

**"If it is about  
us, don't do it  
without us"**

## **YOUTH SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **What is It?**

The goal of a social infrastructure is to build capacity at an individual, group and community level. A social infrastructure for youth organizing encompasses a variety of different elements that work collectively to build capacity and sustainable support, placing power in the hands of young people in communities.

#### **These include:**

Social infrastructure is rooted in mentorship and partnerships and managed by coordinated work involving intermediaries, coalitions and collaboratives, delivered through both physical and online resource hubs, and supported by strategic funder alliances and social entrepreneurship strategies that provide the resources for various services.

## **Building Ontario's Youth Social Infrastructure to transform and sustain youth engagement and organizing**

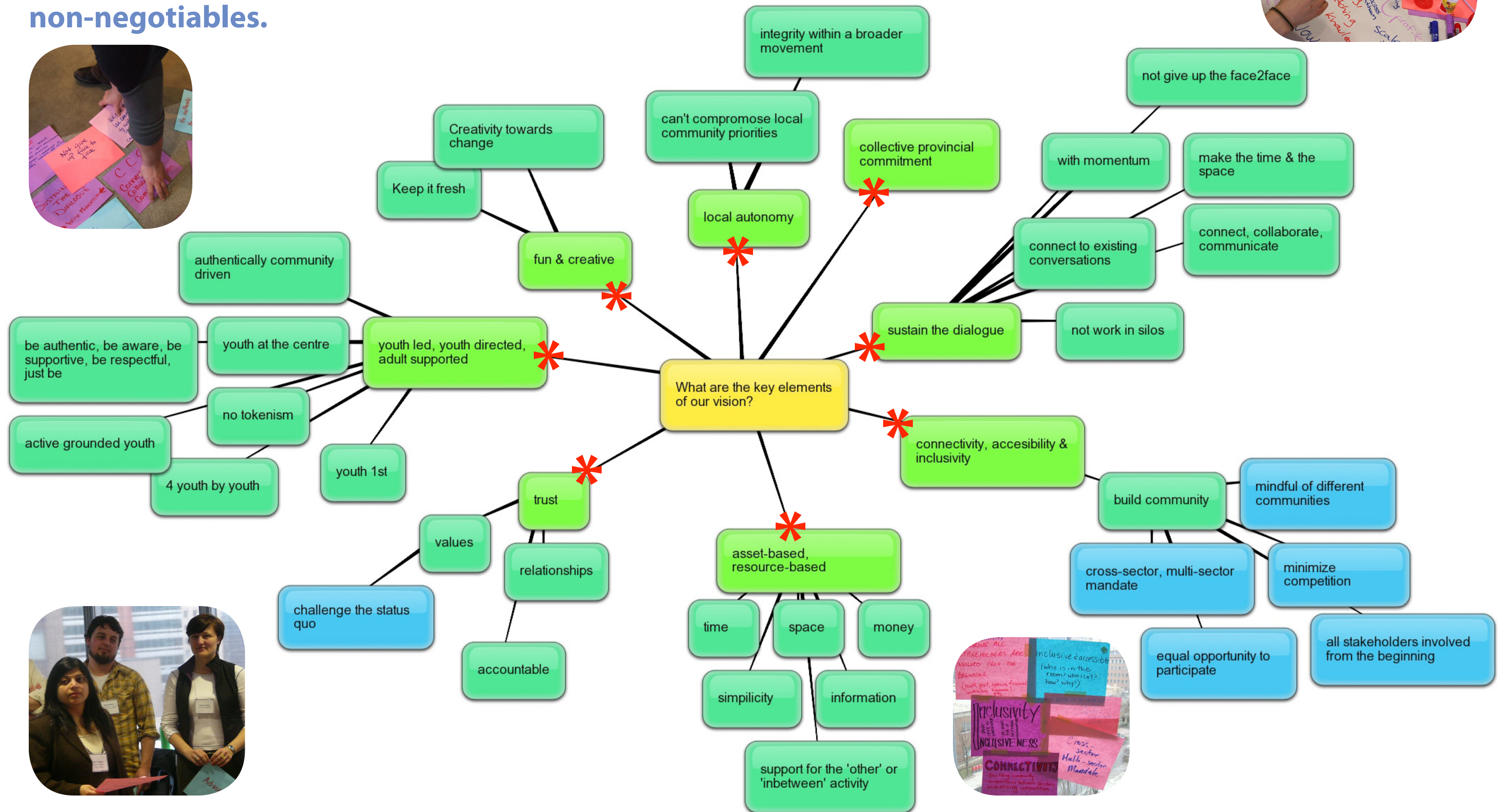
Over the last few years there has been an influx of support for youth engagement and organizing in the GTA and across Ontario. This has coincided with a surge of activity, growing networks in the field and young people solving their own problems.

