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# NEIGHBORS *FOR* BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS

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## PLACE-BASED

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### **SUSTAINABLE CHANGE:**

Small local places are the stage on which a good, sustainable and satisfying life unfolds. Seeing the neighborhoods as the primary unit of change is a powerful strategy for addressing some of our most intractable socio-political challenges. It is, however, a strategy that is counter-cultural, in that it seems to contradict the vast swathe of helping strategies which see individuals or institutions as the most legitimate domains for change.

### **PLACE MATTERS:**

While personal transformation and institutional interventions have their place, we have seen that by intentionally organizing relational power at neighborhoods level, local residents can connect local human, associational, environmental, economic and cultural resources together and by aggregating them at a hyper-local level come up with incredibly inventive solutions which are not within the reach of top-down institutions.

### **DISRUPTING SILOS:**

Neighborhoods, small communities, and villages are the scale at which local residents come to believe they can make an impact. This neighbor to neighbor impact is not about service provision, it is about neighborliness. A small local place also provides the context within which the multiplicity of helping agencies (each currently working within their own siloes) can agree a common ground that automatically takes them beyond their administrative boundaries, to work across siloes.

### **HYPER-NEIGHBORHOOD:**

“Neighborhood” is the potential context and scale within which everything can come together, where relational and civic power can, when needed, join with enterprising individuals and the power of civic professionals and their institutional resources. In sum, places can exist and thrive without people, but people cannot exist and thrive without places. Therefore, advocating for health, safety, learning, prosperity or justice, while behaving as though they have nothing to do with our places and cultures is like trying to grow a flower in a potted plant with limited soil, when we have an entire meadow at our disposal.