

Participatory Engagement

DESIGNING MEANINGFUL ONLINE SPACES FOR
LIVED EXPERTS

Samuel Martin, CEO SDMC



CO-DESIGN
— INSTITUTE —

MEET THE TEAM



CEO – SDMC

Samuel Martin

A seasoned professional with over 15 years of experience in community engagement, working with government administrations, corporations, and non-profits to shape legislation and policies that positively impact communities. An accomplished lobbyist, trainer, and public speaker, Samuel holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Washington and a Master's in Public Administration from Seattle University.

Group Chat Introductions

Name

Role/Org

What is the last movie you watched or book
you read?

WELCOME & SESSION PURPOSE

Virtual collaboration is imperative for co-design.

Unfortunately the virtual space poses challenges to building trust, supporting relationships, and creating sustainable engagement.

This is particularly true for lived experts and community members, whose voices are imperative to shaping policy, programs, and services. This session aims to provide examples and virtual activities designed to keep lived experts meaningfully involved in virtual spaces.

Attendees will learn how activities can foster agency, create a space for fun and playful interaction, and strengthen relational engagement online. This session invites practitioners to help refine and consider how they can enhance their own virtual design work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Ways to make virtual engagement meaningful
- Activities that foster participation and agency
- How to design online spaces that center lived expertise

Together, we can bridge the gap
by incorporating lived expertise
and knowledge through access
and opportunity.

