



The Food Project



# DIRT CREW REPORT APPENDIX 2019 – 2020

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix A: Shifts in Distribution..... Page 2–6  
 Appendix B: Pre-Post Narratives..... Page 7  
 Appendix C: Correlations ..... Page 8  
 Appendix D: Seed Crew through Dirt Crew..... Page 9  
 Appendix E: Conclusions ..... Page 10



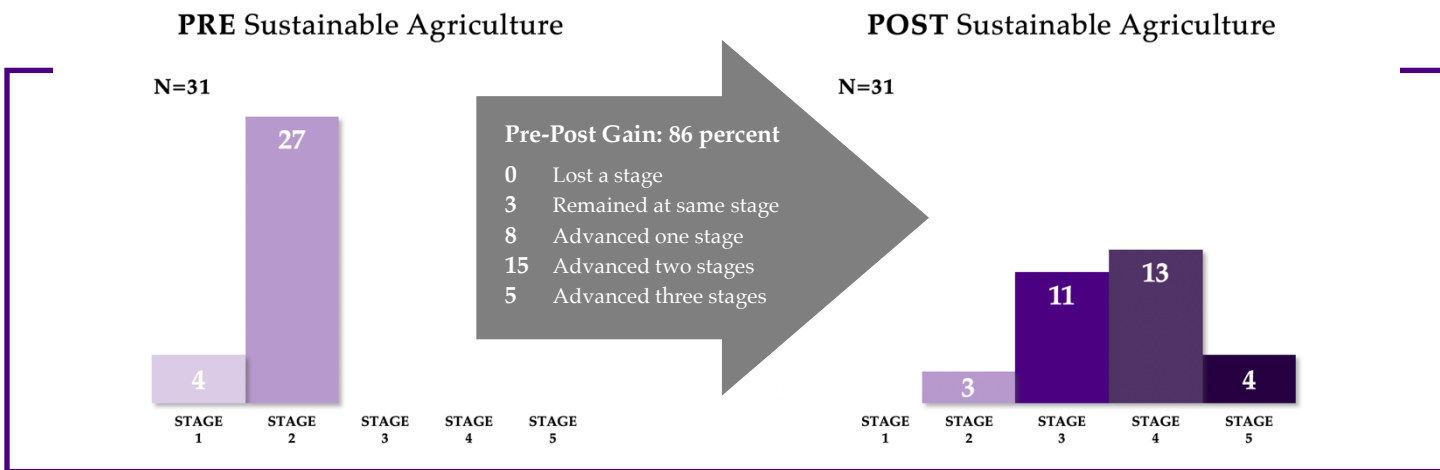
Analysis & Report by  
SEEDImpact.org

# APPENDIX A. LEARNING STAGES: SHIFTS IN DISTRIBUTION

## Sustainable Agriculture

Youth Development Specialists observed an **86 percent gain** in Dirt Crew member competency

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
<p>Youth appreciates the power of a well-functioning team.</p> <p>Youth understands how to do the basic tasks on our farms safely and welcomes additional coaching.</p>	<p>Youth is well informed about the environmental and social costs of industrial agriculture.</p> <p>Youth can also devise strategies about how to best work in a group to accomplish a task.</p>	<p>Youth can coach and motivate people of all ages in basic tasks on our farms.</p> <p>Youth understands how changes in the built, physical environment contribute to the physical health of the community.</p>	<p>Youth is making a contribution through the production of raised bed gardens</p> <p>Youth knows how to plan and plant a square foot garden.</p>	<p>Youth has a sense of and has contributed to farm work throughout multiple seasons.</p> <p>Youth can set priorities for farm tasks in order of urgency.</p>



As illustrated above, in October 2019, four crew members (13 percent) were rated by their Youth Development Specialist at Stage-1. The remaining 27 crew members (87 percent) were rated at Stage-2. The average stage reached was 1.7.

