

Sustaining Healthy Cities Through Collaboration

Insights from Toolkits for
Purpose-Oriented Networks

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Toolkits serve as the operational blueprints for network action



Gap in Theory and Practice

Network Effectiveness

- Our understanding of **network effectiveness** remains limited to perceptions on how to collaborate **instead of how networks can actually achieve their goals** of improving value in health care delivery (Peeters et al, 2023, p. 278).
- Action oriented leadership, goal definition and task orientation, and activities linked to network effectiveness (Sharek et al., 2007; Alexander et al., 2003) (Alexander et al., 2010; Bazzoli et al., 2003)
- Little evidence linking types of activities to governance types (Van Den Oord et al, 2023)

Network Interventions and Outcomes

- Social network interventions, goals, actions, and outcomes must be analyzed separately across levels-activities' vary according to the local, setting and system level and what kind of change is aimed at i.e expansion, diffusion or structural change? (Robins et al 2023; Valente, 2012)
- **Practice gap:** Toolkits/playbooks/guides translate collaborative ideals into action; **we lack systematic evidence on *what activities they prescribe and how prescriptions vary*** across policy domains and producers.



Research questions

RQ1: Who produces and where do toolkits come from for PONs?

RQ2: What activities do toolkits prescribe for PONs?

RQ3: How do prescriptions vary by the intended target sector of the PON?

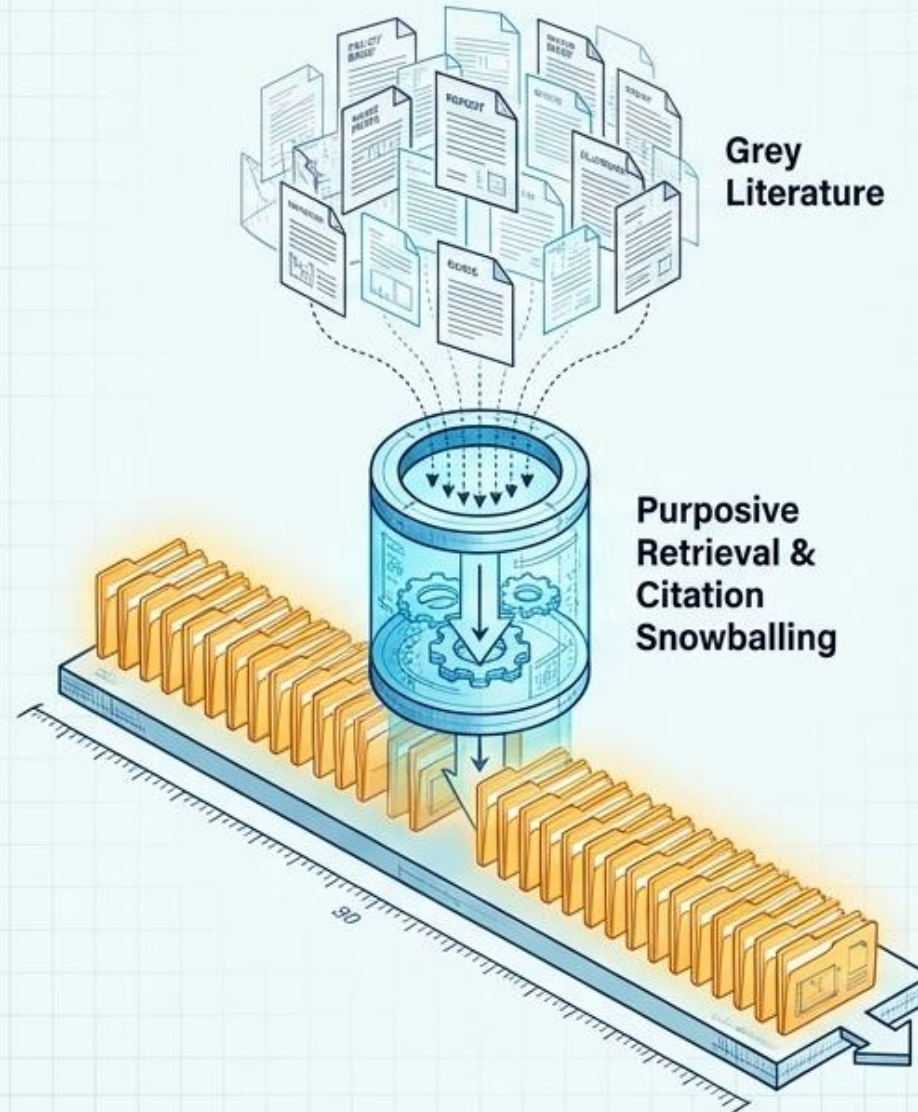
Decoding the grey literature through rigorous qualitative analysis