Now we need to sustain this boom with information, knowledge and resources. In an era of great uncertainty and with increasingly complex yet interdependent issues, we must build a path for the future of youth organizing collectively.

ON THE 31ST OF MARCH 2009, THIS PROCESS WAS STARTED BY A VISIONARY GROUP OF LEADERS IN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND ORGANIZING.

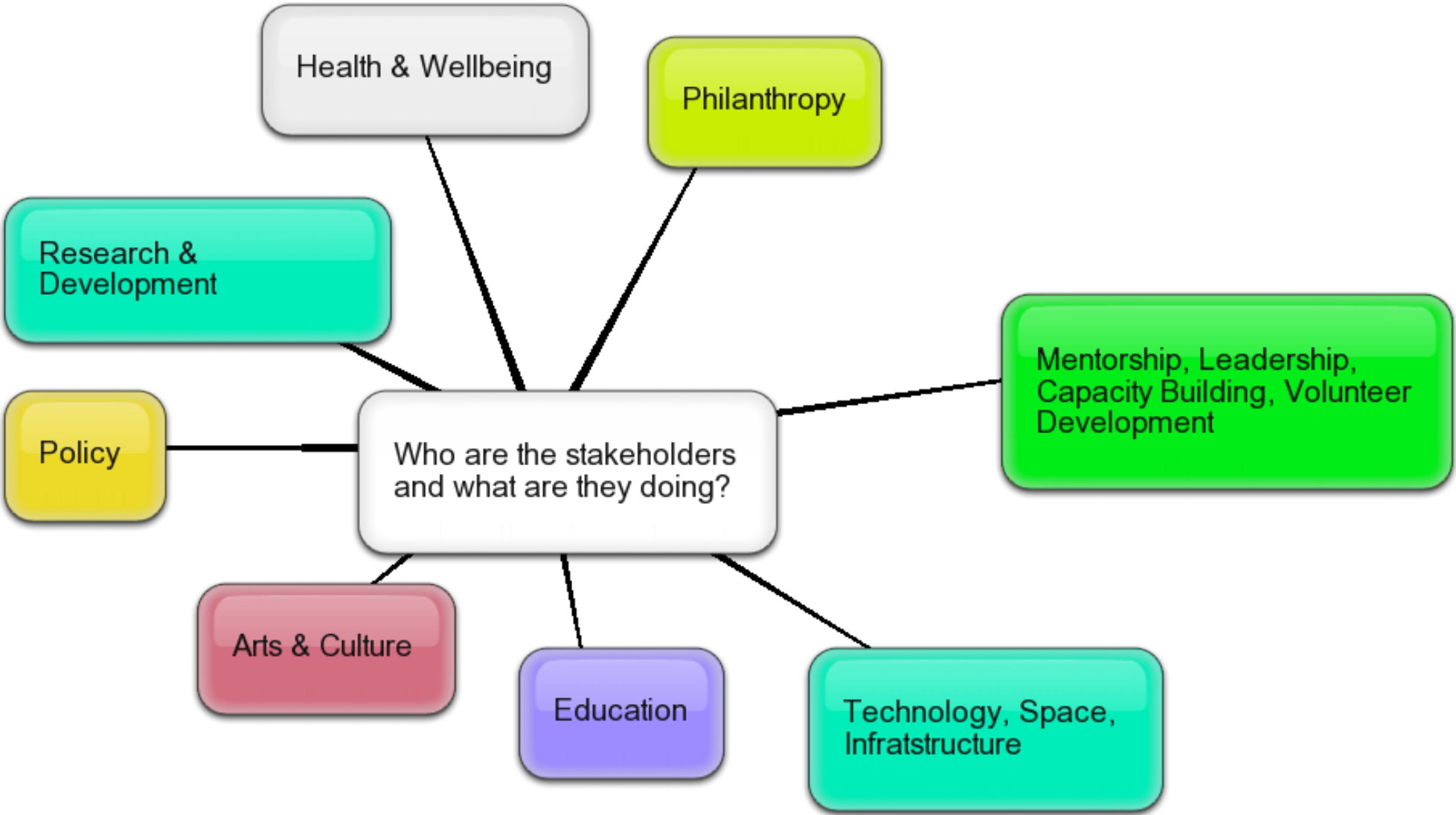


**The group envisioned a social infrastructure in Ontario that would support and sustain their work and their sector. These \* are the non-negotiables.**



