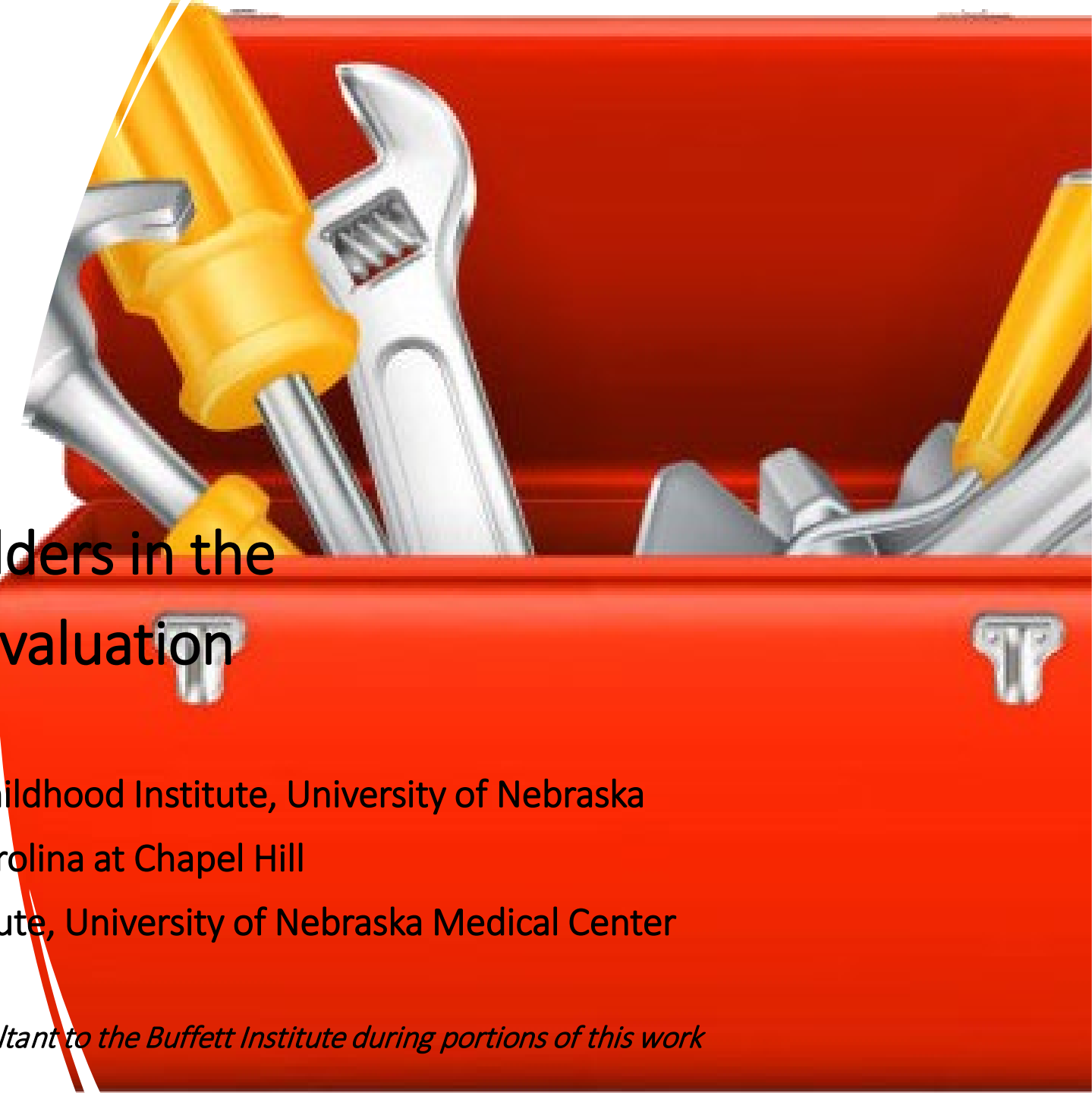# Building Capacity for Systems Transformation

