



# State of Measuring Youth Systems Change

Presented by the Youth System Strengthening Community of Practice  
March 30, 2022

Photo Credit: Pexels



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# Welcome and CoP Champion Introductions



Bonnie Politz  
Community of Practice  
Champion



Mike Hernandez  
Community of Practice  
Youth Advisor



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# Webinar Housekeeping

- Please mute yourself when not speaking and keep your cameras off
- Post questions in the chat at any time
- Turn on English closed captioning with the “CC” button at the bottom of your screen
- This meeting is being recorded. The recording and slides will be available later at [youthpower.org](http://youthpower.org)
- If you have technical issues please contact Stephanie Schmidt in private message or at [stephanies@makingcents.com](mailto:stephanies@makingcents.com)

# Who is here today?

Where are you calling from?



How would you describe your role?



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# Community of Practice Agenda

- Introductions
- Refresh: Youth System Strengthening CoP
- YSS Survey results and follow up plan
- State of Measuring Youth Systems Change: Clare Ignatowski
- Discussion
- What's coming up...

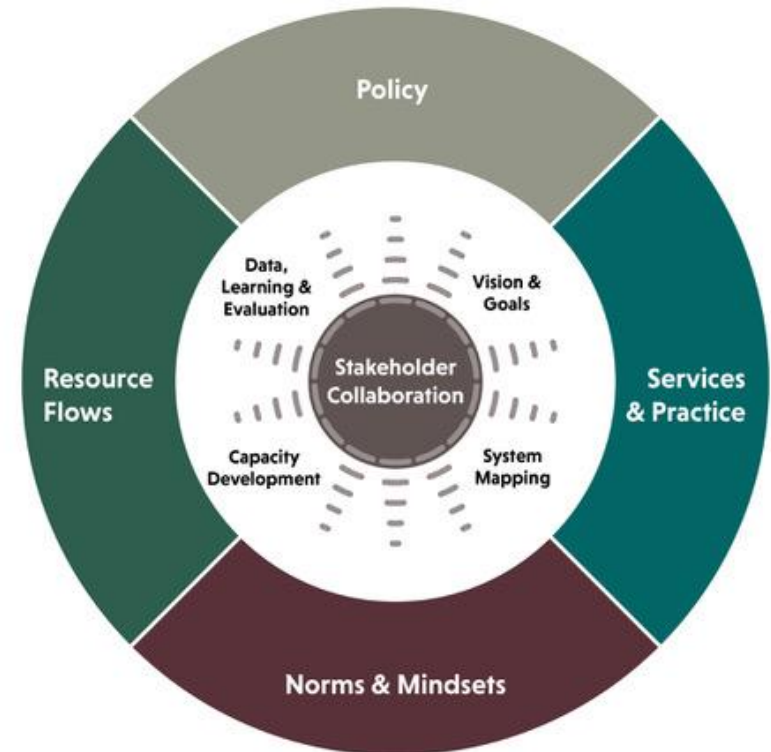
# YOUTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING (YSS) Community of Practice (CoP)

The Youth Systems Strengthening CoP aims to provide an open learning and sharing space that allows participants to understand more about the purposes, processes and outcomes associated with reforming systems that impact youth outcomes sustainably and at scale.

## Discussion Group Link:

<https://www.youthpower.org/group/youth-systems-strengthening-community-practice>

Youth Systems Framework  
by the Youth Systems Collaborative<sup>SM</sup>



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# Youth Systems Collaborative (YSC)

The Youth Systems Collaborative<sup>SM</sup> is a network of international organizations seeking to learn about comprehensive systems change efforts that improve life outcomes for youth in low- and middle-income countries.



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# #2021 ThrowBack

June 2021: Exciting Lessons from Mozambique and Tanzania

July 2021: The Gift that Keeps Giving: Systems Change in Morocco Youth Career Centers

September 2021: Proponte Mas/Propose More- Systems Change Efforts in Honduras and Nigeria

October 2021: Donor Support for Systems Strengthening

See recordings from previous events [here](#)





# YSS CoP Members Survey Take-aways

(March 2022, 10 respondents)

**1** YSS CoP joining recommendation

**2** Virtual Networking

**3** Speakers engagement

**4** Topics for future YSS CoP Events



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# Survey Response: Suggested CoP Topics

- *“Ways to better coordinate and collaborate our work in partnership with all the other global youth systems groups and alliances.”*
- *“Good practices with specific how-tos, including timelines and resources for systems strengthening”*
- *“Youth engagement in systems change work, focus on research or evidence around best practices in working with youth's enabling environment for systems change (i.e. teachers, private sector, governments, etc.).”*
- *“More system strengthening success stories, especially meaningfully involving youth to influence system change.”*
- *“Measuring Systems Change: for example, the BEAM Exchange just did a similar event for market systems development”*



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# State of Measuring Youth Systems Change

Clare Ignatowski, Ph.D.

