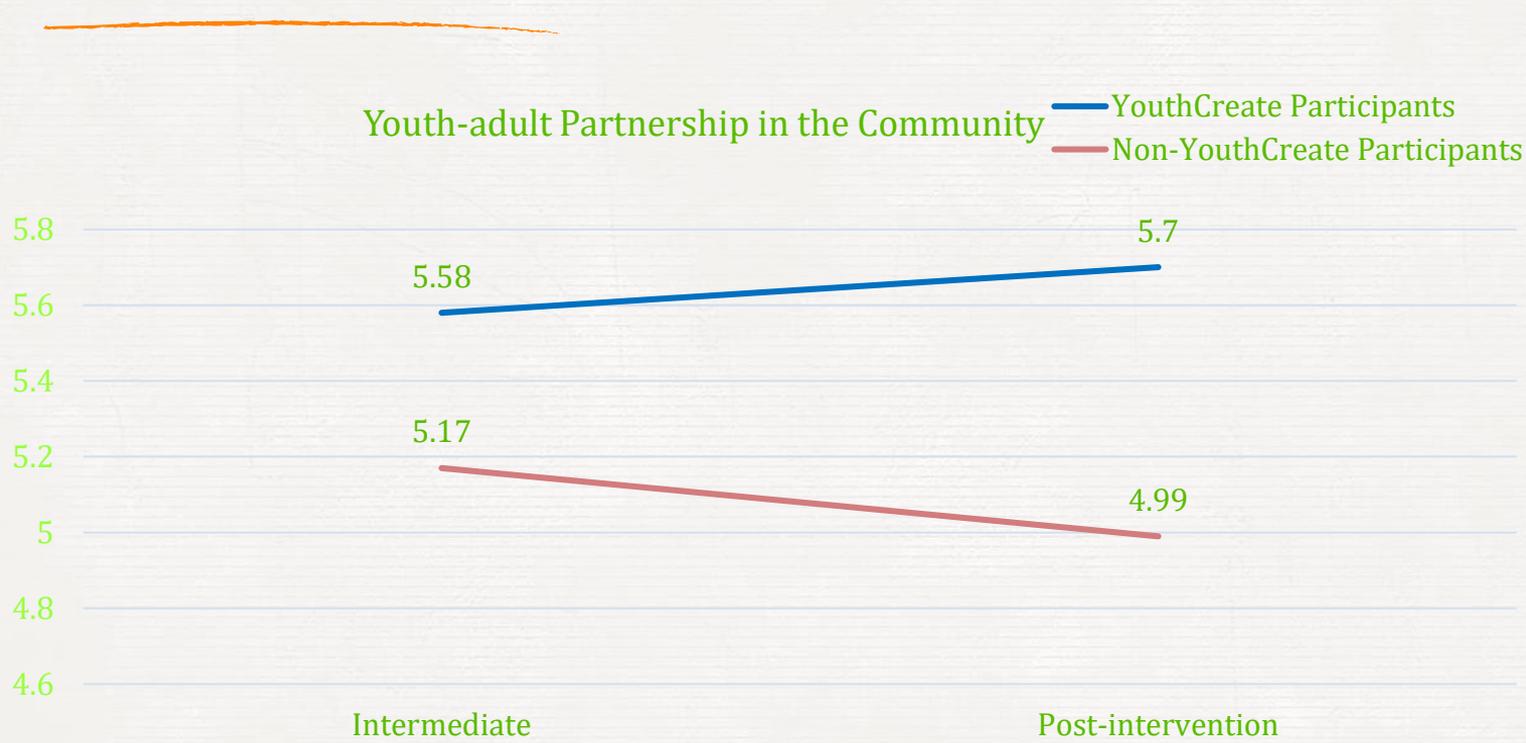
Youth and youth workers maintain a shared power of control in this centre.



Comparison between two groups of participants on baseline and intermediate scores of youth-adult partnership (2017-2019)



Comparison between two groups of participants on intermediate and post-intervention scores of youth-adult partnership (2019-2021)



Comparison between two groups of participants on baseline and intermediate scores of youth-adult partnership by ruling out the effect of pretest (2017-2019)

Indicators	Posttest	ANCOVA		Pairwise Comparison
n= 266, YCP n= 496, NYCP	Participants	Mean	F(p)	η^2
Perceived Youth-Adult Partnership in ICYSCs	YCP	5.60	20.8***	.029 (small effect)
	NYCP	5.14		



