NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

The Power of Network Leadership to Drive Social Change

SESSION

How to Make Complex Collaboration Work

David Ehrlichman
Partner,
Converge for Impact

David Sawyer
Partner,
Converge for Impact

1:15 -3:15 p.m.

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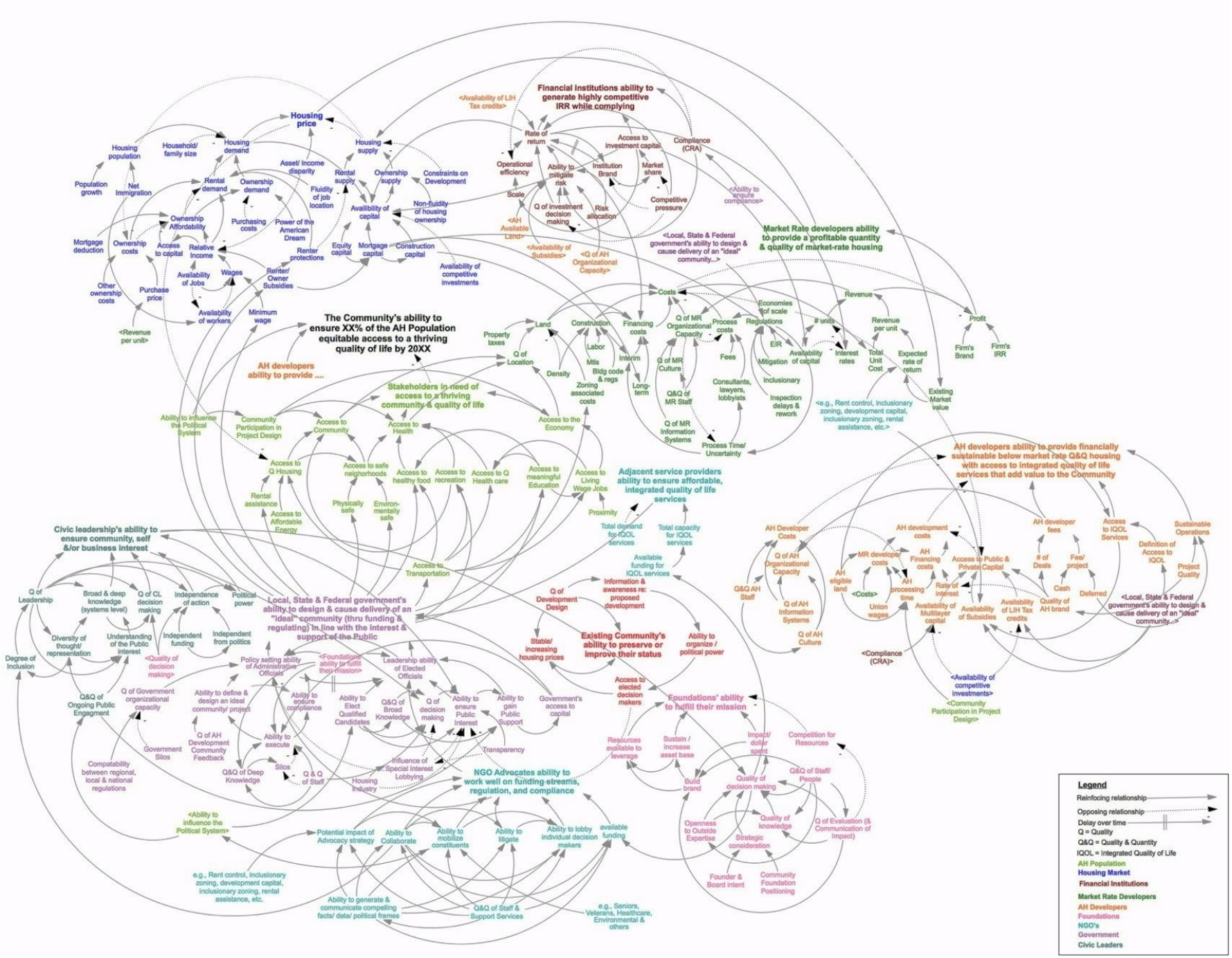

System Map Source: *Housing California, created by Scott Spann of Innate Strategies*

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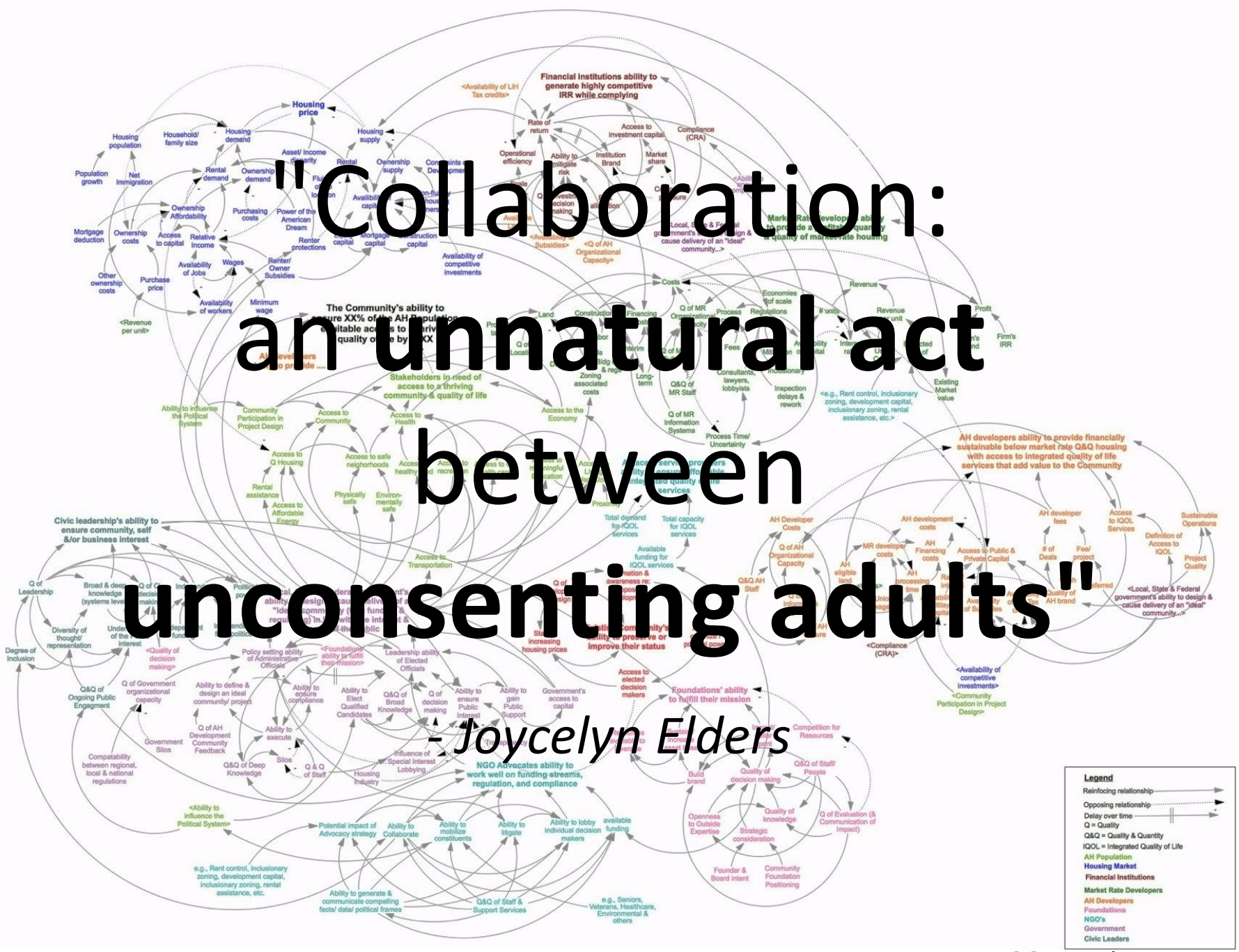

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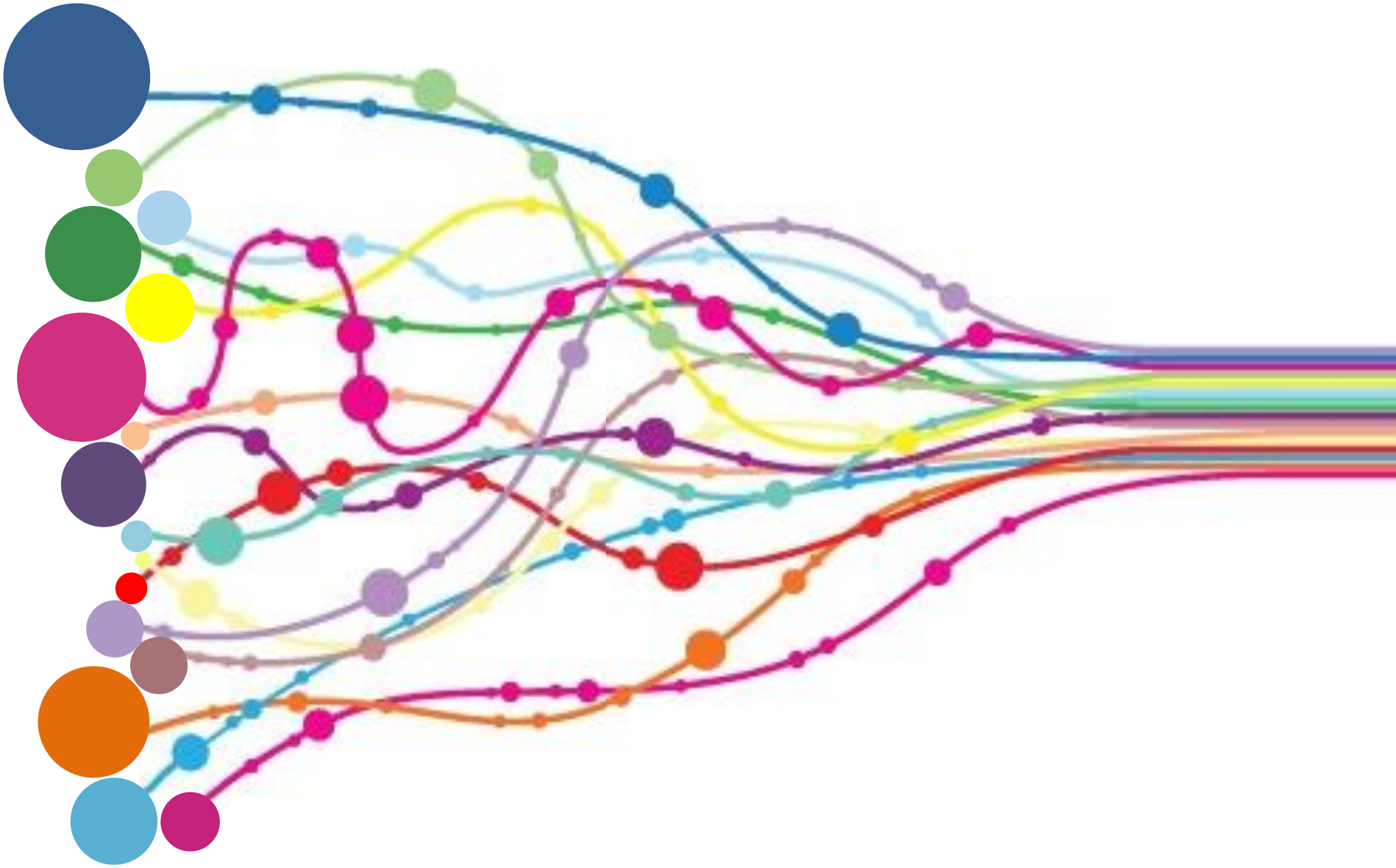

