

How will your community achieve equity?

If you're a changemaker, a seasoned community leader, or an individual newly aware of the inequities around you, this book is a tool for you to create a new community design. Explore the text and graphics within to inspire your thinking, discover new tactics, and reflect on the role you play in a larger system of overlapping communities.



**Equity from Within**

# Equity from Within

*Design Tools and Tactics for Place-Based Practice*



Francis Carter + Ray Owen

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*Design Tools and Tactics for Place-Based Practice*

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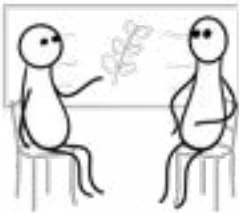
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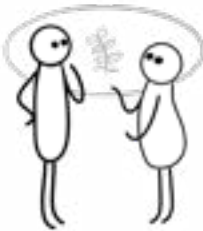
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# Introduction

## *Working with and in a community*

Equity is an action, a verb, and a constant practice, rather than a static goal or an item on a checklist. Deepening our understanding of equality, equity recognizes the need for new paradigms to empower individuals and communities of various backgrounds. Equity may be looked at through the lens of financial, health, racial equity, and among others, and has historical roots that shape everyday life. Equity, as this book will cover in each stage of the design process, comes through empowerment. We won't achieve such equity from the outside looking in, with outsider assumptions of what will work for a community. Developing equity requires the active participation and leadership of individuals and organizations from every corner of a community.

To begin the work that equity entails, start from a place. Place, rather than space, signifies a physical location creating, and created from, cultural meaning. We intentionally use the term "tactic" here—as opposed to methods, for example—because tactics are political. Tactics incite action, and form a broader strategy for making change. The work done within a community will always be political—in its application or impact—and

by acknowledging this political nature from the outset, we can be purposeful in our politics. The tactics in this book are the result of collaborative efforts, and these collaborators represent many fields—healthcare, creative placemaking, community organizing and development, education—and different mindsets—design strategy and systems thinking. Such collaboration moves beyond interdisciplinary, and becomes transdisciplinary, as each discipline works cohesively towards transformative change; what emerges is something greater than the sum of their parts.

The creation of this book was an additional collaborative effort—between Francis Carter, Ray Owen, and Ulu Mills. But the "we" used in this introduction and throughout the book expands beyond the "we" of the book's creators—"we" includes all community activists and organizers looking for change. The book addresses a "you" that is just as expansive. Whoever you may be, this book was created to be a tool for your use. It won't be the only tool. In gathering tactics and creating this book, the intention was inclusivity, and to offer all types of changemakers a way to think through and navigate community change.

This book can be a catalyst and starting point, but it isn't exhaustive. Use the references that accompany each chapter, and more importantly, listen to the individuals in your community, and allow those assets to take you further.

In recognition of this broad purpose, and the many individuals of various backgrounds who may arrive at this page, the book is meant to be read in various ways. You can use it however you please: read every word from start to finish, skim through the chapters to focus on specific tactics, keep it on hand as a reference material, or allow the images to guide your experience. Each chapter covers a separate stage in the design process, consolidated to 10

tactics each. Each tactic is accompanied by a subheading, a few paragraphs of text, and a graphic. The chapters build off of and reference each other, as do the tactics, but you may choose to read them independently of each other. Graphics and text both play a role in illuminating each tactic; allow both or either to guide your understanding. With each tactic, you will also find a reference for further reading or examples. The structure, the graphics, the writing, the references—this book was tailored, in each aspect, to be both tactical and practical.

Whatever brought you to this book, and wherever it may take you, we hope that it will uplift change and advance equity within your community.



# Learning & Interpreting

## *Designing your way into a community*

Consider your position within your own community. Reflect on the culture that shapes community beliefs and practices, the strengths and shortcomings, the community leaders, and the various dynamics that form your community. As a member of this community, your participation over time has shaped a unique point of view. The individuals around you—such as neighbors and co-workers—have their own perspective likely to overlap with, expand on, or possibly contradict yours. This information may not be recorded or expressed in available data, but it offers valuable and necessary insight into the community and its future.

Remember the value of this knowledge while working with a community and dreaming of a design. Whatever

you may think you know, there is still much more you can learn. Recognize that on your own, you do not know what will be best for a community. This is true whether you are a total outsider, or an individual within the community. You will need to develop partnerships with community leaders and organizations, ask questions of a wide-range of individuals, and research funding possibilities. Through cultural planning, you can make sense of a place and its future. Most importantly, you can develop trust within a community.

The following tactics and concepts in this chapter offer a guide to this learning process and how you may begin designing your way into a community.

## ROLE OF ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS



## Anchor Institutions

### *Leveraging organizations rooted in their community*

Institutions such as hospitals, universities, and churches anchor a community. To gain a better sense of how a community functions, and how it might function more effectively, you can look to local anchor institutions. Anchor institutions teach us more about a community, and also provide a powerful avenue for creating change.

Within these various organizations or agencies, consider who makes the decisions. Who do they employ? Which members of the community benefit from their services? How do their goals align with those of the community? Anchor institutions play a major role in the social and economic health of a community, but they are not always attentive to the full scope of their impact. Through greater involvement in the decision-making

processes of such institutions, community members may direct resources and propose actions that benefit the community.

Financial support may be one of the greatest assets an anchor institution can offer. Anchor institutions can assist in fundraising, but even more significantly, they can provide fiscal sponsorship. Partnership between anchor institutions and other community organizations allows for an intersectional collaboration, where the voices of many are heard and combine to create a unified effort.

Meeting the needs of a community requires deliberate, strategic action on behalf of anchor institutions. This action can only occur when community members have the voice and the power to direct policies.



# Community Asset Mapping

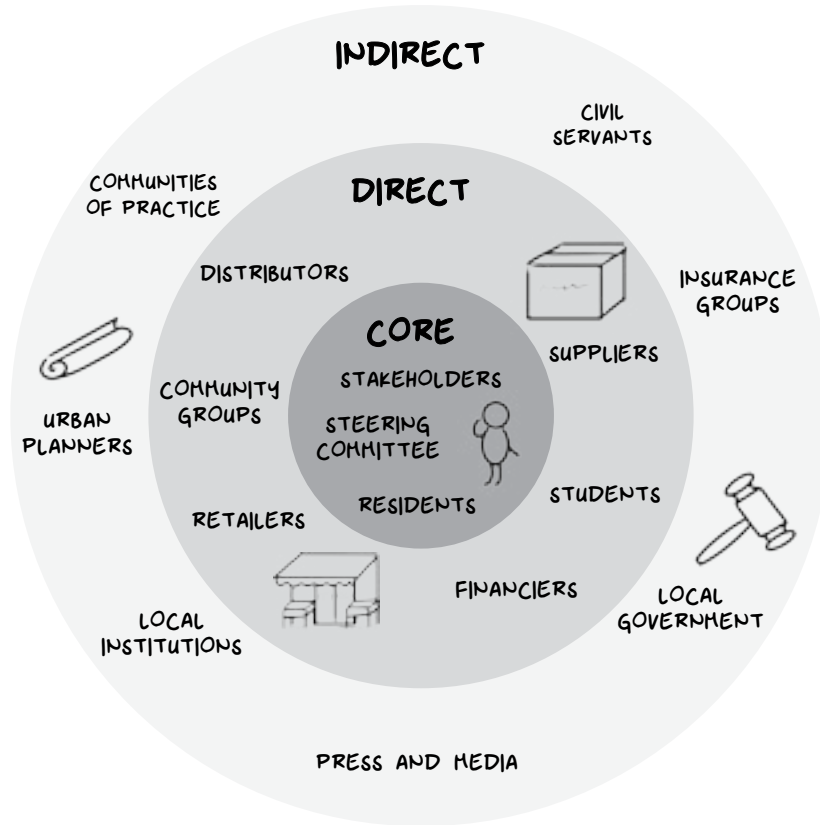
## *Focusing on local strengths and resources*

Locate the assets within your community. What place-based assets are currently being under-utilized, such as abandoned buildings or vacant lots? What assets do community members possess, in terms of their knowledge and skill base? What assets can organizations offer, and that other members of the community may be unaware of?

The process of community asset mapping requires us to reexamine what is right in front of us. We see these things every day—the abandoned building on the corner, the elderly neighbor, the health clinic you walk by on the way home—but our experience of these assets has been filtered by time and internal biases. We may look at them as deficits, but a new perspective can change them into assets. We might not be able to see the potential

vitality of that building, or recognize the repository of knowledge that neighbor has to share, or even realize the work that health clinic can do in community outreach. By re-approaching and evaluating the current resources in a community, we can discover the radical potential just below the surface.

Community design should never be about starting from scratch. So much has existed in this place before you, and still does; rather than reinventing the wheel, appreciate what is already in a community, and how it can create change for itself. Community asset mapping allows us to see a place in fresh ways and direct the power it already contains.



# Stakeholder Mapping

## *Identifying community connections and power dynamics*

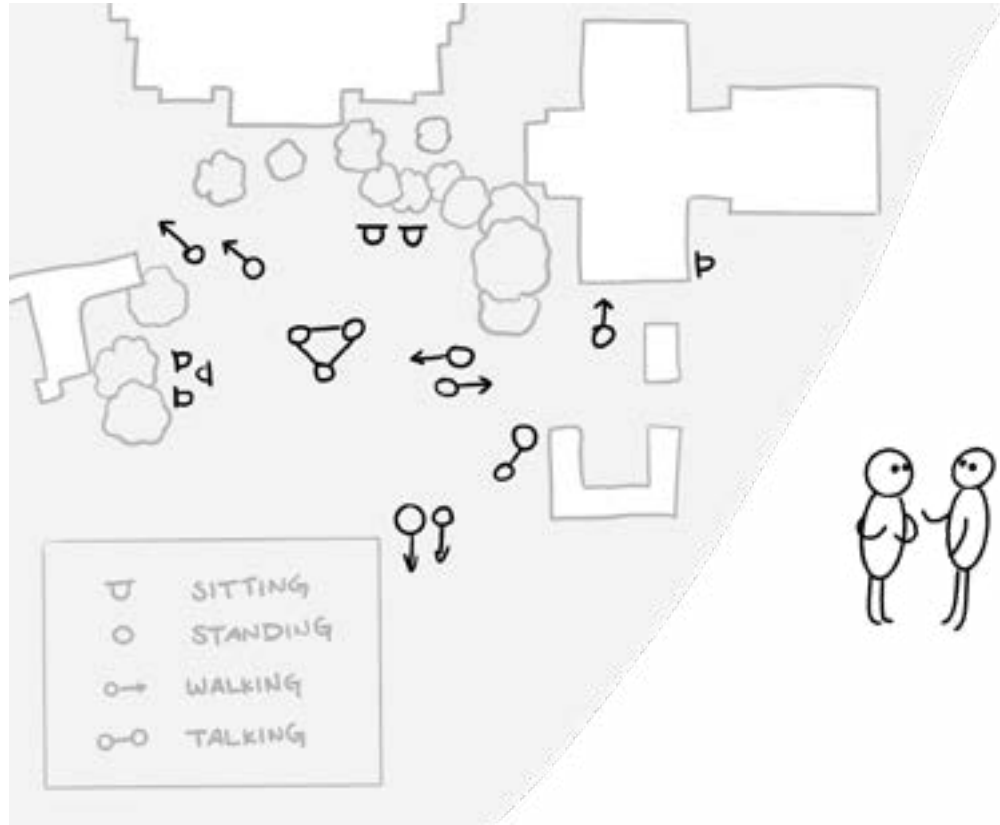
Who are the stakeholders in this community? The stakeholders are those individuals who have a stake in the outcome of any changes, and they are often the change-makers in a community. As you learn about a community and develop a plan for its future, it will be necessary to identify those individuals who have a stake—large or small—in the eventual outcome.

The individuals and groups who have a greater stake in community change may not be immediately apparent. Look closely at the diverse make-up of the community and seek out a variety of area-based groups that represent the different faiths, races, and cultures. Look for community and volunteer groups that may have goals that align or differ with yours. You will need the approval of these stakeholders for the sake of coalition building and further developing trust.

Because of the overlap in the communities, you don't want to limit your focus to those groups or communities physically located in the area. Expand your reach to web-based and virtual group. As your definition of the community you are serving shifts, you will want to continue identifying new stakeholders.

By locating and gathering the stakeholders within a community, you can learn more about what everyone's motivations are; anticipate where there might be conflict or opportunity for collaboration; and gain important allies in implementing new community design. Stakeholder mapping is another step to learning about a community and placing the needs and desires of the community before your own assumptions.





## Behavior Mapping

*Observing actors and activities across time and place*

People move through spaces in unexpected ways. While walking through a park, you may notice that outside of the designed path are worn down tracks through the grass where others have formed their own shortcut. Or perhaps they've left behind materials that tell you something about what they were doing in the park, such as empty water bottles or food wrappers.

The traces people leave—both physical evidence, in the form of discarded objects, and erosion, in the signs of unique wear such as new tracks—reveal how people use a space. Through careful observation of these traces, you can learn more about a space, the people who use it, and how it can adapt to best meet everyone's needs. You might also learn something about the assumptions of previous designers. Are there spaces intended for community gathering—such as a college union or a park pavilion—that sit empty and unused? How might such spaces be reimaged?

Perhaps more significantly, which members of the

community did these previous designers consider as they developed their plans? One of the rich opportunities provided by behavior mapping is insight into marginalized members of the community. Previous designs may have excluded them—either intentionally or unintentionally—but how did those overlooked communities overcome, redesign, move around, or generally utilize places and resources to serve themselves? A significant example might be the homeless population in an area. Driven by necessity, homeless individuals often find ingenious ways to use public spaces. What can we learn from them, and how can we lift some of their burden by centering their needs in community design?

This form of observation offers unique information on the behaviors of a community. There is much you can learn from asking questions, but there is still more that individuals might not realize or think to share. But their actions, revealed in the physical evidence they leave behind and the erosion they create through repeated use, can speak multitudes.



## Listening Sessions

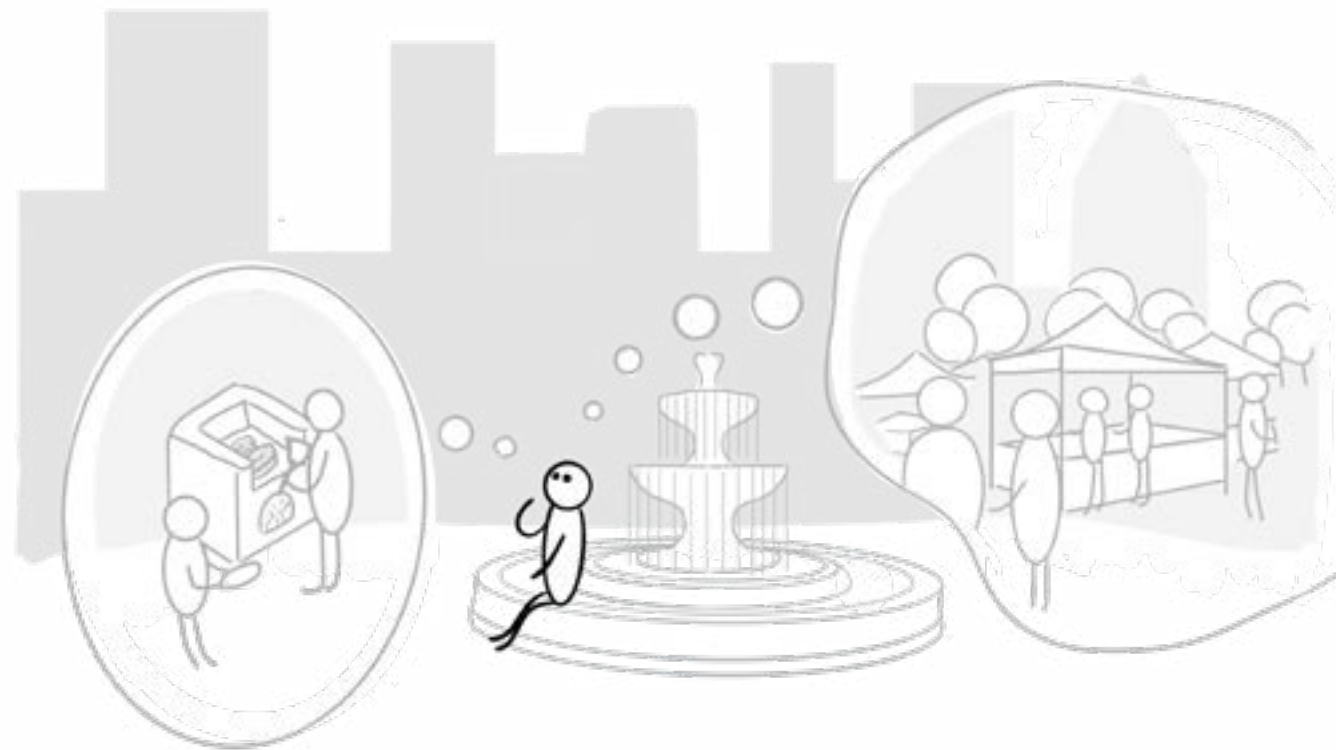
*Share ideas, gain insights, and encourage public exchange*

Developing empathy and understanding begins with listening. There are many types of community, but community always consists of people talking to one another and finding meaning in conversation.

In conversations, practice your listening skills as a different way to participate in a conversation. The search for solutions begins with listening meaningfully. Listen before you speak and take the time to consider what is being said before forming a response. While this advice may seem obvious, we often spend our conversations with each other deciding what we are going to say, even while the other person is still speaking. We enter conversations knowing what we want to say and waiting for the opportunity to say it.

To encourage openness, empathy, and a shared understanding with a community, you may follow these steps for a listening session: steps to a listening session. In this way, listening sessions will continue to build trust as you share the responsibility of change with community members.

The practice of listening meaningfully can transform conversations. Instead of trying to take the lead or assert yourself, you may find yourself allowing your conversation partner to take the lead. Beginning your community engagement with listening sessions can set the tone for your relationship with that community. Are you telling them what will happen, or letting them guide you through this process?



# Genus Loci

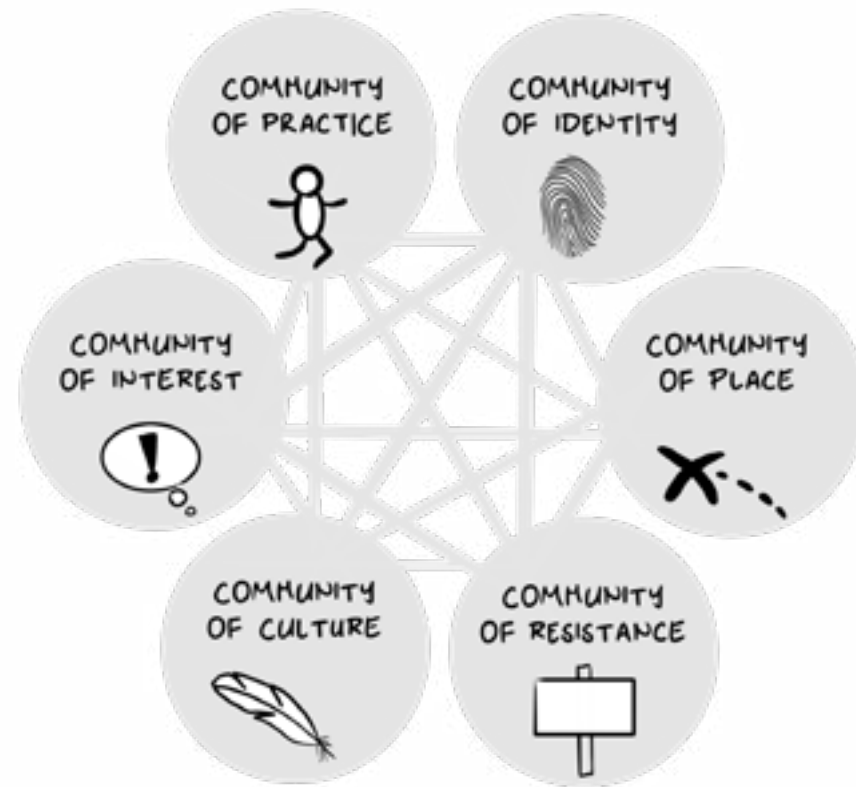
## *Making sense of a sense of place*

Genus Loci is an architectural concept that means the genius of a place, or the spirit of a place. Imagine the physical details of a neighborhood: the style of the buildings, a fading mural, the trees along the street. There are many environmental or physical qualities within a community that not only beautify a space but create the very sense of community.

Consider significant landmarks in your own hometown, or the style of the homes and public buildings in the area—if you were to return and these key elements changed, how would it affect your sense of the place? Would you still feel as if you belong? When creating a design in a neighborhood, appreciate these qualities that give the space its own character. Neighborhoods go through

transformations and may need to evolve and grow, but how can we implement change and still maintain the genus loci? Intentional transformation will center the genus loci of a community. Differentiate between the built and natural environment, and how both shape the life of a community.

The local charm and character of a place is not to be underestimated. These factors affect our experience and connection to a place. Centering the elements of genus loci allows a neighborhood to maintain its integrity and character, and considers the past, present, and future of the community.



## Communities within Community

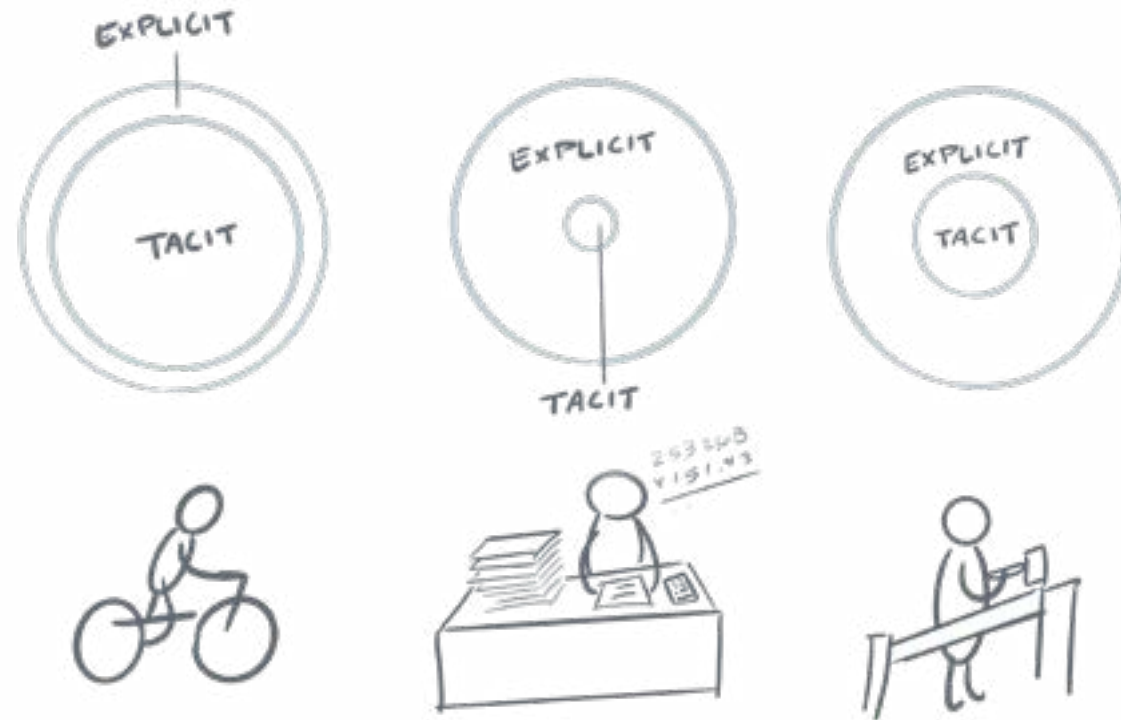
### *Identifying, defining and prioritizing collective needs*

Throughout this chapter, and in those to come, the term “community” repeatedly appears. What community do you serve? If you consider this question at length, you will likely discover that communities do not act independently of other communities; rather, they overlap and impact one another in myriad ways. You will want to have a definition of the community at the start of your project, and to form this definition you have to see the broader scope of the many communities are interacting and intersecting.

While membership in a community may be based on physical location—i.e., “I am a member of the community of this town”—there are many forms of community based on other factors. If you are chronically ill, you may see yourself in community with other chronically ill individuals. If you are resisting or protesting an unfair policy or law, you may see yourself in community with others doing the same. If you are waking early every morning to walk your dog, you may see yourself in community with other dog-walkers and early risers. We all belong to a number of communities, many of which we may not be aware of.

