



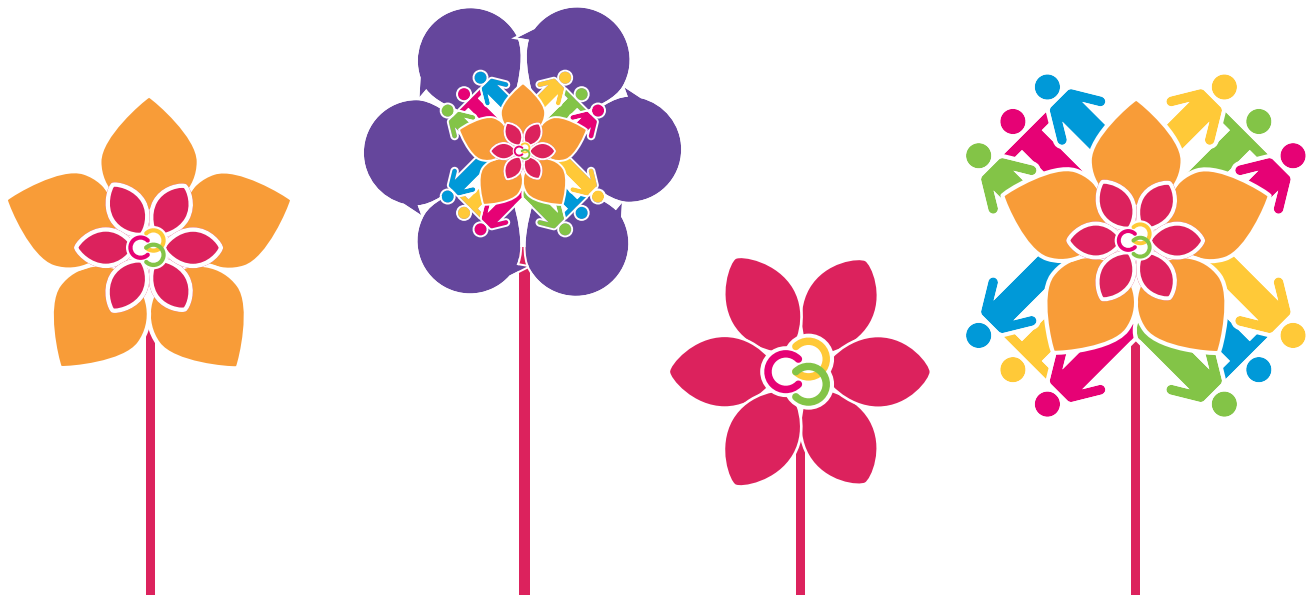
# THEORY OF CHANGE

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## Glossary:

### **Connected Communities Approach (CCA):**

A set of principles and practices that support the authentic and meaningful connection of people who want to make a positive impact in their community. By using the Connected Community Approach, an individual, organization or group, can help weave together the community building efforts of institutions and funders, grassroots groups and social service organizations, strengthening social capital, social fabric and ultimately, the resilience of their community.

### **Community Backbone Organization (CBO):**

A CBO's main focus is to:

- Foster welcoming and inclusive spaces
- Connect people to knowledge & opportunities
- Help people to support one another and work better together
- Leverage assets
- Weave networks.

### **Community builders:**

Anyone proactively engaged in activity that makes a community more liveable for the people who live there (from grassroots to policy)

### **Community Development:**

Community development is planned evolution of relationships, systems and structures in a community in order to improve community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural). It is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems.

It is distinct from service delivery in that community development seeks to change community conditions and service delivery seeks to *help people adapt to conditions as they are*.

### **Equity seeking people and groups:**

People and groups who experience barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination

### **Grassroots groups:**

Residents who proactively and voluntarily design and implement projects and activities to make their community more liveable

### **Institutions:**

Big systems players whose work impacts communities and equity seeking groups including: funders, governments, policy makers, universities, colleges and hospitals

### **Issue agnostic:**

Focused on the interconnectedness of issues that affect equity seeking people and groups rather than on any one specific issue

### **Neighbourhood ecosystems:**

The interaction among a diversity of players in a defined geographic area

### **Systems:**

the interconnected interaction among people and processes (both inside and outside of institutions and governments)



## WHY WE EXIST

Cities are made up of communities. It is at the community scale that people interact, where ideas are born and where there is a real opportunity to create meaningful change.