By May 2020, none were rated at Stage-1 and only three members (10 percent) at Stage-2. Eleven (35 percent) and 13 members (42 percent) respectively had advanced to Stage-3 and Stage-4. Four members (3 percent) were rated at Stage-5. The average stage reached was 3.2.

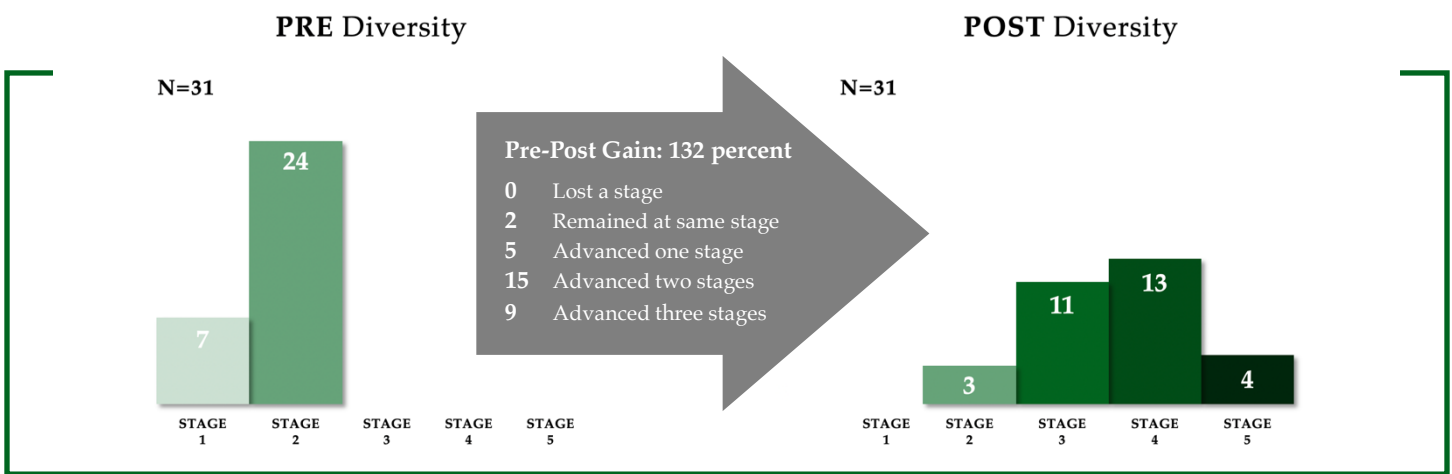
Eight members (26 percent) advanced one stage on the 5-stage model; 15 members (48 percent) advanced two stages, and five members (16 percent) advanced three stages.

*"I led people in farming tasks and I think that greatly increased my confidence and leadership skills. I also learned more about the community when we went around helping them!"*

## Diversity/Anti-Oppression

Youth Development Specialists observed a **132 percent** gain in Dirt Crew member learning

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
<p>Youth has a growing understanding of the causes and impacts of hunger and food insecurity.</p> <p>Youth knows more about the history of injustices related to food in the community.</p>	<p>Youth has deepened their practice with the VISIONS tools within and outside of The Food Project space.</p>	<p>Youth has a deeper understanding of the impacts of racism and classism on the individual, institutional, and systemic levels as these relate to food systems and food access.</p>	<p>Youth is thoughtful about their actions and roles as these relate to their target and non-target identities.</p>	<p>Youth has a deeper understanding of the impacts that oppression has on the way a community functions.</p>



As illustrated above, in October 2019, seven crew members (23 percent) were rated by their Youth Development Specialist at Stage-1. The remaining 24 crew members (77 percent) were rated at Stage-2. The average stage reached was 1.5.

By May 2020, none were rated at Stage-1 and only three members (10 percent) at Stage-2. Ten (32 percent) and nine members (29 percent) respectively had advanced to Stage-3 and Stage-4. Nine members (29 percent) were rated at Stage-5. The average stage reached was 3.4.

