



Outcome-focused Planning for Community Change

Principles for Building Effective Community Impact Strategies



1. Be clear about your target outcomes

Define the specific results you want for specific populations

2. Uncover the underlying issues

Pinpoint the real reasons that the target outcomes aren't true already

3. Focus strategies on underlying issues

Create lasting changes in community conditions that undermine the outcomes

4. Track progress and measure results

Obtain and use data to communicate impact and increase effectiveness

Principle 1

Be clear about your target outcomes

*Define the specific results you want
for specific populations*

Why?



“If you don’t know where you’re going,
you might not get there.”

- Yogi Berra
*When You Come to a Fork
in the Road, Take It*

Principle 1

Be clear about your target outcomes



a. What community populations, specifically, do you intend to benefit?

E.g.:

- Single mothers who are not taking advantage of public and employer benefits
- Individuals and families with no emergency savings
- Individuals and families with incomes below the region's self-sufficiency standard

This is not about clients of programs

Principle 1

Be clear about your target outcomes



b. What, specifically, do you want that benefit to be?

E.g.:

- Single mothers who are not taking advantage of public and employer benefits *begin to use those benefits to increase their income*
- Individuals and families with no emergency savings *develop and follow a budget that includes regular deposits to a savings or checking account*
- Individuals and families with incomes below the region's self-sufficiency standard *make regular contributions to an IDA or other investment product*

A comprehensive initiative will have multiple components with separate target outcomes



(example)

Initiative goal: Lower-income working families in three urban neighborhoods increase their discretionary incomes

Target outcomes for three components:

1. These families receive public and employer income supports for which they are eligible
2. Earners in these families gain skills for available well-paying jobs
3. These families decrease their expenses

Principle 2

Uncover the underlying issues

Pinpoint the real reasons that the target outcomes aren't true already

Why?



A 75% solution
to the *right* problem
is better than
a 100% solution
to the *wrong* problem.

Principle 2

Uncover the underlying issues



E.g.:

Target outcome:

Single mothers who are not taking advantage of public and employer benefits begin to use those benefits to increase their income

Surface problem:

These mothers don't apply for the benefits

Underlying issue:

Eligibility and application requirements are confusing, uncoordinated, cumbersome, different for every benefit, etc.

Principle 2

Uncover the underlying issues



Be sure to engage members of the population of concern in identifying both

- the **immediate obstacles** they face and
- the **underlying community conditions** that create or contribute to those obstacles