Corpus Construction

Sample Size: Qualitative content analysis of ~50 cross-domain toolkits specifically targeting health and wellness

Inclusion Criteria: Self-described as a toolkit, guide, or playbook for interorganizational collaboration; policy-relevant; publicly accessible.

Exclusion Criteria: Single-organization SOPs; purely conceptual academic briefs; non-PON models.



Methodology Details

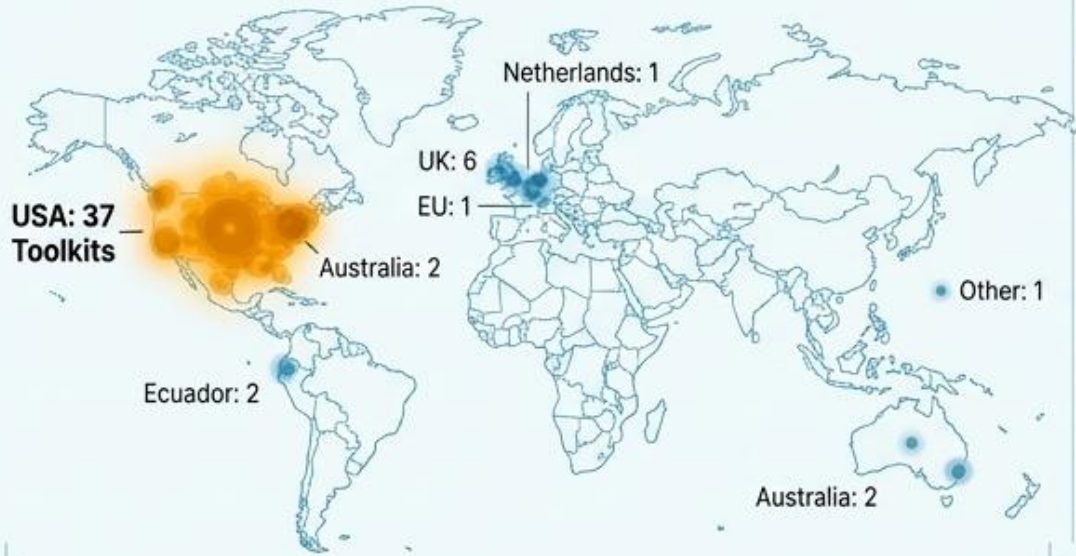
Method: Conducted via purposive web and database retrieval, coupled with extensive citation snowballing to uncover hidden artifacts.

Metadata Captured: Deep archiving of producer archetype, geographic origin, specific policy domain, intended end-users, and operational network stage.