But people in communities can also be disconnected from each other and even more disconnected from the systems that affect their lives.

The key to understanding communities is understanding how people and systems are connected.

The Centre for Connected Communities introduces a new paradigm in community development, the Connected Community Approach. Born out of the pioneering efforts of the East Scarborough Storefront, C3's purpose is to help people, organizations and institutions effectively unlock the potential of community to find and implement creative, collective solutions to complex social issues.

*For more information on the CCA paradigm, see "The Connected Community Approach: How to Unlock the Potential of a Community" and other C3 publications*

**If every community were a connected community  
strategies, plans, ideas and innovation  
would find fertile soil in which to grow.**

## OUR VISION

Every community is a connected community

## OUR MISSION



### CONNECT

people with ideas, knowledge, research, tools and each other



### TRANSLATE

knowledge across sectors



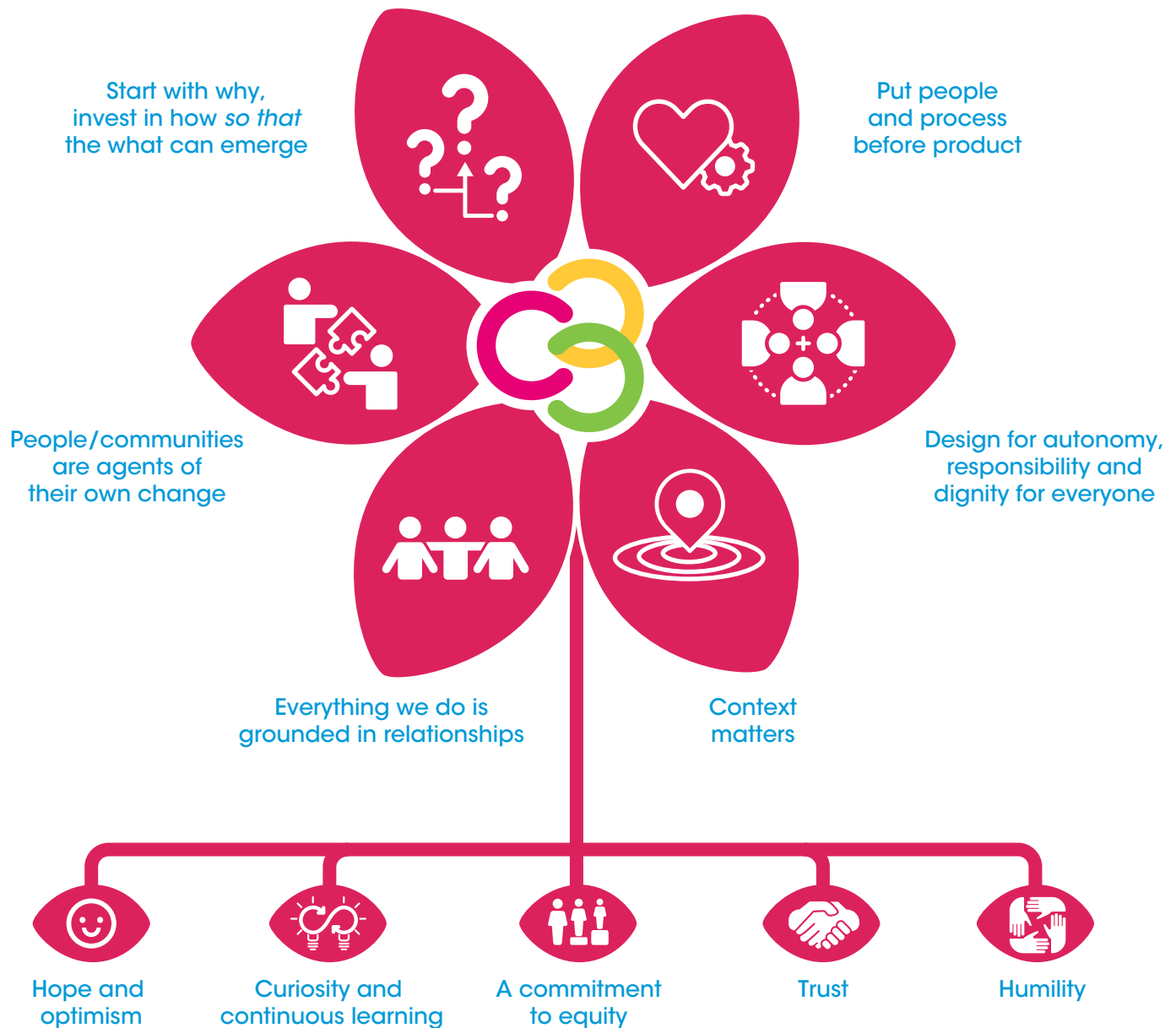
### CELEBRATE

and elevate the work of community builders

## OUR IMPACT

Systems become increasingly accessible and responsive to equity seeking groups

# If we are guided by our **6 principles** and rooted in our **5 values**...



## When we make decisions we are guided by our principles:

- Start with why, invest in how *so that* the what can emerge
- Put people and process before product
- Design for autonomy, responsibility and dignity for everyone

## We believe that:

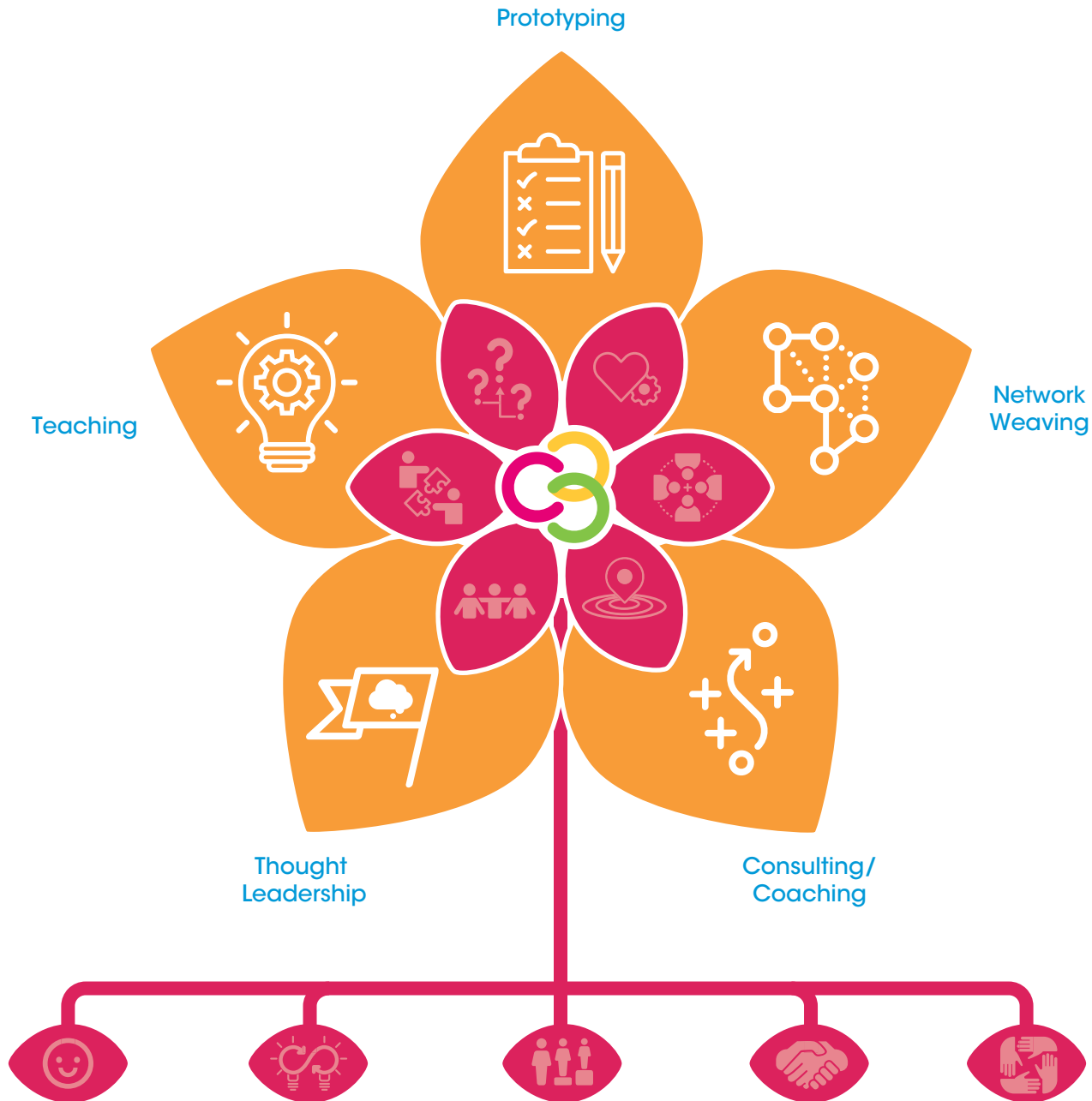
- Context matters
- Everything we do is grounded in relationships
- People/communities are agents of their own change

