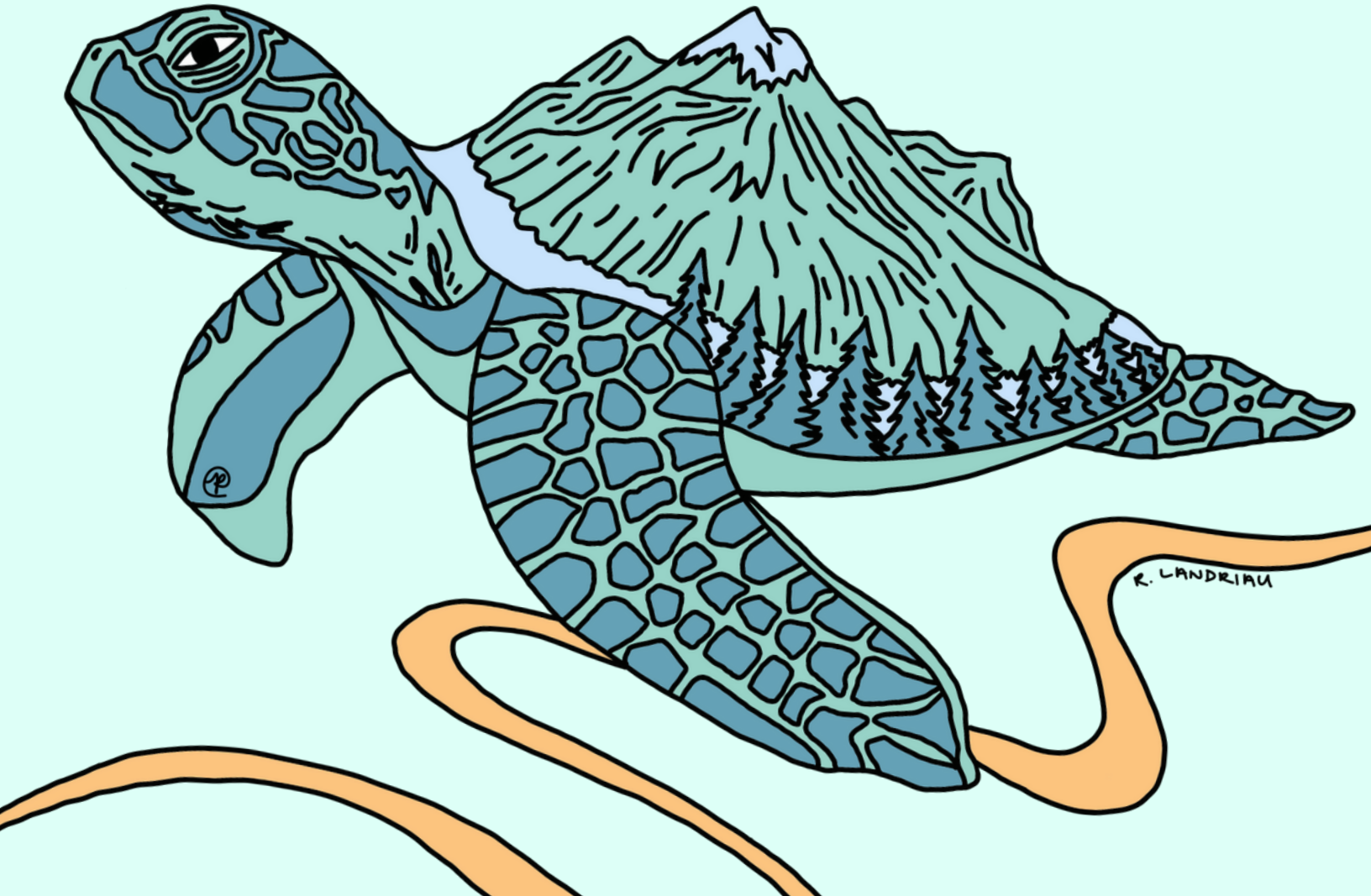
RAD

COLLAB

toolkit for radical change

Designed by Rae Landriau
@createchangecollective

This zine was developed as a product of Youth Climate Lab's RAD Cohort, and includes insights directly from RAD participants. The zine was developed on stolen land across Turtle Island. As settlers, it is important to recognize that we operate on stolen land that was taken through violent acts. As we organize around anti-racism and decolonization, we recognize the ways in which our presence on this land upholds colonialism and reproduces dispossession and violence against Indigenous people. We commit to working and learning more about how we can prioritize upholding the conditions of the treaties that govern this land. Through our actions, we hope to honour all Indigenous communities and peoples across Turtle Island, who are the traditional guardians of this land, past, present, and future.