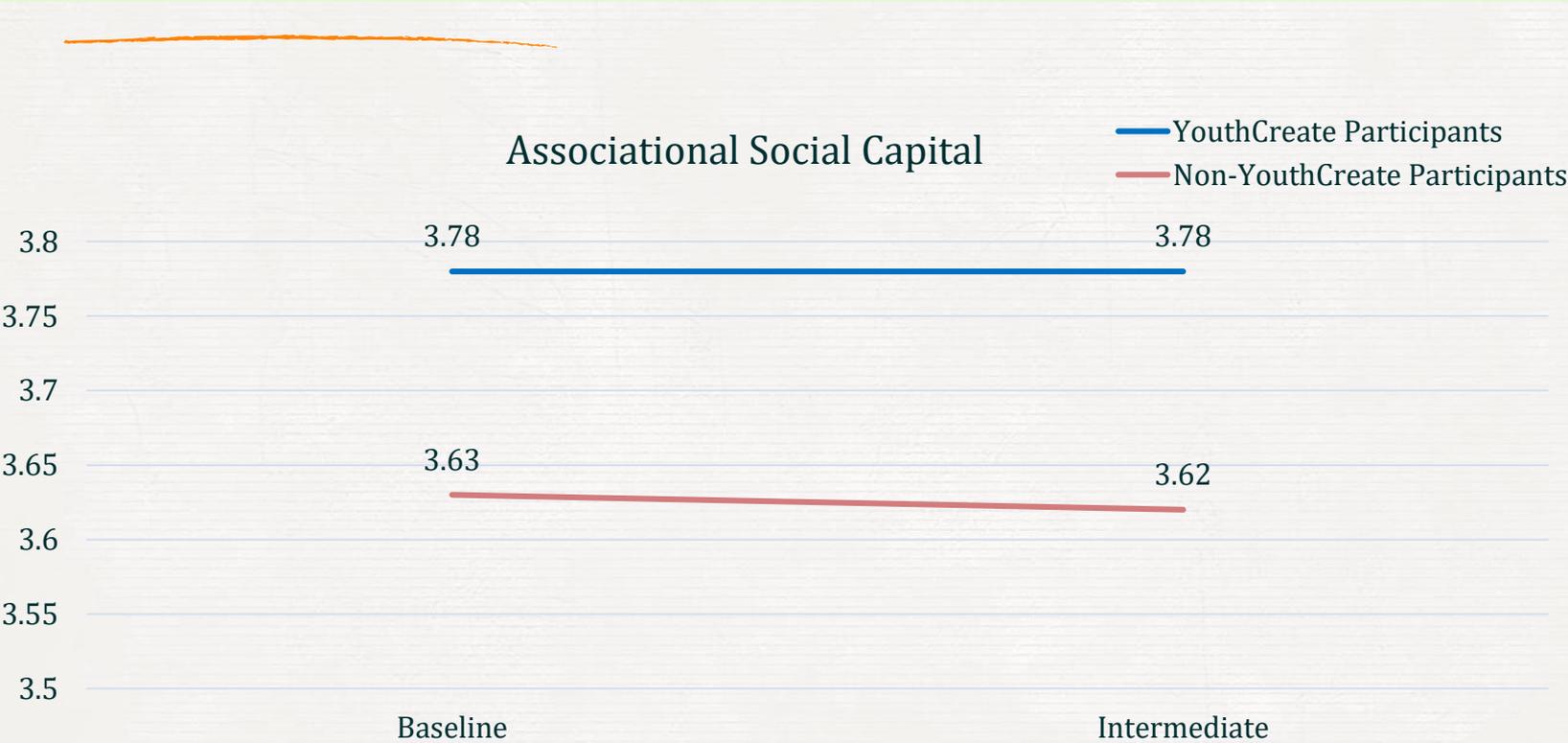
Comparison between two groups of participants on intermediate and post-intervention scores of youth-adult partnership by ruling out the effect of pretest (2019-2021)

Indicators	Posttest	ANCOVA		Pairwise Comparison
n= 166, YCP n= 97, NYCP	Participants	Mean	F(p)	η^2
Perceived Youth-Adult Partnership in ICYSCs	YCP	5.70	18.09***	.067 (medium effect)
	NYCP	4.99		
				YCP>NYCP