Principle 3

Focus strategies on underlying issues

Create lasting changes in community conditions that undermine the outcomes

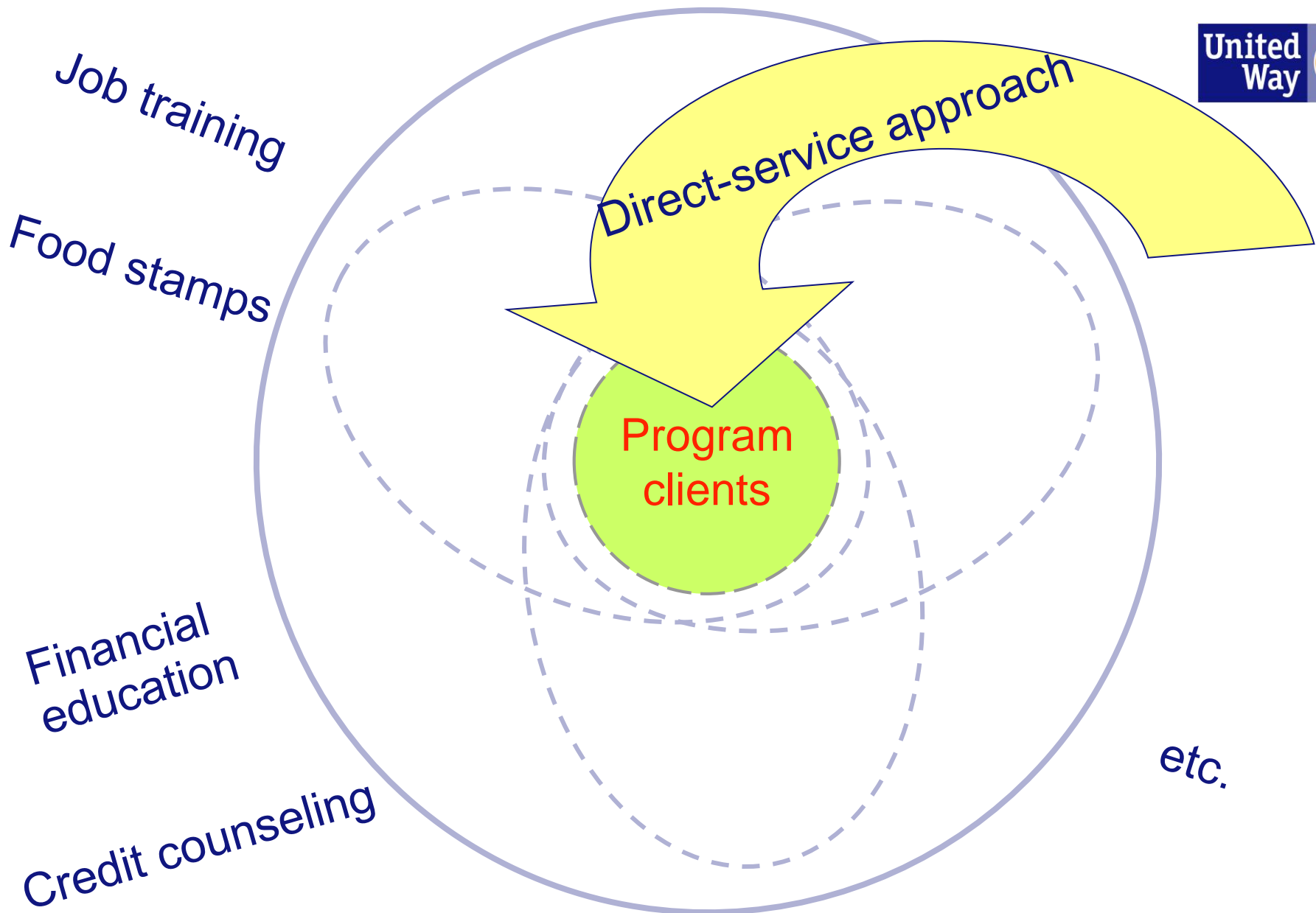
This is about more than supporting direct services for program clients

