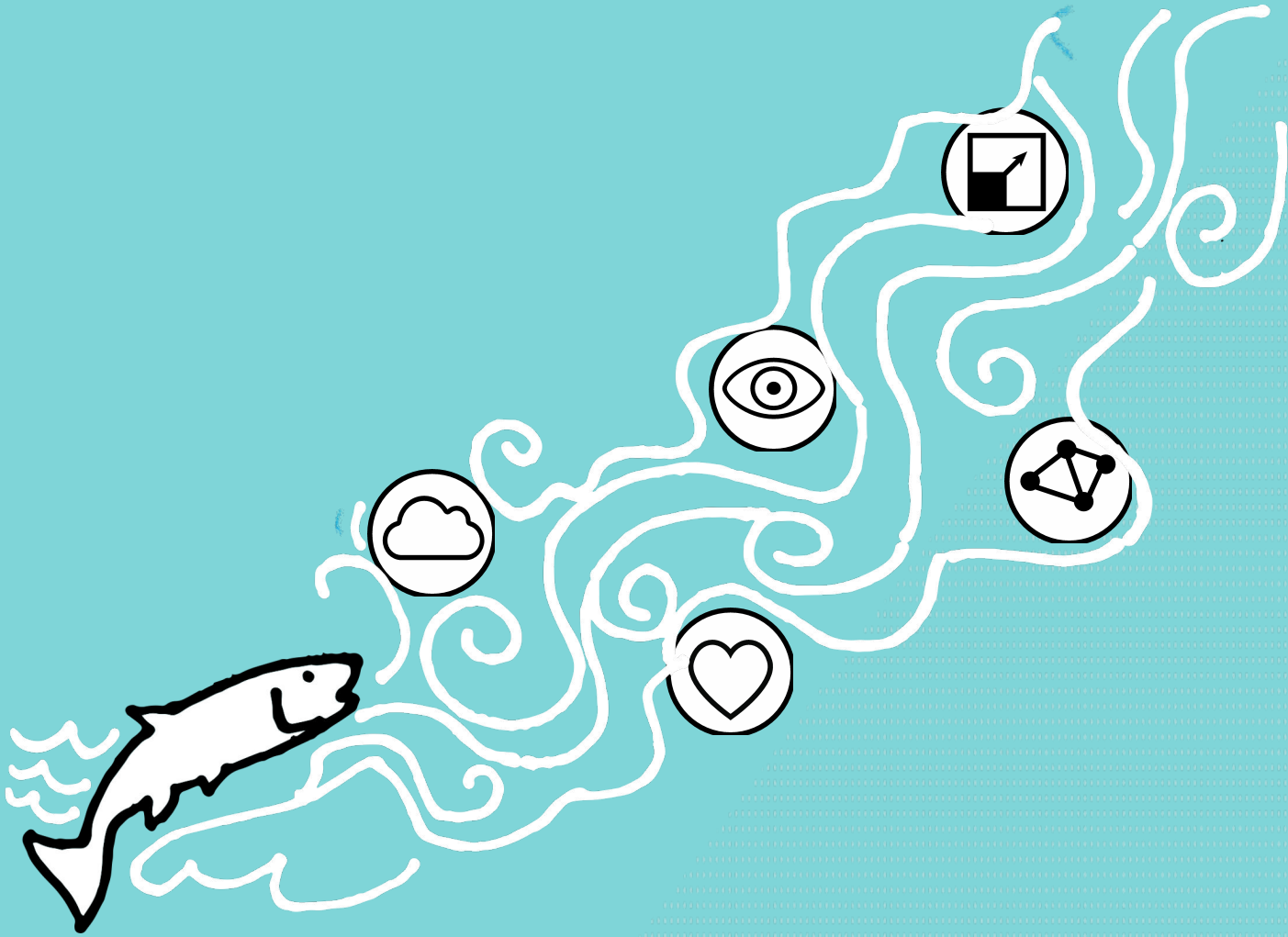


Community Centered Design

by BHC Building Healthy Communities
DEL NORTE & TRIBAL LANDS



AUSTRALIA | NEW ZEALAND | SINGAPORE | KENYA | USA

Playbook Part B Method Overview

Characteristics of Community Centered Design

Unique characteristics of Community Centered Design

In our community many are impacted by intergenerational trauma, poverty, and isolation. The impact is across the whole life cycle for our community and solutions created by outsiders have been too small for the problems they are trying to fix.

We wanted a method that could involve the whole community, especially those who are most marginalized to create our own change.

A single program of work is not enough to catalyze transformative change. A program that focuses on childhood literacy cannot be effective if the children are hungry, if parents experience time poverty to the extent that just keeping a roof over the family stops them from having quality time with their own children, and if neighborhoods and families feel unsafe.

In a community like ours we need to be careful that we do not pour all our energy into reacting to the symptoms of trauma. We need a way to get back from the cliff, see a bigger vision, act earlier, act together, act with deep empathy for each other's experience, and transform the future for the next generation.

Community centered design is about designing **with** the whole community, building the capacity of the community to lead their own change. We align the effort for change and join up different programs of work so that they are mutually reinforcing. We are strategic about where to act to catalyze change that has significant long-term transformational impact for the next generation.

Our Desired Future

This vision for this methodology was created by the BHC leadership group in 2015, in 2021 we see:

People know how to make decisions together in real-time based on shared values, good data, shared analysis, and shared criteria for success.

People convene, can identify shifts, and can create action plans for real impact.

We have a way of leveraging tensions and differences as positive resources to advance the work.

New leaders are supported to be successful.

New leaders bring new insights we couldn't have gotten any other way; the result is more impactful ideas that lead to greater equity.

There's a clear plan/roadmap for sustainability.

The community hears about the work, values it, connects it to BHC, and attributes it to the community.