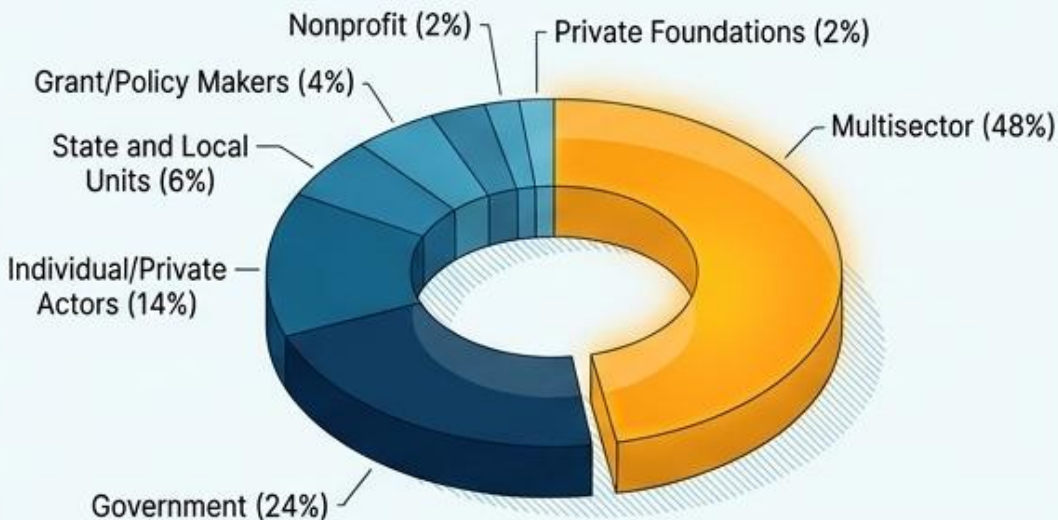
RQ1: Who produces and where do toolkits come from for PONs?

