

COMMUNITY INNOVATION IN PLACE SENSITIVE GUIDANCE PRACTICES



DANISH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

NERA CONFERENCE, AARHUS, DENMARK
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POSTDOC



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the European Union



Aims for today

- Explore the potential for community-led innovations in career guidance
- Present findings from a recently completed project
- Focus on *process*: how we did it
- Focus on *practices*: what we developed





The project

Background

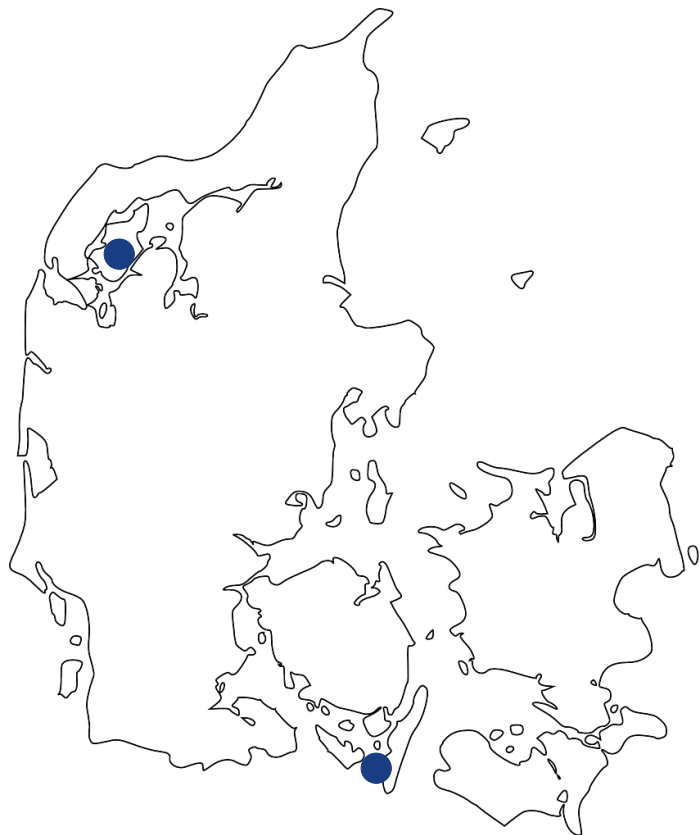
- Very little research into career guidance in small rural communities
- Very little best practice guidelines for rural practice
- Most models and tools we used are based on assumptions of large communities.
- So, how can we think about, and innovate, rural career guidance practice?



Places & Career Guidance (SPACIIS)

How can career guidance be innovated in small rural communities in order to more fully meet the needs of young people and their communities?

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Defining Career Guidance

- “Career guidance can take a wide range of forms and draws on diverse theoretical traditions. But at its heart it is a purposeful learning opportunity which supports individuals and groups to consider and reconsider work, leisure and learning in the light of new information and experiences and to take both individual and collective action as a result of this.’ (Hooley et al., 2018, p. 20)
- Includes: one-to-one advice or guidance, career education provided in classroom settings, career programmes (including a planned set of activities with clear learning objectives), and other activities such as career talks, employer visits and education visits.

An important note

This project did not focus on NEET young people, it focused on young people in upper secondary and lower secondary school.

But some of the learning is transferrable to community innovations generally and to supporting NEET young people



The process

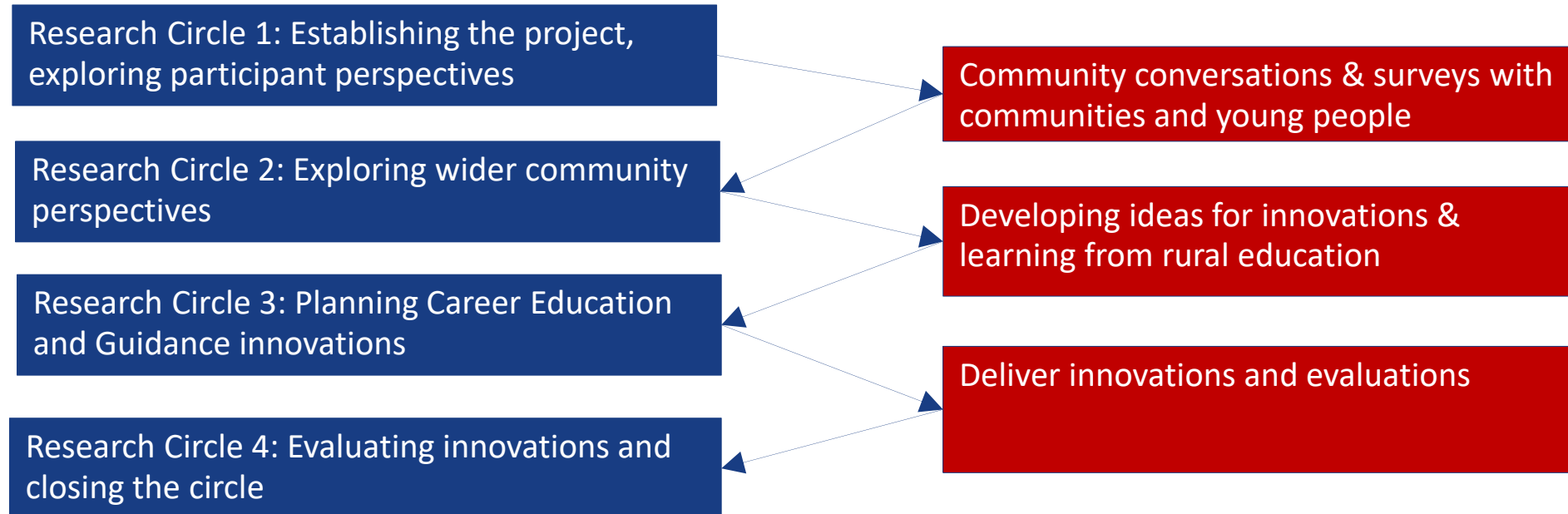
Research circles

- Participatory action research: researcher and participants work together
- 3 circles: Bornholm, Mors, Southern Funen (Ærø and Langeland)
- Up to 10 participants in each circle
- Each group met four times
- Participants: careers advisers (studievalg and UU), teachers, regional development interests (kommune), and employer representatives



