

# **Establishing and Maintaining University-Community Partnerships through Engagement Scholarship**

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# **SESSION II**

# **COMPLEX PROBLEMS AND SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO CHANGE**

# What is a System?

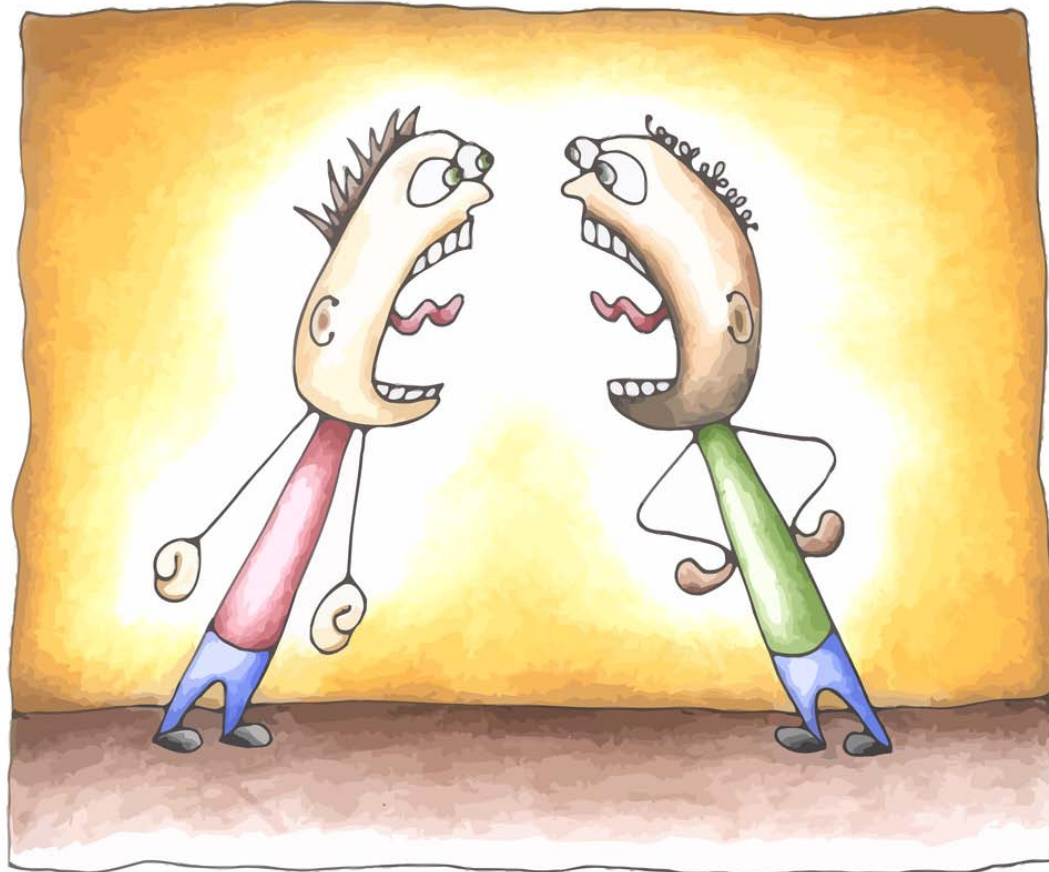
- "A system is a set of **components** (subsystems, units) which when coupled together form a **functional whole**. The study of systems requires:
  - (1) identifying the subunits of the total system,
  - (2) identifying the structural **connections** of subunits,
  - (3) identifying and assessing the functional connections of subunits,  
and
  - (4) assessing the **properties that emerge** when this collection of components are coupled over together into a specific dynamic structure and allowed to change over time."

(Levine & Fitzgerald, 1992)

SIMPLE	COMPLICATED	COMPLEX
<b><i>Following a recipe</i></b>	<b><i>Sending a rocket to the moon</i></b>	<b><i>Raising a child</i></b>
Recipe is essential	Formulae are critical and necessary	Formulae have only limited application
Recipes are tested to ensure replicability	One moon landing increases likelihood that subsequent attempts will be successful	Successfully raising one child gives no assurances of success with the next
No particular expertise is necessary, but some experience is useful	Requires the coordination of high levels of expertise in many areas	Expertise and experience may help, but are not sufficient
Recipe describes the elements and their quantities	Separate parts are made to function together in a complex whole	The parts are inseparable from the whole
Certainty of results every time	High probability of success	Outcomes are uncertain

## Complexity

**Characterized by high uncertainty and high social conflict (high uncertainty about how to produce a desired result fuels disagreement, and disagreement intensify and expand the parameters of uncertainty.)**



## Complexity: A BIG MESS

Causal connections are intertwined, entangled, and overlapping



## Complex Situations

Cause-effect relations are unknown and, in principle, unknowable before effects have emerged.



**MESS: systems of interacting complex problems**

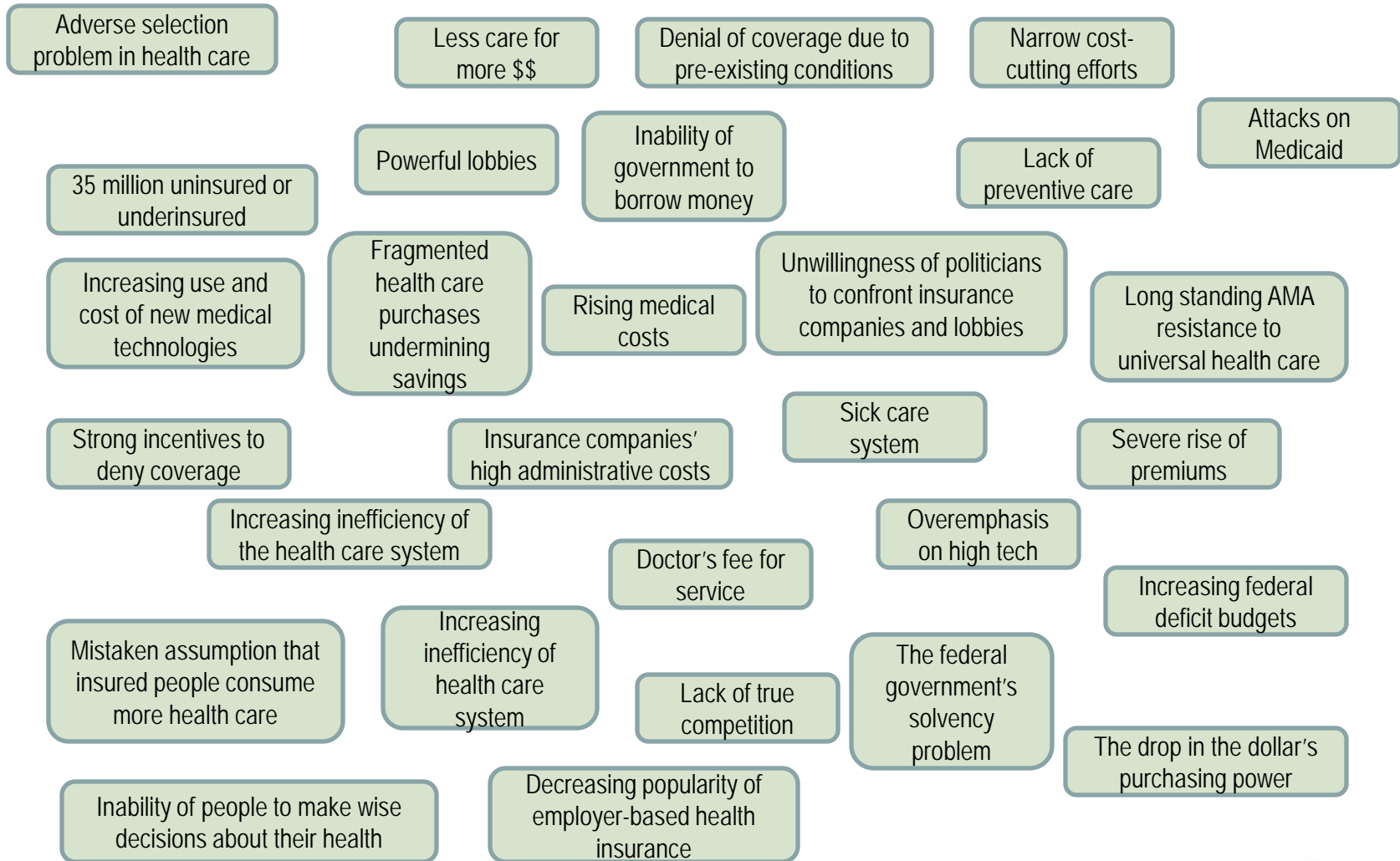
**Systems are different from the sum of their parts: if they are open systems they are dynamic, if closed, they tend toward chaos and wicked problems, which are BIG MESSES (Ackoff).**

**So to change community, economic and family life, we must change the systems that surround them: WE NEED TO THINK DIFFERENTLY**

**Innovation, multi-disciplinary approaches, co-creative solution-focused university-community partnerships BIG TENT ideas and approaches are needed to solve BIG MESSES**



# A BIG MESS: The long-standing health care system



## **The failed hope of parsimony**

### **Reductionist solutions to complex systems messes:**

Fix schools

Train better teachers.

Fix schools

Train better parents.