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Many Forms of Complex Collaboration

Offrejoie

food solutions new england

50 BY 60

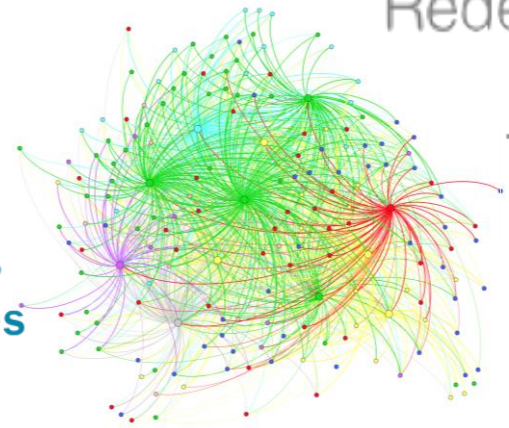
UCSF Health

Redefining possible.™

INTERISE

resilient communities

thriving small businesses



The James Irvine Foundation

NEW LEADERSHIP NETWORK

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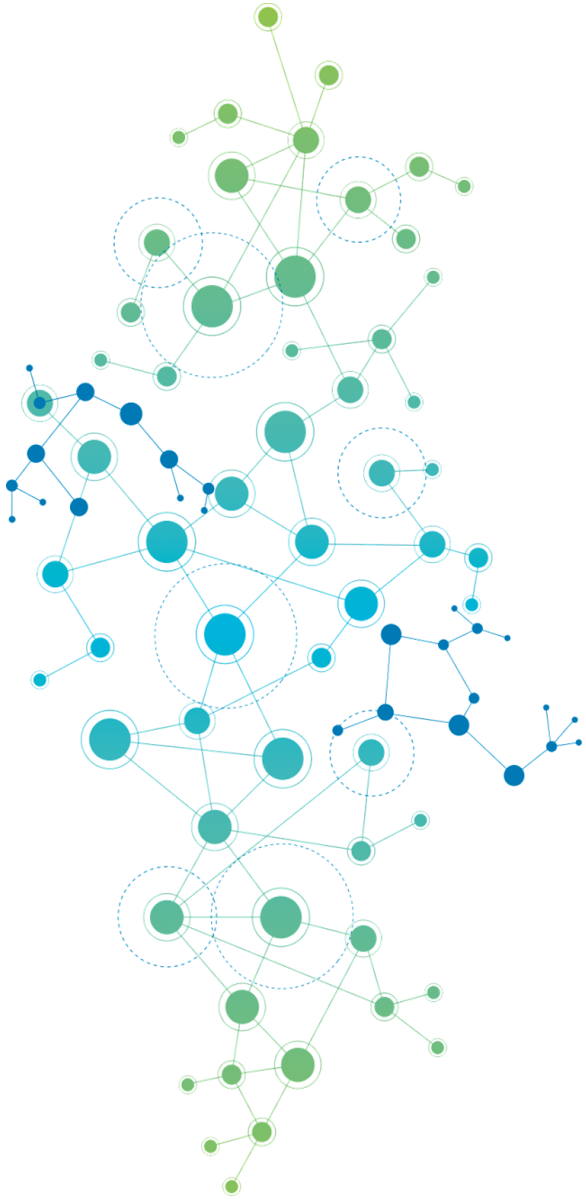
How to Make Complex Collaboration Work



1. Clarify Purpose

2. Convene the Right People

3. Cultivate Trust

4. Coordinate Existing Actions

5. Collaborate at the Systems Level

Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network

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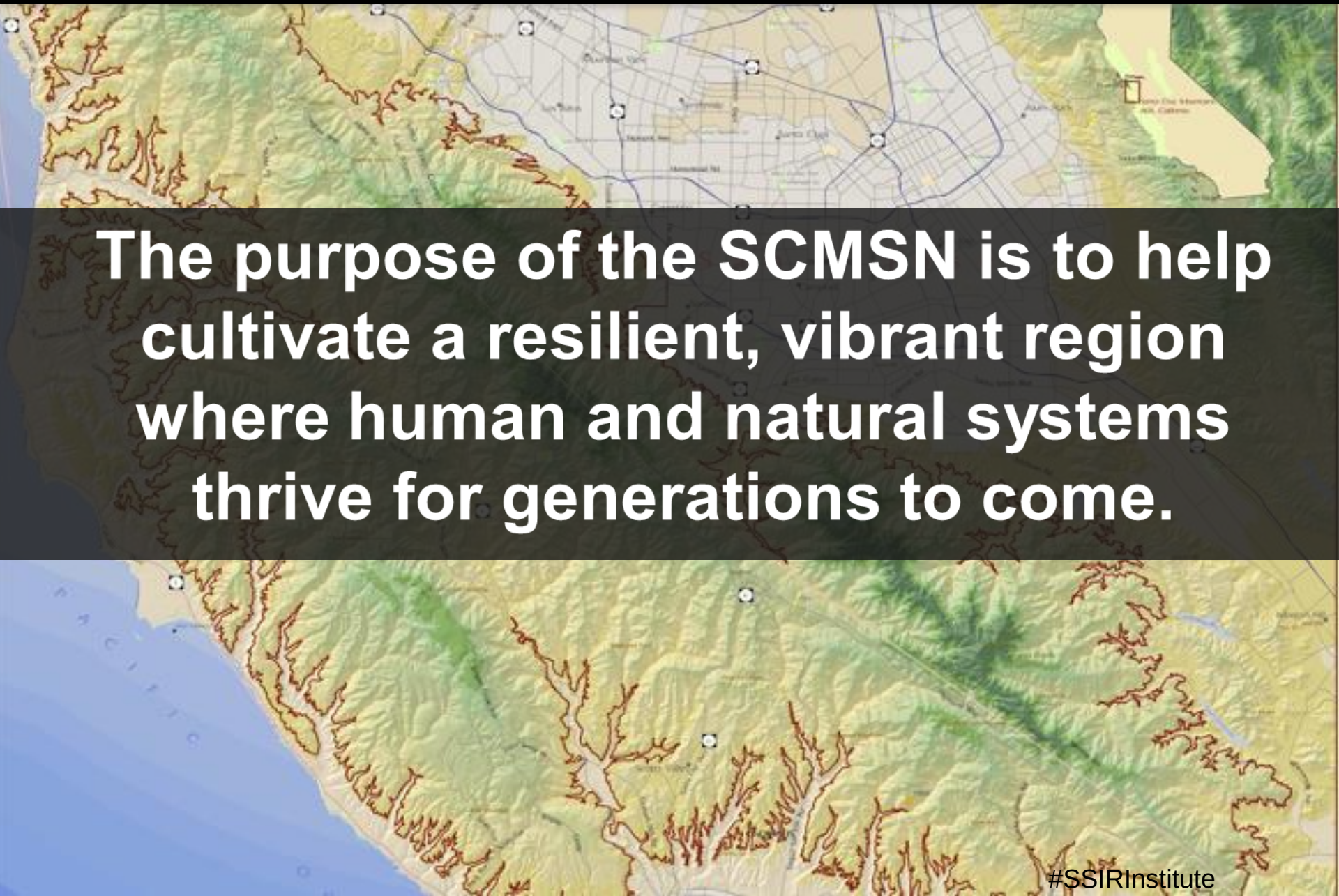
1. Clarify Purpose



The purpose of the SCMSN is to help cultivate a resilient, vibrant region where human and natural systems thrive for generations to come.

