

Doing It Right: Project Report

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Introduction

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology (YWITT) is excited to share our applied research and organizational learnings from our project, Doing It Right (DIR). Over the course of two and a half years, we've learned a lot. We've grown a lot too, as individual staff and as an organization. YWITT has experienced a tremendous amount of growth in a short period of time, thanks to this project's funding from the Government of Canada under the Future Skills program that directly supported capacity building and community outreach.

As we begin, it is important for us to contextualize the organization. First established in 2000, YWITT has been supporting young girls, women, and most recently, non-binary, trans, and gender-diverse people in the skilled trades and technology sectors. Prior to this project, if you were to stop a community member in Whitehorse and ask about YWITT, many would likely mention our workshops, after-school programs, and annual conference for young girls. Indeed, for many years, these initiatives have been the pride and joy of our organization. In fact, it has been the primary focus of our programming in recent years. Some Yukoners might also confuse us for Skills Canada Yukon, another trades-oriented organization that also offers similar school and community-based experiential programming that introduce youth to many skilled trades professions.

Our organization has led or co-led a range of initiatives with adult women in our past 24 years of operations. Community members often share they've taken one of our women-only Do-It-Yourself (DIY) plumbing, home electrical, home renovation and repair, welding, car care, or carpentry workshops some time ago. We offer modest financial support to women and gender-diverse people enrolled in apprenticeship training through the Penny Raven bursary. We also support workers with the purchasing of personal protective equipment (PPE) throughout the year with our Work Boot bursaries. With the University, we have worked closely to support the pre-apprenticeship carpentry program for women, as well as the newly developed Women of Steel program.

We work in and for this organization always knowing we could be, can be, should be doing more to support members of our community. In particular, this report documents our journey towards forging new directions for our adult support programming by directly empowering tradesfolks themselves to speak with members of our community and co-lead the design and piloting of peer and group supports. We've heard from community members that they notice our organization is changing and shifting, and they're curious about these shifts. This report serves as one way to illustrate what we've been up for the past few months.

First, we will outline the evolution of the DIR project, including a critical redesign process that took place in Winter 2022. We share the project's guiding principles and clarified research questions and goals.

We discuss our first intervention: to establish and grow a group of Community Action Leaders to actionize the aspirations and intentions of this project. In late 2022, a small team of tradesfolks were hired to the organization. We talk about the journey in onboarding them into the organization.

Then we transition to highlighting the process and learnings from individual interviews with 25 women and gender-diverse tradesfolks. These interviews were conducted by the Community Action Leader team. We asked people to share stories of peer-to-peer or group support or positive mentorship experiences. We also asked them for their ideas and suggestions for programs and supports that YWITT could work towards. We offer our initial findings from these interviews, including the development of three composite profiles that illustrate the importance of mentorship across a tradesperson's career trajectory.

The Community Action Leaders team piloted three approaches to group support initiatives: 1) community visits and meet-ups, 2) an employer conference, and 3) a tradesperson conference. We provide snapshots of these initiatives.

Reflecting on our overall efforts, we initiated a data collection process to build and validate YWITT's Theory of change. This collaborative effort was driven by data, including an organizational document review, qualitative interviews with internal staff and key community partners organizations, group data analysis and mapping, and group validation and refinement. We present our working theory of change to invite our community members to consider the levels of impact we see our organization initiating and supporting.

In this report, we write from a collective voice to invoke our shared commitment towards organizational and broader social change. One of our team's key strengths was our different social locations and experiences; where possible, we weave in individual members' perspectives and stories to elevate personal experience in light of this collective change-making process. We also want this report to support change work happening in other organizations; because of this, we intentionally weave in stories, descriptions, and examples of our behind-the-scenes process.

Context: What is Doing It Right?

In 2020-2021, the first iteration of the Doing It Right Project was designed by YWITT's then executive director Brenda Barnes and research consultant Patrick Rouble. After some back-and-forth correspondence and meetings with Future Skills Canada, the project's original funding agreement was signed in March 2021. The original timeline for this project was March 2021 – March 2023.

As described in early documents, the project's first goal was to empower women working in the trades and technology to form a supportive community, identify issues in the workplace, and develop and share strategies in addressing them. Its second goal

was to see the elimination of individual, organizational, and systemic barriers that prevent Indigenous and non-Indigenous women from participating in rewarding careers. Using hermeneutic phenomenological and participatory action research approaches, the original research pitched ongoing one-on-one interviews to follow the workplace experiences of women for at least one year, alongside the facilitation of group sessions during which participants would identify topics and issues for discussion.

A handful of challenges emerged complicating early implementation. Brenda Barnes left her position as Executive Director in June 2021, and incoming Executive Director (previously Program Coordinator) Elizabeth Peredun thus joined this project in her place. The original two-year plan did not account for applying for and securing research ethics approval, adding an additional six months of project and document design alongside requests for responses and revisions from Veritas, an independent research board. Ethics from Veritas was approved in August 2021. Shortly thereafter, promotional materials were uploaded to YWITT's website and outreach began to find interested participants in the study.

A small number of participants were recruited for the study between the months of September 2021 to February 2022. A handful of phone interviews and one group discussion took place with the researcher, with handwritten notes taken. Participants' professional resumes were also being gathered. Some concerns were brought to the attention of the organization by project participants. First, the study design outlined monthly phone meetings with the researcher; this request was viewed as an unreasonable ask for busy tradespeople. Second, participants did not receive any honoraria for their time, efforts, or contributions. Third, some participants expressed concern and reluctance in sharing their stories and experiences, signaling a need for trust and relationship building missing in the research process. Their concerns raised the question if the positionality of the researcher should be further examined. Given these concerns, Liz consulted leaders from trusted community partner organizations and local feminist and community-based researchers for advice. In early 2022, Liz established a short-term Community Advisory Board to offer a critical lens and sounding board for the research design and process, and further, provide informed recommendations to shift the project where possible. Through this process, it was decided that a new researcher would be sought to support the organization in steering the project in a new direction to integrate community-based, participatory, and feminist approaches. Project outreach and data collection were paused.

A call for a part-time researcher was circulated in February 2022. In March 2022, Monica Anne Batac was formally hired on as the project's Research Lead.

Situating this work in the Yukon: the need for program intervention

Since the late 1990s, ongoing research has been taking place to examine issues facing women in the Yukon's skilled trades (Government of Yukon Women's Directorate, 2005; Madsen, 1999; Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, 2019).

Viewed together, the 1999, 2005, and 2019 reports illustrate the ongoing efforts occurring in the territory to understand tradeswomen's experiences, explore industry and employer perspectives, and gather ideas and recommendations for advocacy and intervention. All three studies engaged tradeswomen through individual interviews, focus groups, and/or a survey to learn about their experiences and identify barriers and desired supports. In all three reports, respondents emphasized that there was a lack of mentors available to support women learners and workers. The 2005 and 2019 reports both recommend the creation of a mentorship program, and mentors were identified as the primary support desired by both tradespersons as well industry and employer representatives.

In other words, the tradeswomen and skilled trades communities have been clear. Mentorship continues to be a desired program intervention. Indeed, YWITT has had mentorship as part of ongoing board of director deliberations since 2008. There were limitations to implementation observed, including design and capacity questions (both within the organization and the community of potential mentors. As the Doing It Right project was conceptualized as a follow-up project to Making It Work, we found it important to clarify the intentions in conducting research and positioning a project that built on existing knowledge. We recognized the persistence need for some form of mentorship intervention.

The latest report, Making It Work was published in 2019 by YWITT and written by Kirsten Madsen. It outlined current programming occurring within the territory and reported findings stemming from individual interviews with 13 tradeswomen, alongside two online surveys, one with women in the trades and another with employer and industry representatives. Its recommendations can be grouped into the following categories: individual supports, public outreach, training, employment supports, culture change, and systems change (Figure 1).

Individual Supports	Training	Employment supports	Public Outreach	Culture Change	Systems Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship • Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill upgrading • Introductory programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Pay equity • Creation of tools, resources, supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotions and advertisements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplaces • Classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency communication and coordination

Figure 1: Making It Work (2019) Recommendations

Visualizing and organizing the last set of recommendations this way enables us to assess the far-reaching scope of recommendations more accurately. However, these recommendations were made to encourage broader interventions outside the scope of the organization. The goal of this report was to encourage employers and other local leaders to engage more meaningfully with the issue. The report also lacked a critical analysis on contrasting attitudes and perceptions of tradespeople. When repositioning it

Doing It Right, we positioned this research-to-action project from the perspective of an advocacy organization, to lead the interventions and recommendations we want to see.

In both the 2005 and 2009 reports, a repeated point of caution is made that the research being conducted should not simply replicate previous studies. This concern is somewhat echoed in the broader academic literature. A recent systematic review by Bridges et al. (2020) concluded that much of the contemporary research on women in the skilled trades focuses on examining barriers to entry. They share that while research continues to suggest recommendations, there is a lack of research that documents or studies implementation of recommendations. These researchers stress that very little research intentionally examines strategies for support. They identify promising practices, such as fostering intentional relationships with mentors and role models, creating professional networking opportunities, and supporting personal development that foster workers' self-confidence, self-efficacy, and resilience.

Indeed, tradeswomen advocacy organizations like YWITT exist to help intervene, and more research needs to be done on programming offered in such organizations (Wagner, 2014). Faced with the opportunity to reexamine the Doing It Right project, we took time to sit with the stated goals of this project. We did not simply want to continue to conduct research focused on retelling stories of struggle and challenge (deficit or trauma-focused research), nor did we want to continue the focus on naming existing barriers or asking for opinion without opportunity for taking action or working towards some form of social change. Given the lack of literature on actual interventions, we shifted our focus to use this research project to build organizational capacity to develop and trial support programs, document our work, and create a cycle of building on and improving these efforts.

In the section that follows, we describe our feminist and participatory research orientation, an orientation that became clear as we critically examined the intentions behind conducting research within and on behalf of an organization.

Prioritizing feminist participatory action research approaches

Beginning in March 2022, as a new team, we (Liz Peredun and Monica Batac) engaged in a review process spanning several months to examine the original Doing It Right project work plan and the recommendations from Making It Work, in light of emerging areas of program gaps and community needs identified since Peredun's transition as ED. In the early research re-design phase, we found it important to return to the underdeveloped dimension of DIR using participatory action research methods. We wanted to closely examine how to operationalize the action and solution-oriented intention of this project.

According to Lykes and Hershberg (2012), participatory action research (PAR) offers a partnership opportunity between for those directly affected by a particular social issue (often described as insiders, community members, coresearchers) and researchers, who will act as facilitators and collaborators. An oft-used adage in PAR is

“No research on us without us” (Fine & Torre, 2019). This approach affirms and values the knowledge and lived experience of the people directly affected with the social issue under investigation. PAR focuses on cycles of planning, action and reflection (MacDonald, 2012). It encourages collaborative, collective learning and politicized knowledge production (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000), ongoing reflective processes, alongside a commitment towards action. Action can be broadly defined as “individual and collective actions intended to improve one’s life” (Reid et al., 2006, p. 327). Using various tools for gathering data, community members mobilize towards taking meaningful actions towards social change.

As an extension, to critically understand the diverse experiences of a community under investigation, a feminist PAR approach centers relationships and relationality, remains attentive to issues of power and control, and values individual and collective agency to advance social justice (Lykes & Hershberg, 2012). It recognizes systemic, structural, and intersectional forms of oppression and marginalization. It equally values process and product, with a focus on self-reflexivity. Zooming out, a critical approach to PAR fundamentally examines how one engages with research. Fine and Torre (2019) describe it as “an epistemology—a theory of knowledge—that radically challenges who is an expert, what counts as knowledge and, therefore, by whom research questions and designs should be crafted,” (p. 435). It is a “messy, often slow, engagement of ideology, power, politics, and context,” (Cahill et al., 2010, p. 408) that honours diverse and non-hierarchical ways of knowing, being, and doing. It supports a close examining of the conditions of collaboration and power-sharing all throughout an initiative, including assumptions and missteps; and demands a research team to remain flexible to account for changing contexts, shifting circumstances, and new information.

PAR is a promising approach for research with apprentices and workers employed in the skilled trades. Chan (2020) suggests that practice-based participatory methods for researching trades learning, education and support can support a process whereby members of this community can be “empowered by the research process to actively engage with and contribute towards the benefit of improving their learning opportunities and outcomes,” (p. 123). From an organizational perspective, PAR emphasizes critical praxis, described by Gouin et al. (2011) as a process of “gathering information about our work, analyzing it collectively, and identifying successes, gaps, and limitations (p. 278). Connected to a developmental evaluation approach, we wanted DIR to support the organization through a process of designing pilots, reflecting, adapting programming: engaging in a live and emergent change process (Figure 2).



Figure 2: DIR research to action framework

As the new co-leads for this project, we agreed that we wanted the project to embody, as much as possible, participatory action research and feminist principles. This included the decision that the researcher should be embedded within the organization, not completed by an external researcher working far removed. We did not want to overreach and assume we had done sufficient relationship building to name Indigenous Community Members, First Nations groups and organizations as specific members of our community to recruit. We thought it important to intentionally involve members of the community and move with reciprocity at front of mind. At this point, since we were working within the constraints of an existing research project, we could not veer too far from the original boundaries of what this project should do. We committed to putting resources in the hands of tradespersons themselves to enact changes. We wanted to link the project directly to organizational action and program development. To set a different tone for the project and intentionally welcome a group of peer researchers into this project, we established the following principles to guide our process.

Guiding Principles for Doing It Right

- Any and all actions must be grounded in relational accountability (respectful relationships)
- Everyone has something valuable to share and contribute
- We recognize diverse experiences and perspectives
- Commit to safer ways to share support strategies and co-organize amongst diverse individuals and groups
 - Prioritize and practice cultural safety and humility
- Co-producing knowledge requires intentional shared ownership to the information gathered and shared
- We value individual agency and collective action, working together towards similar goals

From Liz's perspective

Through the work of our organization, I have had the great privilege and benefit of building relationships and trust with tradespeople in the territory. It is deeply important to me to listen; I value leading the work we are doing at YWITT through being accountable to those in our community who are most impacted by the work of our organization.