Fix schools

Train better legislators

Fix schools

Hire more police

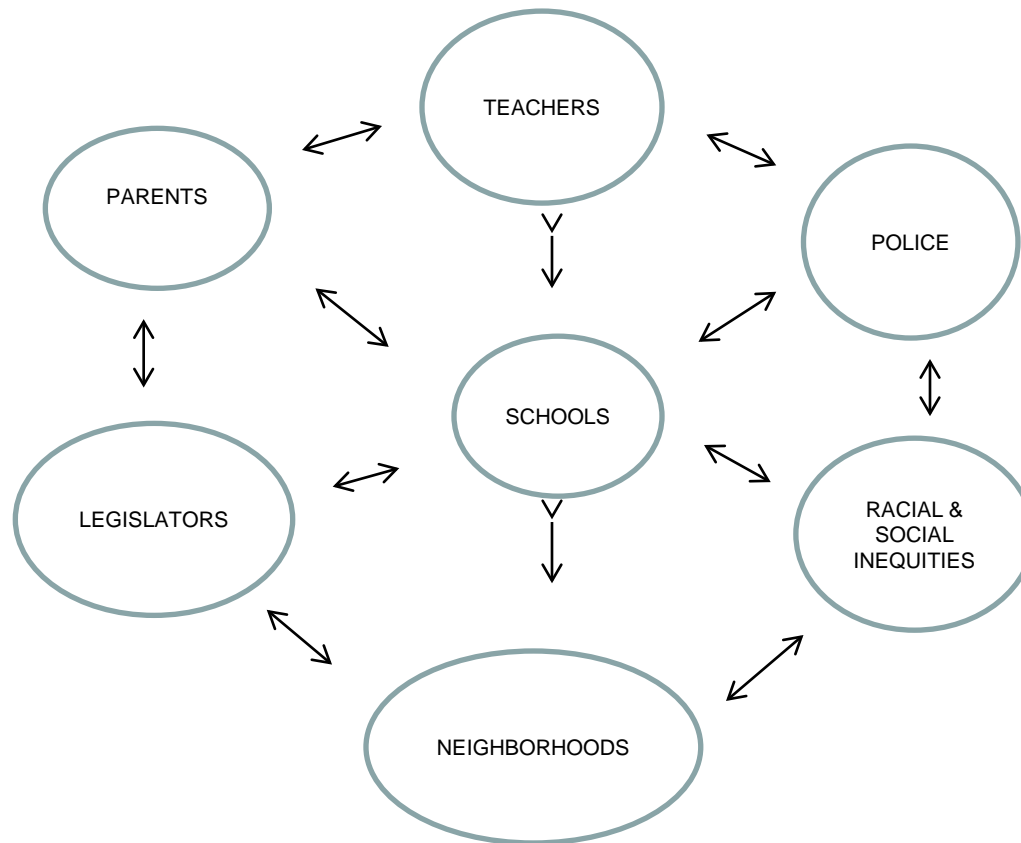
Fix schools

Clean up the neighborhoods

Fix schools

Eliminate racial & social inequities

# The Hope of Systems Change



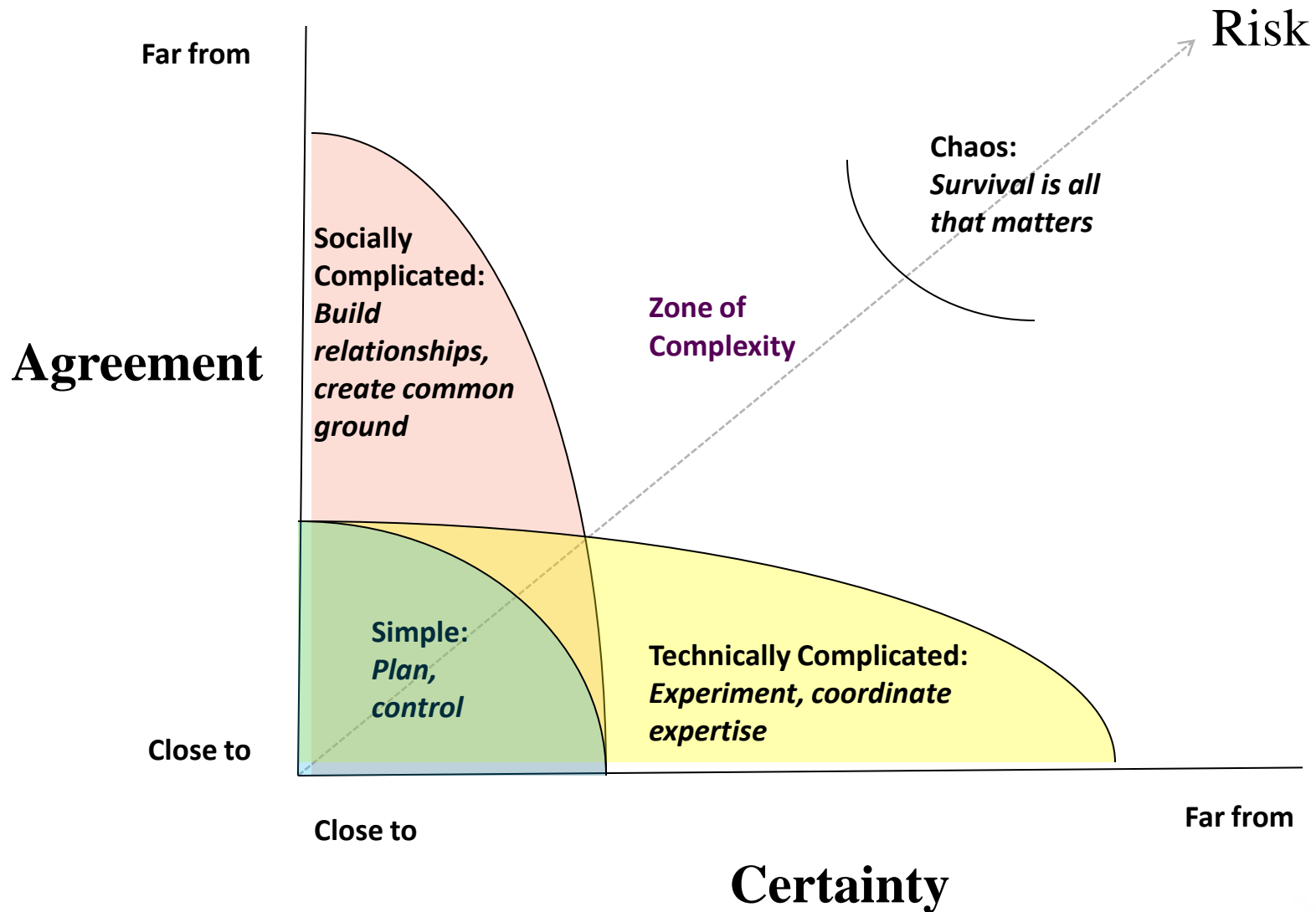
## Second Order Change: Search for Something New

- Deciding to do something *fundamentally different* from what has been done before
- Shifting gears
- Irreversible
- Often begins through the informal system
- Transformation is something quite different
- Requires new learning
- New story is told

# An Engaged Approach to Second Order Change

- **Becoming Embedded in Communities:** working in long-standing partnerships that are embedded in communities to identify the needs of families, businesses, neighborhoods and community organizations
- **Stressing Asset-Based Solutions:** focusing on asset-based solutions that build on the strengths and advantages of community partners
- **Building Community Capacity:** building capacity within families, businesses and communities to address the challenges and build on the opportunities they face
- **Creating Collaborative Networks:** building networks among communities and organizations that lead to regional collaborations and innovations that are sustainable

# Certainty-Agreement Matrix



(Patton, 2011; Zimmerman et al., 1998)