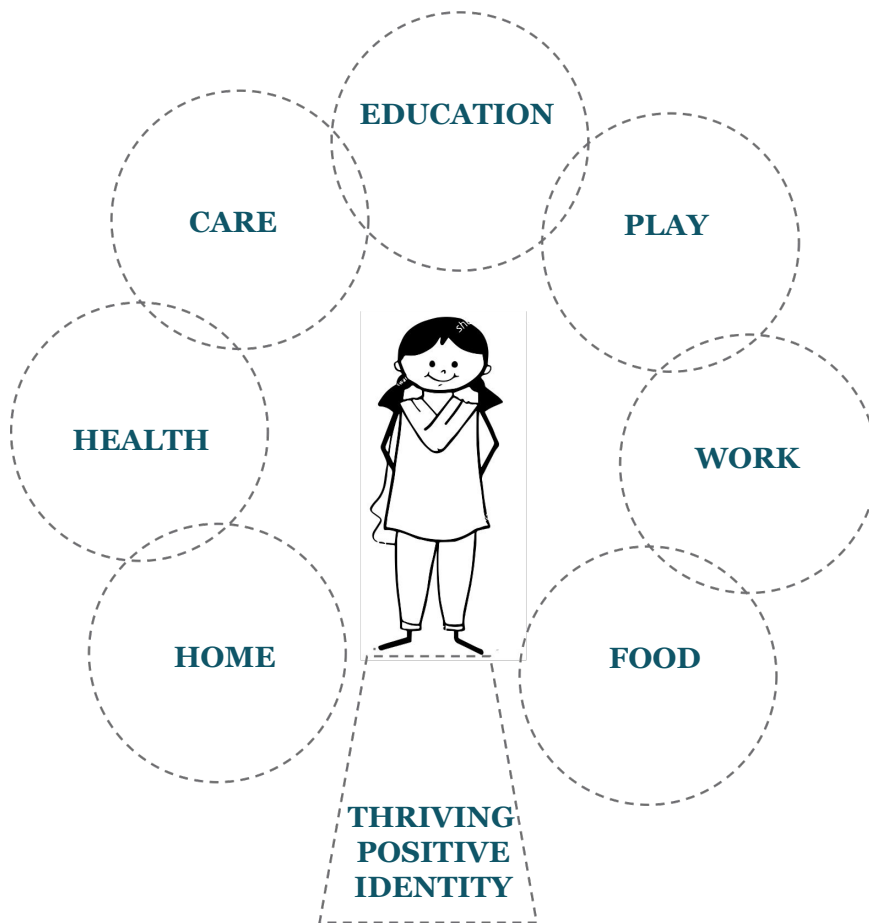
We're actively tackling inequity along race, age, class, gender, culture, and other lines.

The people most affected have enough ownership and data to hold the vision, push on organizations, etc.

We are celebrating our successes.

Our children should dream about their futures and those dreams should be framed by family, health, safety, economic security, education, and hope. We believe their dreams are our community's responsibility.

To transform our children's futures, we need to change the systems around them.



Our health, education, and food systems should support the thriving of our community, but often they fail to do so. This may be due to broader issues, context, or that the systems are suitable for a portion of the population while being inaccessible or unsafe for others.

Our strategy is to change the system in contrast to putting the burden of responsibility on families and expecting them to overcome barriers that are insurmountable to them.

Theoretical underpinnings of the approach

Targeted Universalism

Within the community, some groups are more disadvantaged by systems due to race, economic status, and life circumstances. If we are to design for equity, our approach to systems transformation needs to be empathetic to see these critical differences, to redistribute power, and to design target change relative to people's different contexts and disadvantages.

Collective Impact

Connects and aligns efforts of community leaders, businesses, and employers across different sectors and different community groups. Alignment is inspired by empathy with the experiences different groups have of the same system revealing barriers, inequities, and unrealized opportunities. Through connection, alignment, and empathy we build a coalition for change.

Hope Theory

Builds capacity for individuals and groups to participate in the change. It is defined as the perceived capability to drive pathways to desired goals and to motivate oneself and others to use those pathways.

Systems transformation

For thriving families and communities

Human Centered Design

Puts people at the heart of change and makes sense of systems by listening to understand the human experience of those systems.

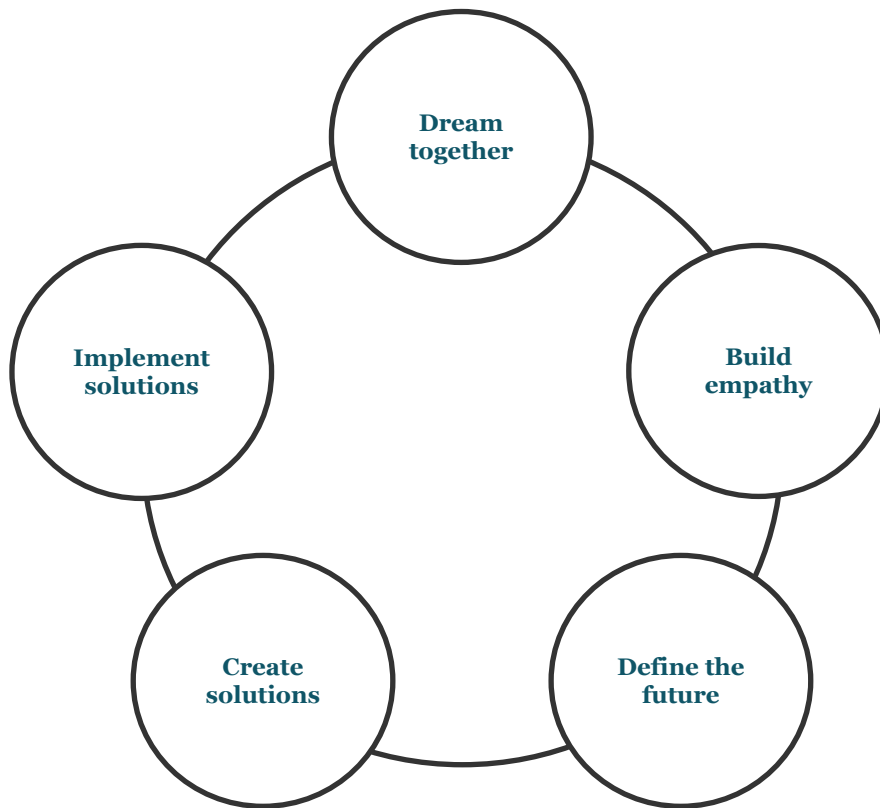
Design creates a bias towards action by visualizing thinking, making things tangible, gathering feedback, and iterating.

Systems Thinking

Our thinking is holistic and long-term. We zoom between the big picture and the individual interaction. We look beyond solving the problems of today, to understand the root cause of problems and imagine alternative futures.

Transformation is not just the improvement of services, it is about changing norms in equity, power distribution, ethos, and experience of systems.

Actioning Targeted Universalism



Targeted Universalism is at the heart of how we act

Within the community some groups are more disadvantaged by systems due to race, economic status, and life circumstances. If we are to design for equity, our approach to systems transformation needs to be empathetic to see these critical differences, to redistribute power, and target change relative to people's different contexts and disadvantages.

Targeted universalism provides an approach to systems transformation that differentiates between equality and equity. Where equity requires an approach to change that is targeted relative to people's distance from the mainstream system, context, and disadvantage. Steps from the targeted universalism approach are integrated into community-led change.