The operational blueprints overwhelmingly target USA multisector networks

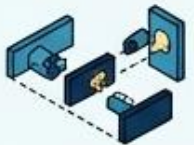
Geographic Origin



Target Sector Distribution



Leading Intermediaries



Fragmented Specialists



Health Sector Nonprofits



Academic & Public Sector



Philanthropy-Driven Partnerships

Five distinct archetypes of toolkit producers drive network design

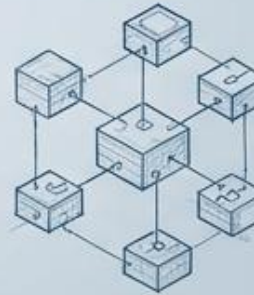
Leading Intermediaries

Examples: Collective Impact Forum, Tamarack Institute, StriveTogether



Fragmented Specialists

Examples: Blueprints for Change, Inst. for Conservation Leadership



Health Sector Nonprofits

Examples: NACCHO, March of Dimes



Academic & Public Sector

Examples: European Commission, HUD ConnectHomeUSA



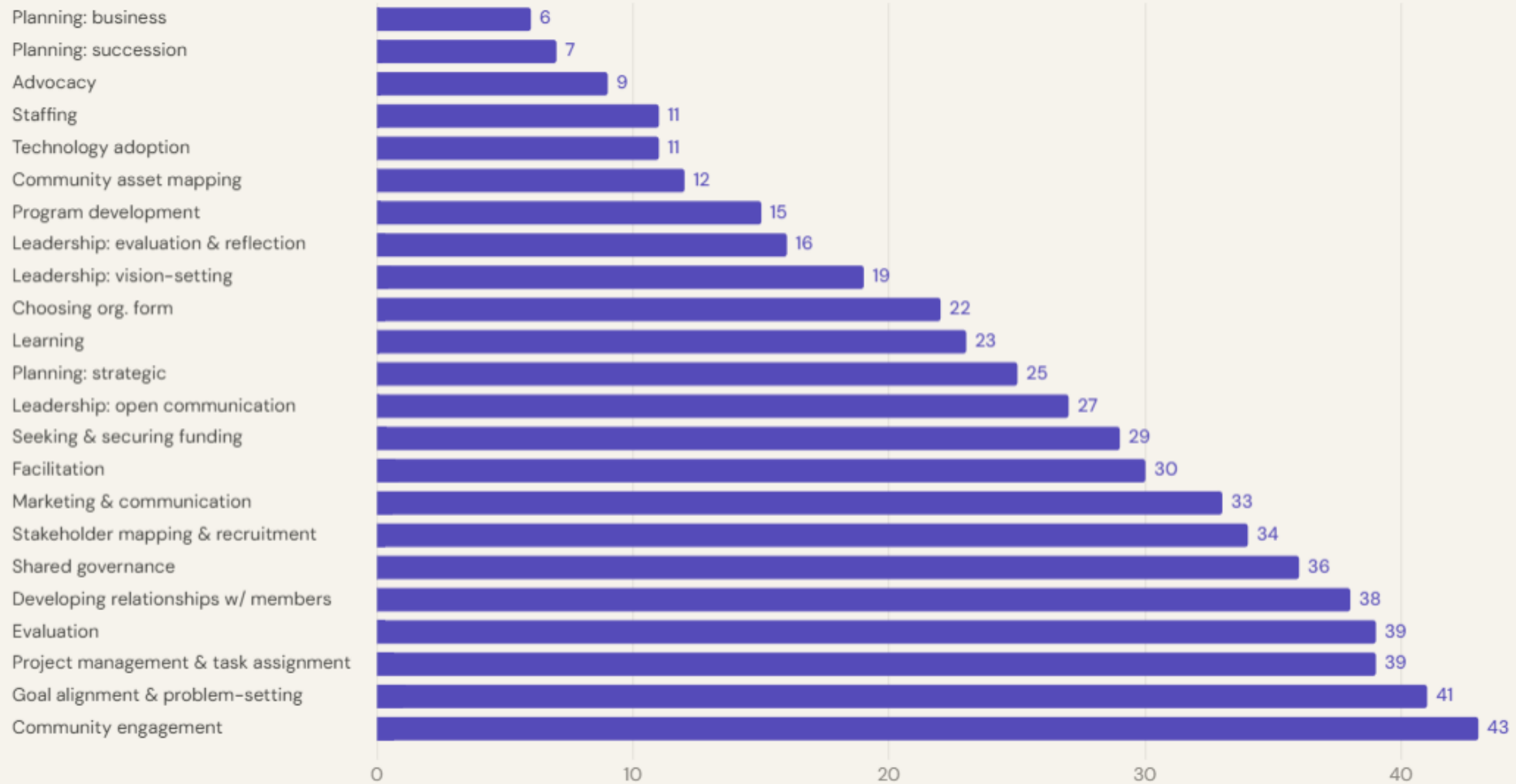
Philanthropy-Driven Partnerships

Examples: AARP/RWJF, Nonprofit Finance Fund



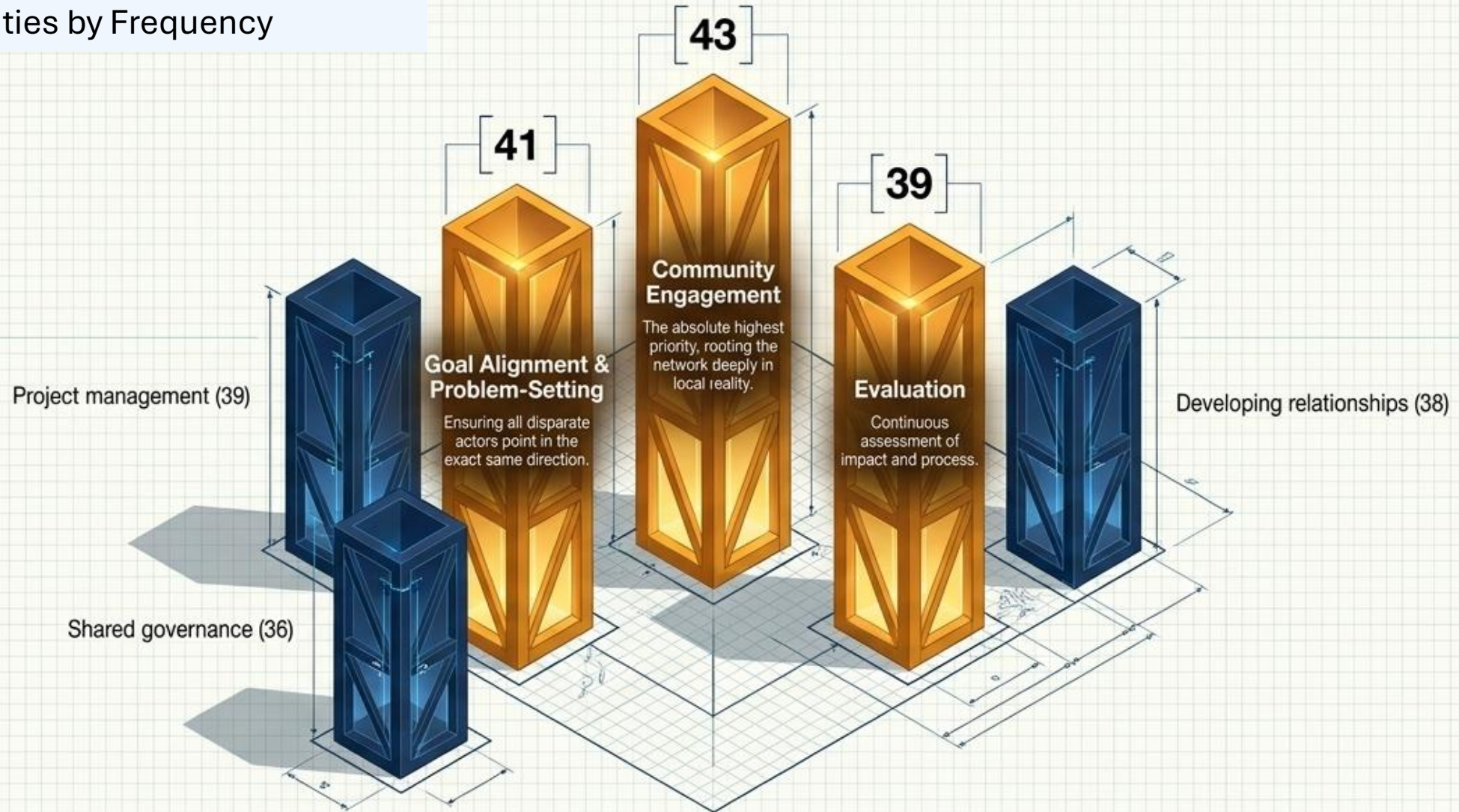
RQ2: What activities do toolkits prescribe for PONs?