# Components of Systems Change

INNOVATION  
FOCUSED

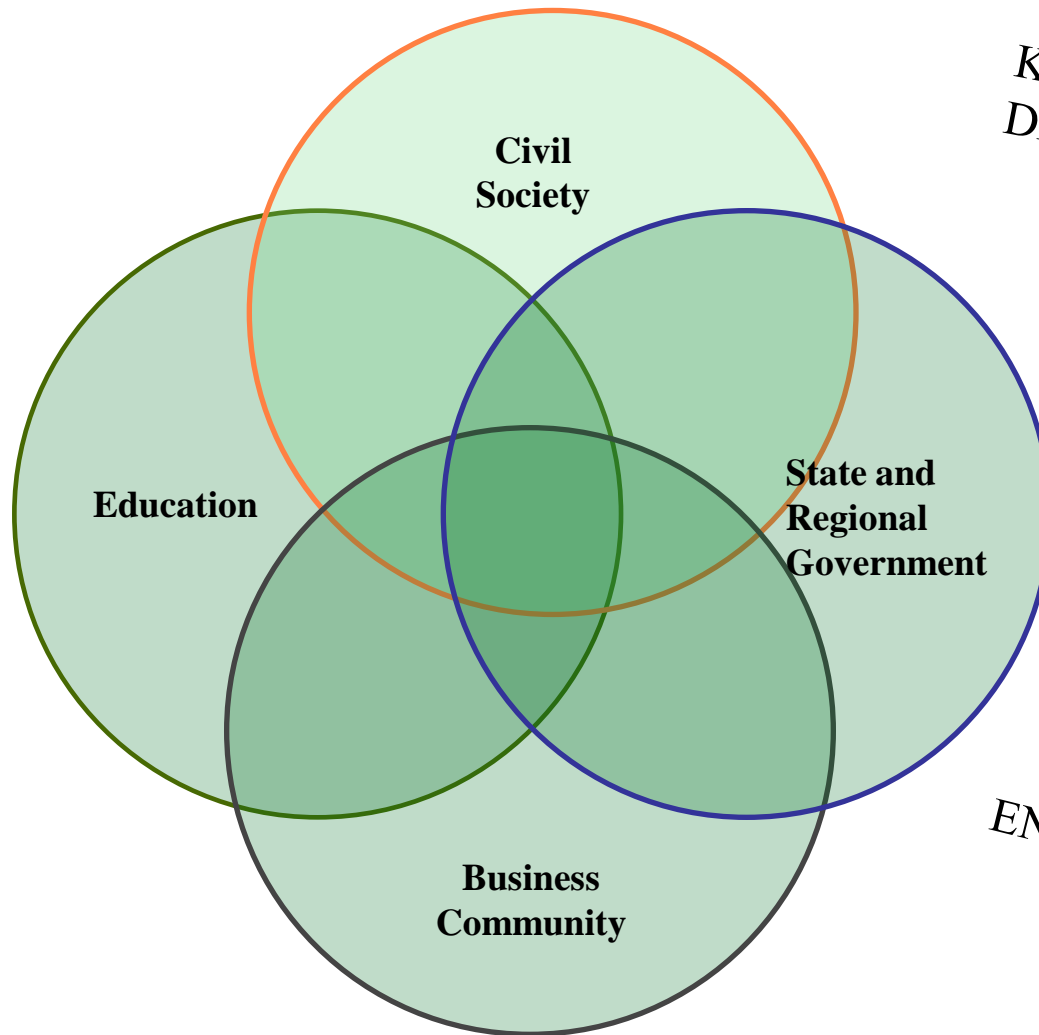
KNOWLEDGE  
DRIVEN

RISK  
WORTHY

EVIDENCE-  
BASED

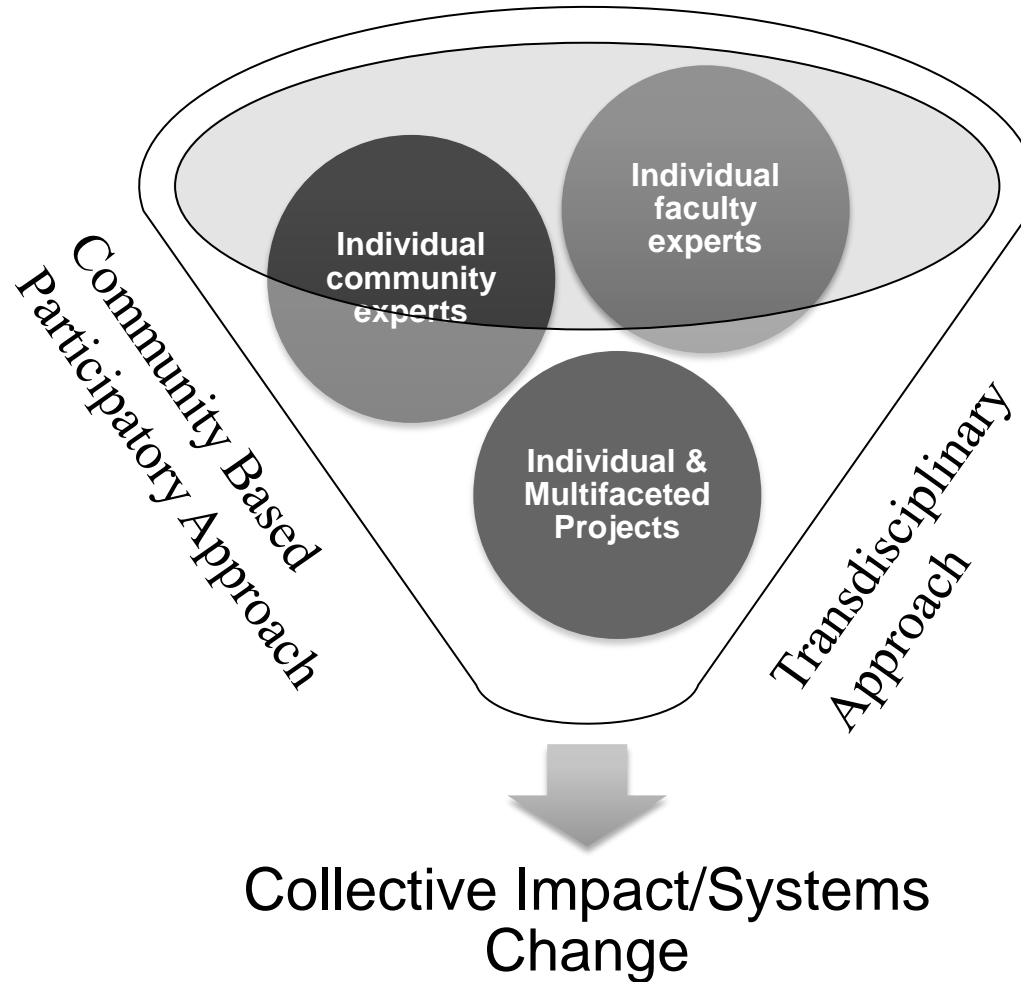
SUSTAINABLE

ENTREPRENURIAL



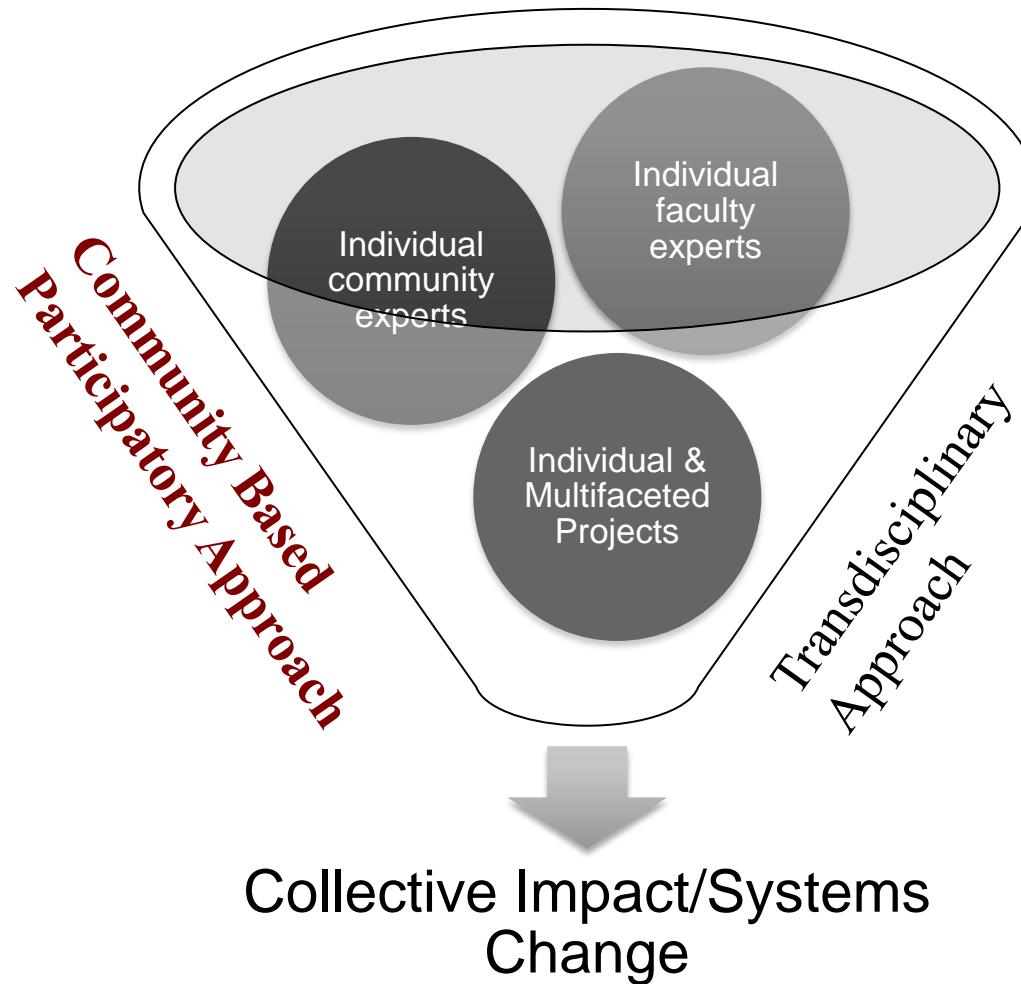
EDUCATION  
ANCHORED

# Systems Change Initiatives: What are they?

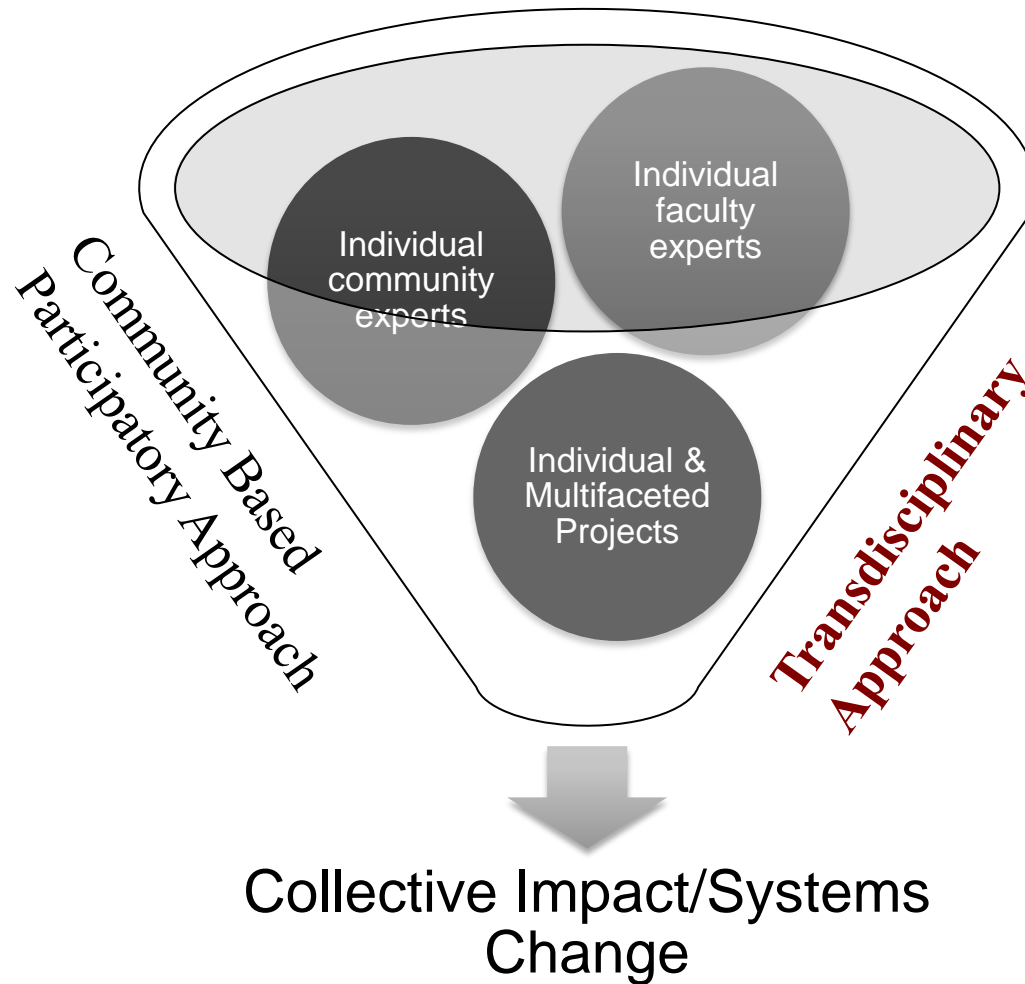




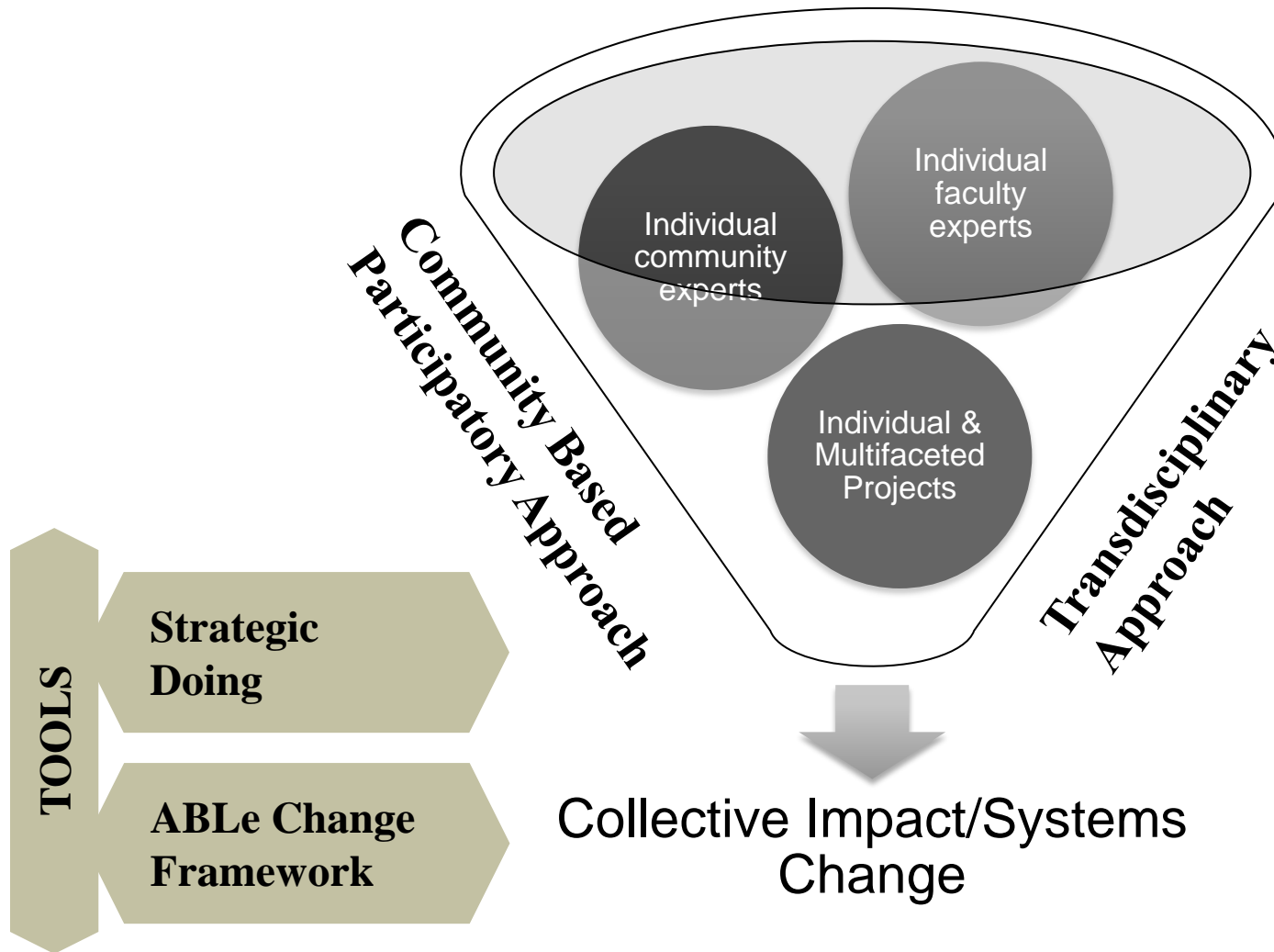
# Systems Change Initiatives: Approaches



