



Applying Evidence (in Complexity)

THE J.W. McCONNELL
FAMILY FOUNDATION

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Session Overview

1. Introduce WellAhead
2. Evidence & WellAhead
3. Innovation and Complexity
4. Developmental Evaluation
5. Conditions for Developmental Evaluation

J. W. McConnell Family Foundation

Founded in 1937, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation applies innovative approaches and collaborative action to build a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Canada.



**SUSTAINABLE
FOOD SYSTEMS**



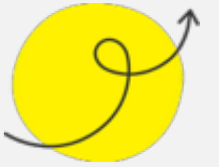
CANADA'S ECOFISCAL COMMISSION
Practical solutions for growing prosperity



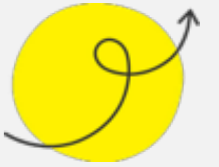
**THE CIRCLE
LE CERCLE**



WellAhead



- > 5-year national philanthropic initiative
- > Initiated by the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation and supported by other partners
- > Interest in improving child and youth mental health
 - Universal, upstream approaches
 - Schools as an ideal setting to reach young people
 - Social-emotional wellbeing – contributes to positive mental health as well as future success
- > Many efforts to introduce wellbeing to schools, but not being effectively scaled or sustainably integrated into school communities

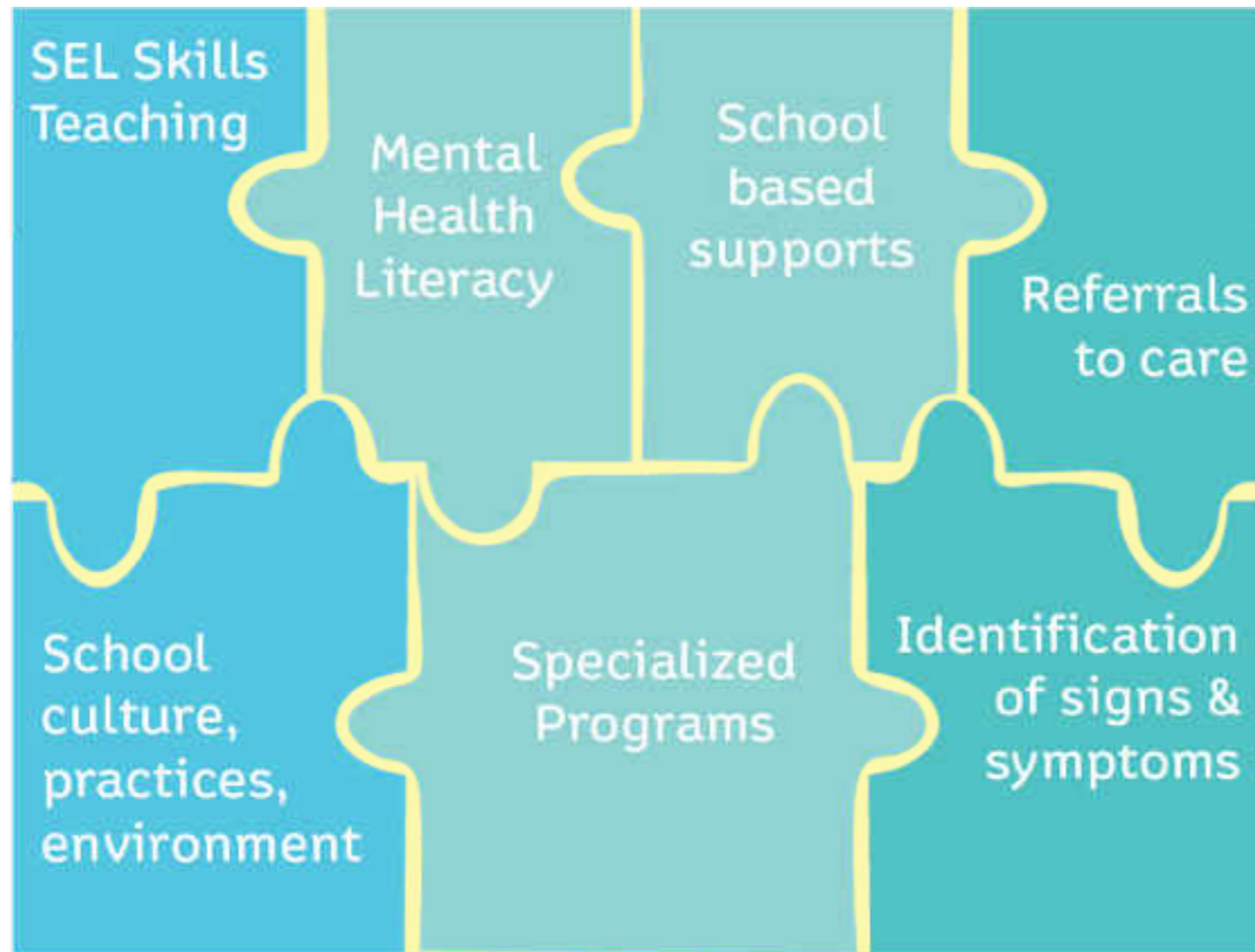
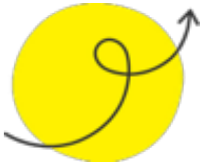


--> How to integrate wellbeing into school communities?

- No easy answer or “silver bullet”
- Experimentation before implementation
- Need to influence and mobilize multiple stakeholders at multiple levels, and multiple dimensions (culture, practices, policy)
- Each province/territory is unique, as is each school district/board underneath

--> In 2015, we began work in BC, prototyping a participatory change process (modelled on social innovation labs) with a focus on “everyday practices” that support wellbeing

