



# COLLECTIVE IMPACT: GETTING STARTED

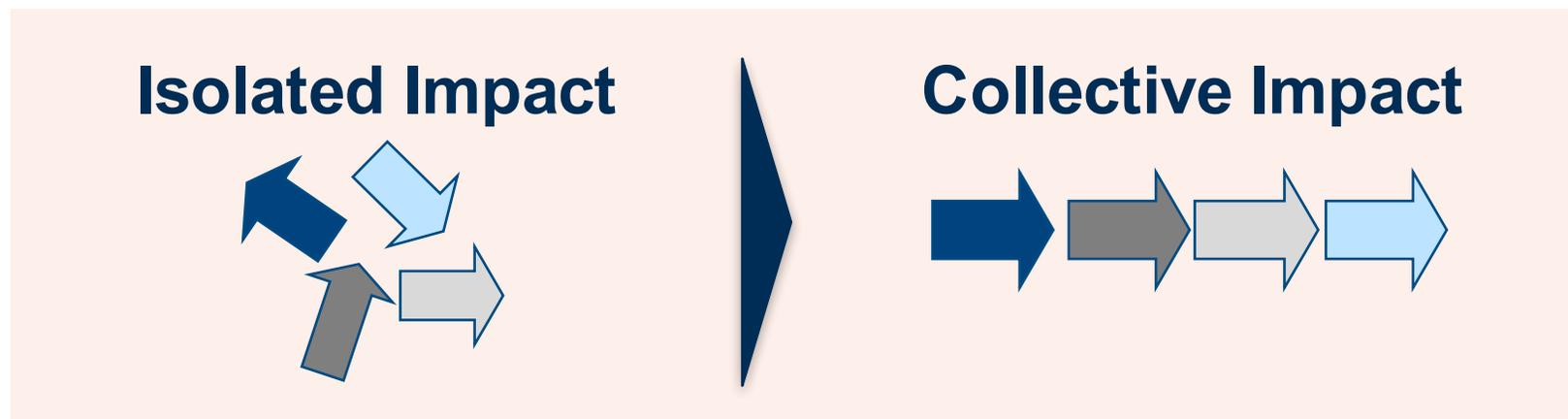
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE  
APRIL 10, 2017



# Collective impact is a unique form of structured, **multi-sector collaboration**

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- All relevant actors are working toward the **same goal** and **measure the same things**
- There is **cross-sector alignment** with the government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and corporate sectors coming together as equal partners
- Organizations are actively **coordinating** their action and sharing lessons learned



*Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of key stakeholders from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem*

# Collective impact only makes sense under **certain circumstances**

## APPROPRIATENESS

- ✓ Addressing the issue will require leaders and organizations from **multiple sectors or systems**, including “strange bedfellows”
- ✓ Addressing the issue will require **different kinds of interventions or strategies** (e.g., data, policy, awareness, coordination, identifying new solutions, etc.) at the systems level and not just replication of programs and services
- ✓ The issue impacts a **significant\* part of the population** and does so in varied geographies

## READINESS

### Influential Champions



- Champions are respected by and have **ability to engage cross-sector leaders**
- **Government leadership** is engaged

### Urgency for Change



- **Critical, complex problem** in the community
- **Frustration** with existing approaches

### Availability of Resources



- Committed, potential **funding partners** with sustained funding for 3 – 5 years for the collective impact infrastructure