PON activity codes — *frequency across toolkit corpus*

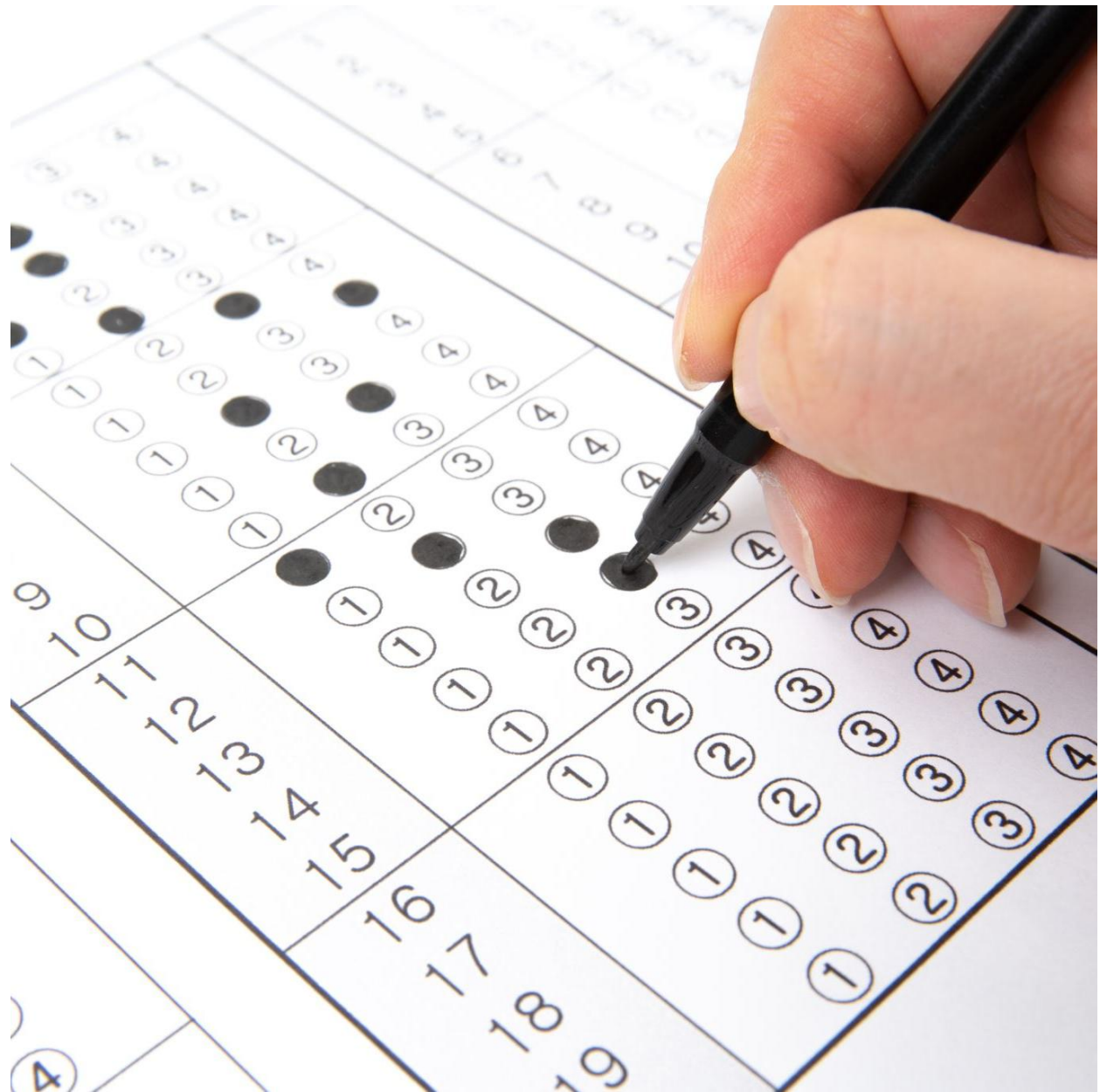


Community engagement and goal alignment drive the core engine of PONs













Top Activities by Frequency



How do prescriptions vary by the intended target sector of the PON?



Toolkits Across Sectors Emphasize Different Activities

 GOVERNMENT	 GRANT/POLICY MAKERS	 MULTISECTOR	 NONPROFIT & PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS
<p>#1 Goal alignment (42%)</p> 	<p>#1 Link to external resources (33%)</p> 	<p>#1 Evaluation (12%)</p> 	<p>#1 Shared governance (13%)</p> 
<p>#2 Leadership Open Communication (12%)</p> 	<p>#2 Goal alignment (13%)</p> 	<p>#2 Goal alignment (8%)</p> 	<p>#2 Goal alignment (12%)</p> 

Synthesis: Multisector PONs struggle because they operate on conflicting logic: Governments seek alignment, funders demand external resource linkage, and nonprofits look for tactical shared governance and management.

Next Steps: Towards a Typology of PON Activities

- Iterative Axial Coding (in progress)
- Understanding the ‘big activity categories’
- Understanding how they are interconnected
- Who does what and when?

Closing Thought: By transforming isolated grey literature into a rigorous operational typology, we can finally equip community leaders with the structurally sound blueprints needed to sustain healthy cities.