Access to digital communities allows us to find these connections and expand beyond the limits of our physical location. The chronically ill individual may connect with others in her community, even if they are thousands of miles away; the protester can discuss potential tactics with other protestors via email; the dog owner can read and comment on blog posts about caring for her pet. We may actively seek out these forms of community or participate in them incidentally. But with many communities always intersecting, our actions are bound to move beyond us in ways we cannot always foresee.

As you consider the community you plan to serve, look for the intersections. Who will be affected by potential change? What are the desires and needs of these communities? Are there opportunities for coalition building? In community research, ask members “who are we?” Leaving the power of self-definition to the community members will prioritize their voices, direct the work that needs to be done, and reveal the many communities that exist within one.



## Tacit Knowledge

### *Recognizing everyday 'know-how' in action*

We all possess unknown skills, talents, or knowledge. As such, each individual within a community is a powerful resource. Some of the knowledge they possess can be gathered through surveys, listening sessions, behavior mapping, and other practices described in this chapter. But the tacit knowledge of an individual can be difficult to describe or express to others. This knowledge seems to flow from us almost naturally, as we are so accustomed to possessing it. Trying to break down this knowledge into steps for someone else can feel impossible.

Consider an act as simple as speaking: you do it without a second thought about the mechanics of language

and speech. If you were to break this process down and attempt to explain to an alien how words form in our minds and come out as speech, you would likely never be able to offer thorough instructions. Community members will possess other types of tacit knowledge that can benefit the entire community but are difficult to codify or write out as instructions for others.

Directly engaging community members in the action may allow this tacit knowledge to reveal itself. Each of us can offer a skill or talent or unique knowledge, and realizing that we have something to offer empowers and engages us.

HOW MIGHT YOUR COMMUNITY...



...WORK  
TOGETHER?



...COORDINATE?



...GROW DEEP  
ROOTS?



WEATHER  
THE TIDES?

## Interpreting Local Metaphors

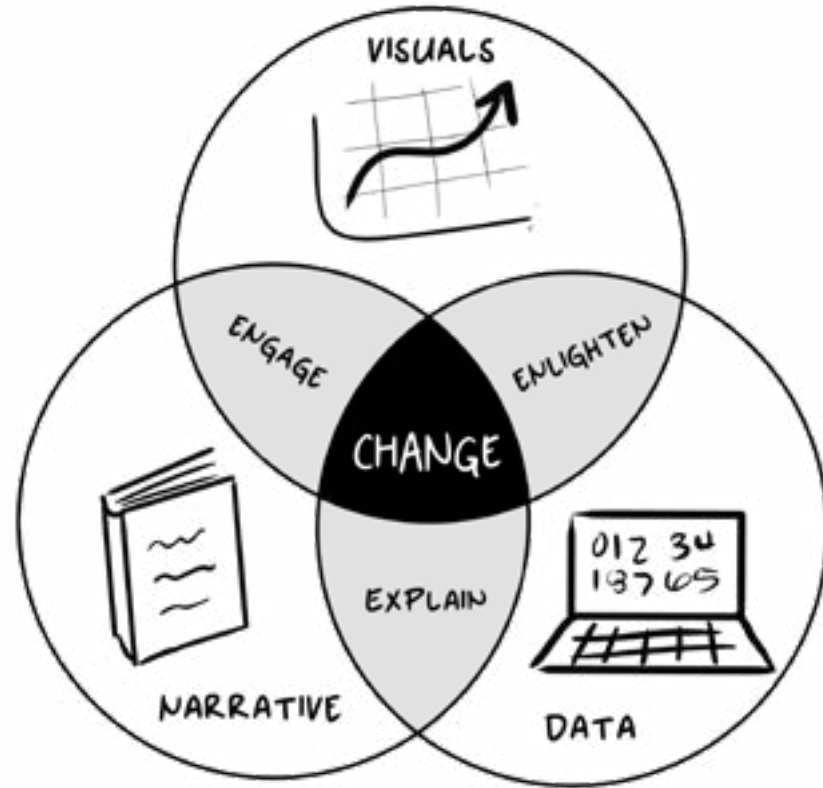
### *Naming, framing and translating for change*

How will you communicate your message? Effective communication is necessary to strong and lasting partnerships. When working with a community, you do not want to fall into the trap of lecturing individuals. Instead, use the power of storytelling.

Consider the adage “Show, Don’t Tell.” Using metaphors or visuals will more effectively convey your message, rather than lecturing your audience. Provide a narrative or story that allows your audience to connect; but not just any story or metaphor will do the trick. You need to know the context of your audience and the stories they already tell about themselves and their community. How will your

narrative fit alongside theirs? Does your tone, your images, your examples, relate to this audience?

Effective communication always centers the audience. Shift away from statistics or data and create a narrative that will fit into the larger narrative of the community, and how they think of themselves. In this narrative, you are no longer creating a dialogue or vision or a story of the community from an individual position. You are immersing yourself in the community and elevating their voices over yours.



## Meaningful Data

### *Finding the value(s) in the information*

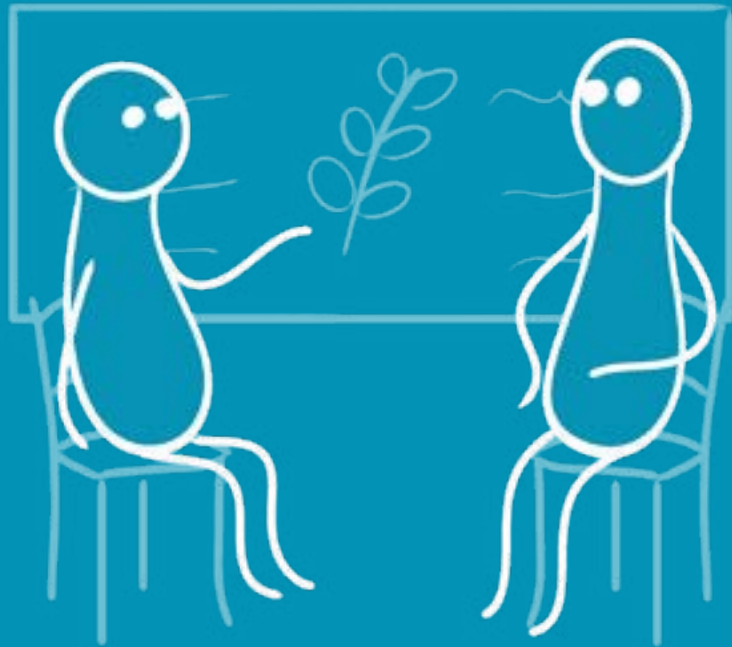
At many points in the learning process, different forms of data and research have to be examined. How that data is developed, and how you move from the data into action, needs to be done with care and consideration. It may be tempting to view data as objective. But how has this data been collected? In surveys, are questions crafted to look for a specific answer? What assumptions are you making based on the data?

Our own implicit biases and assumptions inform our understanding. Being self-aware can help us to avoid taking action based on these biases. As you plan to gather meaningful data, look to a variety of community

organizations and leaders. These might include social clubs, church groups, neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, business associations, municipal leaders, community revitalization organizations, and other involved citizens.

What information might these organizations already have? How can they help you to gather more data, and make decisions based on the data? The inclusion of many different organizations and leaders will prevent your own assumptions or biases from taking center stage. This process will also empower the community to decide what work needs to be done, and how to track their progress.





# Organizing & Convening

*Building trust through empathy and engagement*

Allow questions to lead this step in the community design project. Although the tactics in Learning & Interpreting taught you more about your community, their needs, and the assets they offer, you should hold back on assumptions. Begin to convene with each sector of your community by asking questions: about shared goals, community self-perception, and what role you can play. A fully represented community results in richer responses, and an equitable vision.

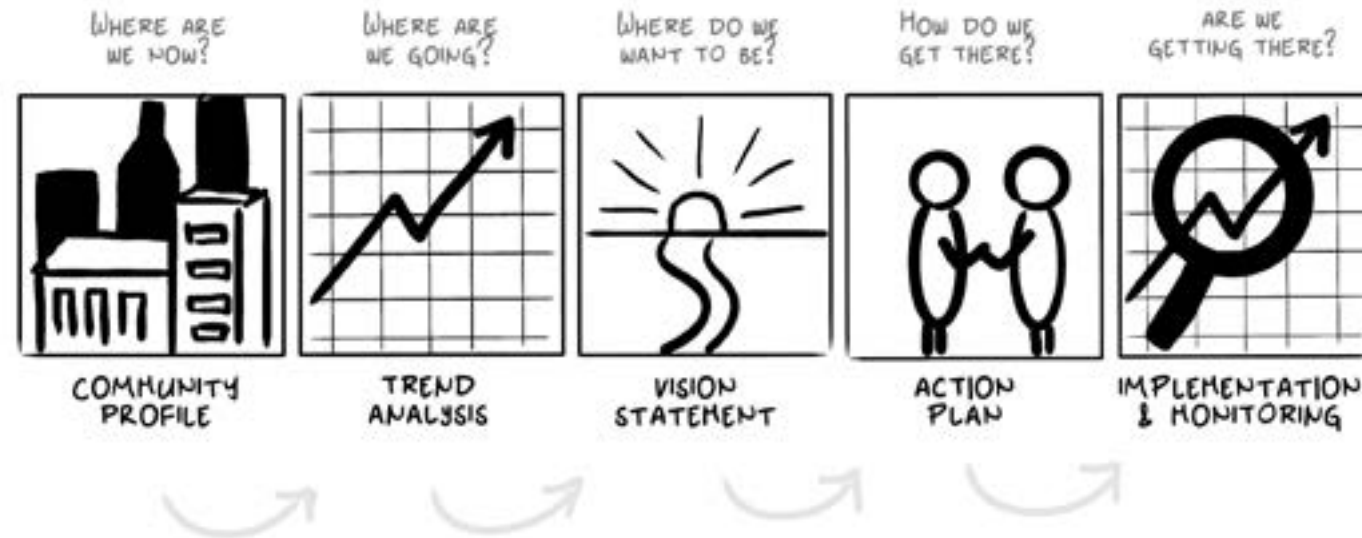
You are still in the early stages of design but need to work intentionally towards the long-term success. A key to success will be community involvement and leadership. Instead of acting as leader, or placing leadership on a few select individuals, recognize the potential for each individual to lead change. How will you enable and

support their leadership, and what tools or resources will individuals have to keep growing as leaders?

Convening with an entire community may be a daunting, lengthy process towards change. In this chapter, there are many tactics for incorporating and representing the diversity of opinions within a group, while still making progress. Consider the whole group and subgroups; by breaking into separate parts or subgroups, individuals are directly involved to make change. Shift between whole group and subgroup as needed.

Organizing & Convening develops tactics from the previous chapter, especially Listening Sessions, for the sake of involving the entire community and supporting long-term success.





# Community Visioning

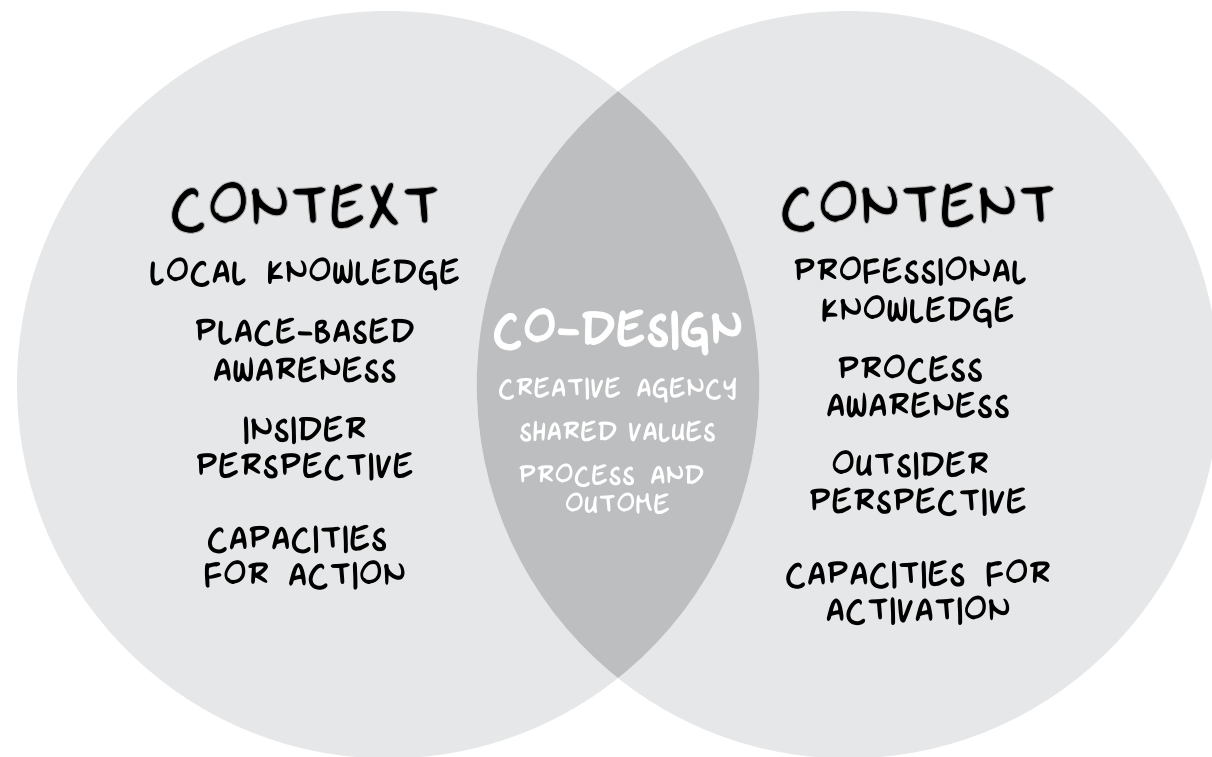
## *A planning instrument for empowerment*

What vision does the community have for itself? What future are they working towards, and how can intentional community design bring that about? What will you and the community be doing together?

As you convene with community members to determine a vision for a place, begin with an exploration of the community's values. Due to the diversity of a community, there is likely to be some conflict. Recognizing these conflicts at the outset, and identifying what values are held in common, is necessary to shaping a shared vision and goals. Ask members to share their vision of the place: what practical changes do they want to see? How does their knowledge challenge your own visions? Proximity to a place, and a stake in the outcome, encourages community members to have a greater involvement and commitment to the project. Convening with the community in this way offers another opportunity to identify the stakeholders and develop relationships with them.

Ultimately, you will need a place vision that has been designed by community members. What are the shared goals? What space are you looking to design, who will use it, and what are your intentions for it? How will you design this space, and what are potential obstacles to your design? Look for comparisons with other projects to better envision success, and from there, form an action plan. No matter the complexity of the project, following these steps and determining both long- and short-term goals will keep everyone on task and make a community vision a reality.

The practice of co-visioning, community future-ing, and community visioning transforms abstract ideas or values into practical, equitable change. As you move through this chapter, consider how each new tactic will achieve this goal.



## Context & Content Knowledge

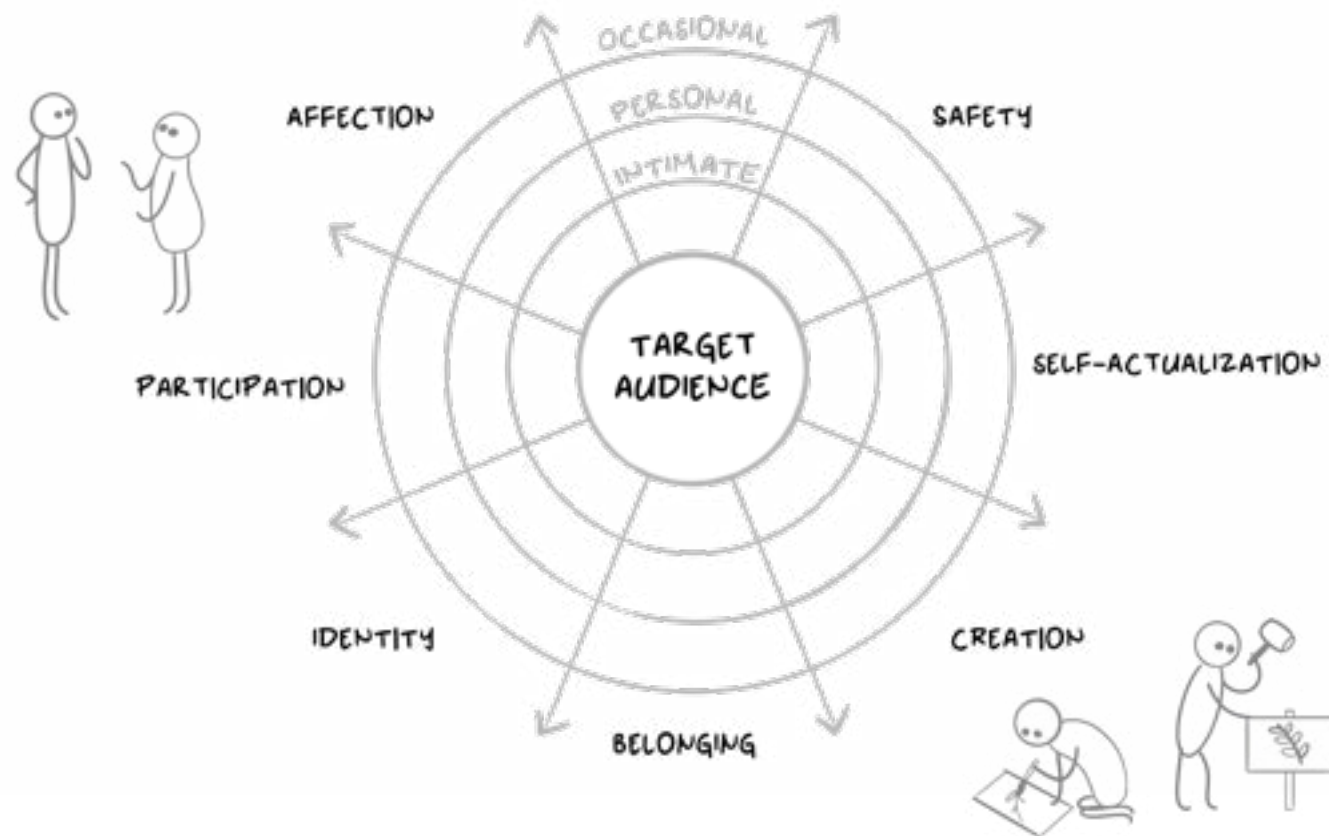
### *Design when everybody designs*

As discussed throughout the previous chapter, community members possess a great wealth of knowledge. Centering this knowledge, and allowing it to drive community design, is imperative. Information from outside experts and researchers should be utilized as a complement or catalyst to local knowledge and visions.

An expert, for example, may introduce an idea for change or a method for investigation. Community members will have to decide if these ideas and methods apply to their community. Are they feasible? Do they apply to this context? Are they in line with the community vision? It's

essential to value the local knowledge that community members share. Community members are the experts of their local context and environment; they've seen other projects succeed or fail, they personally know what assets or obstacles are in place, and they will have to live with and sustain a project or design over the long-term.

As discussed in the Learning chapter, community members possess invaluable knowledge that should lead every community design. Tactics such as meaningful data, and the process of triangulation, also direct us to a balance between local and expert knowledge.



# Social Network Analysis

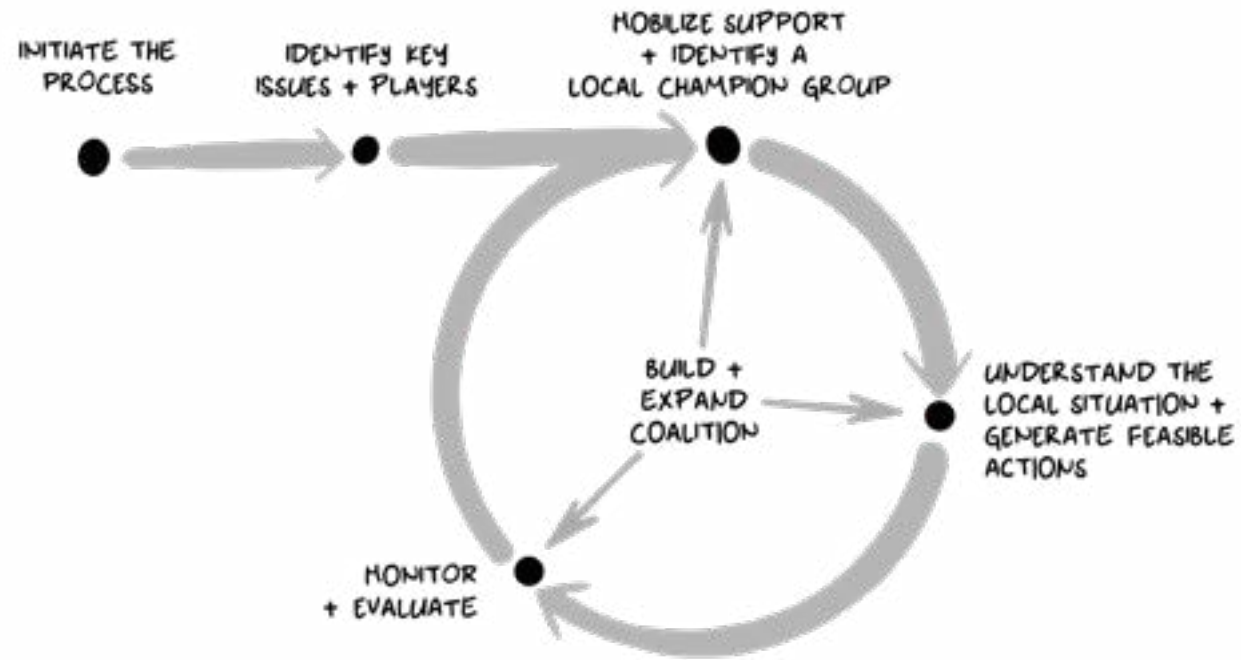
## *Mapping interpersonal to international relationships*

Many tactics from the previous chapter, such as identifying stakeholders, defining community, and leveraging anchor institutions, likely revealed some of the social connections within your community. Take a closer look for the social networks forming your community, with consideration to the political landscape, volunteer organizations, community boards, and stakeholders.

As you analyze these social networks, ask yourself: how do they accomplish change? Where might structures be improved? Who takes charge of projects? How can positive relationships foster further connections? You

will want to consider online social networks as well. Can online social networking allow you to reach a new audience, bridge different sectors of the community, or engage community members in new ways? The more engaged and connected your community is, the more momentum and strength your project will develop.

Analyzing social networks can reveal how best to convene and engage with a community to initiate conversations and change. By combining multiple perspectives, everyone's interests can evolve into a unified, aligned approach.



## Partnerships & Sponsorships

### *Developing local coalitions for change*

Stakeholder mapping and social network analysis will prepare you to identify and develop important partnerships. There are several levels of partnership, ranging from most to least casual: networking, cooperating, coordinating, and collaborating. In the networking stage, you are looking to form connections; cooperating involves a slightly closer relationship, with a greater investment of time and trust; coordinating will require even more time and trust as you depend on each other further; and through collaboration, both you and your partner are equally invested and united in a project.

Develop partnerships early in the design process. You want partners who will be equally invested in the project and its long-term maintenance. Some of these partners may act as sponsors who help legitimize a project within the community. Although they may not be involved in the day-to-day details, they offer knowledge, and lend their authority or power to a project. These partners—whether they are individuals or organizations—are stakeholders as well, who are invested in the outcome.



# Facilitating Exchange

## *Guidance for managing group dynamics*

Draw on the tactics of listening sessions and local metaphor as you facilitate. Facilitation can make or break a relationship of trust. How do you earn a community's trust? What efforts will you make to ensure their comfort? By following the guidelines set forth here, you have the opportunity to prioritize the many voices of the community and engage them in the design process.

Verbal tools for facilitating group conversation:

**Probing** - Is used to determine the mood or general opinion of the group towards a certain topic or point in the discussion.

**Paraphrasing** - Expresses the same content that was just stated before but with your own words in order to check that both you and other members have the same understanding.

**Redirecting questions and comments** - Redirecting a question to the group helps to involve participants more into the discussion while also helping with group reflection.