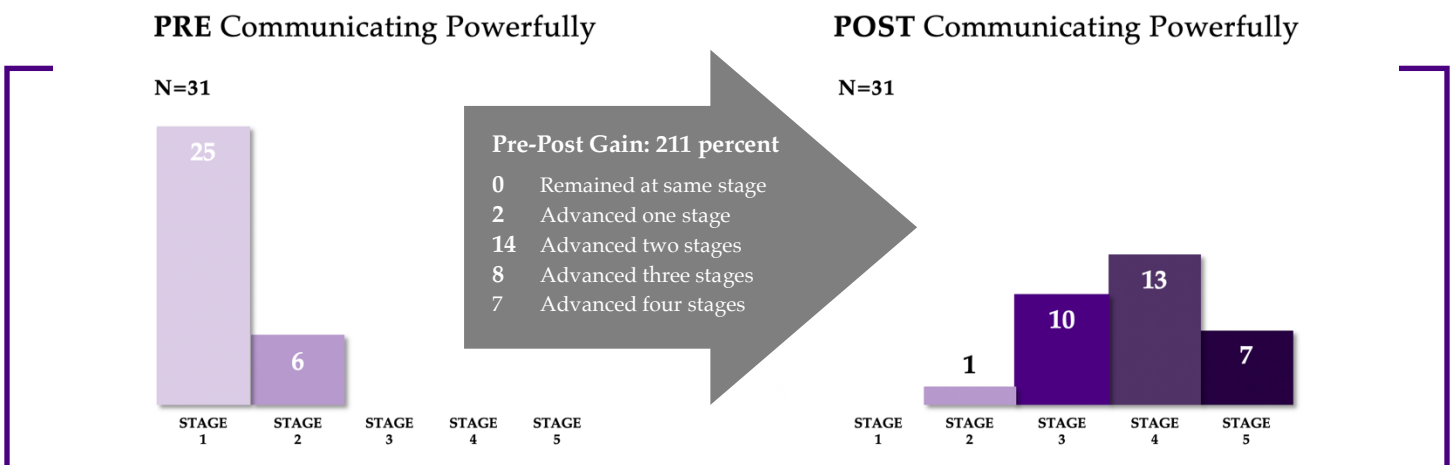
Two members (6 percent) remained at the same stage. Five (16 percent) advanced one stage on the 5-stage model; 15 members (48 percent) advanced two stages, and nine members (29 percent) advanced three stages.

*"I have become more aware of just how much both race and class affect food access and the way the food system works. I have also been pushed to notice the impacts around me."*

# Communicating Powerfully

Youth Development Specialists observed a **211 percent** gain in Dirt Crew member abilities

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Youth knows enough about The Food Project's work to describe it in their own words.	Youth can comfortably create a warm, informative, and inspiring environment for volunteers.  Youth also knows enough about home gardening to provide basic information to community at Greenhouse events.	Youth can confidently state and elaborate on their opinions and viewpoints.  Youth demonstrates skill in making use of Straight Talk.	Youth has a range of descriptors for their feelings and can express these relatively easily in a group.  Youth can describe The Food Project's work and impact on the wider community.	Youth can use their knowledge of garden planting to provide responsive assistance to neighborhood gardeners.  Youth can tell a 3-minute story about the food system and share how they can be an agent of change now.



As illustrated above, in October 2019, 25 crew members (81 percent) were rated by their Youth Development Specialist at Stage-1. The remaining six crew members (19 percent) were rated at Stage-2. The average stage reached was 1.1.

By May 2020, no members were rated at Stage-1 and only one member (3 percent) at Stage-2. Ten (32 percent) and 13 members (42 percent) respectively had advanced to Stage-3 and Stage-4. Seven members (23 percent) were rated at Stage-5, all of whom had started the year at Stage-1. The average stage reached was 3.4.