# Systems Change Initiatives: Approaches



# Systems Change Initiatives: Tools



# **ABLE Change Framework:** **Above and Below the Line components of systems change**

## ABOVE THE LINE FOCUS

Initial Theory of Change Infused with a Systemic Lens  
*System Norms, Components, Connections, Regulations, Power Operations, Interdependencies*

**Simple  
Rules**

**Systemic  
Action  
Learning  
Teams**

**Small Wins**

## BELOW THE LINE FOCUS

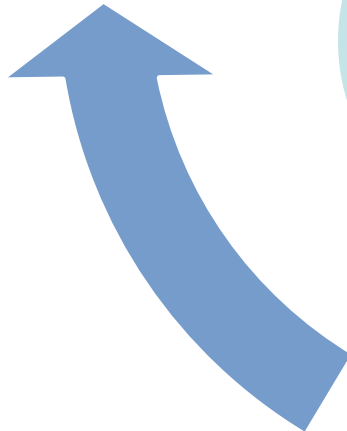
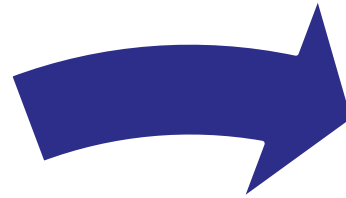
Building a Climate for Effective Implementation  
*Readiness, Capacity, Diffusion, Sustainability*

**Assess  
Results**

**Analyze  
Conditions**

**Systemic  
Action  
Learning  
Teams**

**Design  
and Take  
Action**



# TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE for COLLECTIVE IMPACT

**Risk** ↔ **Resilience**

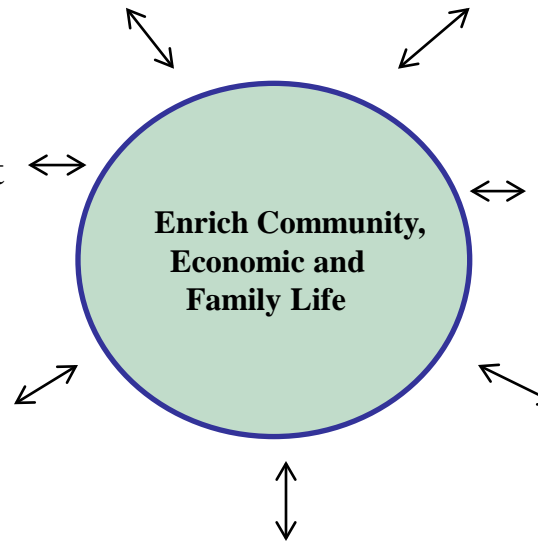
**human capital** – skills, knowledge and abilities

**social capital** —networks of trust and reciprocity

**financial capital** —available monetary resources – investment capital

**cultural capital** —worldview and attributes or assets associated with the community

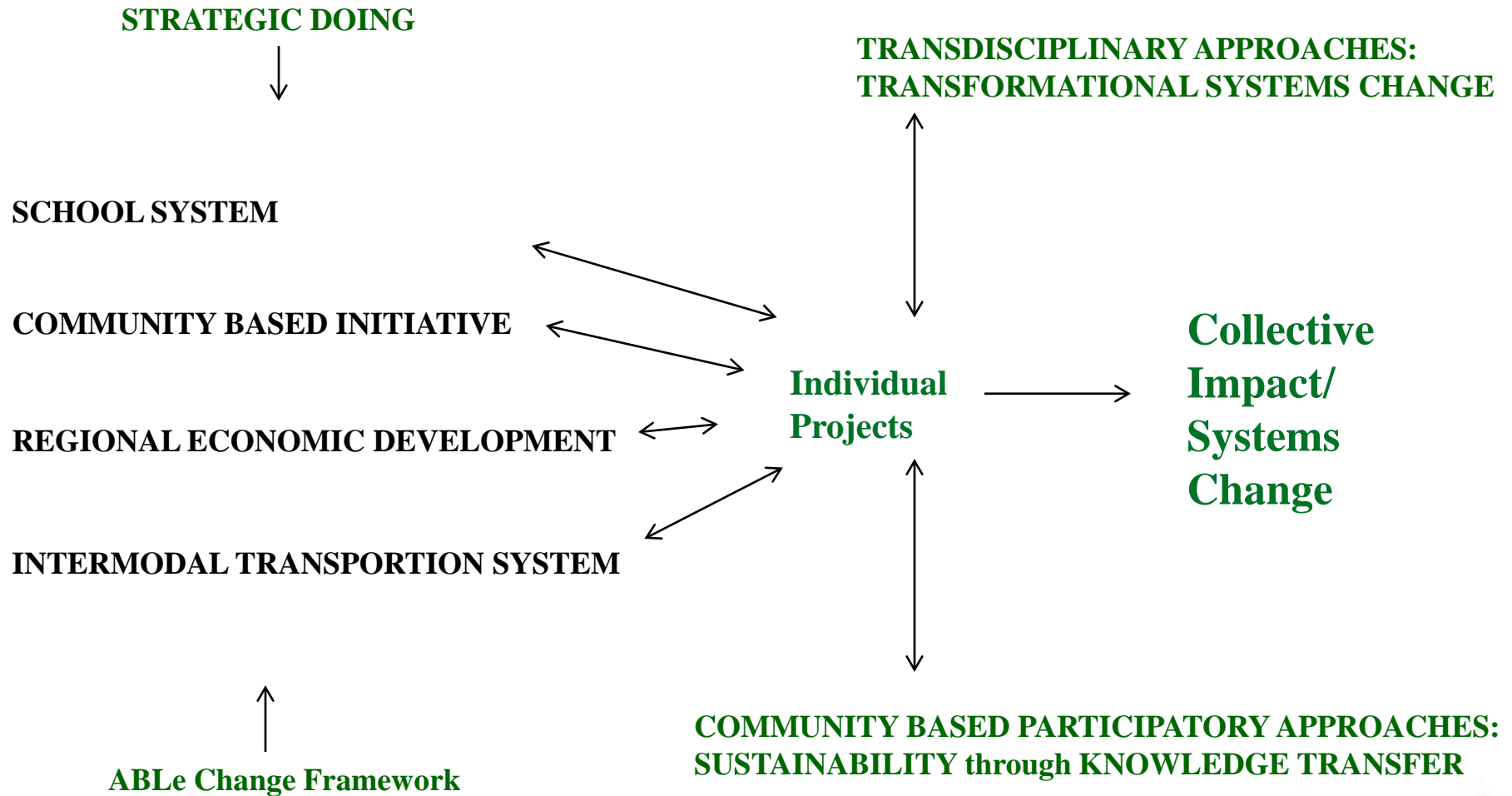
**political capital** – access to financial and other resources through the political process



**built capital** —housing stock, industrial stock, transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure,

**natural capital** —natural assets, ranging from air quality to biodiversity and open space

**SYSTEMS, CHANGE, PARTNERSHIPS, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER,  
SUSTAINABILITY, EVIDENCE BASED (SCHOLARLY) USING THE INTERPLAY  
OF TACIT AND EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE, AND CO-CREATING SOLUTIONS**





# The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

**Common Agenda:** Shared vision for change; common view of the problem; joint approach to actions.

**Shared Measurement:** Collecting data and measuring results consistently for accountability

**Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Activities must be varied but coordinated through a plan of actions:

**Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication to build trust, assure mutual objectives and create common motivation