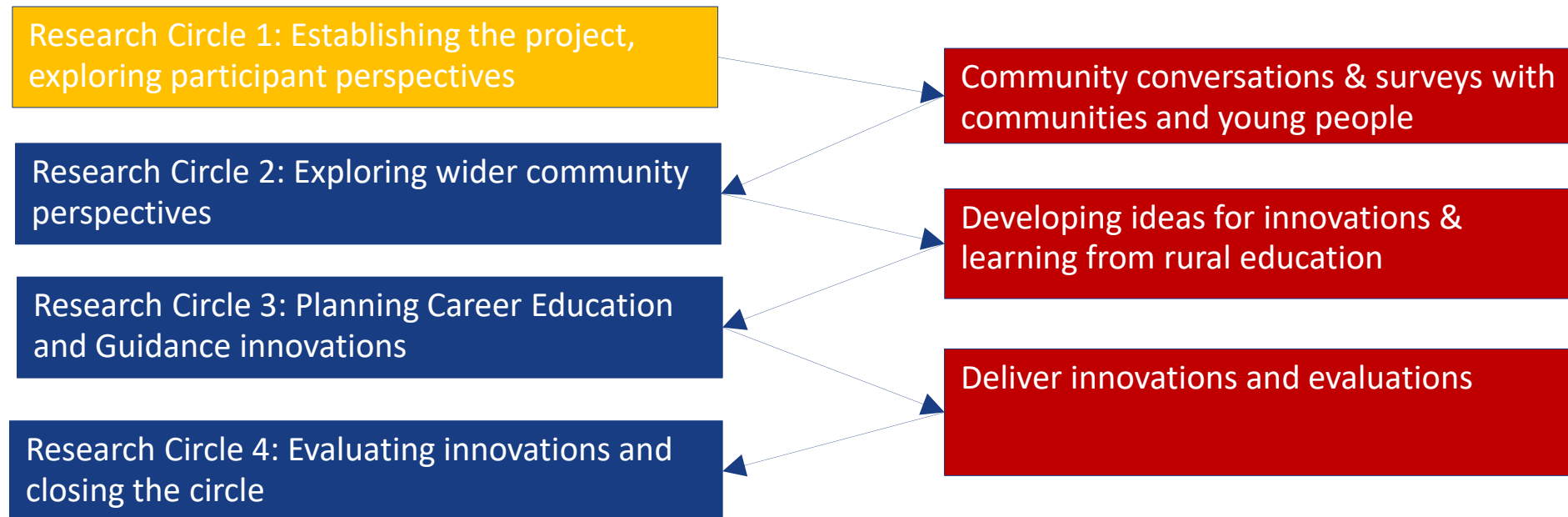
Methods

We met four times, with activities in between for all of us



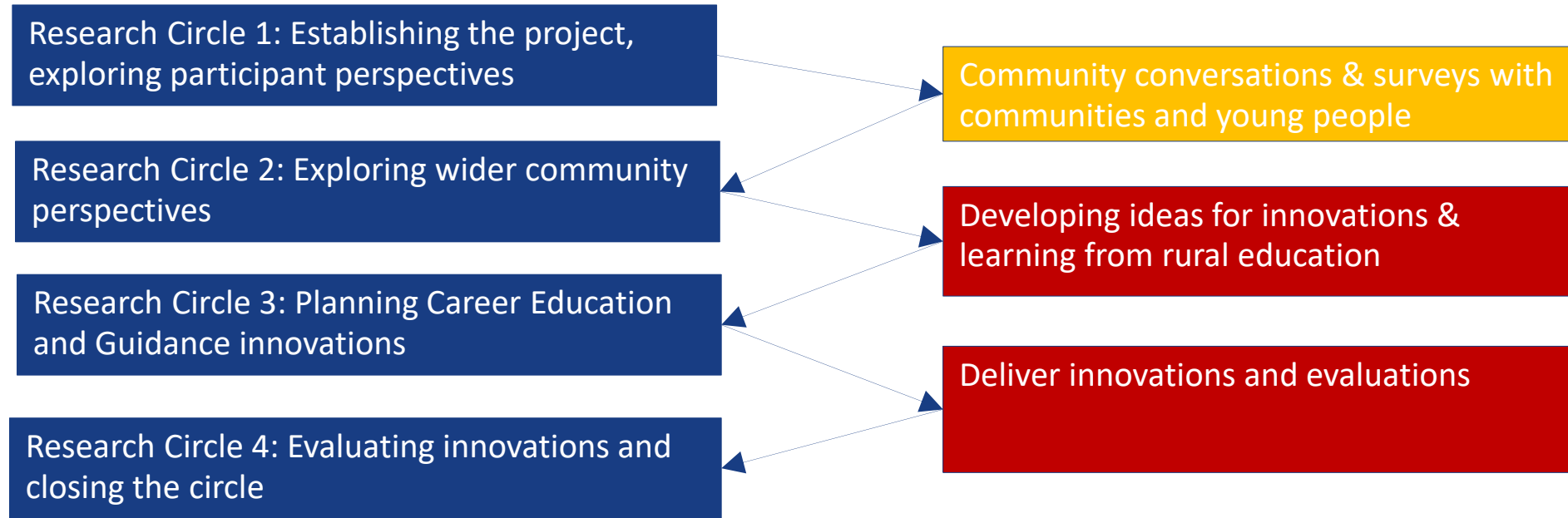
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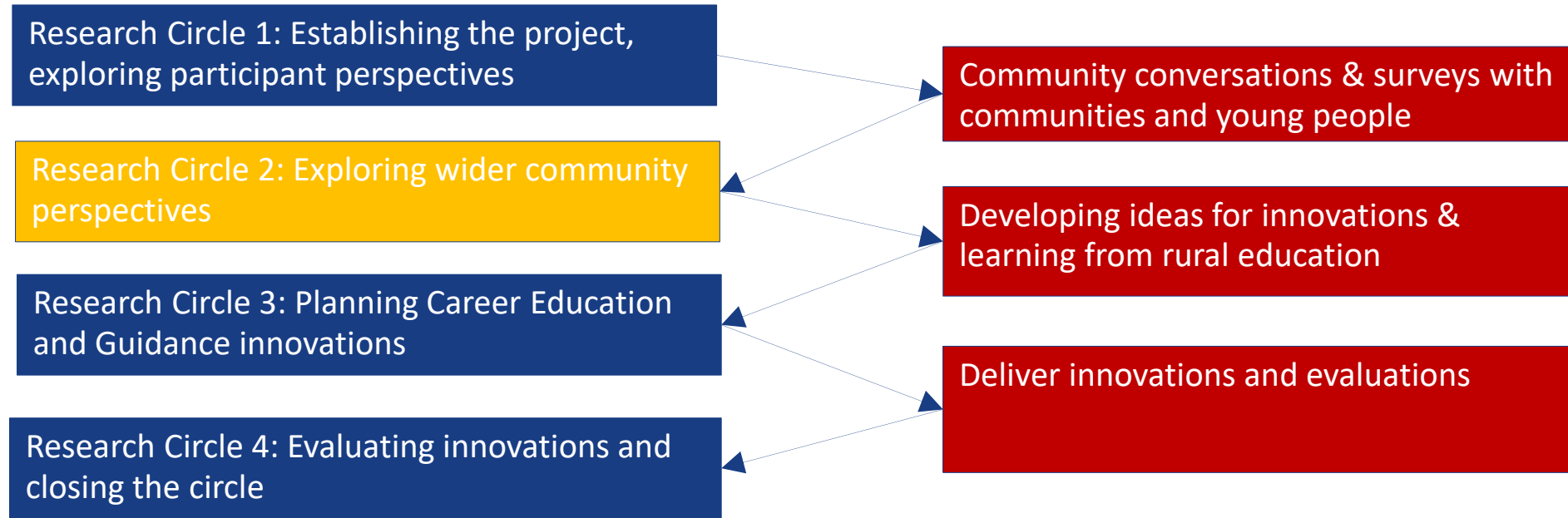
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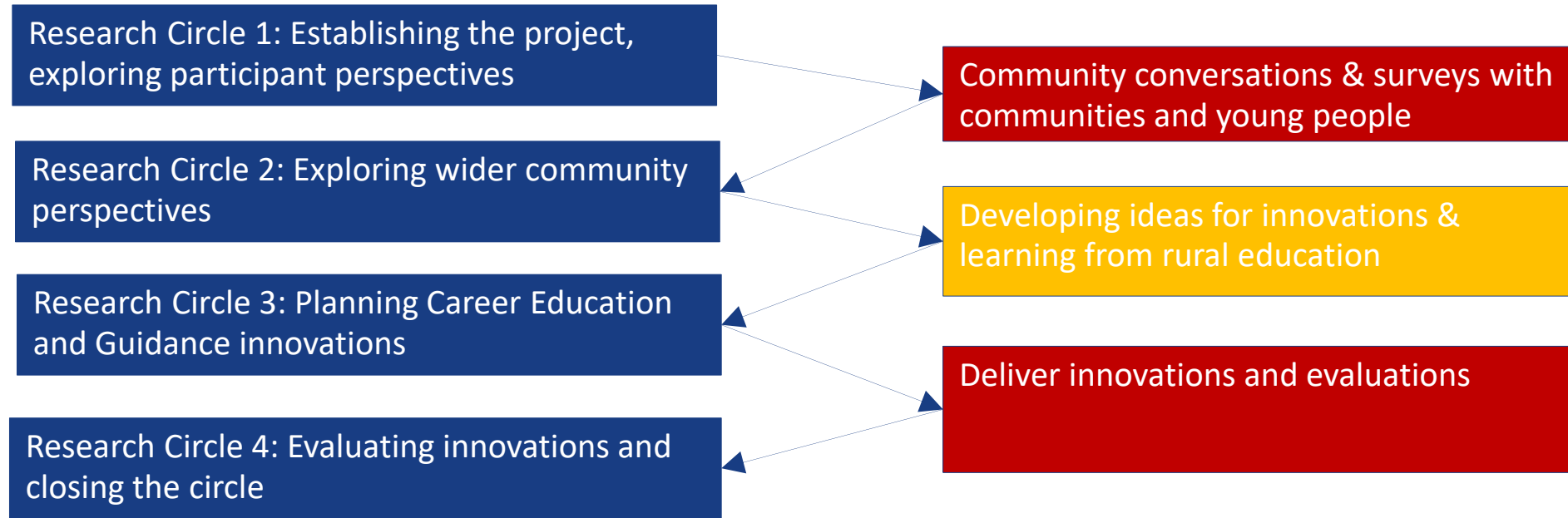
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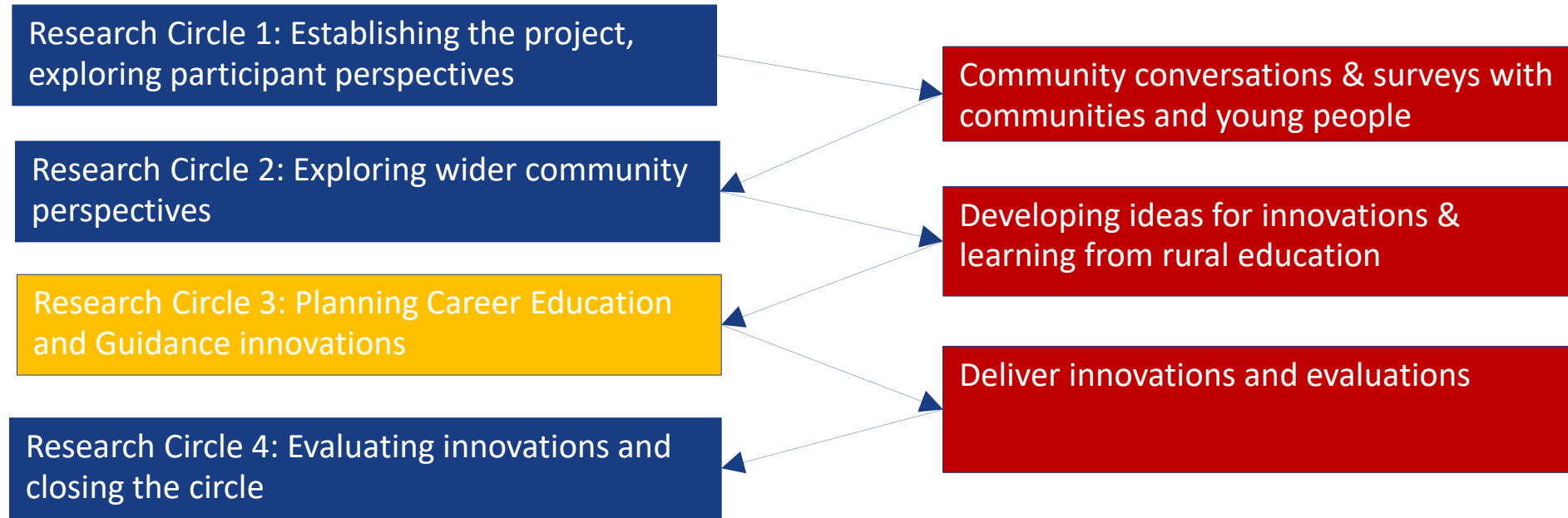
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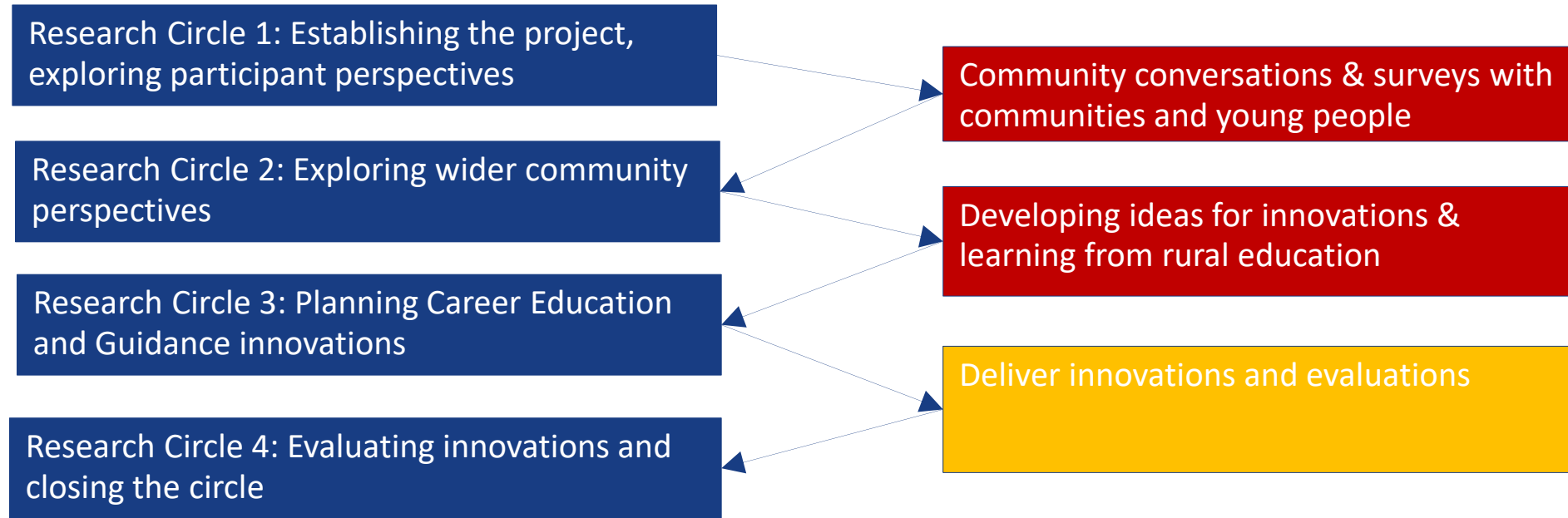
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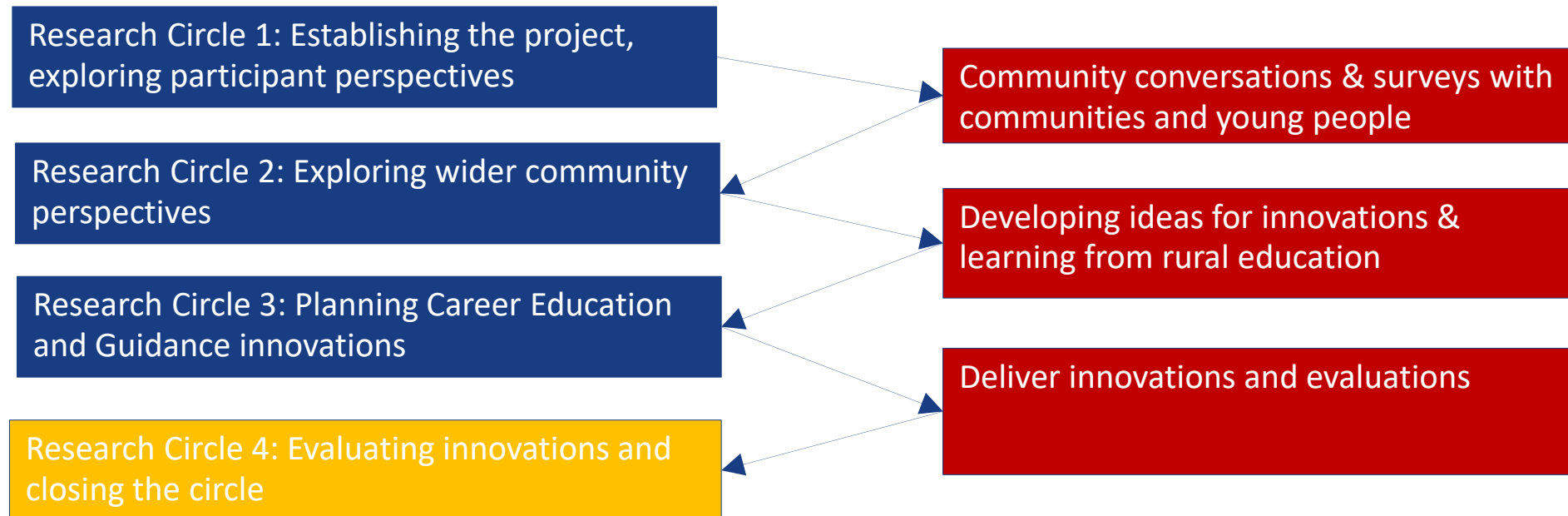
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Developing a focus: variation between circles