Some very special thanks to Youth Climate Lab co-founder Dominique Souris for bringing radical collaboration to life at Youth Climate Lab and developing the language for these principles, values, and key reflection questions, and to RAD Alumni Mariana Salazar and former Community Specialist John Beckles for co-developing this toolkit over the past year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

05 about the rad cohort

07 centering around environmental and climate justice

09 what is radical collaboration?

12 principles of radical collaboration

20 addressing the problems

22 goals of radical collaboration

23 what values should be included in rad collab?

26 dimensions of radical collaboration

29 partnerships for the goals

From Summer 2021 to January 2022, 10 Canadian youth, of different identities, ethnicities, and walks of life, all motivated by climate justice, came together with open minds to experiment in the RAD Cohort, a program aimed to foster and highlight the importance of youth-led radical collaboration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while integrating a justice-oriented approach to the 2030 Agenda.

RAD Cohort was a space for radical collaboration in practice, that took its shape and was molded by the participant's own curiosity to deepen their climate knowledge and develop collaboration skills. Participants engaged in the experience through a variety of facilitated spaces, including

- guest learning sessions on climate justice, SDGs & other topics
- leadership development workshops
- arts-based activities and unconventional knowledge-sharing sessions
- team building exercises

R - RESEARCH

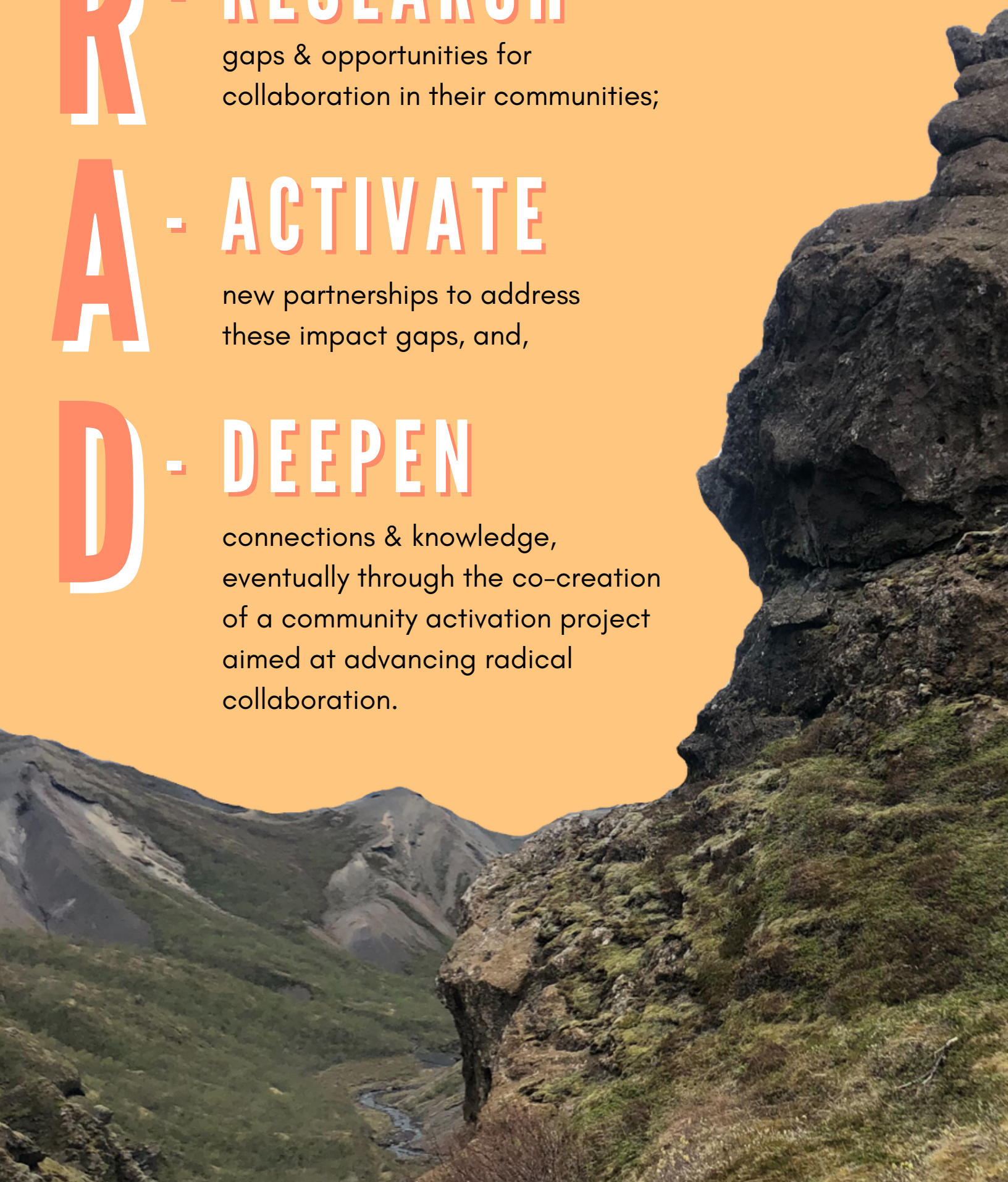
gaps & opportunities for collaboration in their communities;