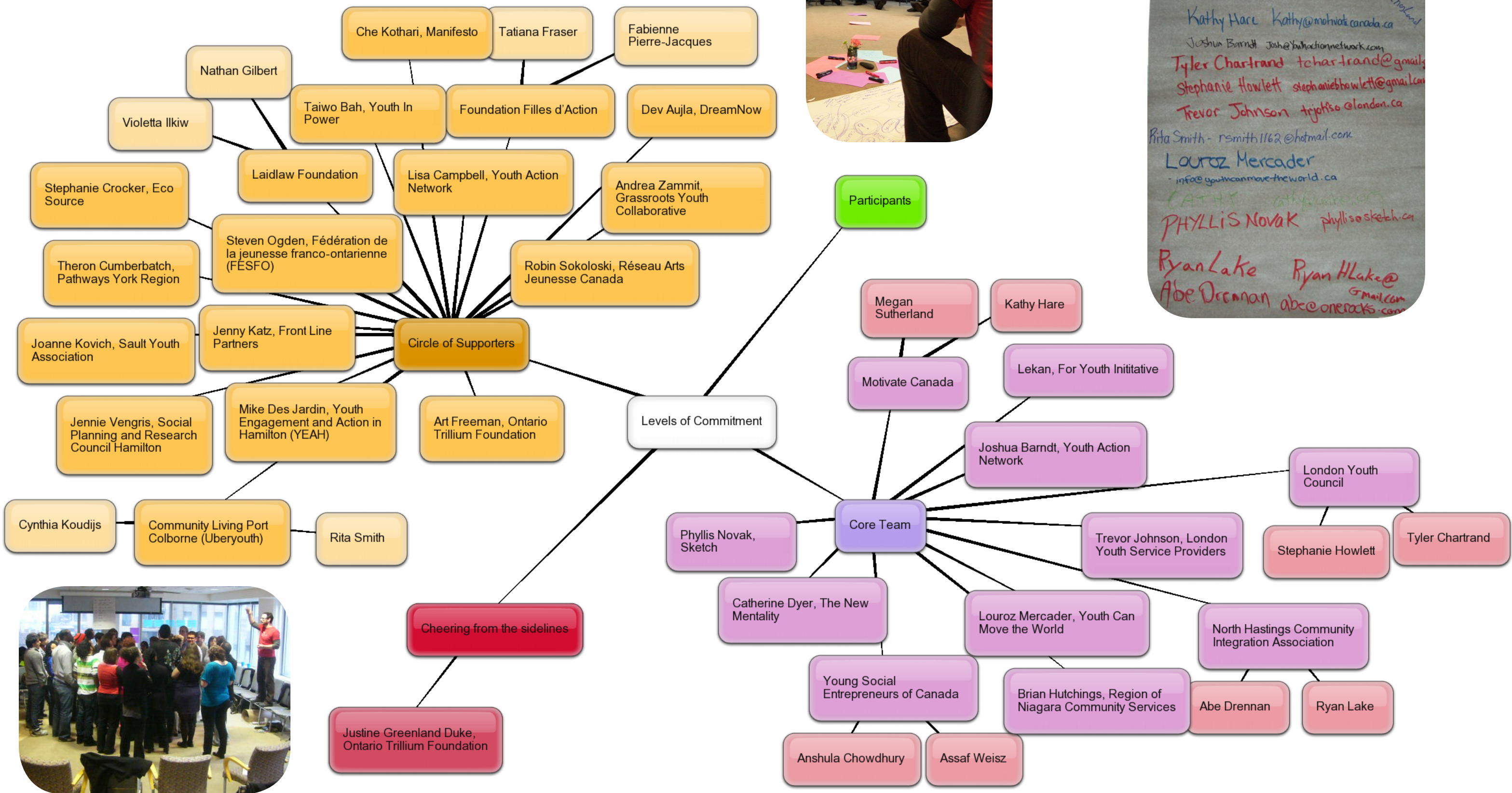


Everyone identified who they represented in this work, who should be invited to get involved next and how these stakeholders would be able to help this vision become a reality. Where does your organization fit?





To realize this vision, everyone made a personal and professional commitment to support the work ahead in some way. Where can you commit?