Year One Focus: Everyday Practices



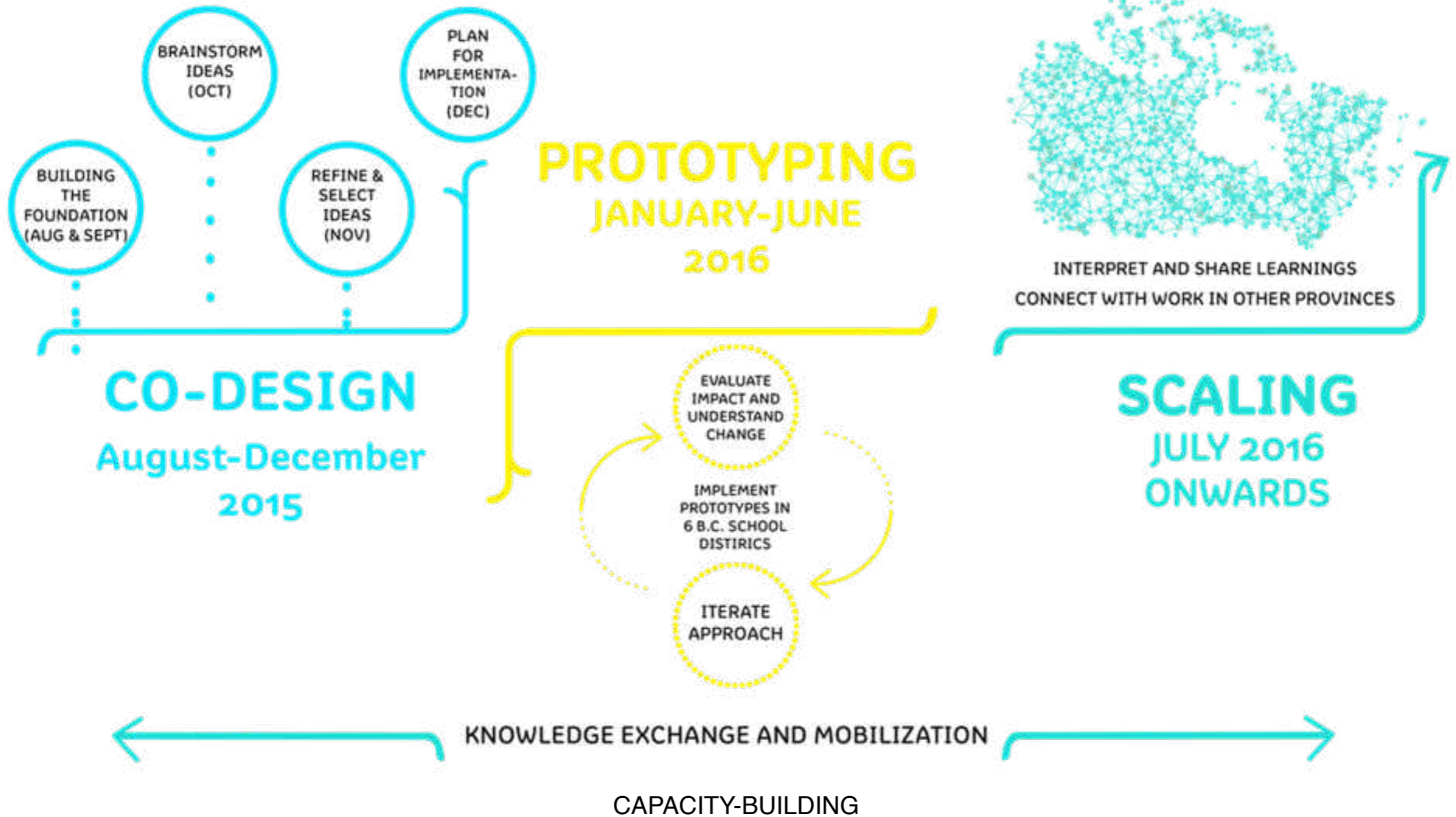
Everyday Practices

Health Promotion
Universal
Tier 1

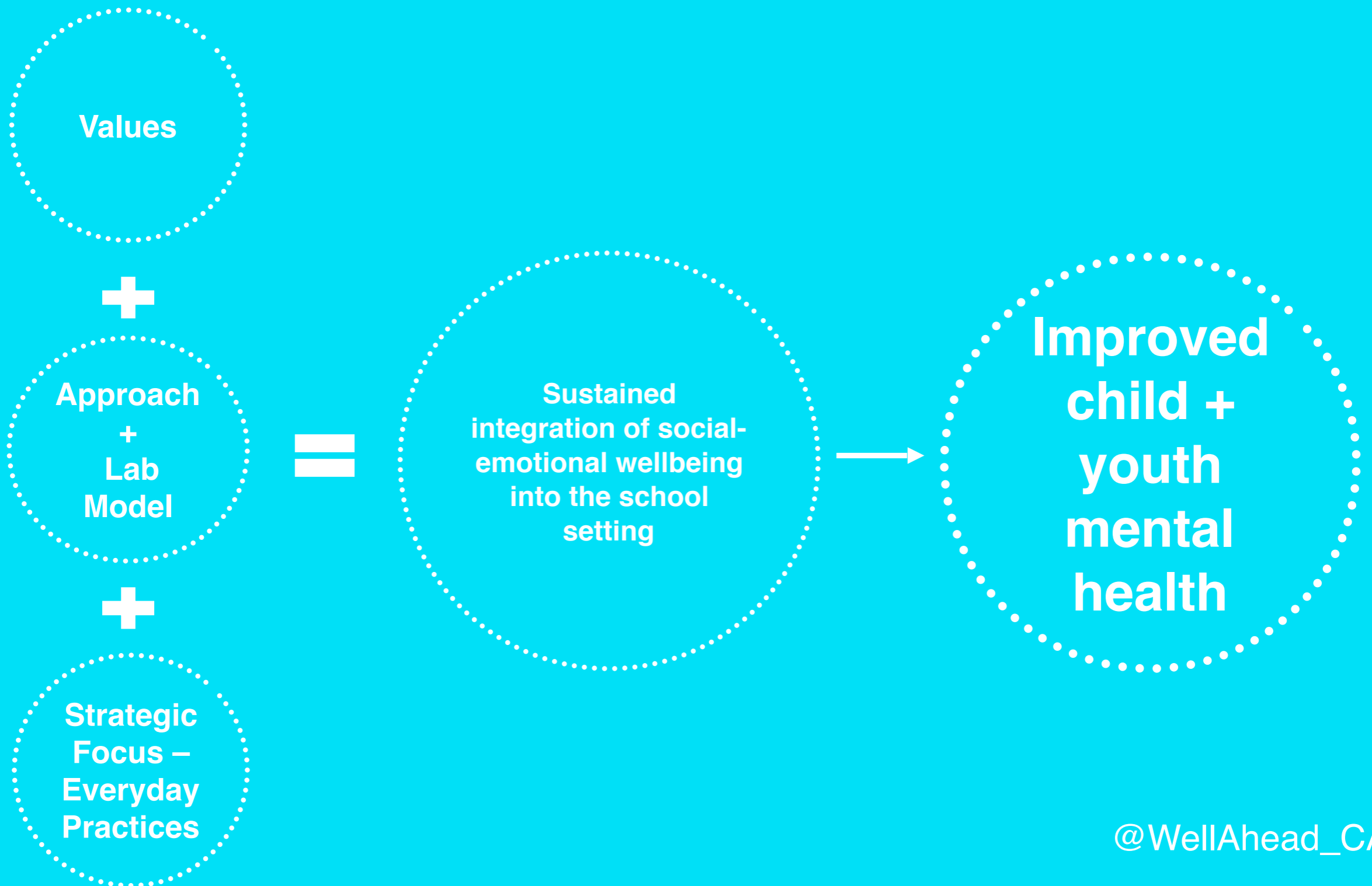