**Backbone Support:** requires an organization(s) & skilled staff to coordinate effort

# **BUILDING CASE EXAMPLE: FLINT**

# Chaos











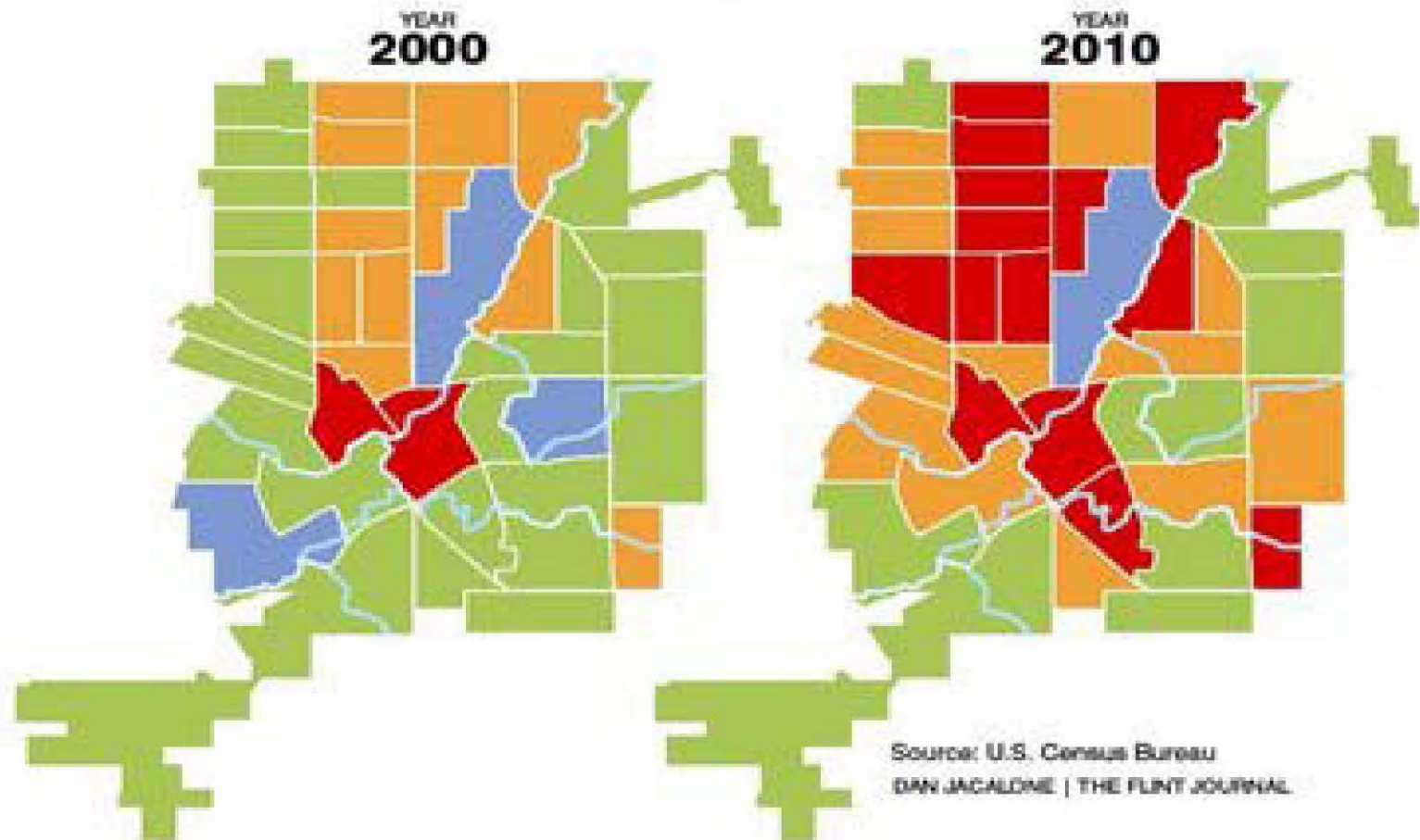




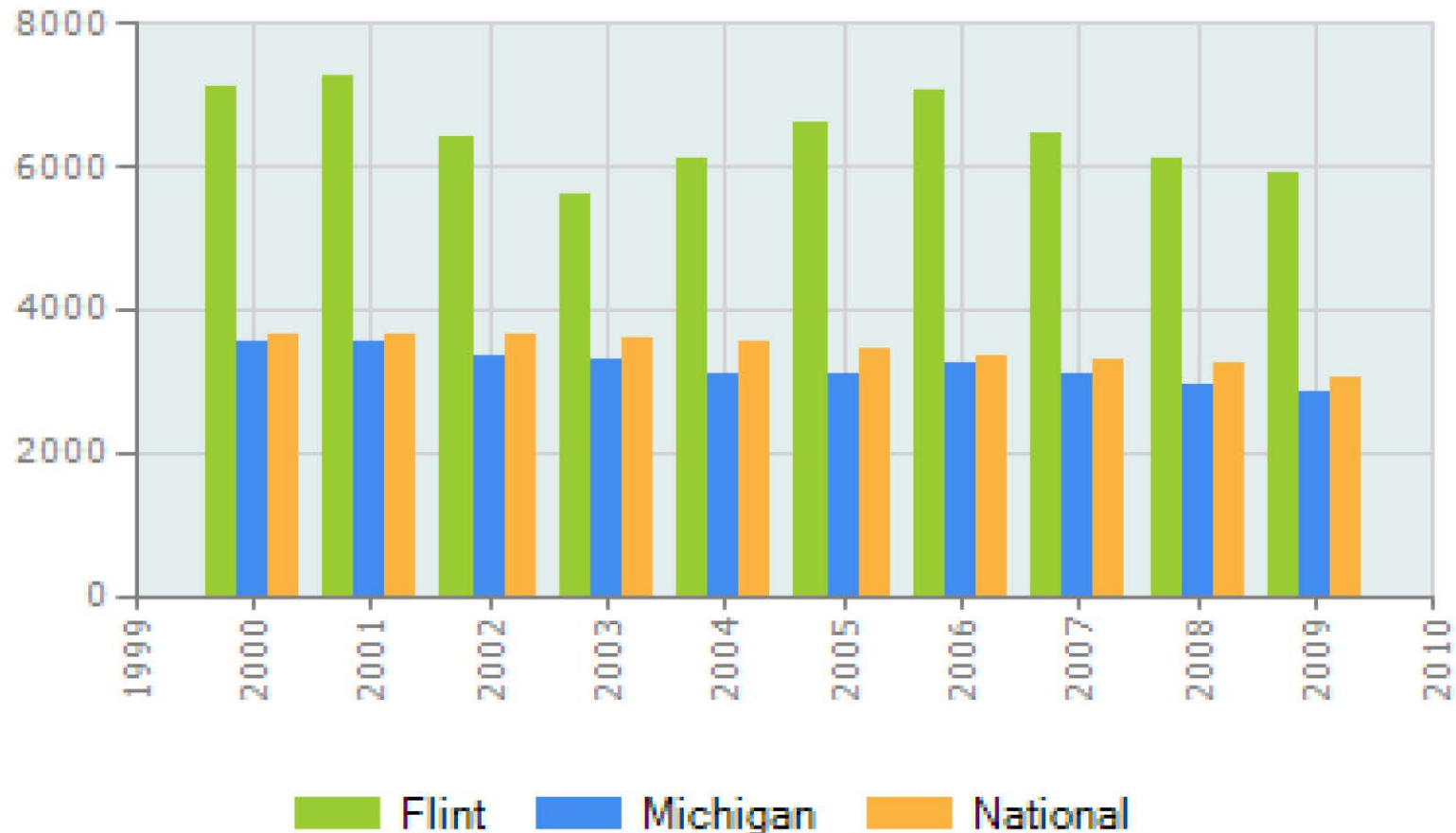
# Vacancies then and now

Two city census tracts were more than 25 percent vacant in 2000. A decade later, 14 census tracts are more than a quarter vacant.

0% to 5% vacant    5.1% to 15% vacant    15.1% to 25% vacant    25.1% and greater



## Flint Property Crime Index

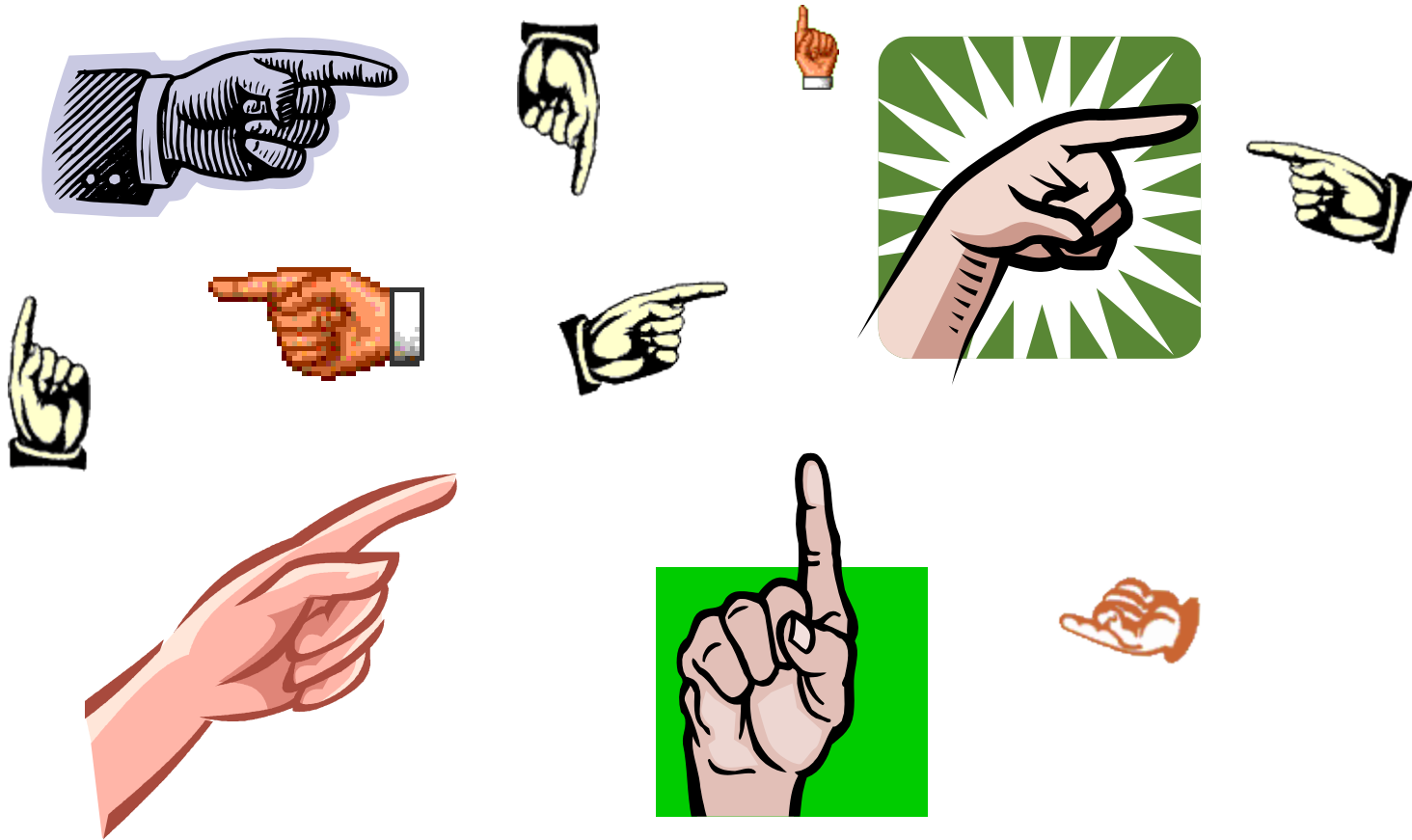


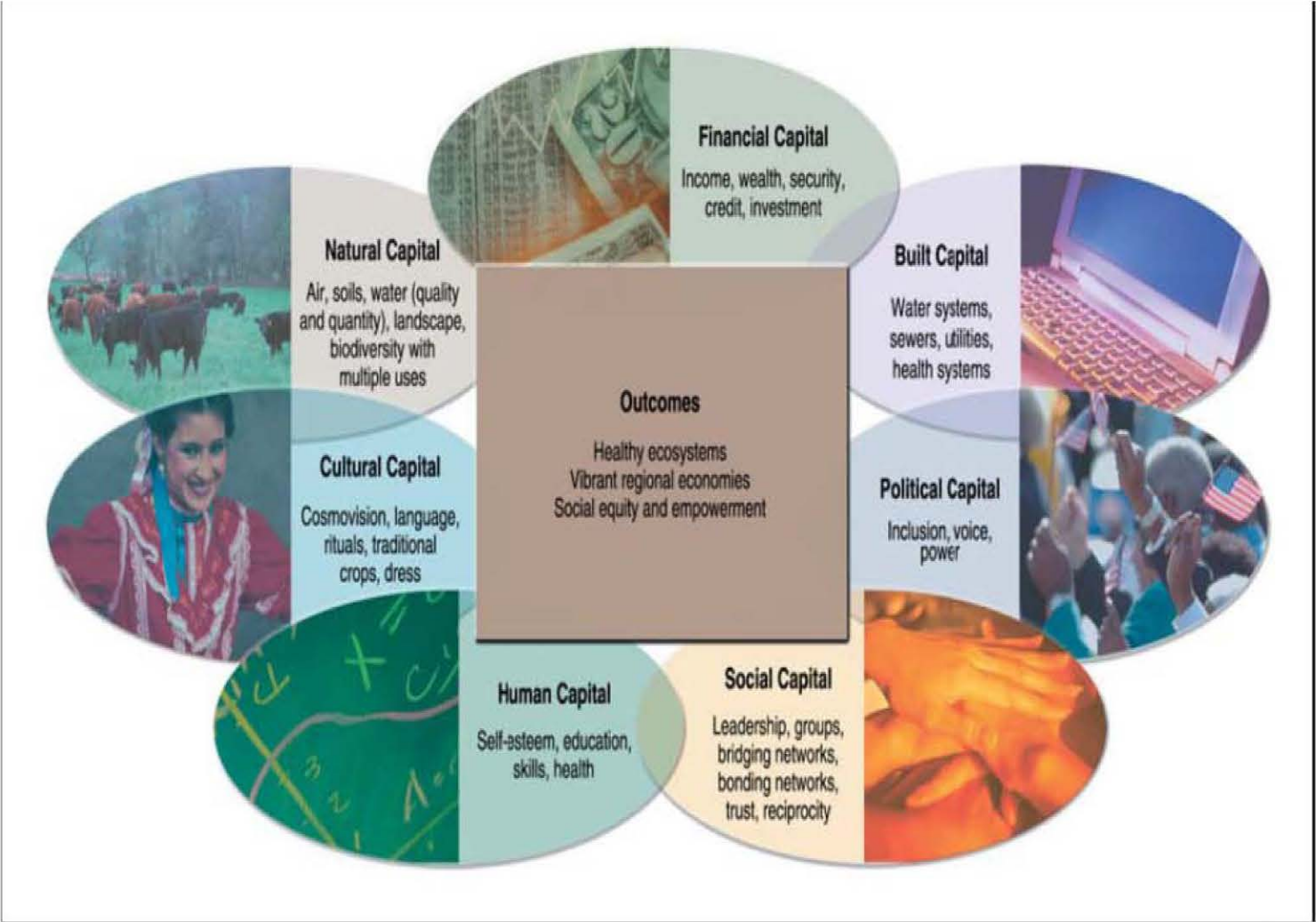
Crime Index corresponds to incidents per 100,000 inhabitants





# Point the Finger







# BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: Co-Creating & Facilitating Community Networks

**Neighborhoods Without Borders:** UOE and Flint community members established this network as a grassroots and community effort to significantly improve the over-all quality of life in Flint neighborhoods.