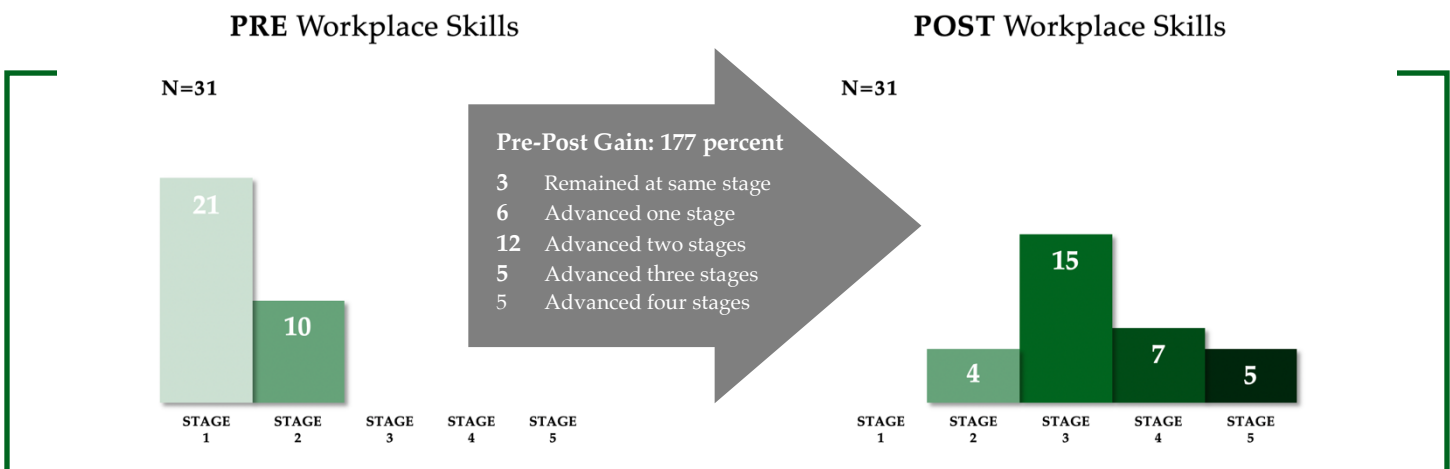
Two members (6 percent) advanced one stage on the 5-stage model; 14 members (45 percent) advanced two stages; eight members (26 percent) advanced three stages, and seven (23 percent) advanced four stages.

*"The creation of a safe space and encouragement to speak out definitely helped me grow into the person I am today."*

# Workplace Skills

Youth Development Specialists observed a **177 percent gain** in crew member skills.

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
<p>Youth can set and work toward appropriate and achievable goals.</p> <p>Youth is familiar with the components of a formal interview process.</p>	<p>Youth understands the importance of and is able to respond promptly to work-related communication.</p> <p>Youth realizes they are accountable to a group and understand their significance in Dirt Crew.</p>	<p>Youth is confident with computer-based workplace skills (email and Google docs).</p> <p>Youth has also gained experience considering the hiring specifications of The Food Project environment for both youth and adults.</p>	<p>Youth is familiar with safe kitchen practices.</p> <p>Youth is comfortable and confident using power tools in our work environment.</p>	<p>Youth is both comfortable and confident in representing The Food Project in the wider community.</p> <p>Youth has mastered the basics of preparing a meal for a large group.</p>



As illustrated above, in October 2019, 21 crew members (68 percent) were rated by their Youth Development Specialist at Stage-1. The remaining ten crew members (32 percent) were rated at Stage-2. The average stage reached was 1.1.

By May 2020, none were rated at Stage-1 and only four members (13 percent) at Stage-2. Fifteen (48 percent) and seven members (23 percent) respectively had advanced to Stage-3 and Stage-4. Five members (16 percent) were rated at Stage-5. The average stage reached was 3.2.