A - ACTIVATE

new partnerships to address these impact gaps, and,

D - DEEPEN

connections & knowledge, eventually through the co-creation of a community activation project aimed at advancing radical collaboration.



CENTERING AROUND ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE JUSTICE

We all depend on the physical environment and plentiful bounty.

Resource extraction, fossil fuel-driven energy production, and other human activities have caused the release of contaminants into the environment and been the cause of climate change.

The goal of environmental and climate justice work is to address the many practices that are harming communities nationwide and worldwide, while centering those who experience the most consequences of this harm. Working together to advocate for changes in policies to rectify these impacts and advance a society that fosters sustainable, cooperative regenerative communities. With the aim of upholding all rights for all people in harmony with the earth

We recognize how climate change is a symptom of historical and intersecting systemic forces at play, such as colonialism, racial capitalism, and patriarchy—the same issues that cause and perpetuate violence towards BIPOC communities.

"the grass is greener where you water it"

- Neil Barringham

COLLABORATE (VERB)

COL·LAB·O·RATE | \ KƏ-ˈLA-BƏ-ˌRĀT

... to work jointly with others or together, especially in an intellectual endeavour

... to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected

RADICAL

RAD·I·CAL | \ ˈRA-DI-KƏL \

... very different from the usual or traditional

From Merriam-Webster

WHAT IS RADICAL COLLABORTATION?

Radical collaboration is based on a key principle from design thinking. It speaks to co-creation and is inspired by the desire to learn from others and embrace diverse perspectives within the processes of problem-scoping, idea generation, solutions finding, and innovation. It allows us to work with others in ways that are open-ended, non-conventional and non-traditional, to spark transformative action and solutions through unusual and unexpected connections for current environmental problems within our communities.