When considering a shift in the Doing It Right project, I wanted to be thoughtful. The easier decision may have been to take inaction, but the decision that felt the most value-aligned was to involve community members directly in the iteration of the project.

When Monica came onto the team, I was grateful for her depth of skill in participatory approaches, how much her research values aligned with the aspirations I had for YWITT as an organization, and how our co-learning, trust-building and relationship building became the foundation of the redesigned project. During the critical discussions, Monica took time to immerse herself fully in the team, and we moved to hire Community Action Leaders to ensure that the voice, power and impact of tradespeople was at the forefront of how we moved forward with our research-to action work.

From Monica's perspective

In many ways, it felt like Liz and I were inheriting a project. Our early work together was to steer the Doing It Right ship, so to speak, in a different direction. This was the first time I joined a research initiative to redesign it midway through its project lifecycle. What a challenge! I took on the role with the explicit understanding that Liz and I would work together to make decisions. Our friendship and working relationship grew with each passing week, where we focused on building trust and mutual respect through our dialogues, asking critical questions to ourselves and each other to respond to the needs of the organization.

For this project, it was really important for me to sit, watch, listen, and learn within the organization— I wanted to be responsive, respectful, involved, and present. My research skills helped me to ask questions, offer staff and organizational support, and facilitate team-oriented processes. My recommendations for project shifts and changes were informed by ongoing group dialogues, engagement with the academic literature, and a pragmatic and shared commitment to ensuring we prioritized action within the organization.

As a feminist, gender-equity organization, YWITT believes that the best people positioned to champion and lead social change in the skilled trades are tradeswomen and gender diverse tradespeople themselves. We wanted to shift the power in decision making in this project towards a collective approach, and by allocating project resources directly into the hands of those most affected. We created three clarified research questions to guide this project:

1. What are the nuanced needs of diverse women and gender diverse tradespersons (and related roles), specific to meaningful forms of peer and group support for those who work in the Yukon?
2. How can YWITT develop tradespersons' capacities, organizational capacity, and new community partnerships towards program delivery and advocacy, specific to supporting women and gender diverse folks currently working in the skilled trades?
3. What support interventions could be developed and piloted with women-identified and gender diverse students in the apprenticeship / pre-apprenticeship programs?

BIG PICTURE GOAL

- Mobilize women and gender diverse tradespersons (those who do not identify as men) working in skilled trades to form a supportive community, and develop and share strategies for peer and group support.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

- Offer relevant and meaningful capacity building training, facilitation support, and additional resources to individuals, groups, and organizations to develop and improve interventions
- Identify emerging and existing initiatives to support at the micro (individual), mezzo (organizational, workplace, town), and/or macro (industry, territory-wide) levels
- Explore how YWITT can support Indigenous-led initiatives in a good way, or in other words, grounded in respectful relations and benefitting the engaged communities.

Pragmatically, we restructured the project budget to allocate funds to hiring peer researchers. We also requested and received a funding increase to ensure there would be honoraria available for research participants and organizational partners, as well as funds to support pilot initiatives. We created new interview guides for three different stakeholder groups (tradeswomen and gender diverse tradespeople, internal YWITT staff and board of directors, and community organizations/groups interested to work with YWITT). Given that the DIR project redesign was a substantial change from the original project, we closed the research protocol with Veritas. Research ethics was obtained through McGill University, REB #22-05-069, in November 2022.

Project design

The project moved through four iterative phases using exploratory qualitative research methods. In the sections that follow, we move through each phase to highlight our process and key learnings.



Growing the YWITT Team: Community Action Leaders

The core capacity building strategy was the piloting of Community Action Leader roles, staff positions where YWITT would hire tradeswomen and/or gender diverse people currently working in the skilled trades to lead the knowledge gathering and initiative piloting processes. Recent research by Wulff et al. (2022) maintains that group dialogues amongst women in the skilled trades are important knowledge and skill sharing relational spaces. This group approach would equally value individual sharing and contributions, while encouraging processes for collective learning through shared decision-making, team-oriented action, and ongoing reflection.

We took time thinking about how to name and position these roles. Recognizing the term “peer researchers” would likely not resonate with the tradesperson community, we settled on the name **Community Action Leaders (or CAL for short)**. This title signals the focus on **community** building and mobilizing, taking **action**, and positioning oneself as a **leader** championing change within the organization and the broader trades community at large (Figure 3). They were to champion the data collection process of conducting interviews and/or focus groups, and we intended that these interviews would help guide our process towards identifying opportunities for pilot programming.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY ACTION LEADER?

Have you worked in the skilled trades or technology sectors?
Love meeting new folks and maintaining connections?
Enjoy working in a supportive team environment?
Energized when gathering people together, socially or professionally?
Want to take action on issues facing women in the trades or technology sectors?
Want to see a diverse, equitable, and inclusive skilled trades industry in the territory?

For YWITT, a community action leader is someone who identifies as a woman, non-binary or gender non-conforming person who has personally trained and/or worked in the skilled trades or technology sector in the Yukon. Community action leaders bring their lived experience, unique perspectives, and community connections to this project, help steer its direction, and lead community organizing, as well as action-implementation activities.

Figure 3: Excerpt from Community Action Leader job posting. See full job posting in Appendix A.

In Fall 2022, we circulated the job posting on YuWin and through the organization's networks, resulting in nine (9) applications received. In October and November 2022, we conducted two group interviews for these roles, the second was co-facilitated by the first two CAL members with Liz and Monica. The group interview was a two-hour session with 2-4 candidates, structured to support individual sharing, encourage dialogue amongst the group, and cultivate relationships between everyone in the room. It was to model the relational and team approach of the roles themselves. The group interview structure and questions were circulated to all candidates beforehand so they knew what they would be asked to do. Candidates were invited to introduce themselves and share their interests in the CAL role. They were then asked to critically engage with two initiatives. Candidates were given information about YWITT's recent informal group meetups at a local restaurant. After reviewing event promotional posters and attendee statistics, candidates were encouraged to ask curious and critical questions to assess the current initiative, then offer ideas on how to improve it or try a different approach/activity. Afterwards, candidates looked at the prospective question guide for DIR's individual interviews and focus groups, and were asked to identify questions of interest and how they might adapt these questions when speaking with tradespeople. We then closed with a group discussion on identifying skills and strengths that align with the role, and assess potential areas for potential training.

We originally onboarded five individuals. The original CAL team consisted of Andrea Parent (cabinetmaker), Cheri-Lee Walters (ticketed welder; sheet metal and refrigeration apprentice), Jodie McGregor (licensed aircraft mechanic engineer), Julaine Debogorski (carpentry apprentice), and Melissa Craig (electrical apprentice). For the

next several months, we focused on relationship / rapport building within the CAL, as well as coaching everyone through the project's redesign, as well as the data collection and piloting processes. Our first team-supported initiative was organizing a broader community meet-up event at the Whitehorse Public Library in December 2023, building on suggestions offered during the group interview process.



Photo: The expanded YWITT team (original CAL members), December 2023. From top L to R: Cheri-Lee Walters (CAL), Liz Peredun (ED), Jodie McGregor (CAL), Julaine Debogorski (CAL), Jessie White (Program Coordinator), Andrea Parent (CAL), Melissa Craig (CAL), Monica Batac (Research Lead)

The CAL started off with early momentum and excitement. However, we did not predict that our own staffing dynamic would mirror the tenuous challenges push and pull factors that impact the retention of women's employment in the skilled trades. Early in our CAL process, Melissa and Andrea chose to leave their CAL roles and the skilled trades sector all together. Jodie decided to leave her trades-related managerial position. Julaine was seeking work as they were finishing their Level 2 Carpentry in-class intensive; they were meant to continue their carpentry position with a Whitehorse employer but was laid off. Cheri-Lee changed employers. These employment changes with members of the team created room in the budget to increase two CAL staff roles (Jodie and Julaine) into full-time positions.

To support the CAL in their day-to-day work, we organized for ongoing skill development sessions as part of our team meetings. We also invited and onboarded Ruth Wilson, a community-based participatory action researcher and social worker to support the team to support the CAL's later work to pilot initiatives and YWITT's data

collection processes for our theory of change / logic model development to document the emergent organizational change processes occurring from this project.

Interviewing community members

Our Process

As part of the project's participatory redesign, the CAL were now positioned to lead the data collection process of interviewing tradeswomen and gender diverse tradespeople. The interview served as an important relationship and rapport-building opportunity between an interested community member and the CAL as YWITT's newest staff members. The interviews were semi-structured in that a question guide (developed by Monica and Liz) was offered to guide the process. The CAL were encouraged to adapt the questions based on their relationships with the people they were interviewing, or to adapt the questions to incorporate their own voice.

The call for participation was posted on YWITT's website and social media accounts. The CAL primarily leveraged their own networks and connections to identify community members to interview (snowball sampling). Interviews took place between the months of March 2023 to August 2023. Majority of the participants we interviewed were employed and living in Whitehorse, with 2 participants from Dawson City.

Participants were invited to first introduce themselves and share their journey into the skilled trades. They were then asked to identify key moments or stages in their learning or career journeys that were important for accessing peer or group supports. The CAL encouraged participants to share stories of peer-to-peer or group support or mentorship. Participants were also asked to describe a good mentor and imagine what a supportive community of peer/group support for women and gender diverse tradespeople might look like or feel like for them. The interviews ended with an open-ended ask for suggestions or ideas for support programs.

Participants were not asked to disclose demographic data or share their resumes. We wanted to honour the participants' autonomy and choice to share what was comfortable at the time of interview. Participants were asked if they wanted to use their own names or use a pseudonym, and if they were open to having the conversation recorded. We wanted to offer the opportunity for people to have their story and sharing linked back to them. This departs from YWITT's previous studies where anonymity was the default. The interview guide did not center on stories of struggle, and instead encouraged people to name positive experiences and forward-thinking visioning for peer, group, and mentorship supports. Majority of participants chose to be identified with four requesting that they review any material before public dissemination. Three participants chose to be identified through pseudonyms (marked by asterix by the first mention of their name).

We provided each participant with an honoraria of \$50 for their interview. We felt this was a reasonable token of appreciation given the time commitment and subject matter involved in each interview, and yet was not high enough to be perceived as coercion. It also represents a fair hourly rate for trades work. As the spring, summer, and fall months are high time for construction, mining, and other skilled trades work, we recognized that participants would be making time out of their busy schedules (including potentially declining overtime hours) to meet with us. We wanted to recognize their time and contribution appropriately.

In the end, we spoke with a total of 26 individuals, where 24 were completed as individual interviews and one pair participated in a small focus group discussion. In all but one case of the focus group discussion, these sessions were recorded using a digital audio recorder. We did not discriminate between workers who were formally trained through the apprenticeship system and those who developed their skills on their own and through work and life experience. We wanted to cast a wide net to those who were working in trades and trades-adjacent work. Majority of the participants were White, with one person identifying as Indigenous and one identifying as Mexican.

Before the interview, the interested participant was given an informed consent form to review and sign. CAL took handwritten or digital notes during the interview, then produced a written summary and reflection of the interview. Researchers Monica Batac and Ruth Wilson transcribed the interviews. Monica initially analyzed the interview transcripts using NVivo using open emergent coding. In December 2023, the research team completed in-person selective coding (by hand) and group data review and analysis. We individually read transcripts, coded for the research questions, reviewed emerging themes, and discussed the themes specific to mentorship.

Participant Breakdown

26 tradespeople were interviewed	5 were ticketed and/or obtained their Red Seal certification	3 had training in two or more trades
	3 owned and operated their own businesses	6 identified as gender diverse (lesbian, queer, or trans)

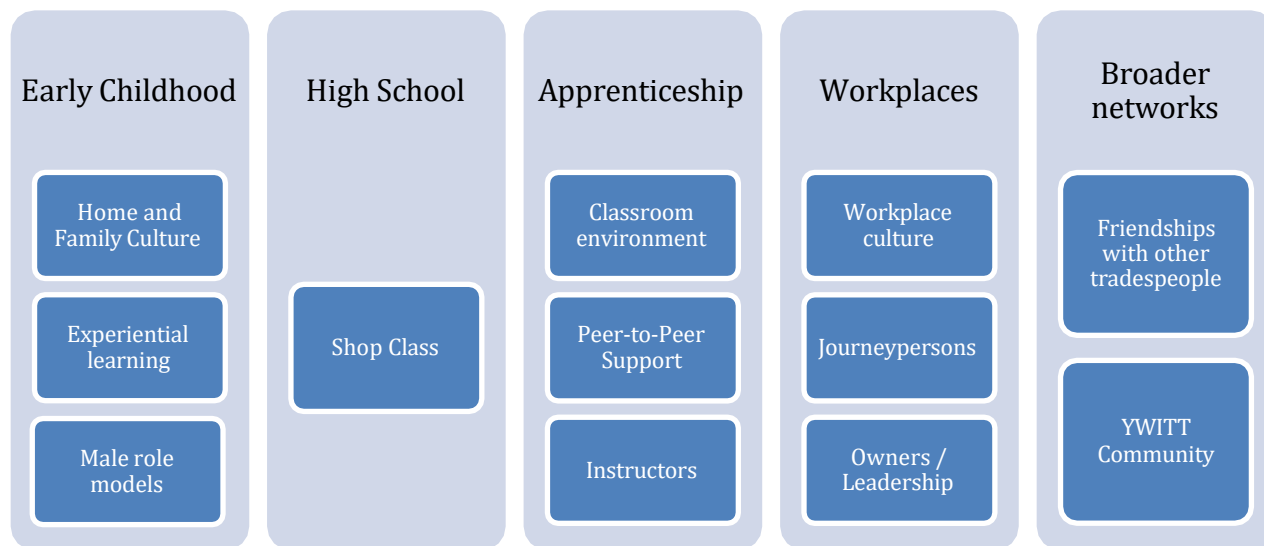
Carpenter
Electrician
Hairstylist
Aircraft Maintenance Engineer
Butcher
Welder
Sprinkler Fitter

Millwright
Sheet Metal Worker
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic
Cook
Baker

Skilled Trades represented

Snapshots of peer, group, and mentorship support

Based on our interviews, the model below illustrates the key points where peer-to-peer, group, and/or mentorship supports took place. We organized these opportunities across five domains along a tradesperson's life and career trajectory.