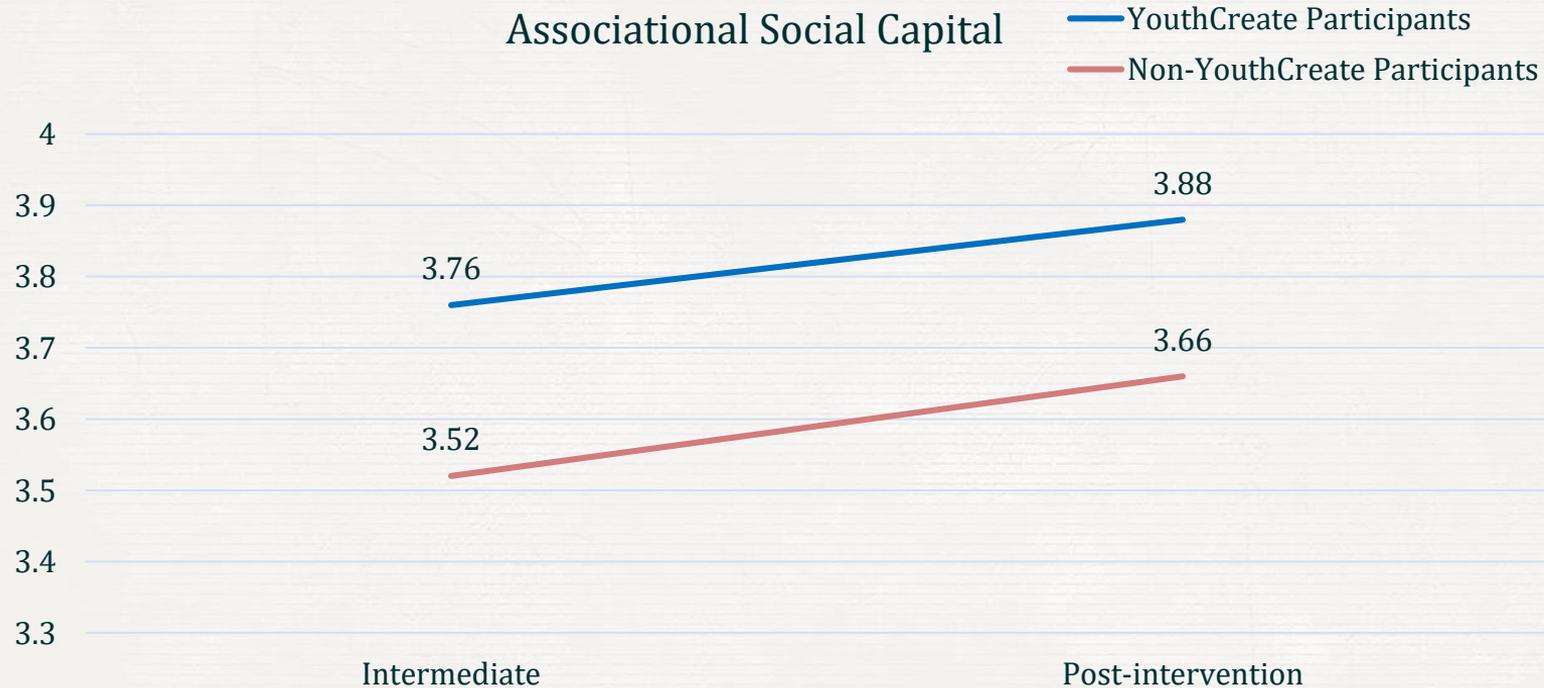
Outcome Indicators: Secondary Outcomes



Comparison between two groups of participants on baseline and intermediate scores of secondary outcomes (2017-2019)



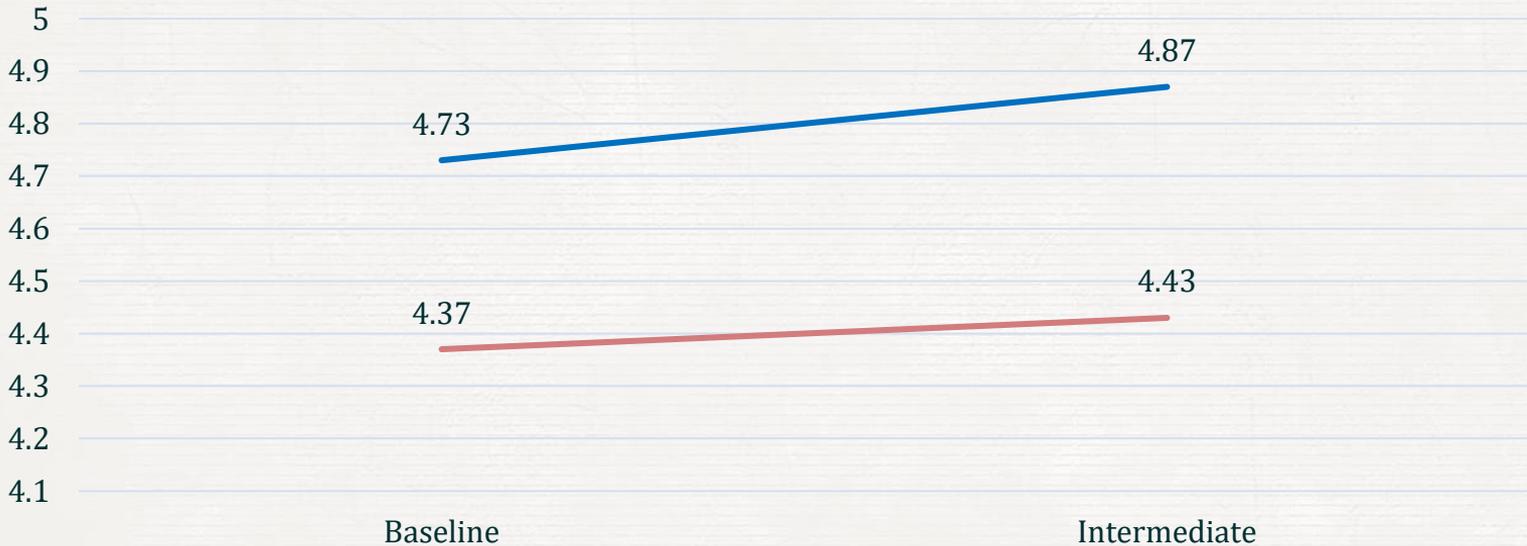
Comparison between two groups of participants on intermediate and post-intervention scores of secondary outcomes (2019-2021)