Actioning Targeted Universalism

Dream together	<p>The community sets the goals for change.</p> <p>We use data to assess the general populations performance against the goal.</p>
Build empathy	<p>Empathy interviews draw out the complexity of structural and environmental factors contributing to disadvantage and also identify strengths, values, and priorities that may not be recognized by the system.</p>
Define the future	<p>We analyze the interviews to identify patterns of barriers, needs, and strengths for different groups.</p> <p>We work with these different groups to imagine a desired future experience.</p> <p>We define the distance between the current experience and the desired future experience and what needs to change in the system for the desired future experience to be true.</p>
Create Solutions	<p>We use the analysis of needs, barriers, and required shifts in the system as the starting point for designing the change.</p> <p>We target strategies for different groups, with a lens for where these strategies could improve experiences for all.</p> <p>We co-design these strategies with the different groups who need/want them.</p>
Implement Solutions	<p>We implement strategies and involve those impacted by the change in defining the measures of successful change.</p> <p>We believe change is only change when it is real for the people who are experiencing it. We listen to how people have experienced change and where barriers and inequities persist.</p>

Principles of Community Centered Design

01

Inclusion and equity

We build empathy for each other by listening without judgment.

We hold multiple perspectives at once.

We empower participation.

We are flexible to support inclusion and meet community in their place of power.

We develop targeted solutions for those most marginalized by mainstream systems.

02

Systems thinking

We think holistically and long term.

We see connections and interdependencies.

We get back from the cliff to act where change can be transformative.

We imagine and make an alternative future.

We zoom in and out between the system and the individual experience.

03

Connection and alignment

We connect through empathy.

We build capacity for participation.

We build new leadership, especially with youth.

We align efforts.

We establish shared vision and shared goals.

We become a powerful coalition for change.

04

Designing and making

We are biased towards action.








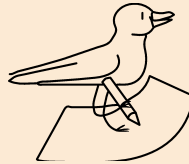


We visualize our thinking.

We invite everyone in the community to participate.

We create audacious, measurable goals.

We test, evaluate, and refine our prototypes.

Design behaviors

 DREAM TOGETHER	 BUILD EMPATHY	 DEFINE THE FUTURE	 CREATE SOLUTIONS	 IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS
 We are Navigators We set the vision and direction for change. Navigators are big-picture, long-term thinkers full of hope.	 We are Listeners We discover the context and what is happening now. Listeners see the world afresh. They do not try to fix things, they empathize with the experience of others.	 We are Architects We define a pathway to the future. Architects are strategic. They create new narratives and define a path to future experiences, norms, behaviors, and systems.	 We are Experimenters We try, fail, and learn. Experimenters explore many ideas and make ideas real. They are not afraid of failure and love to learn by doing.	 We are Makers We introduce change into the world and nurture it. Makers grow things and notice who is thriving and who is not. They nurture the environment surrounding change and remove barriers.

Working in a designerly way is as much **mindset** as it is **method**.

We inhabit these modalities at the different stages of the design process. This gives us permission to think and act in a way that optimizes the stage of the process. Each of us can think in these different ways and each of us may have a modality where we naturally excel.

An aerial photograph of a river with a large, light-colored rock in the center. The water is clear, showing the riverbed and the surrounding landscape. The text "The design process" is overlaid on a dark teal rectangular background in the lower-left corner.

The design process

The design process

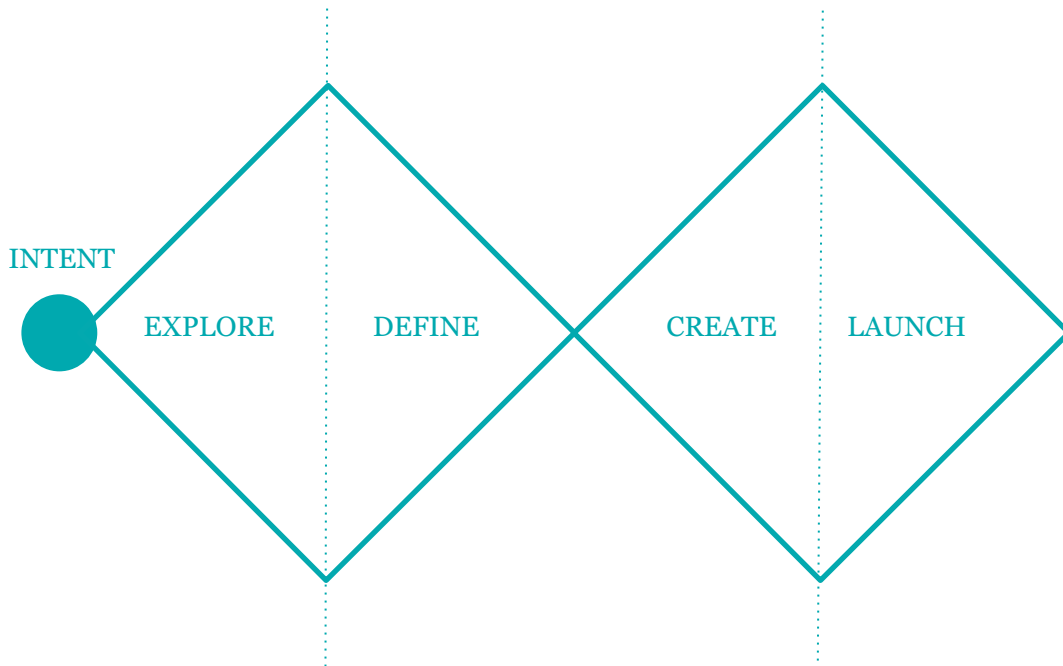
The design process is a process we follow to navigate a complex context from vision to reality. It is a structured process with clear steps and it is endlessly flexible to respond to its context.

The key elements of the community centered design process are:

- The core method is a Human Centered Design (HCD) process.
- We overlay a collective impact model that provides structure to align vision, effort, and impact across multiple programs of work.

What is different for the context of community transformation is that there is an expectation that there will be multiple programs of work and multiple initiatives, all of them impacting the same communities and same families. They need to be mutually reinforcing for change to be holistic and a positive transformative experience for the community, families, and individuals.