## We are issues agnostic\*, not values agnostic; we approach our work with:

- Hope and optimism
- Curiosity and continuous learning
- A commitment to equity
- Trust
- Humility

\* refer to Glossary on inside front cover

## ... engage in 5 core activities...



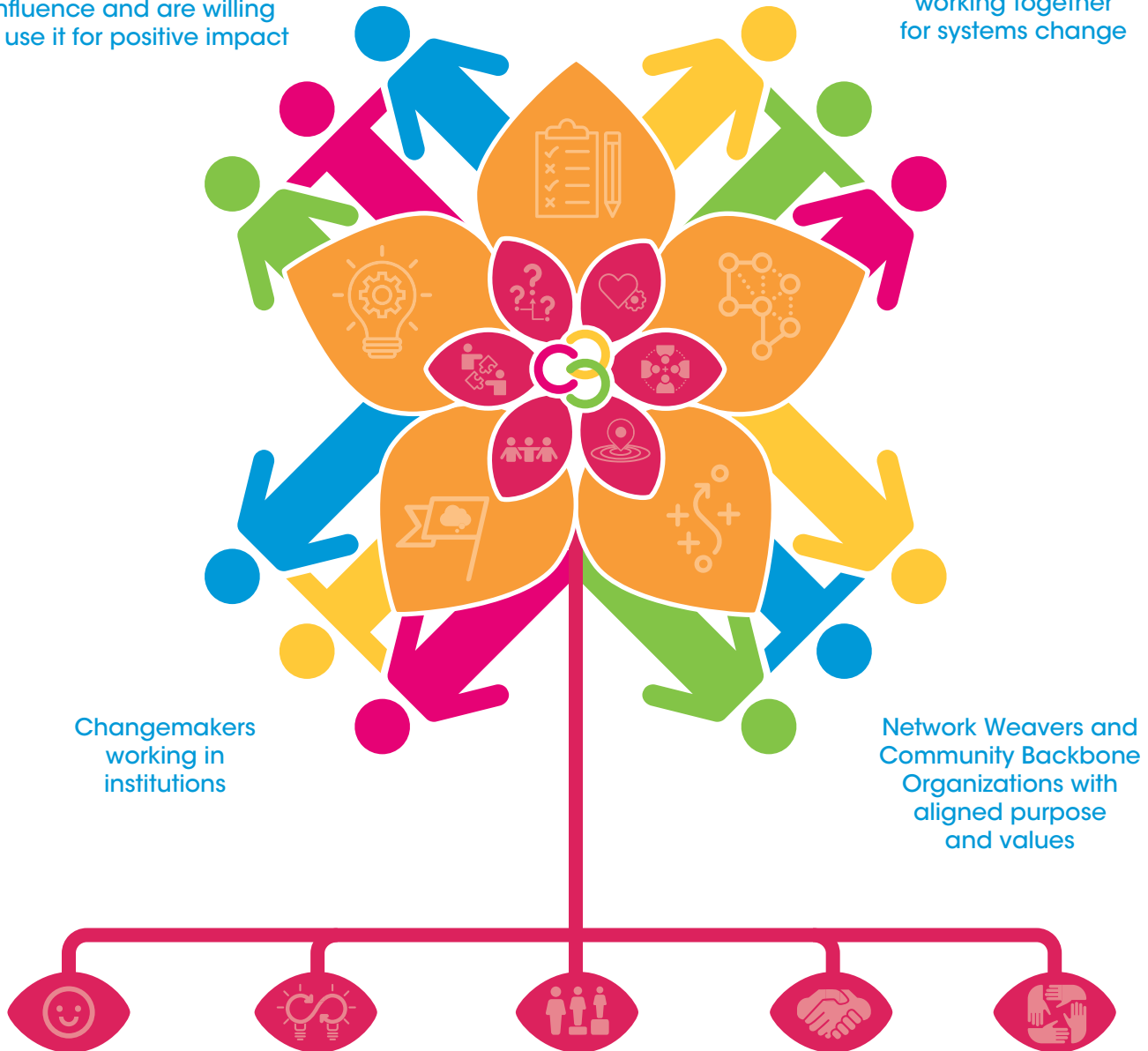
### What we do:

- Prototyping: testing and learning about problems and solutions in various contexts
- Network Weaving: facilitating processes so that people can work together
- Consulting/Coaching: understanding a context and making recommendations, providing coaching for their implementation
- Thought Leadership: writing, speaking, podcasts, video etc. that introduce and deepen understanding about the potential of the Connected Community Approach
- Teaching: designing and facilitating workshops and courses and exchange of knowledge

## ... with a diverse range of system players...

People with aligned values who have power, money, influence and are willing to use it for positive impact

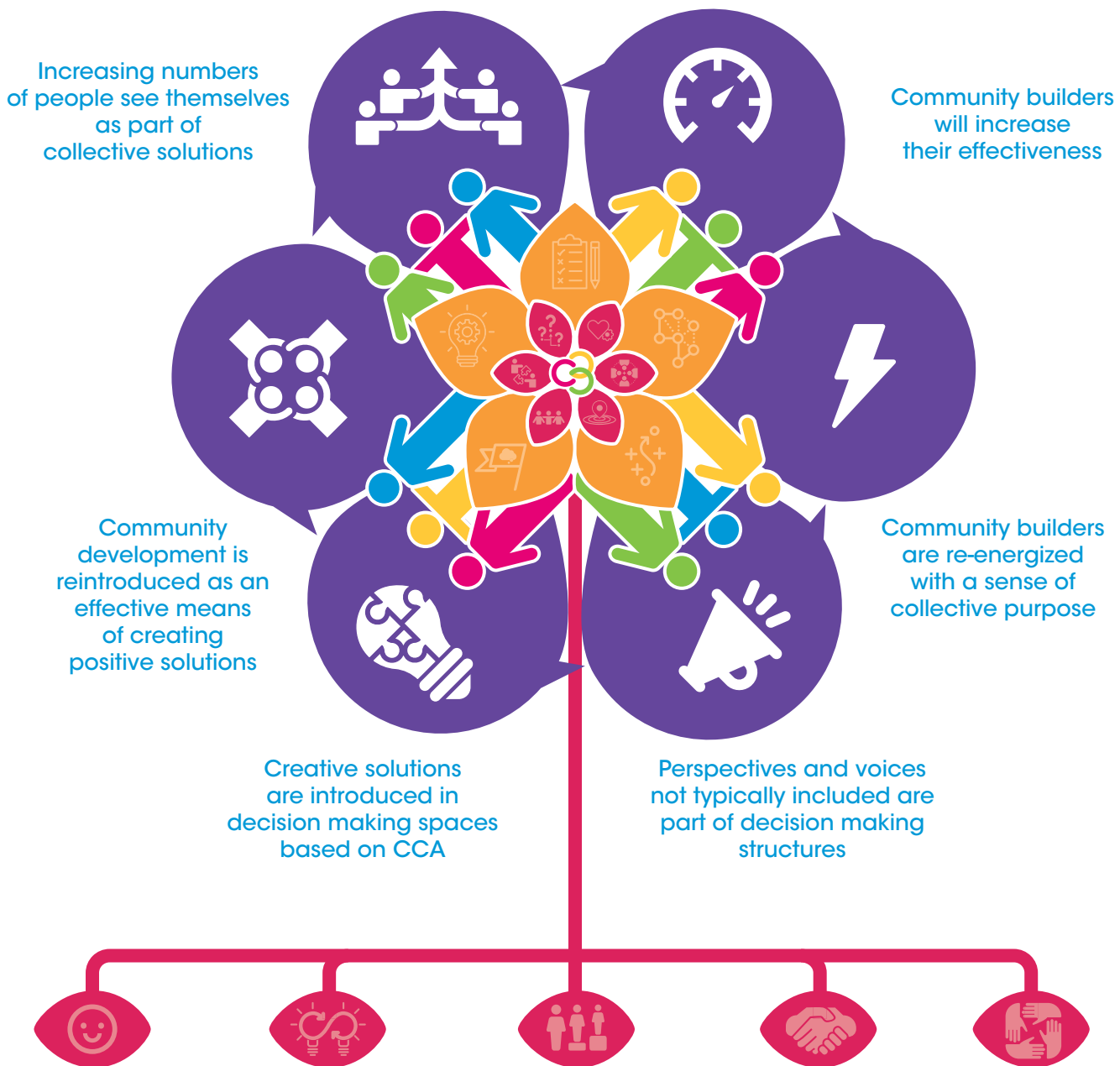
Grassroots leaders working together for systems change