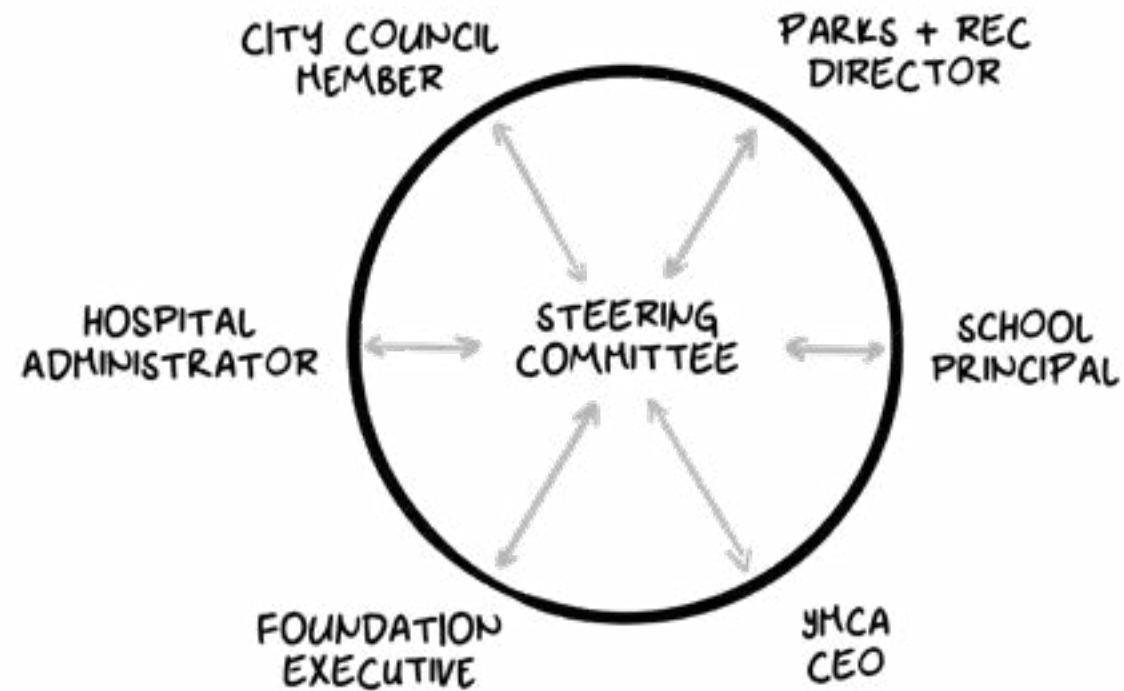
**Bridging and referring back** - Helps the group to follow the discussion and to connect ideas by recalling an earlier discussion or idea.

**Shifting perspective** - If the group gets stuck at some point in the discussion, try to shift the perspective by looking at the problem from a different perspective.

**Summarizing** - Repetition promotes learning and summarizing what has been learned so far helps reinforce learning. Do it often or ask someone from the group to do it.

**Giving positive reinforcements** - It is important to encourage people to state their opinions. When someone brings up a good point, state it, in order to show their participation is encouraged.

**Including quieter members** - Encourage less talkative members to contribute to the discussion. Ask directly for their opinions or if they have questions. Keep in mind people have different learning style.



## Community Action Committee

*A core group of actively engaged residents*

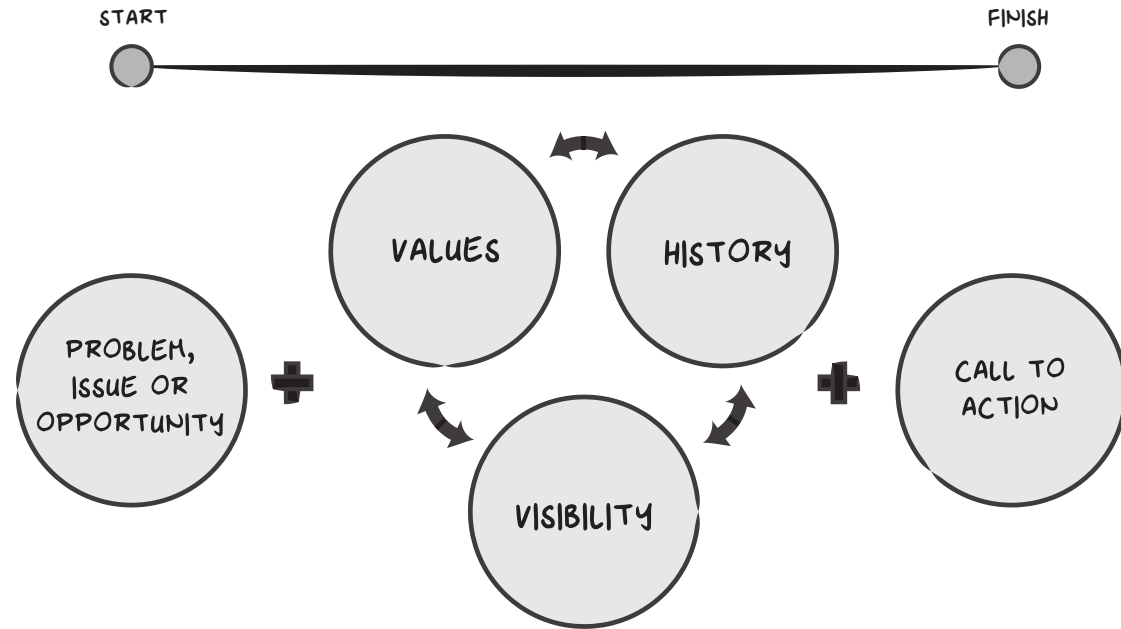
Your community action committee represents the larger community and directs the action of a project. They are knowledgeable about the community, directly impacted by the change that may occur, and invested in the research process. You will likely see overlap between your Community Action Committee and the stakeholders you identified in previous tactics.

Who will serve on your Community Action Committee? Stakeholders are a good place to start, along with other community leaders and dedicated community members.

As you form the Community Action Committee, recognize the diversity of your community. Reflect on the previous tactic of communities within communities and ensure that each sector of your community has a seat at the table.

This core group of individuals will lead the design project through the research phase and into designing, planning, operating, and sustaining. Are they committed to the task? And do they represent the community's diverse needs?

## ELEMENTS THAT MAKE STRONG NARRATIVES



## Meaningful Storytelling

### *Shared values shaping new narratives*

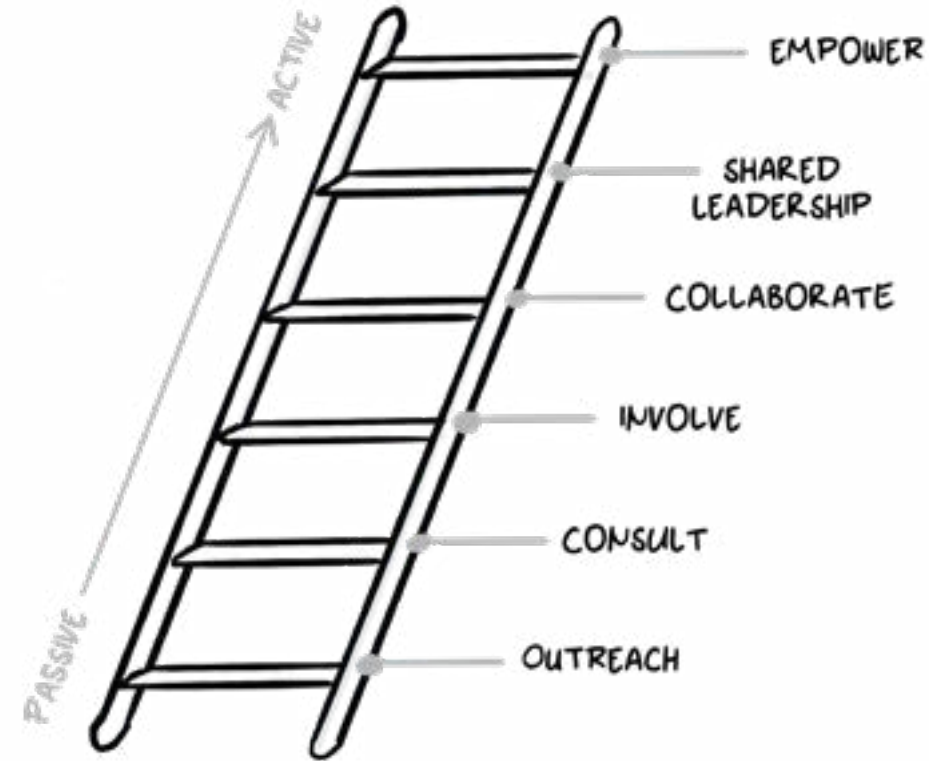
What is a community's story? Who has created this story, and how might a new story take shape? The story of a place or a group of people can also be thought of as narrative.

Narrative is a story that has been broadly accepted and continues to be perpetuated. Media, news, popular culture, advertising, education, policies, art, and even family and friends do the work of perpetuating a narrative, intentionally or not. We often accept a narrative as truth without thinking critically, but narratives can spread harmful stereotypes. Dominant narrative reflects the dominant culture's beliefs and shapes a story from that perspective.

Although it can be a powerful tool, narrative is dangerous

when we lose control over our own narratives. When we regain agency over narrative, we begin the process of narrative change. Narrative change allows for social change, as it encourages a shift in attitudes, questions presumed knowledge, and centers marginalized voices. Without this narrative change, we may be held back by assumptions and stereotypes we've internalized and never questioned. A narrative can divide us and discourage the connections necessary for community change.

The stories we tell become more than stories—they shape our lives in very real ways, for better or worse. What story does your community want to tell?



Arnstein's Ladder of Public Engagement

## Authentic Community Engagement

### *Meeting people where they are*

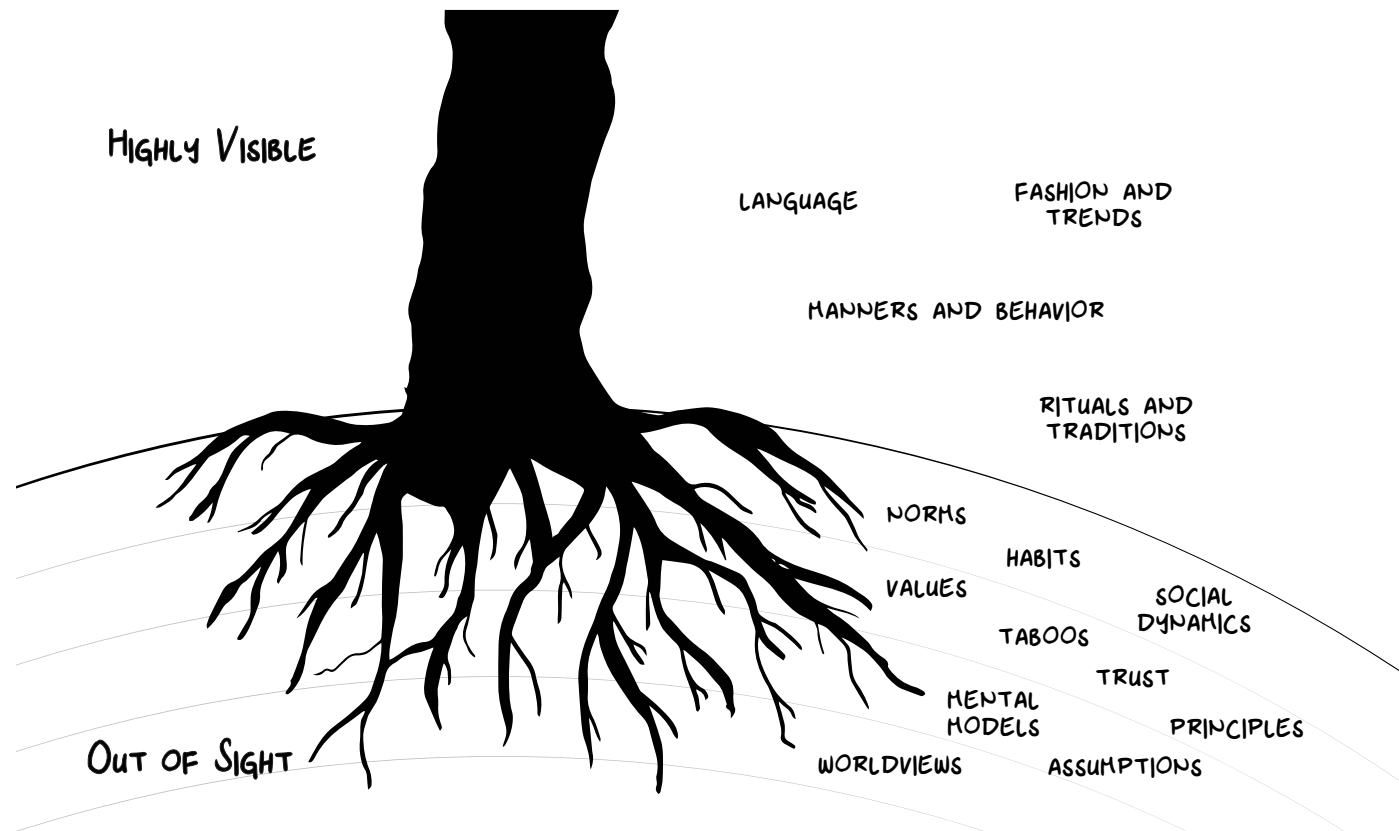
Honesty and respect are essential to community engagement. Why should community members invest themselves in a design if their voices haven't been heard, or if they have felt lied to or misguided?

If you find yourself frustrated or confused by a lack of community engagement, take a moment to consider what yourself and other project leaders could be doing better to gain trust and show respect towards the community. Many tactics already listed, or found in the upcoming chapters, enable this trust and respect to flourish, such as

financial transparency listening sessions. As you convene with the community during this stage of the design, you need to embody these values or risk losing engagement.

Do you fully consider other viewpoints, even when they conflict with yours? When you hit an obstacle or fall short, how will you communicate this to the community? Which members of the community have previously been left behind during times of change, and how will you ensure their engagement now? Continue to ask yourself these questions during each stage of the design.





## Practice Cultural Humility

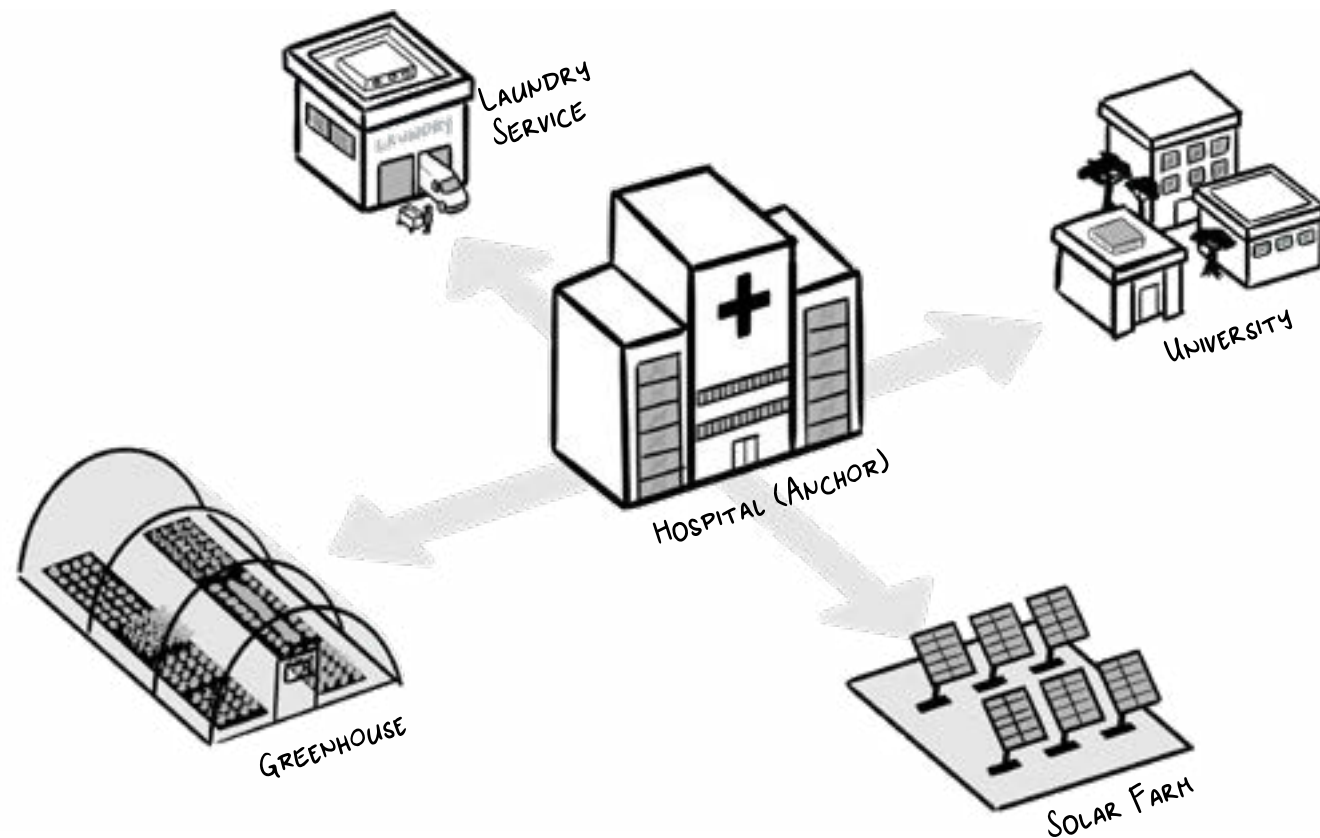
### *Cultural competency builds trust*

As you convene and organize within your community, you should be hearing the many voices of each community within your community, as discussed in the previous chapter. Beginning with the tactics in Learning & Interpreting, and continuing through this entire project, you should be learning more about the intersecting cultures that form your community. Mindfulness and knowledge of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, and the many aspects of identity that shape ourselves and our communities should be a constant priority.

You want to be culturally competent, but also consider your cultural humility. You will never know everything about a culture; to assume so would imply a culture is monolithic. While you should strive to learn more, you

also need to self-reflect and maintain an open stance to other cultures. De-center yourself and your own cultural assumptions, and recognize how cultural background shapes many of our interactions. Cultural humility may begin in listening sessions, from narrative change, or other efforts to truly empathize with others.

This practice is difficult but essential work. Unlike cultural competence, cultural humility is an endless project, requiring personal maintenance and recognition of our shortcomings. But the endless nature of this work also enables us to grow endlessly, and to improve ourselves and our communities. Cultural humility provides a stepping stone to long-term cooperation.



## Symmetries that Exist

### *Points of alignment advancing collective efforts*

As you learn more about a community, you will begin to notice the potential for collaboration. This collaboration may occur between volunteer groups, community organizers, and anchor institutions, as touched on in other sections of this chapter. As you look at existing resources, pay special attention to possible gaps. Are these resources being fully utilized?

Reflect on what you learned from behavior mapping. Community members often take advantage of available places and resources in ways we do not predict. Acknowledging these behaviors may be the first step, and in doing so, we may discover some symmetries. When

waiting in a laundromat for their clothes to be washed, an individual may pass the time reading. Why not turn the laundromat into a library as well, to meet people's needs and offer this opportunity to more of the community? And what books might we put in this laundromat library, to best serve the social health of the community? Finding opportunities in the mixed use of a place can lead to continued social innovation.

Many symmetries exist in our communities, and when they come together, they offer more than the sum of their parts.



# Aligning & Visioning

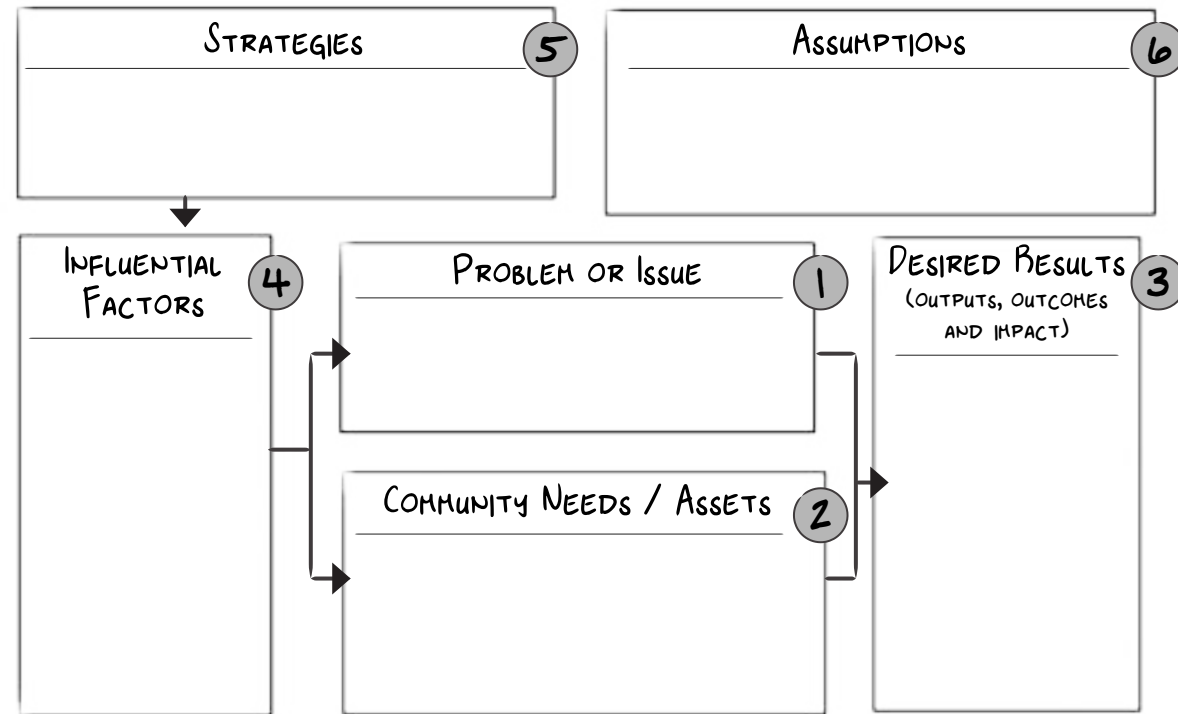
*Mobilizing for action through purpose and planning*

What are the values of your community? This stage in community design will look at everyone's values, and the future these values can create for a community. The challenge will be aligning conflicting values to develop a vision everyone can work towards. Through conversation that emphasizes both sharing with and listening to one another, very different perspectives can begin to align and understand one another.

A vision is likely to develop quickly, with both short-term and long-term goals. Because the participants in this

process are directly involved and impacted by community change, they are going to see the smaller openings for immediate and lasting change. You may be able to support many visions if you build at different scales. Visioning can grow beyond the short-term by encouraging a time shift in everyone's perspective.

Aligning and Visioning facilitates conversation and builds consensus. Support the emergence of new community visions and unified goals.



## Theory of Change

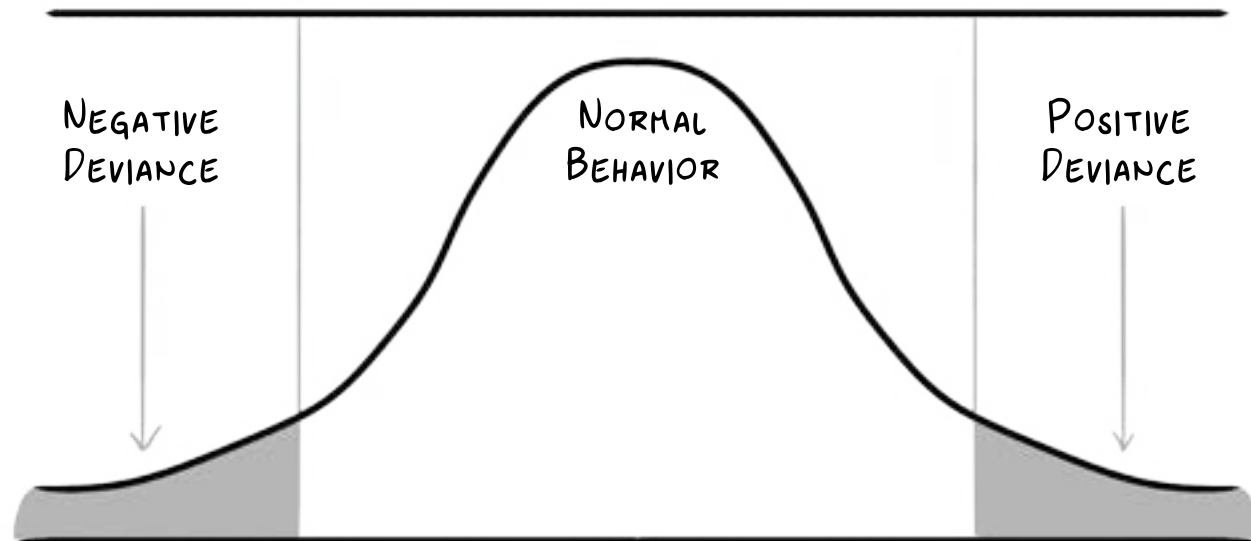
### *Defining goals and pathways for achieving them*

Theory of change asks us to consider the details and practical application of a project. As we synthesize long-term goals and desired outcomes, this approach makes a reality of a community's dream. We not only see the planned actions, but the result of those actions, and why it was effective.