Exactly what each circle looked at, and the innovations developed differed, according to:

- Needs / experience of the community
- Participant interests and resources

Key learning: ground innovations in the places and people.





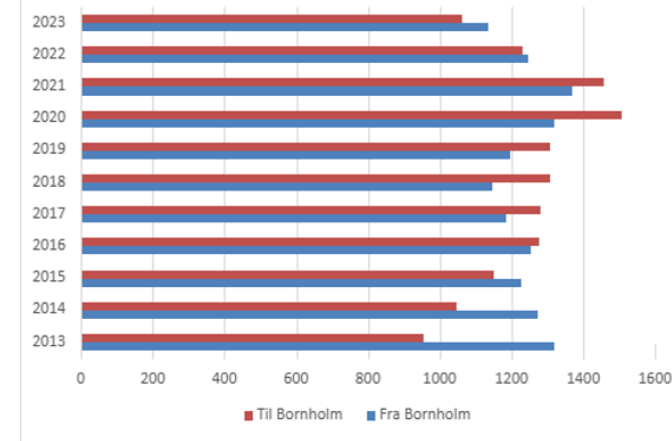
The Innovations

Developing innovations

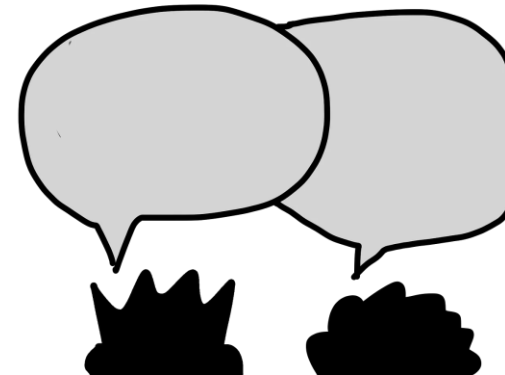
Identifying needs

- What do young people in our community need?
- What does our community need?
- What do we know about what is needed?
- What do we need to know?

MIGRATION (LAST 10 YEARS)



- Until 2016 general pattern of net outmigration
- 2016-2021 in-migration was higher than out-migration
- 2022 and 2023 outmigration is slightly higher than in-migration



Forskningsprojekt om unge på Bornholm og deres fremtid

Bor du på Bornholm? Så har vi brug for dine svar!

Vi vil især høre fra forældre, undervisere, vejledere, rådgivere og virksomhed/HR – men alle bornholmere er velkomne



Klik på QR koden for at besvare undersøgelsen.

Det tager kun 15 minutter og du deltager i lodtrækning om gavekort på 500 kr

Kontakt rosiea@dpu.au.dk for mere information



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Developing innovations



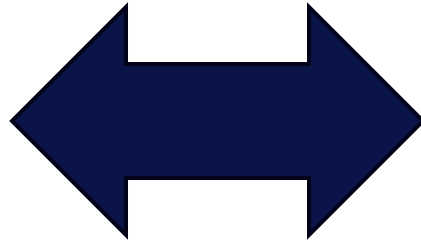
Identifying resources

- Who are we?
- What resources do we have?
- What do we currently do that we could develop or adapt?
- How could we work together?