# A series of steps were identified that would help us realize our vision for youth social infrastructure in Ontario. It's connecting the dots that creates the big picture.

The first meeting brought together those who were thinking about or already building youth social infrastructure in Ontario. We heard loud and clear that there is a need for a coordinated provincial approach that the timing is right and that support could be found within the sector.



THANK YOU TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS:  
Neemarie Alam, Front Line Partners • Dev Aujla, DreamNow  
• Kehinde Bah, Grassroots Youth Collaborative • Taiwo Bah, Youth In Power • Joshua Barndt, Youth Action Network • Remzi Berbatovci, Pathways York Region • Arsema Berhane, Toronto Community Housing • Lisa Campbell, Youth Action Network • Tyler Chartrand, London Youth Council • Jason Cote, Freeform Solutions • Stephanie Crocker, Eco Source • Theron Cumberbatch, Pathways York Region • Mike Des Jardins, Youth Engagement and Action in Hamilton (YEAH) • Abe Drennan, North Hastings Community Integration Association • Neil Donaldson, Grassroots Youth Collaborative • Catherine Dyer, The New Mentality (youth engagement project) • Craig Fortier, Ontario Trillium Foundation • Tatiana Fraser, Girls Action Foundation • Arti Freeman, Ontario Trillium Foundation • Nathan Gilbert, Laidlaw Foundation • Justine Greenland Duke, Ontario Trillium Foundation • Katherine Hare, Motivate Canada • Cameron Herd, YNOT (Youth Nottawasaga) • Stephanie Howlett, London Youth Council • Trevor Johnson, London Youth Service Providers • Violetta Ilkiw, Laidlaw Foundation • Chris Kang, Schools Without Borders • Jenny Katz, Front Line Partners • Che Kothari, Manifesto • Cynthia Koudijs, Community Living Port Colborne (Uberyouth) • Joanne Kovich, Sault Youth Association • Ryan Lake, North Hastings Community Integration Association • Denis Lefebvre, Laidlaw Foundation • Lisa Longworth, Fusion Centre • Rohit Mehta, Peel Environmental Youth Alliance • Louroz Mercader, Youth Can Move the World • Hart Murdoch, YNOT (Youth Nottawasaga) • Phyllis Novak, Sketch • Steven Ogden, Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO) • Lekan Olawoye, For Youth Initaitive • Fabienne Pierre-Jacques, Girls Action Foundation • Breanna Pilon, Kitchener Youth Council • Helena Shimeles, Young Diplomats • Ana Skinner, Laidlaw Foundation • Rita Smith, Community Living Port Colborne (Uberyouth) • Robin Sokoloski, Canadian Youth Arts Network (CYAN) • Jennie Vengris, Social Planning and Research Council Hamilton • Leslie Wright, Tides Canada Initaitive • Andrea Zammit, Grassroots Youth Collaborative

## Tim Merry ~ Facilitator

Founder of the Shire, Co-Director of the Split Rock Learning Centre, Social Entrepreneur and Slam Poet

In a time of increasing speed, diversity and information saturation, Tim believes the clarity we seek is already within ourselves, our communities, or organizations and networks. He is inspired by what happens when we create the conditions for people to engage meaningfully with each other, reach collective clarity and take action that is sustaining. Tim developed his craft as founder and partner in Engage! Interact in the Netherlands and continues work in this field as a free agent in Canada. In 2004, Tim started a community leadership and social entrepreneurship training centre in Canada called the Shire, where he now lives.

*"I believe we can create new ways of working, being and living if we just go for it. From our courage and passion now the organisational and community operating systems of the future will be born."*

## Neil Donaldson ~ Videographer

Grassroots Youth Collaborative Co-Coordinator and Co-Founder of the Stolen From Africa Movement

Neil Donaldson, a.k.a. Logikal Ethix, uses fashion, media and music to empower youth and to create dialogue in communities and high schools around Toronto. His work on the film initiative "Stolen From Africville" has been featured on MTV, Much Music and in The Globe and Mail and he has been recognized by the Mayor of the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board.

## Arti Freeman, Violetta Ilkiw, Leslie Wright

Co-Conspirators, Co-Coordination, Co-Collaborators, Co-Supporters, Co-Enthusiasts, Co-Champions

## Justine Greenland Duke ~ Harvester

Senior Advisor, Knowledge Management at the Ontario Trillium Foundation

*"Harvesting our collective knowledge is a key element of this work. Using traditional and emerging technology in innovative and relevant ways will help us learn from one another and support those who come along later."*

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