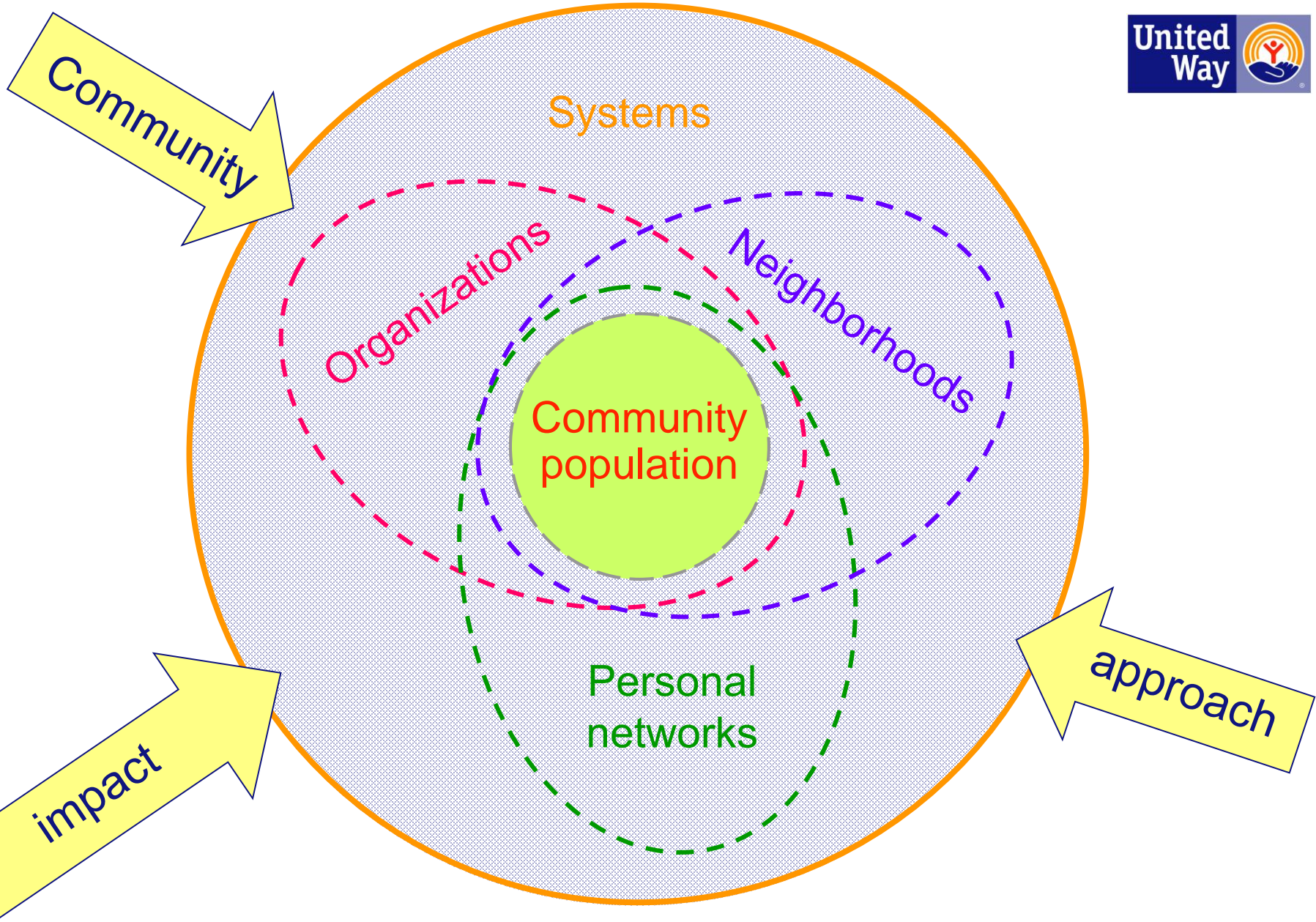
Why?



If you continue to think
as you have always thought,
you will continue to get
what you have always gotten.

- Marilyn Ferguson
The Aquarian Conspiracy





Principle 3

Focus strategies on underlying issues to create lasting community change



E.g., organization, neighborhood, personal network change

- Encourage greater availability of no-fee, no-minimum accounts at mainstream financial institutions
- Ensure that job-training programs match the local job market
- Attract mainstream financial services to low-income neighborhoods
- Raise population awareness of the EITC
- Mobilize community resources to provide free tax-preparation services
- Promote financial education offerings through employers