Developing innovations

Identifying needs

- What do young people in our community need?
- What does our community need?
- What do we know about what is needed?
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Identifying resources

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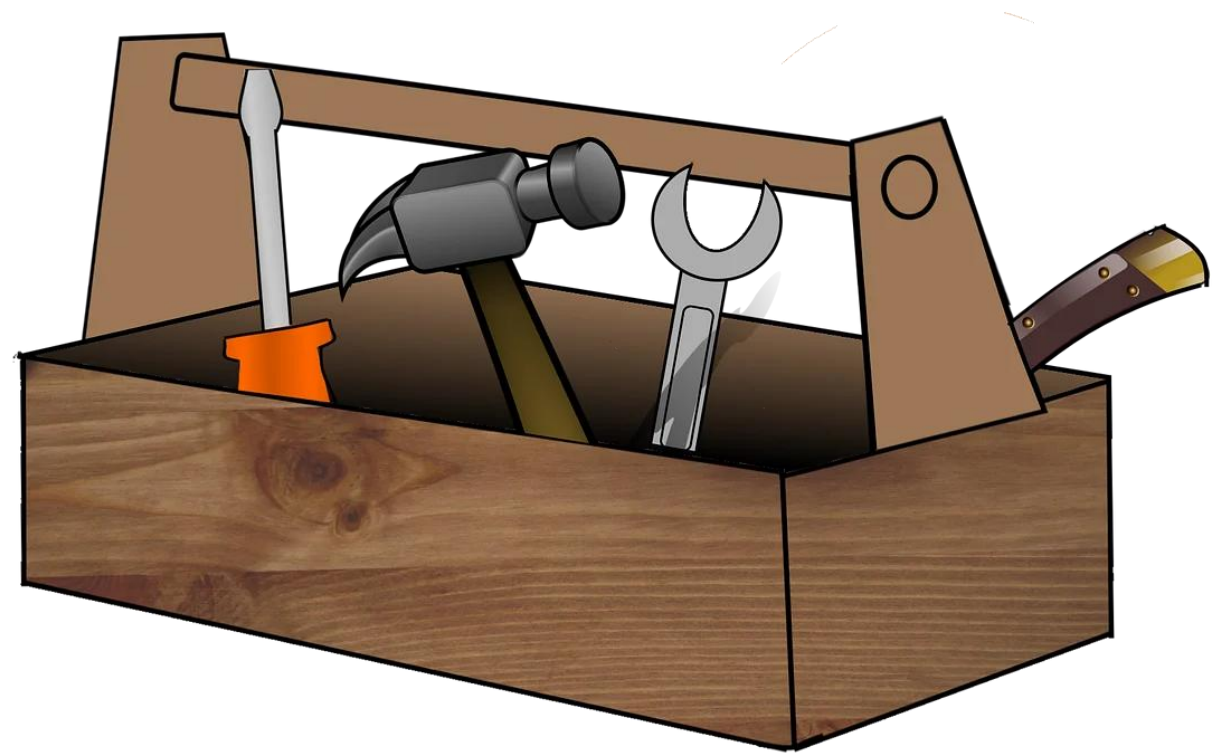
Developing A Plan

- What is the problem?
- What is the activity ?
- What resources does it require?
- What will happen in the activity?
- What impact do you hope it will make?
- What wider outcomes do you anticipate?

Aktivitetens titel
<i>(Giv din aktivitet en titel)</i>
Hvem stod for aktiviteten?
<i>(navnene på dig og andre, der støttede eller var med til at drive jeres aktivitet)</i>
Kort oversigt over aktiviteten
<i>(en eller to linjer, der opsummerer, hvad du gjorde)</i>
Baggrund for aktiviteten
<i>(Hvad var konteksten eller baggrunden for aktiviteten? Hvad fik dig til at udvikle det? Hvordan hænger det sammen med de diskussioner, vi har haft i forskningskredsen? Hvordan tilbyder det en innovation, der kan støtte unge i dit lokalsamfund eller støtte dit eget lokalsamfund?)</i>
Formålet eller formålet med aktiviteten
<i>(Hvad håbede du at opnå? Hvad var dit mål?)</i>
Hvad gjorde du?
<i>(Giv venligst en detaljeret oversigt over, hvad du gjorde, og hvem der deltog. Prøv at give nok information, så hvis nogen andre skulle kopiere din aktivitet, ville de have alle de oplysninger, de har brug for. Understøt din beskrivelse med dokumenter i bilagene, hvis det er relevant.)</i>

The toolkit

- We have gathered the examples of activities into a 'toolkit'
- The toolkit also includes some general advice for small communities who are interested in innovating guidance practices





Overview of the activities

Activity	Target group					Activity					Individuals involved in implementation					
	Lower secondary students	Upper secondary students (academic)	Upper secondary students (nonacademic)	Parents	Employers	Presentations and / or events	Career learning and education	Career guidance	Work experience	Community development	Careers service / careers adviser	Teachers	Employers	Students	Community development interests	<u>Educational leader</u>
1. "Kathrine's dilemma": considering mobility in career education		X					X	X			X					
2. "Bridge-building": embedding family engagement in student transition programmes	X			X			X					X				
3. "Dreams as a driving force": career learning in secondary school	X						X	X			X	X				
4. "A compass to return": Revising messaging to students through a programme of activities		X				X							X		X	X
5. "Jobs for the future": Part time and gap year jobs fair for upper secondary students		X	X		X	X							X		X	X
6. "Career choice, geography and mobility": Embedding place in career learning		X					X	X			X					
7. "My future": Thinking about career and spatial futures through a learning activity	X						X					X				
8. "What I need": student engagement and co-production in career learning	X						X					X				
9. "Havværk": community development for increased opportunities	X	X	X	X						X					X	X
10. "Junior-Junior-Apprenticeship": building local pathways through peer engagement	X					X			X			X	X	X		
11. "Beyond the usual geographies": local options in information evenings	X					X					X					X

Example: Katherine's dilemma

- Classroom activity: group guidance
- Discussion of a constructed case study of a young person from the community facing dilemmas about what pathway to take after completing her education.
- Students discuss the case study in small groups
- They discuss the advice they would give.
- They discuss their own thoughts and feelings about their decisions to stay, leave or return.
- And they discuss their ideas for island development.



Example: 'My Future': career learning

- Classroom activity: teacher led (7th grade and 9th grade students)
- Students were given a worksheet to complete that included questions about both career and mobility / place.
 - Where would I like to live / take my education in the future?
 - Why do I want to live in this place?
 - What job(s) do I find exciting and why?
 - What would it take for me to stay in this place?
 - What would it take for me to move away?
 - What do my parents do?
 - How do I see my educational pathway?