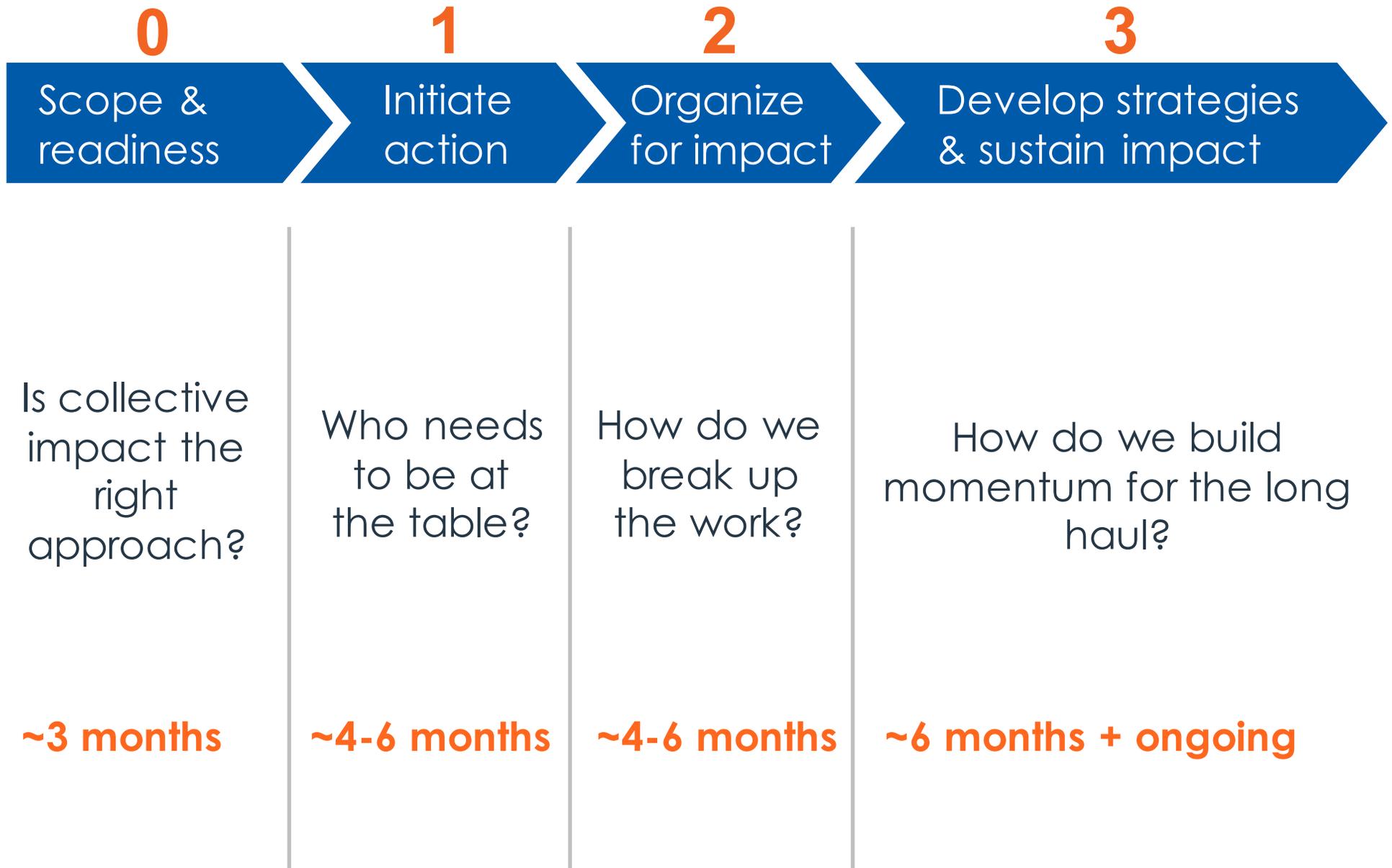
### Basis for Collaboration



- **Trusted relationships** among cross-sector actors
- **Existing collaborative efforts**

\* Defining “significant” is more art than science

# Moving through the **stages of collective impact** can take several years



# Achieving large-scale change through collective impact involves **five key elements**

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1

## Common agenda

- **Common understanding** of the problem
- **Shared vision** for change

2

## Shared measurement system

- **Collecting data** and **measuring results**
- Focus on **performance management**
- **Shared accountability**

3

## Mutually reinforcing activities

- **Differentiated approaches**
- **Coordination** through joint plan of action

4

## Continuous communication

- **Consistent** and **open communication**
- Focus on **building trust**

5

## Backbone support

- Dedicated **staff**
- Resources and skills to **convene** and **coordinate** participating organizations

# Collective impact initiatives work to set up a **strong foundation** for systems change in year 1

1

Common agenda

2

Shared measurement system

3

Mutually reinforcing activities

4

Continuous communication

5

Backbone support

## TYPICAL YEAR ONE CI CONTENT AND PROCESS ELEMENTS

- ✓ Convene a **diverse set of stakeholders** to focus on the issue (i.e., usual and “unusual” suspects)
- ✓ Help stakeholders view their individual challenges and opportunities from a **systems level**
- ✓ Gain agreement on the key challenges today and a **vision for change**
- ✓ **Identify key indicators** to measure progress
- ✓ Determine how to best “**break up the problem**” into manageable pieces to move forward
- ✓ Develop multi-stakeholder, **systems-changing solutions**
- ✓ **Maintain momentum** and hold stakeholders **accountable**
- ✓ Establish a **neutral, facilitator** role