Principle 3

Focus strategies on underlying issues to create lasting community change

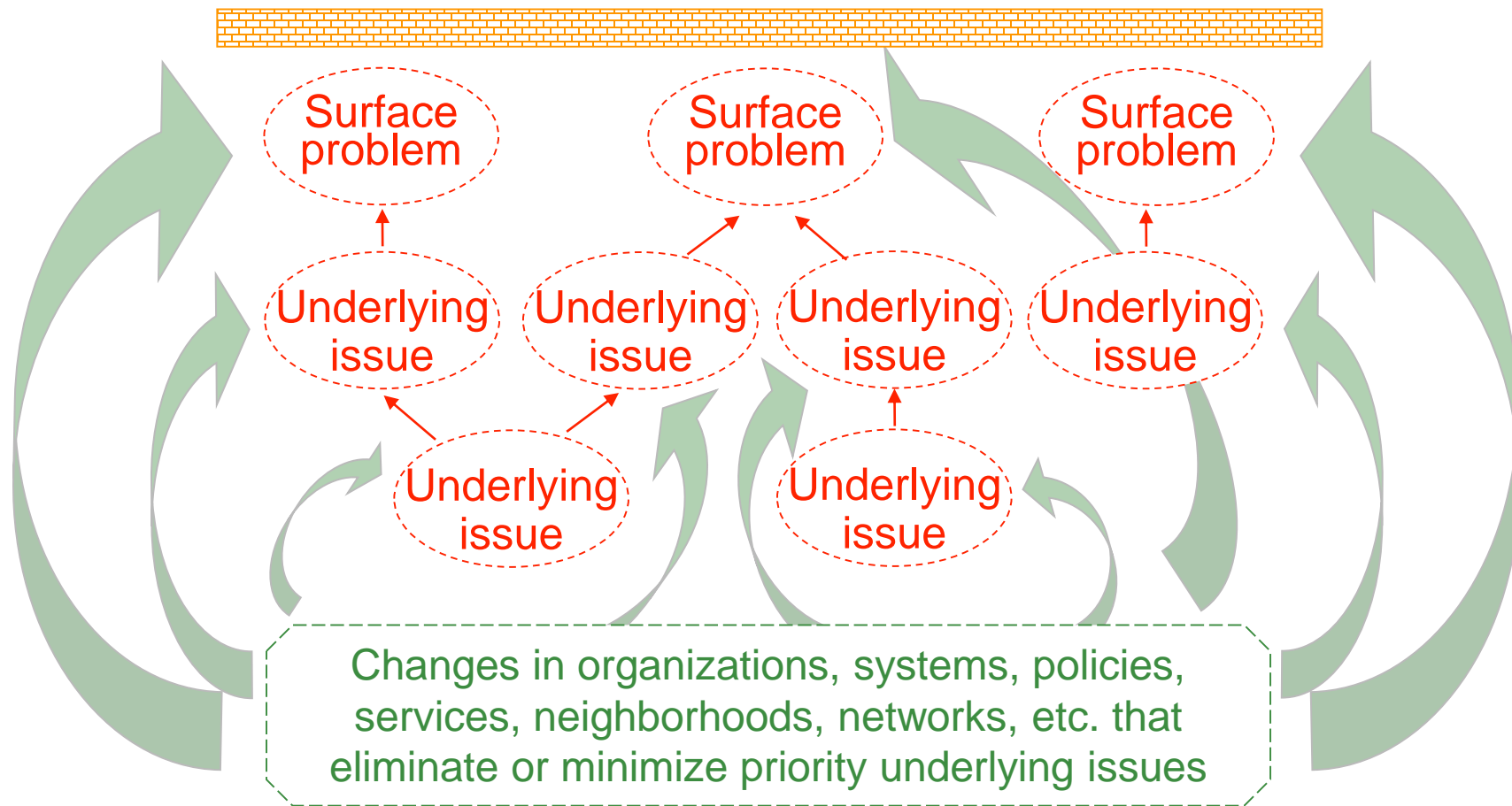


E.g., public policy change

- Support coordinated application procedures for public benefits
- Encourage passage of a state Earned Income Tax Credit
- Promote financial education offerings by school systems
- Advocate tighter regulation of high-cost, alternative financial services (e.g., pay-day lenders, rent-to-own companies)
- Back the provision of tax credits for corporate contributions to IDAs

Principles 1-3 frame your theory of change

**Target
outcome**

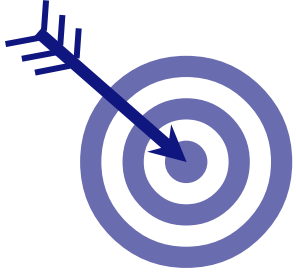


Principle 4

Track progress and measure results

*Obtain and use data on your
strategies and results*

Why?