*Senior Advisor, Youth and Systems Thinking  
Creative Associates International*



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# Introducing! Clare Ignatowski, Ph.D.

Systems thinker, advocating for the well-being of our next generation.



Recognized technical leader in international youth and workforce development and education...over 25 years of experience in research and evaluation, project design, facilitation, and policy development.

Served as USAID Senior Advisor with experience in over 22 developing countries.



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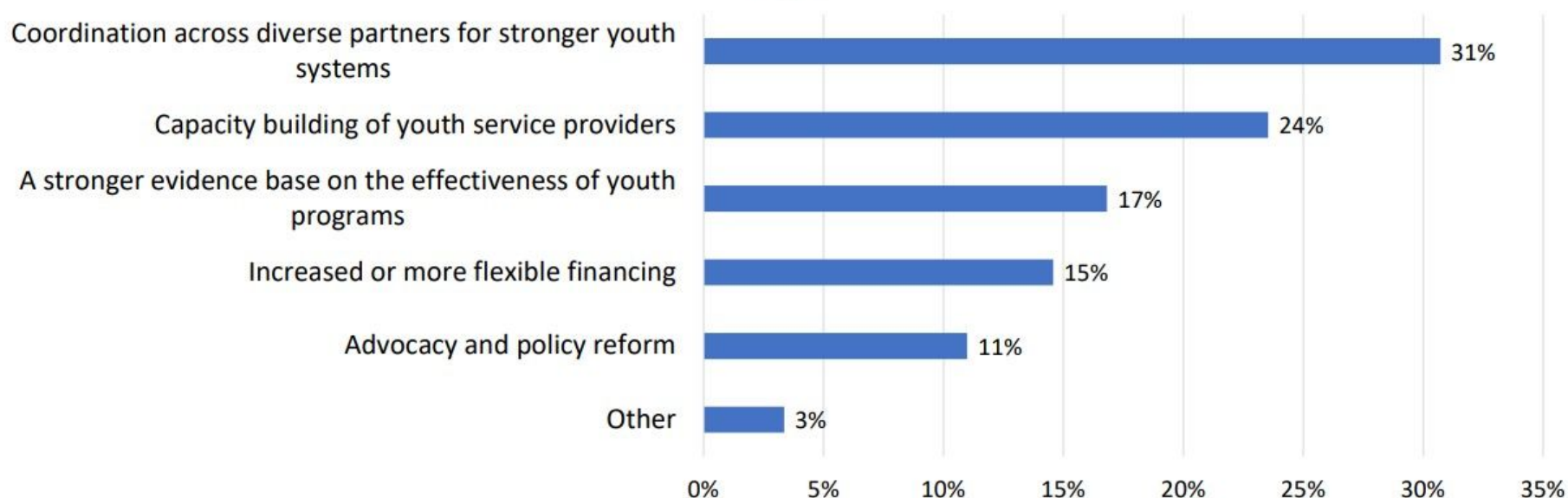
# Youth systems (Enabling environment)

The entire set of individuals, groups, settings, institutions, and policies that shape the degree to which young people grow, thrive, feel safe, engaged, and heard.

Dimensions:

- Social (relationships with peers and adults),
- Normative (attitudes, norms and beliefs),
- Structural (laws, policies, programs services, and systems)
- Physical (safe, supportive, inclusive spaces).

**Figure 16. Survey respondents on what is most needed to improve country-based support of PYD in LMICs**



Source: Ignatowski, C., Smith Hughes, C., Ski, S., Martin Hilber, A. Assessment of Positive Youth Development (PYD) Including the Experience and Contributions of YouthPower. Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID HEARD. (November 2020)  
<https://www.heardproject.org/evaluation-development-and-implementation/evaluation-activities/pyd-youthpower-eval/>