SDMC AND THE CO-DESIGN INSTITUTE

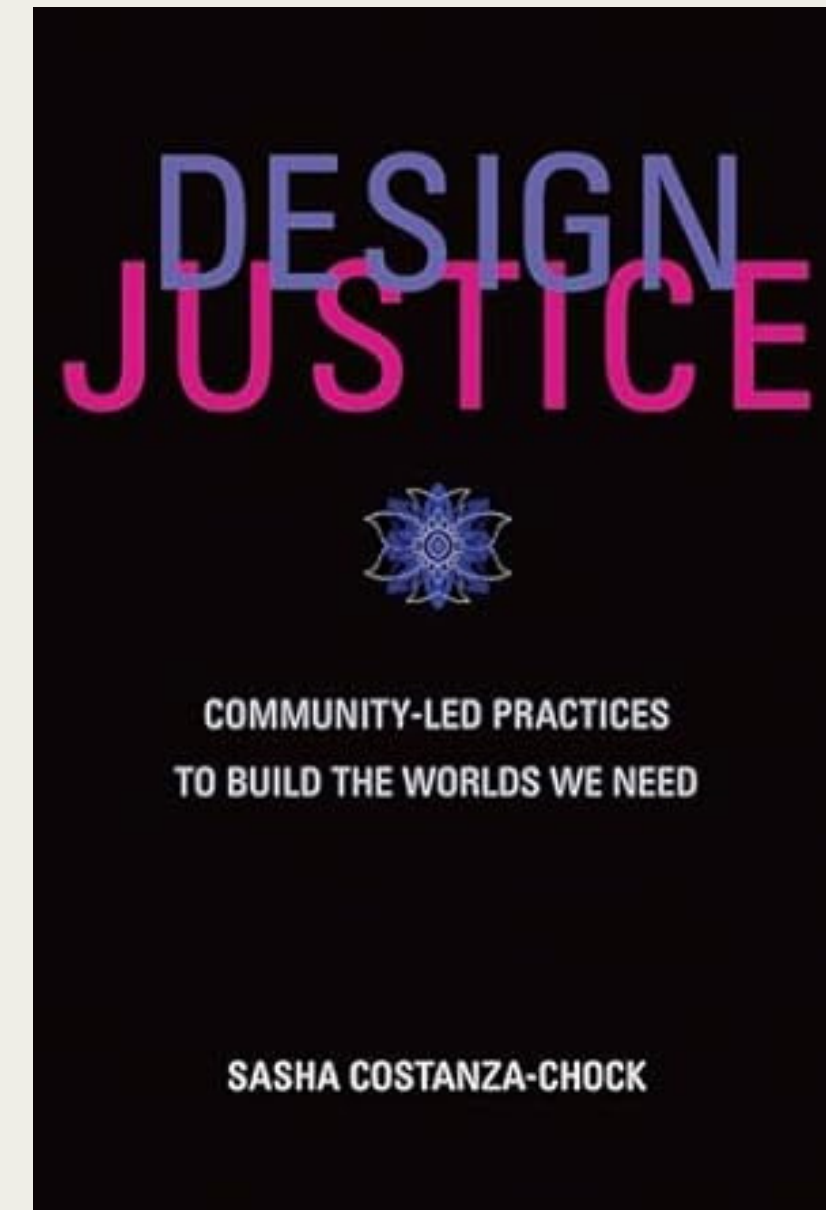
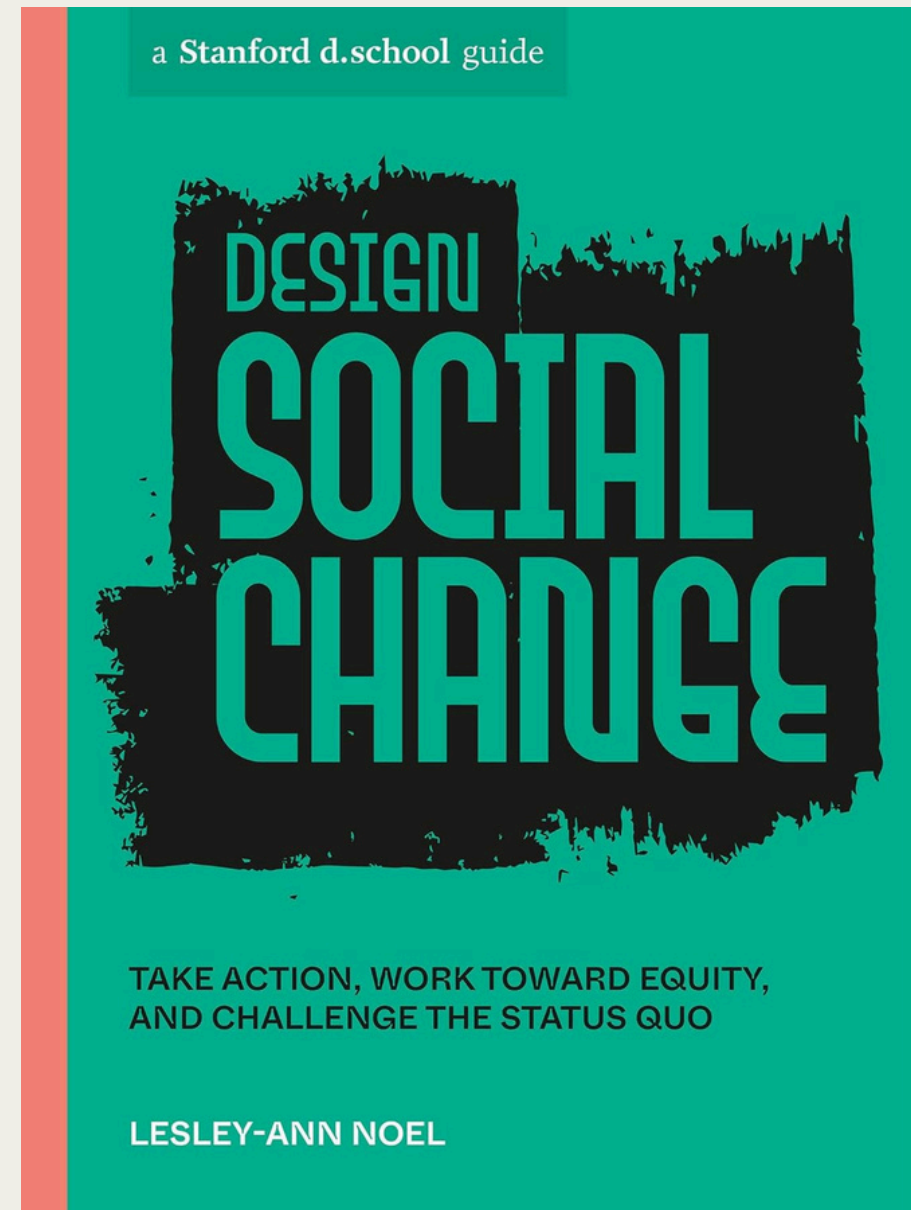
SDMC is dedicated to amplifying the voices of those who have been marginalized and excluded from the legislative process. We support community leaders, advocates, and those working to dismantle oppressive systems by fostering collaboration and accessibility.