Prevention
Indication
Tier 2

Early Intervention
Targeted
Tier 3

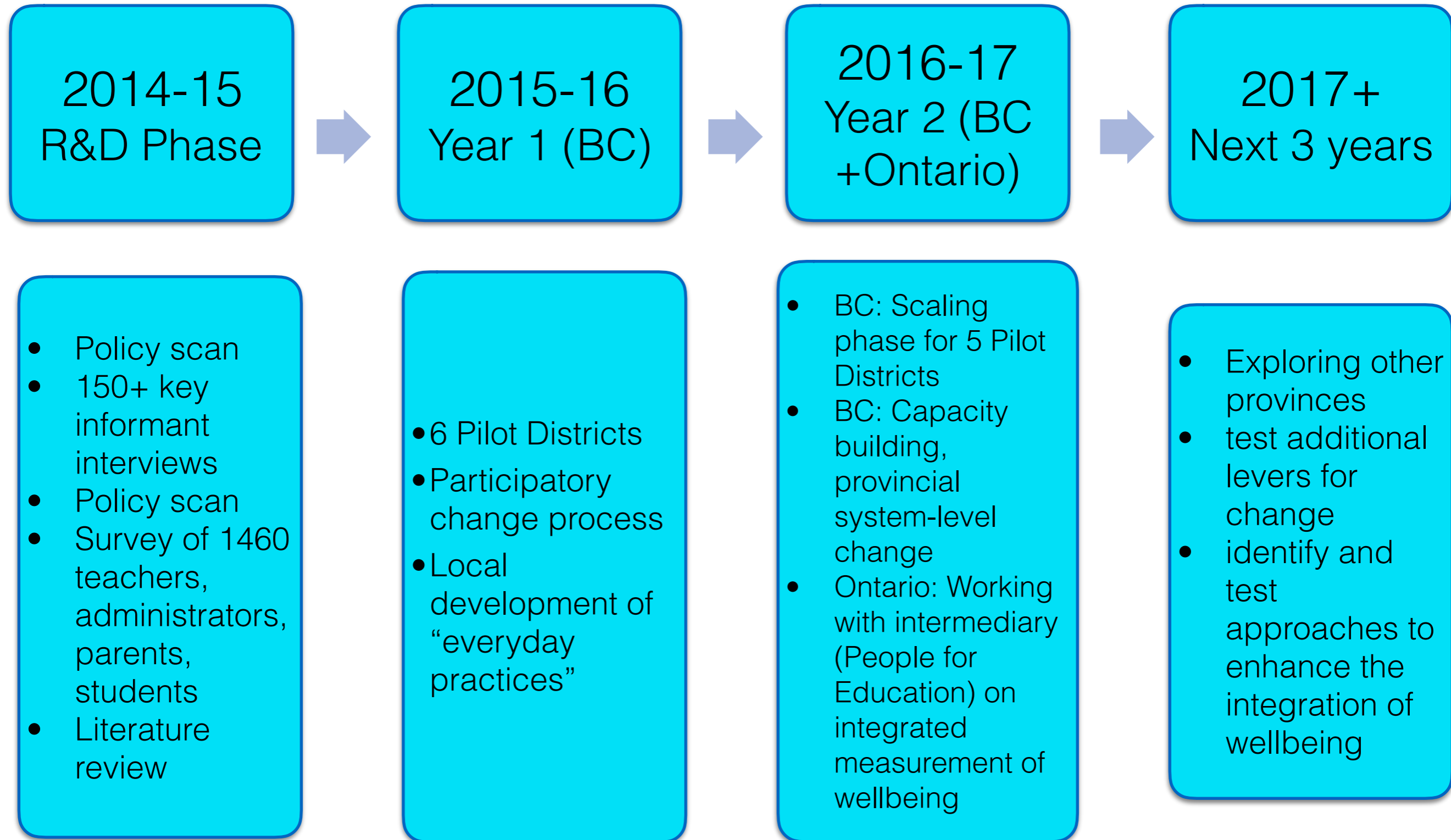
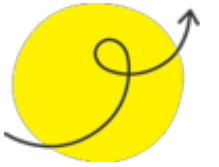
Approach



