

## Theory of change (ToC)

Our theory of change (ToC) underpins everything we do.

It shows how our strategy, programme design and monitoring and evaluation feed into our overall purpose: “to give young people the skills to manage conflict in their own lives, reduce violence in their communities and help lead our society.”

We can use the ToC to inform the design and ongoing development of our programmes, challenge our assumptions and test if we’re collecting the right evidence to measure our impact. It helps us to monitor our work and whether we need to make changes in order to have the greatest impact.

It’s also an opportunity to reflect on the theory and logic behind how we can improve impact for young people’s lives and across the youth sector.

## Operating context

- Funding cuts for youth services and changes in funding landscape
- Young people may not have direct access to youth services
- Cultural changes in youth culture affecting identity and self-image
- Young people face multiple complex needs that are often strongly linked to one another (eg. mental health, absence of relationships with trusted adults, bullying)
- Young people may not receive holistic care via supporting services

## Young people

### Assets

Lived experience and insights, loyal, creative, strong network of peer groups, strong peer influence, strong sense of justice, interested in helping others, strong sense of self, aspirational, strong desire to lead

### Barriers

Don't feel listened to, don't feel safe, don't trust adults and authorities, haven't gained emotional and social capabilities, low self-esteem, feel helpless, experienced trauma and adverse childhood experiences

## Adult professionals

### Assets

Frontline expertise working with young people, passionate, strong relationship with young people, strong desire to gain skills in practice

### Barriers

Don't feel listened to or valued, stressed and overworked, feel helpless and unable to bring about change, feel uncertainty about stability of job

## Community

### Assets

Strong ties, provide sense of safety and belonging, ownership of problems, shared insights and attitudes towards own problems, able to mobilise resources

### Barriers

Specific to certain geographies, may be insular or in silos, limited ability to influence services and support

## Operating context

Our work is most impactful when we respond to the changing environment we're working in. This includes changes in youth service provision, shifts in young people's sense of identity, and the increasingly complex challenges that young people face.

Our programmes build on the immense potential of young people, drawing on their resilience, creativity, empathy, and interest to lead others. This frames the way we address their aspirations. We also consider the relationships young people have with adult professionals and their communities.

Through this we can make sure we have the most meaningful impact across our work.

Support

Belief



## Activities

### Programme design

Partner and community engagement  
Programme design and needs assessment

Understand contextual needs for organisations and young people  
Align interests of partners  
Identify how Leap's work adds value to partners' work  
Build rapport with partners

Participants involved in action-research and programme design  
Focus groups

### Engagement

Work with referrers to improve readiness to take part

**Young people**  
Informal group sessions  
Drop-in sessions  
Taster sessions  
Incentive trips  
1:1 sessions with project workers

**Adults**  
1:1 needs assessment  
Awareness sessions  
Wing walks  
Focus groups

### Training

**Young people**  
Introduction to Conflict Management  
Understanding Conflict  
Leadership  
Girl Story  
Choice to Change  
Self-leadership

**Adults**  
Working with Challenging Behaviour  
Effective Communication in Conflict  
Well-being workshop  
Conflict Coaching  
Peer Mediation

## Short-term outcomes for young people

Feel safe

Become more self-aware

Feel better about themselves

Develop empathy

Assess choice in behaviour

Take more responsibility for own behaviours

Apply skills to communicate effectively

Gain confidence to manage conflict

## Intermediate outcomes for young people

Manage conflict in daily life

Feel confident and recognised

Feel connected to a community, organisation or sector

Have an actionable goal

Manage existing relationships and develop sources of support

Work with partners for other support - housing, mental health etc

Goal setting 1:1s  
External trips  
Youth Involvement Groups  
Follow-ups and check-ins  
Youth Advisory Group