1. Early childhood

Participants told us about formative features of their home or family context that fueled their interest in their respective line of work. Opportunities for experiential learning, or learning by doing, further solidified their curiosities. Some had early exposure to the hypermasculine, machismo culture of trades environments via male role models; these relationships, in their words, helped to “toughened” them up.

1a) Home and family culture

Several participants spoke to early childhood experiences whereby parents and family members nurtured their interest in what would be their current trades. For example, both Lucy Welsh (non-certified butcher) and Catherine (Cat) McInroy (cook/baker, owner of Well Bread Culinary Centre Inc.) were exposed to the preparation of food at an early age. Lucy shared, “My grandpa was a butcher, my mom owned a restaurant, and my uncle is also a restaurant owner. So definitely, food is in my blood.” Growing up in an Eastern European (Ukrainian, Austrian, Slovakian) immigrant family, Cat noted the immersive food preparation in her home: “Everything that involves life involves food in these cultures.” Her parents immigrated to the Yukon in the 1950s and their home helped to nurture her love for cooking. Her family took up the tasks of “growing our own gardens...preserving food for the winter...[managing] a trap line...making our own bread, our own pasta...That’s what I grew up in.”

Outside of the food industry, Rachel Morris (aircraft maintenance engineer) grew up on a farm in Alberta, always involved on the property: this included farming in the summer, seeding, and putting fence in. She attributes this early experience to shaping her first job as a bicycle and motorcycle mechanic. Callie* (trained in millwright, facility manager) grew up in the Yukon and her parents had built their home before she was born. She had early exposure to all sorts of tools and people who used tools to help maintain the home. She reflects on that time, sharing: “We live[d] out in a country residential [area], so we were using chainsaws to cut down wood, doing repairs around the house... my parents were both pretty interested in learning those skills and sharing them with me.”

Family members fostered respect for trades careers. Sloane Arson (carpenter) describes how trades work was normalized and appreciated:

My mother has always been a chef my entire life. My stepfather is a plumber. They also bought and renovated houses all while I was growing up. And so I’ve always been exposed to tradespeople, trades work. It was always very valued as a career path in my family.

1b) Experiential learning

Numerous tradesfolks shared with us specific childhood experiences where they used their hands. For instance, Sloane shared how she had an obsession with building her own fort in the woods, where her building skills were cultivated through ongoing involvement in carpentry projects with her stepfather. Jessie White (carpentry, YWITT staff) proudly shared that they still have the wood shelf they made in Girl Guides programming. Building on this early interest working with wood, their uncle involved them in making a deck at a relative’s home. Because of opportunities like this, they began using power tools more and more.

1c) Male role models

For some of the participants, male role models were particularly influential. For Heather Ashthorn (Executive Director, Raven Recycling), it was her grandfather, described as a “doer, maker, fixer”, who exposed her to tinkering with things and working in a shop context. As the youngest daughter in a family of seven children, Cat grew up with older brothers who were ticketed tradesmen. She recalls how “they were always bragging about their red seals.” She shared lightheartedly about her competitive and overachieving spirit. The brothers’ boastfulness and self-declared self-importance egged her on, encouraging and motivating Cat to also get not just one ticket, but two.

On the other hand, Kessie Ford (electrician) grew up with a “macho” helicopter pilot father. Through him, she would gain exposure to speech and behaviours she’d later witness in the trades. She described how her father “helped” her by “toughen[ing]

me up a bit...when people make negative comments, if I hear things or feel anything [upsetting], I let it roll off my back. He has been my example.”

2. High School

A handful of participants highlighted the influence of their high school woodworking shop classes that nurtured their transition to a formal trades program or employment in the trades. We share Sloane’s retelling of this experience:

It was one of my favourite classes...When I got to shop class... this whole world opened up where it’s like I can make anything. If I can think of it, I can make it... To have access to all the super nice tools...all sharp and in good condition... learning all these techniques to just build...It was mind blowing to me that I could do that.

Despite this excitement and epiphany of the possibilities shown through shop class, we report that several people we spoke to experienced explicit discouragement to enter apprenticeship programs. Gab Roy and Penelope* (carpenters) shared that trades schooling wasn’t put forward as an option: it was positioned only for those who were “bad at school,” not a viable first choice but a Plan B, or alternative route if you were with limited options. Now as a seasoned hairstylist, Lori Green has confronted guidance counsellors and teachers in high schools. She spoke about how educators often suggest that “trades are for stupid people... If you choose a trade, you’re stupid.” Lori explicitly offers support and mentorship to young people to unlearn this pervasive script.

3. Apprenticeship

In the skilled trades, students learn mostly on the job with select times they are in a classroom for more formal instruction. The apprenticeship classroom is often unique in that students come with varying degrees of experience. We heard from participants about their apprenticeship classroom experiences, specifically their instructors, good and bad, and the learning environment cultivated amongst fellow students. Peer-to-peer relationships serve as a critical lifeline of support.

3a) The classroom environment and peer-to-peer support

The skilled trades classroom serves as an important site to develop relationships and self-confidence. Cat shared how she enjoyed the one-on-one interaction with her instructors and classmates. Students supported each other and mutually exchanged knowledge and skill based on one’s strengths and weaknesses. In this learning space, “everyone has something they can teach you.” Shelby Jordan (butcher, co-owner of Bonton & Co) described a relationship with a fellow student as inspiring; they shared their goals and aspirations for what they wanted to accomplish in this line of work.

We interviewed a handful of people who were part of pre-apprenticeship programs specific to women and gender-diverse people. Many of these students came into the program having not grown up in a trades' family or household, and are entering this line of work later in life. Such programs offer fundamental and introductory exposure to tools. For Julaine (carpenter, YWITT CAL), the program created a special learning environment that nurtured their confidence. They described the cohort experience as incredible and uplifting. Another student, Grace recounted, "I probably wouldn't have done it if it wasn't all women." From Kessie's perspective, pre-apprenticeship programs offer women with a credential to help break into the field. However, she noted the differences that women and men experience getting their foot in the door:

You don't need the pre-app to get a job. Guys do it all the time. But I don't think women just walk into jobs without any knowledge and experience, and get hired. It's sad but it's true.

Thus, the classroom then becomes an important site for women to gain more knowledge, experience, and self-confidence in the trades.

3b) The role of the instructor

Instructors can act as facilitators and barriers to participants' trades journeys. When we asked people to share any mentorship stories, we heard several examples of both exemplary and problematic instructors. Exemplary instructors understood students in the room needed interactive and participatory ways to learn concepts and techniques. They were patient. They openly encouraged questions and differentiated instruction for different students, including re-teaching or showing techniques multiple times. They offered support, constructive feedback, and encouragement that facilitated students to take pride in their skill development. They also shared strategies for success on the job. Students described such instructors as passionate and energetic about their work in the classroom. For many, this energy was infectious.

Alternatively, we heard of instructors who actively discouraged women students. One person recounted that she met a male instructor who was supposed to teach her for Level 2. This instructor outright said, "It's really great to see women in the trades. They can cut it in the classroom but they really can't cut it in the field." This shocked her to the point of seeking enrollment at another institution. She reflects on this experience, sharing, "To have someone who is teaching and trying to encourage people to come into the trades... to have that attitude is disgusting, in my opinion."

Now as a Trades Support Staff at Yukon University, Immalluk Galbraith (carpenter, welder) is compelled to proactively approach students, especially women and non-binary students, to help them feel welcomed. It was important for her to create a learning environment where everyone belongs.

4. Workplaces

In many ways, the positive and negative classroom learning dynamics are mirrored and intensified on work sites. Performance expectations in trades work environments are heavily gendered, described eloquently by Bird (carpenter):

In these traditionally male dominated spaces...men are given the opportunity to learn by f*cking up over and over again, and it's understood. Often, when [women, gender diverse people] are working, they are criticized more often, they don't have the same conditions.

Bird and others speak to the double standard at play: men are given the space to make mistakes on the job, and those who are not men are not afforded the same grace or opportunity. Given that the work site is the primary place for skill building and learning for apprenticeship, this is a troubling reality. For many, the work site was not a place to acquire skill and knowledge, instead, it was simply to complete tasks with little to no instruction. As Penelope described, "I don't know how I learned anything [on the job]... nobody taught me sh*t!"

Lori also emphasized that the workplace is meant to be a teaching space, "The mentor is supposed to teach...how to do the job...not to use them [the apprentice] as a slave, a maid." At one workplace, she was tasked with errands for her boss: laundry, coffee, polishing shoes, shopping. For many who worked on larger work sites, they shared that the pressures of deadlines and productivity meant that people felt there was little to no time in the workday to teach. Many co-workers, journeypersons, and supervisors would rush instructions, displaying impatience when asked to show a task or technique or repeat instructions.

4a) Workplace culture

It is no surprise that people shared everyday instances of sexism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia. These conditions create unsafe learning and work environments. Problematic, persistent encounters and experiences on site pushed many to drive their own learning, or in other words, teach themselves. It also forced many to leave, or stick it toxic work conditions to simply to get their hours and/or earn a pay cheque.

The trans community members we spoke to shared that they struggled to be just seen as who they are. Constant misgendered or hiding their true selves was exhausting. Their concerns for safety impeded their ability to simply show up, let alone learn and perform on the job.

Those who stayed in unsafe or challenging workplaces described how, despite these conditions, they overcame by overperforming, working harder simply to gain an

ounce of respect. Sloane described how she had learned to talk back, “dish it back” to harassers: responding to sexist, racist, and condescending remarks by mirroring it back. That shut people up; it created mutual respect. In other words, people adapted to these toxic workplace cultures by mirroring the problematic behaviour simply to survive and earn respect from their male coworkers.

We spoke to people who worked in small companies and large sites alike. On small sites, we heard of a few instances where tasks were micro-managed and there were few opportunities to learn and grow. The expectation was simply to move through one task at a time and there is only one person to turn to for support or guidance. In many cases, workers were left to simply complete work. On large sites, with more people comes more different viewpoints and attitudes. This was the breeding ground for toxic hypermasculine culture, and this culture was assumed to be the norm.

Many reported that they’ve worked on many sites where their learning is underdeveloped, stunted, or sabotaged by peers and supervisors alike. In many ways, these workers are set up to fail. And yet, we heard stories of workplace support and mentorship that served as saving graces. People spoke to specific individual relationships and specific encounters. We heard of instances where the owner-apprentice or journeyperson-apprentice dynamic were beautiful working relationships where learning and mentorship were prioritized.

We are reminded that there are everyday person-to-person encounters that help nurture a sense of safety and belonging on site. For instance, Gab shared that hearing phrases like, “If something happens, let me know...I don’t want that on my job site” and “I want you to feel safe here” signals that someone is actively looking out for you. Grace told us that fellow crew members cultivated a culture of support and friendship, where communicating and asking for help are normalized and welcomed. Sloane talked extensively about normalizing intervention, where workers actively responded to harassment to stop it in its tracks. For Kessie, she worked with a boss who actively supported her to share any problematic encounters on site. Knowing she could report up and be supported meant the world to her. Jodie (aircraft maintenance engineer, YWITT CAL) loved working in teams where everyone nurtured a culture of problem solving. Working through challenges and chaos, she says, “It’s fun: even if you’re working late, you’re together, you’re in this wolf pack.” People did share it is possible and rewarding to build camaraderie in the work. Penelope loved being on teams where workers encouraged each other:

“People do better work when they’re on a team and they feel like they belong.”

Zooming out, Sloane wished that mentorship on the job would go beyond technical skills. She talked about wanting to learn more about work-life balance, sleep, nutrition, physical fitness, given that trades work is hard and demanding on one’s body. She also talked about wanting mentors to teach about setting boundaries in this line of work. That might be as simple as building confidence and learning strategies for how to

say no to overtime without the risk of getting fired. Similarly, Jodie wished she had mentorship to develop workplace skills for self-advocacy and negotiation, particularly around asking for training, pay raises and pay equity. These facets of learning would help create skills on how to approach and navigate challenging workplace dynamics.

4b) Journeypersons as mentors

Just as we heard that there were good and bad instructors, we also heard that people had good and bad journeypersons as part of their workplace experiences. As formally certified (Red Seal, Certificate of Qualification, “ticketed”) tradespeople, they serve important roles in an apprentice’s training and trades development. They are meant to teach, train, and supervise, given their responsibility to formally sign off on an apprentice’s training hours. One person, Bird, shared that some of her best learning came from people who did not have their ticket, impacting their ability to get formal recognition for that learning; however, it was helpful for her overall skill development.

Penelope told us that many of the journeypersons she has worked with had challenged their Red Seal exams: meaning, they did not formally do apprenticeship, but were able to get their Certificates of Qualification based on their work experience, hours, and performance on the exams. Because these journeypersons never experienced being an apprentice, they lack the understanding that apprentices are meant to learn on site. Further, they often fail to recognize and embrace their role and responsibility in teaching and training apprentices. She describes it as such:

The number of times someone I work with say, “Didn’t you learn that in school?!” I’m like, no, I barely learned anything in school. [Apprenticeship] is just a bit of school and mostly on the job training. You kind of go over some concepts [in class]...it starts some ideas for you, but the rest of it [one’s learning] is finished on the job site.

In another case, Josephine* (electrician) shared that she was berated for making mistakes, and because of those missteps, learning opportunities and challenging tasks were taken away from her. Several people spoke about how on many sites, they felt as if they had no space to mess up.

Because so much learning happens on the job, it is important that tradespeople are reassured that they can ask questions, that it is safe to do so, that is welcomed. Cheri-Lee (welder, sheet metal worker and refrigeration apprentice; YWITT CAL) for instance, shared that in her current workplace, it was normalized to simply ring up journeypersons and bosses for support. It created a supportive team culture. In other workplaces, this was not encouraged.