### Who we work with:

- Grassroots leaders working together for systems change.
- Network Weavers and **Community Backbone Organizations\*** (current and potential) with aligned purpose and values.
- People with aligned values who have power, money, influence and are willing to use it for positive impact.
- Changemakers working in **institutions\***.

## ... we will achieve these 6 direct results...



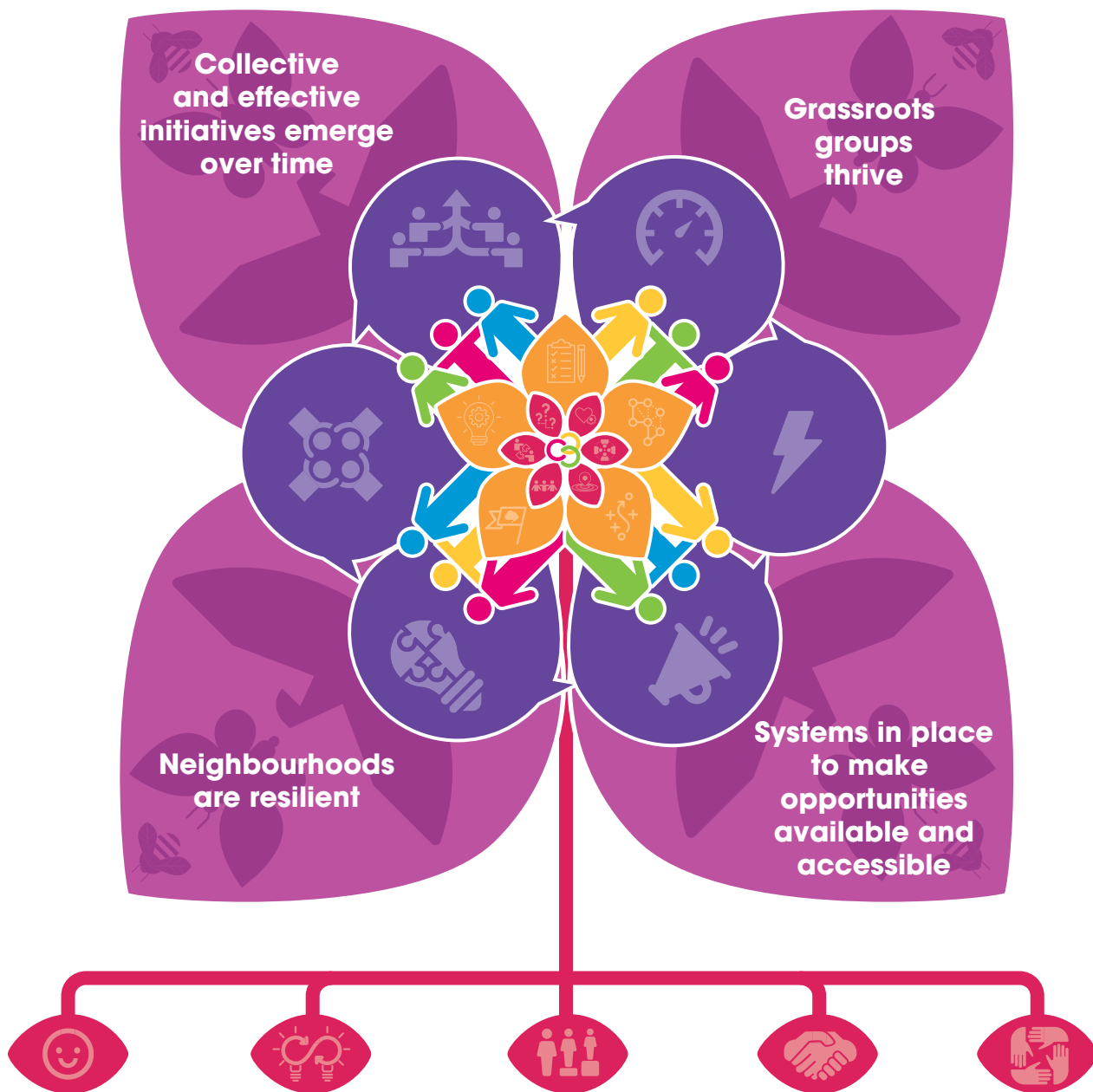
### The direct results we expect to see:

- **Community builders\*** increase their effectiveness in using the **Connected Community Approach\***
- Community builders are re-energized with a sense of collective purpose
- Perspectives and voices of community builders not typically included are part of decision-making structures
- Creative, effective solutions, rooted in the Connected Community Approach, are introduced to a range of players at multiple scales (from grassroots to policy)
- Community development is reintroduced as an effective means of creating positive solutions to social and economic issues
- Increasing numbers of people see themselves as part of collective solutions to the problems of social and economic inequities

\* refer to Glossary on inside front cover



... that lead to 4 impacts.



### So that:

- Grassroots groups\* thrive
- Systems are in place that make opportunities available and accessible to equity seeking people and groups\*
- Neighbourhoods are resilient
- Collective and effective initiatives emerge in neighbourhood ecosystems\* over time

With the Centre for Connected Communities,  
systems become increasingly accessible  
and responsive to equity seeking groups



If we are guided by our **6 principles**  
and rooted in our **5 values**,  
engage in **5 core activities**  
with a **diverse range of system players...**  
we expect to see **6 direct results**  
that will lead to **4 impacts**.

## If We...

If we are guided by our principles, beliefs and values:

- Start with why, invest in how *so that* the what can emerge
- Put people and process before product
- Design for autonomy, responsibility and dignity for everyone
- Context matters
- Everything we do is grounded in relationships
- People/communities are agents of their own change
- Issues agnostic, not values agnostic
- Hope and optimism
- Curiosity and continuous learning
- A commitment to equity
- Trust
- Humility

Activate 5 key strategies:

- Prototyping: testing and learning about problems and solutions in various contexts
- Network Weaving: facilitating processes so that people can work together
- Consulting/Coaching: understanding a context and making recommendations, providing coaching for their implementation
- Thought Leadership: writing, speaking, podcasts, video etc. that introduce and deepen understanding about the potential of the Connected Community Approach
- Teaching: designing and facilitating workshops and courses and exchange of knowledge

Working with:

- Grassroots leaders working together for systems change.
- Network Weavers and Community Backbone Organizations (current and potential) with aligned purpose and values.
- People with aligned values who have power, money, influence and are willing to use it for positive impact.
- Changemakers working in institutions.

## We expect that....

- Community builders increase their effectiveness in using the Connected Community Approach
- Community builders are re-energized with a sense of collective purpose
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## So that...

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C3 plants seeds,  
which bloom  
into flowers that  
attract many people.  
These people wish to  
expand the beauty of  
C3's blooming flowers  
over their meadow.  
They work together  
to find ways to  
tend the land and  
support continued  
growth of these flowers.  
Their efforts attract pollinators,  
who in turn spread more C3 seeds  
across the land.



**A mandala is an integrated structure organized around a unifying center** - Longchenpa

The word "mandala" is from the classical Indian language of Sanskrit. Loosely translated to mean "circle," a mandala is far more than a simple shape. It represents wholeness, and can be seen as a model for the organizational structure of life itself—a cosmic diagram that reminds us of our relation to the infinite, the world that extends both beyond and within our bodies and minds.

Describing both material and non-material realities, the mandala appears in all aspects of life: the celestial circles we call earth, sun, and moon, as well as conceptual circles of friends, family, and community.

#### **Micro to Macro**

Representing the universe itself, a mandala is both the microcosm and the macrocosm, and we are all part of its intricate design. The mandala is more than an image seen with our eyes; it is an actual moment in time. It can be used as a vehicle to explore art, science, religion and life itself. The mandala contains an encyclopedia of the finite and a road map to infinity.

**It is said by Tibetan Buddhists that a mandala consists of five "excellencies":**

**The teacher • The message • The audience • The site • The time**

From [www.mandalaproject.org](http://www.mandalaproject.org)

Find out more at  
**[connectedcommunities.ca](http://connectedcommunities.ca)**