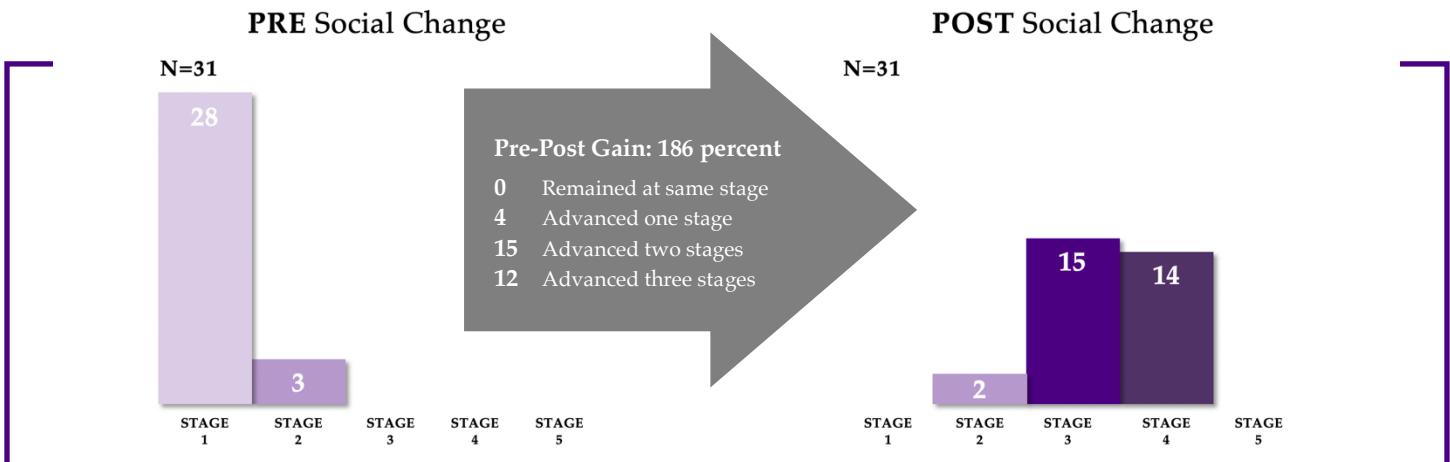
Three members (10 percent) remained at the same stage. Six members (19 percent) advanced one stage on the 5-stage model, 12 members (39 percent) advanced two stages; five members (16 percent) advanced three stages, and five members (16 percent) advanced four stages.

*"I have learned that it is always worth getting into things that are there for a good cause ... there is always growth in that. I also learned that you grow the most when you are with people working towards the same goals."*

# Social Change

Youth Development Specialists observed a **186 percent** gain in crew member learning

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Youth is willing to work toward their own liberation from the impacts of oppression.	Youth recognizes of the significance of understanding their social location.  Youth has the tools to invite others to consider the significance of their social locations.	Youth actively supports the leadership of peers with many different leadership styles.  Youth understands the charity-to-social change continuum.	Youth can leverage their goals toward making food systems and equity-focused changes.  Youth is actively engaged in making food systems change in eastern Massachusetts as a Dirt Crew member.	Youth has initiated steps to mobilize their own community around issues related to food justice and to equity more broadly.



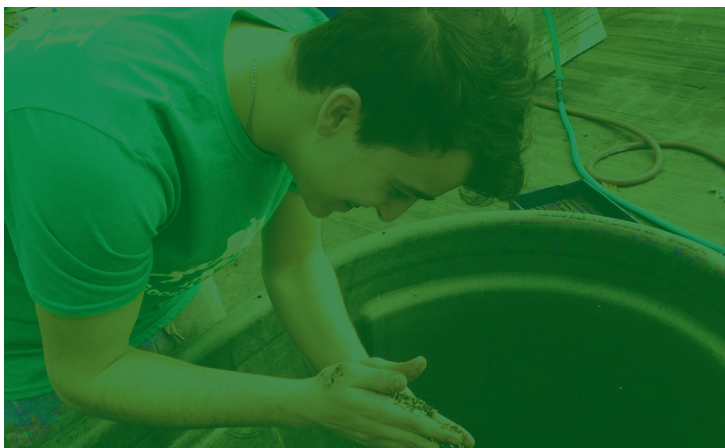
As illustrated above, in October 2019, 28 crew members (90 percent) were rated by their Youth Development Specialist at Stage-1. The remaining three crew members (10 percent) were rated at Stage-2. The average stage reached was **1.1**.