Several participants wished for mentors to demonstrate patience in the trades training process. Several people fondly looked back on being given challenging tasks and projects with support. Josephine appreciated when a mentor on site would actively ask about her learning interests and skill gaps. She recognized that no matter how much experience one has, there is always more to learn. Callie and Heather both believed that mentors should model how to be flexible and adaptive in any work situation or challenge.

Journeypersons can play an important role in setting the tone for performance and workplace culture. Carli (electrician), for instance, shared how received encouraging words and positive feedback on her performance, overheard by other workers who were giving her a hard time. These simple encounters shifted the tone to normalize everyday feedback and celebrate positive performance, affirming the contributions of a woman on site. Carli described how a journeyperson and boss viewed her as “equal”, seen as a “worker, not just a woman.” In her eyes, they helped set the tone, normalizing how men should treat her on site. For us, Carli’s sharing hints to us that some tradeswomen just want the mutual respect and do not want to be othered on the worksite. They seek relationships that model equal treatment and opportunity. Josephine similarly described it as being “treat[ed] like a regular person, which is what I need.”

4c) Owners

A few tradesfolks highlighted the supportive bosses they encountered, sharing how these owners and bosses intentionally create a culture of care at their workplace. Cheri-Lee put it simply, “Having an employer that actually cares is a huge thing.” Kessie described her boss as such: “He’s like Team Acceptance. He accepts everybody. He really wants a woman-dominated team.” This boss sets a high standard and expectation of respect, team work, and collegiality. Kessie spoke strongly about his active communication style, emotional intelligence, and transparency.

Similarly, some of the owners we spoke to highlighted the workplace culture they model and explicitly emphasize. For instance, Shelby tells us that Bonton is a women-dominated workplace where “we support each other. We are definitely helping each other... build[ing] each other up... We inspire each other.” Sydney Oland (food business owner of Yukon Chocolate, Yukon Ice Cream, and Yukon Provisions) shared how she wants to cultivate independence and autonomy with her staff so that they could grow their skills and knowledge in areas they were interested in. This empowers staff to take ownership and seek responsibility of different domains and processes on site.

On a similar thread, Callie described how a previous boss and fellow tradesworkers came together to create a welcoming, supportive environment where she not only felt welcome, but could thrive:

My boss and three of the other equipment technicians...were all just really happy to teach me things, quite welcoming. The kind of people that value things like competence and humility, good humour, just happy to have another new person... [and] share the knowledge they had.

Now as a supervisor and mentor herself, she carried a supportive and relaxed attitude towards work, understanding people make mistakes. She believed in the importance in not making workers and learners feel ashamed or guilty for not knowing what to do or how to do it. Instead, she chose to actively “create as many opportunities for people to learn.”

5. Broader networks

Lastly, we heard a little bit about the supportive relationships that take place through tradespeople’s informal self-initiated or self-built networks. Many people spoke to the treasured friendships they have with other tradespeople, including other women. Others hinted to their interest and curiosity to engage with the community and network of tradespeople being cultivated by YWITT through our activities.

5a) Friendships with other tradespeople

Many of the people we interviewed were connected to friends also employed in the trades. These relationships were established during various stages of their training and work. Others expressed preference to be more solitary and introverted by choice.

Cheri-Lee Walters shared how she organizes a weekly social gathering where people meet for beers and wings. She also used this strategy for information gathering when she started a new job. She took out the last male employees who held her role in order to build relationships. Through that informal space, she learned “all the tips and tricks” for the job. Cheri-Lee also discussed a close friendship with a fellow tradeswoman, “someone who is willing to be there and help you out, listen, and laugh.”

Immalluk told us that coming through the trades, she didn’t see women represented in this line of work. She had very few women role models. She wished she had more support. She started to find more tradeswomen through YWITT and is now employed where she is able to offer that support to others coming up.

Several participants spoke to us about the intentional efforts YWITT makes to build a community of tradespeople. Some are active in attending our events, others just hear about it through the grapevine, a few shared that they live out of town and are

more introverted. Majority of the people we spoke to talked about being curious or interested in knowing more about the organization, and the interview exchange enabled the CAL to share information about what we heard from other interviews and which initiatives we were curious about and interested in piloting.

5b) YWITT Community

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Building a community of support

Our interviews offer us glimpses into understanding where and how these tradespeople have found support through early childhood, schooling, and workplace contexts. Reflecting on these generous and initial sharings, we believe these interviews tell us that as an organization, we can play a role to cultivate intentional approaches for providing group support and mentorship of women and gender diverse tradespeople.

As part of transitioning into a journeyperson role, one recently ticketed tradesperson shared with us her recollection of the Level 4 module on mentoring and training. She received about an hour's worth of learning on the concept of workplace coaching. In her eyes, this was sorely insufficient. She knew that coaching and training apprentices and other workers would be part of her new responsibilities, especially on work sites where she might be one of few workers with a ticket.

Having met many hairstylists, Lori reckoned that many did not have mentorship coming through. She described her own self-driven training approach as "fighting for my skills, knowledge, and information." She had to demand knowledge exchange and training relationships by persistently asking people to teach her. Now as a mentor, she actively engages apprentices and learners in ongoing discussion and planning about their learning and professional goals.

Cat (cook, baker) shared with us how she intentionally supports women apprentices and workers, especially older women. In this dynamic, she strives to model passion for food, integrity, and a hard work ethic, while sharing all that she knows. Cat intentionally motivates and supports her mentees in their choice to enter this line of work. She wants them to thrive. From her mentees, she has outright heard that the mentorship relationship has changed their lives.

Several expressed interest to support YWITT in developing mentorship programming. As the leader of a large team, Heather shared her own ever evolving understanding of what this work entails:

“I am very much learning to be a mentor. Maybe that’s what makes me a good mentor, I do understand and acknowledge that I am still learning to be in that role. For me, what that means is asking people about what they need, what their ideal work environment is, what they need to be healthy, productive, and thrive in their work.”

Heather reminds us that we’re all learning. These interviews gave us much to reflect on and consider, giving us some directions to inch towards in our pilot initiatives.

The people we spoke to all shared various examples of how they are currently supporting other younger apprentices and tradesfolks. They are leading the way to create mechanisms of support, and it causes us to think about moving beyond a micro-level or individualized approaches to how organizations like ours can build on creating a broader system of support across contexts.

Zooming out from these individual interviews, we put forward an emerging model of the priorities people wanted to see promoted in skilled trades classroom and workplace cultures:



Figure 4: Cultural change priorities and suggested approaches

We asked people to tell us about what a community of support would look like and feel like for them. This forward-thinking, visioning exercise helps us consider the values inherent in this community of support, as described by participants. Several people recognized the presence and work of our organization as actively building a community of support already. Several had attended past and recent programming, others had availed our support for workplace advocacy and reporting. Upon reflection, we put forward that an emergent community of support could contain the following elements (Figure 5):



Figure 5: Elements of a Community of Support

A community of support that connects through shared / similar lived experiences:

It is no surprise that many people talked about how rare it is to meet a fellow woman or queer person at their workplaces. Finding them offers an immediate sigh of relief. In a community of support, women and gender diverse individuals would come together because they share or have similar struggles. And it is in that shared struggle that people wanted to be able to facilitate opportunities for reciprocal sharing and exchange. For example, Grace shared that she would love to enter relationships of support where

people listen to each other's stories, share advice and their perspectives, and ideally, help identify next steps to improve one's work experience or learning.

A community of support that questions and combats hypermasculine culture:

There were mixed opinions about how to survive and succeed in the skilled trades. Many felt they had to "man up" to the tough, toxic, and violent workplace. This idea was primarily promoted by those further along in their careers. In attending some women of trades events, including at YWITT, Jayne had observed that

There are some women who have been in the trades for a long time, and I am weary of some of them... I feel like they have bought into 'You gotta be tough,' all these harsh things that I'm not... They've been hardened by the time they've been in there. [At those events], I walk away... feeling like I am too soft and that I shouldn't be here.

Jayne's sharing signals to us that we should not simply promote molding yourself, changing yourself to fit into the problematic trades environment, or in other words, adopting the behaviours and values we want to change.

A community of support that offers affirmation and celebration of one's

contributions and successes: A community of support creates connections and camaraderie. People are seeking opportunities to meet people to talk to and build friendships with. They wanted to be heard and encouraged. Several people further along in their careers expressed interest and passion for supporting the next generation coming up, by sharing their stories, experience, and skills. For instance, Lori shared with us that she wants to support people to experience the trades "without suffering the way I did." She continues,

[I want to] try to build them up instead of cutting them down. Tell them what they're doing right, not what they're doing wrong. I cried all through my apprenticeship because I was always criticized. It's wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. Nobody ever said, "Hey, you did a good job on that." Ever.

A community of support that is committed to change making: Participants expressed a shared interest in seeing the culture of the skilled trades improve for the next generation of women and gender diverse people coming up.

Three stories – composite profiles

Based on the interview data, we created three composite profiles. These profiles creatively combine stories and experiences from different interviews to illustrate how peer support and mentorship occurs across the lifespan of a trades career. These profiles highlight how positive mentorship and group supports can be embedded in the everyday lives of tradespeople.

Christine is an early-year carpentry apprentice, Skye is a newly ticketed electrician, and Fran is a food business owner. Together, these composite profiles serve as snapshots to encourage us to think about the ways we can promote systems of support and mentorship in the skilled trades.

We augment these profiles with prompts posed to fellow employees, supervisors, and employers to highlight how they can intentionally support each person's trajectory.

Christine

Christine is a young carpentry apprentice who has been working for the same company for the past three years. She grew up in a home with parents who enjoyed homesteading: living off the land and being self-sufficient around all facets of the property. As a kid, she often tinkered with tools and helped with building projects. Because of these early childhood experiences, Christine feels comfortable in a shop context.

She has worked for a few different Yukon and B.C. employers since her teenage years and has had her fair share of both positive and negative worksites. She works hard and believes her quality of work speaks for itself. She has observed that there is an implicit higher level of scrutiny to her work, which really nerved her when she first started out. She loves that the work demands a high level of organization and planning. Over time, she has learned to take care of her body because of the physical demands of the job. Like many other tradeswomen, she's experienced hazing from some male workers, but has also experienced support and defense from other males on site too. She cherishes those instances of support. She's never reported those workplace situations to her supervisors, which she now understands as harassment and sexualized violence.

Christine acknowledges that she has learned a lot from non-ticketed carpenters, however, now that she's in her apprenticeship, her options are limited to working under a ticketed carpenter for it to count towards her hours. She's worked for some employers where her supervisors would actively guide younger staff and share everything they knew about the worksite. Christine excelled in those environments, soaking in information and new techniques like a sponge. Christine has only encountered one other woman on a construction site and wished there could have been more intentional ways to work together. That woman coworker was a lesbian and was openly sharing how she navigated the toxic masculine culture of the workplace.

Christine believes a good mentor on the job would demonstrate patience and understanding. She believes mentors should communicate effectively and utilize a range of teaching and training techniques, including showing how to do something more than once. She believes that apprentices should not be afraid to ask for help, and that a workplace should be an environment where there should be no shame for asking questions.

So far, she's really enjoyed her classroom-based trades training, which started before the pandemic. She highlights a very supportive male teacher who noticed her skill and aptitude right away. Christine has developed close friendships with some women classmates and keeps ongoing contact with them. Through texts and phone calls, they check in about how they're doing. Christine likes that the group shares information about job openings for different employers and have found some short-term contracts this way. These casual exchanges also help the group circulate information about problematic supervisors, unsafe worksites, and promising employers who are supportive of their apprentices. She describes it as a whisper network.

At her current job, guidance and training comes primarily through a small, supportive crew of male co-workers. She's mindful that this delicate dynamic can shift with someone leaving or joining the team. She wishes there could be more established ways to get feedback, guidance, and support from her boss, who is not a good communicator. She was told no news is good news; in other words, if she didn't hear anything from her boss, that was a positive thing. Her boss tends to only give brief mentions of instructions, and she relies on her co-workers to explain. Given that her boss challenged his Red Seal exam, it's like he doesn't know that Christine's learning is supposed to happen on the job.

Reflective prompts

Considering Christine's story,

Co-workers on site: How do you welcome your new coworkers and early year apprentices? How do you foster their self-confidence on the job? How do you create, maintain, and normalize that a worksite must be a safe and supportive environment for all workers?

Supervisors: How do you communicate with your staff? How do you create the environment where all workers and especially apprentices can ask questions, seek clarifications, and seek support from anyone on site?

Employers/Boss: How might you create workplace plans and processes that intentionally plans and prioritizes teaching and supporting apprentices? How do you carve out that time on busy sites and schedules? How might you recognize and compensate workers for improving the quality of peer-to-peer support and on-the-job training?

Service providers: How can you create networking opportunities between tradespeople at different stages of their careers?

Skye

Skye is a newly ticketed electrician. She is so proud of her accomplishments so far and takes her new role as a journeyman very seriously. She didn't come from a

family of tradesfolks, so she's had to learn much of what she knows on her own. She believes that it's tough not only break into the industry, but be respected. Having lived in the Yukon for most of her adult life, Skye feels there is a lot of programming focused on promoting the trades to young women. She believes there is a lot of middle-aged and older women who want to get into the trades. She believes in creating opportunities for women and gender diverse people of all ages.

Skye is seeking more learning to be a better coach, supervisor, and mentor. She reflects on the Level 4 module on mentorship was very limited and wishes there was more a focus on this transition from apprentice to a journeyperson. She notes that there is a shift in responsibility – as a ticketed electrician, she is responsible for training these apprentices! She recognizes her skills in communication, including offering feedback. She wants to encourage other tradeswomen to develop their self-confidence. She would love to meet other new journeypeople to be a sounding board for this current stage of her career. She dreams about starting her own company in due time.