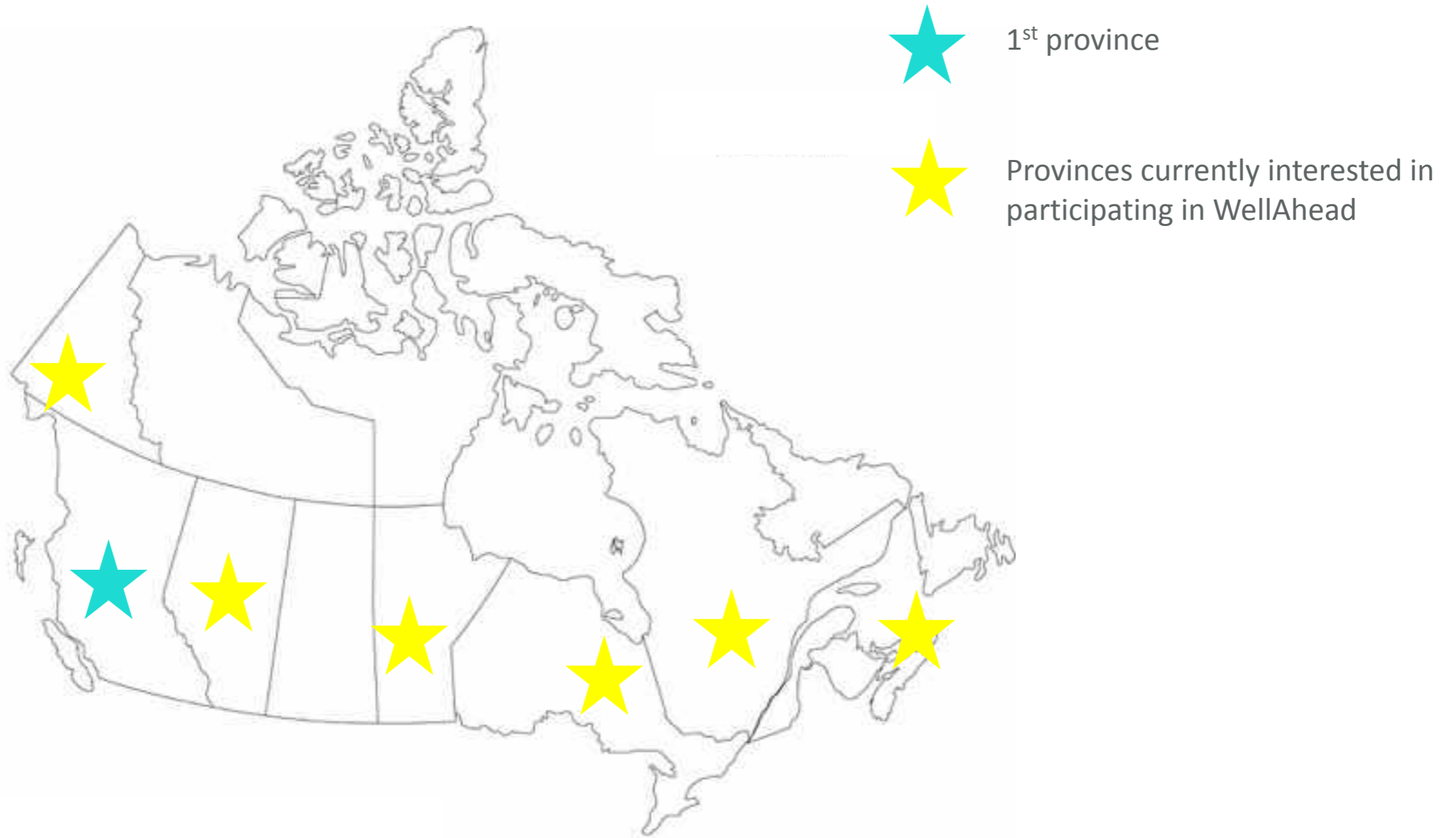
The design of BC Year One



Timeline



National Initiative



WellAhead & Evidence

Published Research highlights the importance of WellBeing

- Positive mental health can effectively be promoted in schools (SBMHSA Consortium, 2009)
- Strong connection between wellbeing and academic achievement (ASCD and CDC, 2014)
- Connectedness to adults at school a strong predictor of success (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2014)

WellAhead & Evidence

WellBeing remains underdeveloped and under-prioritized within the school system

- Canadian children have a poor wellbeing ranking (ranked 17th out of 29 wealthy nations by UNICEF)
- 97.7% of 1460 WellAhead survey respondents felt that wellbeing was very or highly influential to future outcomes, but only 47.4% felt their school put a strong or very strong emphasis on wellbeing
- 84% of Canadians believe teachers have an essential role to play in the mental health of students they teach (Ipsos Reid 2014)
- 76% of Canadians feel that schools in their province need to do more to ensure that students have an emotionally safe environment in which to learn (Ipsos Reid 2014)
- There is an over-emphasis on mental illness, and less on positive mental health, upstream approaches, societal wellbeing
- Programs don't achieve scale: Many programs/initiatives designed to promote wellbeing, but they are difficult to get into "every" school

Systems Paradox

Evidence highlights the importance of wellbeing

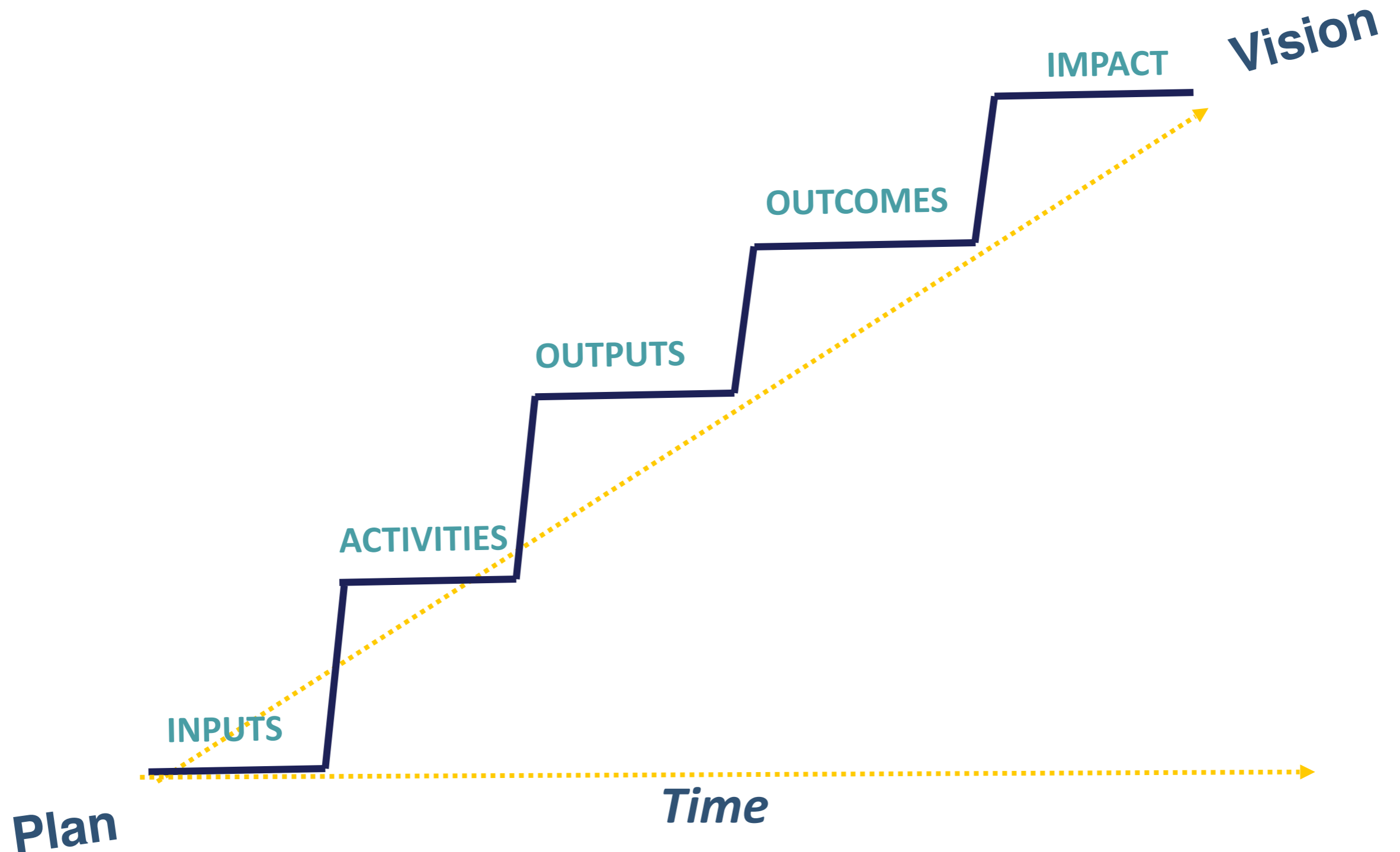
Wellbeing remains underdeveloped and under-prioritized within the school system