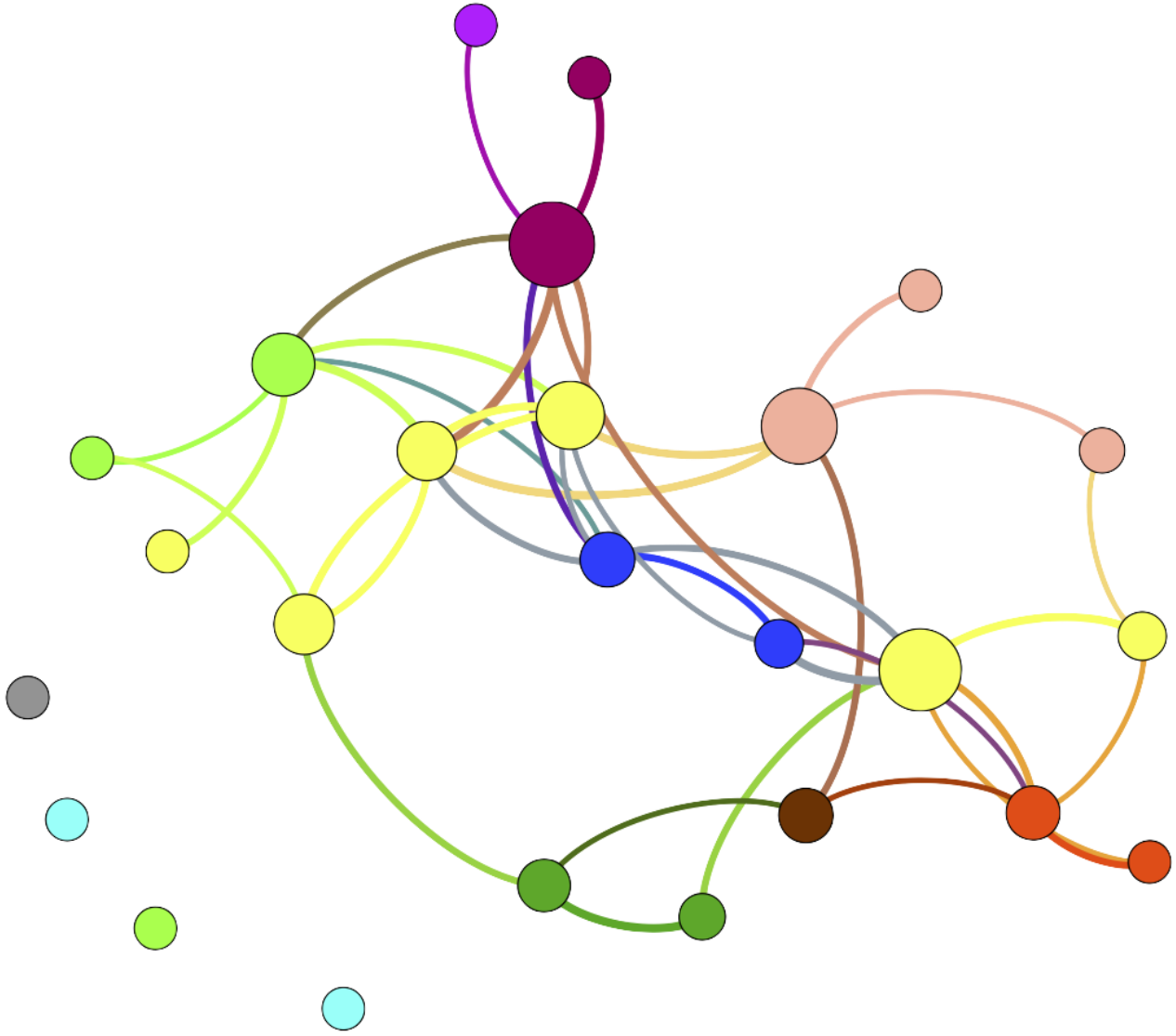
2. Convene the Right People

3. Cultivate Trust

Santa Cruz Mts Stewardship Network, March '15

Organization Type

- *Government*
- *Land Trust*
- *Marine & Water*
- *Open Space District*
- *Parks*
- *RCD*
- *Recreation*
- *Regulatory*
- *Research*
- *Tribal*
- *Working Lands*



Santa Cruz Mts Stewardship Network, Sept '15

Organization Type

- *Government*
- *Land Trust*
- *Marine & Water*
- *Open Space District*
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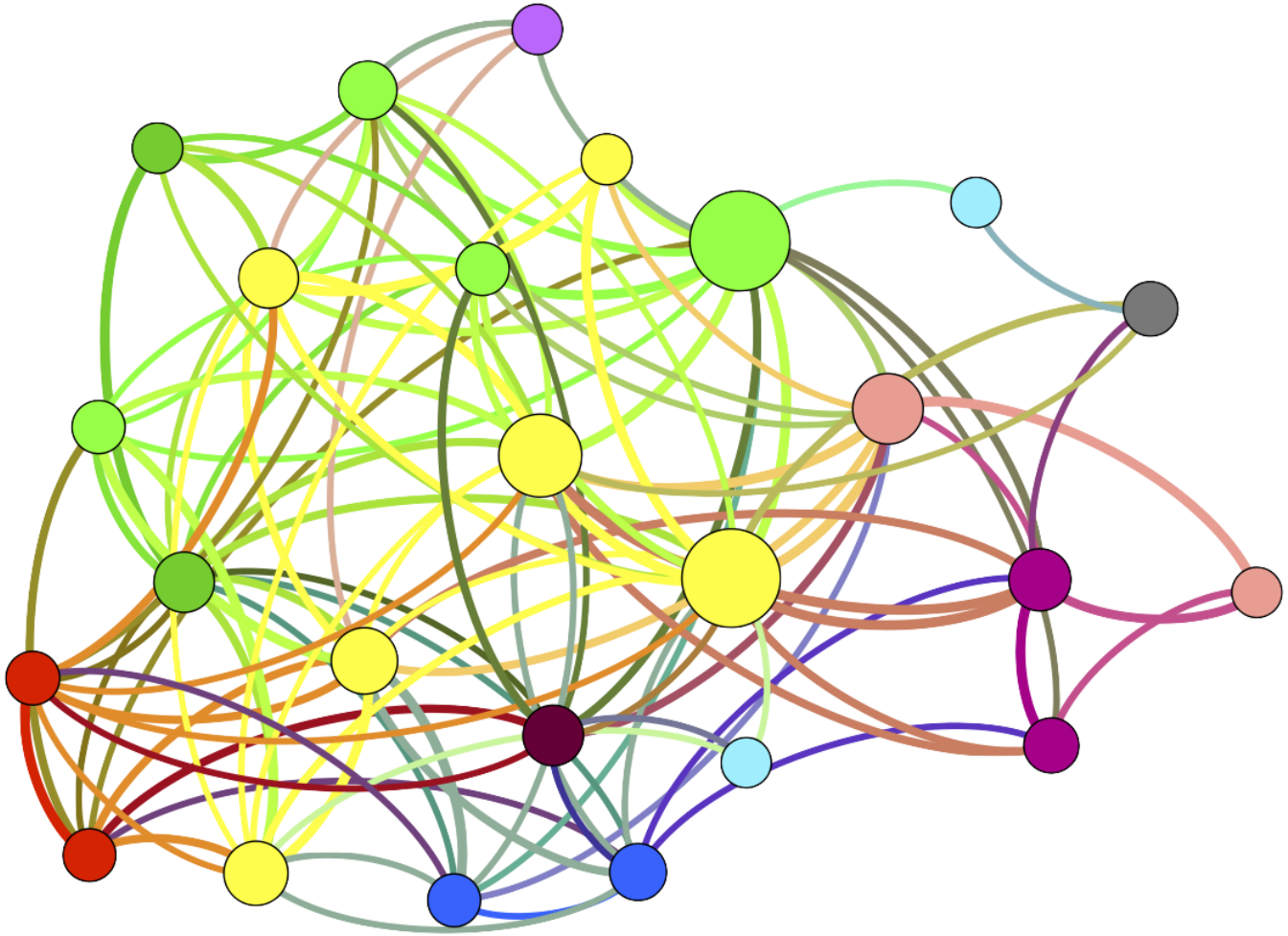

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4. Coordinate Existing Actions