Over the years, Skye has met a handful of other women in the trades. They meet informally for walks or drinks. She really values these friendships, so she doesn't feel so alone. These friendships have been a lifeline, just as an opportunity to have someone listen and share their experience, and offer advice and support. She's also been trying to organize regular informal get-togethers with other tradesfolks of all genders to encourage friendships outside the workplace. Now that she's more seasoned in her career, she does not want people to slip through the cracks and leave the trades.

She attributes much of her success in the trades to her hard work and self-confidence, and hardened take-no-sh*t attitude. She understands that not everyone has this persona. As a queer woman, she holds strong feelings about cultivating a trades learning environment and workplace culture where all people feel safe to be themselves. In recent years, she has learned that she learned to survive by adopting the same problematic behaviours she witnessed in trades classrooms and on worksites. She is slowly and intentionally trying to unlearn this. Skye believes in the importance in shifting the skilled trades to be more inclusive. She does not want to replicate the same harms she experienced coming through. She hones in on the best work experiences where everyone was encouraging, patient, hard working, and fun to be around. She's had mixed experiences working for companies in the territory and has left employers who did not respect their employees with regular or equitable pay; promoted a toxic workplace culture of competition, sabotage, racism, and homophobia. Skye spoke about some companies that promote its workplace as a "family." In some ways, one can view a strong and positive team as a family unit that supports each other. However, Skye also spoke to the tension where the "family" unit can also mask a toxic workplace culture, where a staff is expected to step up, stay late, be on call, and make sacrifices for the family.

Skye is eager to develop her advocacy skills. She talks about how she has been quiet in the past not to rock the boat or be seen as a troublemaker. However, she now sees that being silent is a disservice to herself and others who are following behind her.

Rather than be intimidated, she wants to feel empowered in this work to change the trades. She is looking for a community of support. Living out of town, it's hard for her to come into Whitehorse for activities and events, however, she's keen to grow her

Reflective prompts

Considering Skye's story,

Co-workers on site: What are the everyday actions you can make to create an environment where skill sharing is normalized and promoted?

Supervisors: How do you create a workplace culture wherein skill sharing is normalized and promoted? How do you support the development of your upper-year apprentices and journeypeople to take on and mentor apprentices? How do you allocate time and physical space for apprentices and journeypeople to meet intentionally on a regular basis?

Employers/Boss: What values are you promoting on your worksite or in your company? How can you allocate tangible resources to support workplace coaching and mentorship, informally and formally? How can you connect your newly licensed journeypeople to other ticketed and experienced folks?

Service providers: How do you support her interest in advocating for workplace change, accountability, and cultural shifts in the trades? How do you create learning and networking opportunities for someone like Skye to learn the ropes of starting her own company?

network.

Fran

Fran is a food business owner in the Yukon. Coming to the skilled trades later in life, she has had experience and formal training in other lines of work, however, food has always been a passion interest. She chose to get trained in butchery and pastry arts outside of the territory and took those studies seriously. She brings an energetic spirit of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship to her work and takes pride in setting an example for her growing business and staff team.

Fran's food business has taken off in recent years and she attributes it to a few things. First, she was actively seeking mentorship and guidance from people she was meeting from the beginning of her training. People generously shared their time, documents, and processes to help her get her business idea rolling; she did not have to reinvent the wheel. Many of these early supporters were not just fellow women, but majority men! Because of this explicit early support, she generously gives her time to other small business entrepreneurs looking for a sounding board for their ideas and initiatives. Fran openly welcomes staff who are wanting to learn and develop their skills.

She also was supported by people who believed in her skills and emerging vision for a business that was responsive to local needs. She is also approached from time to time by women studying in other trades. Much of what she shares can be applicable to any line of work.

Fran takes staff development and training very seriously. She comes to her business with an explicit value orientation that is reflected in her supervision and mentorship approach with all staff. She wants each of her workers to feel a sense of belonging in the workplace. She does not tolerate bullies and models a supportive environment where people can be themselves and bring their whole selves to work. She wants every worker to use their voice and share their ideas. Fran believes that the best ideas come around when the team tackles issues together and talk things out. She believes in nurturing people's interests and creating a workplace where everyone's knowledge and skills are valued and can be shared. Even with her experience and training, she believes she can learn every day on the job. She is fortunate to have staff who want to return after their apprenticeship classes. Fran wishes there were more people who she could train up because demand continues to grow and the team can't keep up!

Fran is keen to meet with other business owners who want to promote positive workplace cultures. She believes that there are a lot of strategies and processes that can be shared amongst those willing to do that cultural change in their own spheres of influence. She believes that larger employers can also take the charge and believes that change should come from the top. All it takes is commitment and accountability. She believes that a group of employers willing to operate businesses different could serve as industry leaders in the trades.

Reflective prompts

Considering Fran's story,

Prospective workers / applicants: How do you communicate your desire to learn, be challenged and supported on the job when interviewing with a prospective employer?

Supervisors: How do you establish and maintain a culture of mutual respect, honesty, safety, and hard work? How do you hold workers to a higher standard of behaviour?

Employers/Boss: How do you create a culture of learning and knowledge sharing between workers from different ages, backgrounds, experiences and areas of expertise?

Service providers: How can we grow a network of workplaces and employers interested in shifting towards inclusive workplace cultures and systems?

Piloting Peer and Group Initiatives

The Doing It Right Project enabled YWITT to actively solicit ideas for our programming. As the CAL strengthened their relationships amongst each other and with community members through the interview process and first data collection phase, we also took to identifying and developing pilot initiatives. A core part of our team meetings were to imagine and ideate on ideas for programming. This included debriefing on things we heard from individuals and documenting emerging directions for pilot initiatives. All throughout this project, we maintained a reflective group process and kept written records of our ideation, planning, implementation, and evaluation discussions. As the project neared the end date, we engaged in another series of meetings to reflect and assess the impact of our pilot initiatives to build towards our theory of change / logic model. In the sections that follow, we offer snapshots, or summaries of the pilot initiatives.

Community Visits and Meet-Ups

Community Visit to Dawson City

With the goal of reciprocity in mind, visiting communities outside of Whitehorse followed our decentralized approach to the work. Remote and rural communities outside of Whitehorse can often receive less support from Whitehorse-based organizations, so it was important for us to continue to seed relationships and partnerships throughout the territory. We met with a wide range of community partners in Dawson City in April 2023. This included the Dawson Women's Shelter, members of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government, members of the Industrial Arts, Trades and Technology Society of the Yukon (IATSY), and community members who had come together to start discussions on a Dawson Makerspace.

During this visit, we discussed potential pilot programs with all parties. This engagement led to capacity building activities with local tradespeople, including a butcher who was enthusiastic to lead skill and peer-sharing opportunities and mentorship with the support of YWITT.

This pilot activity allowed us to explore the support that is needed to initiate piloting activities, especially those outside of Whitehorse, and the necessity of relationship building, showing up and offering tangible financial and human resource support that formulates the new organizational identity.

During this visit, we hosted an informal meet-up in the SOVA space in Dawson City, which was attended by 22 community members. During this meet-up, we offered a reflective activity for community members to offer optional engagement on potential programs or initiatives. There were also important discussions highlighting the gaps in training and trades journeys related to space, funding and skills development. We also

heard from community members that there is a need in Dawson City for women and queer folks to feel safe to navigate and learn trades-based skills.

Community Meet-ups

Community meet-ups within the organization were our response to feedback for women and gender-diverse members of the YWITT community. These community members expressed a need to have an informal space outside of programs and projects, as well as their workplaces, to connect with others and create shared community experiences.

YWITT's numerous community meet-ups provided the opportunity to generate informal feedback and interest on pilots; inform YWITT staff on emerging issues and areas of support within the community of women and gender diverse tradespeople; and grow the organization's impact and support for new directions. This snowball effect brought progressively more people into the organization who were curious about YWITT's new directions.

Early iterations of the meetup pilot happened at the local Boston Pizza. For the internal two staff members at the time, renting a public space and assessing community interest were the two main goals. There were 25 attendees of the first meet-up and 20 during the second. As the meet-ups progressed, individuals brought their partners, family members (including children), and friends.

Learning from the previous meet-up setting led us to our next initiative involving the newly hired team of Community Action Leaders at the Whitehorse Public Library. CAL members wanted the space to be accessible, dedicated and neutral. We employed a local tradesperson to cook and deliver food. Having multiple break-out tables and discussions led us to recognize the diversity of YWITT's community, across trades and identities. This led to our next two community meet-ups, which narrowed our range to be more specific with place and the needs of specific sub-groups.

We hosted an informal meetup over the lunch hour, for YWITT to connect directly with students across the Yukon University trades programs. This led to the Yukon University Trades Department hosting "coffee breaks", bringing all trades students together across disciplines weekly. Individual connection and rapport building occurred through these meet-ups, and new individuals began to reach out to YWITT to access services and support after initial connection was made with individuals within the organization.

The Queer Meet-up collaboration with Queer Yukon Society (QYS) was based on feedback from previous initiatives, showing a desire from participants to have a space that was dedicated to discuss the unique celebrations and challenges of 2SLGBTQIA+ tradespeople in our community. It was attended by 11 community members, 4 YWITT staff and 2 QYS staff. We received participant feedback on workshop topics and social

learning opportunities for a future Tradesperson gathering.

These community visits and meet-ups got us to think more broadly about how to set the tone for group events. We collaboratively created a set of community agreements to ensure we are transparent about creating safer spaces for all our community members to join in.

Community Agreement for YWITT's Events (est. 2023)

1. **Treating others with respect and dignity:** YWITT is committed to working towards an industry that sees trades and technology and all the people within it as important. We are committed to fostering harassment-free community spaces where all volunteers, employees, and community members are treated with respect and dignity.
2. **Equitable access to opportunity:** We want all people to experience access to training, promotion, success, and opportunity regardless of who they are or what their gender is.
3. **Positive learning environment:** We promote spaces where people can learn new skills, ask questions and be supported by invested mentors and leadership.

Employer Supports: Building Strong Leaders Conference



Building Strong Leaders for Skilled Trades: Promoting Retention was a one-day gathering on August 17, 2023. This event gathered participants to discuss a hot topic issue: retention in the skilled trades workplace. As an organization, our goal was to promote an equity lens to these conversations, planning, and action. As a team, in attending recent equity-focused gatherings, trainings, and conferences hosted in Whitehorse, we never encountered any tradespeople in those rooms. We wanted to host a space where people in the separate skilled trades and equity circles had the intentional opportunity to intersect, network, and learn from each other. Therefore, we invited staff from equity-serving and equity-oriented organizations and community partners [Queer Yukon, Yukon Legal Services Society, Yukon Human Rights Commission, Aurora Workshops] to support the event as facilitators and note-takers, where they could listen in on the conversations, meet with engaged employers and skilled trades leaders, and be present to informally share information and resources.

We focused efforts on promoting this all-gender event to local employers, human resource staff, skilled trades instructors, and interested skilled trades leaders and workers interested in management and leadership who directly engage with daily site and construction operations. Staff identified a list of 35 employers and sent personal invitations via email, over the phone, or in-person visits. We also ran event advertisements on local radio.

With approximately 30 participants in attendance, we moved through a thoughtfully designed interactive, collaborative, participatory, and action-oriented day.

Schedule	Activity
8.30 – 9.00am	Registration – Come early, enjoy breakfast and meet other leaders in the trades
9.00 – 9.15am	Opening Remarks: A message from the Honourable Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education and Minister responsible for womens Directorate Eleanor Fitzgerald
9.15 – 9.45am	Meet your crew: Lets celebrate the leaders in the room and think about how to connect with those who could not make it today!
9.45 – 10.45am	Hear from your team: Personal stories and hard facts about retention. Why does retention matter? What retention issues are we facing? How are we addressing them?
10.45 – 11.00am	BREAK TIME
11.00 – 12.30pm	Table Talks: We want to hear from you! Join solution-focused discussions about: Safety in the workplace Mentorship in the Trades Transformative Leadership
12.30 – 1.15pm	LUNCH
1.15 – 1.50pm	What did we hear? : Lets review the discussions and add any thoughts, what do you think could work at your workplace. what resources and recommendations are available.
1.50 – 3.15pm	Turning Talk into Action!! Let's identify concrete next steps! How do we lead positive change in the trades together?
3.15 – 3.30pm	Closing Thoughts: A message from YWITT Executive Director Liz Peredun, and final thoughts from the group.

The room was filled with positive energy, with attendees expressing a shared and focused interest in identifying actionable outcomes. People openly shared their reasoning and excitement for being there. Employers present expressed the values they promoted on their sites, including nurturing relationships to promote retention.

Sharing strategies for success: During table and whole-group discussions, a few well known industry leaders and business owners began to share the concrete ways, or strategies they are prioritizing their workers' wellbeing and mental health, and promoting work-life balance. This intentional approach to business ownership, boss-apprentice dynamic, and employee support fundamentally differed from what they received from previous bosses. Owners emphasized that these conversations are so necessary in this line of work.

Desire for creating a central place to access resources and training: The group identified topics for training included: microaggressions, trauma, conflict resolution, bystander intervention, advocacy, diversity, equity, and inclusion; sexual harassment

Naming the issue of retention: We heard from participants that some workplaces have had job postings up for journeypersons for over a year with no

responses. People anecdotally shared that outside recruitment efforts are ineffective, and that one intentional strategy could be to invest in training up the people who are already in the territory.

Most of the conversation centered on apprenticeship and workplace dynamics, with one participant sharing they wish we spent more time delving into the various issues affecting retention.

Next steps: We recognize the need to continue to create and nurture relationships with interested companies. We want to create a platform for employers to share success stories and strategies to demonstrate how small changes can make a big difference in the lives of tradespeople.

Should we continue this event, we believe more time to plan and implement would be helpful. For instance, we see the value in hosting a series of smaller focused events and conversations leading up to a larger group gathering.

Tradesperson Community Building: Tools for Change

Our event, Tools for Change, was a two-day community building gathering with interested tradespeople in the territory. We created this event to be open to all genders, creating a space to make equity and social change in the skilled trades a priority for everyone. We heard within our CAL meetings that there was an interest to include men in our community and advocacy activities and that men need to be actively supporting workplace- and broader culture change work in the skill trades. This event was an opportunity for us to enact the mission and vision of the organization through our collective action.

