

WHO DECIDES?



Democratizing Data in Local Investment

A PROGRAM OF EAGLE VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

Why This Matters

Traditional funding systems rely on limited data—credit scores, financial history, and institutional bias—often excluding emerging leaders and entrepreneurs.

Elevar challenges this model by centering community-led data, including lived experience, peer evaluation, and shared decision-making.

“WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COMMUNITIES DEFINE WHAT COUNTS AS “DATA”?”

What Traditional Systems Miss

Traditional Data	Missing Voices
Financial Metrics	Lived Experiences
Institutional Review	Peer Insight
Static Indicators	Community Context

Data has historically been used to gatekeep access.

Elevar uses data to redistribute power.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Shift power in funding with participatory data
- Integrate lived experience into evaluation
- Apply community-defined metrics for long-term impact

METHODS

Elevar’s Participatory Model

We’ve built a community-governed, data-informed investment process that captures the full picture behind the numbers.

Participatory Data System



Shared Decision-Making



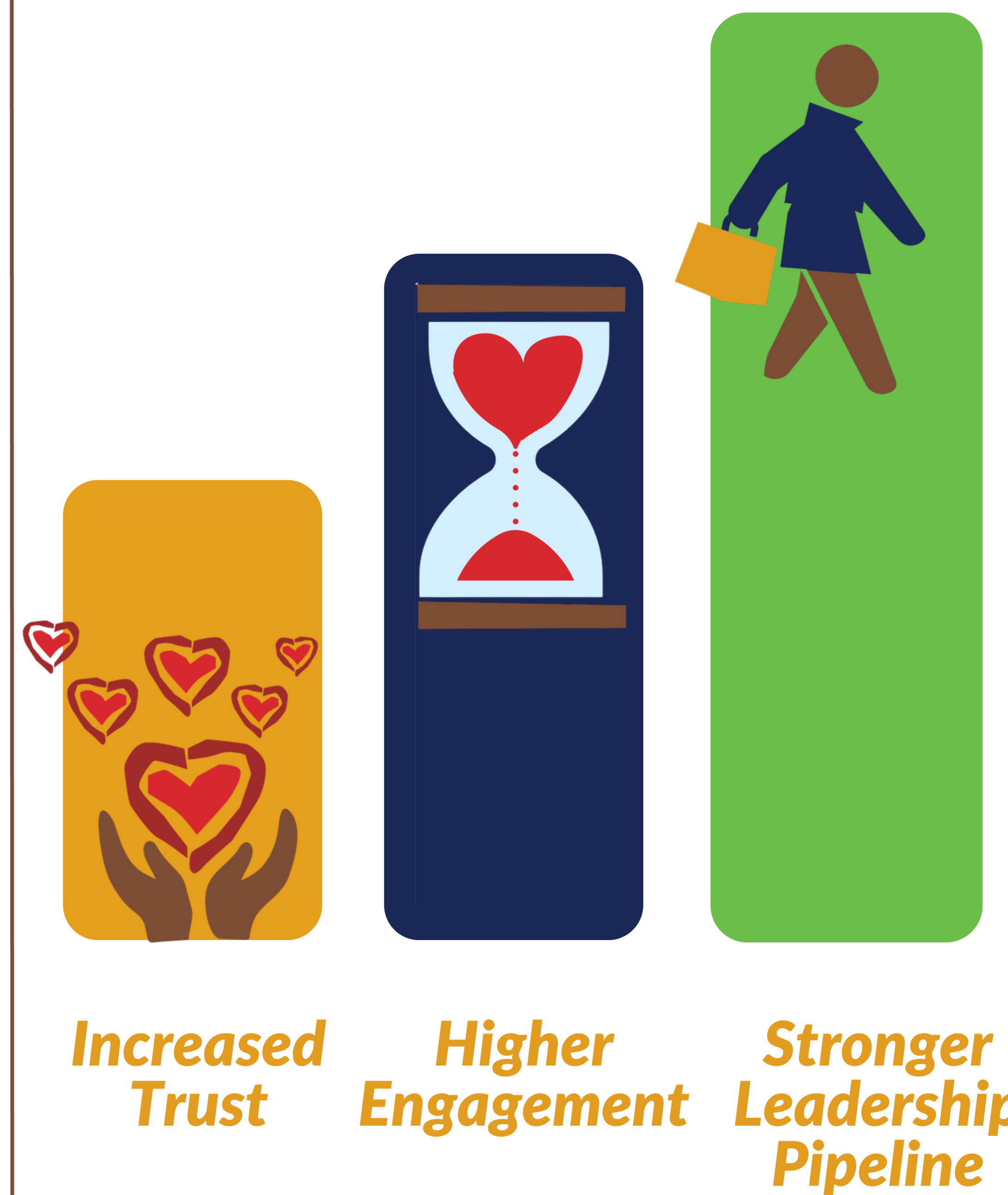
Community-Defined Metrics



Data As A Living System

RESULTS

What changes when power shifts?



“This is the first time I felt like my story—not just my numbers—mattered.”
Elevar Cohort 1 Graduate

Before	→	After
Gatekeeping	→	Access
Top-Down Decisions	→	Community Governance
Limited Metrics	→	Holistic Success

CALL TO ACTION

Bring This Model to Your Work

- Center lived experience
- Share decision-making with communities
- Redefine success beyond traditional metrics

CONCLUSION

Reimagining Data

Participatory data systems don’t just improve decision-making; they **build trust, expand opportunity, and redefine leadership.**

Data is not neutral. It reflects who has power and who gets left out.