KLASSE: _____ NAVN: _____
ALDER: _____ BY: _____

HVOR VIL JEG GERNE BO/TAGE MIN UDDANNELSE? (STADT OG PLAD) _____
UDANNELSES-VEJ: _____

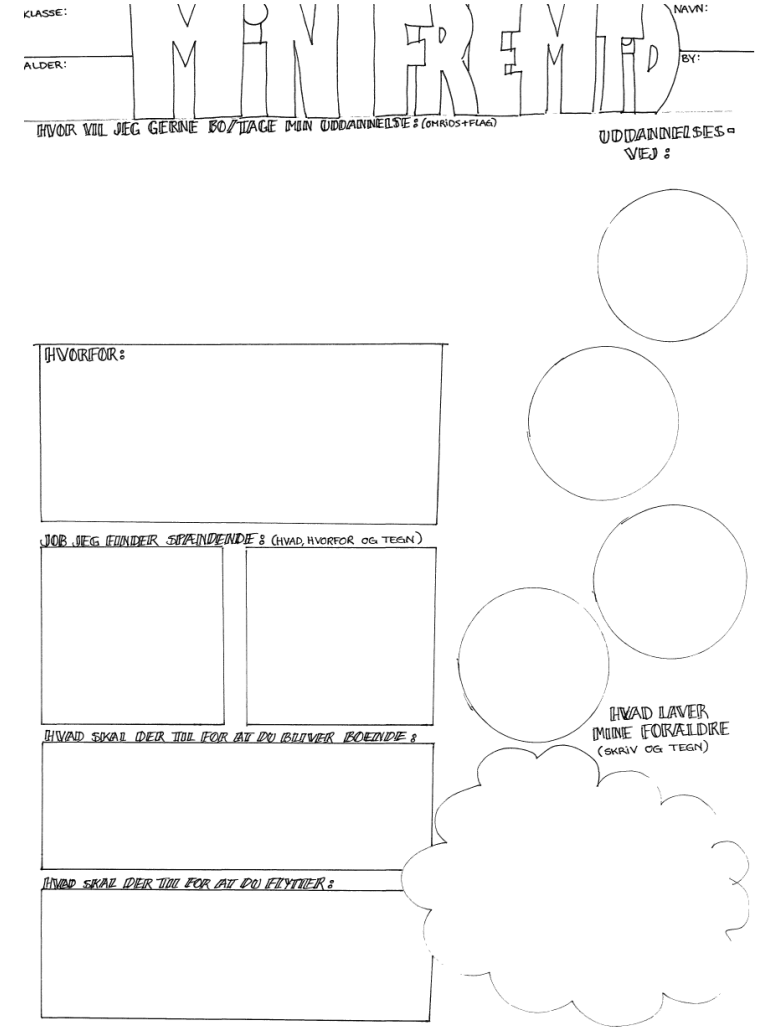
HVORFOR: _____

JOB JEG FINDER SPÆNDENDE: (Hvad, hvorfor og tegn) _____

HVAD SKAL DER TIL FOR AT DU BLIVER BOENDE: _____

HVAD SKAL DER TIL FOR AT DU FLYTTER: _____

HVAD LÆVER MINE FORÆLDRE (SKRIV OG TEGN) _____



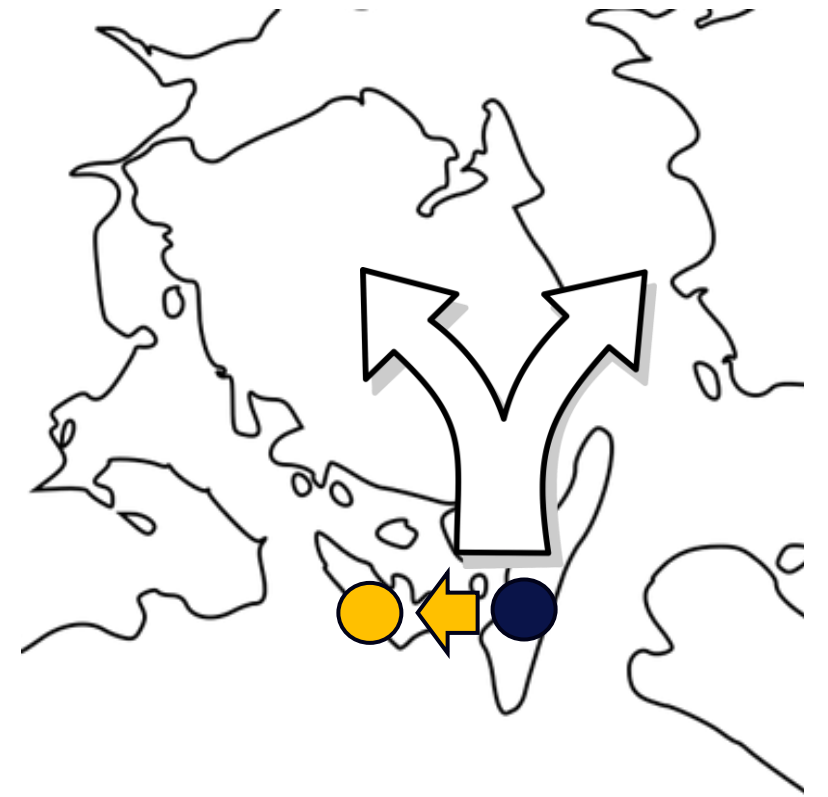
Example: Bridge Building with parents

- Activity for young people in transition programmes (“brobygning”) between lower and upper secondary education.
- Day 1 of the transitions programme a task is given to young people to speak with a family member about that person’s career path
- On the final day, students share their learning from the activity with each other.



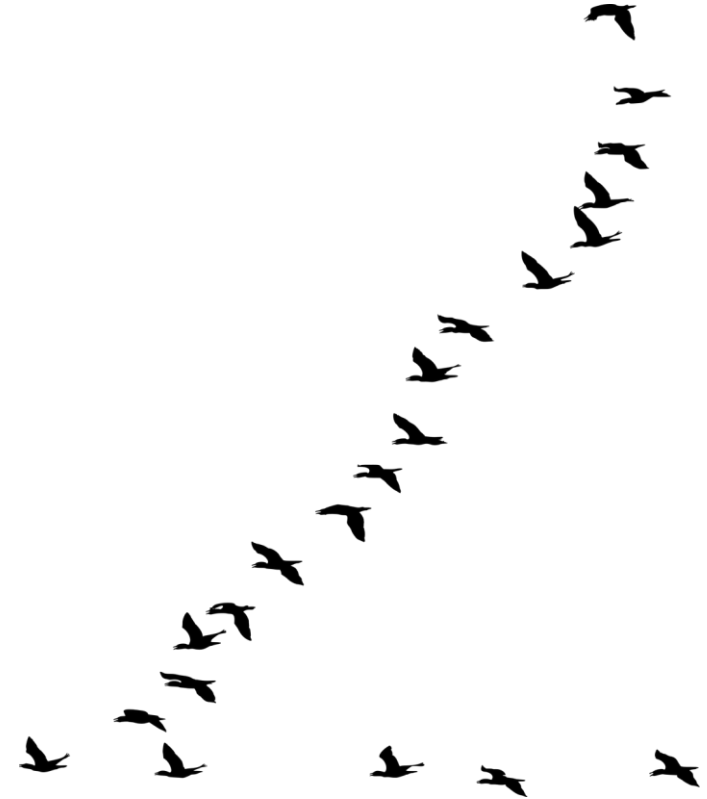
Example: “Beyond the Usual Geographies”

- Activity connected to annual ‘education evening’ in one of the southern funen islands
- Extending invitation to education providers in the other islands, rather than just from the larger city locations.
- Providing information to students about education opportunities in smaller communities (like their home community).



Example: A compass to return

- Activity focused on the messages given to pupils by their upper secondary school
- Rektor provides the message that they want pupils to have ‘wings to fly, and a compass to return’



General advice for developing innovations

- Reflect on implicit spatialities of practice
- Directly address issues of place and mobility
- Trouble assumptions
- Engage wider stakeholders: employers, parents, others
- Collaborate for community advocacy and innovation

Key learning

- Innovations are best developed when:
 - They address identified needs
 - They build on existing resources and interests
- Small changes can make big differences
- The innovation is not the end of the journey
- The process is the learning
- The evidence generated can support wider changes

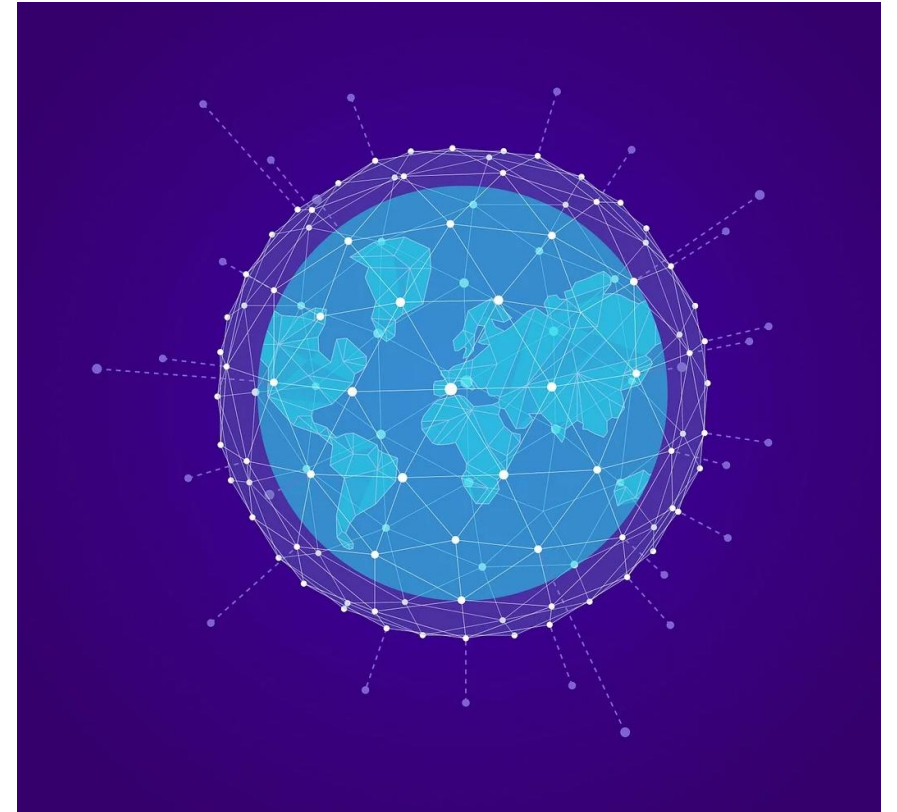




Next steps

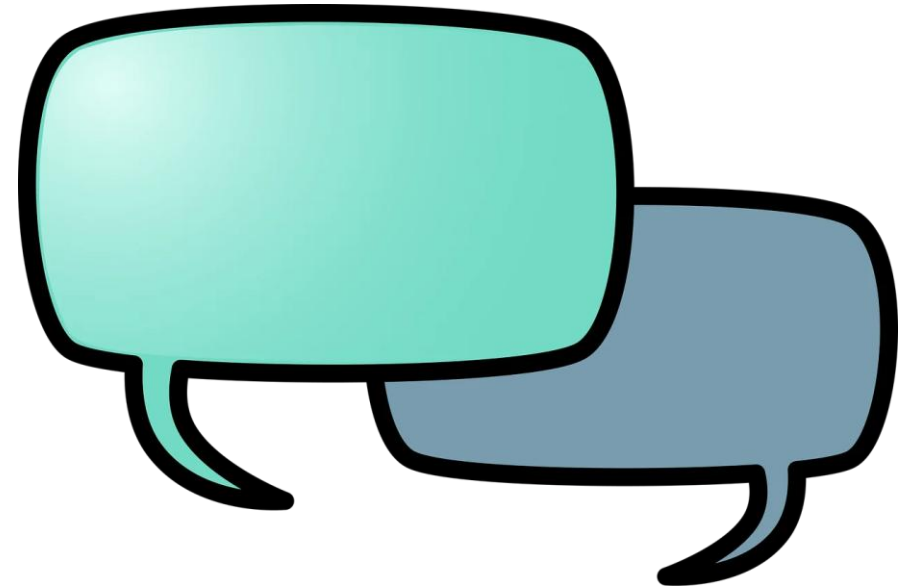
Next steps for the project

- Refine activities in the toolkit
- Gather evidence of more innovations
- Gather more evidence of impact:
 - on young people and
 - on communities
- Expand the focus to explore approaches in different communities and different client groups



Next steps for you & us

- What do you think about what I have presented?
- What do you already do to address place in your work with NEETS?
- How could you innovate your practice to include a greater focus on place?
- Please share your ideas!