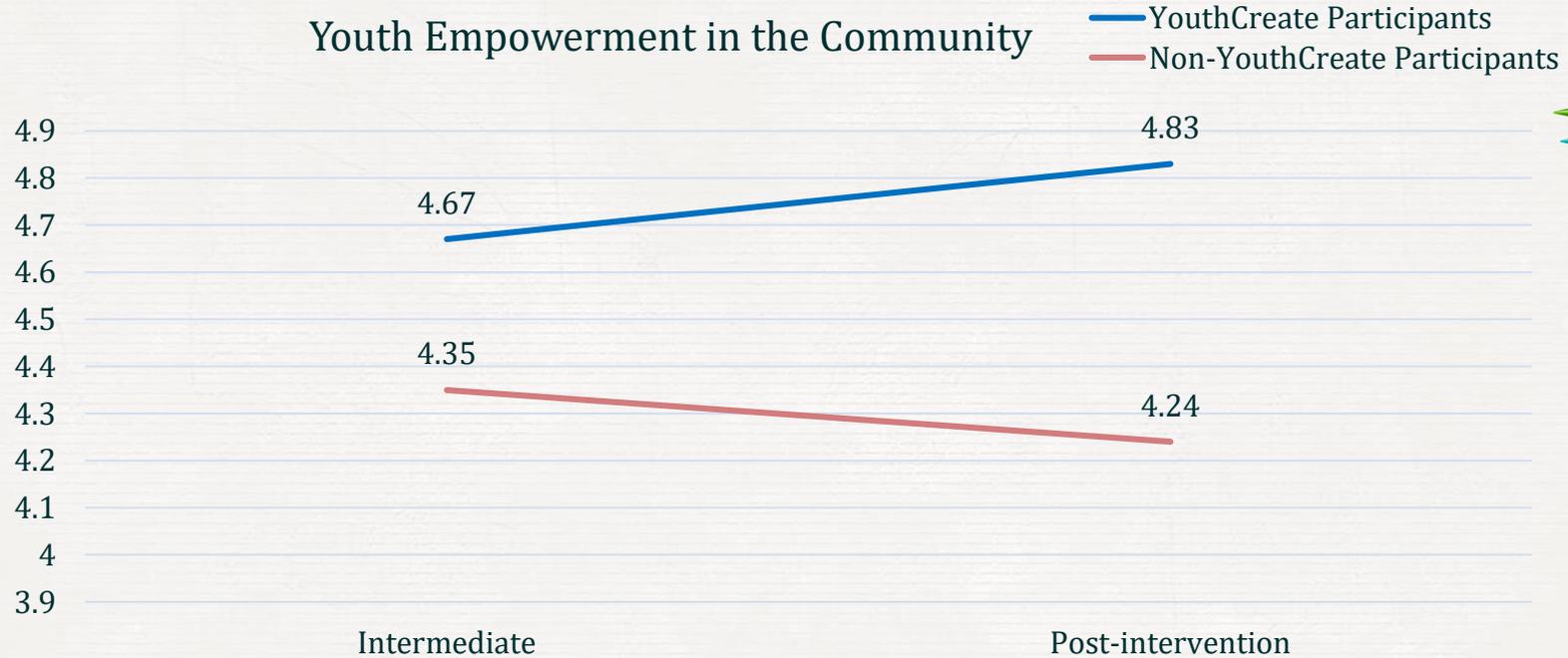
Comparison between two groups of participants on baseline and intermediate scores of secondary outcomes (2017-2019)