Born from lived experiences with systems like foster care and education, our mission is to empower those directly affected to lead the charge in dismantling and rebuilding these systems for lasting change.

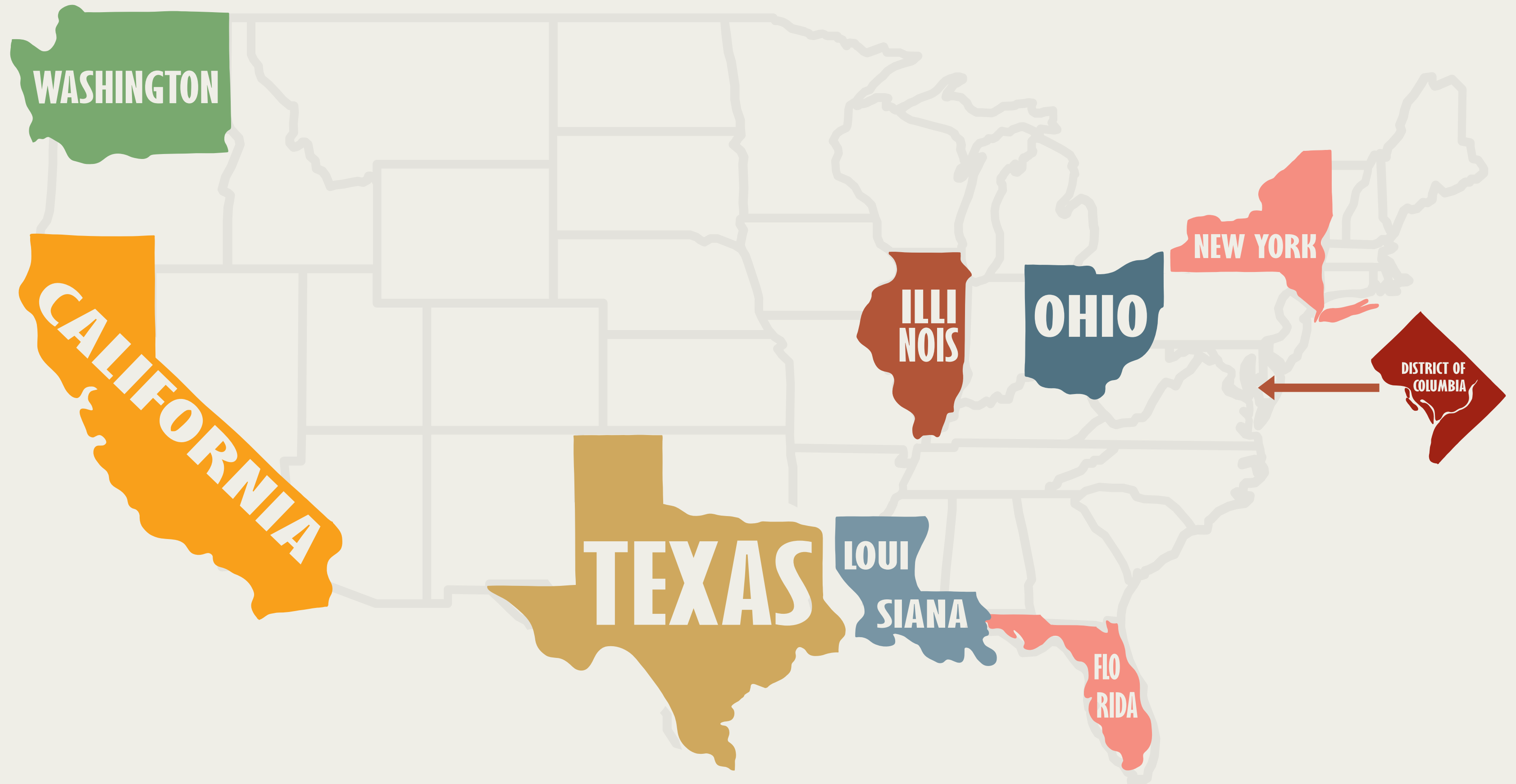
The Co-Design Institute is a resource hub focused on advancing the co-design process, where those with lived experience are central to program and policy creation. Its mission is to promote the value of co-design, provide necessary resources and training for policymakers, and connect individuals nationwide who are committed to creating policies by the people, not just for them.