Tools for Change had four goals,

- Gather trades and technology workers of all genders across the territory to socialize
- Celebrate what makes these industries exciting and a great choice of work
- Reflect on how much change we've seen in the past decade, and
- Think about what changes we would like to see in the decade to come

An informal unstructured, family-friendly social event (Friday) was set up to host an opportunity for tradespeople to create new connections to build on in the Saturday structured sessions. We offered free food, and organized axe-throwing, face-painting, and a bonfire.

Saturday offered participants the opportunity for semi-structured dialogue and free-flowing interaction. As a group, we co-created a timeline of change in the territory's skilled trades sector. Using an unconference approach, we also identified topics of interest amongst the group. We invited a local artist to hold an interactive and

collaborative art activity that offered a tactile, creative exercise for people outside of the formal dialogue-driven tables.

The positive and buzzing energy from both days was infectious. While we wanted this event to offer an introductory dialogue space, we heard from many participants that they were eager to go deeper in these conversations and talk intentionally about solutions. In other words, they are ready, willing, and able to move with the organization towards the next level of conversation, strategizing, and action. The event offered our community members the space to dream and discuss the changes they want to see in the skilled trades.

Our intended outcomes were achieved:

- Participants left the event better connected to other people in the trades.
- The event helped the organization identify topics and issues that matter to participants.
- Participants left the event better connected to tools, resources, and supports.
- The event helped “warm people’s hearts to equity.”

On reflecting on the Tools for Change initiative, Community Action Leader Julaine Debogorski said, “No regrets!” We are proud of this effort and commit to organizing large gatherings for tradespeople to gather, grow their professional networks, talk about concerns close to their heart and in their workplace, and gain awareness and exposure to ideas and issues about equity in the trades. We believe one of the most important support tools we can offer people is community.

Turning inward and looking outward: Building a Theory of Change

After a year of active engagement and involvement through the Community Action Leaders, we took to an intentional internal reflection process to assess the changes that have been emerging for the organization. We engaged in a process to develop and test a theory of change and logic model to illustrate the work we are doing and aspire to do. This process was collaboratively led by Julaine Debogorski, Community Action Leader; Jodie McGregor, Community Action Leader; and Ruth Wilson, Research Consultant.

A theory of change (TOC) is a big-picture understanding of how and why an organization’s programs or services will lead to their intended or desired outcomes. YWITT’s TOC will help explain why the work we do individually and collectively will make a difference in the lives of women and gender diverse folks exploring and working in the trades. A logic model is a visual representation of the TOC. It is a map of how YWITT’s resources (also known as inputs) mobilize the organization’s day-to-day activities, how these activities connect to each other and the potential impact (also known as outcomes) we have on the trades & technology sectors.

Between December 2023 - January 2024, the team met regularly to plan the development process, learn about the value and purpose of TOCs; collect, review, and interpret data; and review and edit the logic model. The development process unfolded in two stages. In the first stage, we built the TOC and corresponding logic model. Specifically, we collected and analyzed data to gain insight into the scope of YWITT activities and how those activities lead to positive change. This data included a document review, qualitative interviews with staff and key community partners, data analysis and mapping, and model development. The second stage is currently underway. At this second stage, we are validating the TOC with YWITT staff and YWITT's board of directors. The purpose of the validation process is to test or interrogate the logic of the model.

Reflecting on the changing context of the organization

YWITT's vision is to build a "vibrant hub with community partnerships and programs that increase awareness, provide support and advocate for inclusion and equity in trades and technology career." The journey towards this vision is shaped by and is shaping the complex web of factors and actors that define the trades and technology landscape. It is not possible for us to draw a full picture of the social, economic, political and community-based forces that influence YWITT's work. However, we do want to highlight a few, more recent factors that were identified through our interviews with staff and partners.

YWITT is a part of a "small town" sector of non-profit organizations where personal relationships often intersect with professional relationships. These relationships lay the groundwork for partnership and community building in the Yukon. In response to an increasingly competitive funding environment, YWITT is focused on building more strategic partnerships with the hope that YWITT's work will complement rather than overlap with the work of other non-profit organizations, and in turn sustain their long-term and reciprocal relationships in the sector.

Conversations about equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the Yukon are more frequent and happening in both public and private sectors. However, both YWITT staff and partners have noted that interest in and conversations about EDI in the trades landscapes are a relatively new phenomenon.

As our organization matures under the leadership of a new Executive Director, our organizational strategy has shifted and as a consequence, the scope of our work has expanded. In recent years, we adopted a more advocacy-based approach to program development and community building. As part of this approach, YWITT's activities now come together to form a more holistic body of services and programs. While YWITT remains committed to supporting girls and young women as they explore and enter the trades, they have introduced three additional priorities over the last 3 to 5 years:

Gender Diversity in the Trades: Recognizing and valuing the experiences and contributions of people (youth & adults) who identify as non-binary, transgender and/or gender diverse.

More Adult Programming/Services: Facilitating more activities for adults who identify as gender diverse or women in two ways: 1) helping them navigate challenges and barriers in the trades (e.g. informal mentorship, one-on-one advocacy support), 2) building equitable, inclusive, compassionate and safer work environments (e.g. participating in planning & policy discussions), and 3) providing safer spaces to access tools, community, and support.

Industry Leaders & Men in the Trades: Strategically engaging and supporting men and industry leaders in their equity journeys through public education and advocacy (conferences, workshops, resource development) and providing them with the tools they need to be better allies.

Our Theory of Change and Logic Model

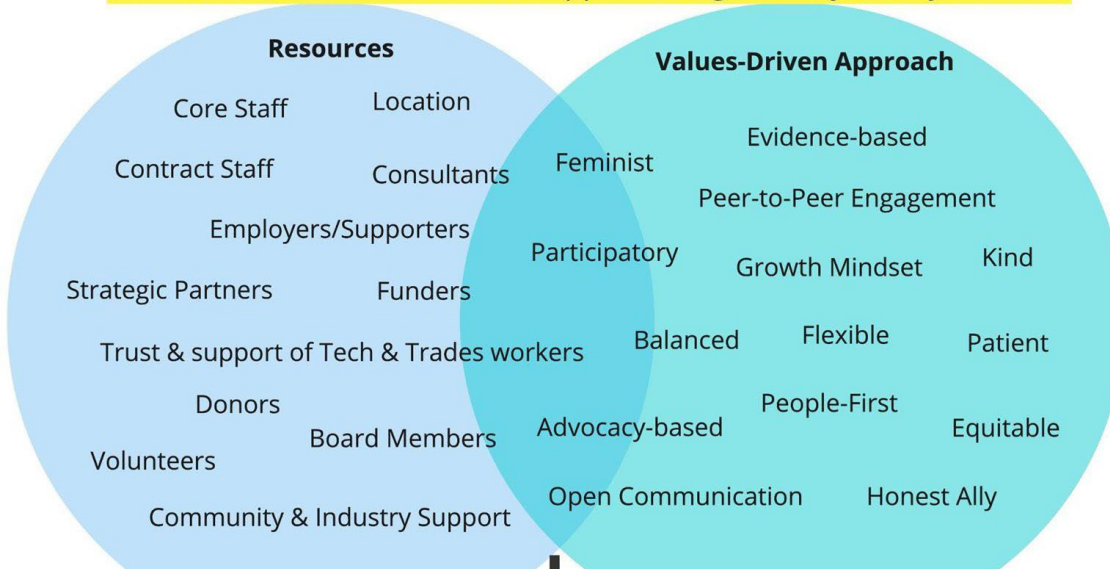
Our current theory of change and logic model helps YWITT to map our **organizational inputs**, financial, human, and material resources that support our day-to-day programs and services. We more clearly identify our **activities** across three pillars, 1). Internal organizational development, 2) Programming that support individual tradesperson's journeys, and 3) broader strategies to build equitable, inclusive, and compassionate workplaces and communities. Building on these activities, we are now able to clearly define our individual-, employment-, community-, and system-level impacts for our community members.

Inputs

What are inputs? Inputs represent the resources (financial, human, material) that come together to support the organization's day-to-day activities (programs and services).

INPUTS

The resources and values that support and guide day-to-day activities



YWITT's inputs can be described at two levels:

- a) the resources, specifically money and people, that are mobilized into action and bring YWITT staff closer to achieving their vision
- b) the set of values and principles that guide their work, including their approach to leadership, program/ service delivery, resource allocation, and community building.

Three Pillars of Activities

What are activities? Activities represent all the day-to-day actions taken to move the organization in the direction of their vision. Examples of activities can range from financial planning to partnership building to workshop delivery.

For a relatively small non-profit organization (4 full-time staff, 2 regular part-time staff), YWITT engages in a wide range of activities that span across the following three broad pillars of action:



- 1) Internal facing activities to support **organizational development**.
- 1) External facing activities to support **individual journeys** of girls, youth, women and gender diverse folks of all ages in the trades and technology sectors.
- 1) Strategies and related activities to build equitable, inclusive, compassionate & safer **trades & tech communities**.

Under each of these pillars, the activities are broken down into numerous subsets. We offer a closer look into each category in the sections that follow.

Pillar 1: Activities to support organizational development

This section of the logic model captures activities that support organizational development, and organizes them into two interrelated areas of work. The triangle on the left outlines activities that set the organization on course to **operate a sustainable and equitable organization**, including (but not limited to):

- risk management
- financial management
- human resource management
- governance & compliance
- volunteer coordination
- funding proposal writing & reporting
- fundraising
- YWITT brand development



Activities listed in the triangle on the right point to the range of formal (e.g. staff trainings, evaluation) and informal (e.g. reflection, debriefings) strategies to **nourish a culture of co-learning and growth** in the organization, including (but not limited to):

- facilitate ongoing cycle of reflection-action-change on equity in the organization and in the trades & tech more broadly
- formal & informal co-learning & cross training opportunities with/for the YWITT team (e.g. formal trainings for staff & board, professional development resources & opportunities)
- informal & formal needs assessment
- tracking & evaluation

Many of these strategies follow a participatory, experiential approach to co-learning through which staff identities, experiences, and knowledges are valued, exchanged and mobilized throughout the organization. Finally, these activities support and are supported by operational efforts to sustain an equitable organization.

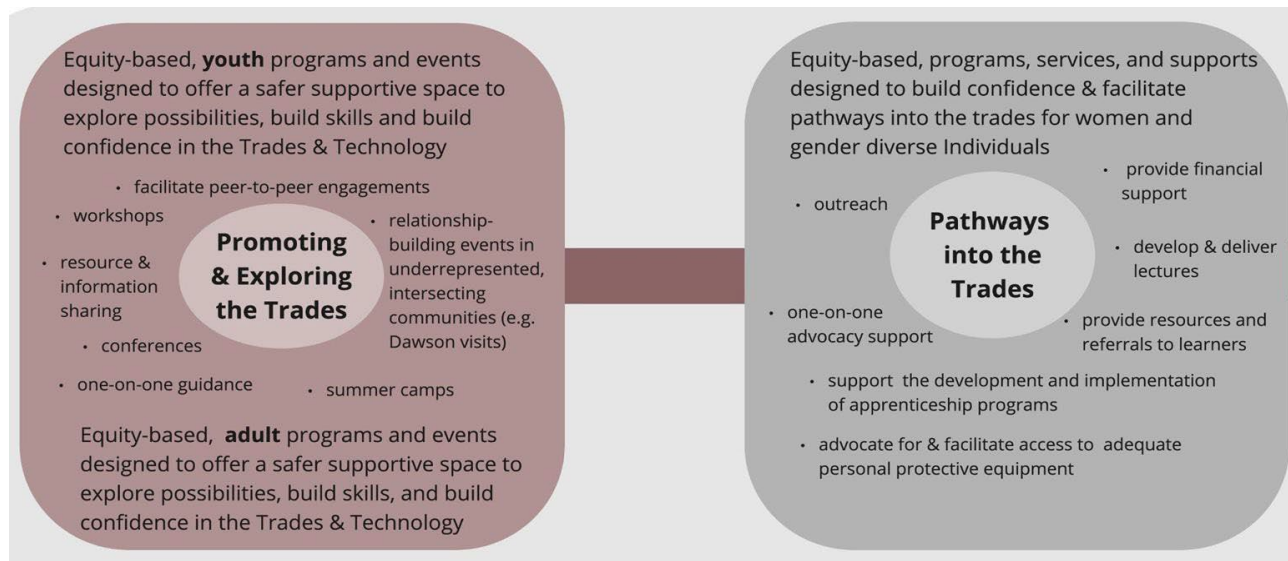
In theory, these areas of work, and the day-to day activities that define them, will lead to a series of **immediate organizational outcomes** that signal positive change to the benefit of the organization and ultimately enhance the work they do. Specific outcomes of these activities include:

- Organization moves closer to a shared power & horizontal leadership model
- Staff, board members & volunteers feel invested, supported, balanced, valued
- Staff & board members feel confident in their ability to 1) speak truth to power, 2) engage in public education, advocacy, community advocacy, and 3) model/defend YWITT's values
- YWITT continues to be recognized as a safer and trusted space for women and gender diverse folks to gather, share their experiences, and feel valued
- Organization and staff are better positioned to support the individual journeys of women and gender diverse folks as they explore, enter, and navigate the trades & technology sectors
- Organization and staff are better positioned as experts & advocates with the capacity to build equitable & compassionate communities in the trades and technology sectors

Pillar 2: Activities to support individual journeys of girls, women & gender diverse folks of all ages in the trades and technology sectors

Almost all of the partners we spoke with recognized YWITT's ability to keep their "ear to the ground" and create deep connections to workers in the field as the organization's biggest strength.