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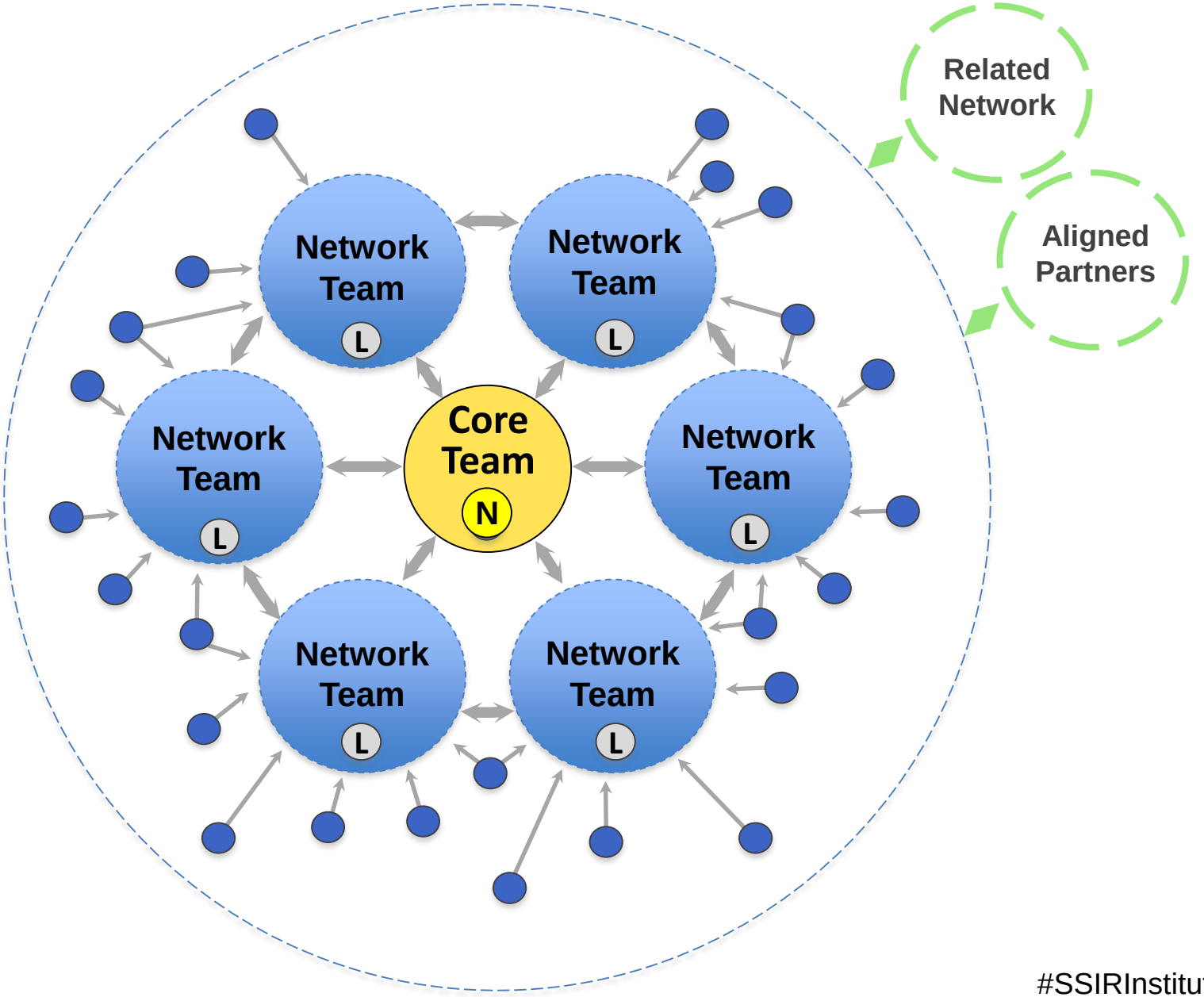
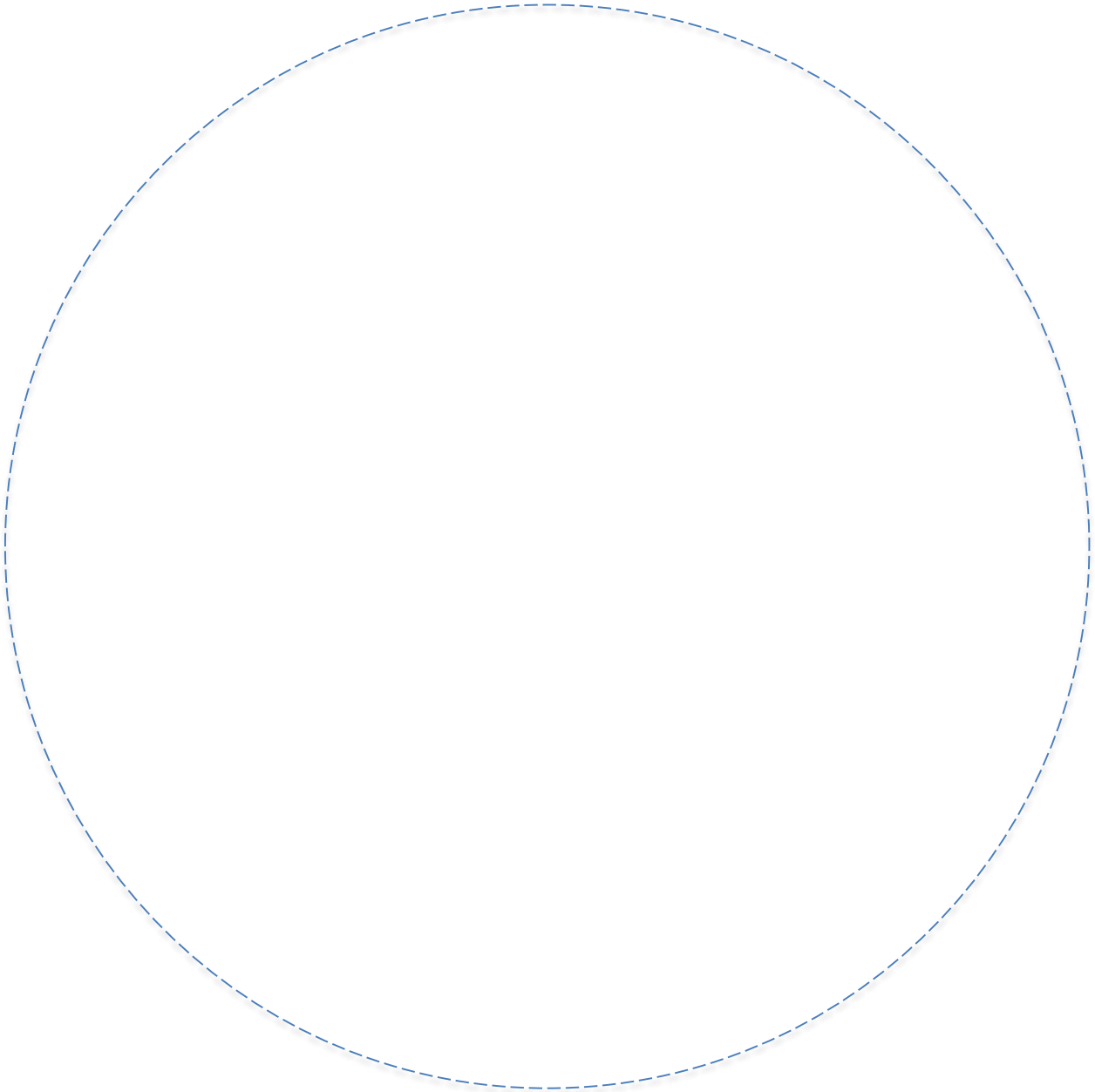
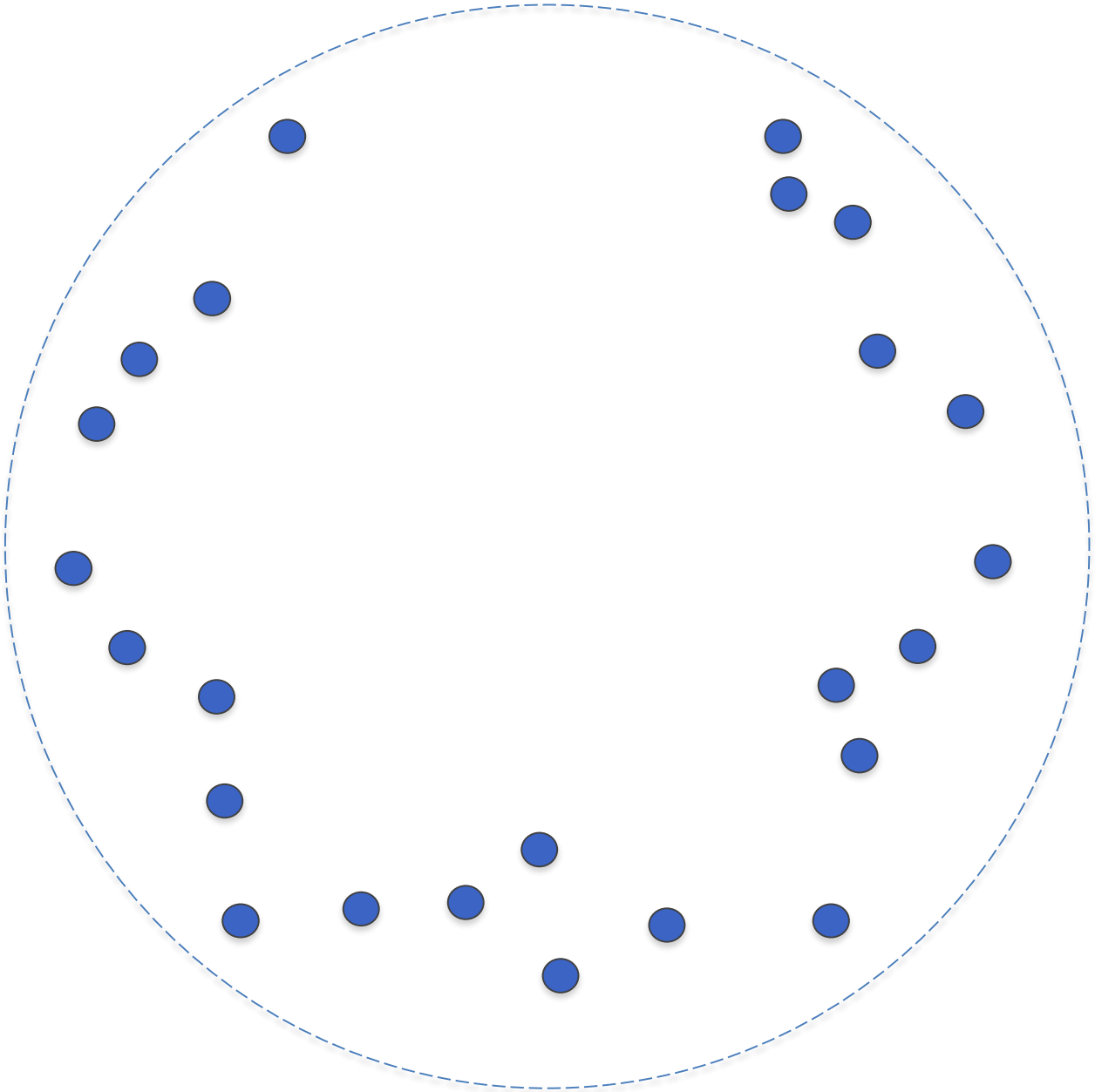
5. Collaborate at the Systems Level



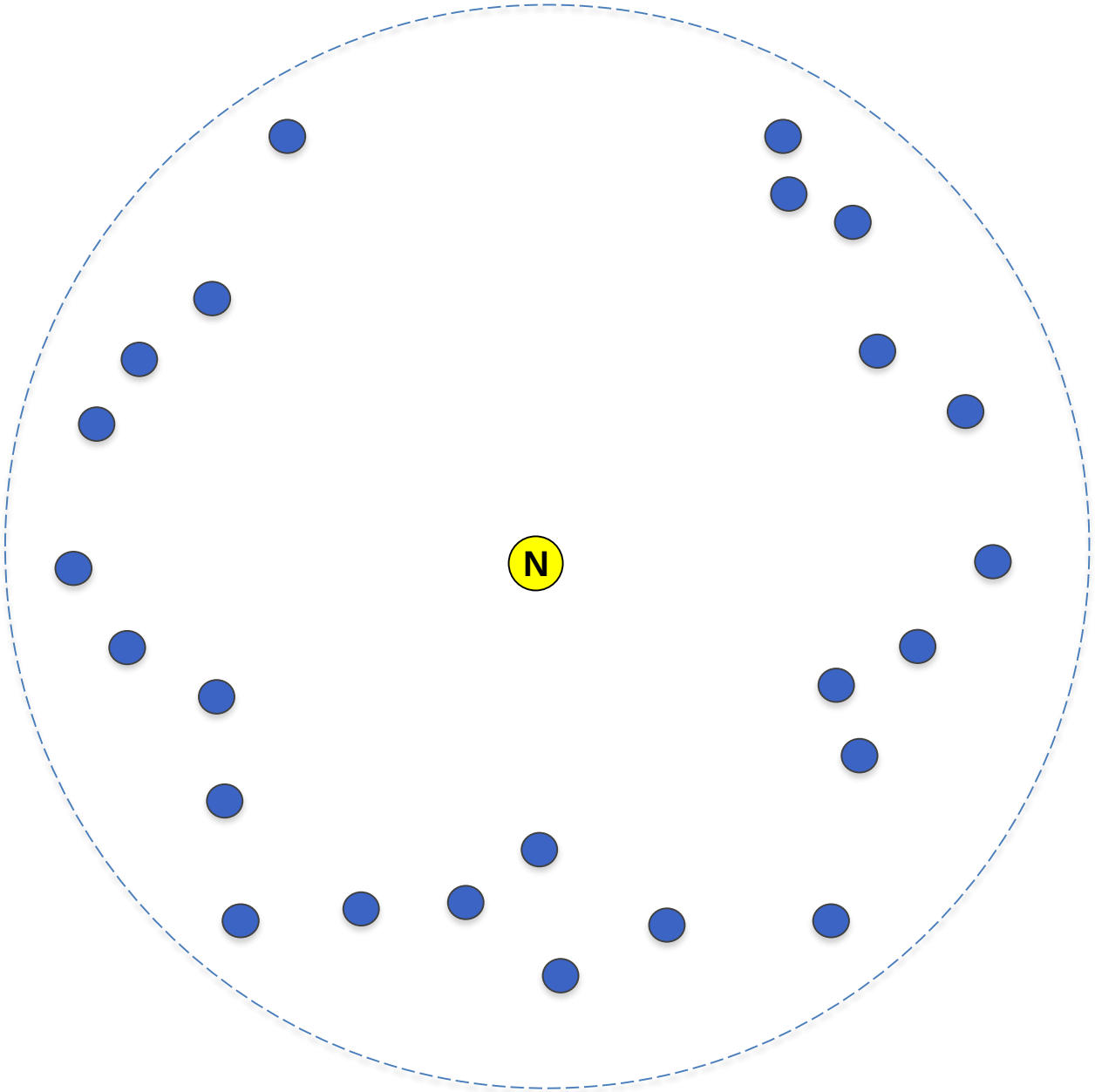
Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network