**Building Neighborhood Capacity Program:** UOE is a partner in this effort to help low-income neighborhoods build the capacity and resources needed to ensure residents experience better results around education, employment, safety, housing and other key areas.

# Identifying Network Issues & Concerns/Understanding Network Knowledge Needs

## Neighborhoods Without Borders

**Area** (one of nine): Community Safety, Gangs, & Ex-Offenders

**Focus:** *How can we use our existing resources and assets to support a comprehensive approach towards community safety, gangs and ex-offenders?*

**Knowledge Needs:** *How do we overcome the historical mistrust of police and codes of neighborhood silence when it comes to crime and violence? How do we help youth gain a sense of a positive future?*

# **BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: Informing Deans of Community–University Systemic Partnerships: Understanding College Engagement Issues & Concerns**

## **Themes from Recent Meetings with Research Deans**

- The importance of working in Flint
- Transportation costs for working in Flint and Detroit (especially students)
- Space for place-based efforts in Flint and Detroit
- Creating high school to MSU pipelines for minority students and underserved communities
- College level engagement continues to grow
- **Facilitation needed for inter-college collaboration**

## **BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: 60 faculty, administrators, staff, community partners**

- Faculty and staff from 11 colleges
- MSU Global
- UOE
- MSU-Extension
- Flint Government, Health Systems Partners

Searching for Multi-disciplinary and university-community BIG TENT ideas to move programs and activities to COLLECTIVE IMPACT



## BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA

Establish knowledge about cross-university initiatives

Create collaboration opportunities among MSU researchers

Identify where MSU initiatives align with identified goals, activities, and partnerships of local Flint groups

Understand where there are synergies among research initiatives and gaps that may constitute opportunities for new initiatives

Increase the intentionality of establishing meaningful partnerships with the residents of Flint and their organizations





**CASE EXAMPLE:  
GREATER LANSING**

**POWER OF WE  
CONSORTIUM**



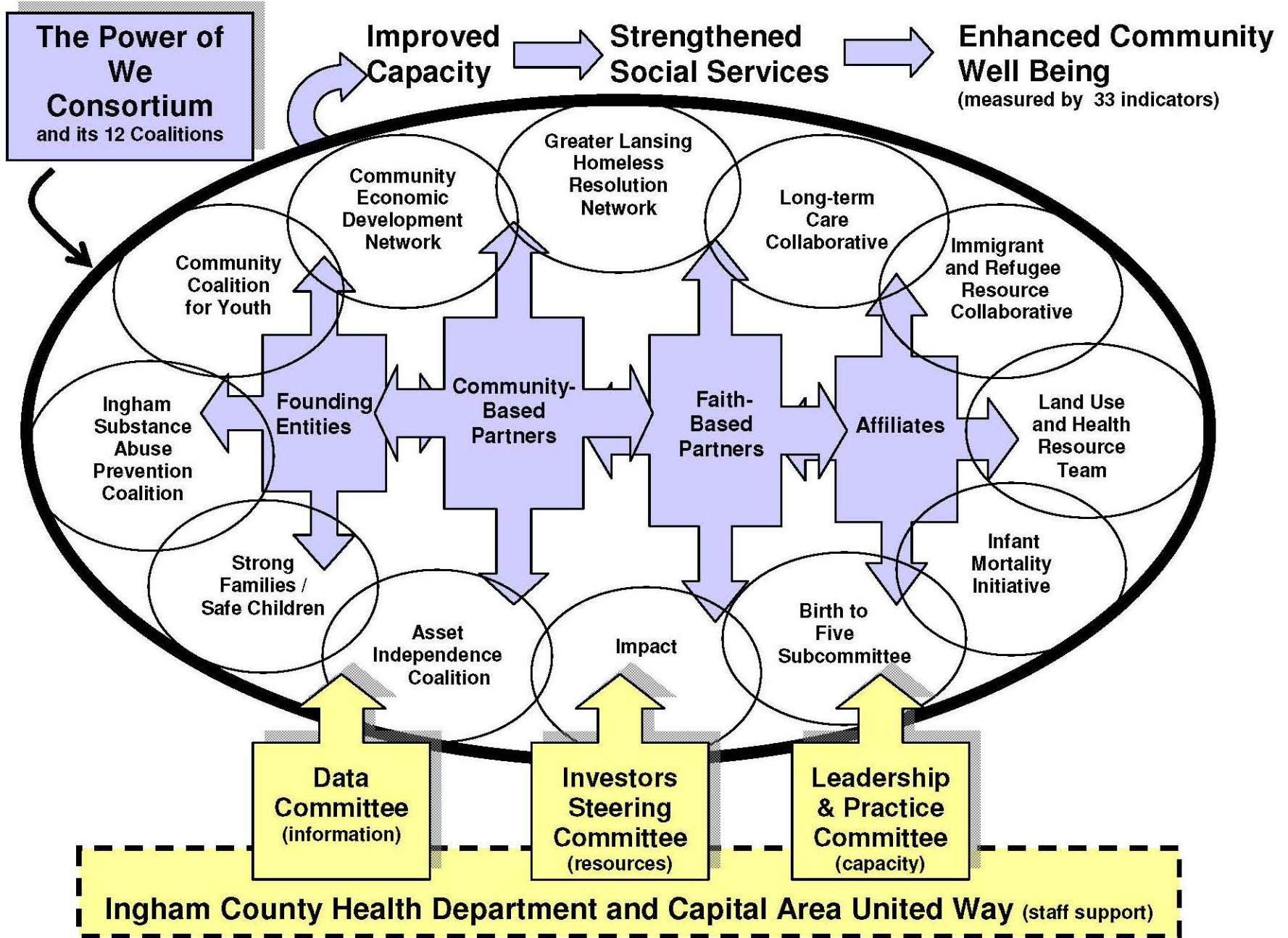


# **Systemic Community-Engaged Partnerships to Prepare Children to Compete in the Global Knowledge Economy**

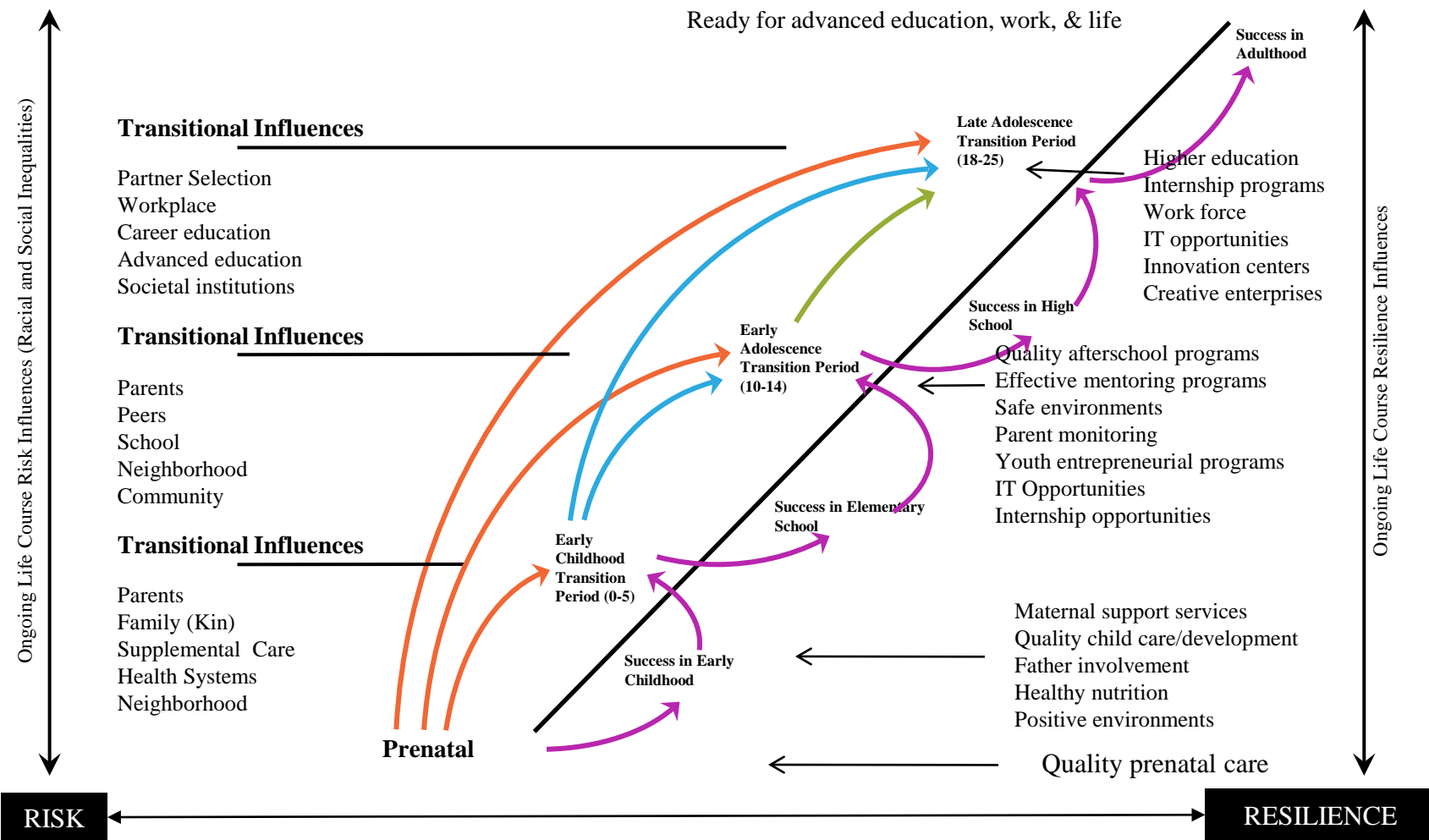
# Implementing Systems Change: The i2i Vision

*By 2020 all children, youth, and young adults in the Capital area will grow up with the skills and abilities to actively participate in the global knowledge economy*

# Power of We Consortium Structure



# Driven by Conceptual Frameworks: Infancy to Innovation (i2i): Building Collective Impacts over the Life Course



# **The Power of We Consortium Focus Areas for Assessing Community Change**

1. Intellectual & Social Development
2. Physical & Mental Health
3. Environmental Resources
4. Dynamic, Diverse, Vibrant Economy
5. Community Safety
6. Sense of Community Cohesion