This is credited to - at least in part - their long history of engaging and supporting the journeys of girls, youth, women and gender diverse folks of all ages as they move in and out of the trades and technology sectors. Their journeys and the YWITT activities that support them are organized into the following four areas:

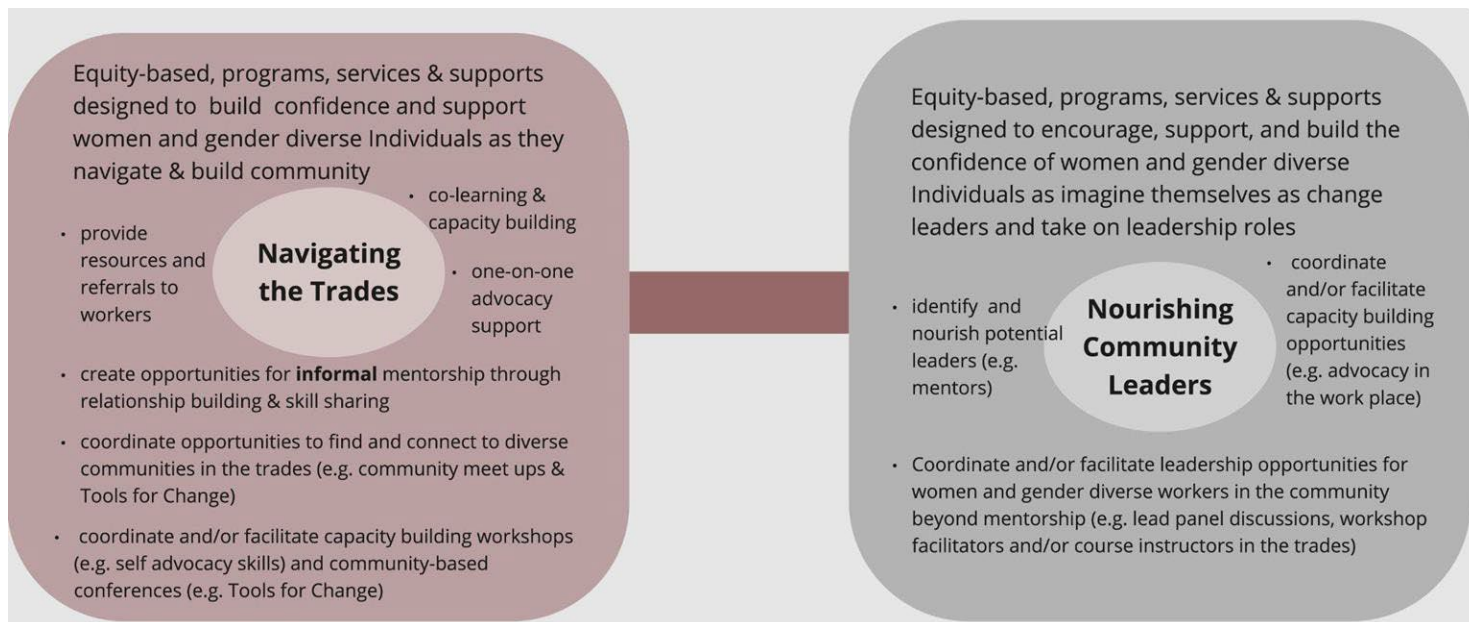


Promoting and exploring the trades: YWITT coordinates and/or facilitates a diverse range of programs and events that provide a supportive space for youth, women, and gender diverse folks to explore possibilities, build confidence and skills in the trades. Activities include (but are not limited to):

- experiential workshops for youth (e.g. Power-Up!) and adults (e.g. YWITT Makers Club)
- conferences (e.g. YWET - Youth & Women Exploring the Trades)
- Camps (e.g. week long summer program & support Youth Moving Mountains)
- resource & information sharing
- Informal, adhoc one-on-one guidance & peer-to-peer engagement
- Relationship building events in underrepresented, intersection communities

Pathways into the trades: YWITT offers a number of equity-based programs, services, and supports designed to facilitate pathways into the trades for youth, women, and gender diverse folks throughout their education/training and as they launch their careers. Activities include (but are not limited to):

- Financial support (e.g. Penny Raven & Work Boot Bursaries)
- advocate for & facilitate access to adequate personal protective equipment
- Support the development & implementation of apprenticeship programs for women & gender diverse folks through Yukon University
- Provide capability building support to apprentices
- Indirectly support Yukon University's student outreach efforts
- one-on-one advocacy support for students & apprentices during their training and for women and gender diverse individuals searching for work in the trades
- Provide resources and referrals to students & apprentices



Navigating the trades: This is an emerging area of work for YWITT staff. Part of YWITT’s work includes equity-based programs, services & supports designed to build confidence and support women and gender diverse Individuals as they navigate & build community. Activities include (but are not limited to):

- Develop resources, offer referrals and provide one-on-one advocacy support that will help workers address or navigate challenges and barriers
- Create opportunities for informal mentorship through relationship building & skill sharing
- Coordinate and/or facilitate co-learning & capacity building opportunities to give trades workers the knowledge and tools they need to advocate for themselves and others in the workplace
- Coordinate opportunities to find and connect to communities of women and gender diverse folks in the trades (e.g. community meet ups & Tools for Change)
- Coordinate and/or facilitate capacity building workshops (e.g. self advocacy skills) and community-based conferences (e.g. Tools for Change)

Nourishing community leaders: This is another emerging area for work for YWITT staff. In the recent years, YWITT has leveraged their grassroots connections in the trades community to encourage and nourish women and gender diverse folks to imagine themselves as change leaders and take on leadership roles in the trades. Leadership in this context is not limited to and in fact moves beyond formal leadership to include informal roles such as mentors, allies, workshop facilitators, and advocates in the workplace. Activities include (but are not limited to):

- Identify seasoned trades workers with leadership potential, nourish them to act as informal mentors, and connect them to apprentices and other workers in need of support
- Coordinate and/or facilitate capacity building opportunities for women and gender diverse workers interested in taking on leadership roles in the community and/or in their industry
- Coordinate and/or facilitate leadership opportunities for women and gender diverse workers in the community beyond mentorship (e.g. lead panel discussions, workshop facilitators and/or course instructors in the trades)

Pillar 3: Strategies and related activities to build a more equitable, inclusive, compassionate & safer trades & tech environments

ACTIVITIES

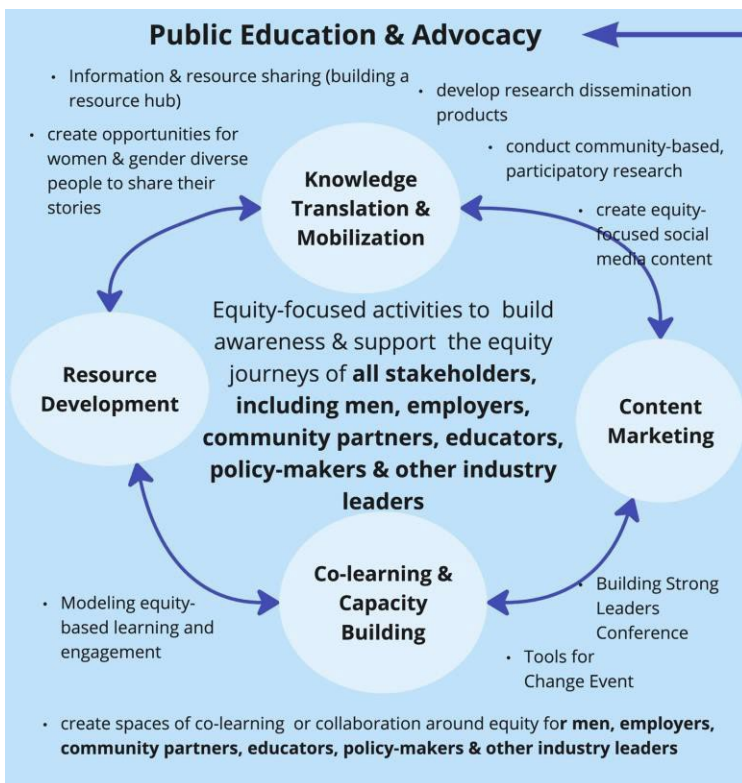
Strategies and related activities to build a more equitable, inclusive, compassionate & safer **trades & tech environment**

Public Education & Advocacy

Community Building & Organizing

This final pillar extends YWITT's focus beyond the individual journeys of potential and existing trade workers towards change at the levels of employment, community and system. These are activities dedicated to building more equitable spaces in the trades & tech where women and gender diverse folks feel included, safer and valued. Activities in this pillar are organized into the following two areas of work: a) Public Education and Advocacy, and b) Community Building & Organizing. The diagram makes note of the reciprocal relationship between these two areas (marked by the two-way arrow that connects them). In other words, YWITT's activities in public education and advocacy will influence their efforts to build and organize community and vice versa. The dotted line between these two areas point to the possibility that activities on one side may also fulfill the purpose of strategies on the other.

Public Education & Advocacy: YWITT engages in a series of activities to build awareness & support the equity journeys of all stakeholders, including men, employers, community partners, educators, policy-makers & other industry leaders. The range of activities that define this area work reflect four key, interconnected strategies that contribute to the organization's commitment to public education and advocacy.



- 1) YWITT values multiple ways of knowing and forms of knowledge including knowledge generated through formal research, community dialogue, arts-based facilitation, and activism. A portion of YWITT's activities are dedicated to **translating and mobilizing this body of knowledge** across different audiences and to engage different stakeholders.
- 1) YWITT's knowledge translation and mobilization efforts lay the foundation for **resource development** in both existing evidence and lived experience.
- 1) Part of YWITT's public education and advocacy efforts include programs and events designed to facilitate **co-learning, capacity building & collaboration** opportunities for men, employers, educators, policy-makers and other industry leaders.

- 4) In the future, YWITT hopes to locate resources to support activities dedicated to **content marketing**. This work entails packaging organizational knowledge into accessible and strategic messages and then creating and sharing these message in the form of videos, podcasts, social media posts and other public platforms

Activities in this area can span across the four strategies and include (but are not limited to):

- Model equity-based learning and engagement at community events and partnership meetings
- Create spaces of co-learning or collaboration around equity for men, employers, community partners, educators, policy-makers & other industry leaders (e.g Building Strong Leaders & Tools for Change conferences)
- Coordinate workshops and consultations that include men, industry leaders, community partners, educators and policy makers to support their equity journeys while in dialogue with women and gender diverse folks
- Conduct community-based, participatory research & disseminate research findings
- Information & resource sharing (building a resource hub)
- Regular engagement across social media platforms



Community Building & Organizing: This area of work captures the day-to-day efforts of staff to connect, build and mobilize all stakeholders in the direction of positive social change. Similar to their work in the areas of public education and advocacy, YWITT's community building and organizing activities follow four, interconnected strategies:

- 1) YWITT has increased their efforts to develop and sustain meaningful and reciprocal relationships through **partnership building and networking**.
- 1) Through partnership and networking, YWITT staff are facilitating **cross-sector collaborations** with an eye to addressing barriers in the trades and tech and filling gaps in policy, programs and services.
- 3) Successful cross-sector collaboration requires **community engagement**. These are processes (facilitated by YWITT staff) through which actors across sectors (community, government, industry) learn about, imagine and commit to a shared vision of a more equitable trades and tech community in the Yukon.
- 3) Finally, with hope of expanding community engagement, YWITT's activities include **community outreach** efforts to increase their presence in and build relationships with hard-to-reach and/or underrepresented, intersecting communities (e.g. women and gender diverse people from First Nations communities and/or living smaller cities or towns outside of Whitehorse).

Activities in this area can span across the four strategies and include (but are not limited to):

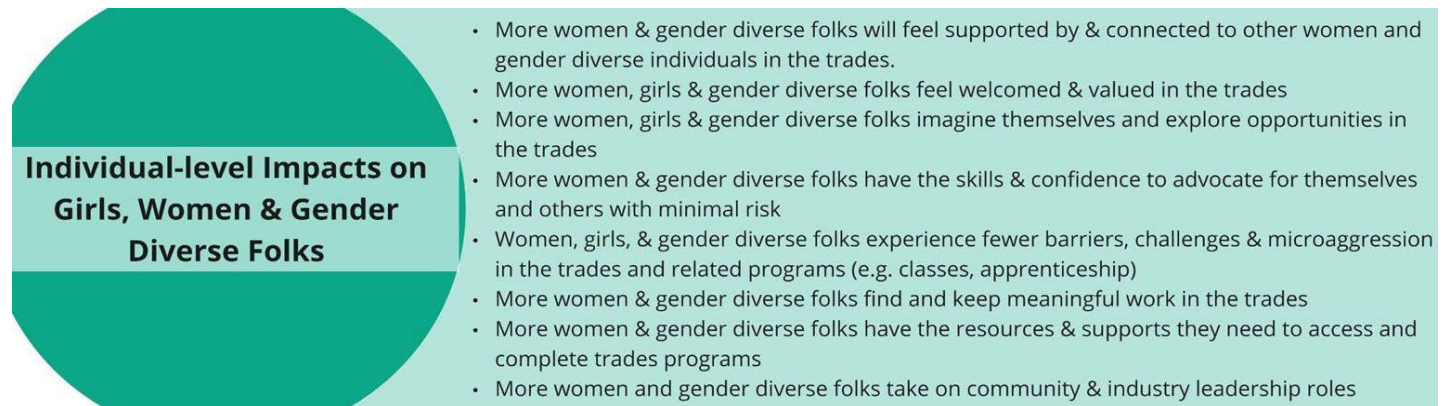
- Coordinate & facilitate community meetings or meet & greets with underrepresented, intersecting communities (e.g. Dawson City visits)
- Participate in planning and policy discussions across sectors (e.g. Trades & Tech Committee)
- Facilitate opportunities for communities to connect, dialogue, exchange knowledge, and organize (e.g Building Strong Leaders & Tools for Change conferences)
- Support equity-focused, community partners in their efforts to build connections in the trades (e.g. LDAY workshop at Tools for Change conference)
- Support, promote and celebrate organizations & leaders doing equity & anti-oppression work
- Represent the trades and tech sectors at equity-focused, community-based events
- build relationships and engage underrepresented, intersecting communities

What are outcomes?