Tools for Engaging Stakeholders in the Design of Equity-Focused Evaluation

Kathleen C. Gallagher, PHD, Buffett Early Childhood Institute, University of Nebraska

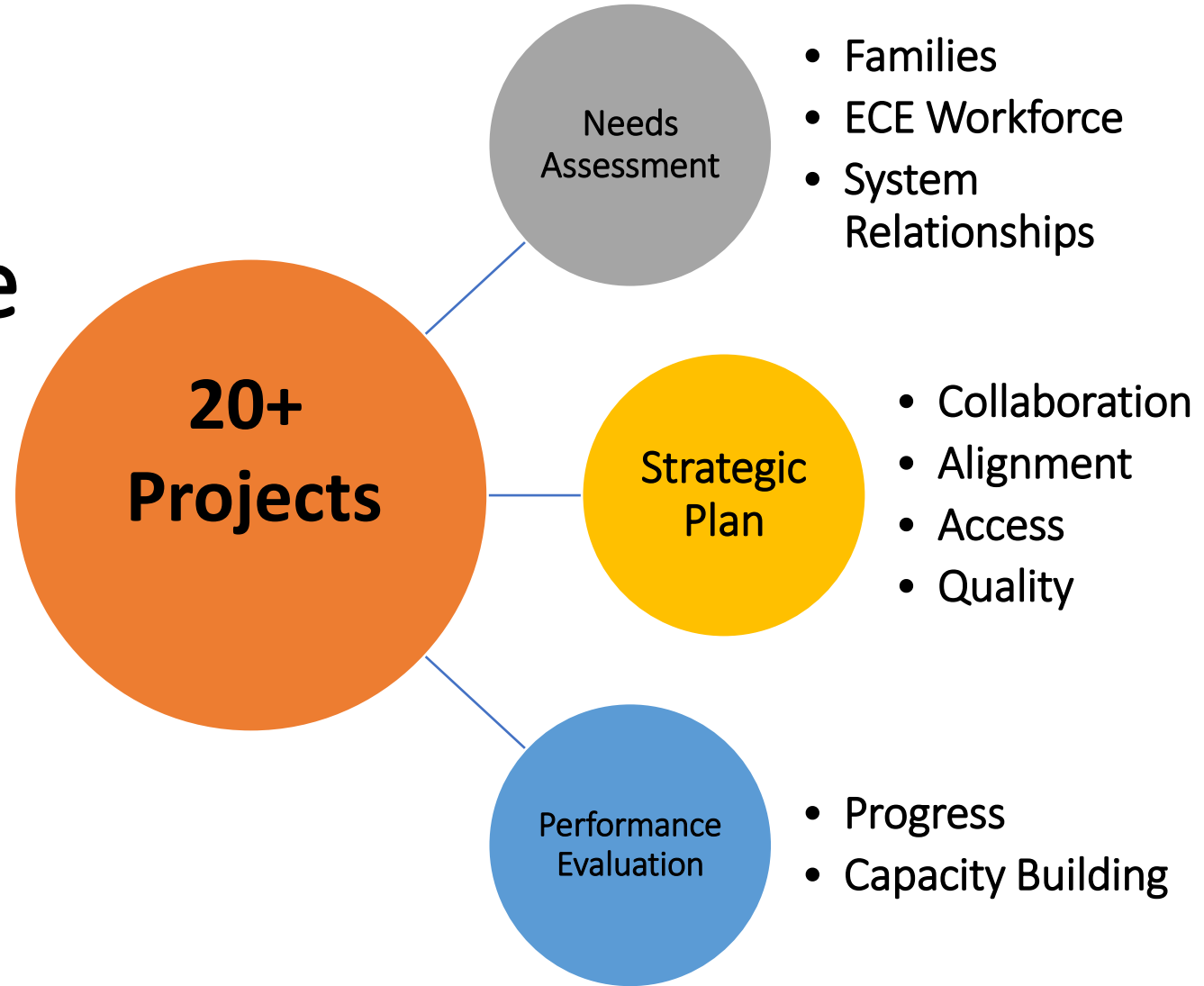Kirsten Kainz, PHD*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Jolene Johnson, PHD, Monroe-Mayer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center