Youth Empowerment in the Community

— YouthCreate Participants
— Non-YouthCreate Participants

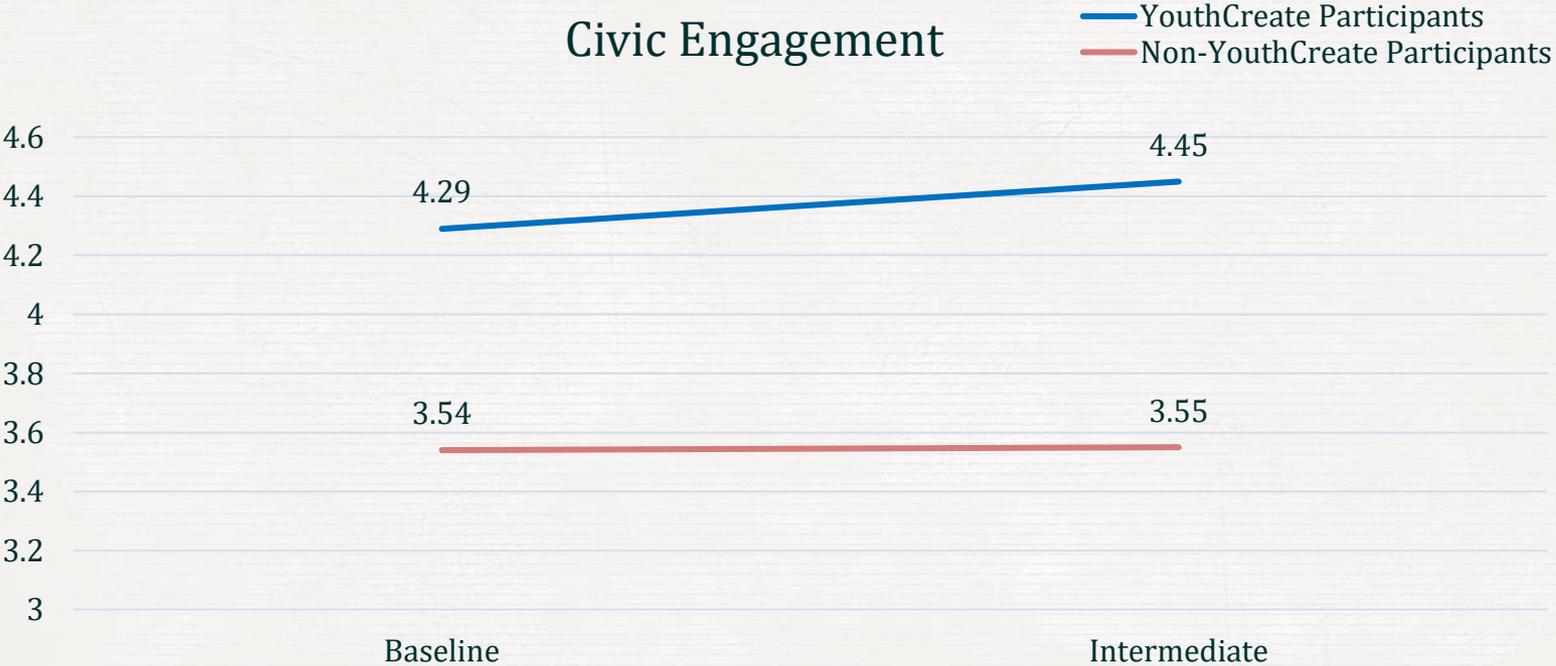


Comparison between two groups of participants on intermediate and post-intervention scores of secondary outcomes (2019-2021)