By May 2020, none were rated at Stage-1 and only two members (6 percent) at Stage-2. Fifteen (48 percent) and 14 members (45 percent) respectively had advanced to Stage-3 and Stage-4. The average stage reached was **3.0**.

Four members (13 percent) advanced one stage on the 5-stage model; 15 members (48 percent) advanced two stages, and 12 members (39 percent) advanced three stages.

*“The Food Project has helped me figure out the values I stand for and to think about the deeper injustices in our society and how I can have an impact on them.”*

## APPENDIX B. SAMPLE PRE-POST NARRATIVES PROVIDED BY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS



"NJ really enjoyed the farm work and the physical work. He has grown a lot. Coming in as a shy and timid person, he is ending the year with a newfound sense of confidence and stronger relationships within the crew."

"JT has really blossomed as a leader. She has been very receptive to feedback and is very passionate about her work here at The Food Project. She has grown trimester by trimester and learned new things about herself along the way!"

"TL has taken on so many roles throughout the year, from Serve and Grow, to interviewing potential Crew leaders. She has given it her all and learned many skills along the way."

"SR was very quiet at first. Throughout the academic year, he has grown in his confidence about being heard and in creating a friendly environment with peers."



"KD gives her all in every project. She has stepped it up when it comes to public speaking and has gotten more and more comfortable..."



**The Food Project**

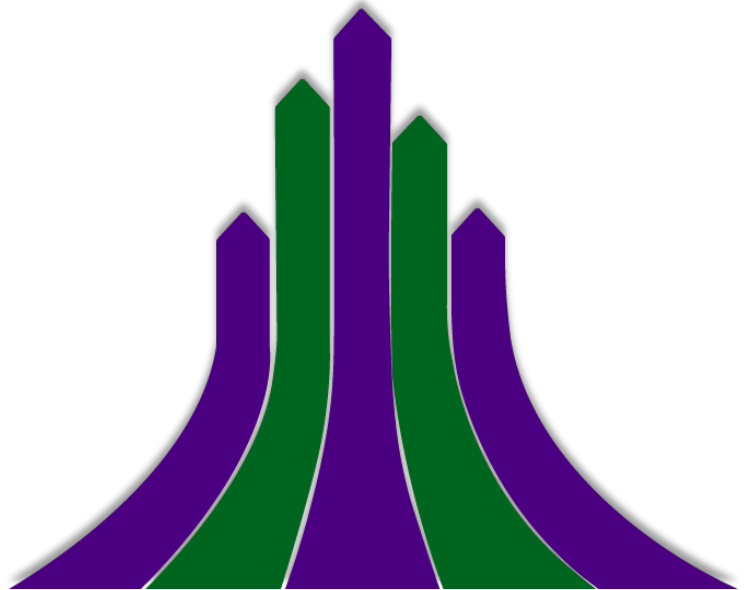
## APPENDIX C. CORRELATIONS

### A) DO GAINS IN ONE PROGRAM AREA SUPPORT GAINS IN ANOTHER?

Absolutely Yes! As crew member competency increased in any one of the five areas, there was a commensurate gain in any of the other four areas.

For example, the correlation coefficient was 0.87 (out of a perfect correlation of 1.0) in comparing gains in Diversity / Anti-Oppression with gains in Communicating Powerfully. Similar high correlation coefficients were seen for all the possible comparisons.