*Please note that Kirsten Kainz served as a paid consultant to the Buffett Institute during portions of this work

Context:
Early Childhood Systems Change

Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five

20+ Projects

Needs Assessment
- Families
- ECE Workforce
- System Relationships

Strategic Plan
- Collaboration
- Alignment
- Access
- Quality

Performance Evaluation
- Progress
- Capacity Building

A Retrospective View of our Tools

- *Started with values and relationships*
- *Responded to calls for equity*
- *Explored connections*
  - *Participation*
  - *Voice*
  - *Conversation*
  - *Action*

Tool #1: Systemic Communities of Practice

Communities of practice: groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wegener & Travner)

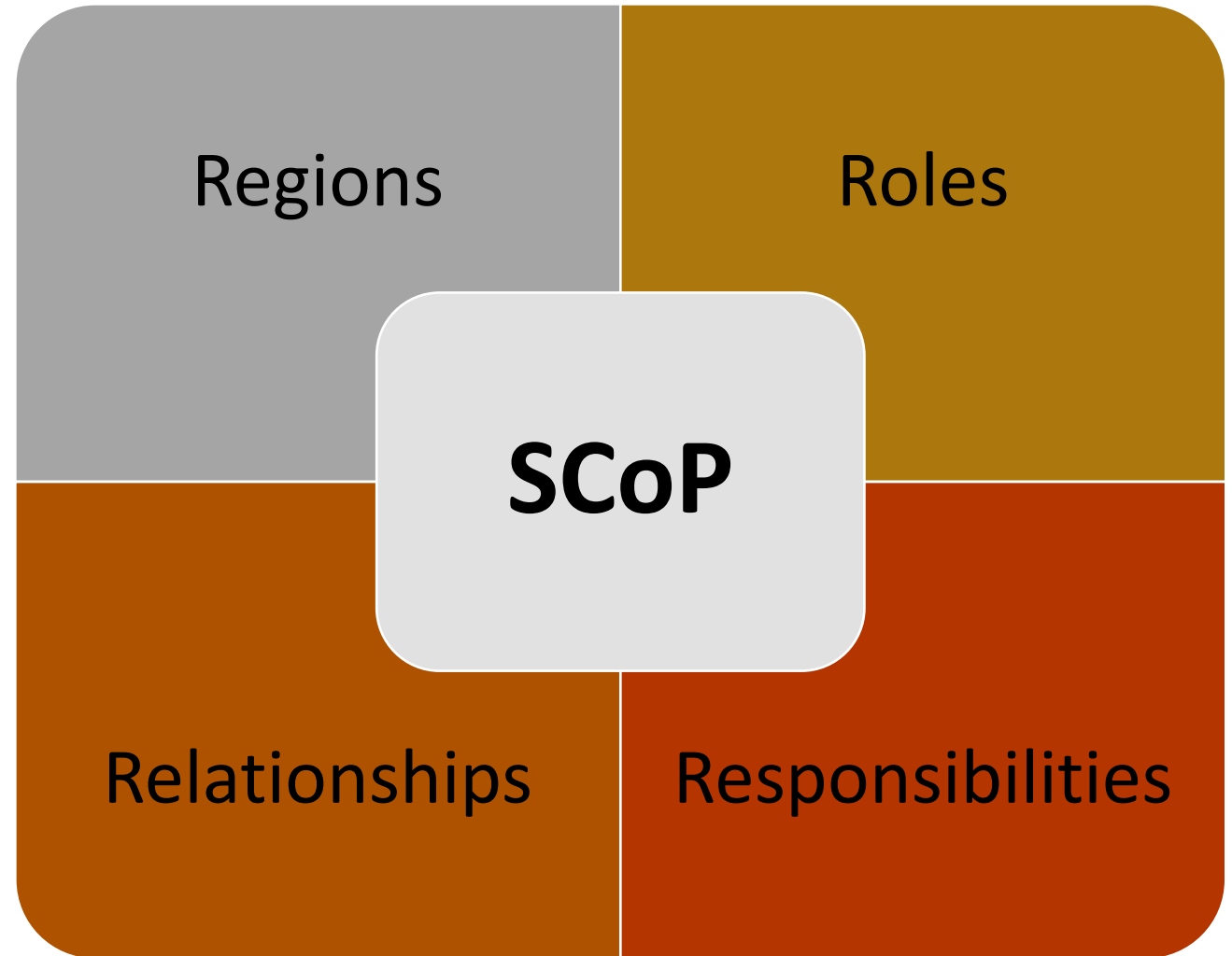**Systemic Community of Practice:** We redefined the "WHO"