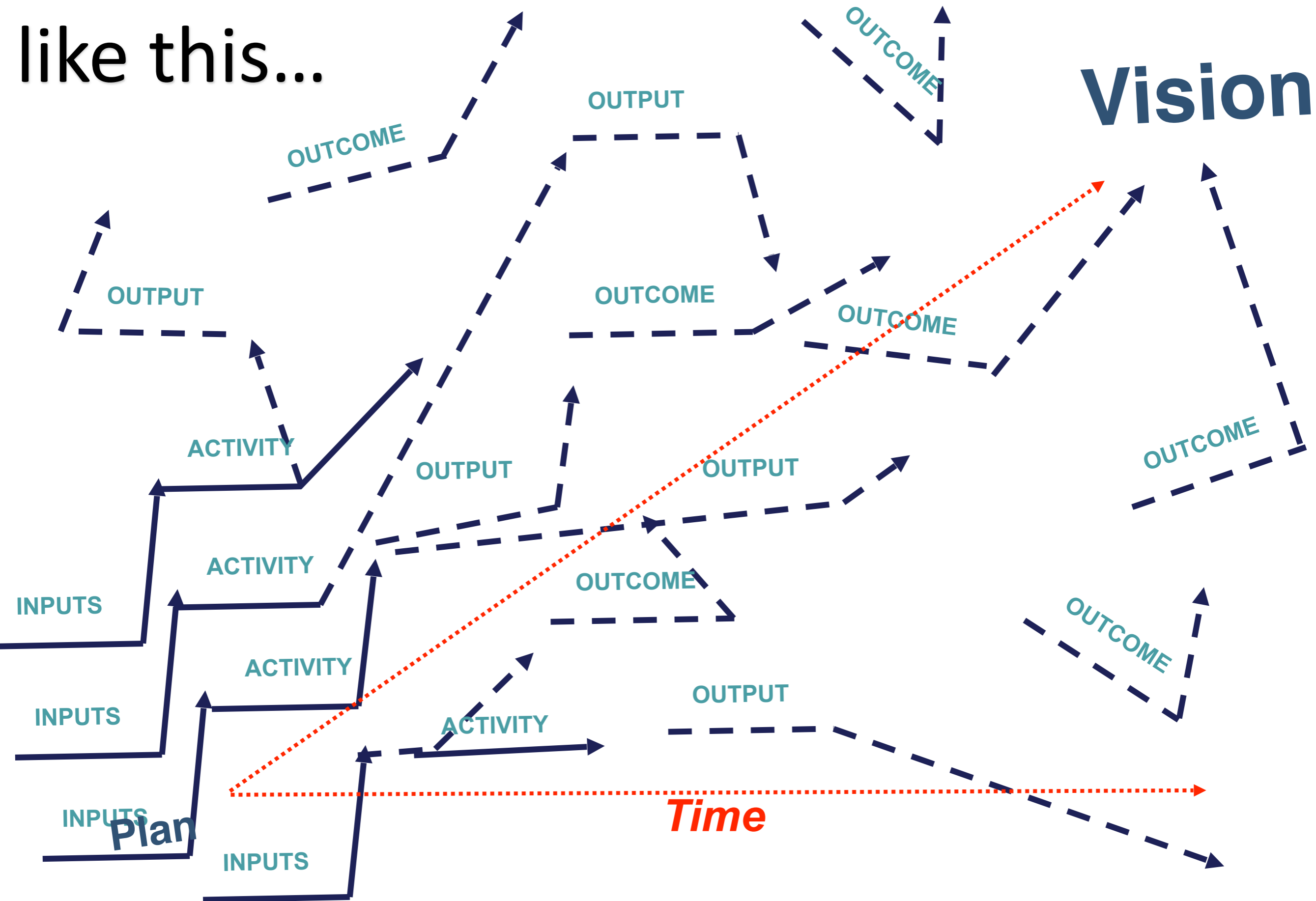
How does wellbeing become more integrated into schools?

- What are the approaches that enable the integration of wellbeing?
- What supports change at schools & districts?
- How to mobilize provincial stakeholders towards a common goals?
- How to achieve change at scale?

Not an established model to implement...



And probably something that looks like this...



WellAhead & Evidence

Innovation

- Initial findings validated there is opportunity for impact on child and youth mental health by taking a focus on wellbeing in schools, that BC was particularly fertile ground for experimentation in this area

Systems & Complexity

- School's ability to support student wellbeing depends on district/board priorities, provincial policy environment, school culture and educator practices
- Need for greater cohesion in wellbeing efforts across stakeholder groups

Capacity Building

- In order to be sustainable, wellbeing efforts need to build on educator assets and ways of working, building their capacity to do this themselves rather than relying on outside providers

DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

Innovations that are both social in their ends and in their means... simultaneously meet social needs & create new social relationships and collaborations.
– Open Book of S.I.