The co-design approach emphasizes collaboration between traditional stakeholders and those with lived experience.

Influences that inspired this work



SDMC AND SERVICE DESIGN IN THE US



What is Co-Design?

“Co-design is an approach to designing with, not for, people and communities. This approach **amplifies the voices and experiences of the people closest to the needs** addressed through an engagement or initiative. It also **prioritizes relationships, increases trust across all stakeholders, and uses participatory approaches** to ensure the work is guided by those most affected.

Co-design requires **sharing power with people with lived experience across the entirety of an engagement or initiative**, from determining the focus of exploration, to the design implementation, and evaluation”

DEFINITION OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Lived Experience refers to the direct, personal experiences and insights of individuals within a community. Encompassing their daily realities, challenges, and perspectives. Providing crucial input that ensures designs and solution are relevant, effective, and grounded in actual needs.



Fundamental Principles

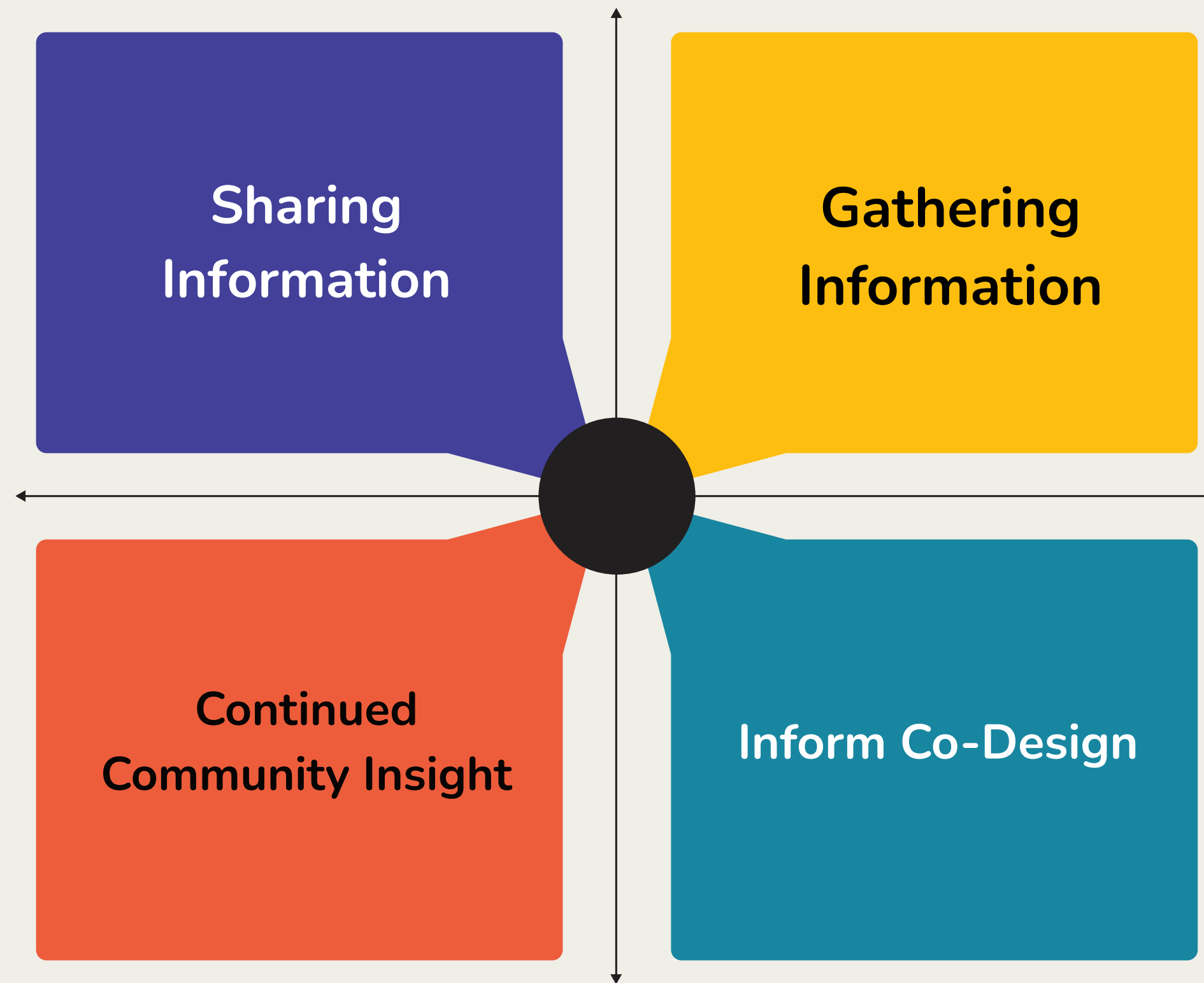
- 1 Healing and Trust Building
- 2 Power Sharing
- 3 Prioritize Relationships
- 4 Participatory Engagement
- 5 Building Capacity
- 6 Equity and Justice Lens

PARTICIPATORY ENGAGEMENT

Co-Design inherently provides opportunities for people to take part and express themselves. This shows up through visual, kinesthetic, and oral practices. Participatory engagement isn't about regurgitating information or giving presentations. It's about facilitating self-discovery and moving beyond participants to engaged co-designers.



The Participatory Engagement Matrix



OUR GOAL

To revolutionize lived expert engagement.
Through collaboration, innovation, and a
commitment to inclusivity, we strive to create
a more equitable and inspiring world.

STRATEGIES FOR PARTICIPATORY ENGAGEMENT



Making things **Accessible**

When engaging community members, it's important to make sure that we make research and data accessible. Making information digestible is a pivotal part of the process. This isn't only important for lived experts. Most don't read long reports. Providing content that's digestible is key to co-design.

Slow Down and **Work Relationally**

It's important for everyone to feel able to engage in the process. Slowing down and taking the time to make sure everyone understands the information we share is key. It's important to hold space and allow for moments to digest the content. It's important not to break the silence.

Never make assumptions **about skill**

Everyone comes to the table with different skills and it's important to never assume what skillset co-designers bring to the table. If you recognize the need to build capacity and share information it's important to provide that support. If the group has previous experience and needs less grounding that's ok too. All communities are unique.

Understanding our **Shared Learning**

We have to be on the same page about what we're aiming to achieve. Which also applies to how we learn. While as conveners we play a role in compiling information and sharing it with co-designers, it's also important that lived experts provide opinions, make suggestions about research, and even request content experts to present.

Producing Insights for Co-Designers

- After collecting information provide a synthesized version of the content.
- This can take many forms: Handouts/Posters, video clips, diagrams, even a performance.
- Give the opportunity sit with the insights; could even be weeks between meetings to allow the opportunity digest content.
- Spend time figuring out where there are gaps; speak with lived experts about how the data fits with their experience.