# System Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Score (1-3)	Comments
<p><b>1. Understanding existing systems dynamics</b></p> <p>1. (Very weak): No evidence. Focus on discrete programs or models only for numbers.</p> <p>2. (Weak): Rudimentary mapping or analysis of system actors and dynamics.</p> <p>3. (Moderate): Moderate/good effort to map and analyze the system actors, relationships, and dynamics.</p> <p>4. (Strong): Engagement of local stakeholders to map and analyze the system.</p>	1	USAID/IP assumes that local partners will learn and improve through "osmosis" rather than structured capacity-building and relationship building.
<p><b>2. Bringing diverse local stakeholders together</b></p> <p>1. (Very weak): Little evidence of partnership development.</p> <p>2. (Weak): Coordinating or managing 2 or more eco-system actors to achieve or sustainable project.</p> <p>3. (Moderate): Engaging a wide array of diverse eco-system actors, in ways that build their capacity for collective action. Efforts to build a backbone organization is supported.</p> <p>4. (Strong): Deep focus on supporting locally-based partnerships composed of and complementary actors to make decisions about the youth in their community. Role of "backbone" organization is supported.</p>	2	USAID (and international partners) role is flexible, adaptive, facilitative, and supportive to local space of change. Understanding of need for longer timeframe
<p><b>3. Improved, coordinated service delivery</b></p> <p>1. (Very weak): USAID-funded and implemented service delivery through fragmented efforts with little analysis of system needs (gaps, redundancies, etc.).</p> <p>2. (Weak): Some effort to coordinate service delivery across several partners with little analysis of system needs (gaps, redundancies, etc.).</p> <p>3. (Moderate): Multiple service delivery partners working together to improve or expand support and opportunities for youth with some evidence of analysis of system needs.</p> <p>4. (Strong): Local stakeholders (including youth) analyze eco-system and tailored responses to identified youth needs, and take necessary steps to provide these services. Includes significant efforts to remove system barriers and bottlenecks, and to innovate solutions.</p>	3	USAID demonstrates some flexibility and willingness to allow local actors to make key decisions about system-strengthening process.
<p><b>4. Shared standards &amp; indicators</b></p> <p>1. (Very weak): No evidence. Focus only on USAID reporting requirement.</p> <p>2. (Weak): Some effort to create a common set of standards, measures, and data sharing. May be missing continuous learning and adaptation.</p> <p>3. (Moderate): Sharing standards, measures and data including some authority for continuous learning at least at the institutional level.</p> <p>4. (Strong): Robust shared data management system that is used for institutional continuous learning and adaptation, as well as systems-level decision-making, accountability and advocacy.</p>	3	USAID supporting key local stakeholders in building and improving their system, though USAID commitment may be shorter-term.

Source: Ignatowski, C., Smith Hughes, C., Ski, S., Martin Hilber, A. Assessment of Positive Youth Development (PYD) Including the Experience and Contributions of YouthPower. Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID HEARD. (November 2020)  
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# Youth System Findings



- Over-emphasis on measurable outcomes over building country youth systems. Weak “systems” lexicon.
- Capacity-building and focus on institutional relationships, but often lacking strategic focus.
- Leverage of local investment is under-developed.
- Shared standards, monitoring and evaluation for systems change are rarely the focus of dedicated attention.
- Youth policy reform and alignment are relatively rare.
- Changing roles of IPs: facilitative, bringing together diverse country-level stakeholders.
- Normative changes (mindset shifts) have been demonstrated across diverse areas.

Source: Ignatowski, C., Smith Hughes, C., Ski, S., Martin Hilber, A. Assessment of Positive Youth Development (PYD) Including the Experience and Contributions of YouthPower. Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID HEARD. (November 2020)  
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# Recommendations: Strengthening Youth Systems