# Organizational Culture

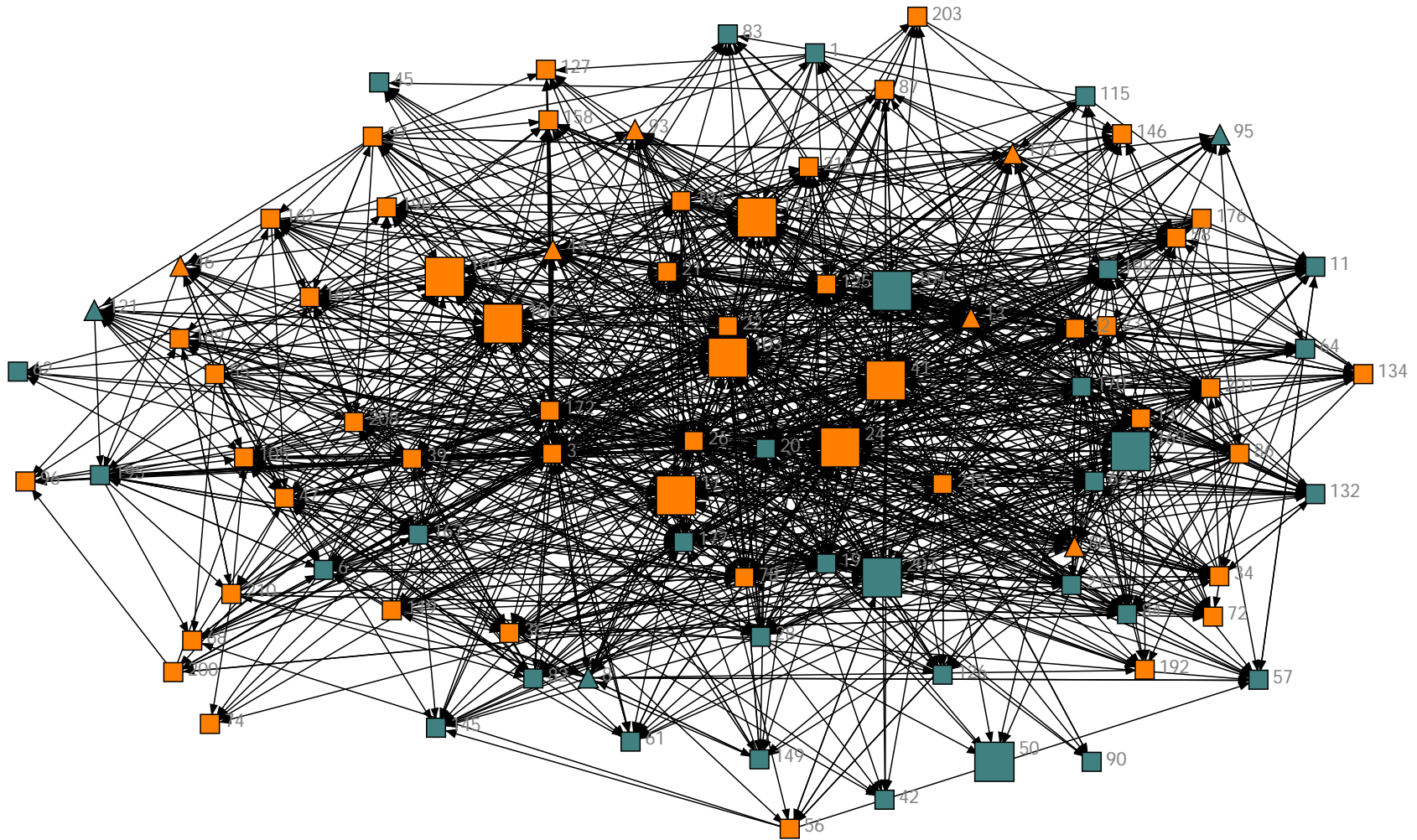
- **Hierarchical: Control**
- **Market: Competitive**
- **Clan: Cooperative, relationships**
- **Adhocracy: innovation, dynamic**

Jimenez, T. (2012). ATTENDING TO DEEP STRUCTURES: AN EXPLORATION OF HOW ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE RELATES TO COLLABORATIVE AND NETWORK PARTICIPATION FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE .  
Doctoral Dissertation, Michigan State University