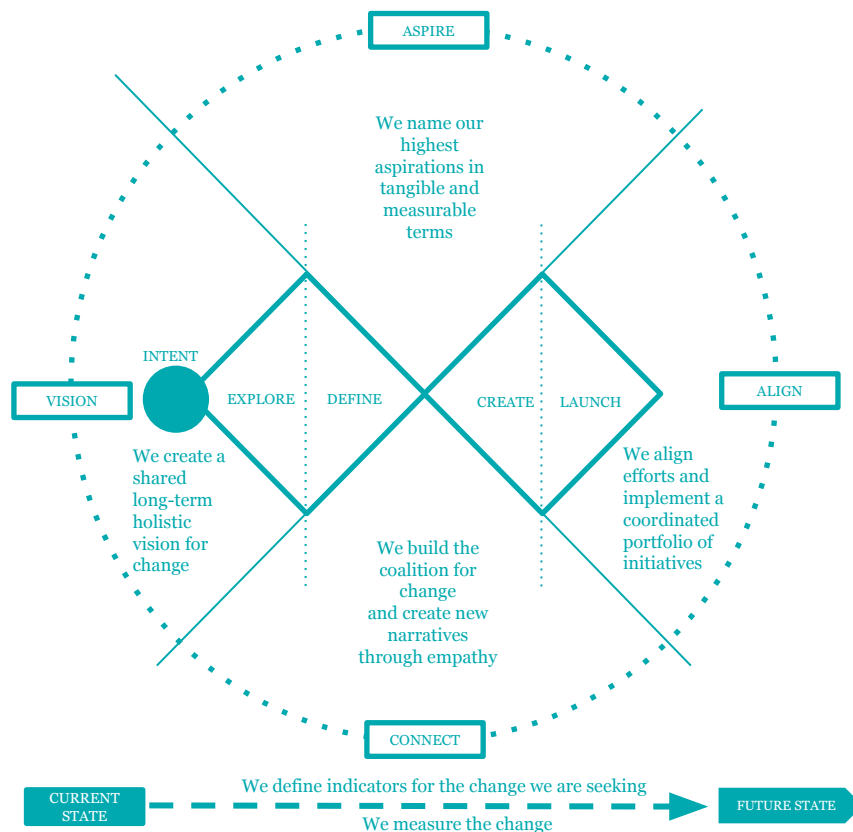
We start with a human-centered change process



We start with a human-centered change process.

- Change is guided by the human experience it creates.
- The process is divergent and convergent, we explore multiple perspectives before testing and evaluating.
- We design our way forward, our understanding of the problem and possible solutions evolves through making and testing every step of the way.
- We spend time making sense of complex problems and deciding where in the system to act before we create solutions.
- Our design processes are participatory and harness the wisdom and perspectives of many.

We overlay a collective impact approach



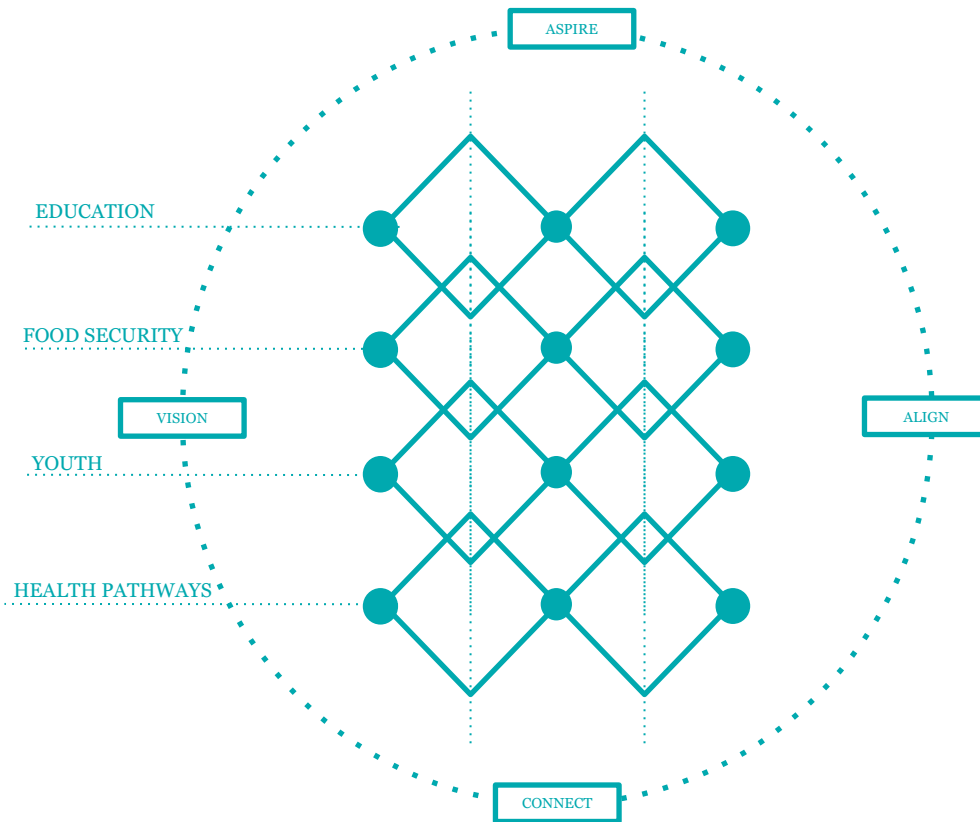
We overlay a collective impact model

Transforming community requires collective action to align change and effort across multiple programs or work and multiple sectors.

Elements of the collective impact model include:

- Shared holistic long-term vision for change, that will require programs of work in multiple intersecting sectors (e.g. education and health).
- Shared aspirational goals that are tangible and measurable and can align efforts across multiple initiatives.
- We intentionally and continuously build connections between different sectors and different parts of the community. With empathy and increased understanding of each other, we build an inclusive coalition for change.
- We align efforts for implementing change strategies that may include a portfolio of initiatives in different locations and owned by different parties. For example, in the home, in the community, in the school owned by the government, and in the private sector.

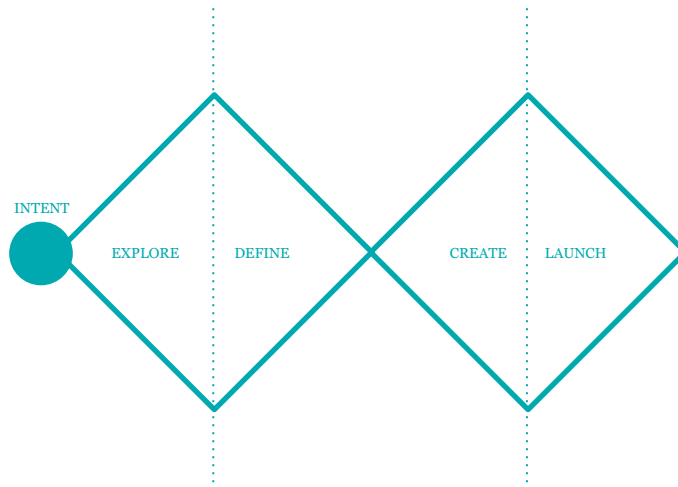
Aligned Programs



The method supports the alignment of multiple programs of work

All these change initiatives will involve and impact the same communities and same families. They need to be mutually reinforcing for change to be holistic and a positively transformative experience for the community, families, and individuals.