Social innovation is both a destination — the resolution of complex social & environmental challenges — and a journey — devising new approaches that engage all stakeholders, leveraging their competencies and creativity to design novel solutions
– Tim Brodhead

The process of designing, developing and growing new ideas that work to meet pressing unmet needs
– Social Innovation Exchange

SOCIAL INNOVATION

Seeing things differently and imagining that which could be. It is about asking questions of ourselves and our institutions and wondering whether we can do better.
– BC Social Innovation Council

Any initiative (product, process, program, projects or platform) that challenges and, overtime, contributes to changing the defining routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced. Successful social innovations have durability, scale and transformative impact.
– Frances Westley

New ideas that resolve existing social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges for the benefit of people and planet
– Centre for Social Innovation

New ideas that meet unmet needs
– Geoff Mulgan

Simple

- The recipe is essential
- Recipes are tested to assure replicability of later efforts
- No particular expertise; knowing how to cook increases success
- Recipe notes the quantity and nature of “parts” needed
- Recipes produce standard products
- Certainty of same results every time

Complicated

- Formulae are critical and necessary
- Sending one rocket increases assurance that next will be ok
- High level of expertise in many specialized fields + coordination
- Separate into parts and then coordinate
- Rockets similar in critical ways
- High degree of certainty of outcome

Complex

- Formulae have only a limited application
- Raising one child gives no assurance of success with the next
- Expertise can help but is not sufficient; relationships are key
- Can't separate parts from the whole
- Every child is unique
- Uncertainty of outcome remains

Simple

Cause=Effect

Best Practices

Monitor implementation for high fidelity, assurance and quality.

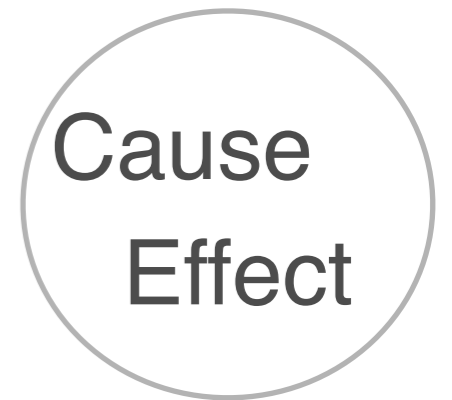
Complicated

Cause.....Effect

Expert Analysis

**Validate practices and options.
Convert expertise into a testable model.**

Complex



Emergent Practice

**Conduct experiments and gather rapid feedback.
Track evolving understanding.
Develop principles.**

Developmental Evaluation serves the purpose
of developing or adapting something.
Especially innovative programs or initiatives
that are unfolding in dynamic & complex
conditions.

Michael Q. Patton

Developmental Evaluation is not a recipe



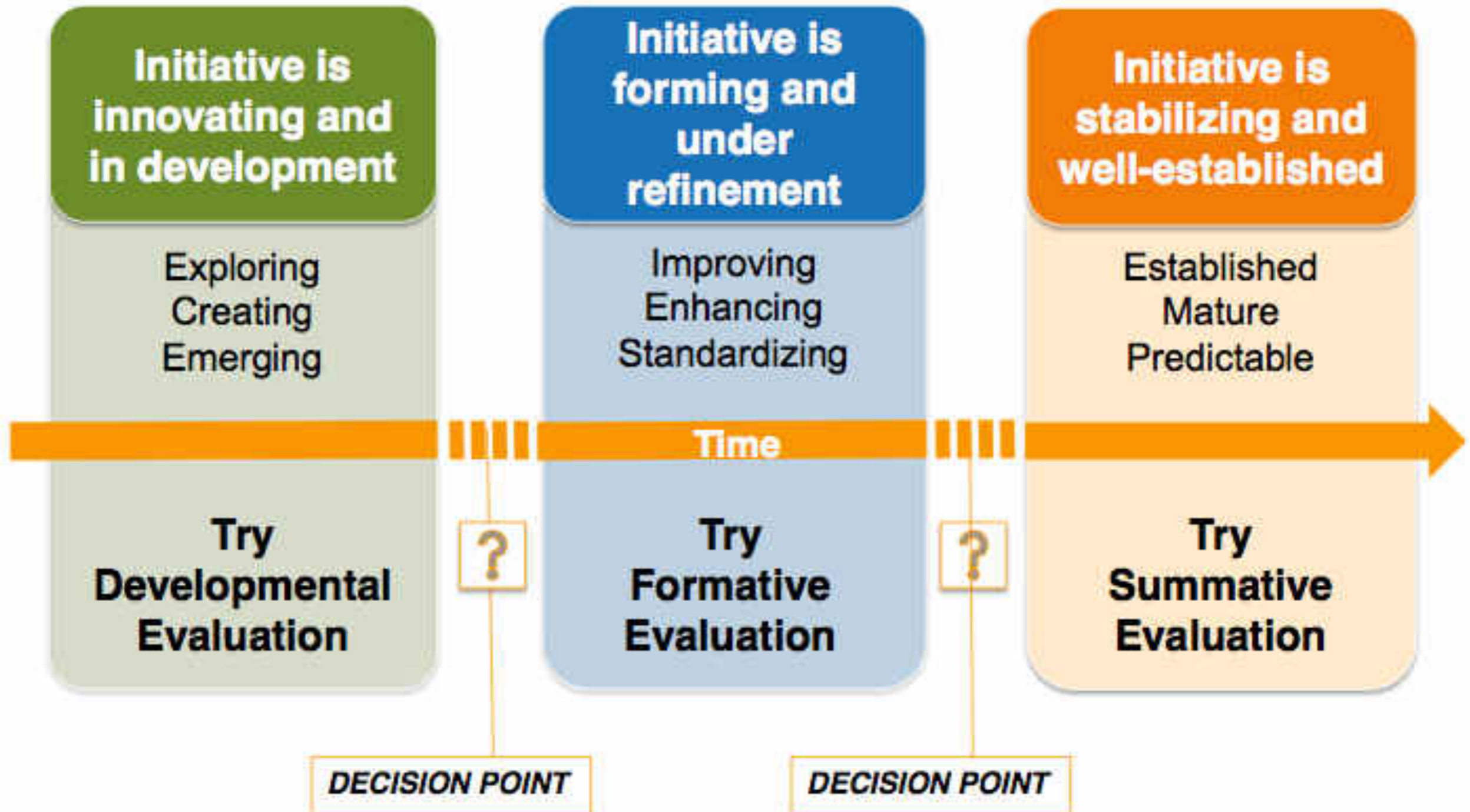
Developmental evaluation isn't some particular set of methods or recipe-like steps to follow. It doesn't offer a template of standard questions.

