Lessons on partnerships for complex systems change

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OVERVIEW

- Our premise
  - Complexity and partnerships

- Successes and challenges to date
- 4 Lessons

OUR PREMISE

- Housing instability and homelessness are complex issues.

- Addressing the issue requires a systems response.

- We have what we need to address the issue.

Complex issues

- No 'one' owns the problem or the solution
- Multiple causes and interdependent factors
- No single solution
- Emergent solutions and systems

Examples

Climate change, pandemics, poverty, housing

Partnership approach

- Multiple players with different missions, visions, values, priorities and processes
- Multiple levels of 'partnership' interaction
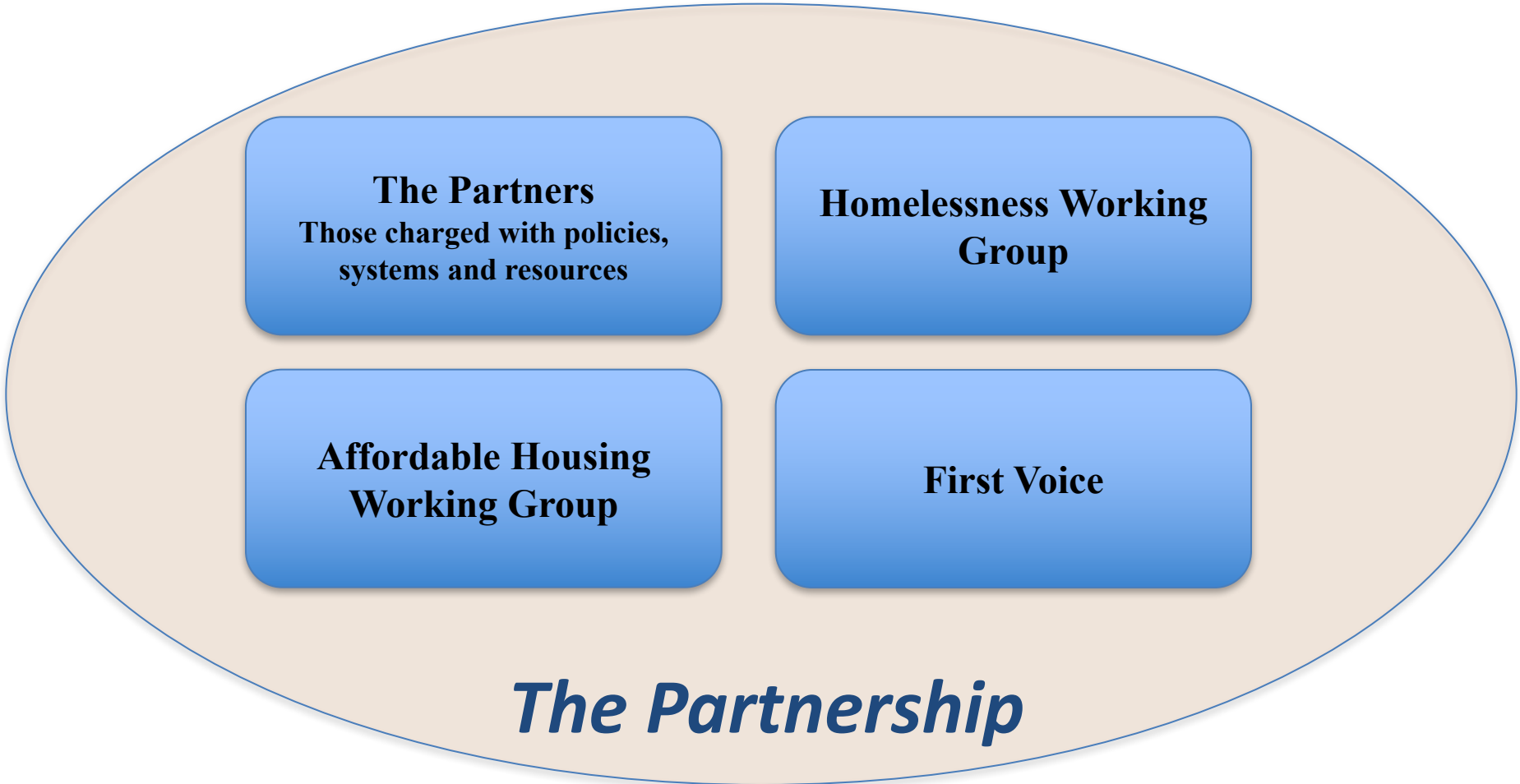- Individual, shared, parallel and collective action

Inherently and unavoidably messy, time consuming, challenging.

Imperative to address complex issues.

Some stakeholders

- Persons with lived experience of homelessness
- Persons facing housing poverty or at risk of facing housing poverty
- Service providers
- Organizations that set community and institutional policy
- Organizations that control and allocate resources within community

housing and homelessness partnership

The Partners
Those charged with policies, systems and resources

Homelessness Working Group

Affordable Housing Working Group

First Voice

The Partnership

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Successes

- Municipal focus on housing
- Community plan
- Common work: SPDAT, PD, eviction fund, rent supplements
- New ideas

Challenges

- Bridging organizational cultures
- Maintaining momentum
- Building and maintaining trust and buy-in
- Adequate resources

LESSONS LEARNED

A FOOT-RACE

#1: Co-create decision making processes and timelines

- Working together vs taking over
- Comprehend decision making processes and timelines of others
- Co-create and articulate common timelines and signposts for work
- Agree on reporting and accountability

#2: Iterative process

Ask deliberately and in meaningful ways of everyone involved:

"Is this working? Is it working for you? What's working? What's not? What needs to change?"

Keep the momentum going.

#3: The need for brokers

Multiple organizations and players with different mandates, values, priorities, approaches etc. need to be bridged for success.

- Understand the issue
- Respected in the community
- Suitable personality and style
- Adequately resourced

#4: Many players, many roles

- Everyone needed, welcomed and valued
- Language and structure matter *a lot*
  – Collective vs hierarchical
  – Roles, responsibilities, expectations and accountability
- Communication is key

**THANK YOU
and
QUESTIONS?**

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