With theory of change, you will work backwards or 'back-cast' to map out a plan of action. Start by identifying the long-terms goals and shared values. From there, list the necessary conditions or requirements for achieving this goal, and why those elements are necessary. What outcomes are you planning for? Consider your own assumptions, how your design will intervene in the community, and how you will measure the success of your

design. Why do you think certain actions will result in change? Is that based on evidence, or assumptions? Take a moment to map out other routes of action. As you move through each step of this backwards mapping, develop as many details as you can. Ask yourself and others about the location, the dates, the population, the materials, the budget, etc.

This tactic doesn't need to be a clearly written narrative. Instead, use diagrams to show the movement between steps. From this perspective, you will create an outlined guide to achieving a desired outcome or goal, that shows both the how and why of a design project. This method of planning is an investment to the design and the desires of the community and reveals how change occurs.



## Positive Deviance

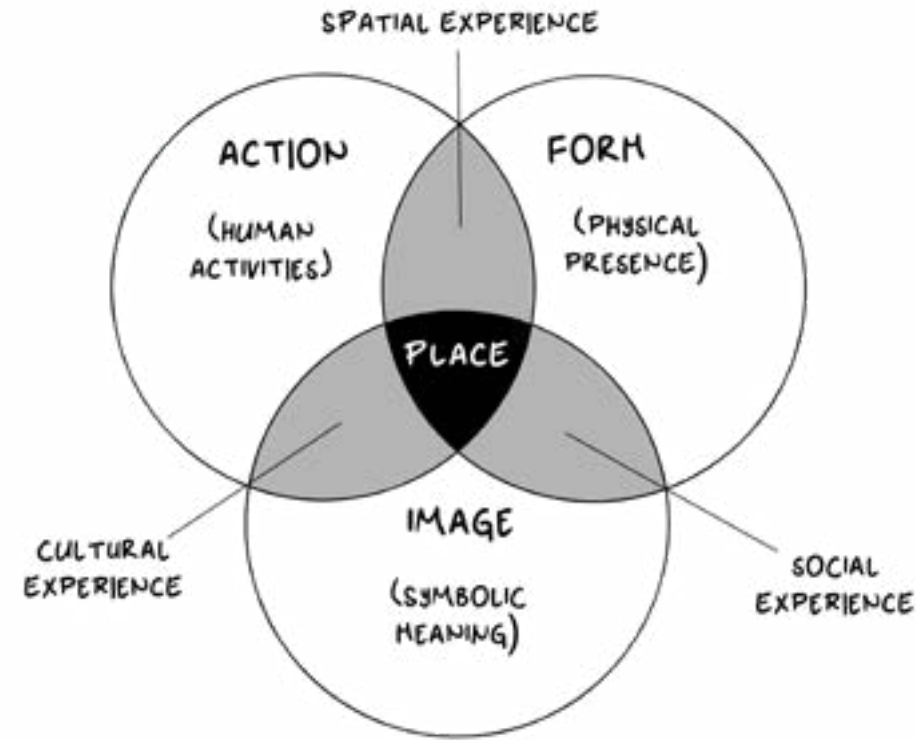
### *Acting your way into a new way of thinking*

When faced with obstacles and driven by necessity, we are all capable of finding unique solutions. As you take stock of the challenges facing a community, you will want to examine the different responses of community members. Focus on the positive deviants, or those community members who deviate from expectations to find positive, imaginative solutions to a collective problem. These individuals may not seem exceptional next to their neighbors—they may not have more knowledge or resources—but they can provide insight to larger solutions that may benefit everyone.

If a community is located within a food desert and lacks access to affordable food, for example, you may find that families and individuals respond to this issue in a variety

of ways. Some may be forced to rely on local fast food restaurants; others may carpool or walk to the nearest grocery store; neighbors may come together to form a community garden, or individuals may start their own gardening projects along a windowsill; and still others may form a buying club, where they come together and use their buying power to purchase bulk quantities of food together. There may be any number of original responses to this issue. You will likely learn from each one and discover creativity that can only be found in living with such a challenge firsthand.

If you can find those individuals in a community who have found success, despite the challenges, they can offer a roadmap to larger solutions.



## Space or Place

### *Changing spaces by activating places*

We may use these terms, space and place, interchangeably. But pause for a moment and reflect on the meanings of each term. A space may just be a physical, geographical location: a grassy lot. A place takes on more meaning, transforming space into an integral part of the community: the grassy lot as a baseball field, where children gather for games and families cheer on the sidelines.

A space itself may seem neutral, simply existing and waiting to develop a purpose. When a space develops into a place, it takes on more than just physical qualities.

A place is also a social construct, reflecting the values and beliefs of a community. When we recognize this distinction between space and place, we can also acknowledge the ability of place to shift in identity. A place can evolve for the needs of a community; the grassy lot may become a baseball field, or host an outdoor music event, or allow for outdoor yoga classes.

How will you use the concept of space and place in community design? And how do these distinct concepts shape your long-term goals to sustain a design?

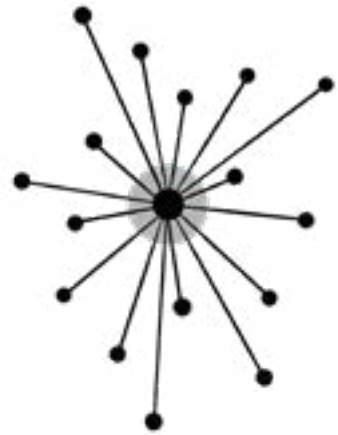
# Decentralizing the Center

## *Systematic delegation of agency across scales*

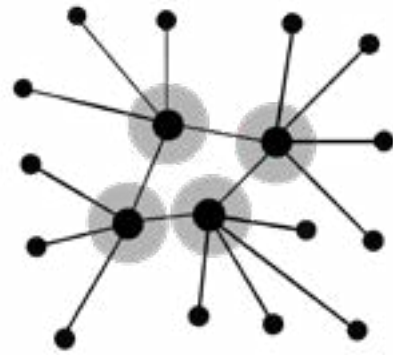
Shaping each tactic in this book, and their application in any community, is power. Who has power in a community, and who doesn't? How will your community design project account for these power dynamics? Will new community members be empowered? Will the power in a community be redistributed, or remain with a select few?

Locate the center of power within the community and identify what gives that individual or institution power.

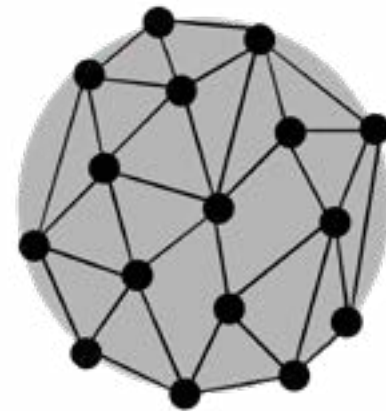
Oftentimes, the direction of financial resources can lend power. Who contributes the funds for a community design, and who directs the use of funds? By finding the center of power within a community, you can begin to envision ways of de-centering it. Bringing this power out to the margins will enable every member of the community to contribute and create lasting change that can be maintained over the long term.



CENTRALIZED

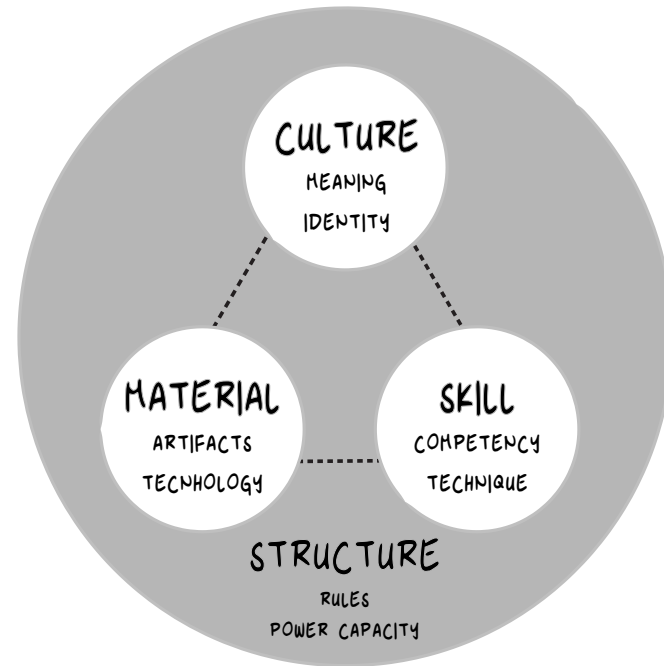


DECENTRALIZED



DISTRIBUTED

## ELEMENTS OF EVERYDAY PRACTICES



## Practices are Political

*‘Power reminds, everyday practices undermine’ - Jamer Hunt*

We often envision our role in political matters to be small or insignificant. Perhaps we vote in elections, educate ourselves on policies, or sign the occasional petition, and while these actions might feel empowering, for most people, they only take up a small fraction of our lives. Becoming more politically involved can be overwhelming, or require a commitment and skillset we don’t think we possess.

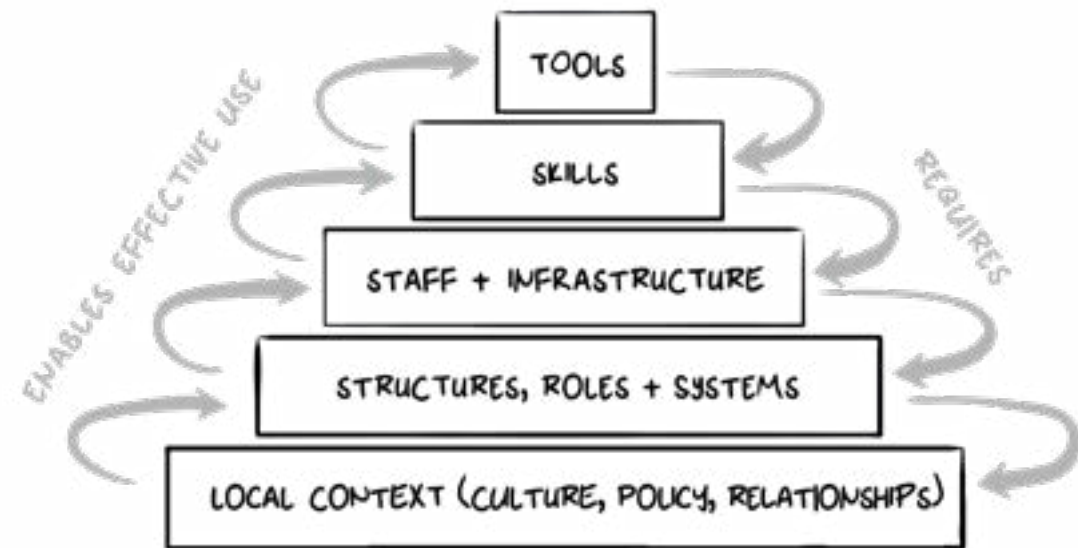
Although overtly political practices are necessary and impactful, we also need to recognize the politics of our everyday actions and decisions. How do our actions conform to a societal value? Are we aware that our actions reinforce these values? If we pause to consider the significance of our choices, might we change our behaviors?

Consider eating habits. Depending on your culture, class, and geographical location, you may not think twice about eating meat, or relying on fast food, or choosing organic, etc. But how do these choices maintain a certain

status quo? How does the decision to eat meat, or rely on fast food, or eat organic, for example, support certain industries? How does your class position determine what you eat, and access to organic foods? What is the environmental impact? Who produces or serves this food, and how are these workers treated? How do your eating habits impact your physical health? The decision of what to eat for lunch appears mundane. You likely base this decision on what’s affordable, available, and appetizing. But even such a seemingly small decision has far reaching implications—especially when you make this decision day after day.

Voting is an important political action. But how often do you get to vote in an election? Reflect on everyday choices and consider their political significance. By becoming a mindful citizen and consumer, you can make choices that reflect your politics, and perhaps challenge the status quo. What you choose to eat, where you shop, whether you drive or walk to work—each of these choices matters beyond yourself.





# Capacity Building

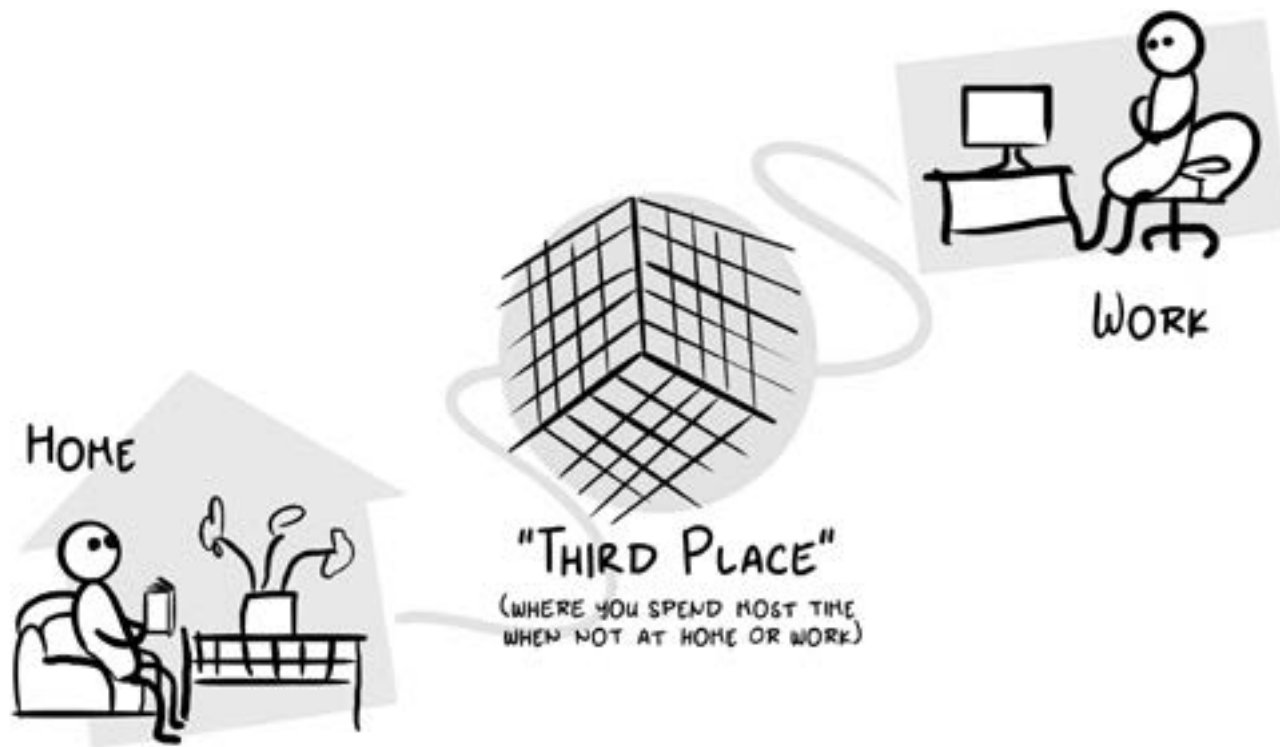
*Build capacity don't create dependence*

How can a community, through its individual members and organizations, reach its greatest capacity? Where might community members collaborate with organizations and contribute their knowledge and expertise?

Capacity building in a community calls on the knowledge, experience, and skill-sets of everyone, and seeks to improve or empower these strengths to better serve the community and its individual members. Complete a skill audit to determine the strengths and weaknesses for your community design. This skill audit can occur internally, within an organization, and externally, with community members. How can strengths develop for greater impact? Do potential weaknesses present an opportunity for

more training or education? To meet your own needs as a community, look inward at what your community is capable of, and also outward, to locate outside resources you can rely on.

Increased education, empowerment, and advocacy can result from capacity building. Finally, the process builds both skills and trust. When community members direct initiatives, offer feedback, advocate for themselves, or engage in community change with the support of local organizations, they are more likely to feel respected by and trust these organizations. Respect and trust, as discussed in previous chapters, are necessary for a community to come together and design a future.



## Third Places

### *The living rooms of society*

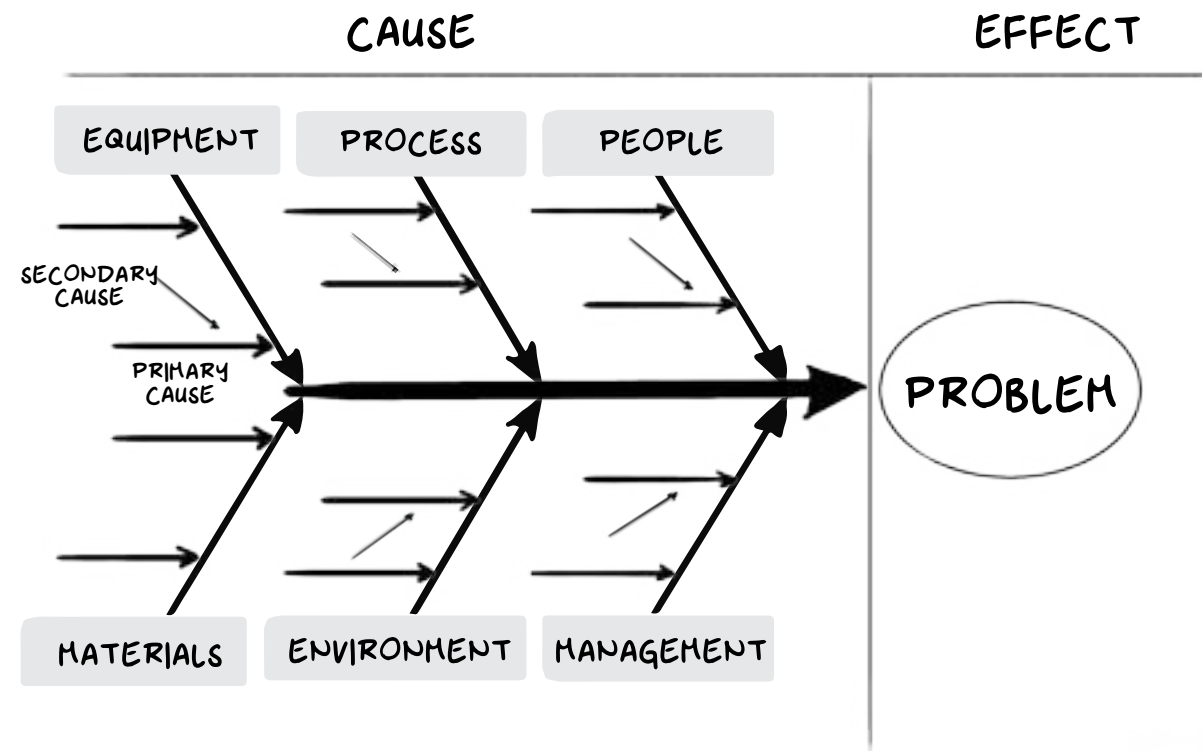
Our lives are spent largely at home (“first place”) or at work (“second place”). But there are many spaces between and beyond home and work. Referred to as “third places,” these are community settings: libraries, parks, cafes, churches. Third places are neutral, open, and accessible, allowing people to congregate, connect, and socialize. What are the third places within your community?

To answer this, consider where you go when you aren’t at home or work. Do you stop at the public library to unwind and read? Do you go to a local coffee shop, enjoying a drink and taking in the atmosphere and free wifi? Your sense of a community’s third places is shaped by your individual experience. For example, you may enjoy the library and use that space to relax, but for a homeless individual, they

need that same space just to stay warm. You may not recognize certain third places, because you haven’t had to use them; for example, a local laundromat.

Identify third places within your community, and the potential for new places. What spaces are underutilized? For those third places that exist, how can we revision them to better serve the community? Third places shape community health. They offer a social setting necessary to community members who are often left behind, such as the disabled and elderly. Are your community’s third places accessible to and inclusive of these individuals?

Improving third places can transform community health and connection, and offer a place in the design process to literally meet the community where they’re at.



## Make the Invisible Visible

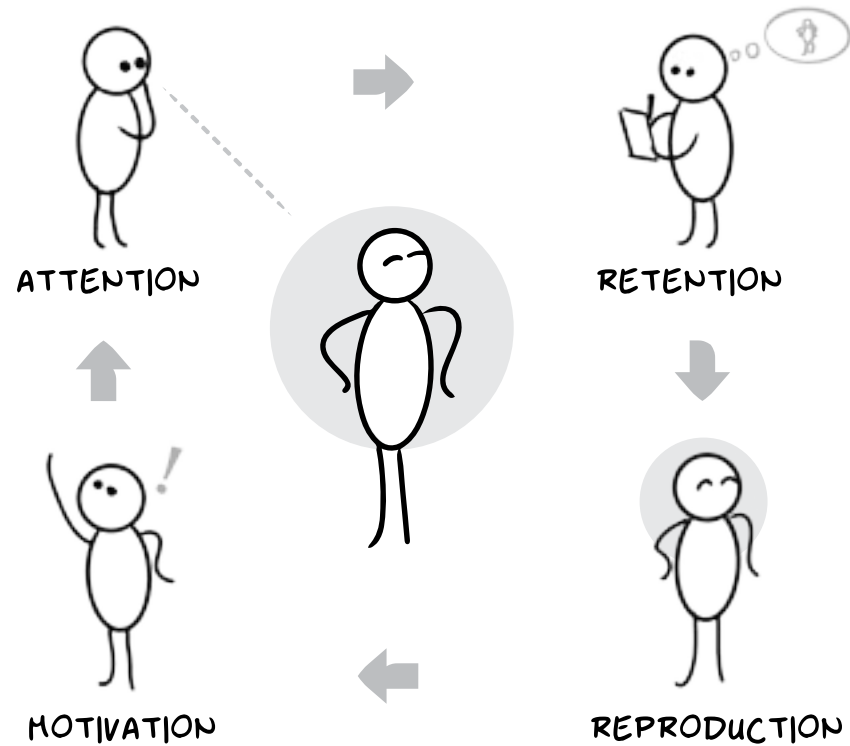
### *Highlighting the causes of the causes of inequity*

In the story that a community tells about itself, do they recognize injustice? Do they consider oppression central to their identity? How does this shift across different members of a community?

A function of ideology is to make injustice invisible, or to appear so every day and mundane that we don't see it or question it, but accept injustice as part of the status quo. To challenge this injustice, we need to make what has always been invisible, newly visible. Bringing such injustice

to the center of a movement will make new individuals aware of wrongdoing, and also unite those who are affected. The goal is to encourage action that may liberate individuals and transform current power systems.

Making these injustices apparent can change the story or narrative, so that the invisible is now visible, and an issue we all play some role in. How will this change the community's story of itself? Or, how will this empower the community to create a new story?



## Social Modeling

### *Observing, imitating and demonstrating best practices*

How do we know what is possible? As children, we likely look up to parents, teachers, and other adults to see what the future might hold. As we get older, we continue to look for models of who we can be, whether we realize what we are doing or not. To see what's possible, we often have to see someone else do it first.

Envisioning possibility becomes trickier when we don't see individuals who reflect ourselves. Diversity plays a significant role in social modeling; for marginalized communities, seeing someone from their community succeed can reveal new possibilities, but a total lack of representation can be limiting.

Social modeling may present itself in three forms: 1. Live Models, where we can see an individual in our life modeling behavior we can follow; 2. Verbal instruction, in which we are given clear verbal instruction we can follow and model ourselves after; and 3. Symbolic, formed through various media and its representations of real or fictional characters we can model ourselves after.

The health and future of a community relies on social modeling. Where do you see social modelling within your community, and how can you encourage or take part in this practice?



# Action Planning

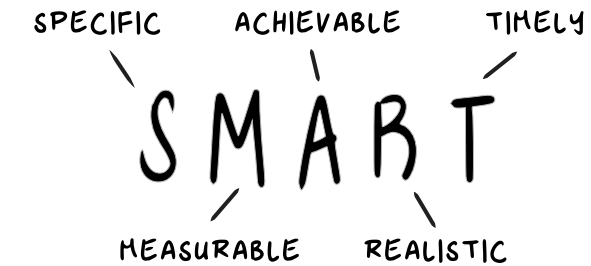
## *S.M.A.R.T steps for your strategy to succeed*

Clearly outline the steps you need to take to reach your goal. What is your objective, what are your goals, and what concrete steps can you take to achieve them?

Action planning transforms a larger goal into an achievable process. In deciding on this process, you need to account for both the strengths and weaknesses in your community, or potential obstacles. Build on the progress of organizing and convening. The previous chapter discussed the benefits of convening with the

entire community; action planning may occur when the community breaks into subgroups to accomplish the decided goals. After recognizing the issues, getting everyone at the table, brainstorming and analyzing together, and creating a proposal, how will you transform the abstract into something concrete and actionable?

Dig into the logistics, and prepare for the vision of your community to be realized.