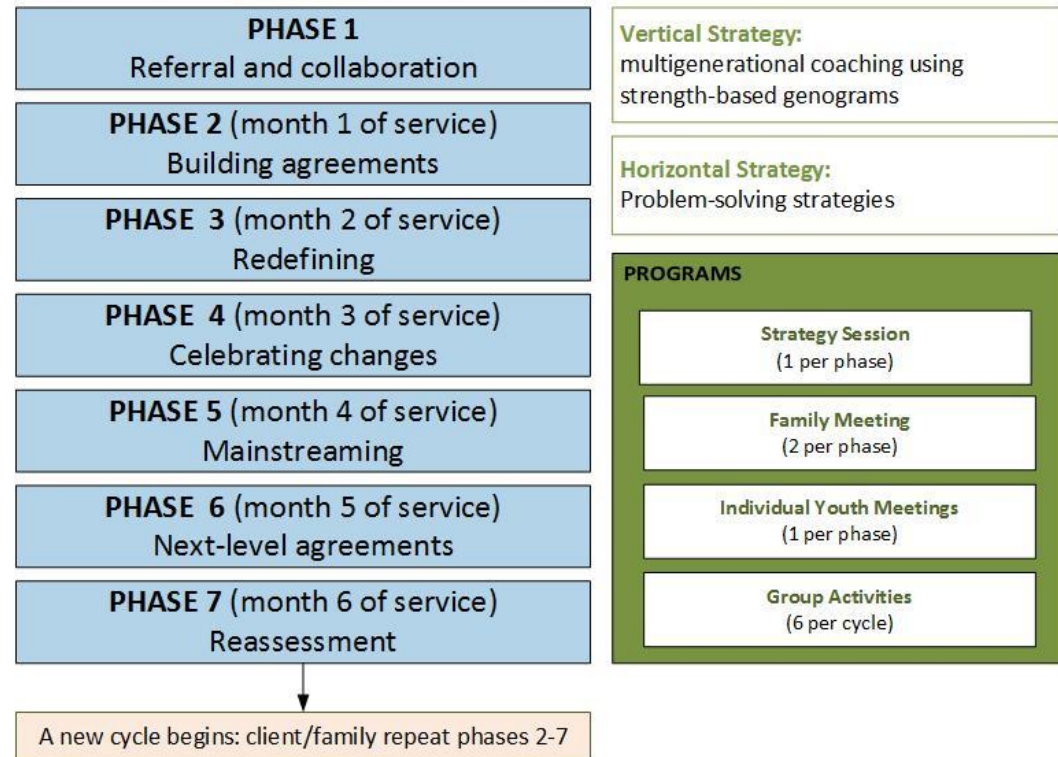
1. Identify, track and support progress of **system change efforts *already* locally initiated and owned.**
2. Improve knowledge of systems analytics and terminology among USAID and its partners in order to **better understand the systems dynamics** around youth development challenges.
3. Deepen understanding of and support to the role of **intermediary organizations** that play a critical role in youth systems work.
4. Explore the use of **shared monitoring and evaluation platforms** (dashboards) for systems work.
5. Avoid over-reliance on “the numbers” to evaluate the success of systems activities; **relationships are at the heart of change.**

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# Proponte Mas (Propose More): Systems Change Efforts in Honduras

- Organized, and well documented approach to family systems counseling
- Language was essential
- Recognition of family as a system
- Meeting families where they are (homes, educational levels, etc)
- Shifting intervention from a year to 6 months
- Shift in how government entities looked at youth from a risk differentiation standpoint
- Reduction of stigmatism of vulnerable populations
- Recognition of youth as valuable inside family and outside
- Risk were reduced by 74%



# *Proponte Mas* (Propose More): Systems Change Efforts in Honduras

- Risk differentiated approach now part of language and programmatic approaches of government institutions (DINAF, INAMI)
- Juvenile Justice Judges made a significant shift to decrease number of kids in detention based on their knowledge of the family systems
- IMC tool is being used by other CSOs with a broader population and including questions that identify the risk to migrate and role of protection factors
- Families and counseling are being promoted through municipal prevention committees and other service providers



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# Let's Discuss

*Have a question or a great resource on measuring youth systems change?*

*Add a link or reference in the chat to share your work and learn about new resources!*



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# Summary of Resources Shared in Meeting