Training for young trainers  
Young Ambassadors Panel

Co-delivery / facilitation of workshops

Participate in a different programme

## Activities

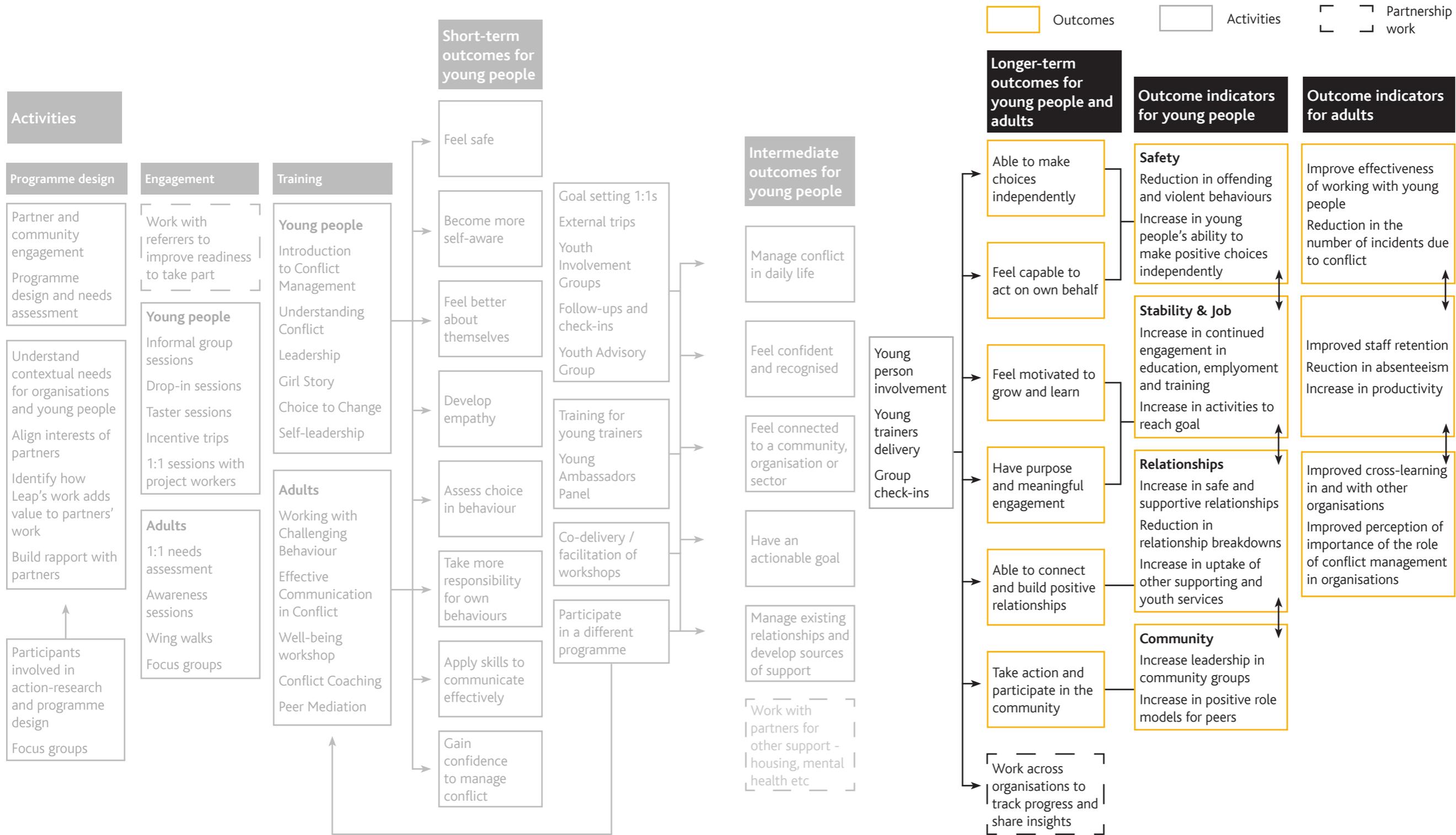
Here we outline how our programme design feeds in to our engagement work, and how this feeds into our programmes for young people and adults.

## Short and intermediate outcomes

Short-term outcomes are measured at the end of the course. We want to find out whether our training has challenged participants' thought processes, attitudes, and awareness in relationship to conflict.

After graduating, participants may take part in a different programme, or co-facilitate some of our training with the support of our trainers.

At this point, we expect participants to practice and gain confidence in their conflict management skills.



**Longer-term outcomes**

After a year or longer, participants should have embedded conflict management skills in their daily lives and have sustained behavioral changes.

The changes are seen in whether participants can make choices independently, act on their own behalf, are motivated to grow and learn, have purposeful and meaningful engagement, can connect and build positive relationships and take action and participate in the community. These are also key facets in a person's wellbeing.

These outcomes are then measured at least a year after they participate in a Leap programme. We measure these differently for our young people and adult professionals.