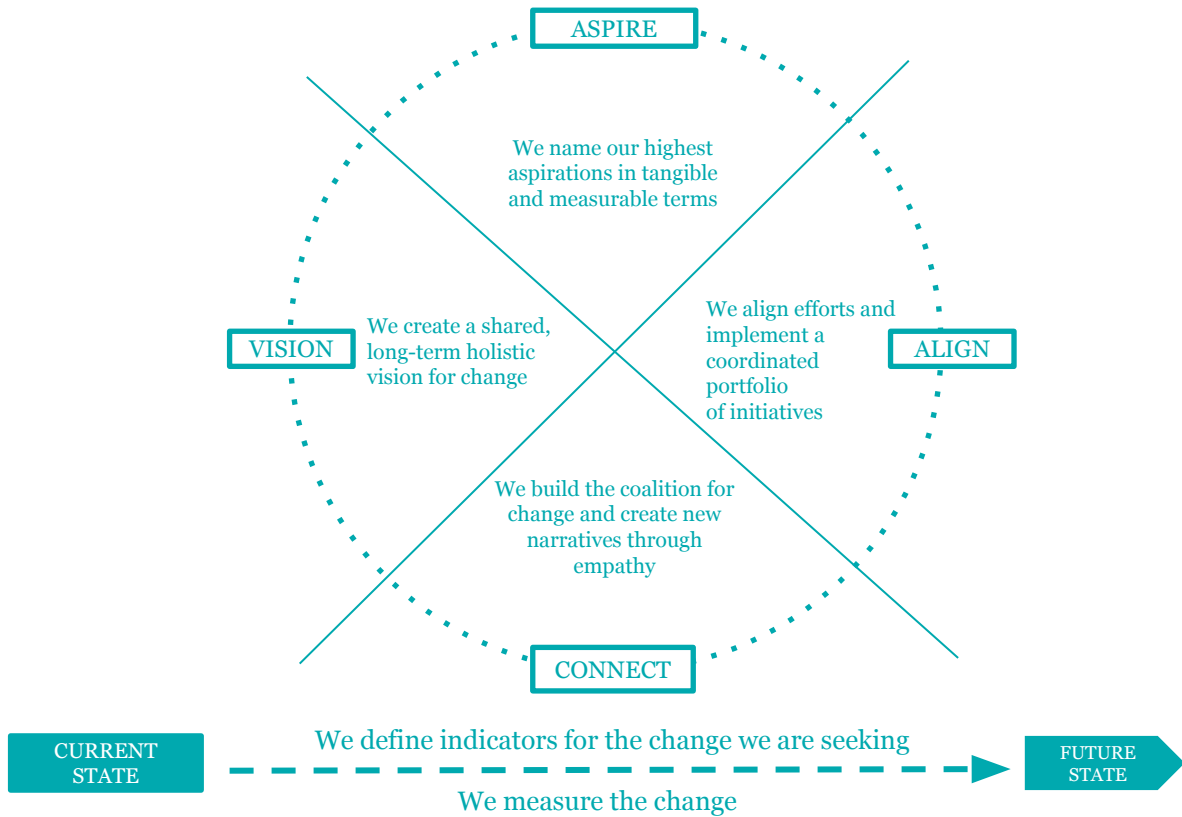
Program level



Each program of work follows the same approach

Intent	Explore	Define	Create	Launch
We set a clear intent for programs of work with the key voices involved in the change.	<p>We listen for a deep understanding of diverse human experiences.</p> <p>We make sense of what we have heard and formulate insight that will build empathy and inform fresh thinking.</p>	<p>We use our insights to describe the change we want to see for families and systems.</p> <p>We describe the desired future for different groups and systems.</p>	<p>We generate ideas for initiatives that will change the system.</p> <p>We evaluate prototypes, test, learn, and refine.</p>	<p>We put in place means to learn and measure the changed experience.</p> <p>We create and nurture the enabling environment for change. We launch, pilot, embed, and scale the change initiatives.</p>






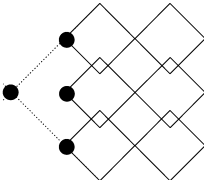
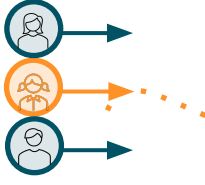
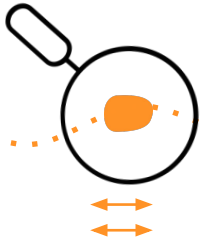
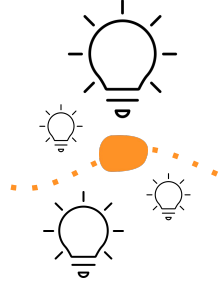

Strategic level



The strategic level aligns vision, effort, and impact between multiple programs of work

Vision	Connect	Aspire	Align	Measure
<p>We inspire hope.</p> <p>We imagine the future for our children and our community together.</p> <p>We create a long-term, whole person, whole community vision for change.</p>	<p>We share stories and create fresh thinking – insight and new narratives through empathy.</p> <p>We build a coalition for change.</p>	<p>We name our highest aspirations in tangible and measurable terms.</p>	<p>We prioritize design strategies, align efforts, and implement a coordinated portfolio of initiatives.</p>	<p>We put in place means to learn and measure the changed experience.</p>

Phases in the transformation process

	CURRENT STATE		KEY SHIFT	FUTURE STATE	
					
	DREAM TOGETHER	BUILD EMPATHY	DEFINE THE FUTURE	CREATE SOLUTIONS	IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS
STRATEGY	Vision	Connect	Aspire	Align	Measure
PROGRAM	Intent	Explore	Define	Create	Launch
	<p>We dream together. We create a holistic community vision for change and we define the intent for key programs of work.</p> 	<p>We build empathy through listening and connecting with the lived experience of those we are designing with. We generate insights that broaden and deepen our perspectives for change.</p> 	<p>We define the future by naming our highest hopes and describing the change for families and systems. We define opportunities for design.</p> 	<p>We create strategies and initiatives for a portfolio of change initiatives through ideas, prototypes, and aligned efforts.</p> 	<p>We implement an aligned portfolio of initiatives. We create an enabling environment that can nurture the change. We put in place means to measure the changed experience.</p> 
WE ARE MAKING	<p>VISION Shared vision and program intent maps</p>	<p>LIVED EXPERIENCE A campaign of listening, new perspectives, and insight</p>	<p>PROGRAM STRATEGIES Measurable goals, future experience pathways, and critical shifts</p>	<p>INITIATIVES An aligned portfolio of initiatives and prototypes</p>	<p>CHANGE Project implementation, briefs, and measures</p>

The five phases

To make community centered design easy to navigate we have documented the process as five phases. Each phase contains a strategic level and a project level step. While this process can be linear in practice you may find the phases are likely to loop back and forth.