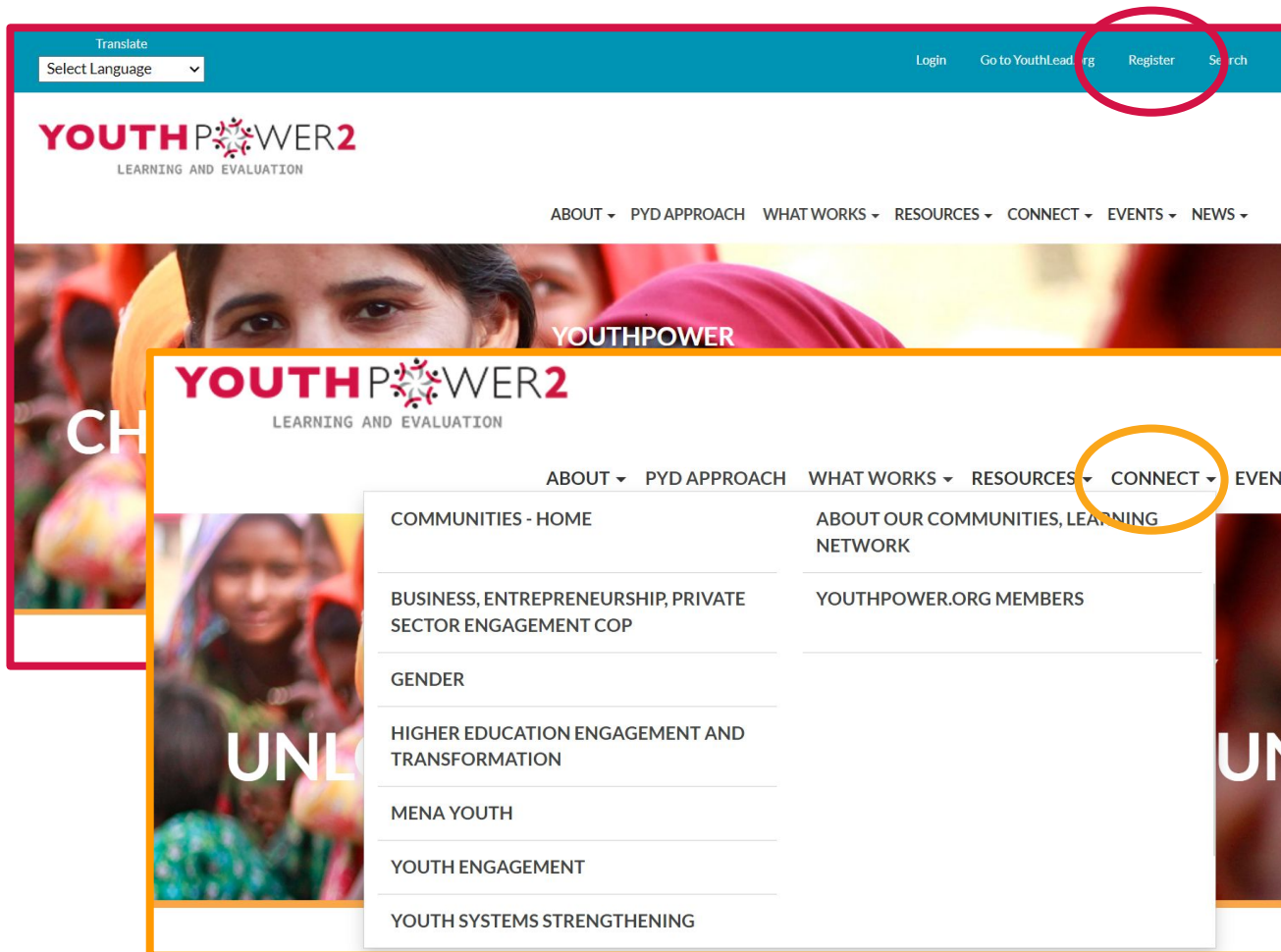
## Systems thinking resources or training:

- Omidyar/Acumen Academy systems thinking course: <https://acumenacademy.org/course/systems-practice/>
- Omidyar Guide on Systems Change: <https://docs.kumu.io/content/Workbook-012617.pdf>
- The Presencing Institute u.lab 2x Accelerator for Systems Transformation - Syllabus: <https://www.presencing.org/files/ulab2x/u.lab-2x-Syllabus-2021.pdf>
- Thinking in Systems (book): <https://donellameadows.org/systems-thinking-book-sale/>
- YouthPower Learning Network Systems Thinking webinars (90 minutes each): [Session 1](#), [Session 2](#), [Session 3](#)

## Other resources:

- Global LEAD Toolkit on ways to raise and integrate youth voices in designing programming: <https://www.youthpower.org/global-lead-integrate-youth-voices>
- Every Hour Counts (US-based organization) framework for measurement, continuous improvement, and equitable systems: <https://www.everyhourcounts.org/resource-library>

# How to join: <https://www.youthpower.org/>



**Register** on  
YouthPower.org



**Connect** with  
others through the  
CoP pages,  
discussion groups,  
and future events



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# What's coming next from the YouthPower 2 Learning Network

Week of April 2: YSS CoP sending recording and slides  
April YSS CoP meeting (non-webinar) - date coming soon!

Next YSS CoP webinar: Systems to Strengthen Youth, Peace, and Security

Wednesday, April 20: Youth Engagement in Breaking Gender Stereotypes: Experiences from Tunisia (Middle East and North Africa CoP)

Thursday, April 21: Climate Change and Higher Ed: Education Outcomes and Roles of Universities (Higher Education Engagement and Transformation CoP)



# THANK YOU!

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