Systemic Communities of Practice (SCoP)

*Recognizes **networked nature** of systems*

*Seeks to **diversify conversation** through diverse membership*

*Aspires to generate new information sharing patterns to **disrupt existing structures***

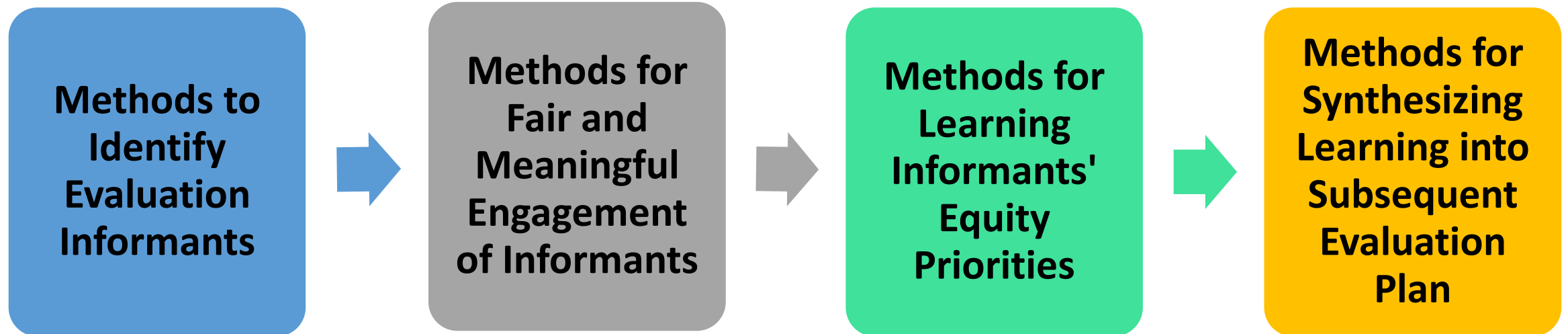|	
Regions	Roles
Relationships	Responsibilities