# The PWC Network: Focus Area 1

## *Intellectual & Social Development*

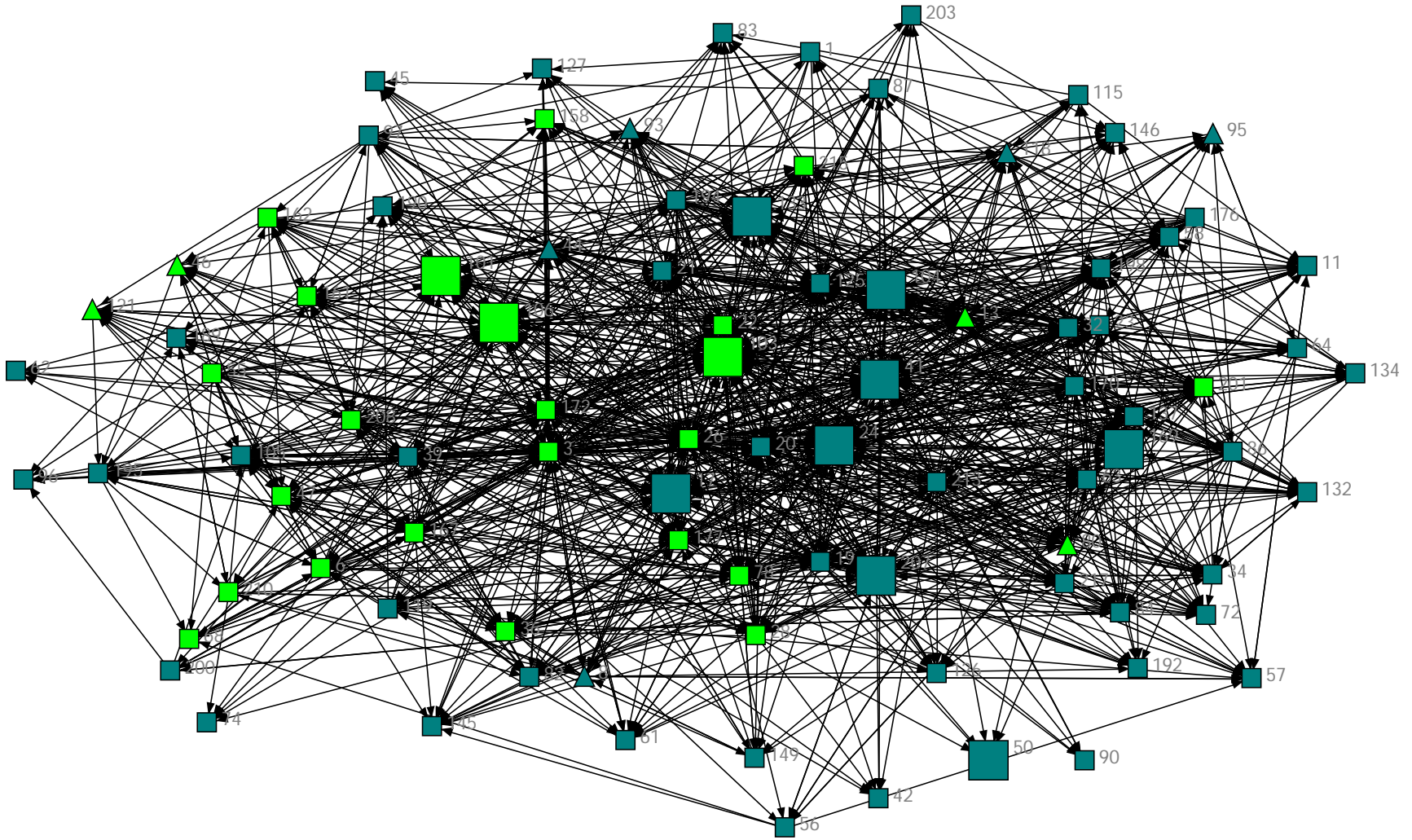






# The PWC Network: Focus Area 3

## *Environmental Resources*

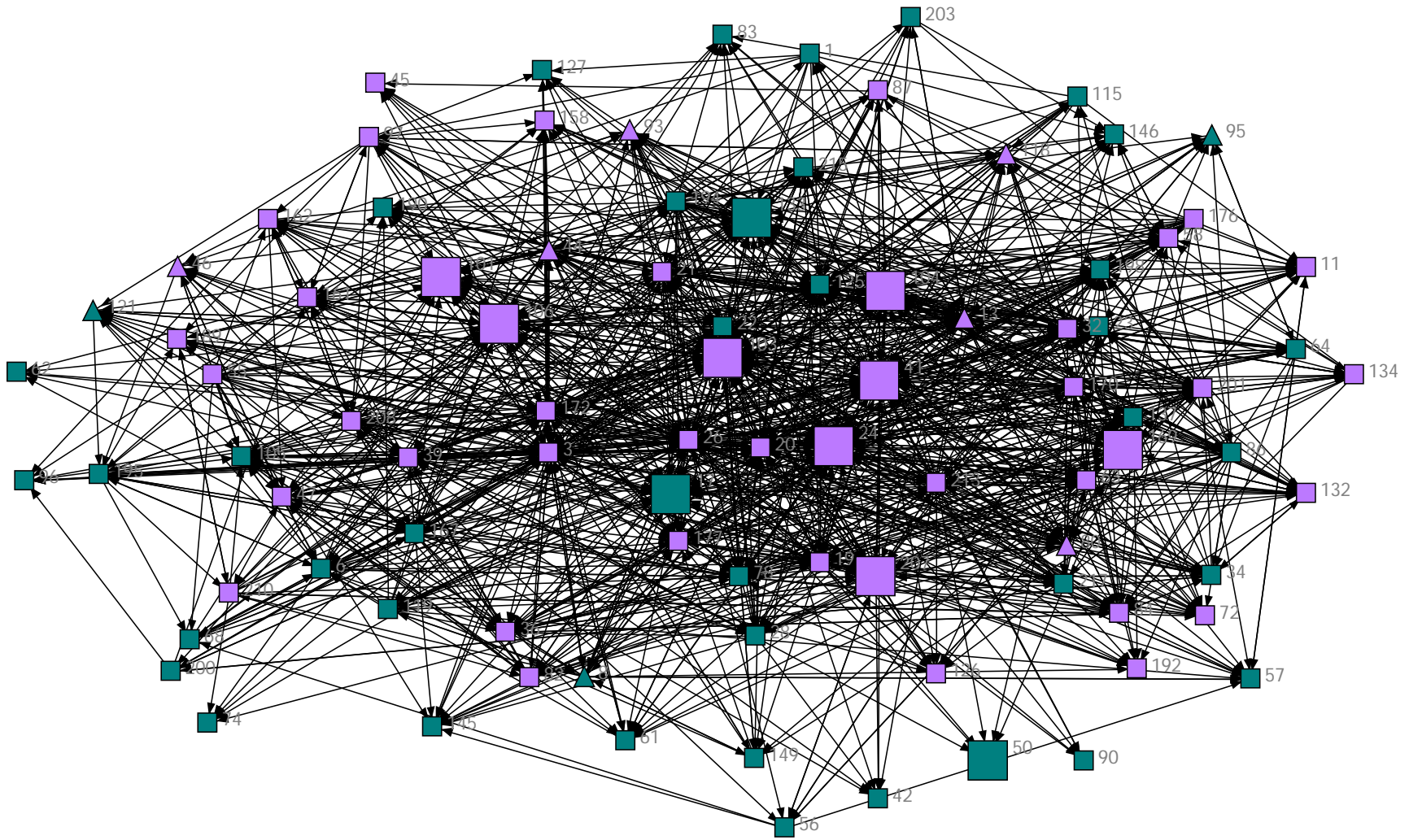






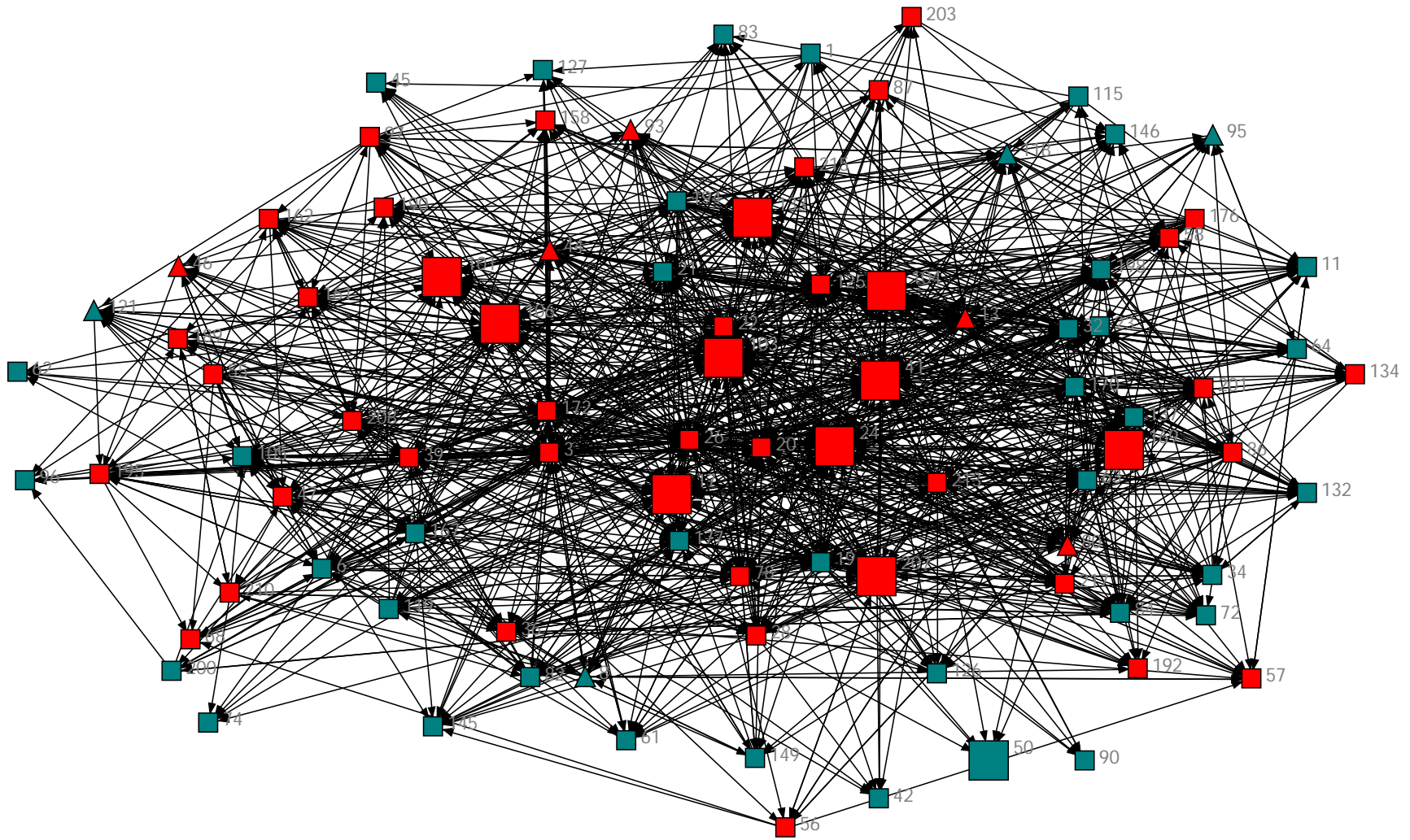
# The PWC Network: Focus Area 5

## *Community Safety*



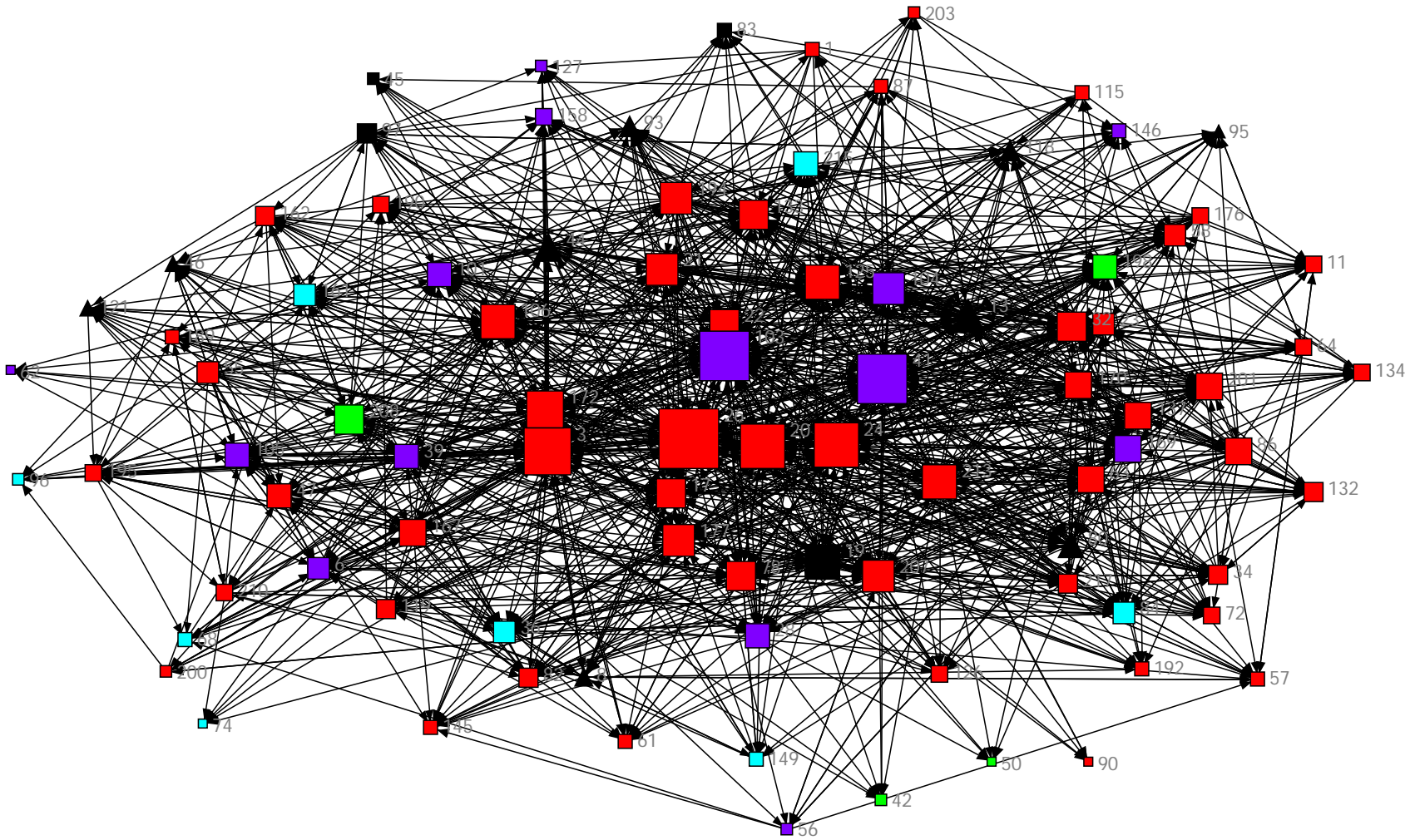
# The PWC Network: Focus Area 6

## *Community Cohesion*



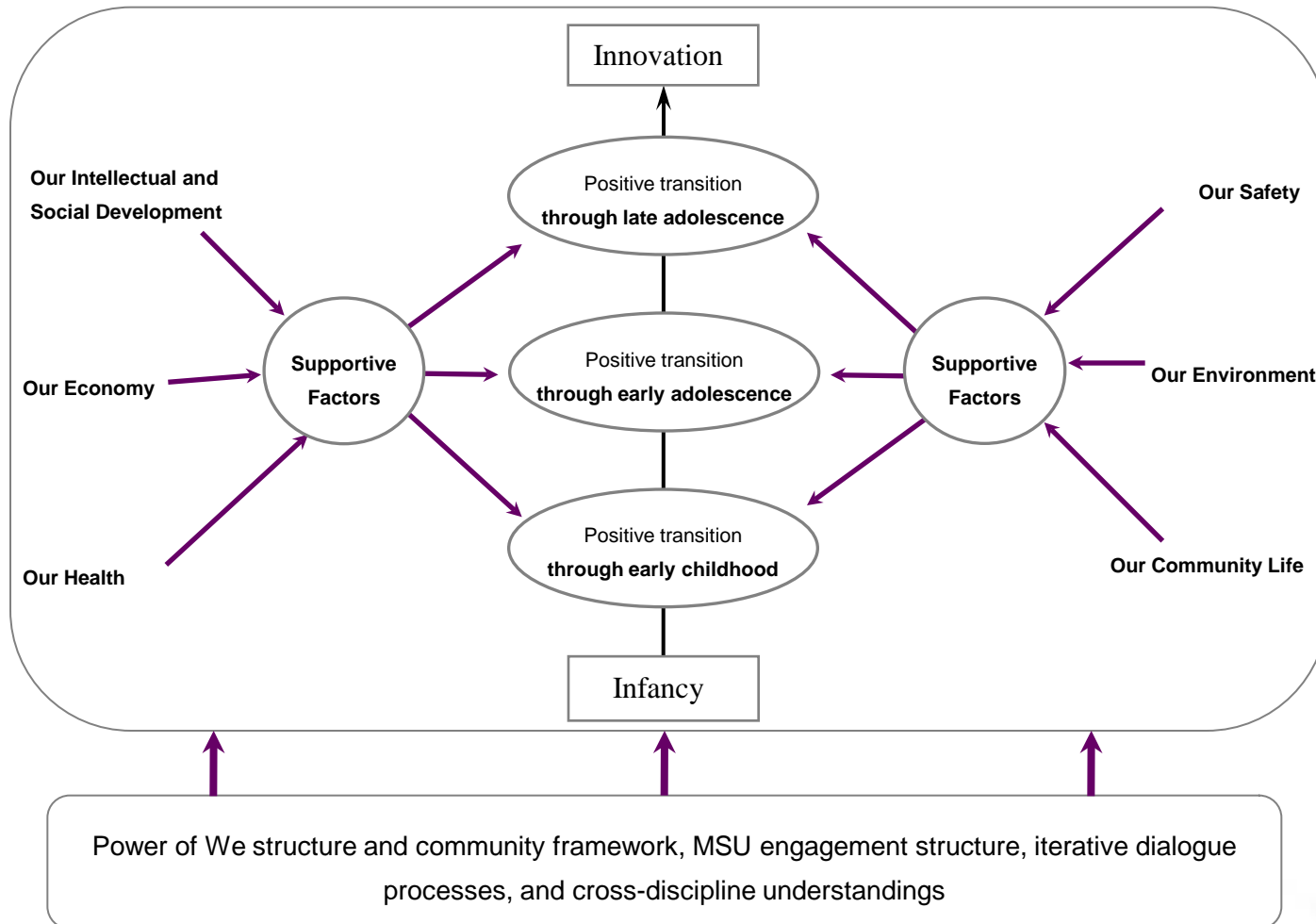
# The PWC Network Cultural Components

## *Organizational Culture & Centrality*





# BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: Systemic Perspectives on Infancy to Innovation Developmental Pathway



# *Ingredients for Success*

Produce early successes

Reconcile differences in community and university cultures

Co-create a foundational principle

Work toward reciprocal, long term commitments

Produce a coherent, common community-building agenda

Use candor and respect confidentiality

Use effective co-management and coordination practices

Clarify mutual expectations and benefits

Create solutions to other challenges

Reward, incentivize, and support both staff and faculty

Generate shared responsibility for long-term funding





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