# Designing & Co-Creating

*Creative problem solving with and in a community*

Grow your vision into a tangible goal. A common purpose will motivate and mobilize a community towards design, and the community needs to be an active co-creator for a successful design. Co-creation goes a step beyond collaboration to identify shared values in design implementation.

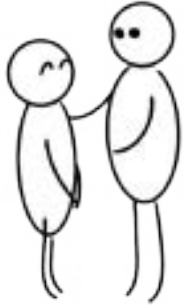
The process of design and co-creation requires everyone at the table together and should be open, voluntary, democratic, and encourage the independence and autonomy of each participant. Respect continues to inform this stage of the process, as a community comes together for something larger than any one individual, but still reliant on each individual. The design that emerges from this process cannot be determined by one person,

and will prove to be larger than the sum of its parts.

As the community design begins to unfold, there are many physical and spatial considerations within a place that must be acknowledged. Many tactics from Learning and Interpreting will inform this stage in the design, as you apply what you learned about the physical place of the community into the design. Having completed asset mapping, for example, you can now allow these assets to guide the design.

Utilizing physical community assets and a unified vision will transform space into place.

## DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL



### RELATIONAL DIMENSION

**TRUST:** INTERPERSONAL,  
RECIPROCAL

**NORMS + VALUES:** SHARED  
EMOTIONAL CONNECTION, SOCIAL  
SUPPORT, COLLECTIVE GOALS,  
AFFECTIVE BONDS

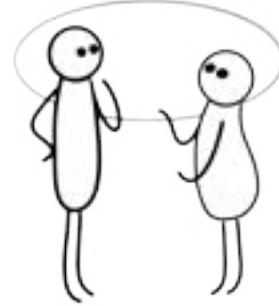


### STRUCTURAL DIMENSION

**NETWORK STRUCTURE:** NETWORK  
DENSITY, DIVERSITY + SIZE

**TRUST:** GENERAL, INSTITUTIONAL +  
INTERPERSONAL

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERSHIP, VOLUNTEERISM,  
CIVIC + POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



### COGNITIVE DIMENSION

**SOCIAL NETWORKS:** BONDING,  
BRIDGING + LINKING  
RELATIONSHIPS

**SOCIAL COHESION:** SOCIAL  
INTERACTION, TOGETHERNESS,  
NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

## Social Capital

### *Bridging, bonding and belonging*

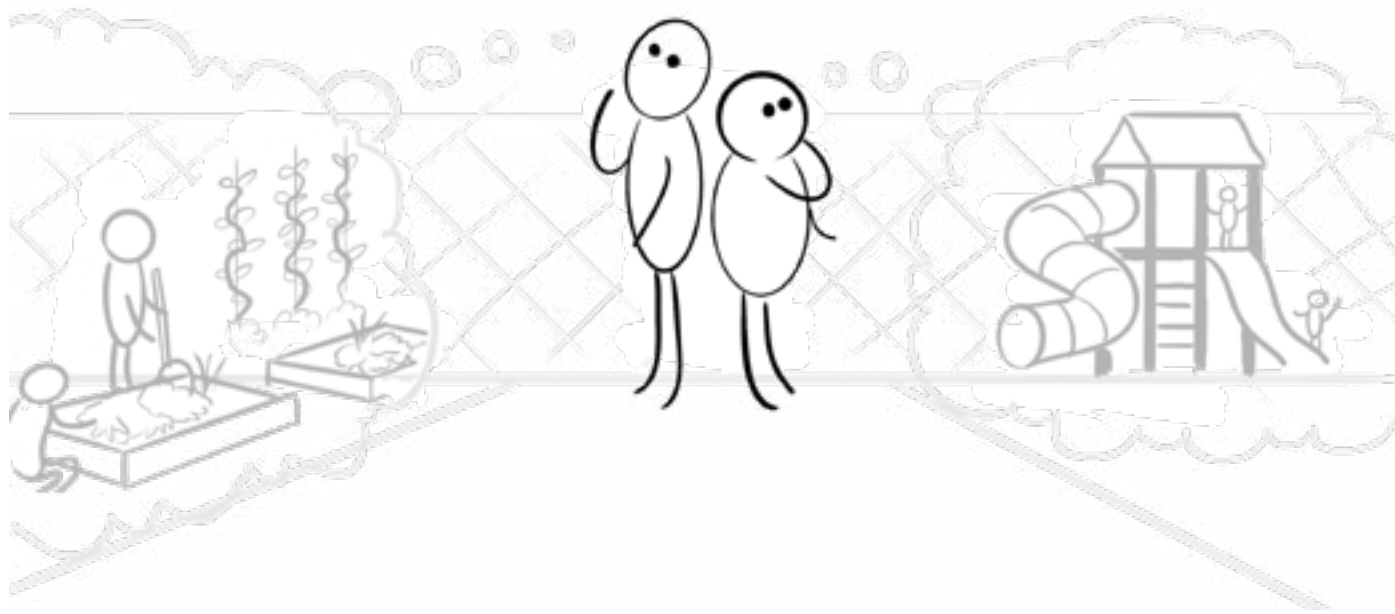
What we consider to be “capital” reveals our values. Capital most often refers to money or material goods. But with such a limited definition, what might we be missing as we try to understand our community’s capital? Financial resources do not define a community, what it can offer, and what it needs to function.

Look instead to cultural capital. While economic stability is vital to a community’s health, there is so much more that builds it up, including natural, human and social, and built capital. What natural resources does a community use (i.e., food, water, energy), what ecosystems does it rely on (fertile soil, water filtration), and what aspects of the environment does it rely on to for a sense of identity (mountains, bird song, local flora)? Building up from natural resources, what resources do the people in a community offer (health, skills, education) and what resources come from social structures (connection,

family, government)? Finally, what built, or human-made material, can you find within the community (infrastructure, buildings, information)?

We often overlook these forms of capital—natural, human and social, and built—in part because they are difficult to measure. But each aspect of community capital shapes and binds that community. If we ignore the limits of natural capital, we may over-utilize these resources, harm the environment, and destroy a key aspect of community identity. But if we are considerate of natural capital, we can better utilize this resource, allow it to grow, improve our environment, and strengthen community identity.

An informed community design considers each form of cultural capital, and how they can contribute to and benefit from creative placemaking.



## Authentic Adaptations

### *Locally seasoned best practices*

Local assets, history, and character, combined with the tools used successfully in other communities, allows for authentic adaptations. Begin with your community. What is the local reality? What resources are available? How does cultural capital shape your design? Identifying the essential characteristics of a community will rely on previous tactics, such as genus loci, stakeholder mapping, and many others.

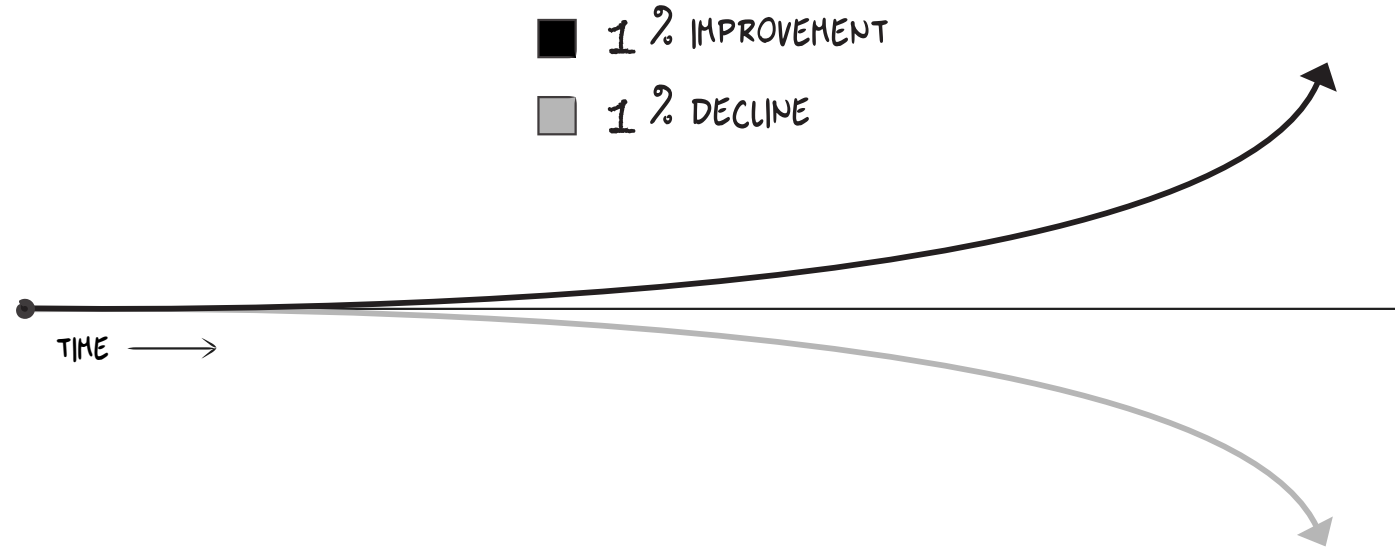
With this information in hand, you can look at what has worked for other communities and consider how these plans might be adapted in your design project. How do other cities and neighborhoods address homelessness?

Gentrification? Food deserts? We can learn so much from other communities, and other design projects. But ultimately, these ideas must adapt to authentically reflect the community you serve. Authentic adaptations find a solution that satisfies the needs of a community more than anything else by examining what works elsewhere, and adapting for the best fit.

Authentic Adaptations builds on the tactic of Context Knowledge and Content Knowledge. You need both resources, with the local community always leading the way.



## AGGREGATION OF MARGINAL GAINS



## Small Wins

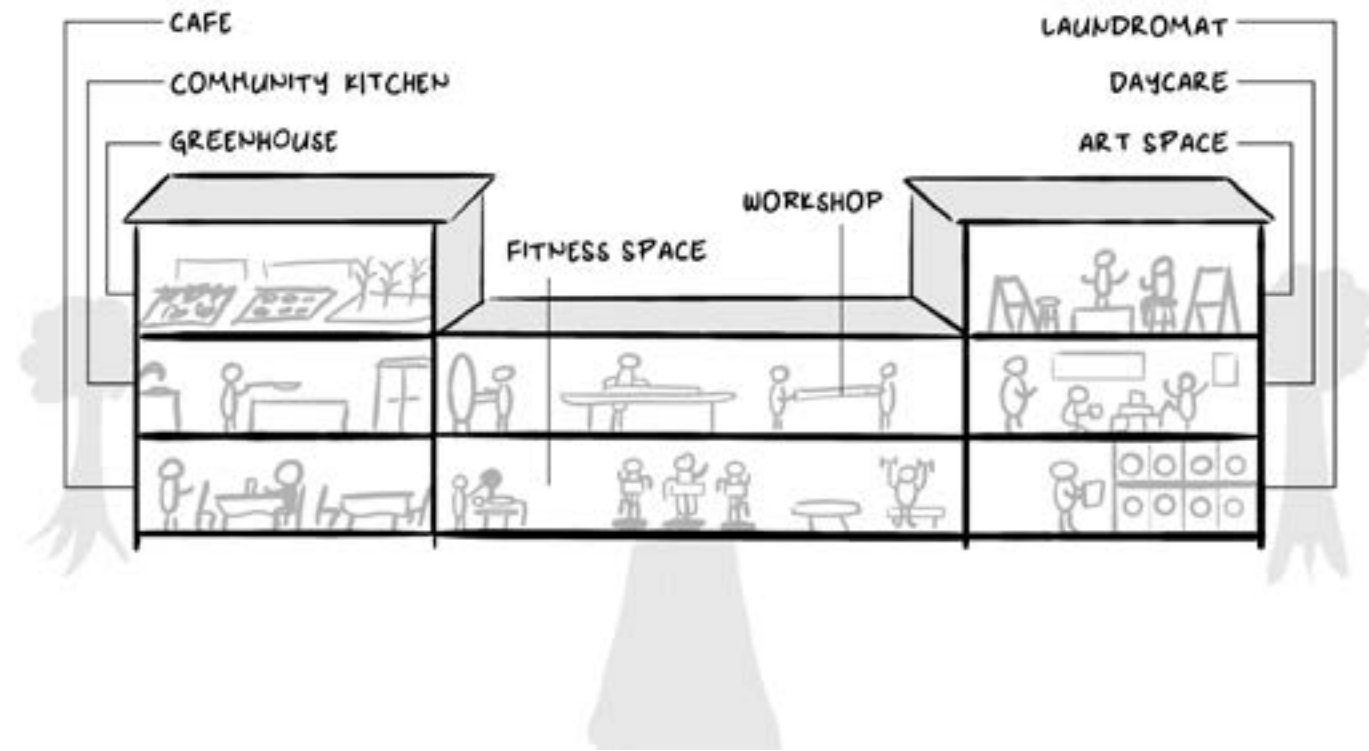
### *Starting with the petunias*

There are many steps to gaining the trust of a community and empowering each member to take part in change. You can listen meaningfully, shape a powerful narrative, meet them where they are at, and follow a number of other tactics from the previous chapters. As you move beyond learning, convening, and planning, and shift into the design stage, you can continue to develop trust and encourage participation with small design choices that offer quick wins.

Start with the petunias. Petunias are inexpensive and easy to plant, but they immediately beautify a space and show a concrete change, after many stages of abstract ideas being discussed and planned. Once the petunias

are in the ground, they will need to be taken care of by the community, further engaging members in the everyday and practical steps of community design and maintenance. Although a fairly simple step, planting petunias lend a project more credibility and may win over skeptics who don't expect to see follow through.

You don't have to take this advice literally. Your project may have real petunias, but if not, look for comparative goals. What small but immediate steps can you take to get a project off the ground, making a visible change to the community that members can participate in?



# Adaptive Reuse

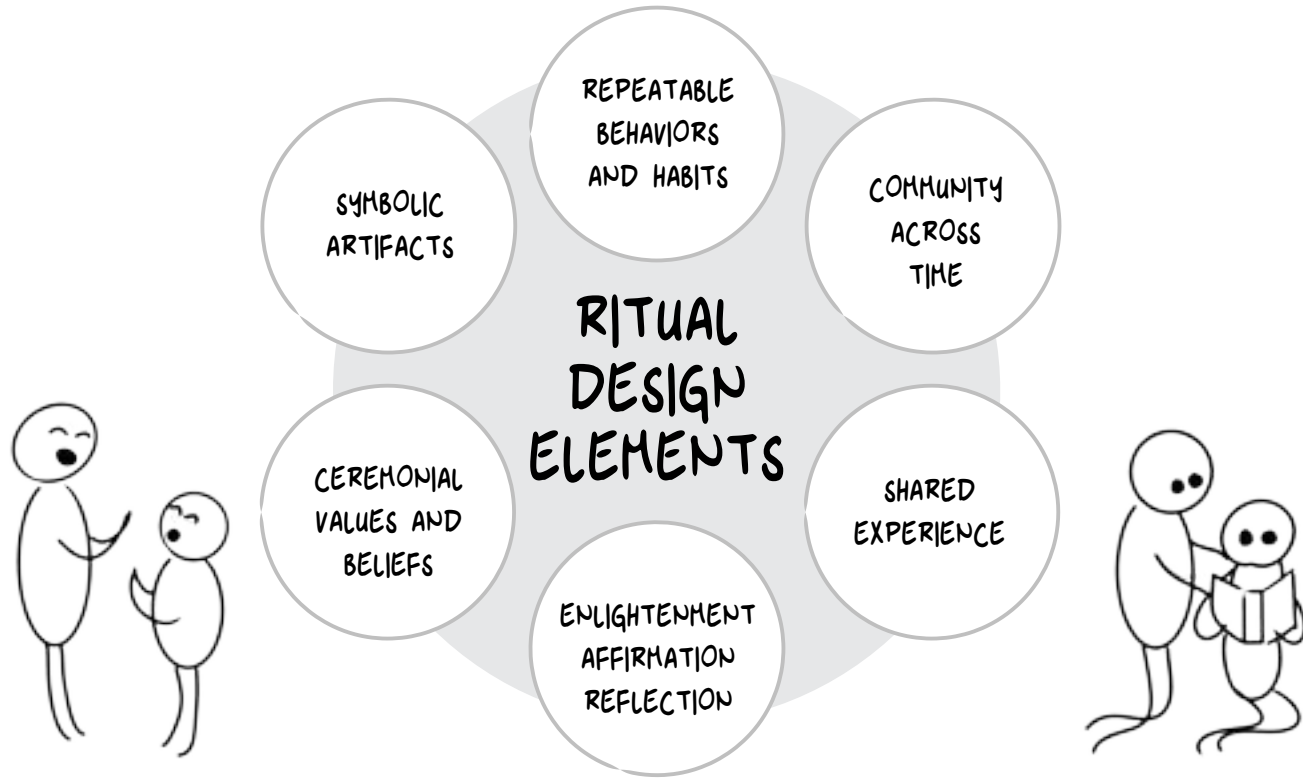
*Repurposing the past, in the present, for the future*

Community asset-mapping helps to identify those assets in a community that we may not recognize as assets—such as an abandoned building or vacant, overgrown lot. Through adaptive reuse, we can begin to discover and design new uses for these assets. As “reuse” would suggest, this tactic encourages environmentally friendly practices—just another aspect of improving community health.

Adaptive reuse supports the *genus loci* and larger identity of a community. A former factory may have been abandoned when an industry left a community. For many years, perhaps it sat empty and unused. Rather than tear down or completely reconstruct a building that the

community now knows, recognizes, and considers a part of its identity, you can develop this place into something new. In doing so, you also lessen your environmental impact. This former factory may have the space for many new enterprises: a store, a gym, offices, a community hall, a theater, or any combination of uses.

This tactic in the design stage builds on information already gathered from the learning stage. You’ve done the work of assessing the physical community space; what does this assessment suggest about the community’s ability to physically adapt?



## The Power of Ritual

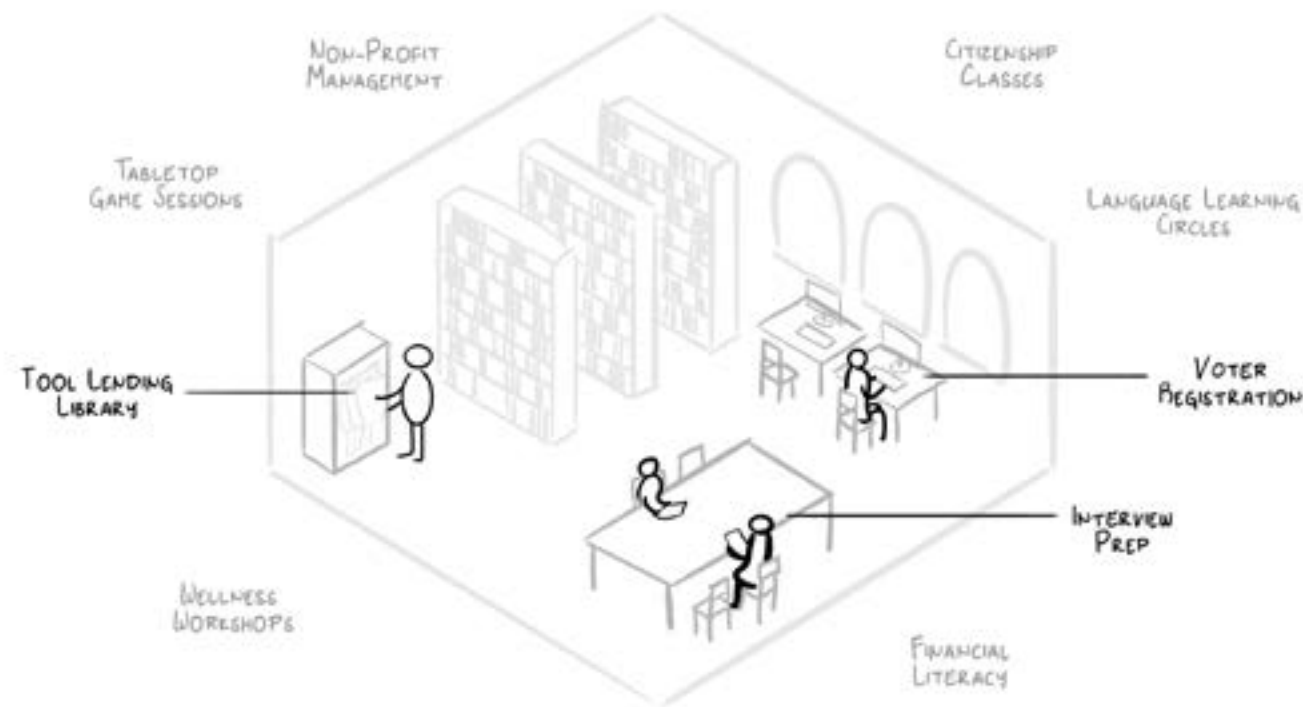
*‘Not only is seeing believing, doing is believing’ - Barbara Myerhoff*

Habits and routines are those regular actions we practice on both an individual and community level; ritual goes a step beyond to form understanding and give new meaning to these actions. Rituals have a narrative arc, but also offer a “magic force,” which is where we find new meaning. We can practice ritual in small, everyday ways, and with our communities. As you develop an understanding of a community’s sense of self, you will become more aware of specific rituals.

When we participate in a ritual, our actions are intentional and direct us toward new forms of meaning. Through ritual, we can better connect with our community, create lifestyle changes, engage with spirituality, self-affirm, and refresh or cleanse our minds. Ritual is powerful; it can help

us transition into a new stage in our lives, feel reassured in an ongoing stage, and reconstitute our values and identity. Through ritual, we can maintain communities and designs.

What rituals are at work in your community? Locate these rituals, starting with rituals that engage the entire community and focusing your attention on their individual impact. Can your design play a role in or somehow connect with these rituals? What new rituals might develop to encourage community engagement and health? Often, the strongest rituals aren’t planned, but arise from unforeseen connections. Allow space in the design process for the spontaneous to transform into the magic of rituals.



## Adjacent Activities & Mixed Uses

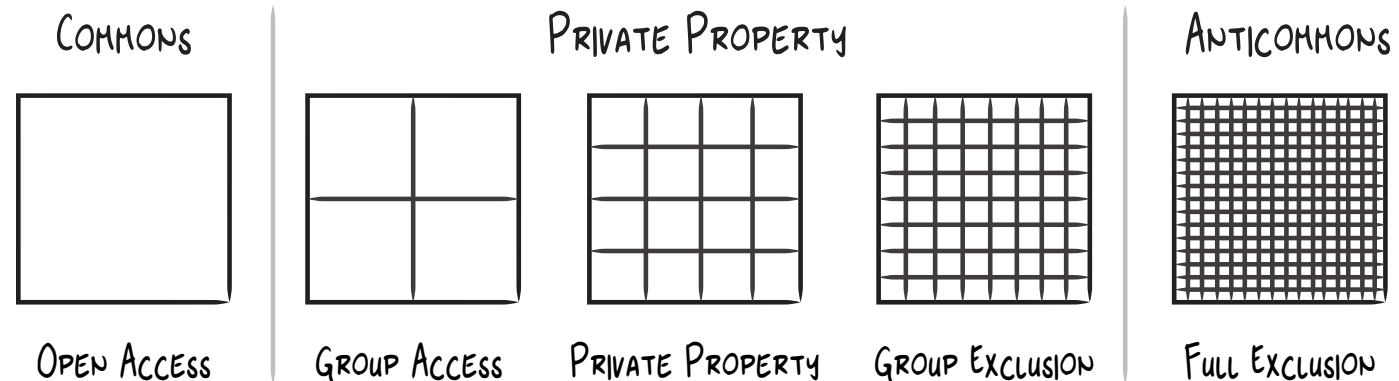
### *Increasing the 'stickiness' of interventions*

Throughout previous tactics, such as behavior mapping, opportunities for mixed use became apparent in the many assets of a community, and in the behavior of residents as they move through a space. How can this information apply to intentional community design?

Consider the physical spaces in which many community needs may intersect. For example, your local public library is an important resource in the community. This space offers educational resources, through the books available and access to the internet, and also acts as a third space, where people can congregate for free—an especially important factor for homeless individuals who

need a safe, warm space during the day. Knowing what the library already does for a community, how can we build its capacity? In addition to loaning books and offering access to computers and the internet, many libraries also provide classes for their local community and host community events. The variety of activities one library may provide not only assist in education and literacy, but community engagement, empowerment, and health.

What other spaces have the potential to encompass various community resources? How might a park, a grocery store, or a city block evolve to address an intersection of community needs?