Reflection Questions

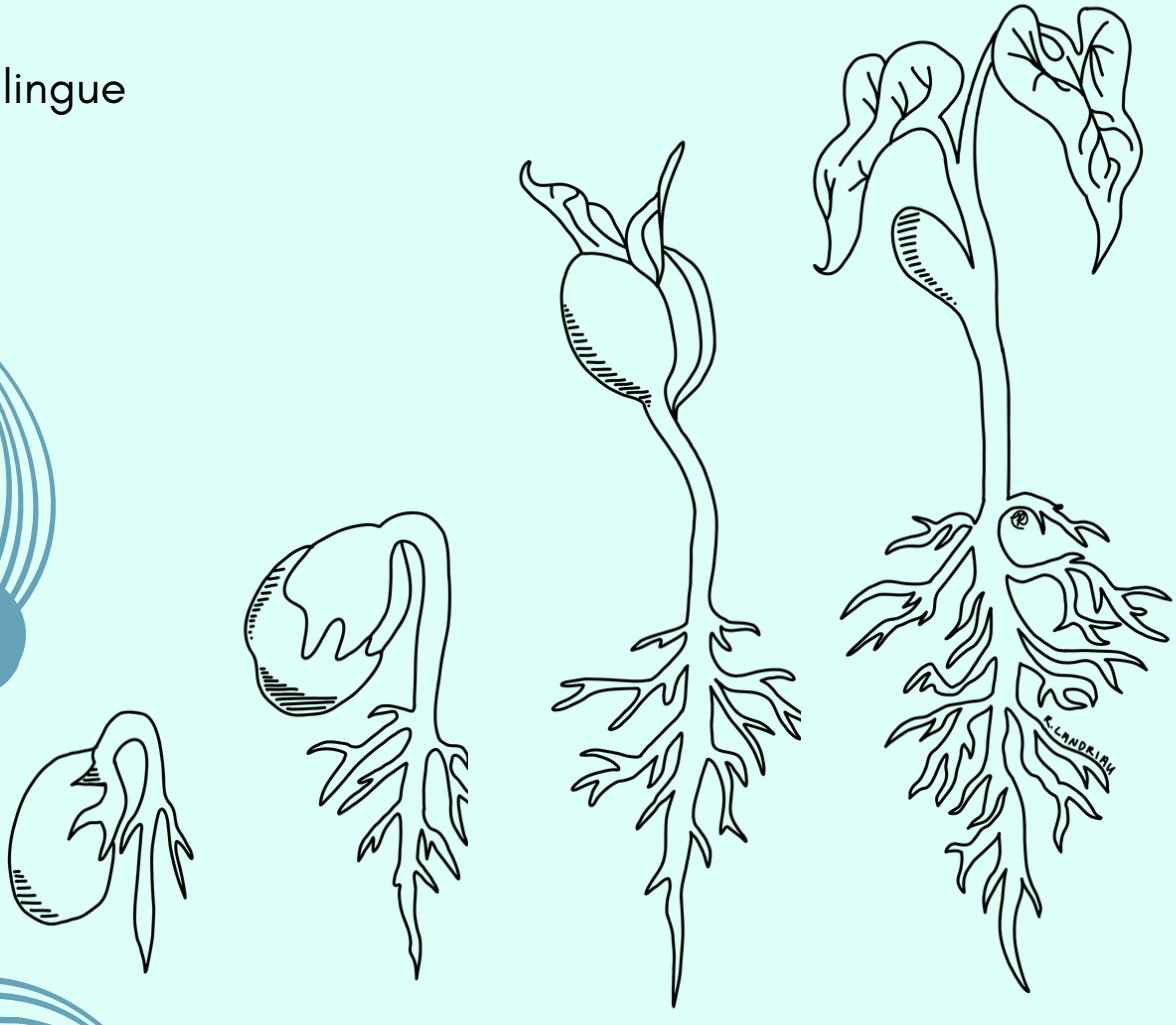
What makes collaboration “radical”? How do we do justice to the depth and historical context of radical action? Where does activism fit?

"The root of the word "radical " is root.

What if rather than treating "radical" as some form of outlier or extreme, it is a reminder of how we root ourselves, reconnecting to the root of what is core, nourishing and foundational in our work.

Our radical selves affecting the fundamental nature of our work and the world we create by how we form the root of fundamental change."

via @josebilingue



ROADMAP TO RAD COLLAB

Youth First

Disruptive

Creative

Catalytic

Inclusive

Equitable

At YCL, we are guided by these 6 principles of Radical Collaboration

YOUTH FIRST

"The bigger our connections, deeper our conversations, and spaces to bring our skills together, the farther we can dream and put those dreams into action."

- Marina RAD cohort participant

Involves collaborations that prioritize the needs and efforts of youth as they build just, climate-resilient futures. Taking the time to center youth in these vital conversations.

CREATIVE

Seeking partners who are excited about experimenting with new approaches, and who recognize that complex, ambiguous problems require unusual intersections. Breaking the mold and expanding the realm of possibilities.

principles of RAD collab

INCLUSIVE

By acknowledging and working through systemic biases, Youth Climate Lab seeks to think beyond ourselves, asking questions like "who is not sitting at this table and how can we make space for them". We thoughtfully welcome people from all walks of life into often hard-to-navigate climate spaces.

"I will accept the things
I cannot change
and change the things
I cannot accept"

- Angela Davis

DISRUPTIVE

Working with partners who are willing to make the radical change necessary to secure a just and climate-resilient futures.

Reflection Question

Does radical collaboration, by definition, mean collaborating with the powers that be?