“It’s a mindset of inquiry into how to bring data to bear on what’s unfolding so as to guide and develop the emergence.”

What that means and the timing of the inquiry will depend on the situation, context, the people involved, and the fundamental principle of doing what makes sense for program development.

Michael Quinn Patton.
Developmental
Evaluation. 2010

Developmental Evaluation Is Most Useful During the Design and Early Implementation Phases of a Strategy, Initiative, or Program



The evaluator is part of a team whose members collaborate to conceptualize, design and test new approaches in an on-going process of improvement, adaptation and intentional change. Their role is to support interpretative dialogue within the team and to prompt rapid feedback, rapid cognition, and reality-testing.

Evaluation Across Project Phases

Level of Stabilization /
Certainty

Developmental

Formative

Summative

Very stable / high
level of certainty

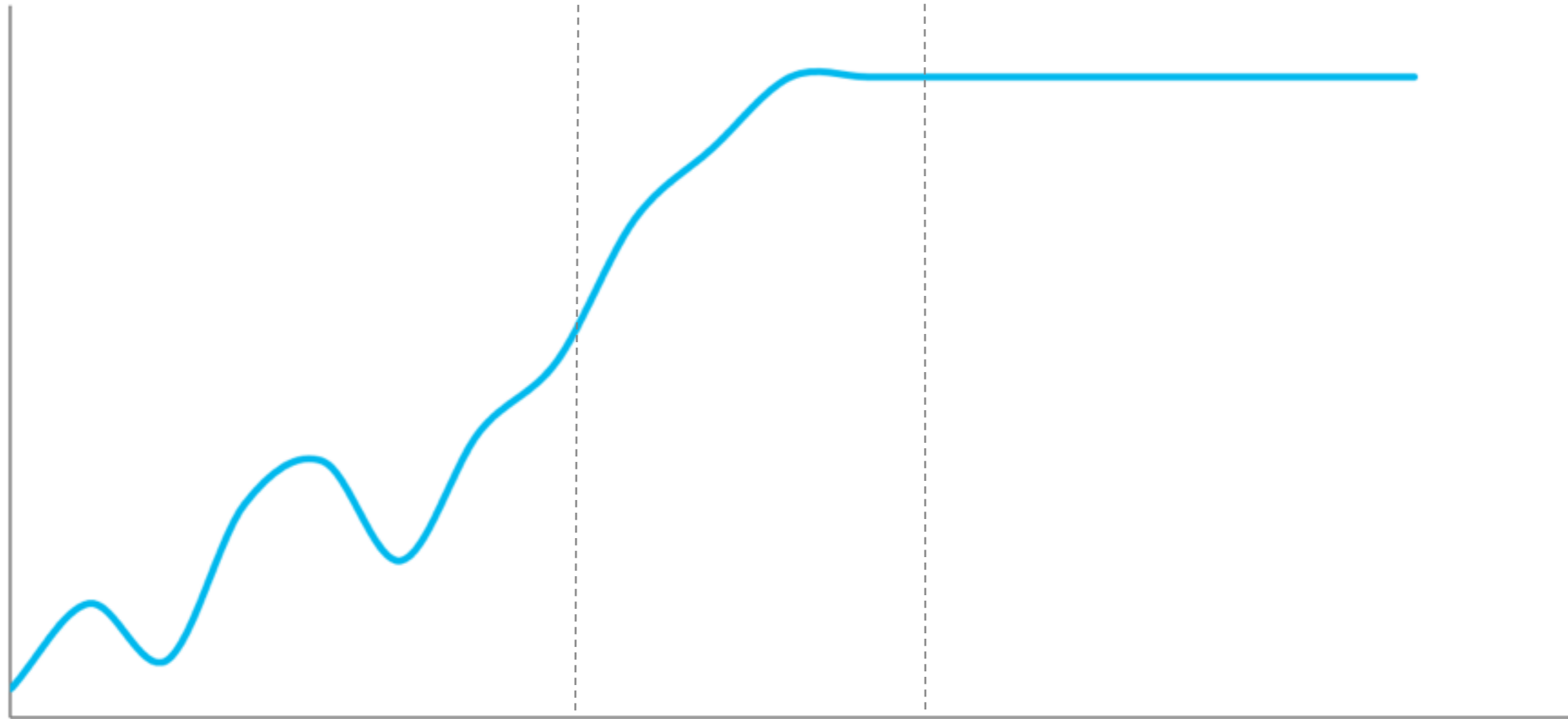
Unstable /
uncertain

Creation