## (Re) Commoning

### *Reclaiming what we collectively hold in common*

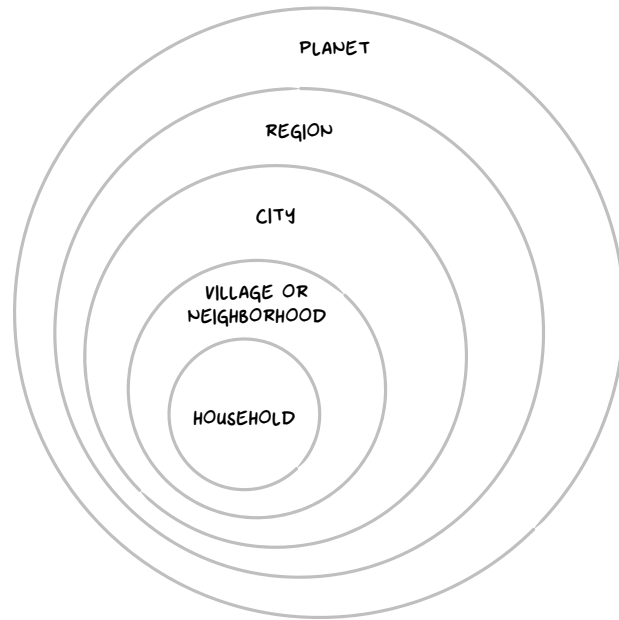
What resources belong to the community? What belongs to individuals? Where is the boundary between individual and communal wealth? How might our value system adjust to better consider the community's needs? Cultural capital reveals the many forms of capital within a community: natural, human and social, and built. These resources contribute to the overall community, but they may not be managed by the community.

Commons are those spaces and resources that belong to all of us. Examples include national parks, or the internet. For both national parks and the internet, though, we can find individuals and corporations who would like to profit off of these commons and eliminate their current accessibility. Reconsider the resources in your community, who can access them, and who they benefit. You might wish to start with natural resources. We all have to breathe the same air; we all rely on the health

of local wildlife and insects to support our environment; we all benefit from the rivers, trees, or other geographical features of our homes. But are we empowered to work with our natural environments to protect, appreciate, and benefit from them? If not, who has that power, and why?

The act of recommoning ensures that commons return to, or remain with, the community. Commoning requires the individuals in a community to recognize their shared assets, and cooperate with one another to self-regulate. Rather than separated by cultural differences, commoning reminds us of the connection we share through the space we inhabit, pushing us towards a collective sense of identity. Through recommoning our shared spaces and resources, we can reverse the exploitation of our communities into empowerment.

'ALWAYS DESIGN A THING BY CONSIDERING IT IN ITS NEXT LARGER CONTEXT -  
A CHAIR IN A ROOM, A ROOM IN A HOUSE, A HOUSE IN AN ENVIRONMENT,  
AN ENVIRONMENT IN A CITY PLAN.'



## Designing at the Human Scale

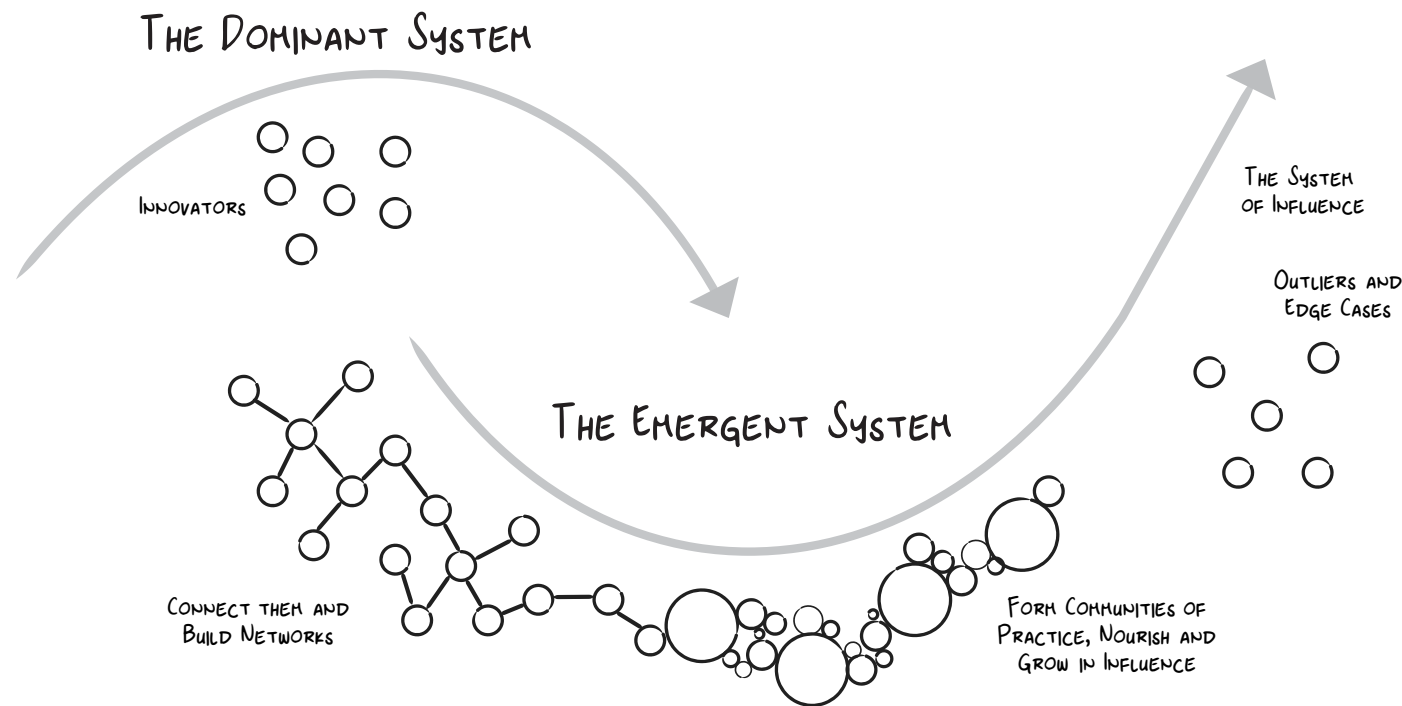
### *Putting people first*

Take a look around you—if you're sitting at a desk, observe the different sensations of the room. How does the chair feel under you? Is a breeze coming in through the window? Does the lighting make it easier or harder to read this page? How do the various elements of the room effect you, and what efforts have you made to create a space for work? Maybe you're at a kitchen table, lounging in the park, sitting in a coffeeshop. Wherever you are, consider the many aspects that define this space for you.

Each element of a design needs to begin with consideration of the human scale. We may look at a skyscraper and, overwhelmed by its enormity, only see its role in the larger cityscape. But that skyscraper holds hundreds or thousands of people inside. And each person

is in a room, or hallway, experiencing the design of each singular space in the larger building. While it has to accommodate the city and its layout, a skyscraper also must accommodate each person working inside.

Spend time with the elements that an individual might see, smell, touch, and feel as they move through a new community design. How will they experience a space, and will it bring them back, or keep them away? Designing at the human scale is challenging, necessary work that requires thoughtfulness and cultural humility. You can never predict every human need or reaction, but you can be considerate to the impact of race, ability, gender, age, and other cultural or socioeconomic differences.



## Amplifying Emerging Trends

*Building upon the wealth and wisdom already present*

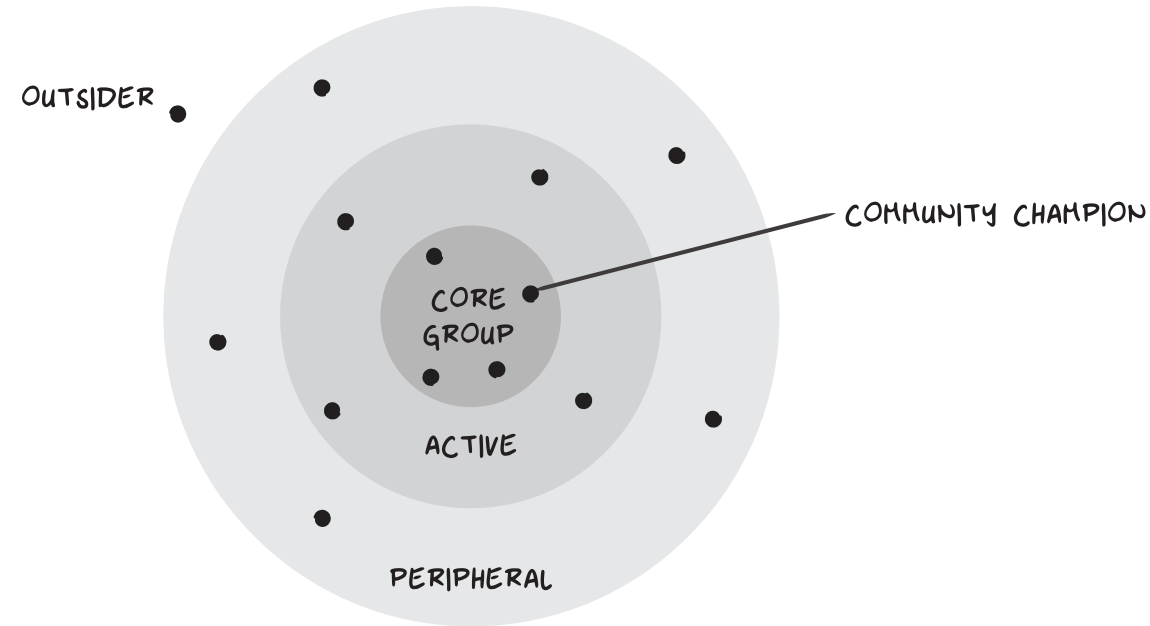
How do we know what is possible? As children, we likely look up to parents, teachers, and other adults to see what the future might hold. As we get older, we continue to look for models of who we can be, whether we realize what we are doing or not. To see what's possible, we often have to see someone else do it first.

Envisioning possibility becomes trickier when we don't see individuals who reflect ourselves. Diversity plays a significant role in social modeling; for marginalized communities, seeing someone from their community succeed can reveal new possibilities, but a total lack of representation can be limiting.

Social modeling may present itself in three forms: 1. Live Models, where we can see an individual in our life modeling behavior we can follow; 2. Verbal instruction, in which we are given clear verbal instruction we can follow and model ourselves after; and 3. Symbolic, formed through various media and its representations of real or fictional characters we can model ourselves after.

The health and future of a community relies on social modeling. Where do you see social modelling within your community, and how can you encourage or take part in this practice?

## DEGREES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



## Community Champions

*Leading and catalyzing change through passion for place*

How do you maintain momentum and energy for a project? How do you stay on track, and work through obstacles? To keep a project on track, a community champion, either an individual or a group, needs to be committed to the day to day details of planning.

Your community champion needs to model the type of behavior you hope to see in other participants. The community champion keeps people energized and optimistic to keep the project moving forward. Your champion may also be a sponsor, or at least will work with sponsors to ensure progress. The effort of moving the

planning process along doesn't need to belong entirely to the community champion; community members should feel the push from being a "consumer" to becoming a "producer" in part from the encouragement of their champion.

Assess your project and identify those participants most active in the planning process. What individual or group can carry this responsibility, and advocate for your community?





# Implementing & Sustaining

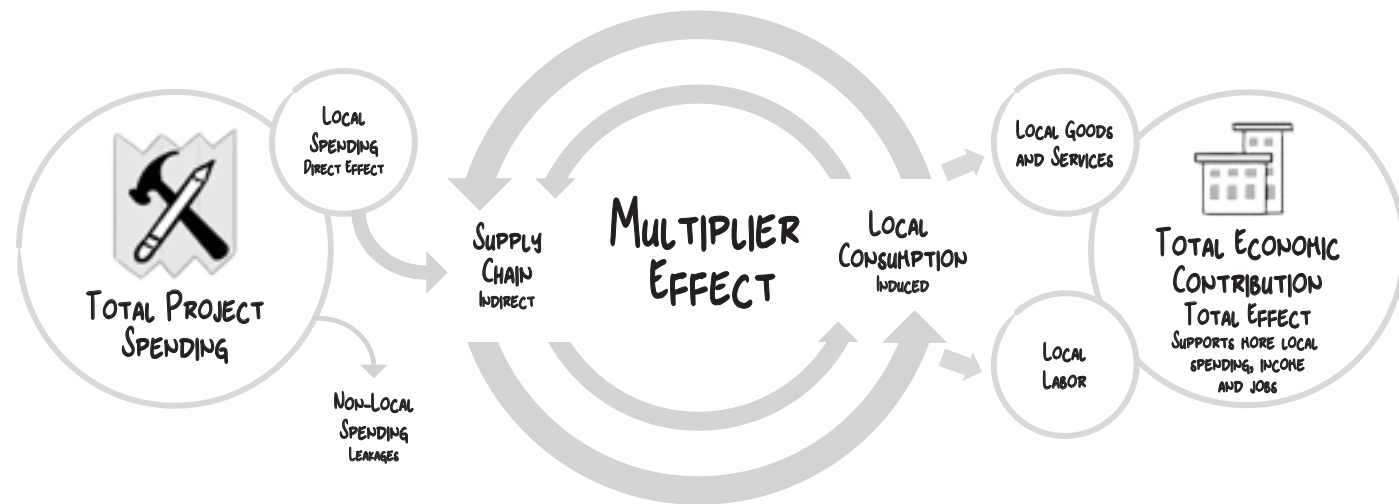
## *Enduring change through agency and empowerment*

The purpose and success of a community design project relies on the empowerment of community members. What has your design done, and how can it continue or succeed, if community members do not feel empowered in the process?

Think of design as agency. Individuals develop agency through their ability to create change, exercise power, or make a difference in their surroundings. Each step in the design process should empower individual community members and increase their sense of agency. When the initial momentum of a design project wears off, will

individuals recognize their agency to keep up the work? Will they feel empowered or powerless in the face of social inequity?

We may start this project focused on our individual needs. But through the tactics covered in each chapter, we should see ourselves less as individuals, and instead, as part of a larger community. By helping each other and considering our mutual needs, we can recognize our combined power.



# Multiplier Effect

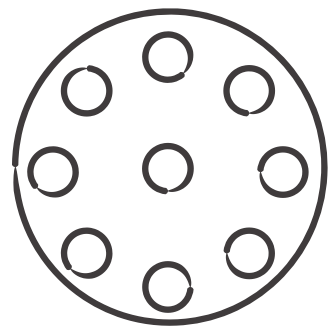
## *Recirculating local efforts for advancing equity*

What happens when a big business comes to town? They may offer jobs to local residents and will certainly have some impact on the local economy. But where are the roots of this big business? What are their connections to local businesses—do they purchase from, print through, or in any way support local industries? What will happen if this big business leaves the community?

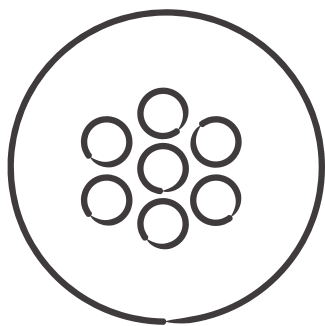
In contrast, we may look at local businesses, their relationship to each other, their connection to each member of the community, and their impact on the local economy. When a local business receives financial support, they can direct that financial support towards hiring employees, and also other local businesses that they partner with (i.e., ordering printing materials, renting vehicles, etc.) The financial support given to this local

business isn't contained within that one business; it expands and multiplies outward to benefit the entire community.

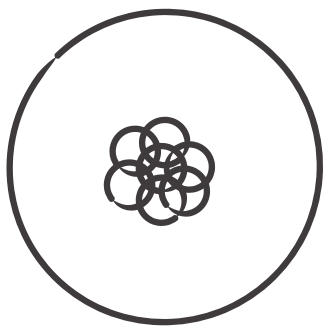
How can your community harness the multiplier effect? Are there grants for small businesses, shop local initiatives, or other systems in place to educate the community? The long-term growth and sustainability of a community relies on economic stability. By locating the opportunities to support local businesses, you can multiply initial investments and secure the community's financial future.



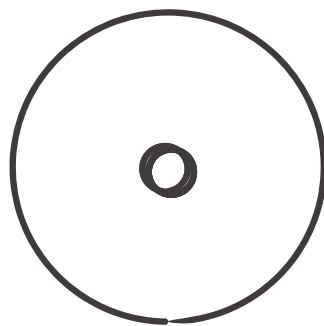
MULTIDISCIPLINARY



CROSSDISCIPLINARY



INTERDISCIPLINARY



TRANSDISCIPLINARY

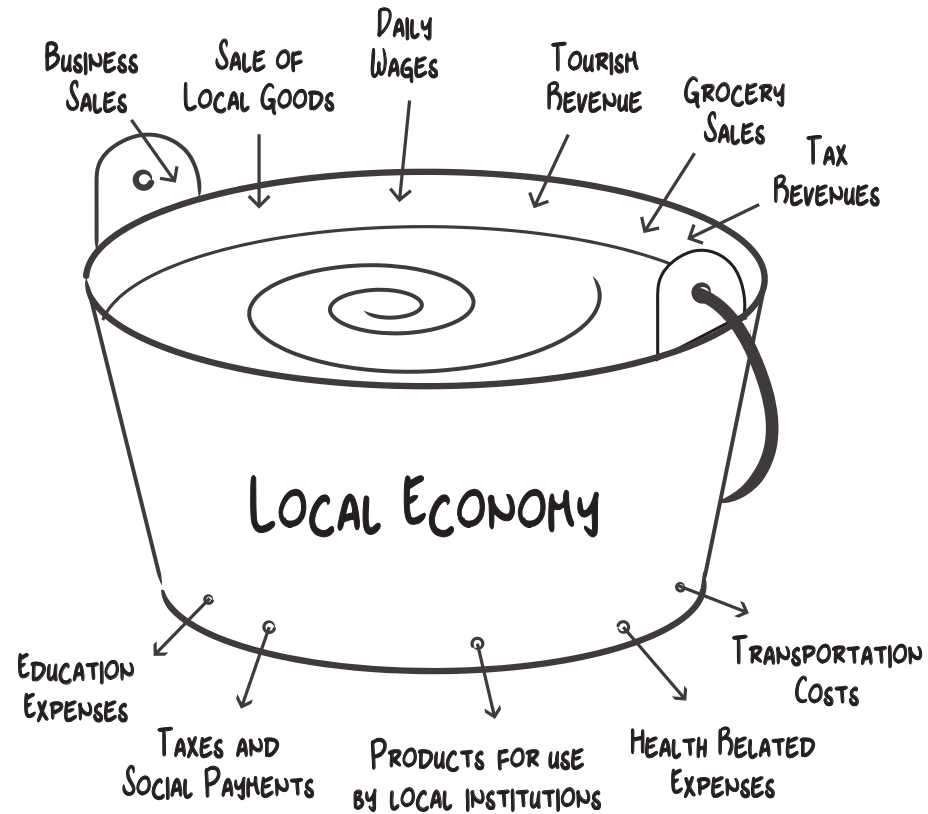
## Inter-Sectoral Collaboration

### *Getting the whole system in the room*

A wide range of individuals and organizations have shaped your community design project. How might these investors, stakeholders, and community leaders come together to maintain operations? By bringing these community members into one room—to discuss, learn, and grow together—you can enable the entire system to connect and adapt.

As with previously listed tactics, such as convening, this collaboration needs to represent the many voices of the community and be responsive to their needs. You will

want collaborators from various sectors—i.e., financial, the arts, government—to guarantee an expert on a wide variety of matters. Each collaborator will have to expand their skill-set and knowledge, move outside of their usual roles, and think creatively. This expansion of abilities and skills elevates each collaborator and builds capacity within a community. Consider anchor institutions from the Learning chapter; this inter-sectoral collaboration will function similarly to maintain and expand on a design.



The “Leaky Bucket” represents money coming into the community from outside and internal sources and how this money is spent.

# Import Replacement

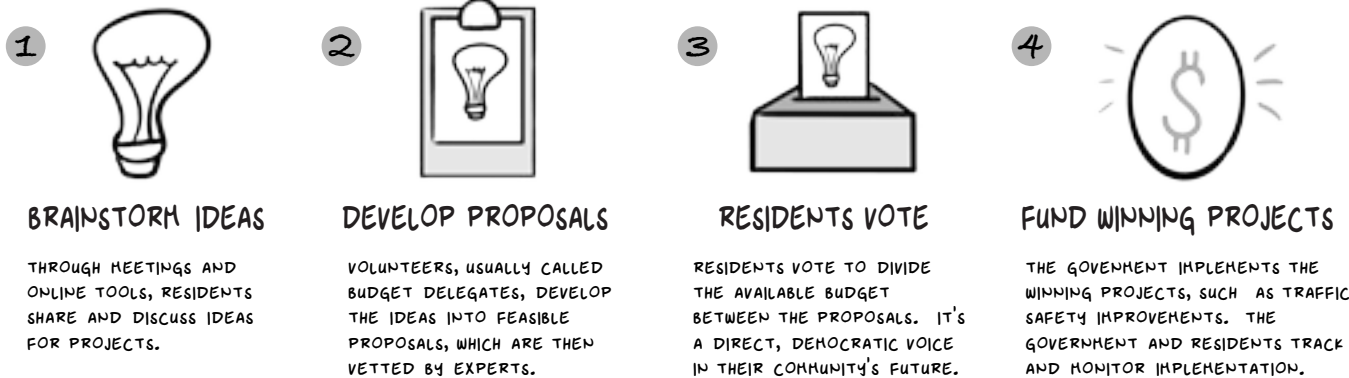
## *Local procurement of goods and services*

Rebuilding a neighborhood’s economy requires a new balance of inter-dependence and reliance. How do the cornerstones of a community—such as anchor institutions and local businesses—rely on local resources to grow; or do they outsource and import from beyond the community? If we change our relationship to imports and community land to focus on providing for ourselves, how can transform our economy and our communities?

Local procurement, import replacement, and community self-provisioning allow for this transformation. Through local procurement, the institutions in a community (such as hospitals, schools, or corporations) would make larger contributions and invest in their community by hiring local workers, increasing their local purchases, and

generally committing themselves to the community’s continued growth. Import replacement further emphasizes this goal towards self-reliance within a community—if we minimize the number of imports to a community, and replace them with local materials and commodities, how would that redirecting of funds strengthen a community’s economy?

Community self-provisioning engages and invests in each member of a community. If we focus on our commonality, and our ownership of the places we share, we can increase our collective power. With this power, we transform our communities towards a financially sustainable inter-dependence and reliance.



### OUTCOMES OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

INCREASED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

BROADER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

NEW COMMUNITY LEADERS AND  
MORE ACTIVE RESIDENTS

STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATIONS AND  
RESIDENTS

FAIRER & MORE EFFECTIVE SPENDING

## Participatory Budgeting

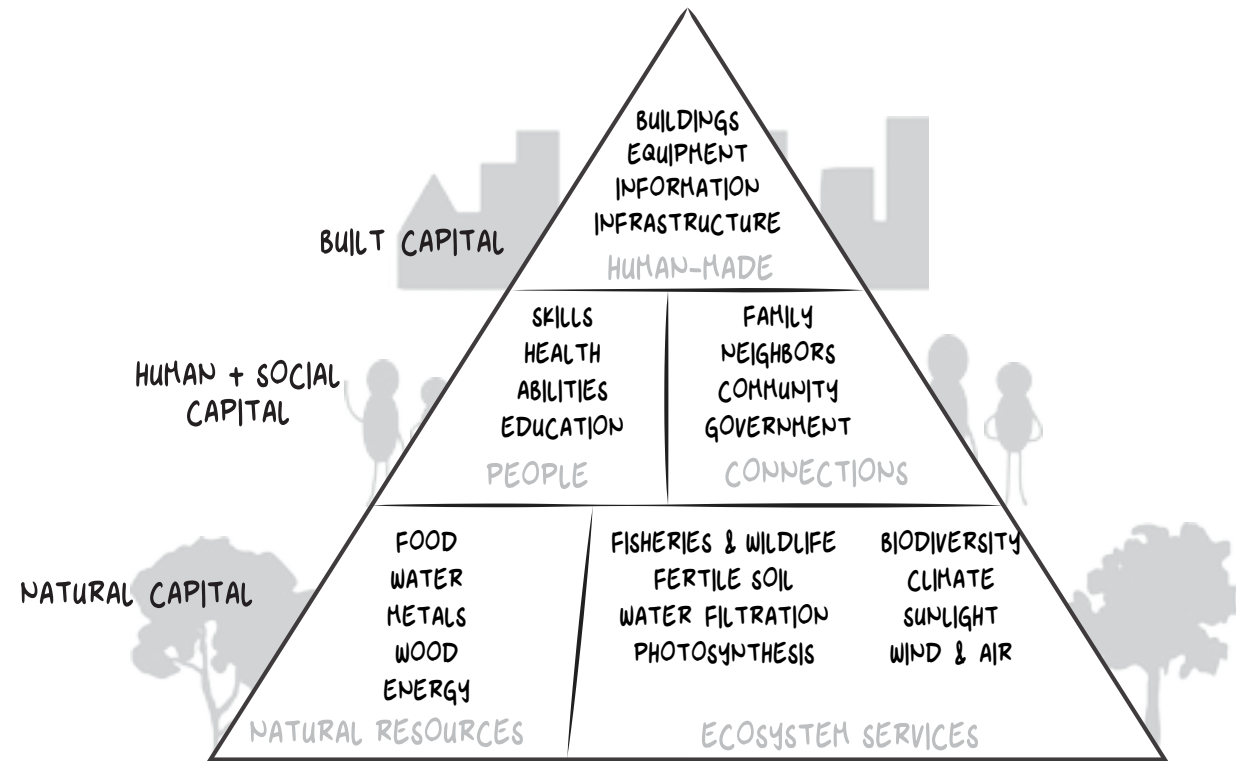
### *Citizen democracy and decision making*

Any community design project should be directed by the community, which requires engagement and trust. Various tactics, from listening sessions to co-visioning, focus on these goals of engagement and trust to develop a vision that comes directly from the community members. As a project moves beyond the initial planning stages, how will you continue to center various members of the community to ensure each individual has some say in the future of a project?