SCoP

Tool #2: Equity Action Agendas

- A **pre-evaluation** process to generate equitable experiences and outcomes
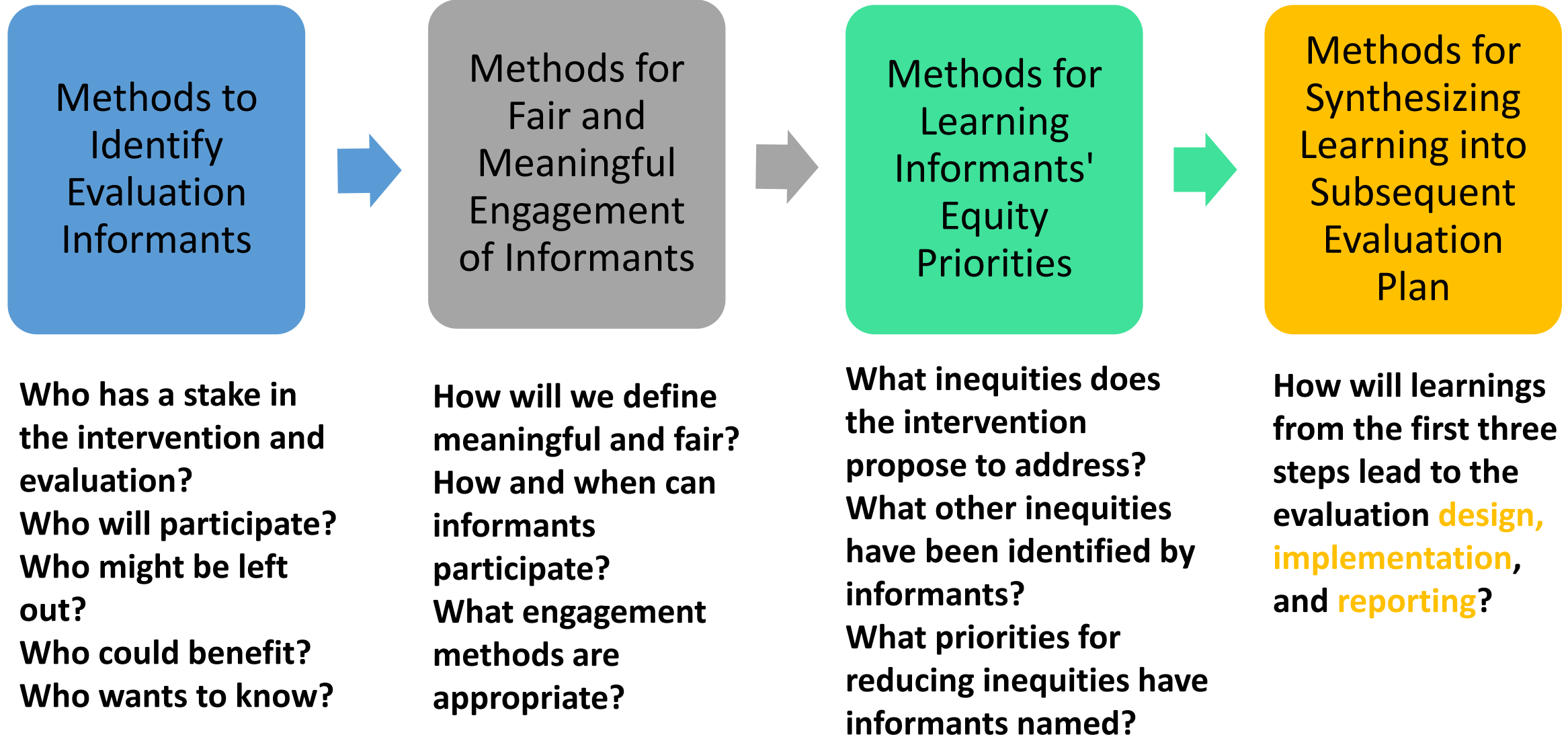