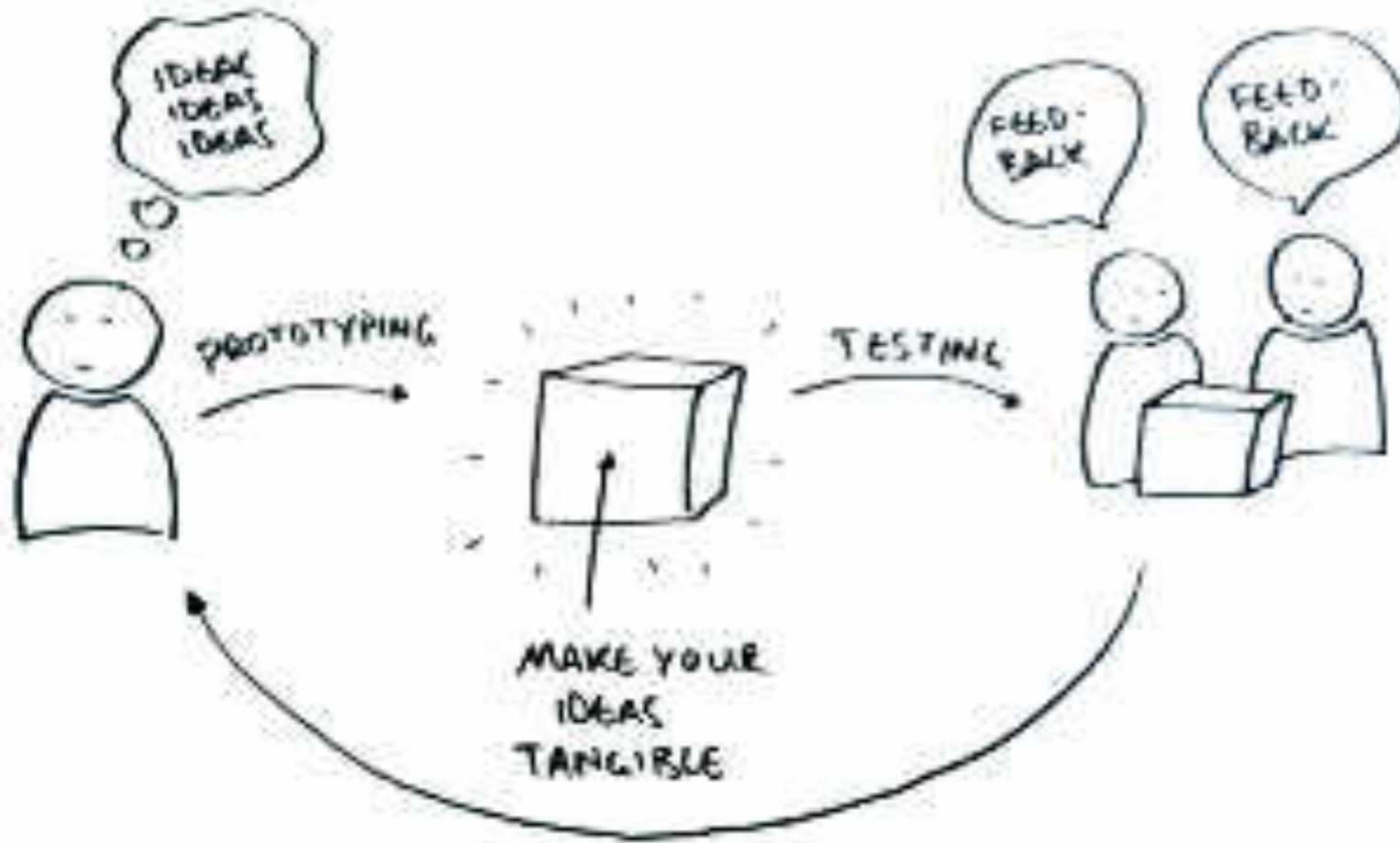
Development

Implementation

Project Phase

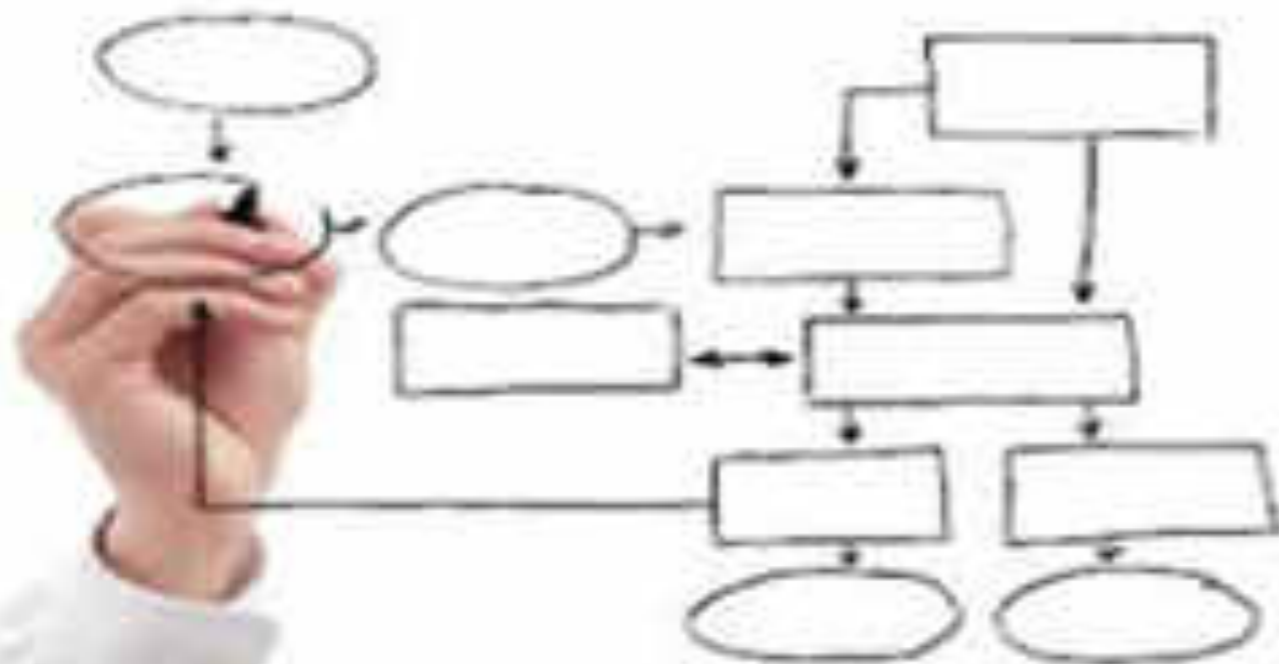


#1: Testing Quick Iterations



- Support opportunities for rapid experimentation
- Low cost/low risk experimentation
- Generating real time feedback

#2: Framing The Intervention



- Evolving the understanding of the nature of the problem being addressed (e.g. What is poverty?)
- Articulating desired outcomes, changes or impacts and how these evolve (e.g. What does success look like?)
- Framing up emerging working models

#3: Tracking Developments



- Identifying major forks in the road or key developments
- Describing the rationale, basis or evidence for key decisions in the development of the intervention
- Documenting the overall evolution of the intervention

#4: Surfacing Tough Issues



- Pointing out when decisions are made without (or despite) considering key data
- Identifying and sensitizing people to issues related to tensions, power, being stuck, etc. (e.g. there does not seem to be consensus on this decision)