Through participatory budgeting, each community member has the opportunity to direct funding. This process involves politicians and community members working together. Politicians may allocate funds for a neighborhood, and then it is up to the residents of that

neighborhood to decide which projects receive funding. The decision-making process of participatory budgeting offers greater transparency, allowing for trust to form and preventing political corruption.

Participatory budgeting is only one-step in the lengthy process of designing a project, and then operating and sustaining that project. But it can be a pivotal step, as it more directly engages community members in a funding process that is usually obscured or done behind locked doors. If residents of a neighborhood can choose to fund a project, they are more likely to continue with that project and further invest themselves in its success.



# Alternative Forms of Capital

## *Sweat equity as capital and commitment*

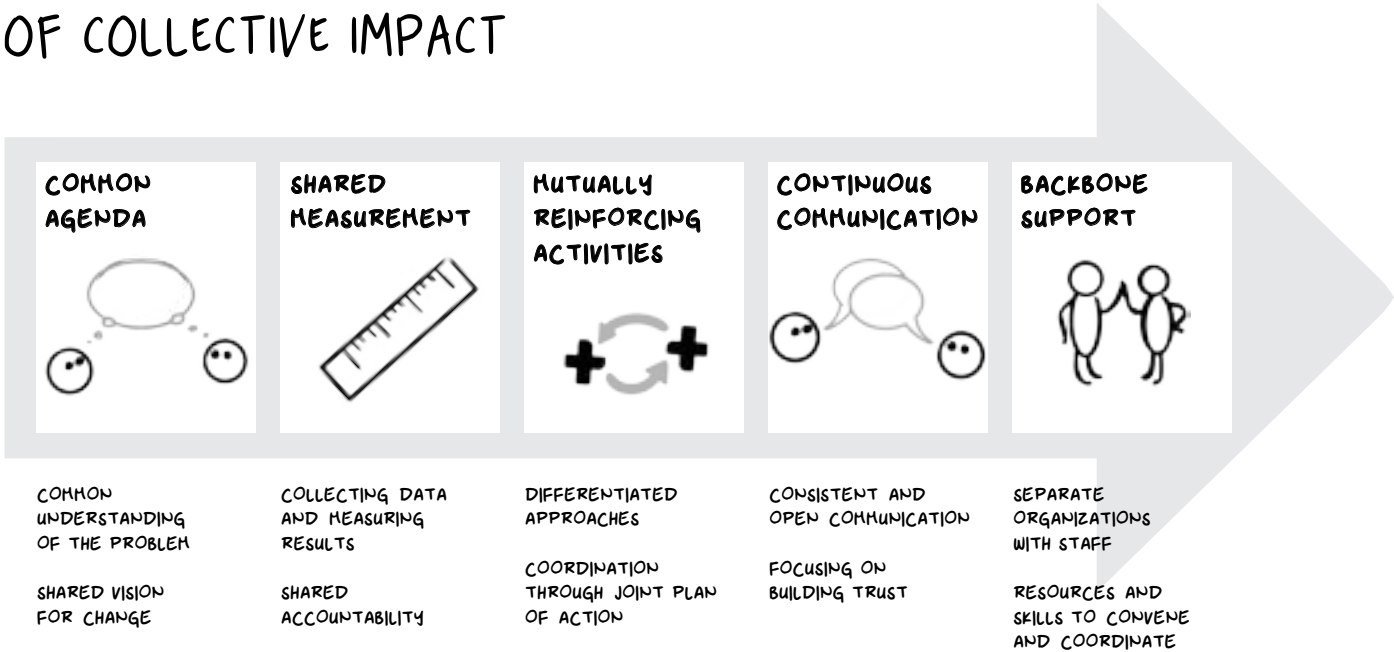
In the previous chapter, Designing, we discussed cultural capital and its role in the design process. As you consider the sustained operation and sustainability of a community, consider how these forms of capital can support the community, and increase community member's investment.

Rather than focusing on traditional forms of financial capital to maintain a project, look to other sources. How can community members offer their labor or volunteer work, and what can you offer them in return? When the members of a community provide support in any form they can—such as physical or intellectual labor—and receive something in return for their investment—a share in a business, a new community resource they benefit from—they are more likely to be engaged in the long-term operation of a community design project.

Community investment of this type can also be referred to as sweat equity, and it can never be fully repaid. Instead, there is a constant reciprocity. We cannot measure this contribution or investment, and we cannot measure an appropriate repayment. Rather than a cut and dry financial transaction, sweat equity ensures a deeper investment from both parties—those who offer their sweat, and those who accept it.

By recognizing sweat equity and other alternative forms of capital, respecting its positive impact on a community, and always aspiring to return the investment, you can empower community members and develop new value systems.

# THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT



## Collective Impact

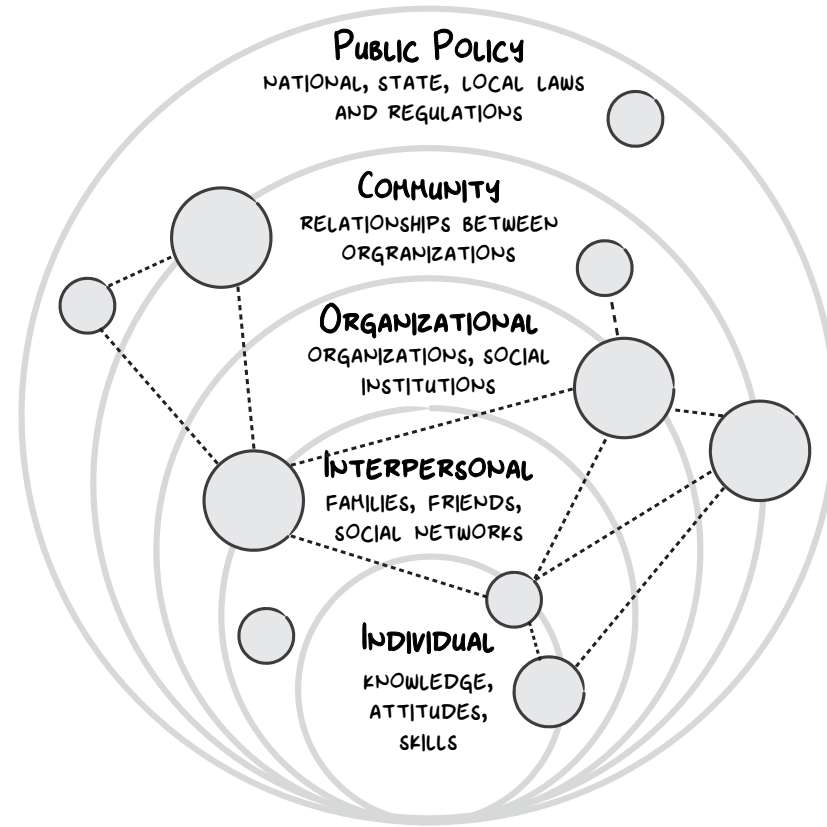
*Empowerment through participation and critical mass*

Collective impact takes us further than we can go alone. Separate organizations focusing on connected social issues can accomplish significant work independently of each other. But when these organizations come together, pooling resources and strategically planning together, they are more likely to succeed.

Developing collective impact may look different than usual collaborative efforts. While collaboration may bring everyone to the same table, collective impact transforms organizations even when they are apart. If each organization or non-profit working on food

insecurity within a region were to meet and discuss their approaches, they could adjust their practices to be more effective and address the larger picture. They could then work with organizations seemingly less related to food—those focused on housing, education, addiction, etc.—and expand a region’s approach to food insecurity and the many contributing factors.

While a discussion may happen between everyone at a table together, what truly matters are the new practices that continue for individual organizations.



# Ecologies of Interventions

## *Small, local, open and connected efforts*

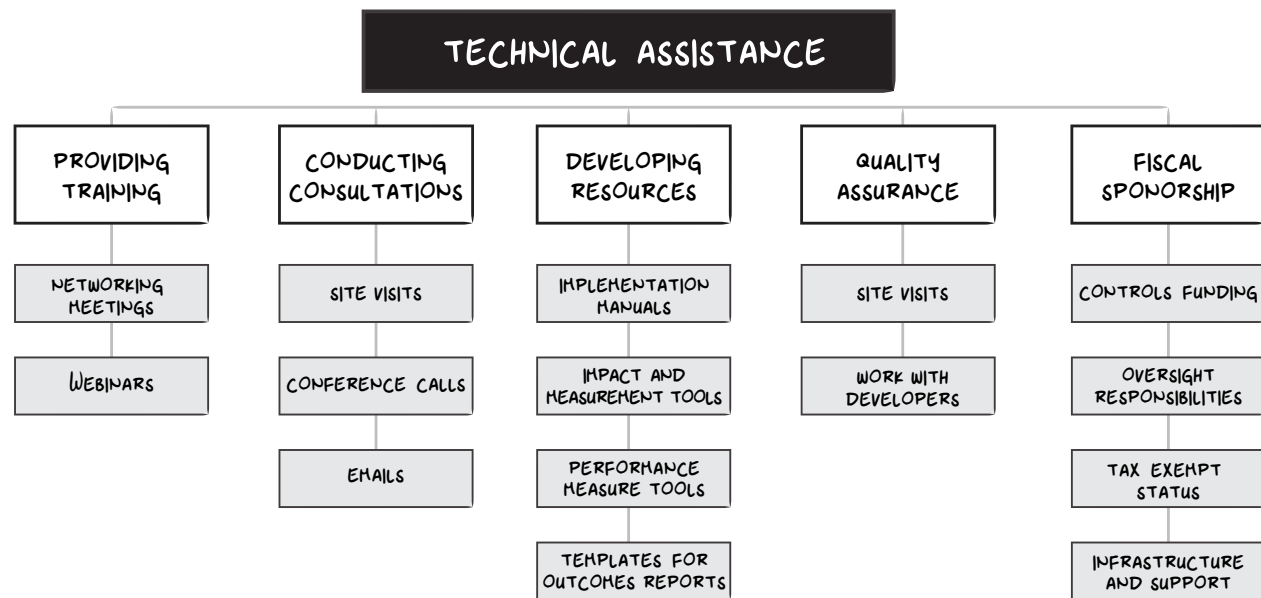
The strength and resiliency of a community relies on diversity and connection. As you consider the ecology of your community, how might interventions better unify a variety of efforts?

This approach takes natural environments as a model, and applies their strengths to human-made systems. Within any environment, a variety of elements work off of each other and with each other, able to adapt, and gaining strength from each other. Look at the elements in play within your community. How do various volunteers, anchor institutions, changemakers, and small businesses contribute to the larger ecosystem? How can we

strengthen the bonds between these various elements, for a more robust community?

Reflect on Symmetries That Exist from Chapter Two, and the connections that already exist within a community. Can we make these connections even more intentional, embracing our shared goals and utilizing space together? Ecologies of Interventions promotes long-lasting, self-sustaining change and empowerment.





# Technical Assistance

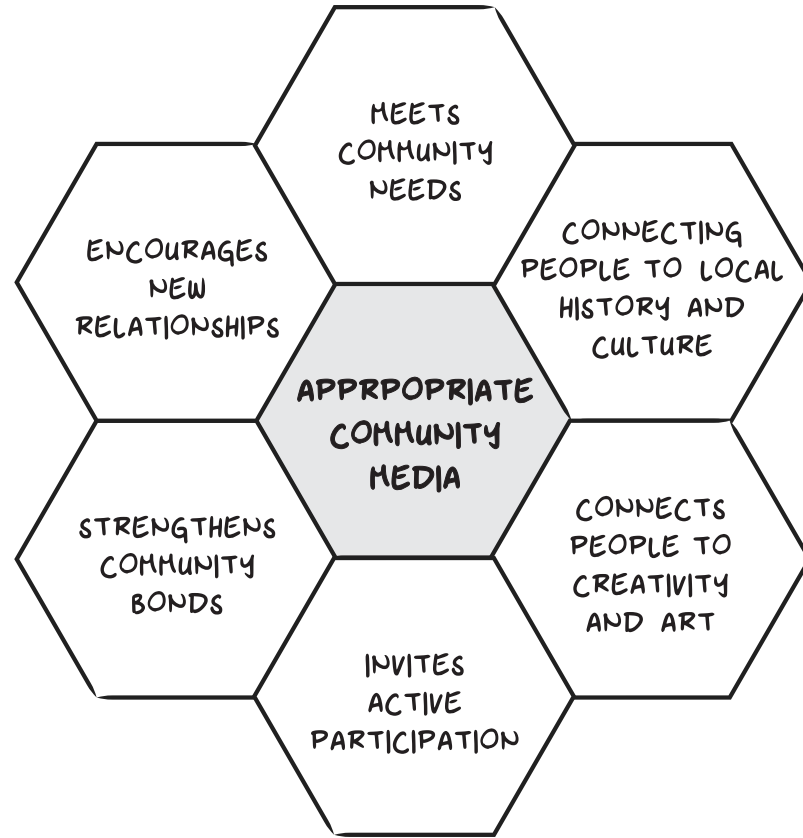
## *Support, coaching and consultation*

In the first chapter, we discussed Anchor Institutions and their role in a community design project. As you focus on the operation and sustainability of a project, return to the opportunities offered by anchor institutions for building capacity.

Fiscal sponsorship allows anchor institutions to assist community-led projects financially. Non-profits have a legal and tax-exempt status they can share with a project, given that the work is related to the non-profit's mission. A smaller, community-led project can receive grant funding through this partnership, and the assistance necessary to implement the funding efficiently.

In this way, fiscal sponsorship may also lead to technical assistance. Technical assistance extends to non-financial assistance, such as training, an exchange of information, and sharing resources for fundraising, administrative services, etc. Anchor institutions and other specialists offer technical assistance to community-led projects to build capacity within a community.

Both fiscal sponsorship and technical assistance enable growth, commitment, and partnership that will ensure the long-term success of a project.



Beck Tench's honeycomb diagram

## Appropriate Media

### *Adapting communications for addressing local challenges*

How do you reach your community? In Learning & Interpreting, we examined the need for different types of storytelling and communicating. You need to understand your community, the story they tell about themselves, and how a design fits into this narrative. Of course, your community is also a community of communities, each with their own story.

Look to your local media. Which local news stations do different communities turn to? Do you have one or more local newspapers, and who reads these? Visual and print media will reach very different community members. Begin with the audience you want to reach, and branch

out from there. That doesn't mean you'll be leaving anyone out; on the contrary, by recognizing the diversity of local media and how it is consumed, you can plan intentionally to utilize different formats and reach different people. Local media may be a powerful tool for communicating with and mobilizing a community; media will also allow you to document the process of a design project.

Locate the media sources in your community, and foster collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships by involving them each step of the way.



# Democratizing Finance

## *Community development of, for & by the people*

Financial inequity often overlaps with other varieties of inequity—health, racial, etc. Without financial resources, it can be challenging to implement change. If we're lacking financial equity, how can we move a project forward? How will the community's development continue to be led by the community members?

Alternative financing presents unique routes to financing, that bypass traditional bank loans, and keep the project within the community. New channels of financing include crowdsourcing, such as Kickstarter, GoFundMe, Indiegogo, and GiveForward, among many others. Crowdsourcing encourages donations of all sizes, allowing community members of various financial means to participate. Even if someone can't donate directly, they can still share the site with others. Crowdsourcing is an opportunity to gain momentum and excitement about a project, while keeping control of the project within the community's

hands.

Grants also provide a form of alternative financing, although they also come with the pressure of additional administrative work, and prove less sustainable than other forms of finance. Beyond crowdsourcing and grants, there are opportunities for partnerships between community businesses, fundraising, and the sharing of skills and services to promote a project.

Ultimately, financing can determine the strength of the entire community's commitment to a project, and who is empowered to make change happen. Finding alternative routes to financing can change the story of and empower a community.



# Reflecting & Evaluating

*Moving forward by looking backward*

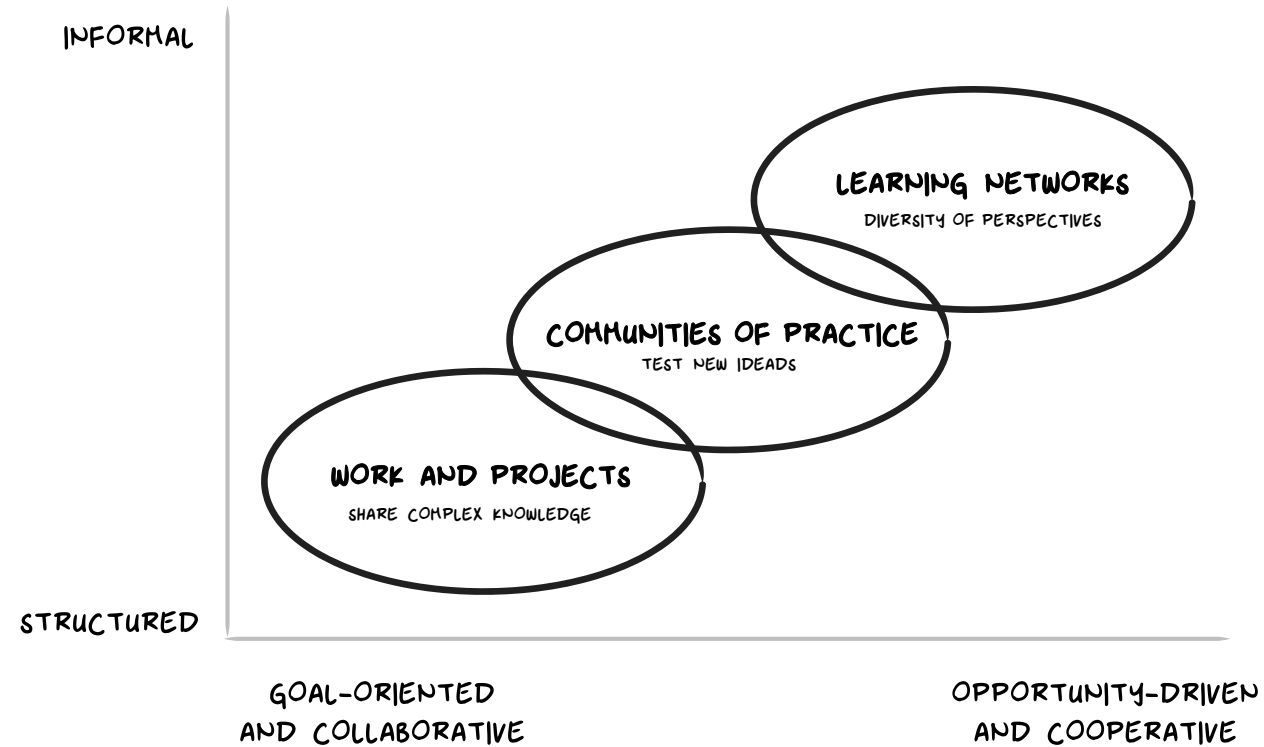
At this stage, a design has been implemented and community members are empowered to create change. The efforts of stakeholders, local experts, community leaders, anchor institutions, and many other contributors have, hopefully, built capacity. As you reflect on the design process, do you feel that the community's vision has been fulfilled? Did you meet your goals, fall short of them, or expand these goals beyond expectation?

Whether you've experienced success or feel that a project has fallen short, take the time to reflect on the entire process. This reflection may reveal useful insight to the design process that can benefit yourself, your community, and fellow designers. This reflection should not be limited

to your perspective; take in the many voices of the community for a fully representative reflection.

Paired with reflection comes evaluation. In building community capacity, has the community developed the tools to self-monitor, meet benchmarks, and track progress? Evaluation should occur regularly, and this chapter lays out several forms of evaluation that engage community members. Constantly ask questions at every stage in the process and at every level. Who benefits from this design? What have we learned from this experience?

Where do we go from here?



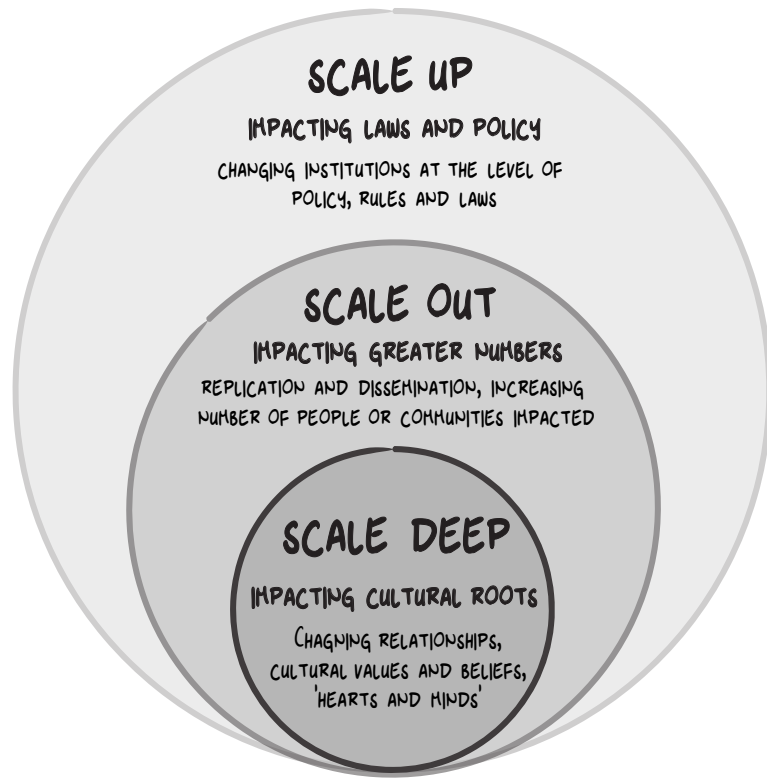
# Learning Network

*Cultivating collaboration and extending learning*

Within your community is a powerful learning network. We learn from one another, and as we teach one another, we become more comfortable in our knowledge. While we can gain valuable insight from outside experts, the process of peer-to-peer teaching is necessary for the sustainability of a project and its evaluation.

How formal or informal is your learning network?  
Do individuals have the opportunity to share their

knowledge? What knowledge is valued? Where are the gaps in knowledge? Utilizing and improving the learning network in your community will allow for successful evaluation of a community design.



## Small is Beautiful

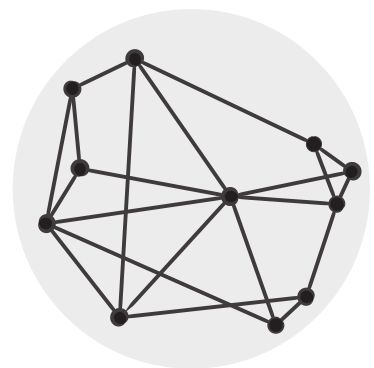
### *Do things that scale deep*

Bigger is not always better. You've discovered this truth again and again while working within your community and working through the tactics in the book. As you reflect on a community design and consider next steps, consider the maintenance that a new intervention will require. Do you want to implement something that requires constant growth or progress, or do you want to develop a community that asset that can be self-contained?

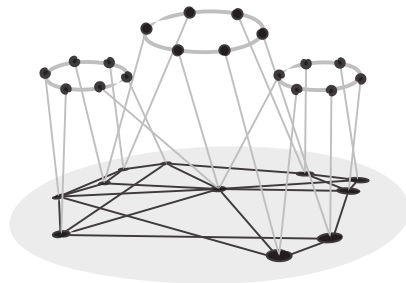
If you take a look at your local businesses, you can find proof that small is beautiful. In a world of overwhelming

choice and connection, bringing life down to the local scale can be a relief. A small café can offer cupcakes from a bakery down the street, and in doing so, forge community connections, offer local flavor to customers, and keep their operations manageable but profitable.