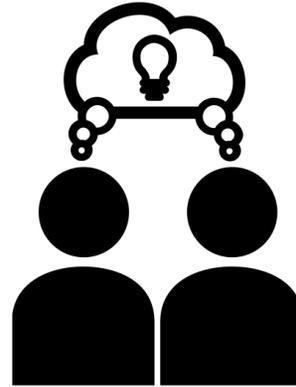
# Several elements make up a **common agenda**

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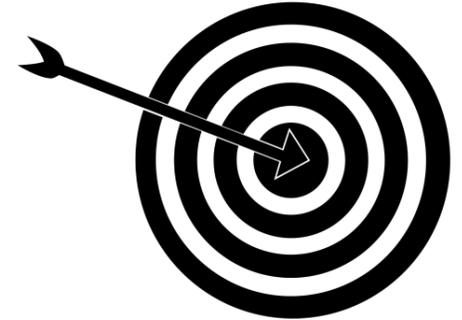
## PRINCIPLES

*How are you going to work together?*



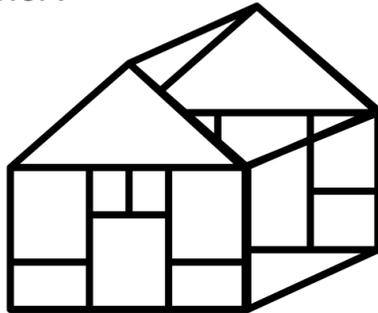
## PROBLEM DEFINITION

*What is in and what is out?*



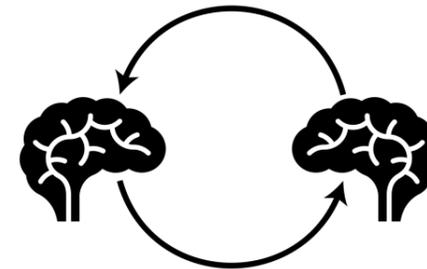
## GOAL

*How will you define success?*



## FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

*How are you going to split up the work and prioritize?*



## PLAN FOR LEARNING

*How will you track progress and learn?*

# Five reasons to **engage the community** in collective impact efforts

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1

## **Understand pressing systemic community challenges**

- Understanding the issues
- Clarify questions that arise about the challenge

2

## **Co-create solutions**

- Spark innovative problem-solving rooted in “lived experience” of the community
- Identify and spread unique solutions that exist within the community

3

## **Verify the direction**

- Get feedback on specific strategies and indicators from selected communities, particularly those who will be the end users of new programs or activities

4

## **Expand the reach of strategies**

- Expand the reach of adoption of initiative strategies
- Evoke and sustain the will to take aligned action

5

## **Build community capacity to lead and sustain change**

- Train stakeholders in skills of effective collaboration and strategy execution
- Share resources and learning across the community to help scale best practices

# Doing collective impact well means being even more vigilant about **equity and inclusion**

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- *How do we effectively **integrate community voice** into institution-heavy collective impact efforts?*
- *How do we authentically and meaningfully **involve communities who have historically been left out** of decision-making processes?*
- *How do we engage stakeholders in sensitive **conversations about race, class and culture** without driving away those who need to sit at the problem-solving table?*

1

A **common language** is useful to help communities engage in constructive conversations