- **To identify** the inequities in intervention and evaluation
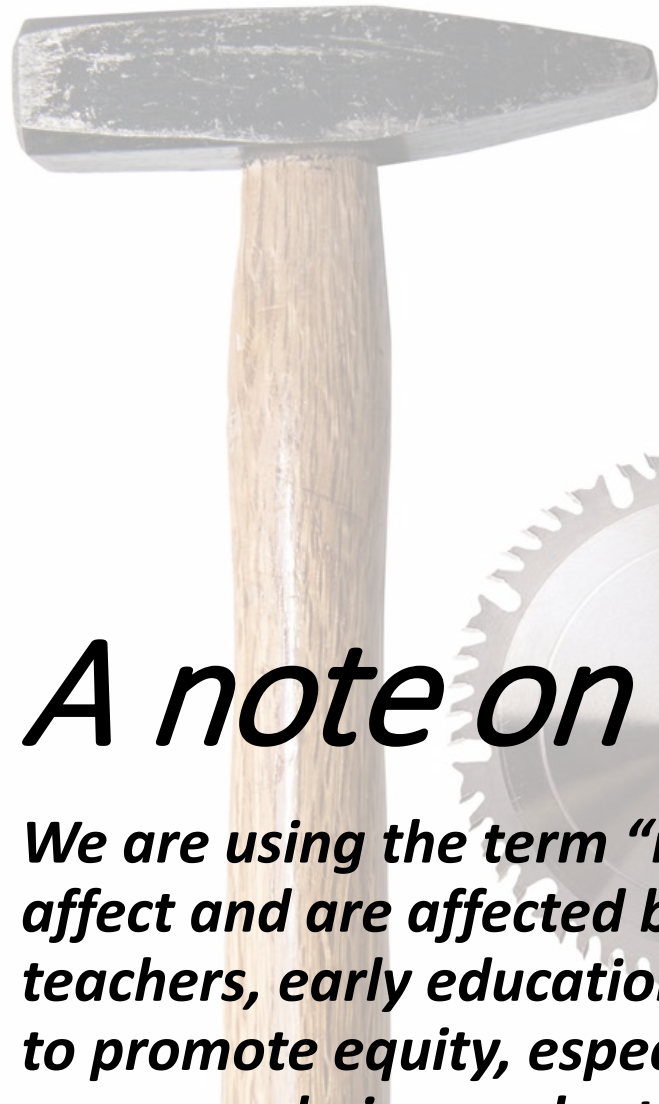
A note on language:

We are using the term "informants" to refer to the diverse set of people who affect and are affected by evaluations (funders, evaluators, policy makers, teachers, early education providers etc.) who will need to inform the evaluation to promote equity, especially the people who participate in interventions and programs being evaluated.

Equity Action Agendas: The Process

Key Questions for Each Step in the Process:

Methods to Identify Evaluation Informants	→	Methods for Fair and Meaningful Engagement of Informants	→	Methods for Learning Informants' Equity Priorities	→	Methods for Synthesizing Learning into Subsequent Evaluation Plan

Who has a stake in the intervention and evaluation?
Who will participate?
Who might be left out?
Who could benefit?
Who wants to know?

How will we define meaningful and fair?
How and when can informants participate?
What engagement methods are appropriate?

What inequities does the intervention propose to address?
What other inequities have been identified by informants?
What priorities for reducing inequities have informants named?

How will learnings from the first three steps lead to the evaluation design, implementation, and reporting?

Tool #3:
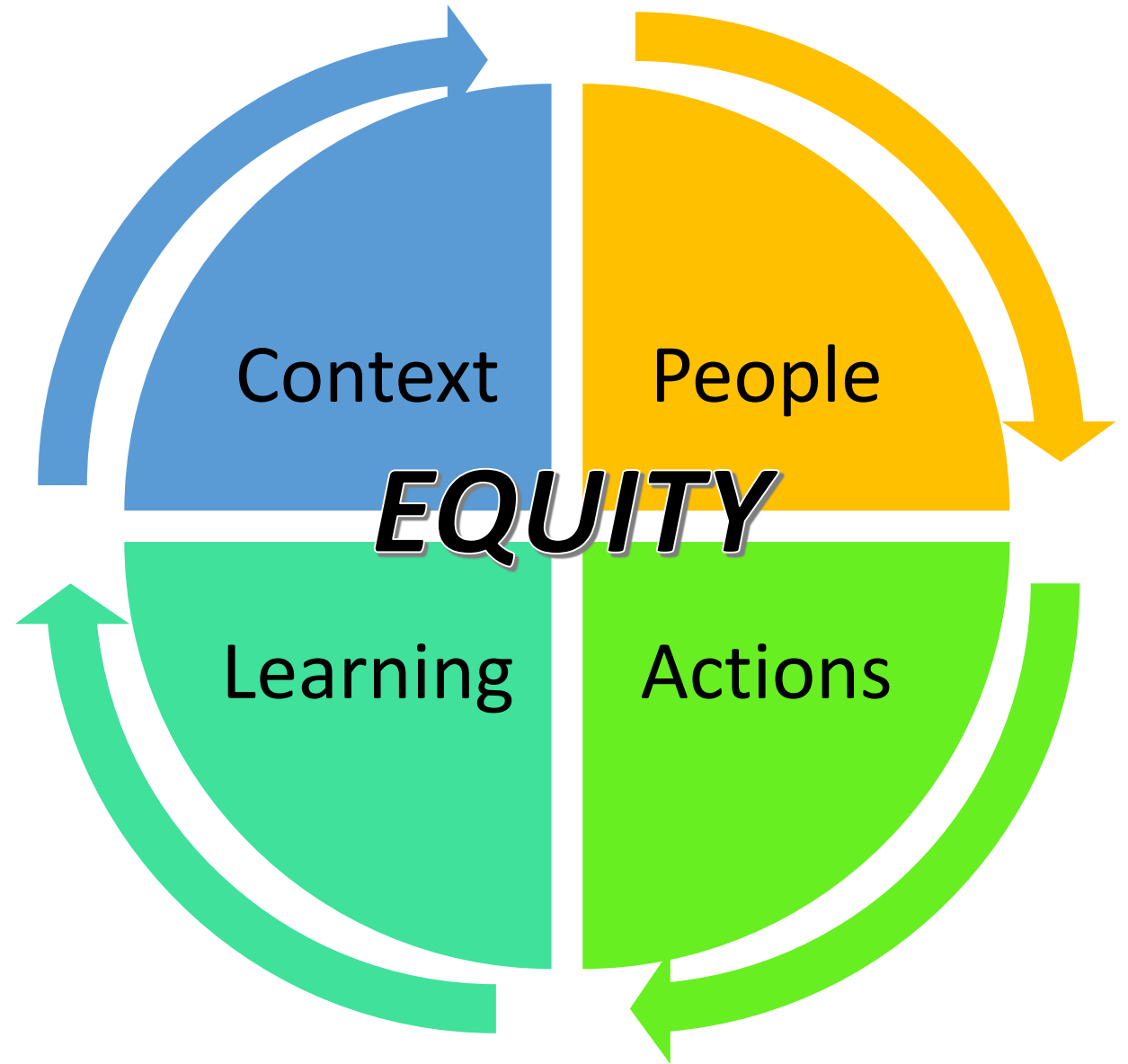# Equity Lens & Scenario Analysis

Foster conversations about equitable processes and outcomes

Scenario Analysis Using an Equity Lens

Take systemic view of realistic scenarios

*Rely on the diversity and history of **relationships** within the SCoP to unearth **multiple perspectives***

Context

People

Learning

Actions

EQUITY

Tool #4: Framework for Measuring Progress

- *Change existing focus on metrics and measurables*

- *Recognize social aspects of identifying progress*

- *Operationalize equity in theory of progress*

Prioritize key capacities within social networks

Measuring Progress

- Capacity for Strategic Reporting
- Capacity for Gathering & Analyzing Relevant Information
- Operationalized Theory of Progress
- Collective Appetite for Evaluating Progress

Integrate insights to build capacities

Community Driven Systems Impact

Build local capacity to analyze impact

Empower communities to determine priorities

Generate new and better information

Demonstrate value and impact

Seitz & Grieve, 2004

Integrate insights to build capacities

Community Driven Systems Impact
Build local capacity to analyze impact

Empower

Data Storytelling

Generate

A compelling story sparks public imagination and

Demonstra draws people to think...data stories, at their
best, push the audience from simply believing,
to knowing with a degree of confidence.