Further reading

- Information about the project can be found here:
<https://projects.au.dk/spaciis>
- Contact: rosie@rosiealexander.co.uk

The workshop: Building your ideas and plans

- In your country groups you have already had a lot of discussion
- You have started to make plans for your activities in this project (some of you might be quite far along).
- In the next few hours we will review your ideas and I will introduce a way of thinking about your work to help you reflect on your plans, and hopefully strengthen them.



Three stages

- Who you are, your priorities and aims
- Developing plans (theory of change)
- Making a timeline

There will be a lot of post it notes!

We will take pictures to record your work.

You may not finish all your thinking – that is okay, this is a starting point that you can build on in the coming months.

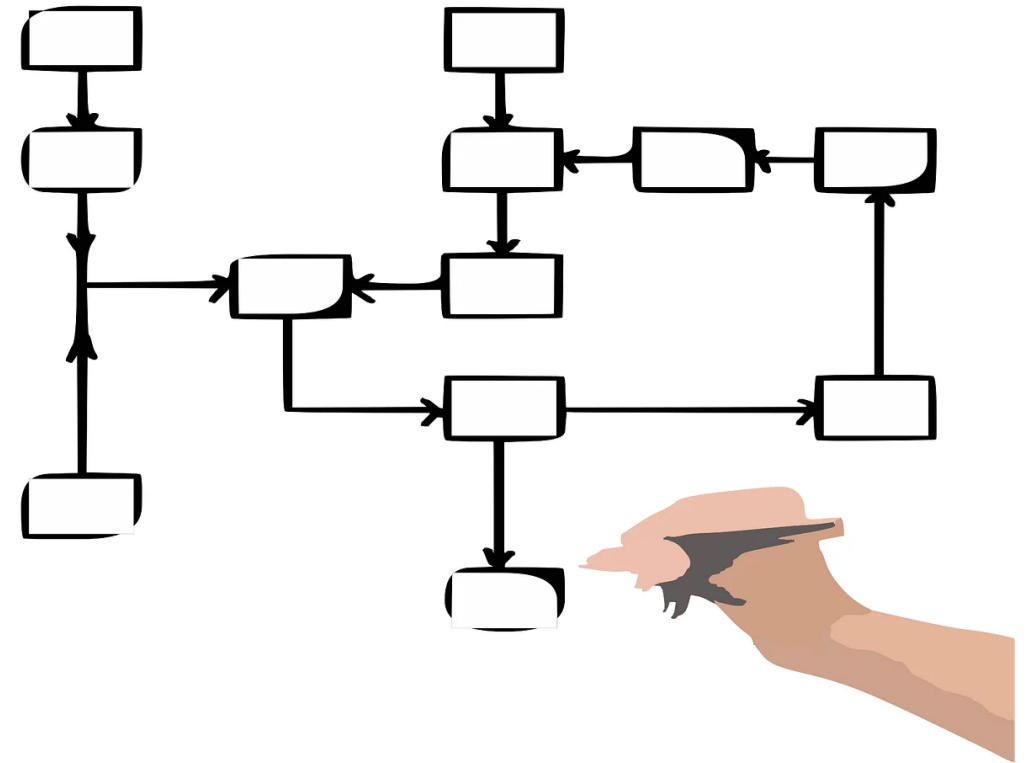


Workshop 1: Who are we, and what are our priorities and aims? (20 minutes)

- On your own, write on 3 post it notes (5 minutes):
 - Who are you and what do you do
 - What is your no.1 aim for this project – what would you like it to achieve?
 - What is your no.1 activity for this project – if you only do one thing, what do you think would be most useful?
- As a group:
 - Each person share what is written on your post-it notes. (try not to get into discussion! Just share what you have written).
 - Gather the postit notes into three groups: who we are, our priorities, our aims
 - Finish with some discussion about your ideas for aims and activities: are there themes? What key areas emerge as priorities?

Workshop 2: What are our plans? (55 minutes)

- Now you have a set of ideas of aims and activities – and a sense of priorities
- We will now build a more elaborated plan about how to take these forward using a structured approach: a theory of change



Theory of Change

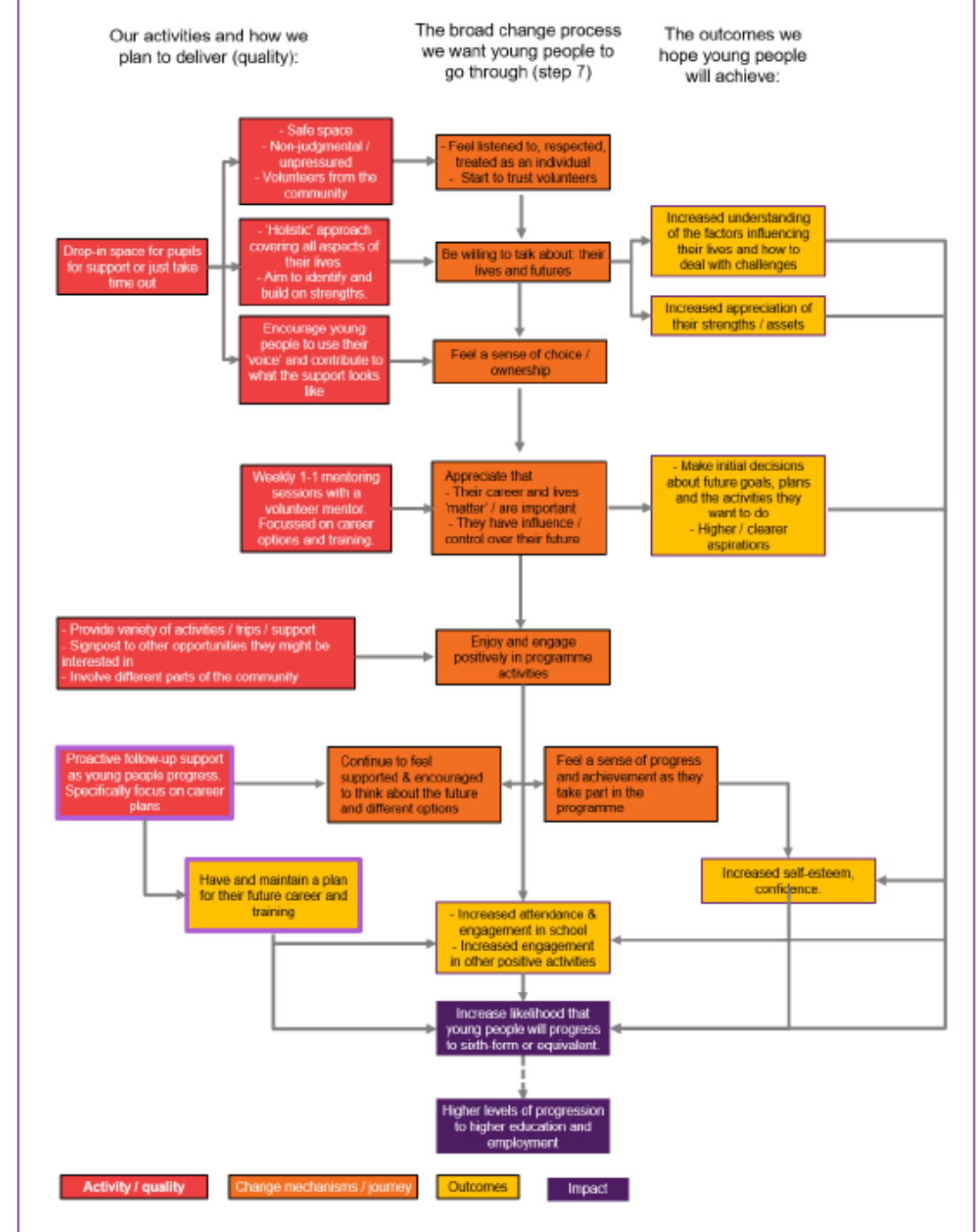
- A theory of change helps you to ‘think through’ an activity from what you plan to do to what you hope it will achieve.
- It helps to identify the ‘theory’ of how you think your activity will achieve the impacts you want it to
- It helps to identify assumptions you are making....
- ...which can help you refine your plans
- A theory of change also helps with evaluation because you can evaluate if the activities are achieving the outcomes in the ways you expect.