CATALYTIC

Our partnerships amplify strong, existing initiatives and spark new and unique programs - ensuring that we use our resources as effectively as possible without doubling efforts in the climate space

EQUITABLE

We recognize our privilege and seek to leverage our positionality to support and amplify the voices and solutions of youth, particularly youth of marginalized identities, on the frontlines of climate change.

RADICAL COLLABORATION

" [radical collaboration is] open-ended, it's always building on itself. You are always going to catch yourself learning new things by connecting their experiences to yours. And new perspectives come out of nowhere. It's also so important to truly be non-prejudice and come with an open mind and heart.

- Mariana RAD cohort participant

Reflection Question

How do we bring people together?
Who do we bring together?

- Youth tokenized and not fully integrated into decision-making/ solution mechanisms (there's a lot of lip service)
- Insights are developed (youth summit, youth reports, etc.) but never sourced
- Increased tendency for partisan and polarization amongst stakeholders
- Catering to the same youth (e.g. not captivating hard-to-reach sectors, indigenous youth, or low-income populations)

- Recreating the process to carve out places for input
- Created conditions that enable meaningful contributions from a diverse set of stakeholders
- Finding unconventional ways, collaborations, and mergers with the aim of arriving at solutions (in our case, to address the climate crisis)
- Develop innovative solutions and see them through
- Facilitating systems change / accountability (ie. corporations)