2

We need to be clear on **who we mean** by the community

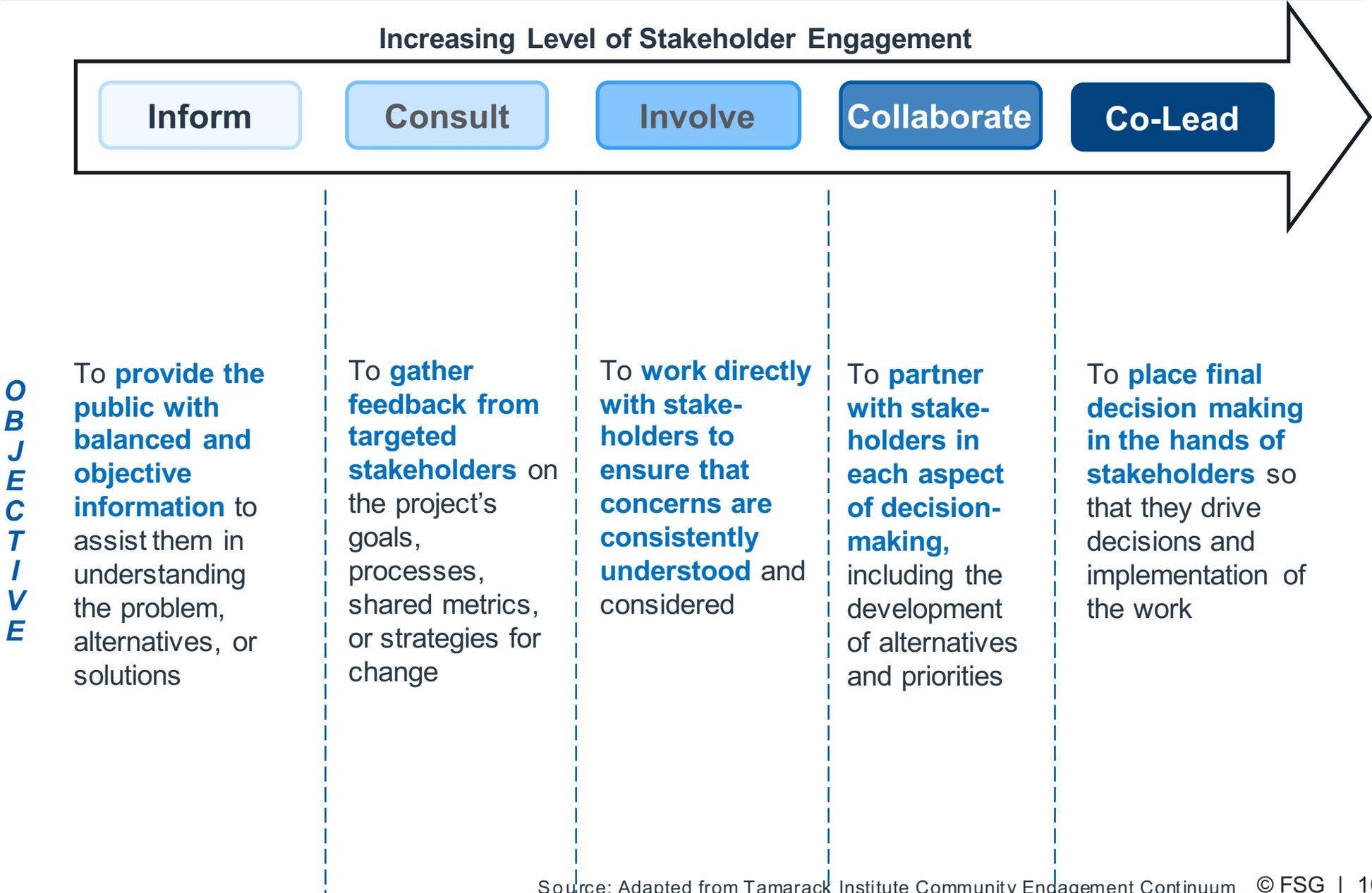
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We need to recognize the difference between **equity and equality** in community engagement