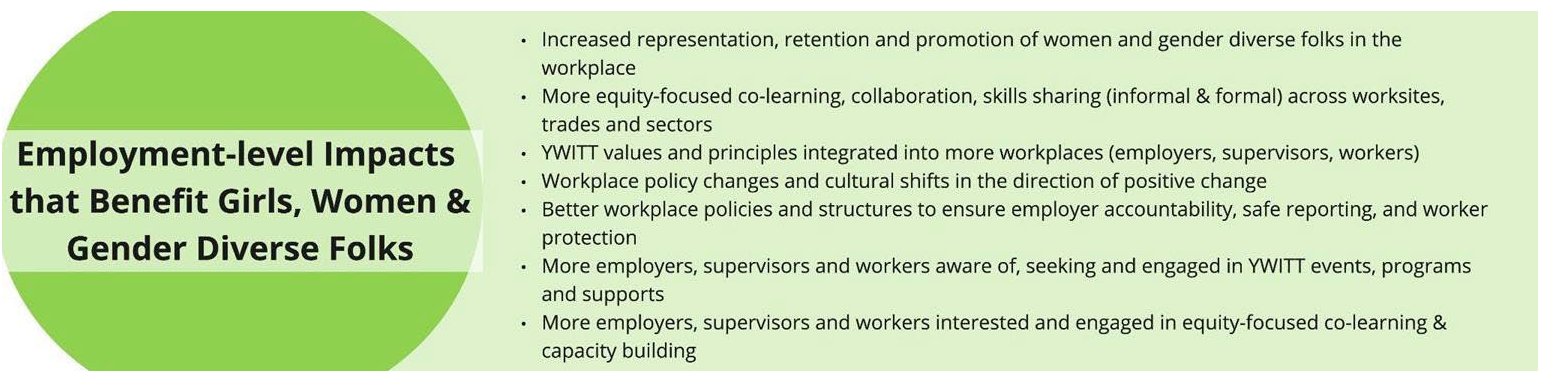
Outcomes are the changes expected to happen as a direct or indirect result of activities. These are the signs that an organization's services, programs or events are working well and are having a positive impact on the communities they serve. For example, the intended outcomes of YWITT's community meet-ups may include **more women and gender diverse people feeling supported by and connected to other women and gender diverse individuals in the trades.**

We can think about outcomes in terms of time. For example there are changes we will see right away or right after an activity is over (immediate outcomes), there are changes that might happen over 6 to 12 months after our activities (intermediate outcomes), and there are the long-term impacts (1 year +) of our activities. It is also possible to think about outcomes that happen at different levels. For example, an organization's activities might create change at the individual level, community level and system-level. In YWITT's logic model, outcomes are organized into four levels of change: individual, employment, community & system.

Individual-level outcomes: Through our interviews with YWITT staff and partners, we were able to identify several individual-level outcomes (see diagram below). Individual-level outcomes are changes in personal beliefs, perspectives, behaviours or circumstances as a result of organizational activities. Specifically, these are the positive impacts YWITT activities have (at least in theory) on girls, women and gender diverse folks interested or working in the trades.



Employment-level impacts: Impacts at this level can be understood as positive changes in nature of employment and workplace relationships in the trades and technology sectors . These impacts are signs that employers and worksites are evolving into a more equitable, inclusive, compassionate and safer space for girls, women and gender diverse folks. For example, co-learning equity focused workshops with supervisors can lead to increased representation, retention and promotion of women and gender diverse folks in the workplace.



Community-level impacts: Impacts at this level can be understood as positive changes in local communities, specifically the communities of trades & tech workers, their families, their supporters, and the people who share in the benefits of their work. These impacts are signs that trades & tech communities in the Yukon are evolving into a more equitable, inclusive, compassionate and safer space for girls, women and gender diverse folks. Community-level impacts noted in the model should be directly or indirectly related to YWITT activities. For example, an annual conference to facilitate dialogue across stakeholders, including men, may lead to greater awareness among men in the trades of inequities that affect women and gender diverse individuals. Impacts at this level can have ripple effects that support positive change at the individual, employment and system levels. For example greater awareness among tradesmen (community-level) can lead to more women and gender diverse folks feeling valued in the workplace (individual-level).

Community-level Impacts that Benefit Girls, Women & Gender Diverse Folks

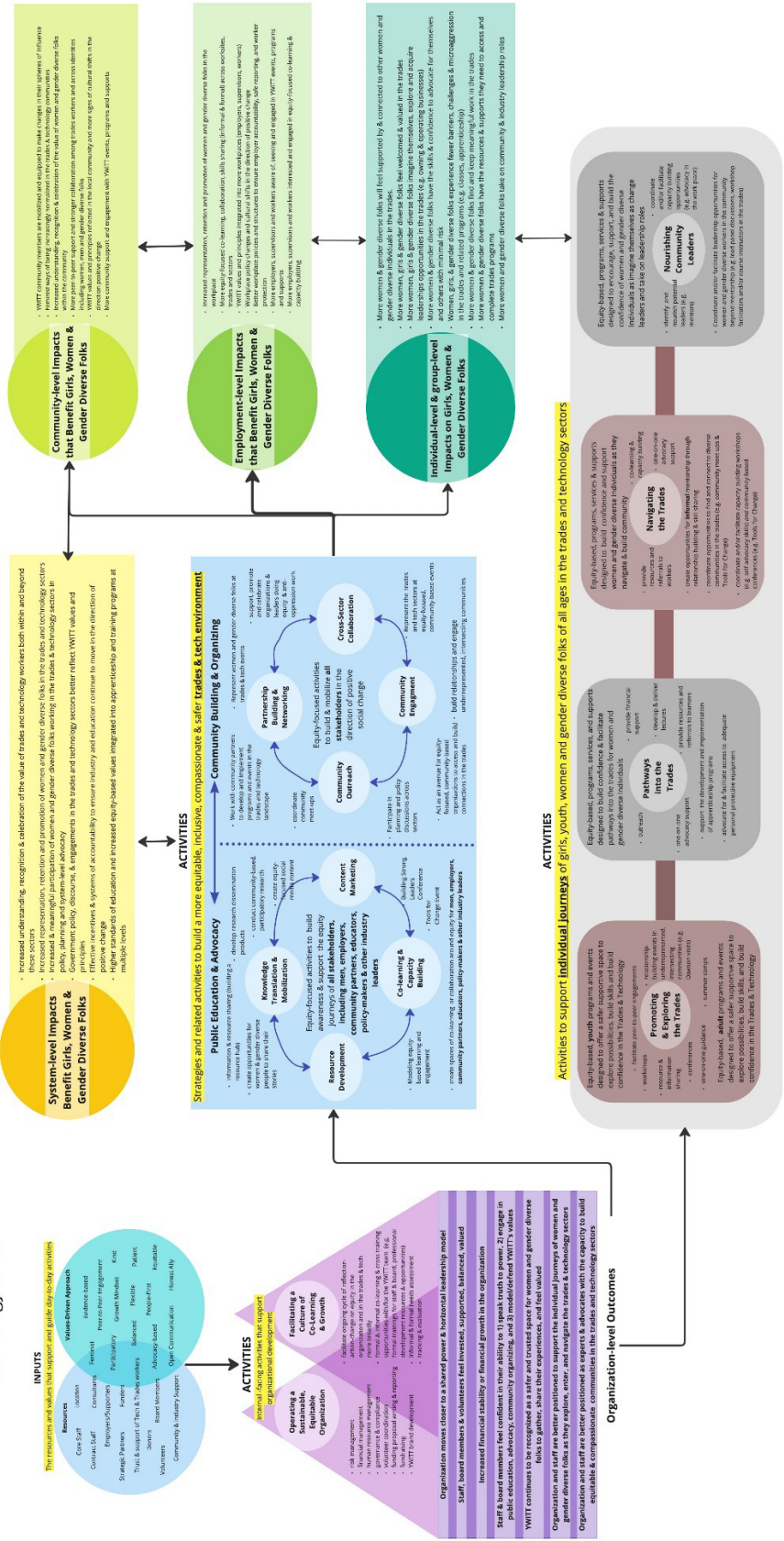
- YWITT community members are mobilized and equipped to make changes in their spheres of influence
- Feminist ways of being increasingly normalized in the trades & technology communities
- Increased understanding, recognition & celebration of the value of women and gender diverse folks within the community
- More peer-to-peer support and stronger collaboration among trades workers and across identities including women, men and gender diverse folks
- YWITT values and principles reflected in the local community and more signs of cultural shifts in the direction positive change
- More community support and engagement with YWITT events, programs and supports

System-level impacts: System-level impacts refer to the impacts of YWITT activities designed to address system-level barriers and advance structural change over time. For example, findings from YWITT's research report may lead to better workplace policies that support women and gender diversity folks and in turn facilitate cultural shifts in the trades. Changes at this level have lasting effects and will lead to positive change at the individual and community levels.

System-level Impacts Benefit Girls, Women & Gender Diverse Folks

- Increased understanding, recognition & celebration of the value of trades and technology workers both within and beyond these sectors
- Increased representation, retention and promotion of women and gender diverse folks in the trades and technology sectors
- Increased & meaningful participation of women and gender diverse folks working in the trades & technology sectors in policy, planning and system-level advocacy
- Government policy, discourse, & engagements in the trades and technology sectors better reflect YWITT values and principles
- Effective incentives & systems of accountability to ensure industry and education continue to move in the direction of positive change
- Higher standards of education and increased equity-based values integrated into apprenticeship and training programs at multiple levels

VISION: YWITT is a vibrant hub with community partnerships and programs that increase awareness, provide support and advocate for inclusion and equity in trades and technology career



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Appendix A– Community Action Leader job posting

Community Action Leader (5 positions)

Location: Whitehorse, YT and/or Virtual, with possibility for remote work within the territory

Wage: \$30 per hour, casual work

We're looking for 4-5 enthusiastic individuals to join our *Doing It Right* team as Community Action Leaders! These are new positions, so we want to hear from people from a wide range of experiences. Please keep reading to see if you're a good fit or if you're interested in learning more.

WHO IS YWITT?

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology (YWITT) is a Whitehorse-based non-profit organization with partnerships and programs that increase awareness for women and girls in trades and technology. We support women to explore, enter in, and succeed in skilled trades and technology careers by offering individualized support and community-oriented programming. Now in our 22nd year of operations, we are focusing our attention on developing our support and training opportunities for adult women and gender diverse folks who do not identify as men.

YWITT's Doing It Right Project is our ongoing research-to-action project that mobilizes women and gender diverse tradespersons working in skilled trades to form a supportive community; develop and share strategies for peer and group support; and work together to move our collective ideas into action.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY ACTION LEADER?

Have you worked in the skilled trades or technology sectors?

Love meeting new folks and maintaining connections?

Enjoy working in a supportive team environment?

Energized when gathering people together, socially or professionally?

Want to take action on issues facing women in the trades or technology sectors?

Want to see a diverse, equitable, and inclusive skilled trades industry in the territory?

For YWITT, a community action leader is someone who identifies as a woman, non-binary or gender non-conforming person who has personally trained and/or worked in the skilled trades or technology sector in the Yukon. Community action leaders bring their lived experience, unique perspectives, and community connections to this project, help steer its direction, and lead community organizing, as well as action-implementation activities.

What does the work look like?

Community engagement

- Nurturing relationships with women and gender diverse tradespeople, using phone, email, social media, and in-person meetings
- Identifying people, workplaces, groups and organizations to connect with, using word of mouth, cold-calling, and online searching
- Planning community engagement activities, including visits to organizations and workplaces
- Co-organizing and co-hosting activities, meet-ups and events, in Whitehorse or on community visits

Action / Implementation

- Facilitating group meetings, focus group discussions, and/or individual interviews, independently and/or with support
- Starting and/or supporting new project(s) with interested community members, workplaces, and/or organizations
- Taking notes at or after meetings and documenting ongoing work using words, pictures, video, or other creative means
- Soliciting oral and/or written feedback from different people about our activities and events
- Sharing your ideas, ongoing feedback, and reflections as part of our project learning and team process

What is the time commitment?

The position requires more or less 5-7 hours per week, between October 2022 to July 2023. The hours and time frame are flexible, where there can and will be some weeks where we do not report hours. There may also be weeks where you can work more hours.

Community action leaders will be invited to attend paid orientation and training workshops starting in mid-to-late October 2022. Some of these hours will be done independently, others in a group context. We are open and flexible with your work schedule, given your other work, family, life, and community commitments. We anticipate that the team will work some select evenings or weekends, particularly for events.

Where you will be working

Our office is based out of Whitehorse, though we are open for some of this work to be done remotely. For those with capacity and availability, this work may include visiting communities, so it's a big plus for us if you are connected to other towns and nations outside Whitehorse.

What else you can expect

- Learn and practice community organizing, community building, engagement, and qualitative research (action-implementation) skills in a supportive environment
- Work with a growing team and organization
- Opportunity for mentorship from supportive staff
- Become a part of a larger network of people and organizations committed to supporting women and gender diverse folks enter and stay in the skilled trades

We seek applicants who:

- Identify as a woman, non-binary, trans, and/or gender diverse person with lived experience within the Yukon's skilled trade and technology sectors
- Knowledge of/experience with working with women, gender diverse folks, and/or the skilled trades is a definite asset
- Experience and/or interest in organizing activities and gatherings is an asset
- Experience and/or interest in group facilitation is an asset

How do you apply?

Email your resume and cover letter to Liz Peredun at ed@yukonwitt.org by September 28, 2022. In your cover letter, in 200-300 or so words, tell us

- What excites you about joining this project
- What previous work, volunteer, or personal experiences align with the role
- What you are hoping to gain from this experience working as a community action leader with YWITT
- Anything else you would like to share

Please feel free to email, call, or text Liz at ed@yukonwitt.org or (867)667-4441 if you have any questions related to this post, or require any support to get your application to us.

Please note: Anyone who can legally work in Canada can apply for this job. If you are not currently authorized to work in Canada, the employer will not consider your job application.