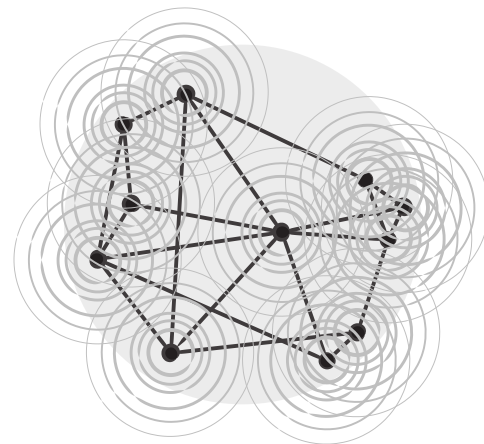
As you look towards the future and reflect on previous designs, direct your attention to projects that do not scale or grow. Keeping change small allows a community to maintain autonomy and focus on other areas for growth.



NETWORKS



COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE



SYSTEMS OF INFLUENCE

## Networked Cooperation

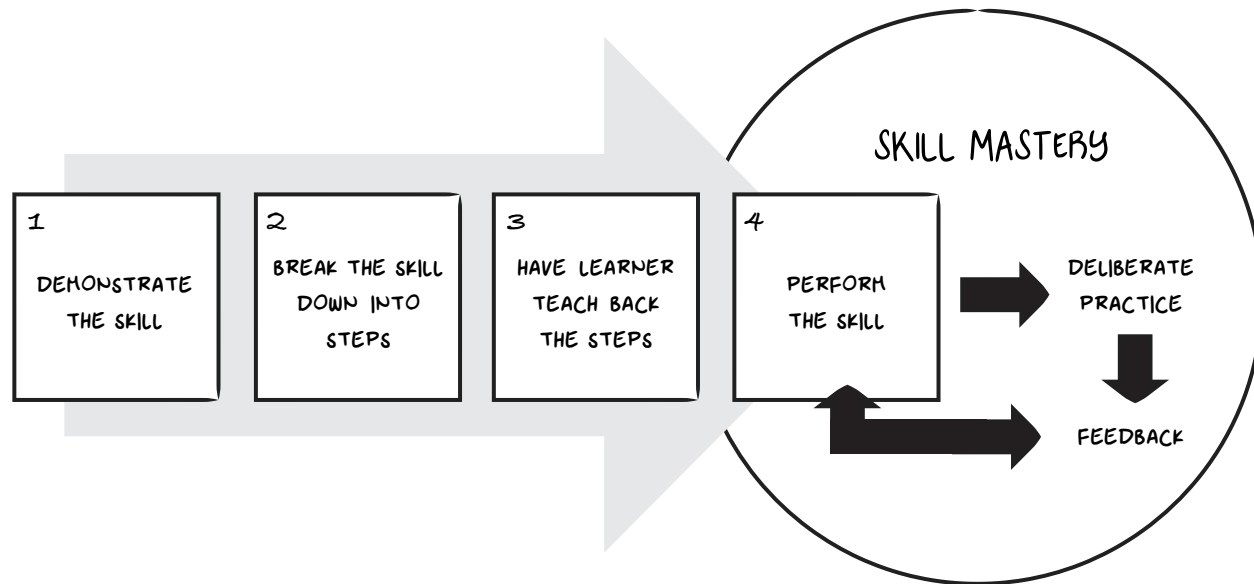
*Strength and support through systematic collaboration*

When we discussed cultural capital in the Designing chapter, social capital showed us the value in recognizing the connections between individuals and organizations that sustain a community. Take a moment to consider the status of social capital in your community. What are the formal and informal networks of connection, and how did they evolve over the course of a project? How might new networks improve communication and cooperation?

Local farmers may have their own network to develop connection and cooperate together. This may enable them to buy, sell, and trade amongst themselves; form farmer's markets; teach each other new techniques; and overall

improve their farms and work together for a stronger community. These farmers would form just one cluster of networks in a community; they may also work with other clusters, such as a network of grocery stores, food pantries, etc.

The partnership enabled through networked cooperation quickly grows beyond itself. Networks become interconnected, strengthen each of their members, and create a collective self-resiliency.



## Training the Trainer

### *Each one, teach one*

Each tactic in the placemaking process should include and empower the members of your community. When evaluating a project, no one should be better equipped to do so than the community members. They already have the unique insight of seeing the project from the earliest stages and implementing it together; moving forward, what tools will they use for evaluation?

A part of the evaluation process may come in the personal, daily experiences that community members have with the implemented design. Their observations are central to understanding a project's success—if it isn't positively benefitting community members, then what is the purpose of this project? Gathering this information,

making sense of surveys, and organizing the resulting data into a useful resource does take training, though. How can community members acquire this training, and pass it along to each other?

When one expert within a community shares their expertise with another community member, they can also train this individual to train others. Through this practice, the skills necessary for training can grow beyond one individual. Training continues to build capacity in a community, growing endlessly from one individual.





## Documentation

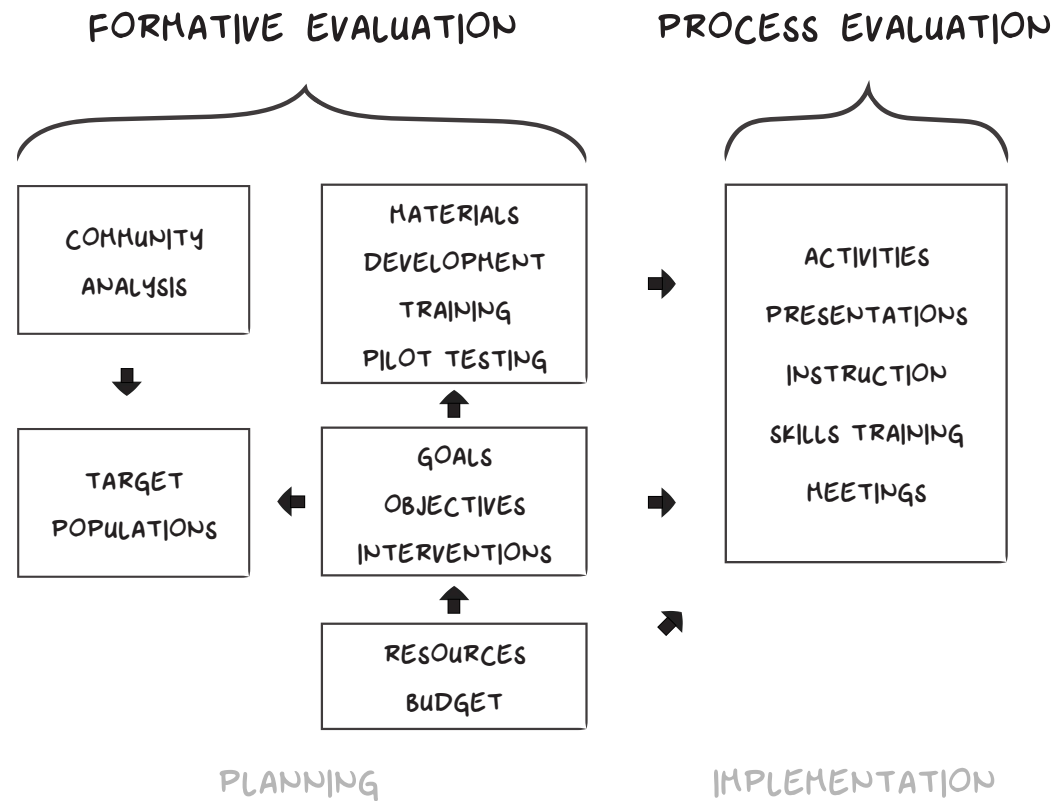
### *If you don't document it, it didn't happen*

This tactic is fairly self-evident. Throughout the entirety of a project—Learning, Convening, Planning, Designing, Operating & Sustaining—you will need to document the process. Documentation is necessary for evaluating and sharing the success of a project, and making your experience into a useful, accessible resource to others. You will also benefit from documentation if you seek out funding, wish to grow momentum, or strengthen coalitions.

What tools are at your disposal for documenting? How can you transform an abundance of data or information into a user-friendly roadmap for others? Does your documentation feature all participants in the project? Documentation doesn't have to be overwhelming;

sometimes it's as easy as pulling out your smartphone to take pictures or videos. Or it may mean recording meeting minutes when a community convenes, or turning the results of a survey into a graph, or holding onto letters from community members who want to offer feedback.

Documentation can illuminate the design process and continue to engage and guide community members as they sustain a project over the long term. From day one, utilize various forms of media to preserve the knowledge in the room, reflect on your success, and extend the vital work your community has accomplished.



## Formative & Process Evaluation

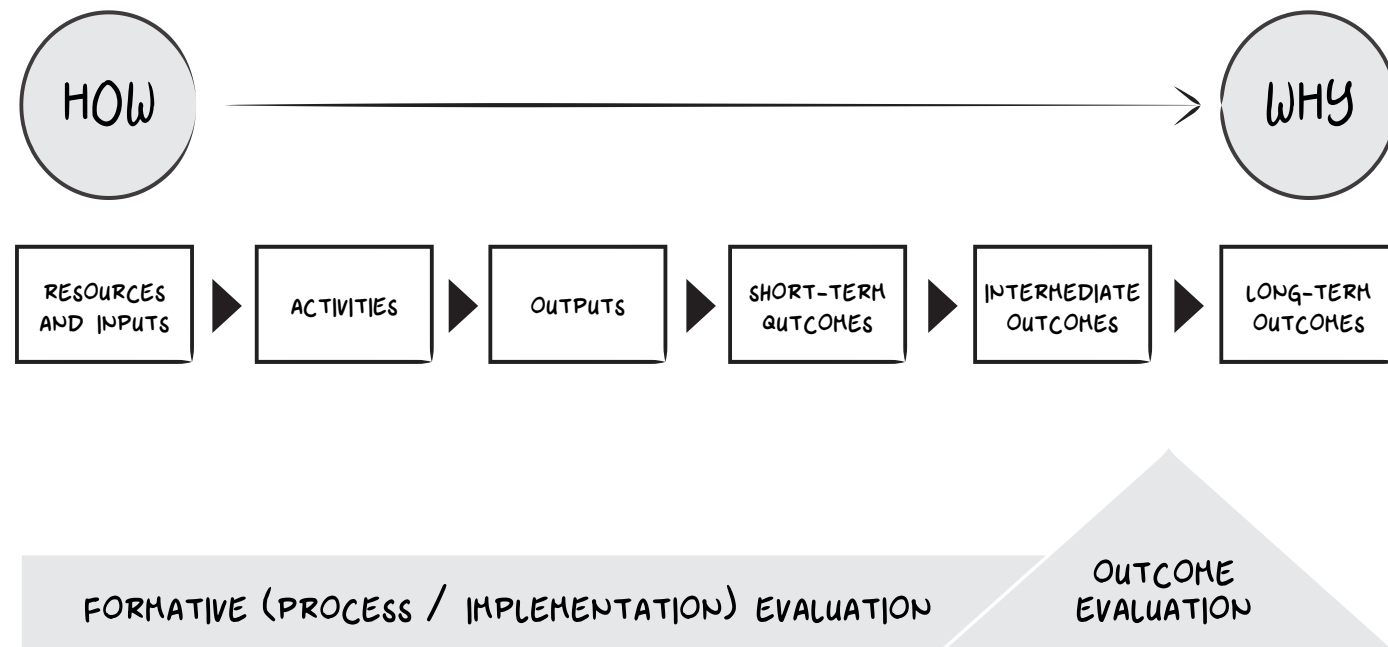
### *Refining, improving and implementing action*

Evaluation doesn't begin at the end of the project. Throughout the implementation of a design, evaluation should be an ongoing practice. Continued evaluation allows for a formal check-in: is the project meeting deadlines? Who are the active participants in the project? Has recruiting been effective? Are expectations clear across the board? In short, what is working, and where is there room for improvement?

Establishing an evaluative process from the beginning allows for corrections or changes to be made more efficiently. There are two types of evaluation you may

consider: formative evaluation, which enables changes to ongoing project implementation, and process evaluation, which offers insight into implementation processes.

Create a structure for evaluation as you plan a project's implementation. Doing so will provide you with information essential for inevitable developments and changes, and also support the documentation process.



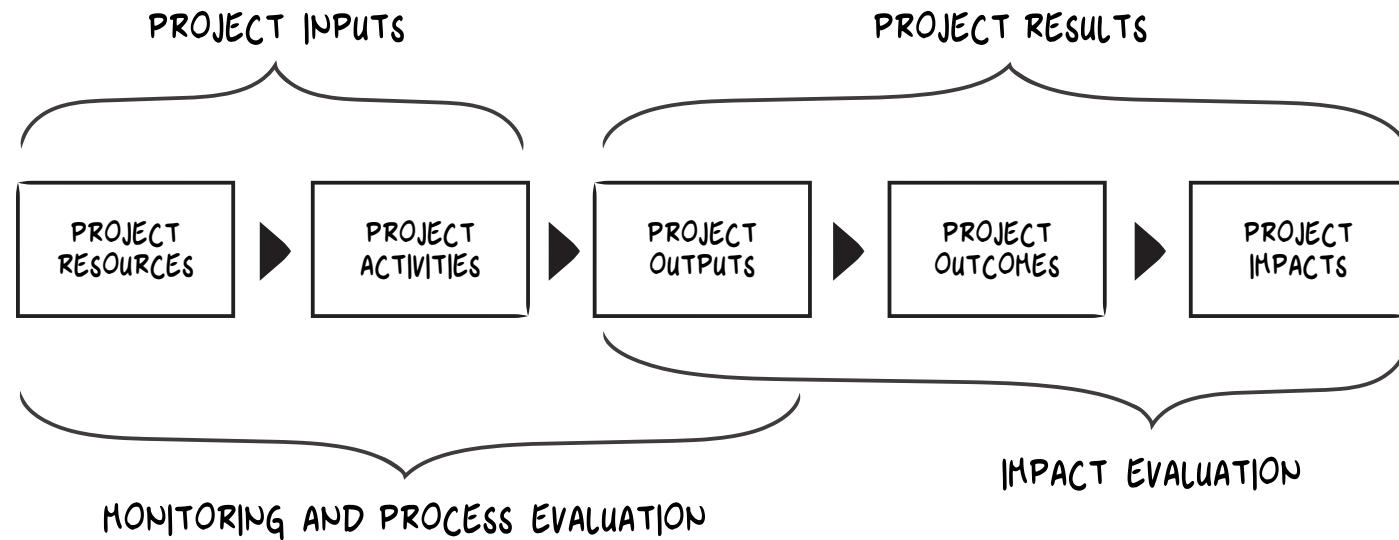
## Summative & Outcome Evaluation

### *Planning backward for moving learning forward*

At the completion of a project, evaluation will allow you to reflect on the process, and identify successes and shortcomings.

While formative and process evaluations provide insight to the ongoing work and progress of implementing a project, summative and outcome evaluations provide a final assessment at the end of implementation. These evaluations tell us what participants and community members gained as a whole from the project. At the end of a project, what new training have they received, or what skillsets have they developed? The immediate, direct impact of a project can be assessed in summative and outcome evaluations.

Summative and outcome evaluations are one of several different types of evaluation, and most useful at the conclusion of implementing a project. As you consider other stages of the design process, such as the implementation and the long-term impact, look to the different forms of evaluation discussed in this chapter.



# Impact Evaluation

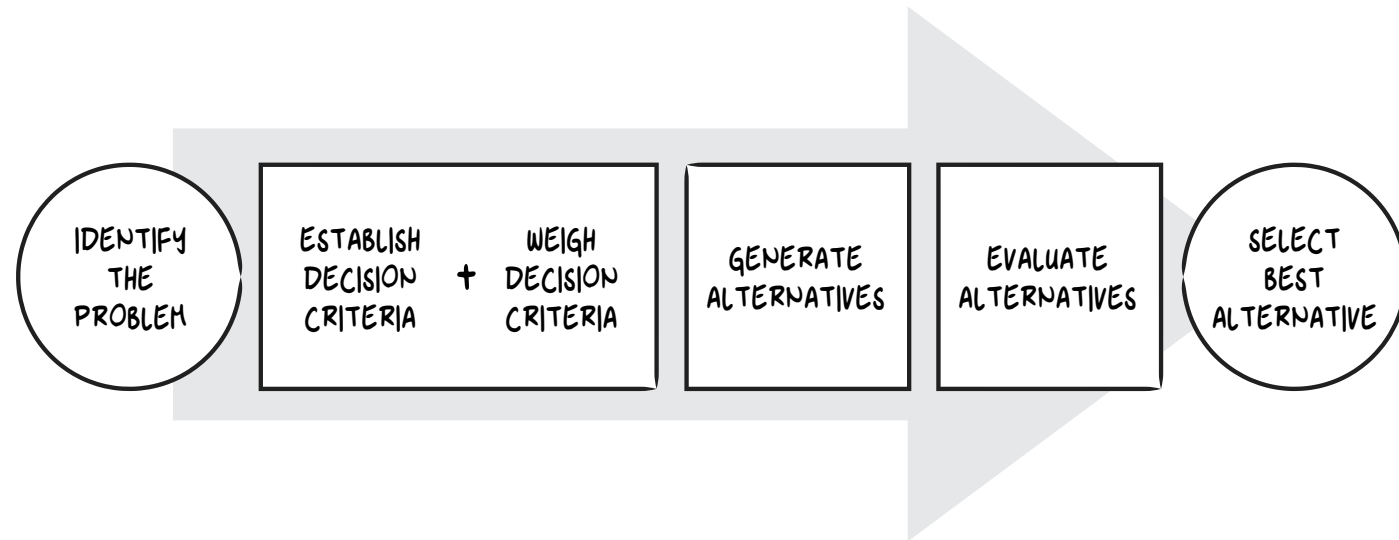
## *Sustained outcomes attributed to interventions*

How has your design project changed the community? What are the long-lasting effects? Did your design accomplish the goals you outlined through Theory of Change?

Completing an impact evaluation will reveal the range of results from your project, both expected and unexpected. As discussed with Emergence, it can be difficult to predict what behaviors will result from community design; but these unpredictable behaviors that emerge can take a project further, and continue to teach you about creative

placemaking. Small wins (or starting with the petunias) can result in longer term and bigger change, and an impact evaluation can support this theory.

As you conduct an impact evaluation, you will need to carefully consider what change is a result of your design, and what is the result of outside factors. Look for causal relationships. This practice requires you to examine the big picture as you search for the broad range of impact, and acknowledge the contribution of outside factors.



## Criteria for Evaluating Alternatives

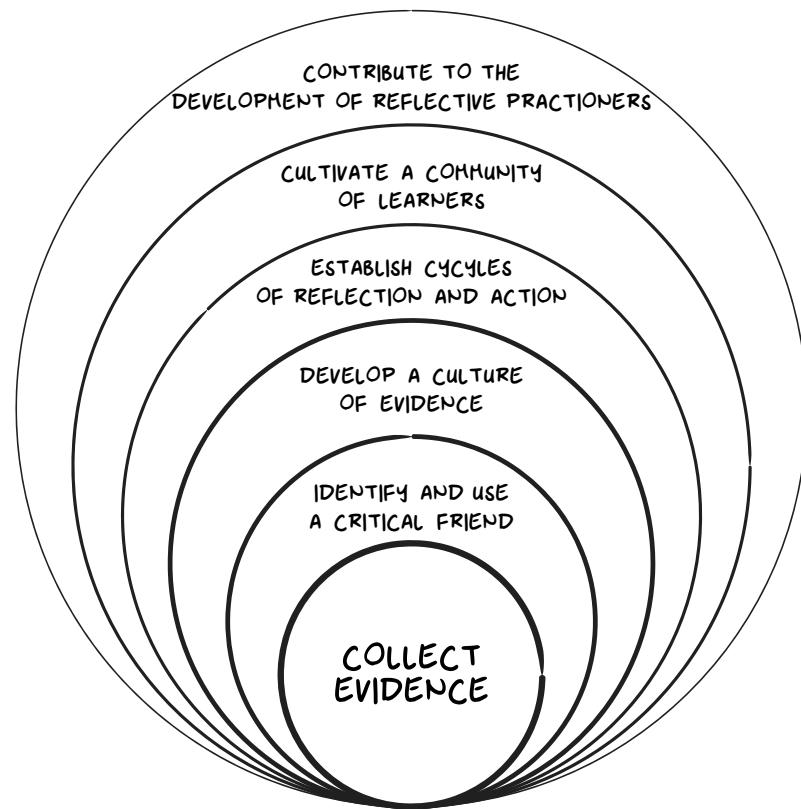
### *Restructuring the decision-making process*

You've made choices, as a community, informed by many voices and available resources. But what are some alternatives, and how will you evaluate them?

As you consider alternatives to the work your community has completed, use tools from previous stages in the design process. Certain criteria may come from experts in the field of community design: you can apply best practices standards, derive criteria from existing research, and develop standards from theory. These criteria build on the work of various communities and academic efforts. But never forget the context and individuality of your own community. You should always include unique community characteristics, derive criteria from project goals, and

engage stakeholder groups.

Evaluating alternatives is one piece of the reflective work necessary to continued adaptation, and sustainable change. The work isn't finished yet.



# Empowerment Evaluation

## *Increasing autonomy for self-determination*

As the name suggests, this form of evaluation empowers communities and enables self-determination.

10 principles guide this form of evaluation: improvement, community ownership, inclusion, democratic participation, social justice, community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, organizational learning, and accountability. These principles should feel familiar, as they can be found in tactics throughout this book. Who will guide this evaluation? How will the results be shared, and how will the community respond? Does this evaluation engage a variety of community members and

stakeholders? How does social inequity feature in this evaluation?

From the very start of this project, you should be empowering community members through the tactics found in each chapter. When the project has been implemented, will the community continue to feel empowered? Will they create and direct the change? This form of evaluation is a key step in ensuring the long-term success of not only a specific design project, but the community's capacity and collaborative power.

## Conclusion

*If you don't have a seat at the table, design one*

Advancing equity is an ongoing project; it doesn't end with this text. The tactics and tools in this text are gathered from various approaches and community change-makers, but the field of community design is always growing and evolving. Don't stop here.

Whether you are at the conclusion of your own community design project, or simply at the conclusion of this book, take the time to reflect. How do these tactics apply to your community? What challenges have you experienced, or do you anticipate? Your reflection should be personal, as well. How has this work changed you?

What internalized biases or assumptions have you come up against in this work? What abilities or capacities did you discover in yourself?

Achieving equity will require each of us to reflect on the role we play in our community, ask ourselves difficult questions, and put this reflection into action. Allow yourself and other community leaders time for honest reflection, and then keep going. On the next page are final tips that you can take into your continued work of advancing equity.

# Tips for Advancing Equity

**Define and know the community** - Generally speaking, the community is the one with the problem. It is important to do the background research and learn about the community, local culture, social networks, economic conditions, history and situated experiences.

**Equity throughout the process** - A process focused on equity at all stages ensures fairness and inclusivity. Engage in an approach which produces policies, programs and practices that advance equitable outcomes through framing and interpreting, implementing and evaluating change.

**Embrace different modes of participation** - Getting buy-in is a crucial part of the process. Expand your definition of participation and allow for formal and informal ways of involvement. Build community trust by allowing members to engage on their terms.

**Networked action and intervention** - *Complicated* challenges require complex solutions. Efforts should support one another and enable collaboration that empowers the community. Build momentum through a diversity of activities which strengthen and extend your strategy.

**Focus both downstream and upstream** - Advance strategies focused on daily actions while working toward addressing the causes of the causes behind inequities. Policies, practices and places offer different opportunities for enacting, advancing and scaling change.

**Develop collective political will** - Change comes through shared self-determination. Community leadership, development and organizing is about enabling people power through participation. Support structures should activate residents and amplify their collective voices.

**Leverage partnerships and resources** - Build community development skills and foster new relationships by mobilizing different forms of capital. Strategic partnerships and a focus on assets over deficits can lead to transformation and the potential for longer-term change.

**Enhance collaboration for social innovation** - Equitable community partnerships require a transdisciplinary approach. Collaboration should add to the quality and quantity of interactions between stakeholders while working across issues and sectors to advance equity.

**Engage in longer time horizons** - Long-term partnerships have the greatest potential for successful outcomes. Investing in a place for meaningful change takes time and commitment. Develop strategies to maintain collaboration and build capacity for sustaining progress.

**Change the narrative** - New narratives about a community can shift paradigms and reframe possibilities. Contextualizing community problems and inequities can shed new light on current conditions. A compelling story has transformative potential for driving community change.