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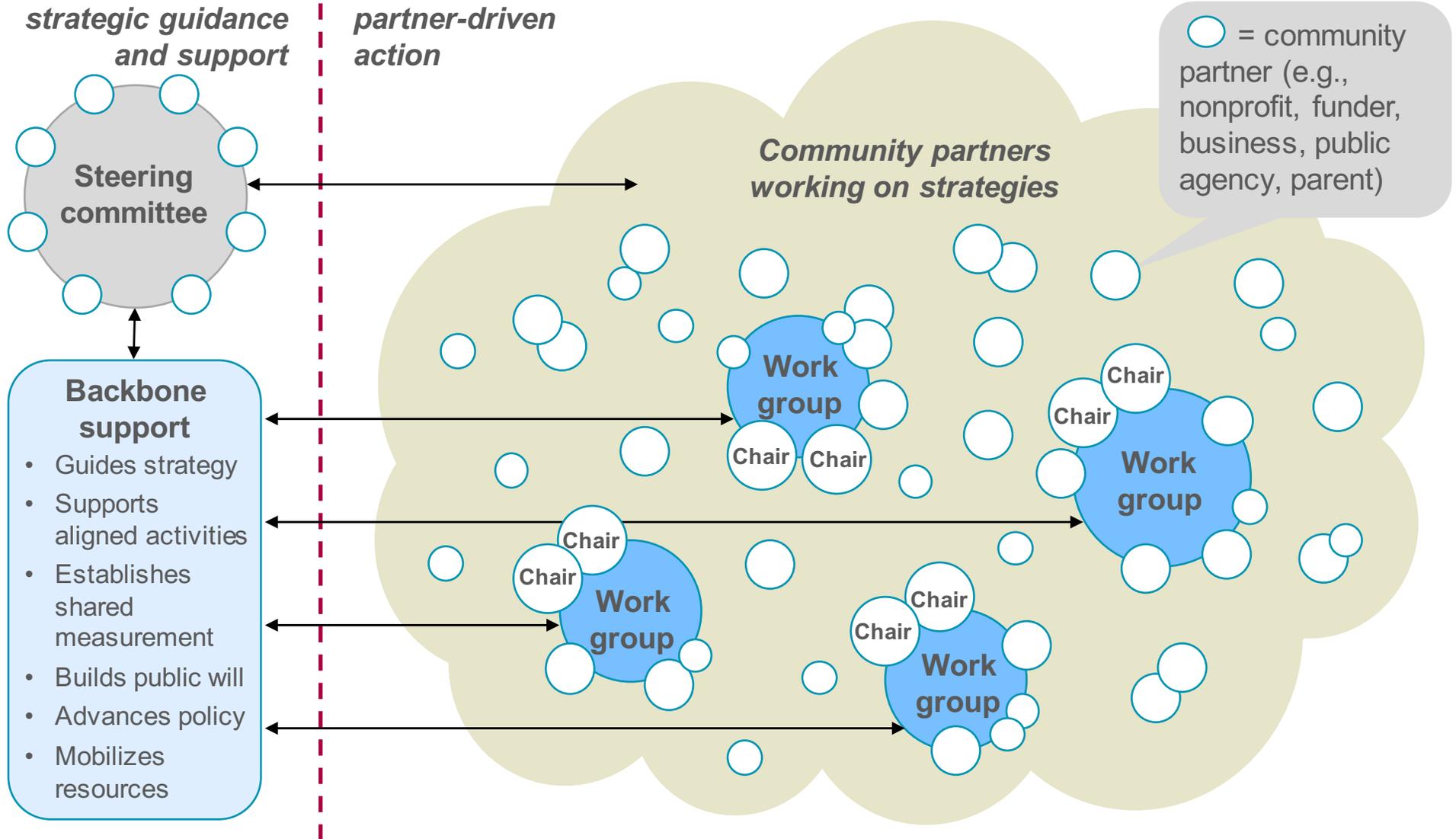
We need to more carefully **redefine power** in collective impact efforts

# There is a **spectrum** of options for engaging community members



# Collective impact achieves action through various structures

## Common agenda and shared metrics



\* Adapted from [Listening to the Stars: The Constellation Model of Collaborative Social Change](#), by Tonya Surman and Mark Surman, 2008.

# Each **structure** has a different responsibility – yet no one person makes all the decisions

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## Steering Committee

- Provides **strategic direction** for the initiative
  - **Champions** the work
  - **Aligns own work** to common agenda
  - Some Steering Committee members serve on **working groups**
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## Backbone

- Provides **dedicated staff**
  - Supports the work of partners by assisting with **strategic guidance**, supporting **aligned activity**, establishing **shared measurement**, building **public will**, advancing **policy**, and mobilizing **resources**
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## Working Group

- Comprised of **cross-sector community partners targeting particular element of common agenda**
  - Designs and implements strategies, involving non-working group members as needed
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## Community partner

- **Individual organizations and members of the community** (e.g, nonprofit, funder, business, public agency, student, parent,)
  - Partners should have **access to a variety of opportunities to learn about and engage** in the initiative, and will be key to implementing strategies
  - Ultimate “power” resides within the **community at large**
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# The **backbone** serves a neutral role “behind the scenes” in six ways

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## *Functions of the backbone:*

- ✓ Guide **vision and strategy**
- ✓ Support **aligned activities**
- ✓ Establish **shared measurement practices**
- ✓ Build **public will**
- ✓ Advance **policy**
- ✓ Mobilize **resources**

## *What the backbone does NOT do:*

- ✗ **set the agenda** for the group
- ✗ **drive the solutions**
- ✗ **receive all the funding**
- ✗ **self-appoint** itself rather than selected by the community
- ✗ **conduct “business as usual”** in terms of staffing, time, and resources
- ✗ **do all of the work** for the initiative