Design Activities

Dream together

Program

INTENT

There is a relationship between powerful clarity of intent and effective change.

We establish the intent for defined programs of work. The purpose of an intent conversation is to get a diverse group of people and groups on the same page about why a new program is necessary and the change it is seeking to achieve.

The intent conversation involves a current and future state conversation. The current state conversation listens to the experiences of the participant to understand different perspectives, agendas, and motivations for change, barriers, and parameters. The future state conversation explores what the desired future could look like from all the key perspectives.

Activities include

- Intent conversations to understand the current state, to build a shared vision for the future, and to decide how we will work together.
- Synthesize conversations into a single shared intent map that becomes a guide to keep the intent of the change project on track.

Strategy

VISION

A strong vision creates hope, aligns effort, and coordinates action.

A community that has suffered disadvantages, inequities, and traumas embodies complex social challenges and may not believe they have the agency to create significant change. We start by creating hope and permission to dream together so that we can see a further horizon than the problems of today.

We sit down with community influencers, those inside the system (e.g. the school board), and those in the community who identify as change makers to understand their aspirations, ways of working, and the barriers to change they face.

Together we create an opportunity to think big and holistically, to see beyond the problems of today. You think long term and ask questions. What if we could transform this community for the next generation? What would that look like? What could the future experience be for our children? How might we work together? Where might we start?

Activities include

- Develop principles for working together.
- Create an aspirational holistic experience pathway.
- Map key networks.
- Map work in progress.
- Explore data.
- Prioritize programs of work.

Design Activities

Build Empathy

Program

EXPLORE

What can people's experiences tell us about the current system and possibilities for the future?

To design for community transformation, we need to understand the different perspectives, experiences, and priorities of the complex population within a community. We explore deeply to understand what is happening for different groups. We listen to stories about people's current experiences in order to understand their values, what works for them, and their pain points. Through these different perspectives, we seek to learn about systemic barriers and the root causes of problems.

We listen to various perspectives within the system, including service providers such as teachers, nurses, and organizations, as well as the voices of the community and families. This includes people who are thriving in the system and those facing challenges, including historically marginalized groups. We withhold judgment and try to hear the complexity of experiences, how people feel, and aspirations for the next generation.

Activities include

- Explore existing data to gain an indication of the magnitude of the problem and generate questions. Who is included and excluded in the data? What is the difference in service access and outcomes for different groups?
- Map the ecosystem to understand the diversity of the population and whose experience we need to understand.
- Develop the lines of inquiry including the stories we are seeking to hear.
- Conduct 1:1 interviews, where we listen to people's stories of their experiences, aspirations, needs, beliefs, and ideas for change.
- Reflect and record emergent insight from every interview.
- Share and connect emerging insights.

Strategy

CONNECT

Empathy builds connection, trust, and respect.

A successful design process builds connection, which is critical for a successful change process. Connection starts to grow as empathy for each other grows, and with that comes new perspectives and fresh thinking—insight that kindles possibility for the future. Confidence and hope grow when the community can explore that possibility and create initiatives for change together.

Connection starts by sharing the emerging insights from discovery early, to build shared understanding between different perspectives. To experience empathy, people need time to absorb stories, space to feel and ask questions, and respect for each other's insight.

Activities include

- Gatherings of different scales and locations that share stories and emerging insights and empower participation.
- Community insights workshops, walkthroughs of work in progress, and forums where stories and emergent opportunities for change are shared.
- Meet people on their terms, ensuring they have a voice and power in the process
- Create a safe creative space to share emerging insight, the fresh thinking that comes from understanding multiple perspectives.
- Evolve a shared language, that grows out of the language of lived experience.

Design Activities

Define the future

Program

DEFINE

We make sense of what we have heard and seen during Explore to bring fresh thinking as insight into the problems we are trying to solve and the opportunities we are trying to create.

We use our insight to define opportunity space for design. An opportunity space is a significant moment that if changed could catalyze new norms, new behavior, transformed experience, and produce different outcomes.

A comparison between people's current state experience and imagined desired future experience informs critical shifts. We ask what is the changed experience we are seeking? What needs to change in the system for those desired futures to be true?

Activities include

- Bring people together to **generate insight** from discovery.
- Map the **current experience** of how systems and programs are experienced differently by different groups.
- Imagine and map the desired **future experience** for different groups.
- Compare the current experience with the future desired experience to define **critical shifts**.
- Support different perspectives to identify opportunities for design where change could make a transformative difference.
- Develop a portfolio of insights, opportunities, and questions to inspire design activities.

Strategy

ASPIRE

We use insights and stories from the empathy interviews to set shared aspirational goals. These goals create shared vision and hope and can align efforts across multiple sectors.

We connect to galvanize the community's commitment to that goal recognizing that everyone has a small part to play and that a clear shared goal is a powerful way to align effort.

*Creating an audacious goal with the community is part goal-setting and part getting buy-in for the goal. BHC setting the goal of **100%** of children reading by the third grade was the best thing they ever did, it was an audacious goal, it is measurable, and it galvanized the entire community around a shared mission from birth to the 3rd grade.*

Activities include

- Imagine a transformed future for all and describe that future as an audacious, targeted, measurable goal.
- Alignment of leadership around the need for change and getting buy-in for shared audacious measurable goals.
- Community forums to build buy-in for the goal, where different organizations can pledge their commitment and potential to contribute to the goal.

Design Activities

Create Solutions

Program

CREATE

We work with the community to design a set of initiatives that will work together to create holistic change.

When we are transforming systems there is no one golden idea that can make the holistic change we are seeking. We need to generate a set of solutions that work together to create change. We create a portfolio of initiatives and strategies that work together to make change at significant moments in people's lives. We may also need to design targeted solutions with some groups that address the specific systemic barriers they face and their values and priorities.

Occasionally ideas will be disruptive, totally new ways of thinking, frequently they will be improvements to what exists today. Sometimes, significant change can be achieved by what we stop doing. Our aim at this stage is to think big, think differently from today, and explore many ideas. Some provocative ideas may never be implemented but they are good to explore as they might change the way we think.

We work in a cycle of imagining, evaluating, rapid prototyping, testing, and improving/changing.

Activities include

- Workshops to generate ideas, different workshops might focus on different opportunity spaces.
- Workshops that build on each other's ideas, prototype, and test.
- Create a portfolio of initiatives that will act together to catalyze change. These initiatives may act in different parts of the system (e.g. at home and at school, at different times of the day, at different life stages). The portfolio would include quick wins, as well as bigger longer-term strategies.

Strategy

ALIGN

Changing a complex system = Interdependent ideas + interdependent players.

Once we have a portfolio of initiatives, we need to create ownership for them and align efforts.

Building ownership has started early and leverages the coalition for change that has been growing throughout the design process.