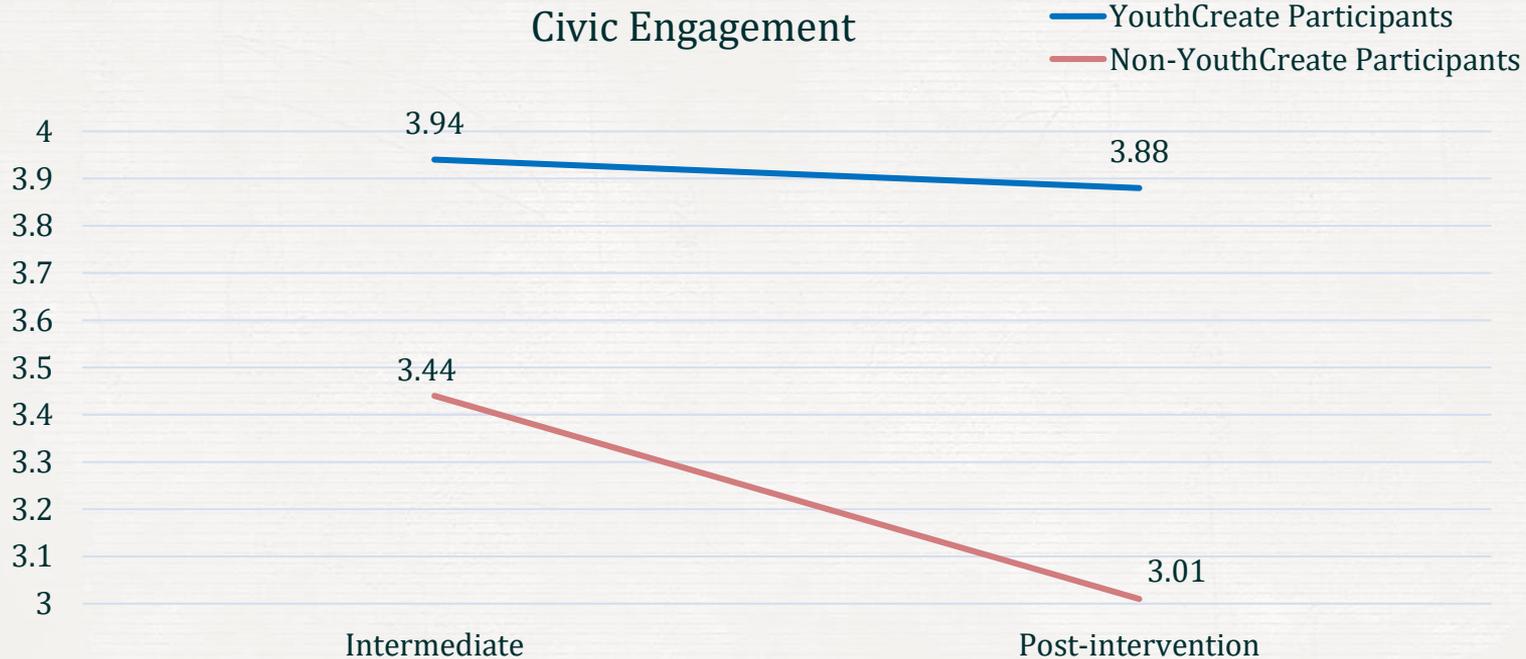


Comparison between two groups of participants on baseline and intermediate scores of secondary outcomes (2017-2019)

Civic Engagement



Comparison between two groups of participants on intermediate and post-intervention scores of secondary outcomes (2019-2021)



Comparison between two groups of participants on baseline and intermediate scores by ruling out the effect of pretest (2017-2019)

Indicators	Posttest	ANCOVA		Pairwise Comparison	
n= 266, YCP n= 496, NYCP	Participants	Mean	F(p)	η^2	
Associational Social Capital	YCP	3.78	4.01*	.008 (small effect)	YCP>NYCP
	NYCP	3.62			
Youth Empowerment in the Community	YCP	4.87	18.72***	.025 (small effect)	YCP>NYCP
	NYCP	4.43			
Civic Engagement	YCP	4.45	33.35***	.043 (medium effect)	YCP>NYCP
	NYCP	3.55			

Comparison between two groups of participants on intermediate and post-intervention scores by ruling out the effect of pretest (2019-2021)

Indicators	Posttest		ANCOVA		Pairwise Comparison
n= 166, YCP n= 97, NYCP	Participants	Mean	F(p)	η^2	
Associational Social Capital	YCP	3.88	7.28***	.041	YCP>NYCP
	NYCP	3.66		(medium effect)	
Youth Empowerment in the Community	YCP	4.83	12.00***	.045	YCP>NYCP
	NYCP	4.24		(medium effect)	
Civic Engagement	YCP	3.88	17.09***	.063	YCP>NYCP
	NYCP	3.01		(medium effect)	

Summary

- ❖ YouthCreate provides more opportunities for young people to work with other youth, collaborate with adults in decision making and implementation processes, as well as to engage in meaningful roles in the community.
- ❖ YouthCreate might have exerted a buffering effect on the adverse influence of the sociopolitical event and Covid-19 during YouthCreate (e.g., sense of powerlessness & social distancing). This argument is supported by the qualitative findings based on youth focus groups.



Key Findings of the Qualitative Study

Practitioners' Capacity Building and Mindset Change

我哋可以唔批判咁樣去接納年青人去天馬行空去俾好多idea出黎，而年青人亦都接納我哋一啲譬如經驗上嘅分享，咁然後慢慢再去co-create一啲project,大家去傾或者去做嘅時候，然後大家都創新左。(SWK 25)

依個分別係大啲嘅，以前係我哋plan定啲嘢，(而家)有uncertainty嘅感覺，但係我覺得依啲正正就係一個空間去發揮嘅，而家同事都唔知下一步行去邊，總之俾個空間大家一齊搞下佢啦，搞落去得嘅啦。(SWK 23)

Deep Youth-Adult Partnerships and Co-creations

社工俾咗個動力我去更加想去做呢件事。因為連佢都肯願意陪喺你身邊一起去做，咁呢件事絕對唔會係冇意義囉。就算幾天馬行空都好，只要佢仲有一刻喺度支持你，同你一起分析嘅話，咁你覺得做落去冇咩難度啊。