Theory of change process

- Inputs: resources
- Activities: what you will do
- Outputs: what will happen as a result of the activity
- Outcomes: short term changes that will happen (often to your target group)
- Impact: sustained or longer term change

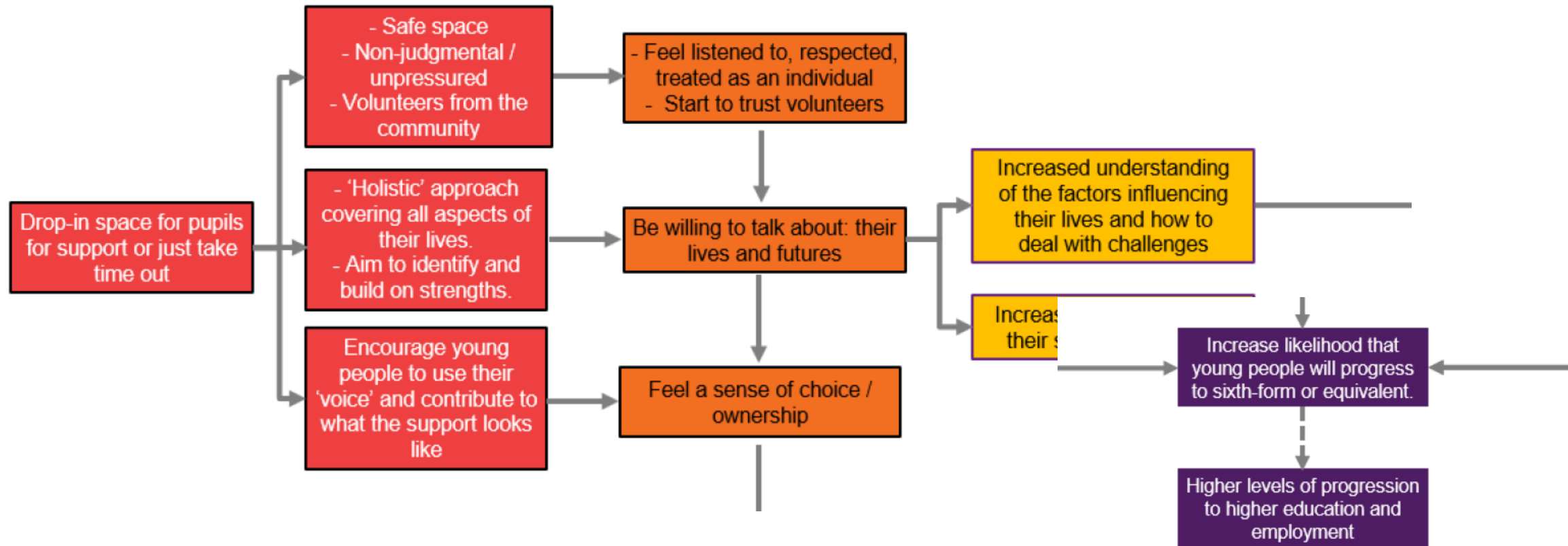
Example (1)

- From Noble (2019) *Theory of Change in 10 steps*



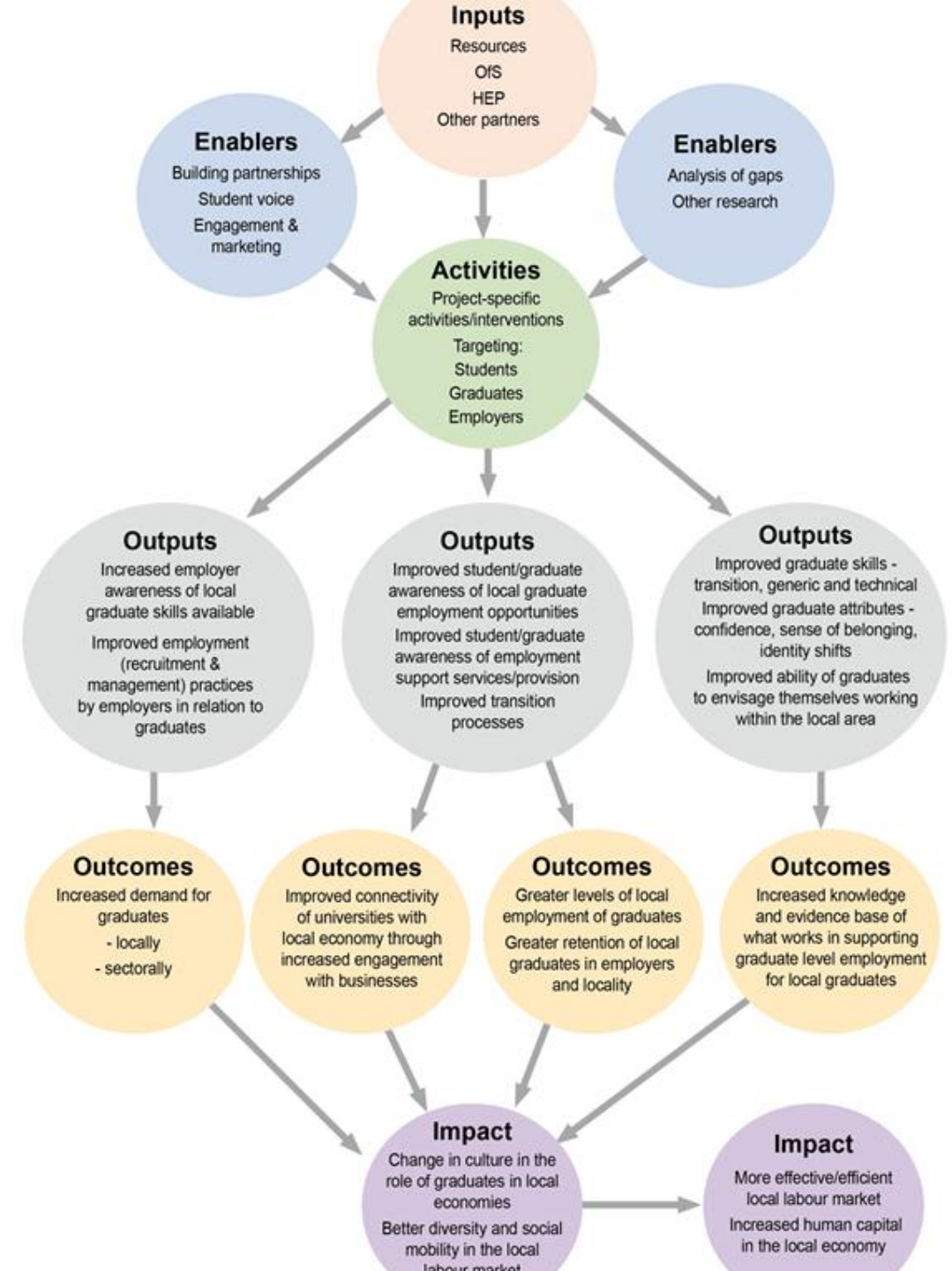
Example (1)

- From Noble (2019) *Theory of Change in 10 steps*



Example (2)

- Alexander, Hooley and Mellors-Bourne (2023) *Supporting Local Students and Graduates*