Increase
effectiveness

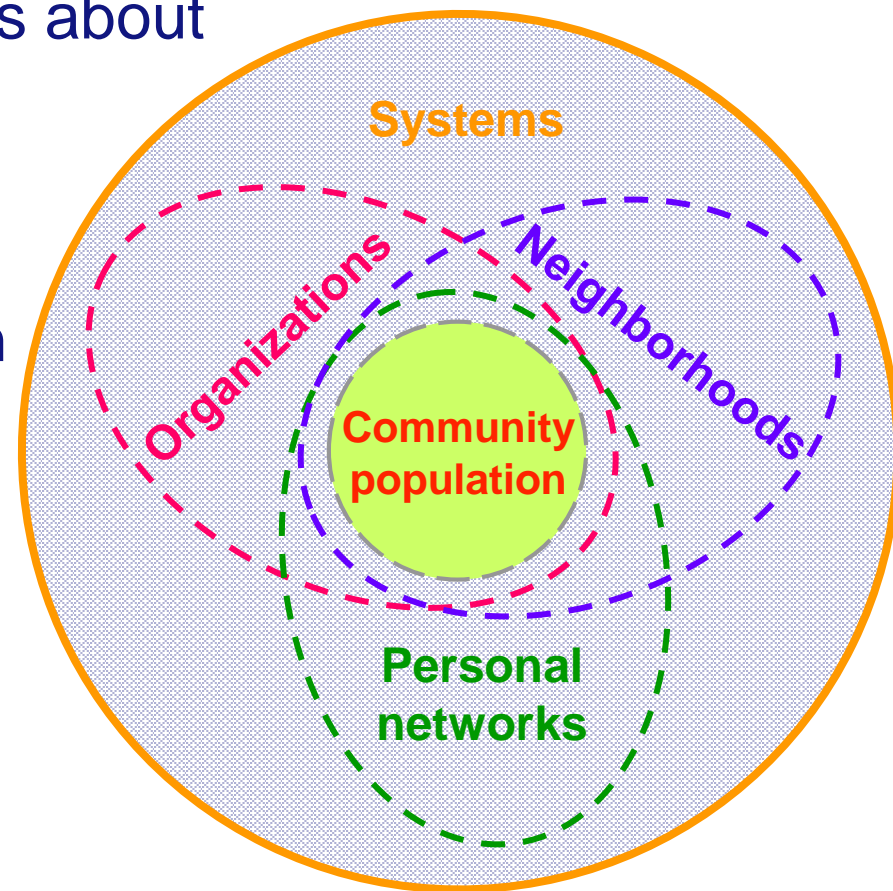
Communicate
impact



What gets measured is determined by the strategies

Measuring community impact is about tracking the extent to which:

- ❖ Intended results are achieved for the population of concern
- ❖ Targeted community changes take place



Principle 4

Track progress and measure results



Track the extent to which

a. Targeted community changes take place

E.g., the number of:

- Mainstream financial services created in low-income neighborhoods
- Employers making financial education programs available to employees
- Public benefit programs that have adopted uniform eligibility requirements, shared applications, 1-visit application procedures
- Advocated provisions regulating pay-day lenders that are passed by the state legislature

Track the extent to which

b. Intended results are achieved for the specific population of concern

E.g., the number and percentage of:

- Single mothers not taking advantage of public and employer benefits who begin to use those benefits to increase their income
- Individuals and families with no emergency savings who develop and follow a budget that includes regular deposits to a savings or checking account
- Individuals and families with incomes below the region's self-sufficiency standard who make regular contributions to an IDA or other investment product

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**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.
LIVE UNITED**

**United
Way**