The least strongly correlated, while still strong at around 0.60, were comparisons of gains in Sustainable Agriculture with gains in any of the other program areas.



### B) DID THE OBSERVATIONS MADE BY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS ALIGN WITH CREW MEMBER SELF-RATINGS?

No. In comparing Dirt Crew member self-ratings (on eight practices) with Youth Development Specialist pre-post observations (using the 5-stage framework), no strong or even modest correlations were found.

For example, the correlation coefficients were 0.15 and -0.11 respectively, contrasting crew member self-ratings of workplace skills with pre-post observation of their workplace competencies. Similarly, the correlation coefficients were 0.03 and 0.01, contrasting self-ratings and pre-post competency assessments of communication skills. These coefficients essentially suggest no relationship.

While the numbers did not align, the narratives provided in both assessments did show strong alignment. The ability to use multiple sentences to assess a skill was clearly superior to a single numeric rating.

In hindsight, the inability to find correlations may be due to the different purposes and format of the two tools. The self-ratings identify a practice in a few words and ask the member to indicate current abilities from weak to strong. The intent is to determine the relative strength of each practice. The competency ladders, in contrast, provide multi-sentence descriptions of successive stages of a practice and require an observer to select the stage that best describes the member. The aim here is to assess how the member is advancing and what more is needed to bring them to the next stage. The second is a more holistic, multi-dimensional approach.

Moving forward, self-assessments might be considered which have youth pick descriptions that best fit them at present for each practice area, rather than simply rate themselves. This approach would better align with both the spirit and format of the competency ladder assessments. It would likely yield stronger correlations, as well as prove more informative as evaluation feedback.



## APPENDIX D. GAINS SEED CREW THROUGH DIRT CREW

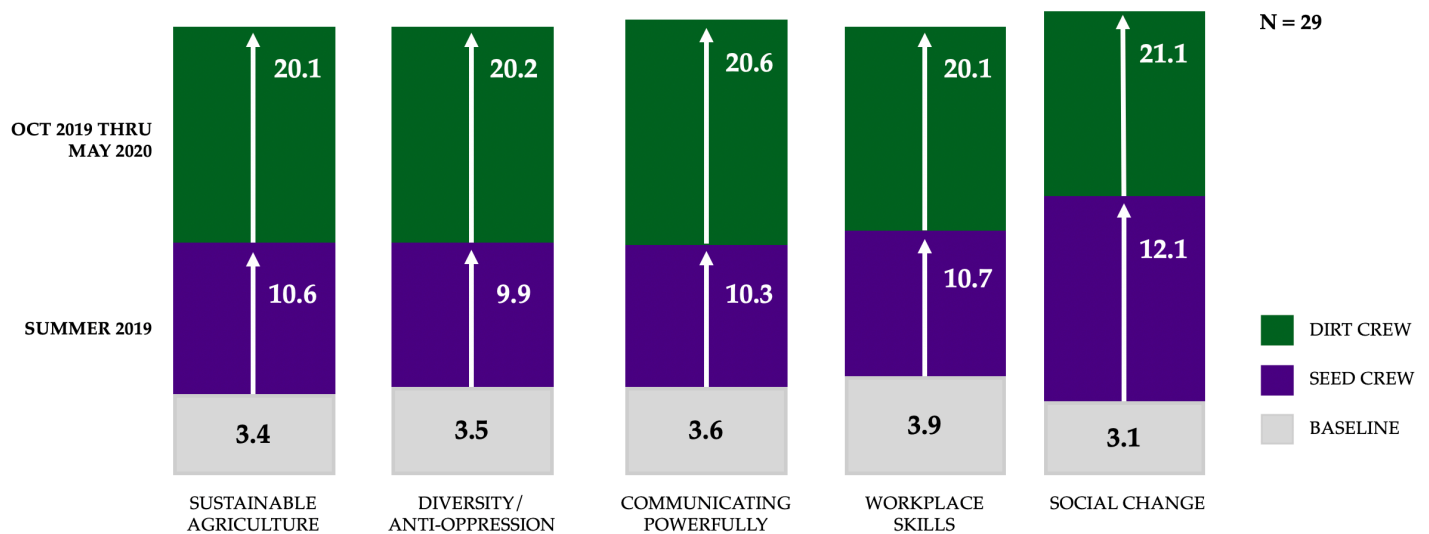
Twenty-nine of 31 Dirt Crew members had participated as Seed Crew members the prior summer. The remaining two youth were returning to Dirt Crew for a second year, with added leadership responsibilities.