Build a
website



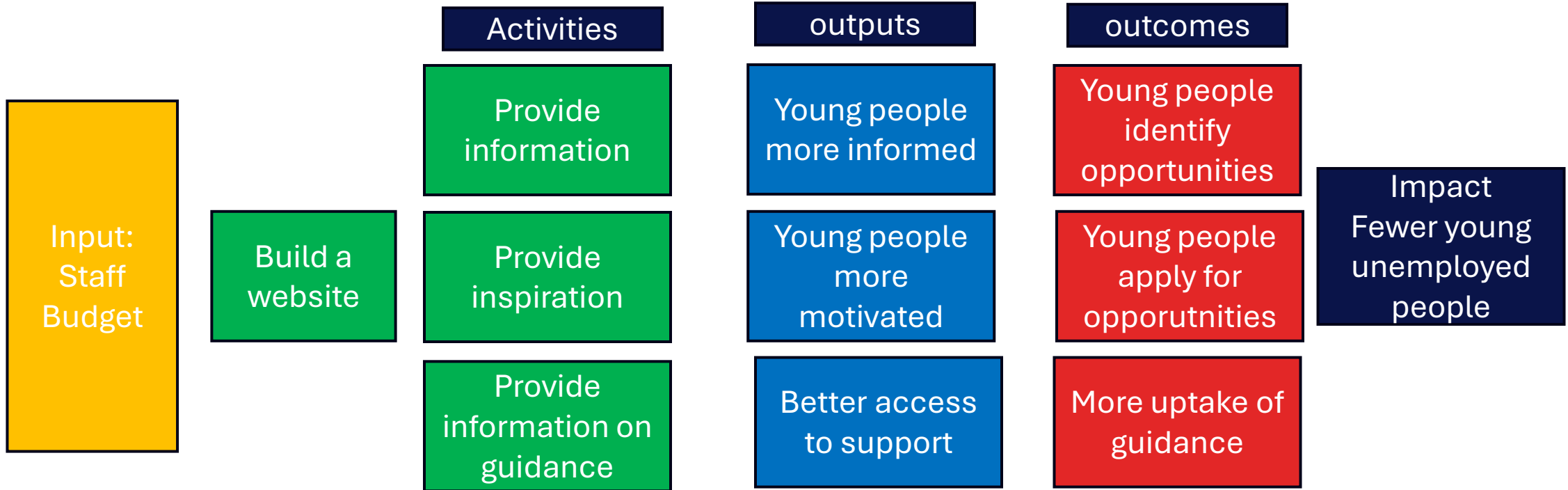
Fewer young
unemployed
people

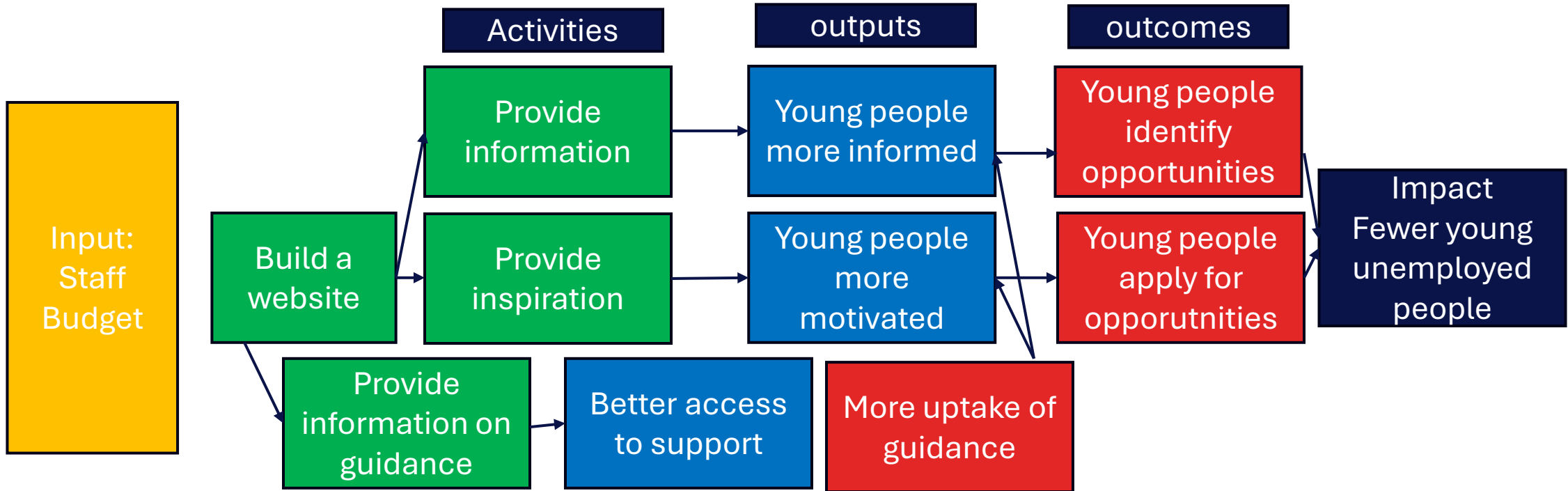
Input:
Staff
Budget

Build a
website



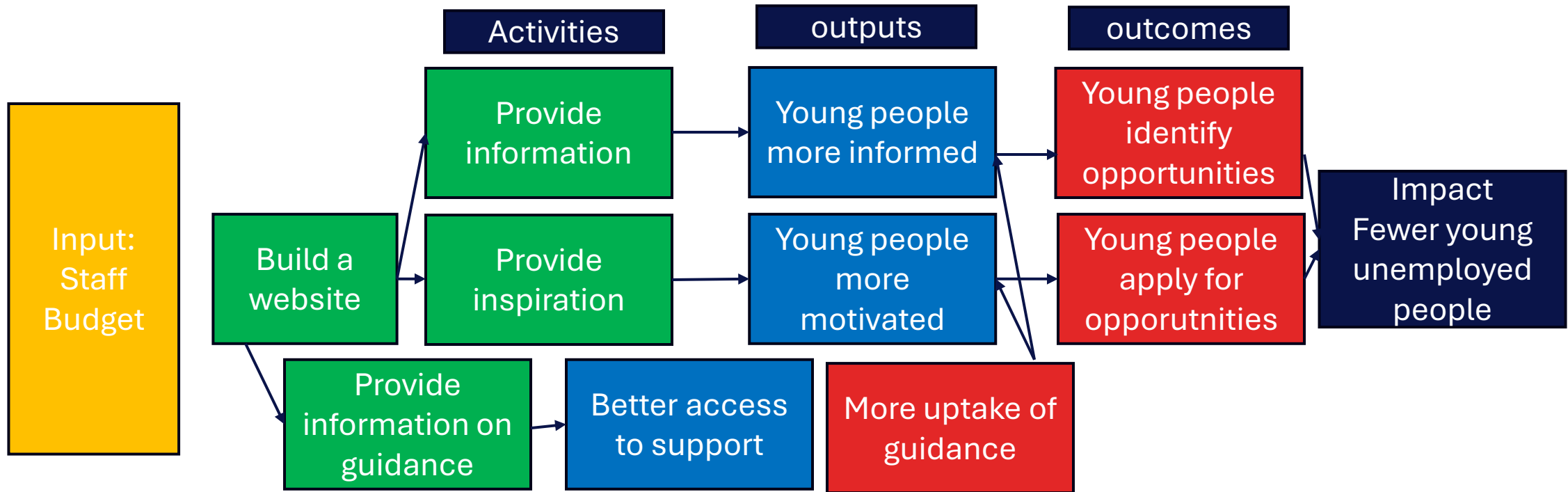
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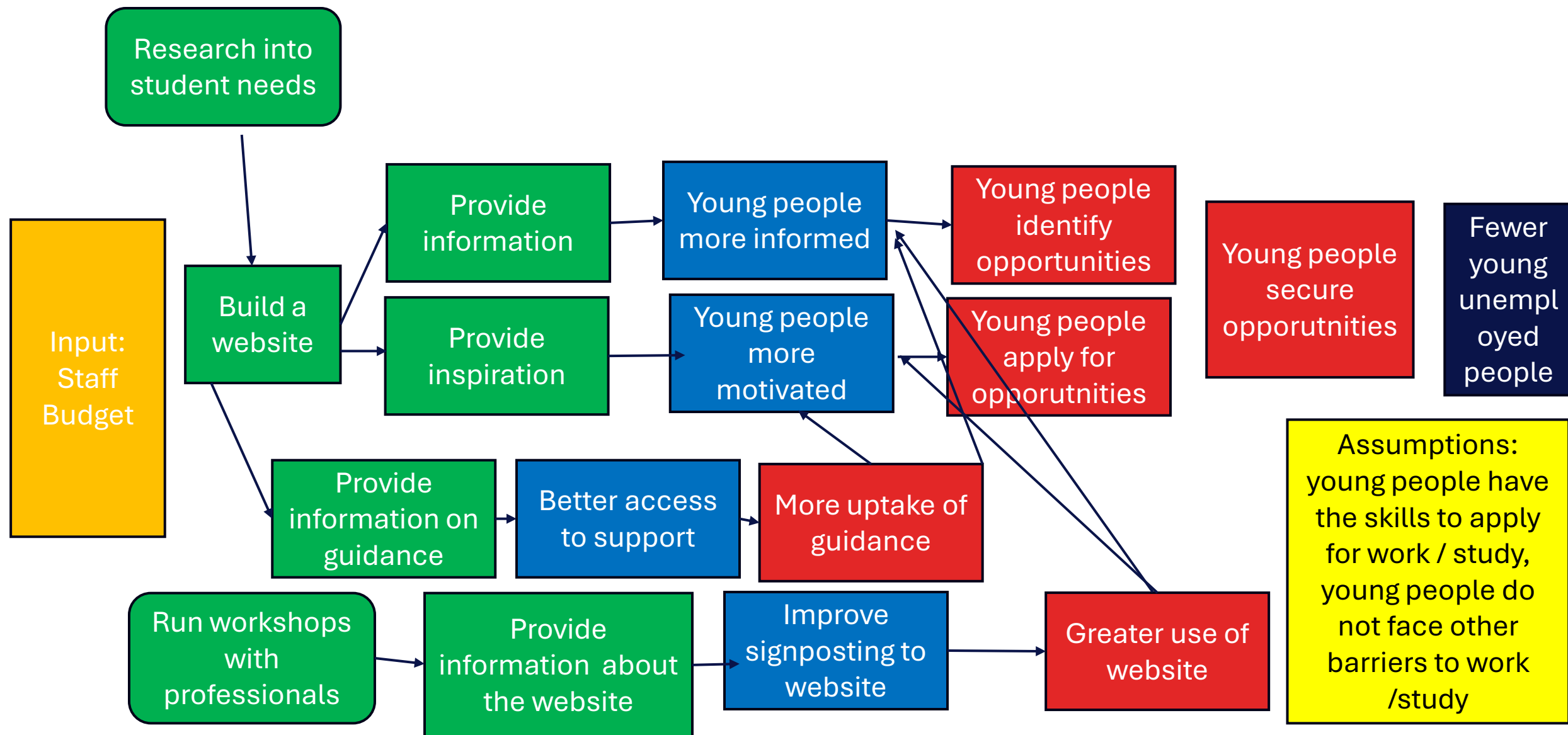


Refining your theory: assumptions

- What assumptions are you making?
- What important contextual factors might complicate the process?



Assumptions: young people will find the website, they will be motivated to use it, young people have the skills to apply for work / study, young people do not face other barriers to work /study



Your turn....

- Choose an activity and outcome
- Sketch a theory of change – how you will get to the outcomes
- Choose your next activity and follow the same process.

Remember: someone has to do these activities! Don't forget your resources and capacity, keep your process realistic

Workshop part 3: timeline and responsibilities (30 minutes)

- Look at your activities on your theory of change
- What resources do each of these need?
- Who will be responsible?
- What timeline can you set for each one?
 - Check if there are activities that have to happen before other ones
 - Remember holiday periods and busy periods – what is practical?

Before Christmas 2026	Spring 2027 (Jan-March)	Summer 2027 Apr-Sept (Faroe islands)	Winter 2027 (Oct- Dec)	Spring 2028 (Jan – March) Åland meeting)
List the action – and who is responsible				