(YOT 40)

而且大家係極度尊重大家嘅意見。佢俾一個好平等嘅位你。冇話佢係個社工，所以佢要決定個計劃走去邊。或者我係參加，我覺得我應該去聽。唔係咁嘅。就係佢俾啲，我俾啲，佢俾啲，我俾啲，咁樣.... 因為有好多嘢我哋未接觸過嘅時候，佢會幫我哋去帶住，咁樣但佢又唔會話完全話我要你點走你就點走。呢個幾微妙嘅一個關係。(YOT 41)

Intra-organizational and Inter-organizational Support

我覺得Design Thinking係一個好youth oriented嘅諗法。今次係有機會Streamline咗成個team啊，即係大家都有一個近似個諗法係做youth service果度，就希望借到呢個training令到成個team都有個近似個諗法。
(SWK 25)

咁今次係一個好好嘅平臺我都認識咗一啲唔同機構單位嘅同事啦，我覺得係一個幾好嘅stimulation俾我哋，呀原來佢哋嘅角度做緊嘅工作其實有啲新嘅可能(SWK 26).

Effective Cross-Sectoral Collaborations

個手法好唔一樣，佢哋又好Eye-open，社工即係有時會做太多嘢，我哋有時可能真係忘記咗Empathetic Understanding，多啲係細路仔個Pacing諗嘢。我覺得個Technical Partner可以真係提供到個Third party比我地睇多啲嘢，即係好立體嘅睇啲嘢，咁我都係...我都expect佢哋有多啲火花。(SWK 5)

透過呢啲project去聯繫一啲stakeholders。我哋有個大型商場係度，因為都其實都包埋啲商戶。我哋都諗緊點樣開展呢一樣嘢，你會唔會可能每一個商戶整一啲俾佢哋點樣，例如我哋今次依個maker for service係同商戶一啲合作，用一啲唔同嘅板斧去結連個community咁樣。(SWK 23)

Strong Community Connections

搖搖板 + 平衡板

Maker~!
Design Thinking

齊齊

1 2

感覺統合訓練道具

由心出發動手造、為人作出一點小改善。

make for services

WE MAKE
共創你思

係自己去觀察社會內有咩係有需要幫助嘅嘢，咁可以去做一啲嘢去幫助一人咁，覺得maker嘅嘢係同我身處在嘅社區有好大嘅關係咁，真係幫助到有需要嘅人。
(YOT 49)

今次我哋focus點樣去同社區連結，如訪問唔同對象啊，傾聽社區嘅故事啊。佢哋見到好多好人好事，同埋識得去睇返自己日常生活嘅社區，對於依樣嘢有的say,個歸屬感強咗。(SWK29)

Finding and collaborating with different community partners who are proved to be suitable to offer technical support and facilitate youth-adult co-creations



有啲youth呢佢屋企爸爸就正正係做呢啲，都係一啲裝修佬啦我哋叫，但係果一次之後呢，佢有一啲嘅體會嘅，你係有一啲嘅創意係裡邊嘅，有設計係裡邊嘅，所以果個youth即刻就「咦係嗶」，我應該唔係再咁睇呢啲好似低下階層整嘅嘢，原來呢一個即刻對個公眾呢個status提升啲，即係原來我一做呢，都可以有一啲創意係裡邊。(SWK 18)

Outcomes of Community-Based Youth Empowerment Programs Adopting Design Thinking: A Quasi-Experimental Study

Siu-ming To¹ and Xiaoyu Liu¹

Abstract

Purpose: Using a nonrandomized control group pretest–posttest assessment, this study aimed to examine the outcomes of community-based youth empowerment initiatives that were informed by design thinking. **Method:** A total of 553 youth living in Hong Kong were recruited to participate in this study. Among them, 213 youth self-selected to join the experimental group, and 340 youth joined the two control groups. Multivariate analysis of covariance and post hoc group comparisons were used to examine the differences among the three groups at the posttest assessment. **Results:** The results indicate a positive improvement in creative self-efficacy among participants of the experimental group compared to the two control groups. Significant differences were also found between the experimental group and the second control group in terms of youth–adult partnerships and youth empowerment in the community. **Conclusion:** Youth empowerment programs informed by design thinking may reinforce self-efficacy beliefs by encouraging youth to bring about innovations in their community.

Keywords

youth empowerment, design thinking, creative self-efficacy, youth–adult partnerships, quasi-experimental design

Design thinking refers both to the process of developing innovations and to the techniques or mechanisms that encourage people or organizations to pursue creative or innovative solutions (Ambrose & Harris, 2009; Brown & Wyatt, 2010). It is outlined as consisting of three tenets—empathy, ideation, and experimentation—and seven stages—define, research, ideate, prototype, select, implement, and learn (Ambrose & Harris, 2009; Scholten & Granic, 2019).