In customizing the Dirt Crew evaluation framework, the intent was to define progressive competencies that build upon achievements attained by Seed Crew participants the previous summer.

The framework delineates three levels per each of five stages to allow more fine-tuned assessments and capture changes within each stage. During summer 2019, as Seed Crew participants, the maximum level of advancement was 15. Then, for the 2019-2020 school year, as Dirt Crew members, they could advance an additional 15 levels, to a *maximum of 30*.

As can be seen below, the 27 participants as Seed Crew members entering the summer 2019 with baseline scores averaging 3.5 for the five program areas. By the end of the summer, they had advanced 7.2 levels, on average, to 10.7. Then, during the school year, as Dirt Crew members, they advanced an additional 9.7 levels to 20.4, by May 2021. This represents **68 percent** of the *maximum advancement possible* across the five program areas over the one-year period.

### COMPETENCY GAINS FROM SEED CREW TO DIRT CREW



A participant who advanced more than a peer as a Seed Crew member was somewhat likely, on average, to also advance more than a peer as a Dirt Crew member (0.34 correlation coefficient). This held true for gains in Diversity (0.37), Communicating Powerfully (0.41), and Social Change (0.42); however, not for Agriculture (0.08) and Workplace Skills (0.08).

## APPENDIX E. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having developed tools and gained experience piloting them with Seed Crew members over the summer of 2019, the application to Dirt Crew went smoothly. The Food Project leadership team was clear about how to define tools that would capture new learnings and ever-deepening outcomes.

COVID-19 radically altered Dirt Crew programming. Despite the unexpected challenges of this crisis, The Food Project was able to maintain program momentum and keep participants motivated and learning. Operating for an undefined time within a virtual learning landscape, it was prudent to reset the knowledge and skills of crew members to best support themselves, their peers, and the broader community they impact.

Dirt Crew members actually outpaced themselves in movement up the competency ladders, even beyond their laudable gains the previous summer.

### **For continued value, SEED Impact suggests the following considerations:**

1. As noted above, the self-assessment format can be improved. For each practice of interest, we can model the approach used in the competency assessments. Provide three-to-five short paragraphs that capture successive growth in these practices and ask the crew member to select the paragraph that best fits them at the current time. This will improve alignment of results across the competency ladders and self-assessments. It may also provide even stronger evidence of the value of the Dirt Crew experience.
2. With Madison in the lead, The Food Project staff have been clarifying learning objectives for the three crews to include Intrapersonal, Interactional, and Behavioral practices. These neatly mirror the three-dimensional framework used at SEED Impact to assess growth in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), tracking Being, Relating, and Doing. In partnership, we suggest exploring a creative hybrid for evaluating seamlessly both the knowledge and skill area assessments explored in this document with state-of-the-art SEL.
3. We also suggest implementing Theory of Change on Its Feet™ and using it to document past, present, and future results from both virtual and live programming. Of most importance, this [all-in-one](#) visioning, goal-setting, and outcome-tracking system will allow The Food Project to capture longitudinal data and report life-changing outcomes long after direct engagement by participants.



*We appreciate this opportunity to learn with The Food Project and help grow your social impact.*