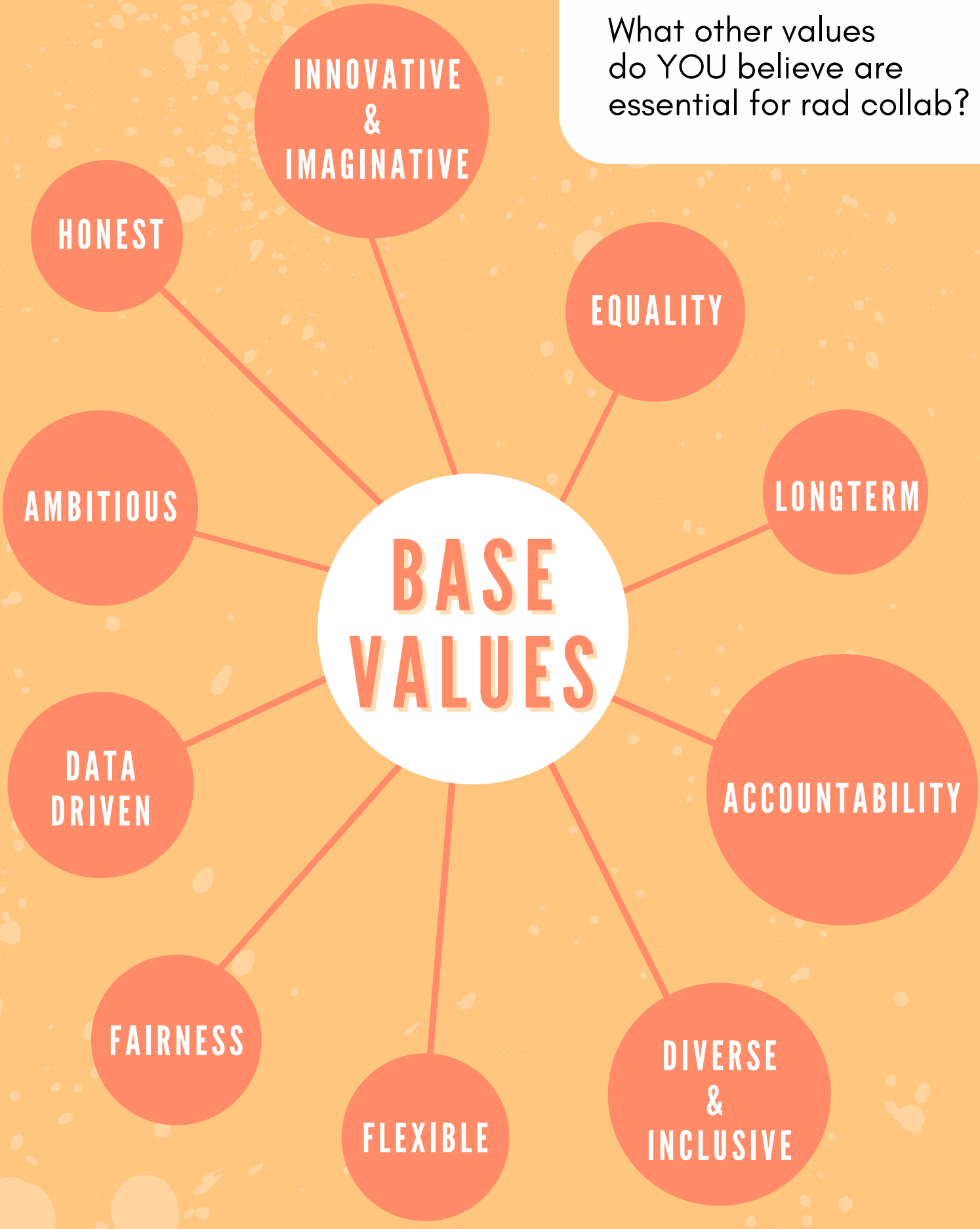
THE * GOALS * OF * RAD * COLLAB *

Reflection Question

Does rad collaboration mean tearing down the status quo? Or does it mean making slow progress considering that inclusiveness/collaboration is important for a long-lasting change? Is it both? And, if so, how do you strike that balance?

Reflection Questions

What other values do YOU believe are essential for rad collab?



WHAT DO THESE VALUES INCLUDE?

Fairness: somebody doesn't reap all the benefits

Equality: parties are all treated with respect and all voices are welcomed/ considered. Youth perspectives are integrated in a meaningful way!

Diverse & Inclusive: Not just the usual suspects; includes actors from different backgrounds, sectors, etc. (even though even actors may be interested in different outcomes and want to participate for different reasons); listening to the most affected

Innovative & Imaginative: Shifts paradigms; the status quo is not enough. "Think as if there is no box!!!!" - John Beckles

WHAT DO THESE VALUES INCLUDE?

Data-driven: focused on assessing the landscape before collaboration and measuring impact afterward; learning from mistakes of the past. Embracing complexity & researching local nuances/ landscapes

Honest: calling out bullshit, being honest with oneself and each other about what's working/ what's not working, asking the hard questions and being truthful about it (note: calling out process is different from calling the content)

Longterm: not burning bridges

Flexible: empowerment, allyship

Accountability: action has to be taken; there needs to be follow-through

Reflection Question

What really is stopping us from holding the global superpowers accountable for their actions and inactions?

DIMENSIONS OF RAD COLLAB

- Learning from data and actors that are ‘not the usual suspects
- Understanding who is in the room and who we are representing/serving is key (key personas)
- Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of each party
- Recognizing their overarching goals as individuals/ organizations (and doing our best not stepping on each other toes)
- Finding where our impact will be the greatest
- Getting alignment amongst partners: If we can align on a goal right off the bat, that’s great! If not, aligning on values or asks/offers

Reflection Question

Is it about shifting the priorities of the people in power?

Acknowledging that some partners may:

- Have the same goal but different approaches, or never align with your goals and values... “They are never going to be convinced!” (know when to walk away)

- Creating new/safer spaces for everyone

- Integrating safety measures for people who are susceptible to harm & violence (systemically or personally)

dimensions of RAD collab

HOW CAN WE ENGAGE IN RADICAL COLLABORATION?

by inspiring young people to force change in a respectful way

together we have collective power

creating space to include others in the discussion

trying a new mindset/ perspective when looking at a problem

by reaching beyond our normal networks

finding new ways to be more inclusive

minimizing barriers to participation

by being open to change and iteration

Asking who's not at the table

actively seeking new opportunities to connect and network with folks

taking time and not rushing to conclusions or decisions

building meaningful relationships

finding ways to ensure all parties have the opportunity to show their strengths

having the option to be involved at every step

ensuring that there is room for growth

how can we bring people together

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

1. Connect with local and grassroots organizations
2. Give community members decision making power
3. Work with (and around) social constraints
4. Use financial power to distribute funds on the ground where possible

To make progress on any SDG, we need to dive deep into the local context, to understand how culture and circumstances affect action.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

THIS TOOLKIT WAS MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF:

RESEARCH · ACTIVATE · DEEPEN

RAD COHORT

CREATE CHANGE COLLECTIVE

Canada

ALLIANCE 2030