Creativity

Courage

Emotional intelligence

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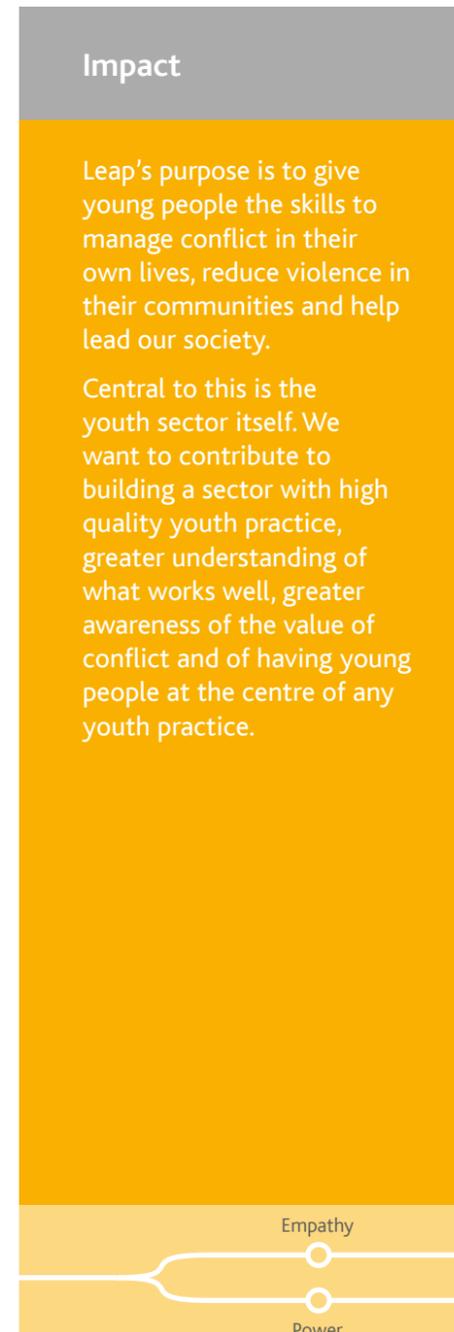
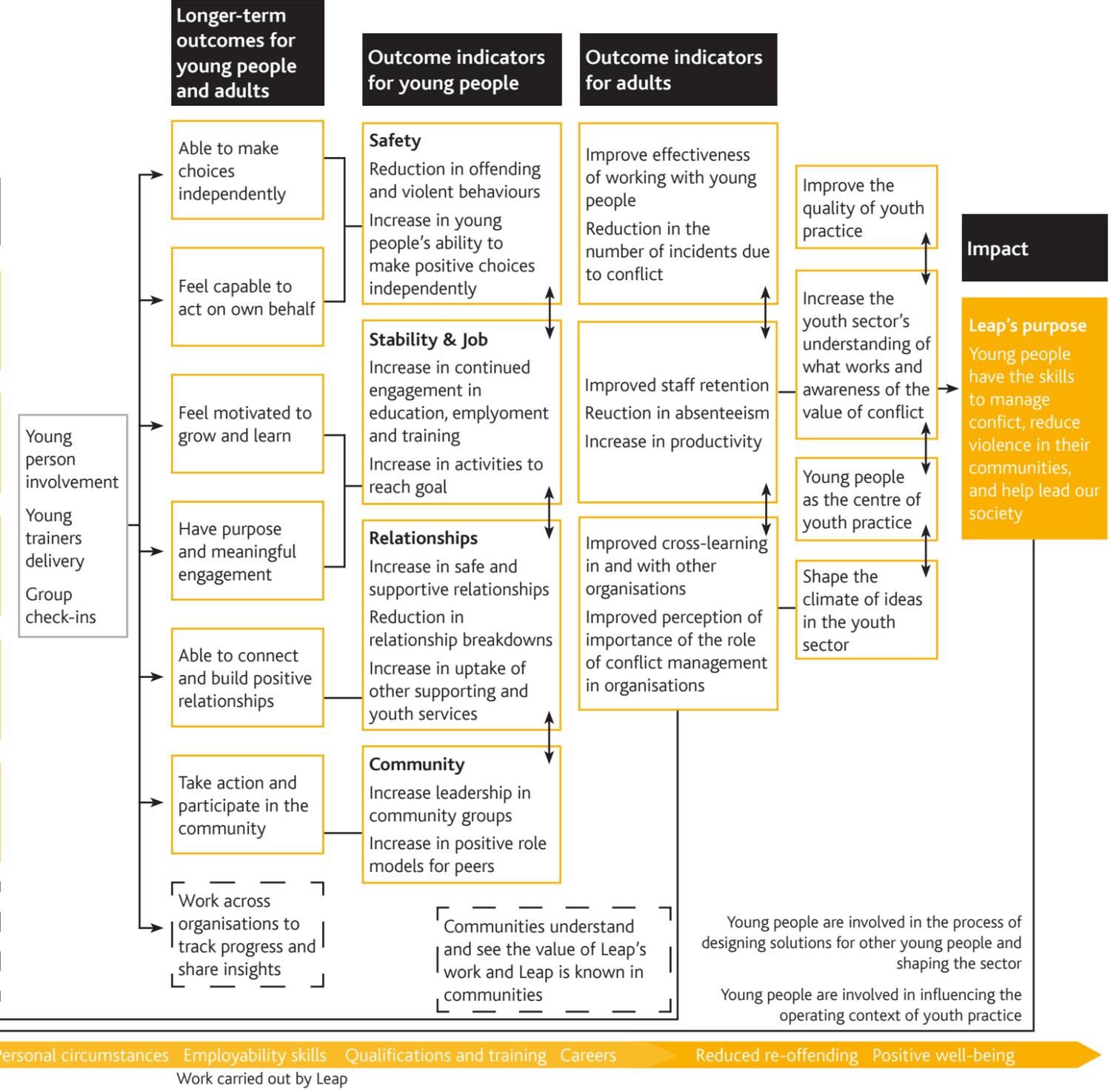
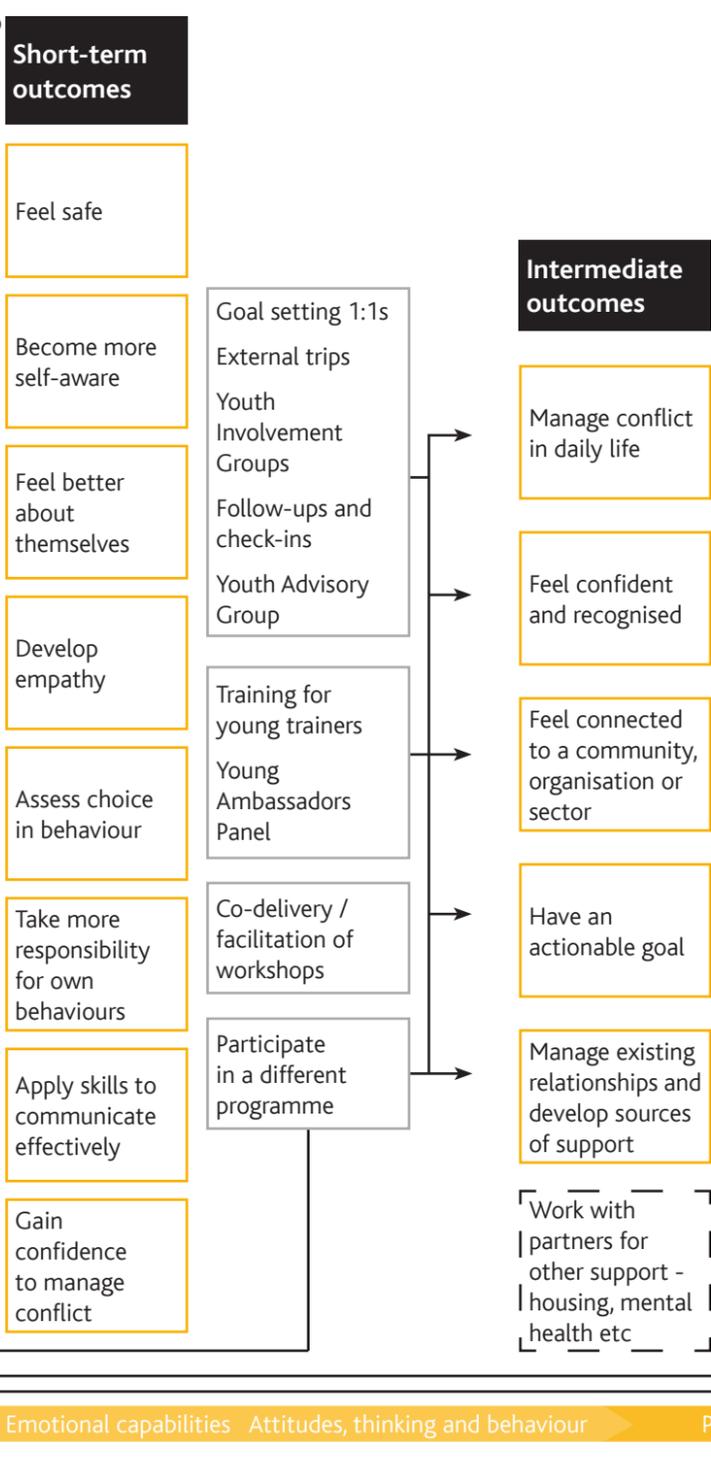
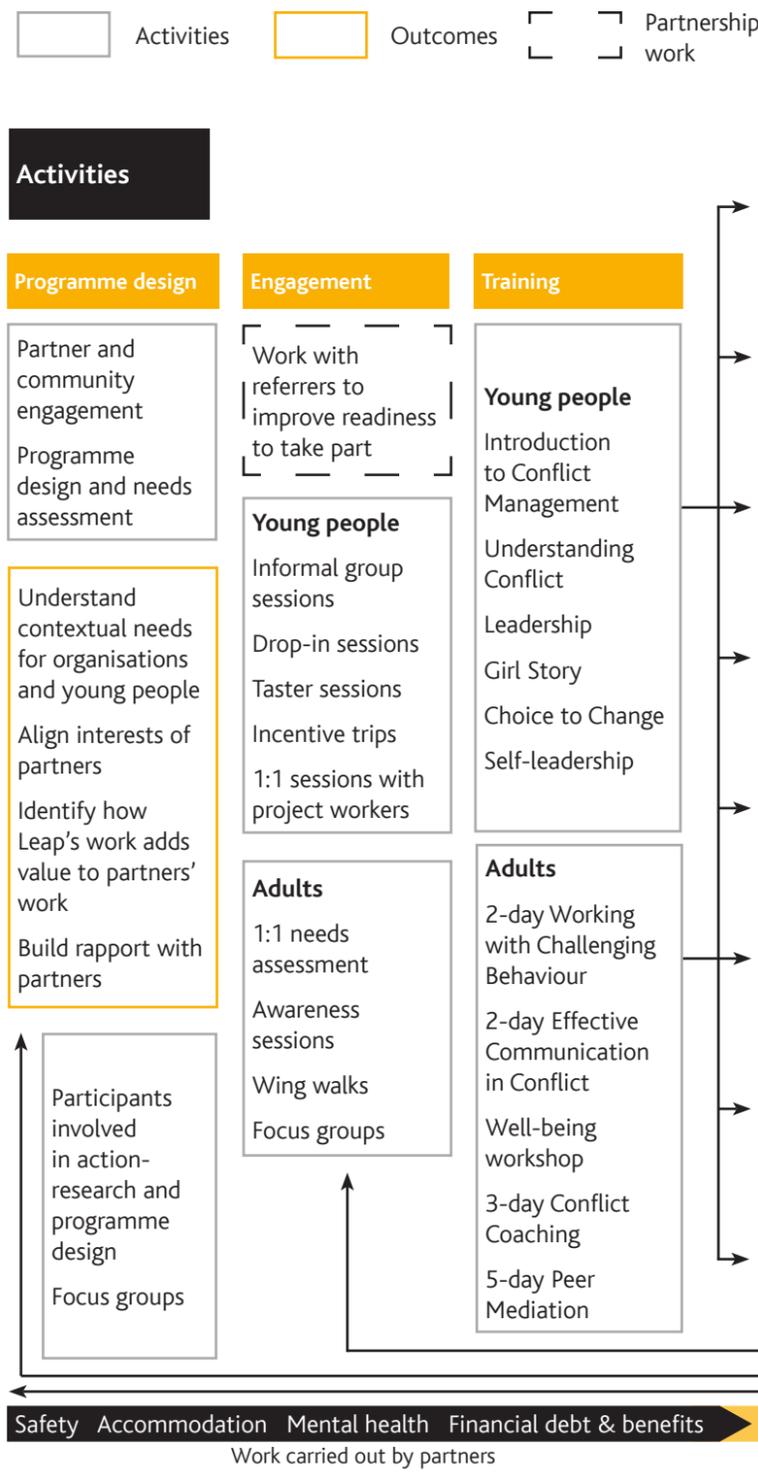
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## How we created our Theory of change (ToC)

### Principles



Listen to the voices of all stakeholders including young people who are taking part in courses, those who haven't completed courses, trainers, staff, trustees and other organisations



Use existing data such as pre and post course forms to understand the aspirations and goals of young people



Build on and learn from existing ToCs in other organisations, and ask them to feedback and critique on Leap's ToC.

### Steps

1. Create a vision - if we achieve our purpose, what would the world look like?
2. Understand the context we're working in including research, stats, needs analysis, funding
3. Define the activities and outcomes that needs to be met for us to fulfill our purpose, bearing in mind the context we're working in. Alongside this, check our assumptions and consider what we can and can't do, and where we can work in partnership.
4. Understand how we will know if we've reached our purpose and how we can measure this