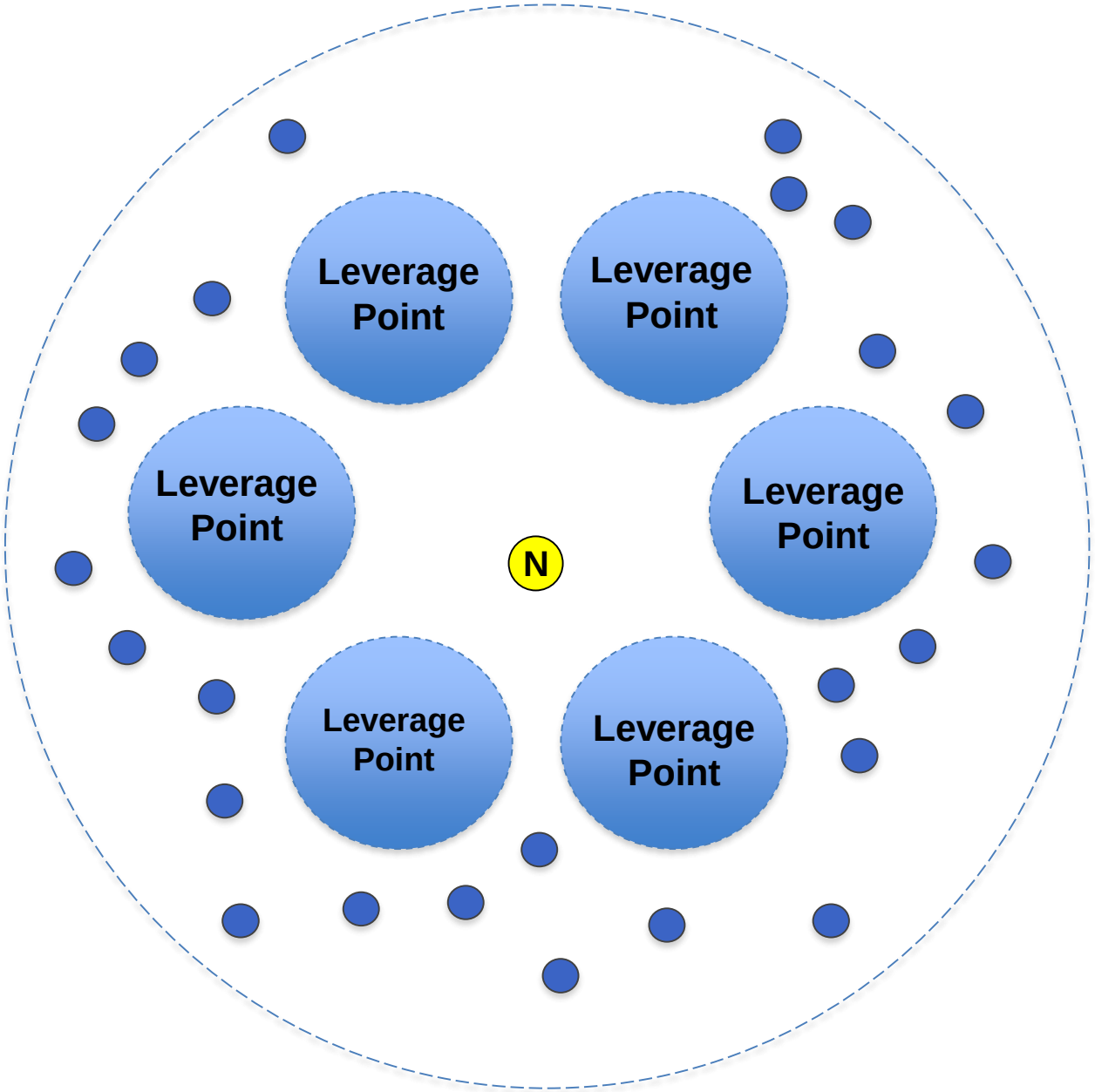
Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network



Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network



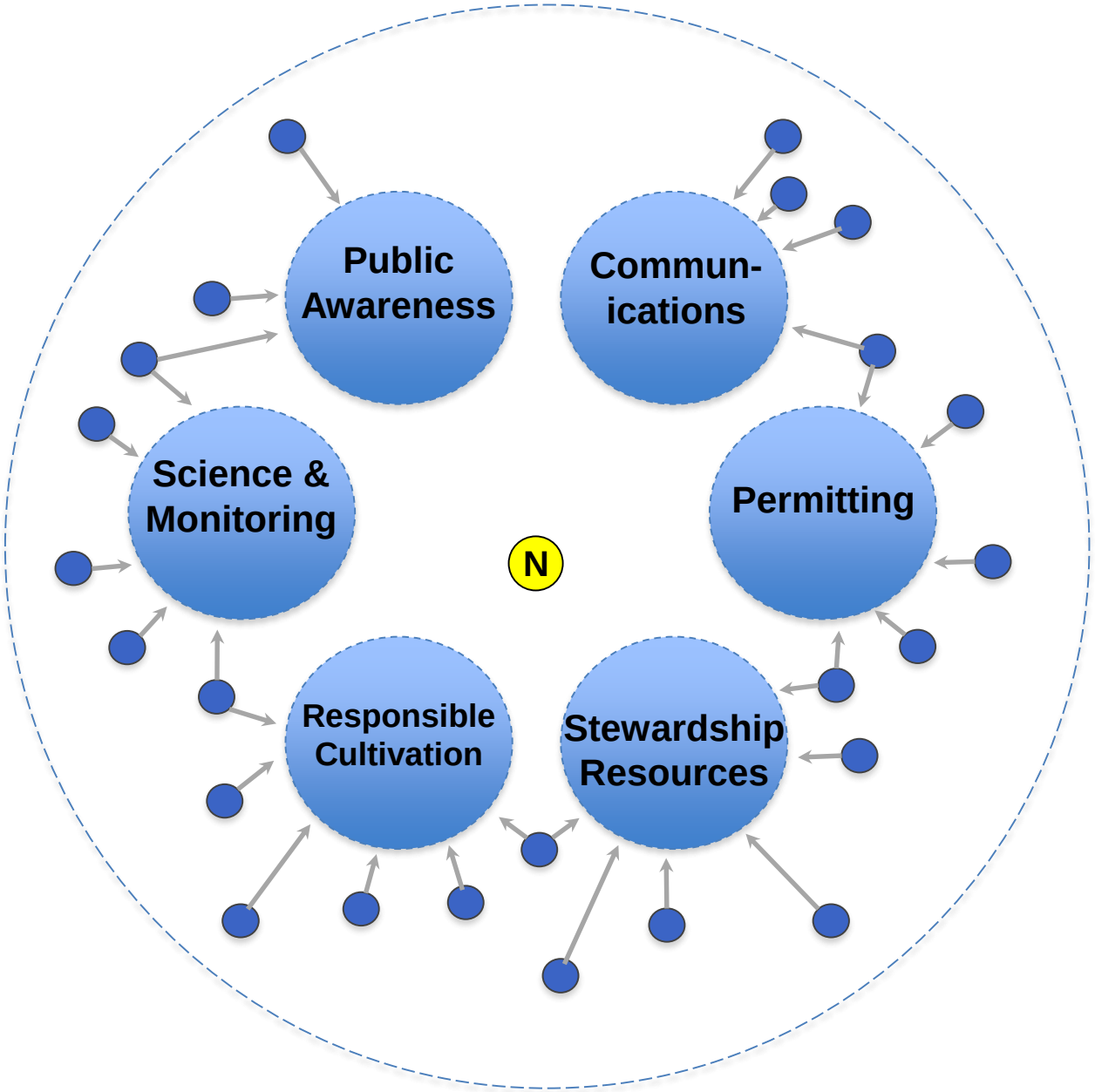
Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network



Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network

Leverage Points:
"Places in a system where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything."

Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network



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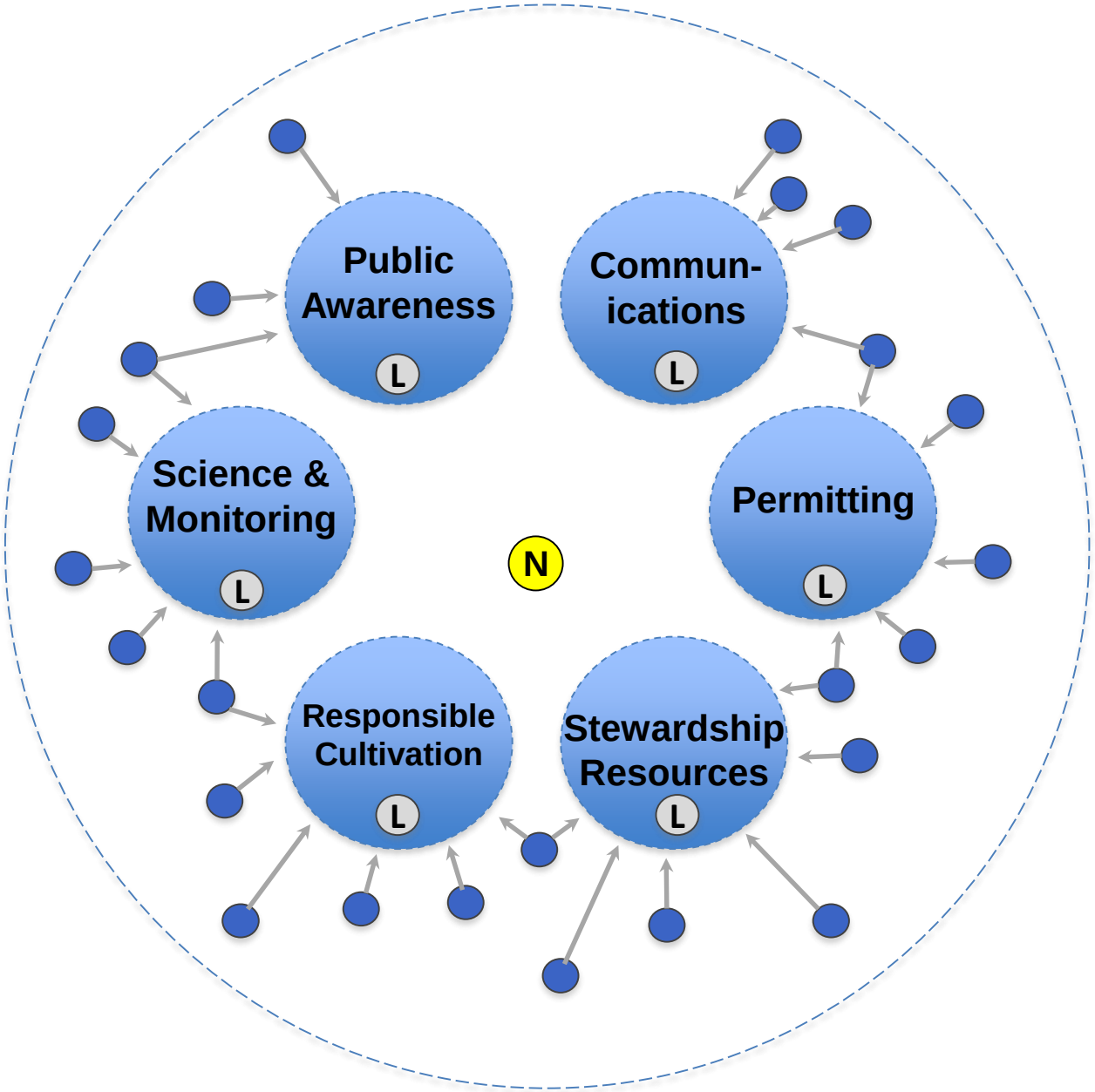
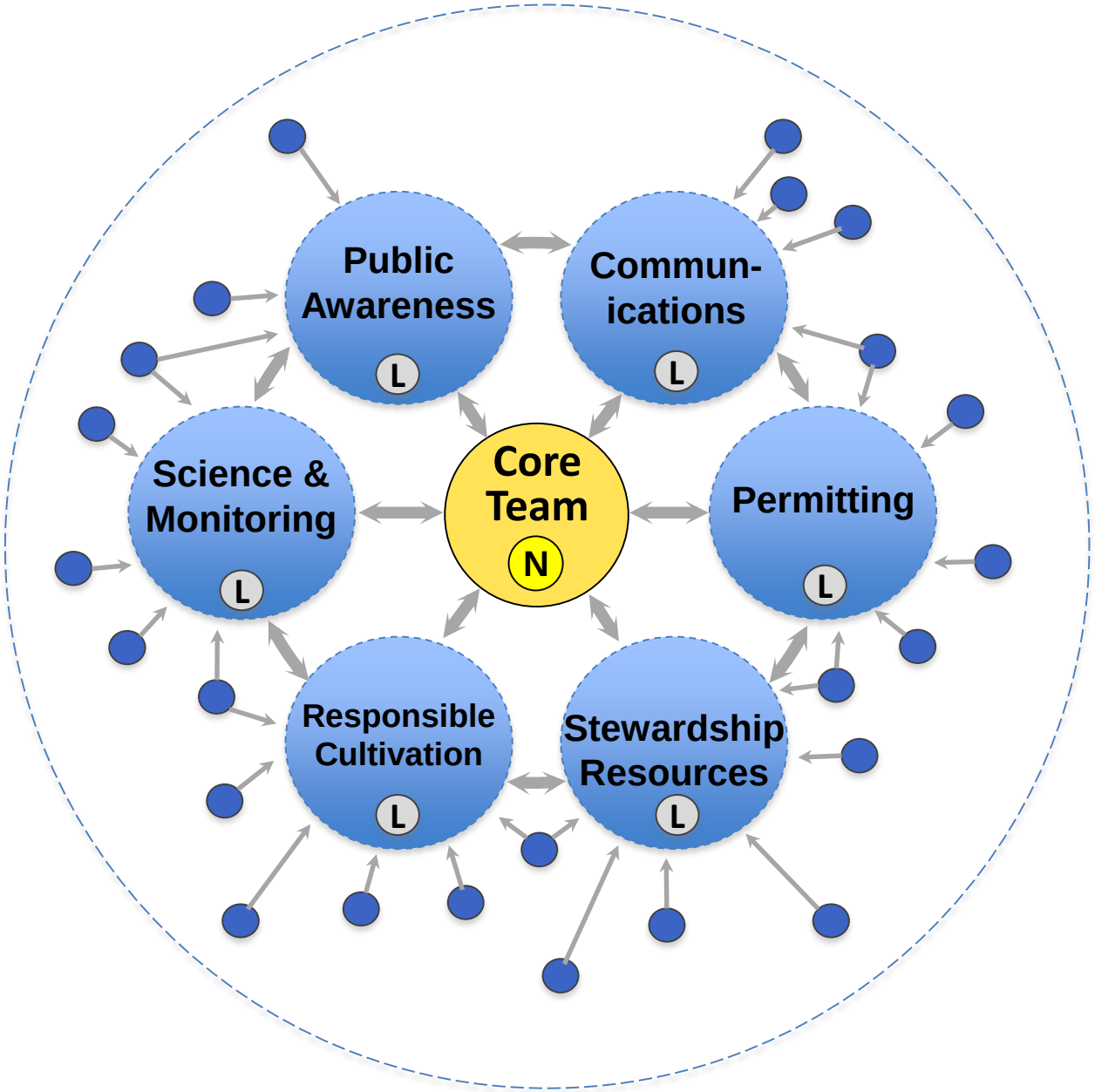


Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network



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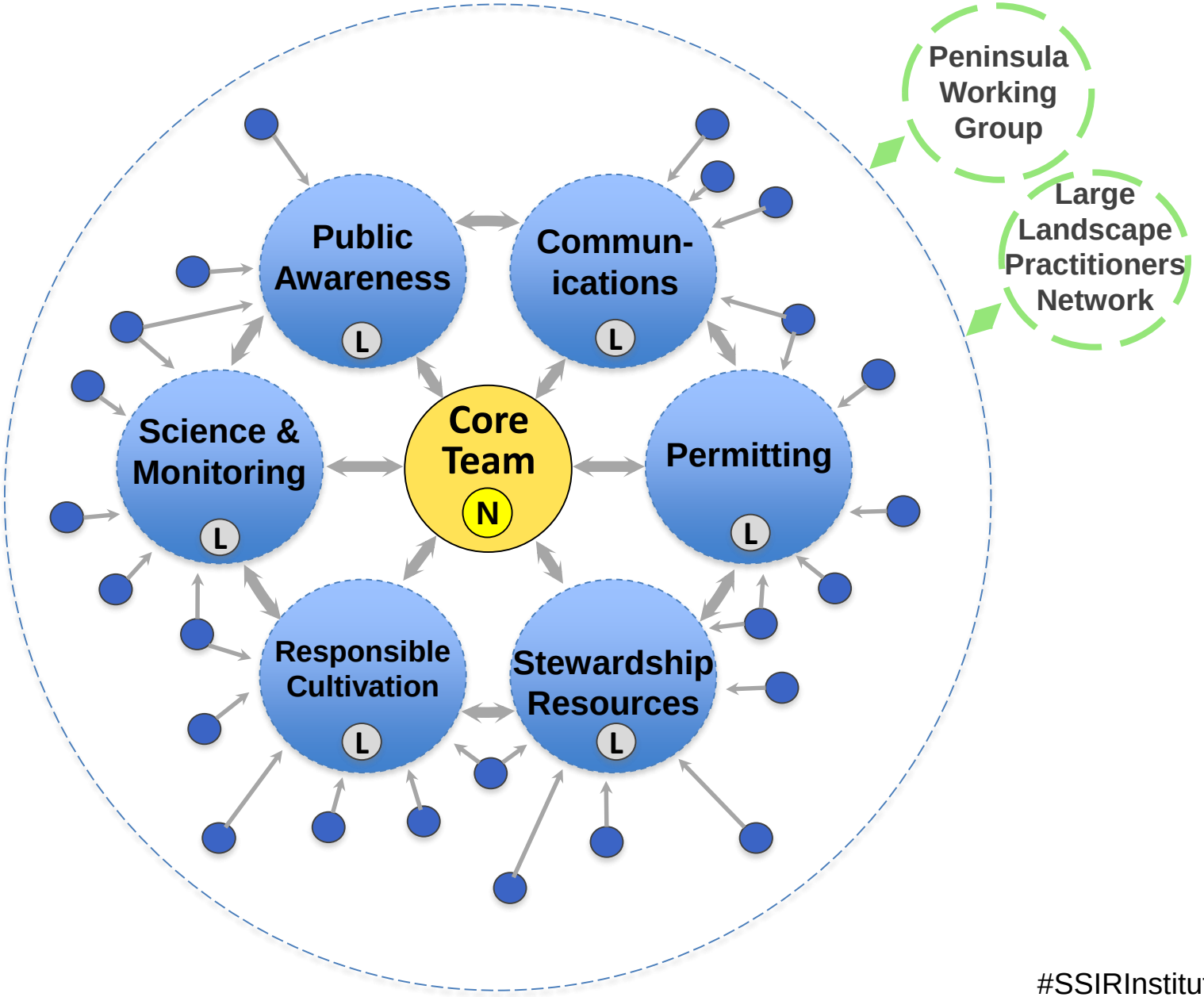
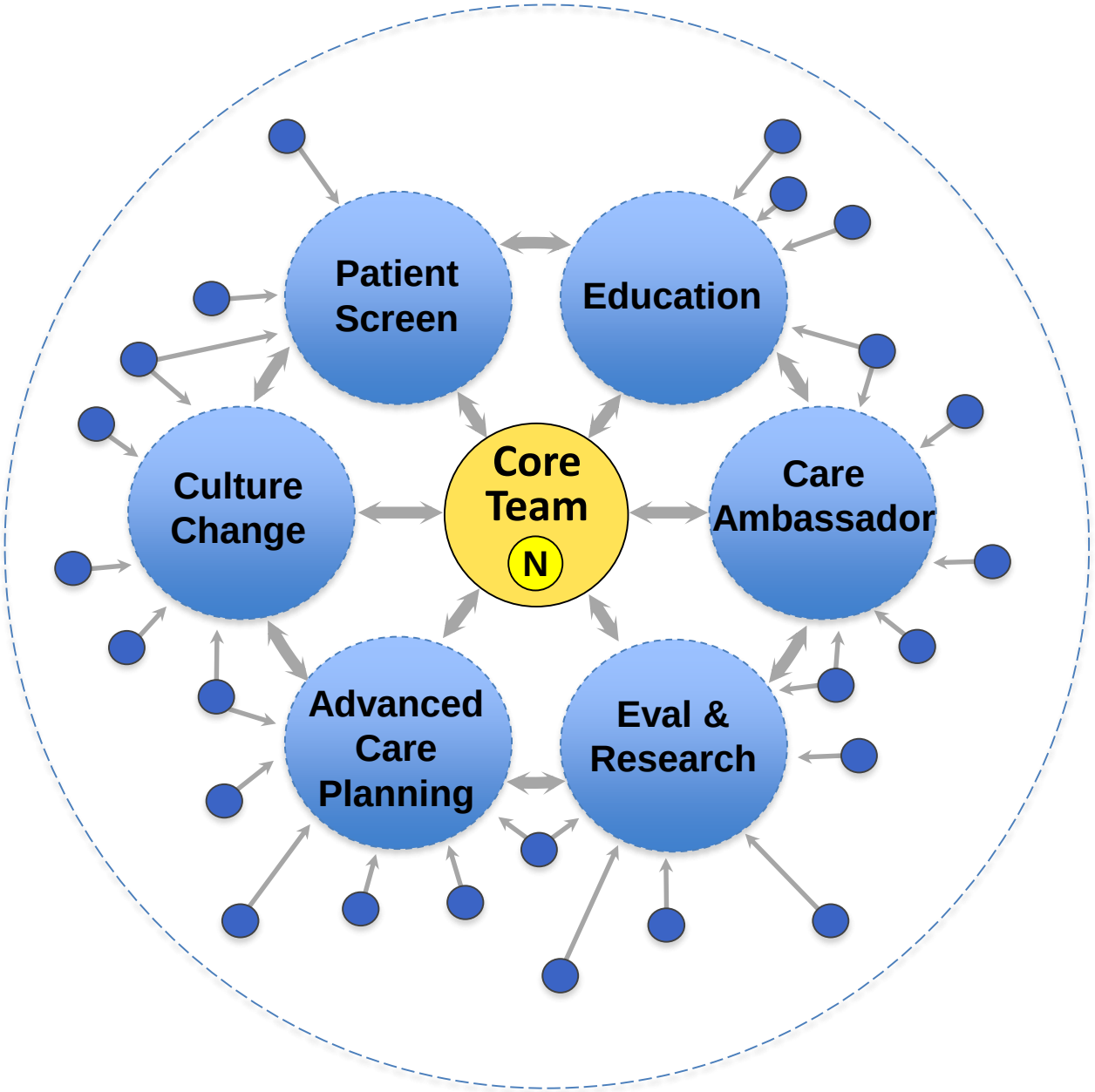
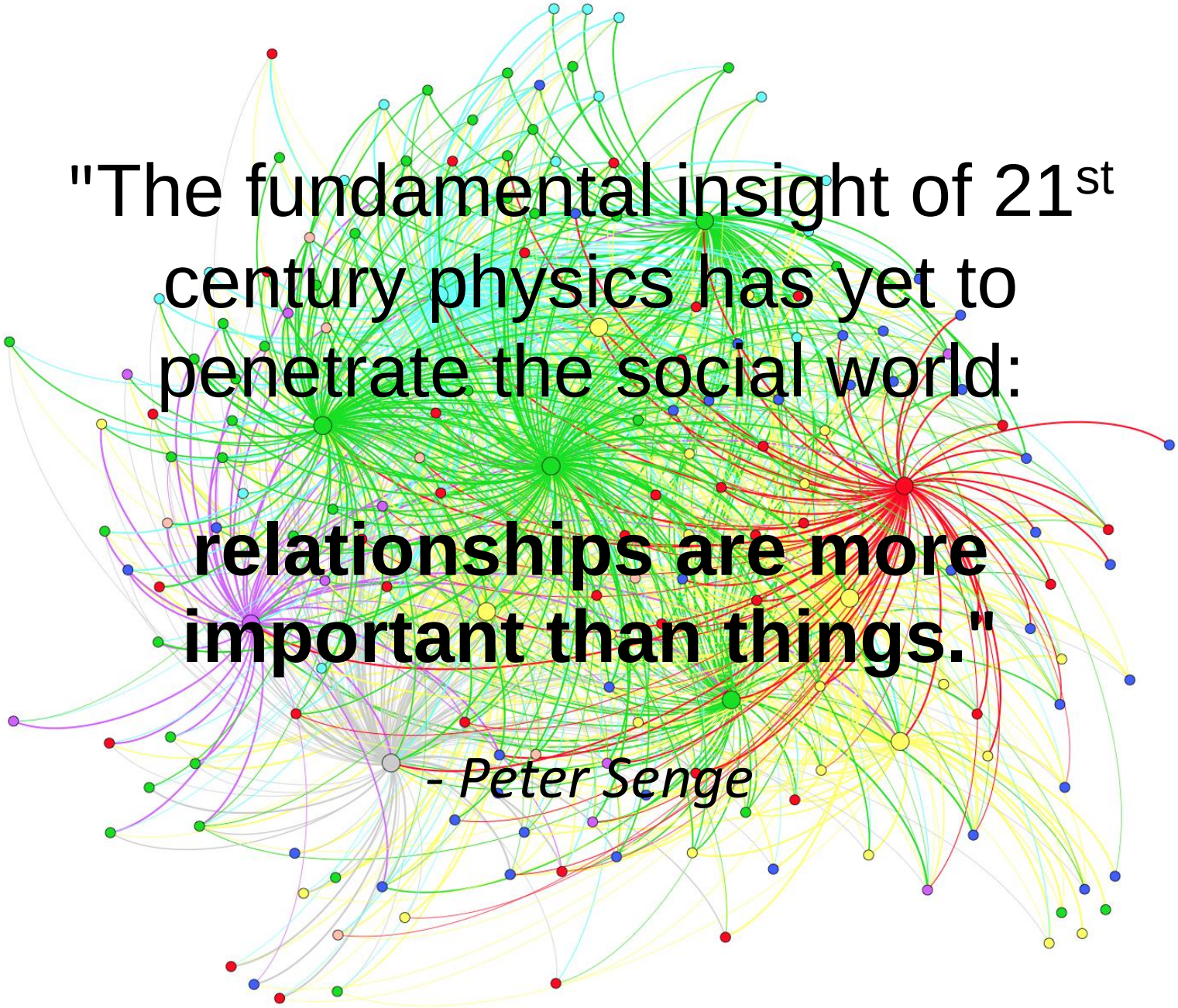


Complex Collaboration in Organizations

UCSF Coordination of Care Network





"The fundamental insight of 21st century physics has yet to penetrate the social world:

relationships are more important than things."

- Peter Senge

System Map Source: *Housing California, created by Scott Spann of Innate Strategies*

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Return on Relationships

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The Tactics of Trust – *SSIR* Winter '16

VIEWPOINT

The Tactics of Trust

Participants in a large, complex collaboration can build a capacity for finding common ground—and it doesn't have to take years.

DAVID SAWYER & DAVID EHRLICHMAN

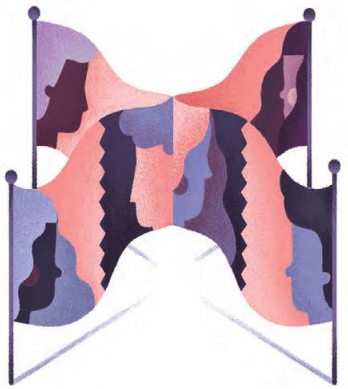
Creating the formal structures that make up an ambitious, multi-sector change initiative is one thing. But forging the intangible interpersonal connections that result in authentic bonds among participating leaders is something quite different. Indeed, it is notoriously difficult. "Developing trust among nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies is a monumental challenge," John Kania and Mark Kramer wrote in their landmark article "Collective Impact," which appeared in the winter 2011 issue of *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. "Participants need several years of regular meetings to build up enough experience with each other to recognize and appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts."

But what if it didn't have to take years? What if it is possible to accelerate the trust-building process that is essential to any ambitious collaboration effort? We believe that it is possible to build trust quickly—even across a network that brings together highly diverse groups of stakeholders. We don't mean trust that's based on liking or agreement. We mean *trust for impact*. Trust for impact entails the ability to cross boundaries, to find a slice of common ground, and then to work together despite significant organizational differences and sharp personal disagreements. By cultivating trust for impact, participants in a collaborative project can creatively manage their differences and form relationships that enable them to do critically important work.

We developed an accelerated approach to building trust for impact while working with the James Irvine Foundation to launch the New Leadership Network (NLN), a cross-sector network of leaders that aims to revitalize the city of Fresno, Calif. (We undertook this work in collaboration with Heather McLeod Grant, managing director of the NLN.) Before the formal launch of the NLN, we went through an extensive research phase. Fresno, we learned, was ripe for community-wide change. The city was beginning to receive an influx of philanthropic and federal resources, and talented people who had left the Fresno region were returning to the area in large numbers.

The NLN, we knew, would have to move quickly to capture that momentum. Otherwise, the network might not be able to overcome its most critical challenge: the significant diversity of its membership. Differences in age, race, gender, class, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and religious belief were vividly apparent. But instead of slowly wading into this challenge, we dived right into it—by making those differences explicit. In doing so, we followed the wisdom of Johnetta Cole, director of the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution, who said: "We are for difference. For allowing difference. For respecting difference. For celebrating difference. Until difference doesn't make any more difference."