IDENTIFYING GAPS IS CRITICAL TO PARTICIPATORY ENGAGEMENT

It's important to share existing knowledge but it doesn't stop there.

We have to acknowledge the history of research and data. Historically there has been voices missing and we can't assume all systems have moved past historical bias when conducting research. We can't just accept data without questioning it with the voices of those most impact and the voices often missing from the table.

Traditional data collection can't acknowledge all experiences

It's important to acknowledge how different cultures share information or 'record' experiences. Some communities rely on storytelling and oral history to share experiences. Some communities use art and imagery to help tell their story. We must be open to all ways to understand experiences.

Avoid Tokenization in the process

Having one person 'represent' a whole community is tokenizing. Build structures that ensure diverse voices are engaged and create accountability feedback loops. Have regular checks-ins and pathways to transparency.

Community **MUST** see how their input drives change.

OUR APPROACH

We recognized the significance of involving experts with firsthand experience in a purposeful and strategic manner. We aim to ensure that our approach is both grounded in reality and enriched by practical insights.

PARTICIPATORY TOOLS FOR FUTURE USE

Interactive/Immersive Digital Content

Using interactive webpages as a way to share information and allow people to engage with content their way.

Games and Digital Activities

Lots of different games and activities can be used to share information and/or gather information.

Film, Video, Music, Art

All forms of artistic expression can be used as a way to engage co-designers. It can be a helpful tool to retain information and a strong tool for self-expression.

PARTICIPATORY TOOLS FOR FUTURE USE

Community Conversations

Often informal dialogues with minimal prompts designed to bring community together to discuss shared experiences and building communal trust.