Matei & Hunter, 2021

Integrate insights to build capacities

Community Driven Systems Impact

Build local capacity to analyze impact

Empower **Data Storytelling**

Generate A compelling story sparks public imagination and

Demonstr: draws people **Key Questions for Measuring Impact**

best, push the What are the outcomes?

to knowing w Who is experiencing the outcomes?

How much impact is experienced?

Who/what is contributing to the impact?
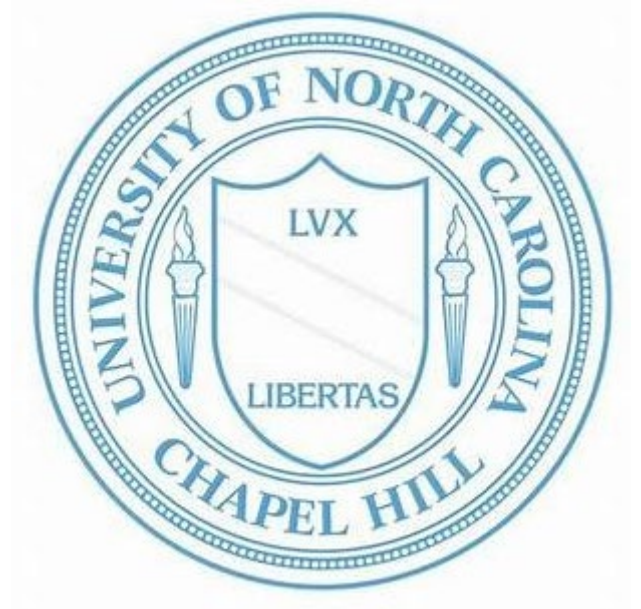
Is the impact different from what we expected?

Peterson et al., 2020

Tell us about your

References

Halgunseth, L., Peterson, A., Stark, D. R., & Moodie, S. (2009). Family engagement, diverse families, and early childhood programs: An integrated review of the literature. Washington, DC: The National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Matei, S. A., & Hunter, L. (2021). Data storytelling is not storytelling with data: A framework for storytelling in science communication and data journalism. The Information Society, 37(5), 312-322.

Midgley, G. (2006). Systems concepts in evaluation: An expert anthology. Edge Press, 11-34.

Peterson, G., Yawson, R., JK, E., & Nicholls, J. (2020). How do we know? Measuring impact. In Navigating Big Finance and Big Technology for Global Change (pp. 91-130). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Seitz, V., & Grieve, M. (2004). Participatory outcomes-based evaluation: The success measures process and data system. Building the Organizations That Build Communities, 285 - 292.

Trochim, W. M., & Urban, J. B. (2021). Theoretical foundations and philosophical orientation of Relational Systems Evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2021, 19– 30. https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.20449

Urban, J.B., Archibald, T., Hargraves, M., et al. (2021). Introduction to Relational Systems

Resources

Evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2021, 11– 18. https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.20444

The Family Engagement Toolkit. https://www.buildinitiative.org/FamilyEngagementToolkit

Moving beyond the Family Engagement Checkbox. https://cssp.org/2020/10/moving-beyond-the-family-engagement-check-box/

Principles for Engaging and Centering Parent Voice. https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Principles-for-Engaging-and-Centering-Parent-Voice.pdf

The Equitable Evaluation Framework. https://www.equitableeval.org/ee-framework

WT Grant Foundation Institutional Challenge Grant. http://wtgrantfoundation.org/grants/institutional-challenge-grant

Equity Audits. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-does-an-equity-audit-work/2015/09

NCTE Early Childhood Equity Statement. https://cdn.ncte.org/nctefiles/equityearlyedbrief.pdf

Wenger & Trayner Model: https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/

Notice of Award
Award# 90TP0079-03-00
FAIN# 90TP0079
Federal Award Date: 04/15/2022