Success is the adoption of change initiatives across the ecosystem, in different locations, and by different organizations, in a way that all the independent initiatives are mutually reinforcing and aligned to a common audacious goal.

In a vibrant collective action environment some organizations may adopt well-developed ideas, while others may adopt the intent of an idea and propose a different way to implement it.

All ideas will need to be tailored to the context in which they will be implemented.

Activities include

- Align investment to support the implementation of change initiatives.
- Understand the forces for and against the change in any specific context.
- Reimagine initiatives for their specific contexts.
- Understand who will be involved, roles, and responsibilities.
- Define the contributions necessary to make initiatives viable and sustainable.
- Ensure that there is clarity of intent for each initiative.

Design Activities

Implement Solutions

Program

LAUNCH

We create a nourishing environment around new initiatives. A powerful change initiative will catalyze change in the system, including the processes, norms, behaviors, and experiences that surround it.

The pathway to implementation is iterative, it starts with small flexible pilots to test assumptions and learn rapidly. Even a small pilot will have an influence on the system around it. The initiative may call for changes to processes, capability, and culture in the surrounding system, and we need to watch out that the strength of existing norms doesn't dilute the intent of the change initiative.

The transition from pilot to an embedded initiative should be logical. Once a pilot is demonstrating its viability and impact it can be embedded as business as usual. It may then be scaled to another location. Initiatives need to be locally owned and tailored to their environment. Each new location will require different adjustments.

Activities include:

- Transfer ownership of the initiative to the launch team.
- Develop a pilot plan with the team who owns the pilot.
- Ensure there is clarity of the change intent and hypothesis for change
- Create a nourishing enabling environment for the initiative.
- Celebrate the launch with the new team.

Strategy

MEASURE

Monitoring, measuring, and improving is a community-owned collaborative process, we watch to actively nurture positive change.

We have started to build our Theory of Change from the beginning of the process when we define the project intent, describe the desired future, look at the data, and set audacious goals for change. We have started to define the indicators of the change we are seeking.

When we design initiatives for prototyping we get tighter about the Theory of Change and the measures and indicators for each initiative.

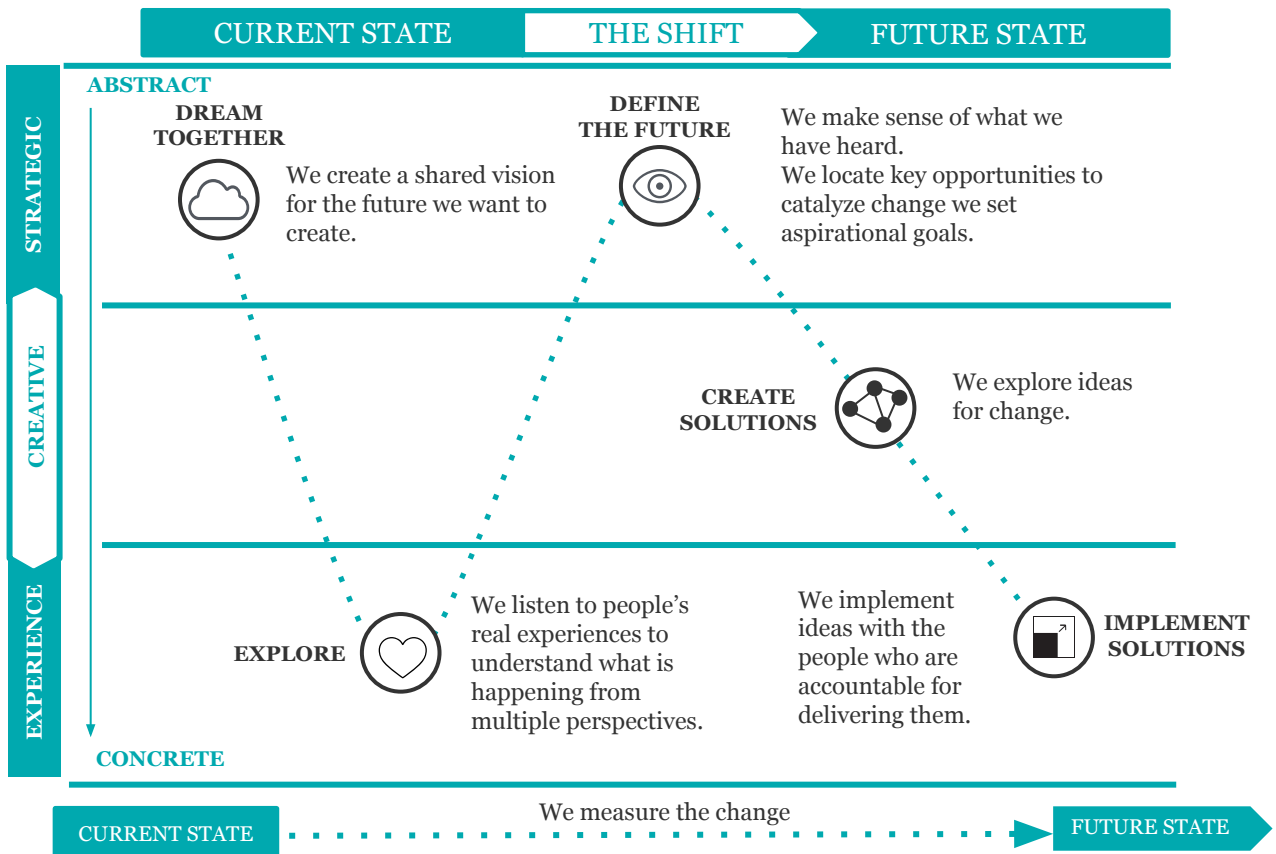
When we pilot initiatives in complex systems, we can never anticipate all of the interactions and consequences, so we monitor pilots closely. We use an action learning approach to regularly share what is happening and notice unanticipated barriers, opportunities for improvement, and early indicators of change.

We maintain a collaborative approach to monitoring change by listening to recipients' experiences to understand what has been the most significant change for them. We combine this qualitative insight with measurable data, and we share the stories of change.

Activities include:

- Co-design a Theory of Change and evaluation tools for each initiative with the teams who will pilot them.
- Develop tools to support monitoring, learning, and improvement.
- Facilitate action learning on-site to monitor, learn, and improve.
- Gather insight from participants' stories of changed experiences.
- Measure data.
- Share stories of change with the community; hope grows as confidence grows.