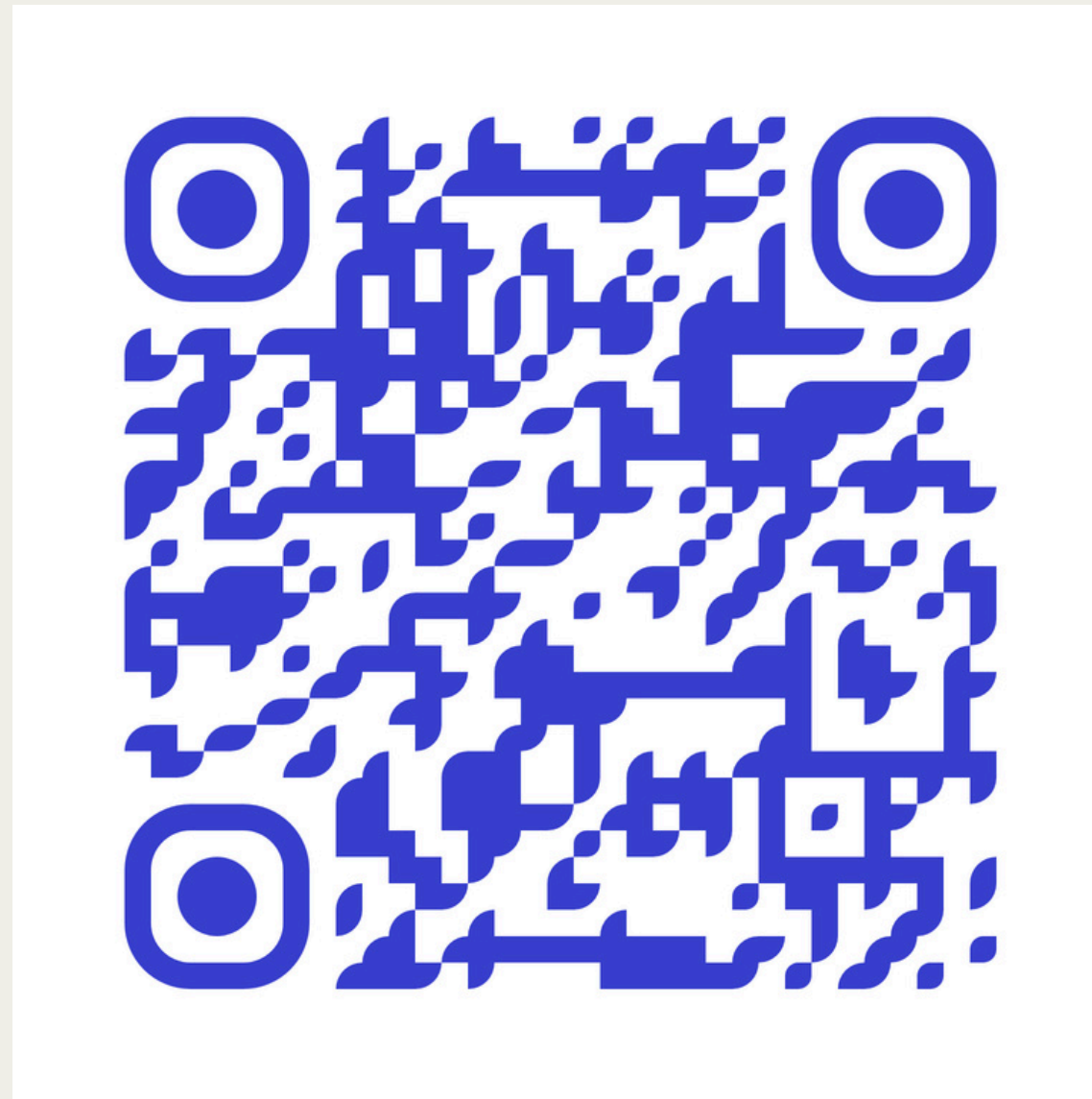
Short Survey and Whiteboard Sessions

Capturing information through whiteboard sessions is a great way to engage community and co-designers. Short surveys can also be helpful but its important to no ask too many questions.

Journey Mapping

A participatory process that visually maps out the steps, experiences, and emotions people through in a system, service, or program. It helps identify barriers, moments of harm, and opportunities for healing and improvement from the perspective of those directly impacted.