While design thinking has become an attractive concept in the development of innovative youth practices in recent years, existing research tends to focus on the application of design thinking to learning enhancement in school and after-school settings. For instance, Yeager and colleagues (2016) found that a psychological intervention based on design thinking was effective in changing learning beliefs and short-term behaviors as well as in improving students' course grades. Won et al. (2015) reported that a social networking forum adopting design thinking helped middle school-age youth draw connections between classroom and after-school environments. However, the number of systematic studies on the use of design thinking in community-based youth services is limited. Given that young people are increasingly being recognized as contributors to community development and innovation (Checkoway, 2011; Martínez et al., 2017), the present study aimed to explore the possible outcomes of community-based youth empowerment initiatives that are informed by design thinking.

Despite the increasing trend in exploring opportunities for using design thinking to develop innovative youth work practices, discussion about the theoretical base of design thinking, particularly in relation to youth empowerment, is limited. This is an obvious omission because empowerment is a guiding value and concept for multilevel interventions that seek to create social value and lasting social impact, which is in line with the goal of using design thinking for social innovation (Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Chandra & Liang, 2017; Sharma, 2012). In the face of the growing complexity of social needs and the changing landscape of social services, it is of paramount importance for social workers and related professionals to design and implement innovative practices. Design thinking is essentially a user-centered intervention tool that emphasizes the involvement of stakeholders and interdisciplinary teams in the development of new processes, products, and services that address social issues and solve social problems (Laakso & Clavert, 2014). Empowerment and design thinking thus

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SAGE

Outcomes of a Design Thinking Program on Social Workers: An Evaluation Study

Siu-ming To¹, Johnson Chun-Sing Cheung²,
Man-yuk Adam Chan¹, Cheryl Danielle Lau¹, and Rui-ling Zhao¹

Abstract

Purpose: This study explored the outcomes of a youth empowerment program guided by design thinking on social workers' innovations in youth service. **Method:** Forty-seven practitioners joined this program with two stages: the capacity-building stage and the implementation stage. A pretest–intermediate test–posttest design survey was used to explore practitioners' changes. **Results:** Significant differences were found in creative self-efficacy and innovative behavior, with the posttest mean scores of these indicators being higher than those of the pretest. Additionally, the results indicated significant differences in youth–practitioner partnerships and inter-professional learning. The posttest mean score of youth–practitioner partnerships was higher than those of the pretest and intermediate test, while the posttest and intermediate test mean scores of inter-professional learning were higher than that of the pretest. **Conclusion:** The findings suggest that participants need both opportunities to learn about design thinking through capacity-building and to integrate what they have learned during project implementation.

Keywords

design thinking, creative self-efficacy, innovative behavior, youth–adult partnership, inter-professional collaboration

Amidst the rapidly evolving contexts of practice due to the changing needs of young people (Cheung, 2016) and the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 (Cheung, 2022), there has been a mounting need for youth service providers and social workers to adapt and innovate (Flynn, 2017; Halvorsen, 2017). In recent years, there have been increasing discussions surrounding the use of design to address social issues (e.g., Heller, 2018). Particularly, the design thinking approach has been viewed as a method to address complex challenges (Dorst, 2011) and narrow the gap between decision-makers and those affected by the decisions (Kolkó, 2018). There has also been a rising number of case studies that leverage design-based strategies toward social outcomes (Heller, 2018; Shea, 2012). For instance, design thinking has been used in the development and innovation of services for youth transitions, STEAM (an acronym for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) education, after-school initiatives, mental health interventions, and more (e.g., Barbour & Eason, 2020; Scholten & Granic, 2019; Yeager et al., 2016).

Design Thinking in Youth Social Service

Design thinking is described as an approach to social innovation and creative problem-solving (Brown, 2008; Brown & Kitz, 2009; Liedtka, 2015; Martin, 2009). Brown (2008, p. 86) defined design thinking as “a discipline that uses the

designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible.” As the concept of design involves creative problem-solving toward the needs or goals of real-world issues (Collins et al., 2004; Hoadley & Cox, 2009), design thinking has been referenced as an optimal approach for human-centered professions such as social service practitioners, social workers, and policymakers (Lockwood, 2010). Given the complex nature and multiple needs of youth, design thinking has the potential to equip practitioners with innovative mindsets or skill sets required to serve today's youth population.

The emphasis on a human-centered mindset in design thinking may encourage the translation of user needs and preferences into innovative and meaningful experiences. Similarly, abductive reasoning in design thinking encourages creative possibilities because this mindset can help make conclusions from what is immediately feasible, apparent, or

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