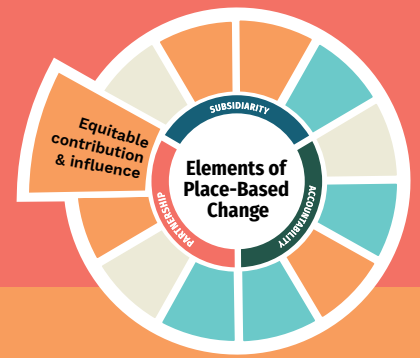


**Partnership:** Complex challenges can't be solved by one actor alone. Place-based change brings together governments, service providers, funders and communities to work collaboratively, across siloes, sectors and timeframes. To be effective, these partnerships must be grounded in trust, reciprocity and shared purpose.



## 3.4 Equitable contribution and influence

**All partners bring something to the table – knowledge, resources, relationships – and have a genuine say in shaping the path forward.**

### What is equitable contribution and influence in the context of place-based change?

Ensuring that partners in place-based work make equitable contributions and have equitable influence is an enabling practice of place-based change. This means recognising that all partners bring something of value – knowledge, relationships, lived experience and resources – and everyone should have a say in decisions about the work.

Every community holds invaluable assets – lived experience, local insights, networks of trust and cultural authority – that are essential resources for place-based change. Institutions often hold the visible forms of power – funding, infrastructure and technical expertise – but this can overshadow the community-held assets that can support and sustain long-term change. Governments, funders and service providers create the enabling environment – through policy frameworks, investment and professional

expertise – that help turn locally defined priorities into sustained action.

A strengths-based approach reinforces that every community already possesses skills, relationships and spaces that generate belonging and resilience. Equitable contribution builds from these assets rather than from an assumption of what is lacking or is a deficit. Equitable influence means community knowledge and voice are not symbolic or advisory but actively shape strategy, priorities and learning. Embedding this influence through shared governance, co-authored plans, and community-led data and monitoring ensures that all partners guide how resources are used and how success is defined. It ensures that decision-making, resourcing and accountability are a collective responsibility.

Together, equitable contribution and influence create mutual accountability and shared ownership of results. They allow communities, governments, funders and service providers to move beyond the limitations of their roles

and contribute equally in shaping direction and decisions.

### Why equitable contribution and influence is important in place-based change

Equitable contribution and influence recognises that all partners bring something of value to the table. Governments, funders, service providers and communities each hold different forms of knowledge, resources and authority that, when combined, can drive desired change. Solutions emerge when partners work together and value what each contributes.

Equitable contribution means each form of expertise is valued equally. It reflects self-determination in practice by valuing local communities as knowledge holders and decision-makers. When all partners contribute on an equal footing, their roles and strengths complement one another in the pursuit of a shared vision and purpose.

Community insight and lived experience reveal what matters and why, local organisations translate

these insights into action, and government agencies and funders create the policy, investment and accountability settings that make change sustainable. This distribution of responsibility and influence creates shared ownership of both the process and the results.

It builds legitimacy, strengthens mutual accountability, and ensures that programs are not just well designed but locally grounded and supported.

Each partner's strengths – whether relational, financial, technical, lived

or cultural – become part of the collective infrastructure for change. This balance of contribution and influence creates the conditions for sustainable, community-owned transformation and more responsive systems over time.

## Key takeaways

- **Create structures for shared governance and decision-making**

Establish joint leadership tables, community councils or partnership boards where communities, governments, funders and services have equal authority in decisions.

- **Resource community capability and participation**

Equitable influence cannot occur without adequate resourcing for community partners.

- **Value and integrate lived and local knowledge alongside technical expertise**

Use co-design, participatory planning and local storytelling to inform strategy and evaluation.

- **Strengthen relational and cultural capability across sectors**

Recruit boundary-spanning staff, invest in cultural learning, and model behaviours that value humility and shared learning.

- **Align systems and funding with local priorities**

Move away from short-term, output-driven funding towards long-term investment frameworks that reflect community-defined outcomes.