Group Crossword Activity

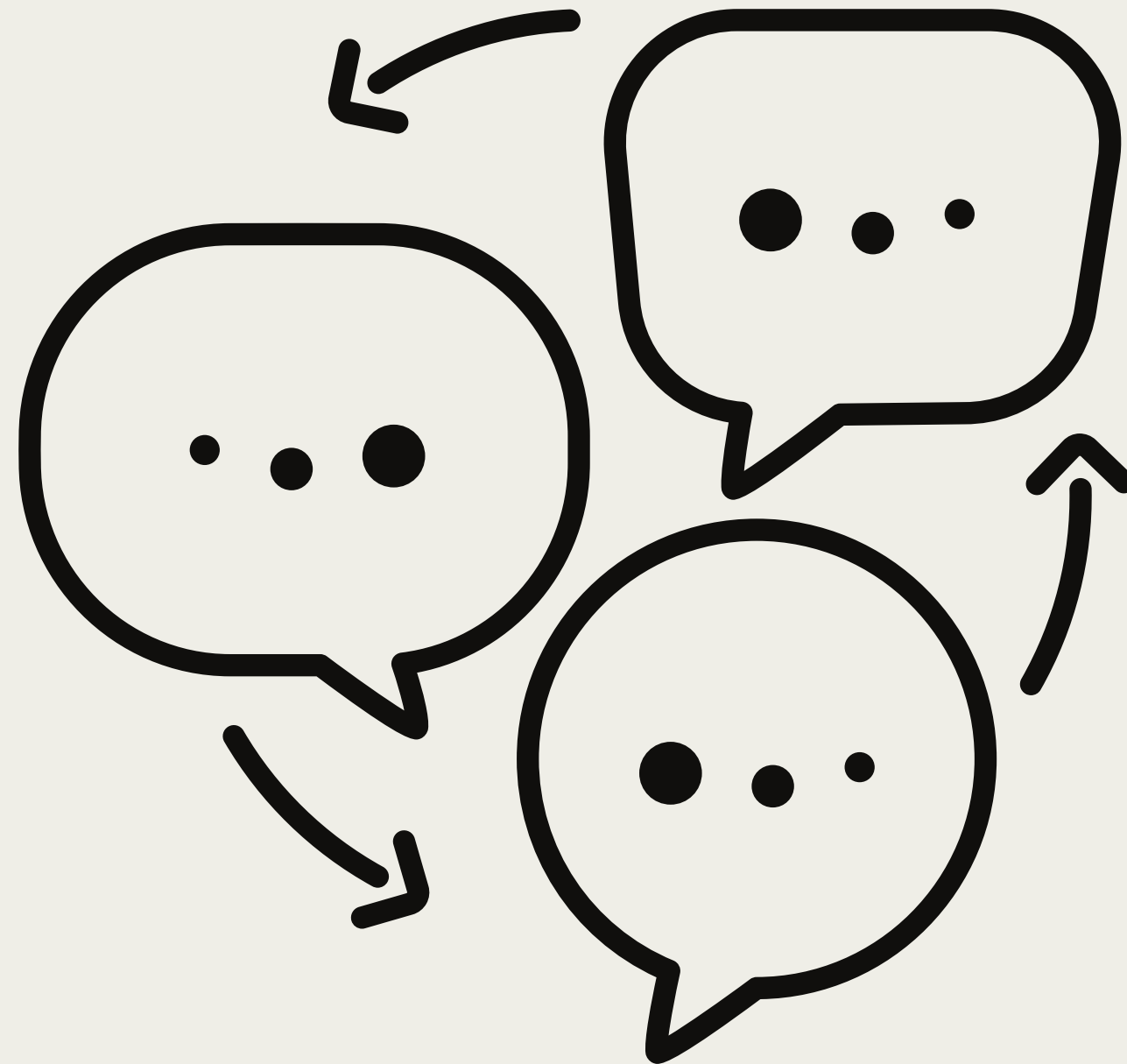


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We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community...Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and our own.

Cesar Chavez

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS



KEEP IN TOUCH

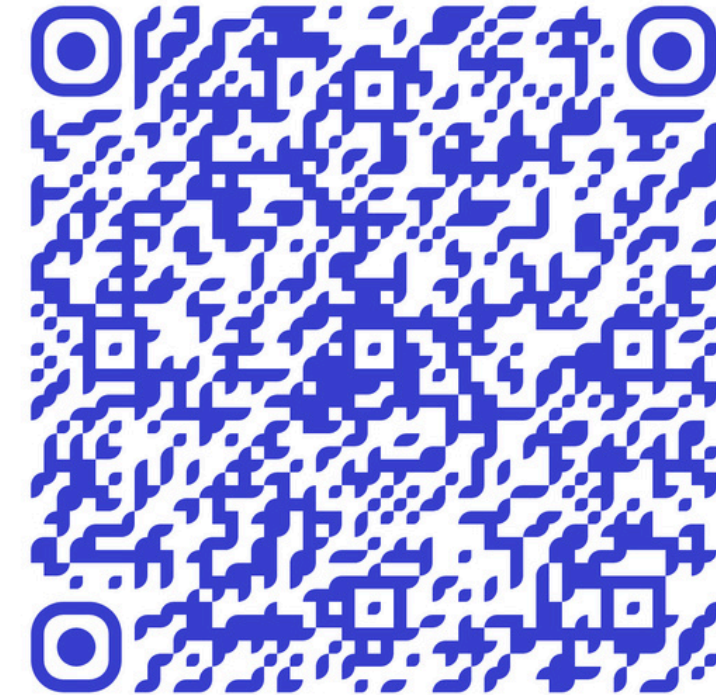


Samuel Martin

Sam@sdmartinconsulting.com



For more information please
fill out this google form:



Thank you!