The design dance

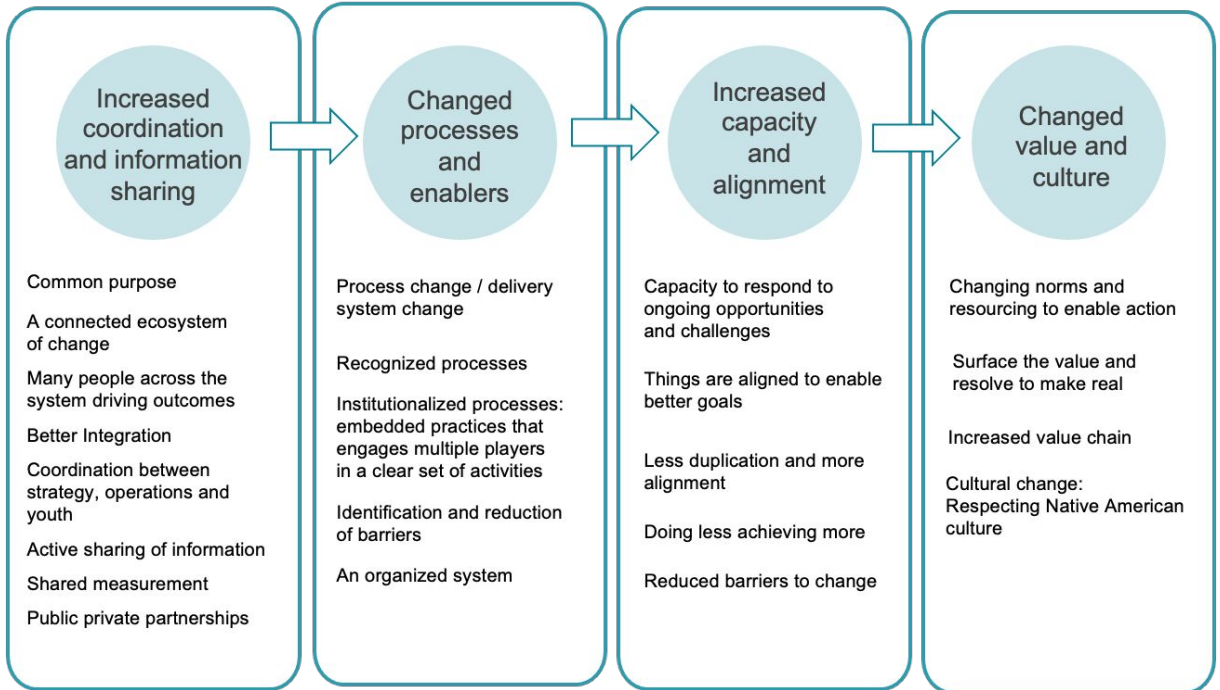


How it works

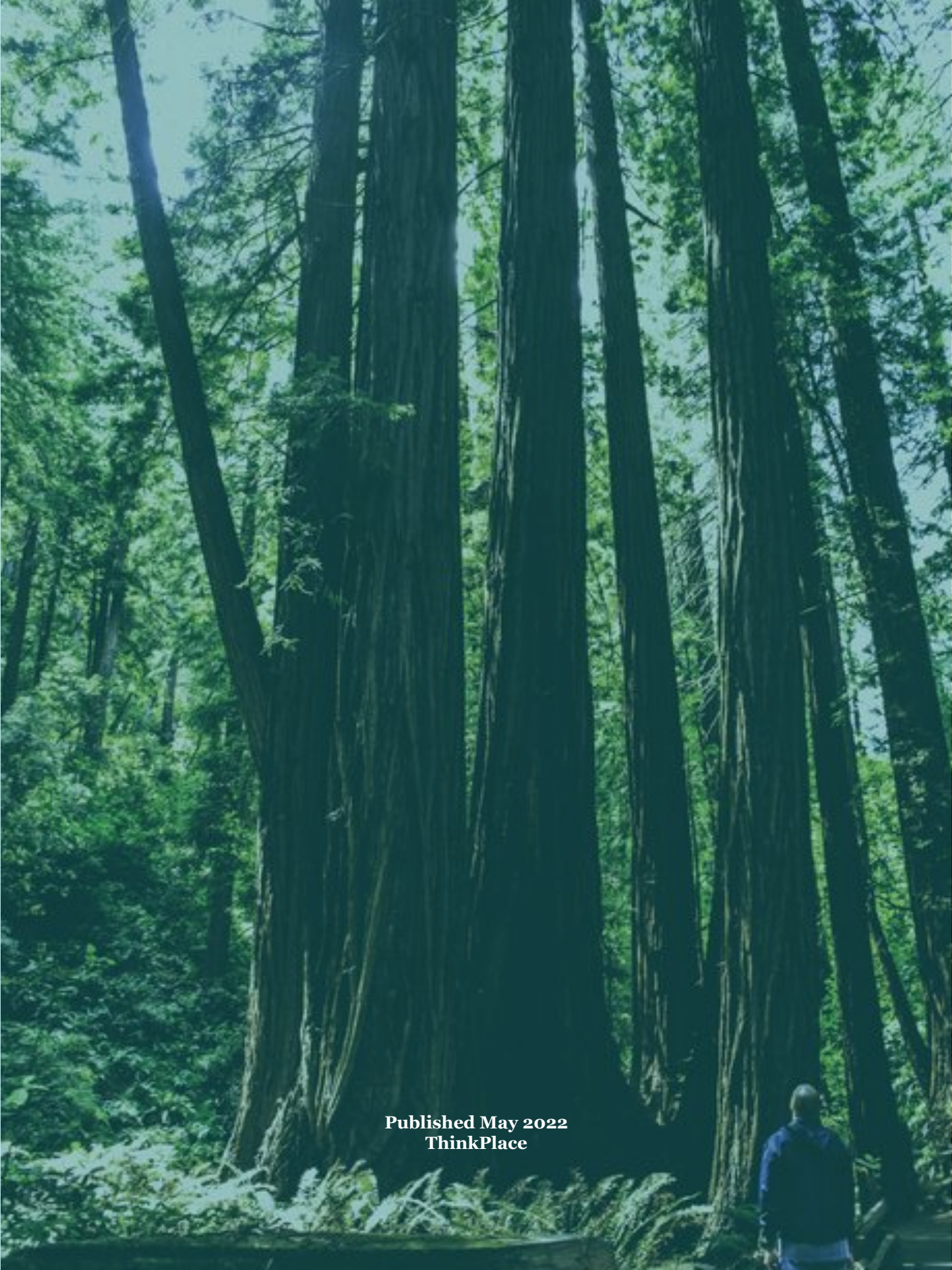
Design thinking calls for a flexible mindset. We zoom back and forth between individual experiences and what that means for the whole community and from the present to the future. The creative space is the bridge between the abstract vision and the concrete experience, the present and the future where we experiment, test, and create a new reality.

How do we know when the system is changing?

From issues, to a practice, to a set of enablers, to changed behaviors



A new system of the future is emerging



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