That approach reflected our faith in the potential for collaboration among the leaders who took part in the NLN. We believed that if we could give those leaders enough direction and support through the early stages of the initiative, they would be able to undertake the hard work of establishing common ground. The NLN began its work in May 2013. Over the next 20 months, 35 participants not only revived existing community revitalization efforts but also created and led 86 new collaborations.



CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

In designing and launching the NLN, we developed or honed several practical exercises that participants used to build trust for impact.

Shift the context | In any effort to build trust, space matters. Bringing people to a location that is distinct from their everyday environment allows them to suspend judgment and to think in new ways. With each group of NLN participants, we initially convened for three days. Instead of hosting this gathering in a generic hotel or retreat center, we held it in a large vacation rental house outside of Fresno. Participants noted that cooking, cleaning, and occupying a living space together led to more unstructured conversations than they typically have at a professional event. They were able to let down their guard, shake off their

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The New Network Leader Series – *SSIR*

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Where small business goes to grow

Graustein
Memorial Fund
Working collaboratively to improve education

Energy
Foundation
Partnering toward a sustainable energy future

Housing
Development Consortium
Affording opportunity in Seattle-King County

Maddie's
Fund
Collaborating for a no kill nation

Sustainable
Conservation
Engaging the private sector for the environment

Dreams
InDeed International
Catalyzing leaders and networks in hard places

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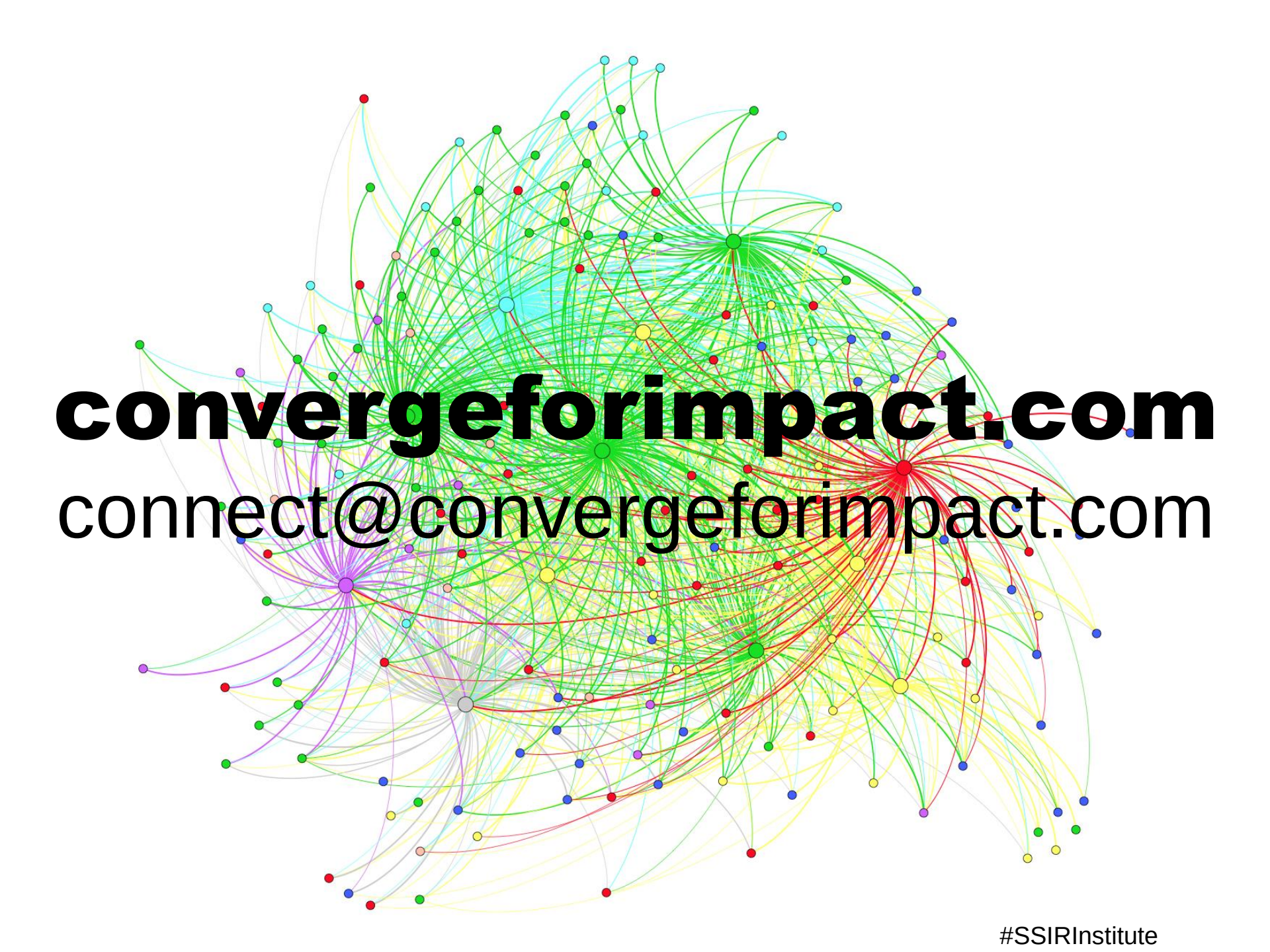

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1. Clarify Purpose

Purpose Statement:

How might the social sector adapt and evolve to most effectively to drive social and environmental change?

2. Convene the Right People

Present To Your Table:

1. Who are you?
2. What do you do?

Discuss With Your Table:

Who's missing from this conversation?

3. Cultivate Trust

In Pairs:

What's something you're sitting on that you haven't expressed fully? (A meaningful conversation you'd like to have with the group)

Discuss With Your Table:

What came up?

4. Coordinate Existing Actions

Present to Your Table:

What's something you're working on (or wrestling with) right now that you could use some help with?

Respond briefly if you see a potential opportunity to help or coordinate actions.

Discuss With Your Table:

Are there opportunities to coordinate existing actions?

5. Collaborate at the Systems Level

Discuss With Your Table:

- How might the social sector adapt and evolve to most effectively drive social and environmental change?
- What are potential leverage points?
- What's preventing us from doing this now?

Reflection

Present To Your Table (one sentence):

What's is something important you learned today that's going to help you in your work moving forward?

"Acknowledge all those who give their lives in the pursuit of a high purpose, transforming the unbearable discrepancy between the way things are and the way things ought to be."

Richard Berger

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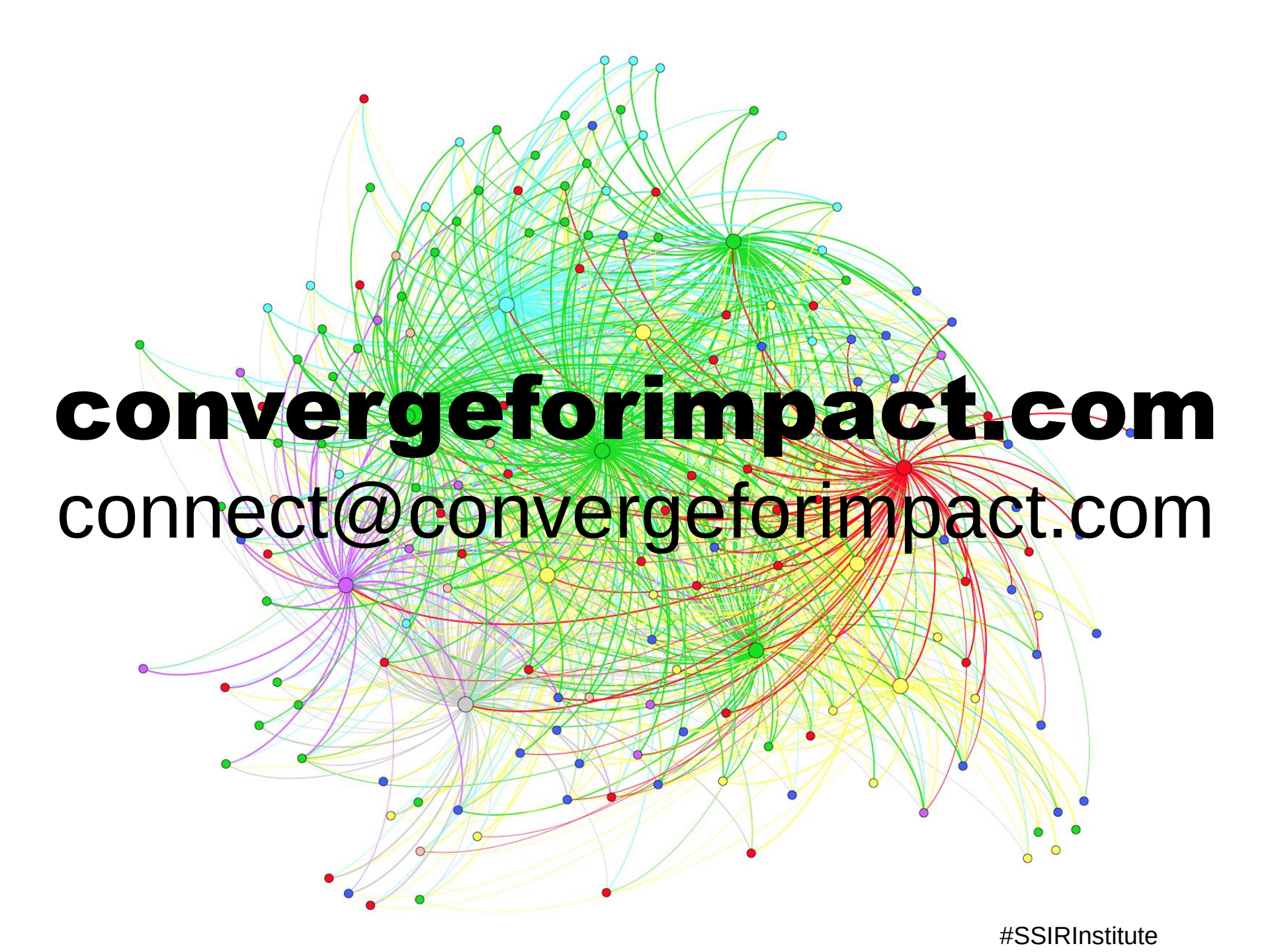

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David Sawyer

SESSION
Making Complex Collaboration Work

Question & Answer

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