

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT COURSE

3. Moving Beyond Top-Down  
& Bottom-Up



1

Why we focus on 'top-down' & 'bottom-up' concepts

2

Principles & practices of community development

3

Theories behind international & community development

NOTE: this lesson focuses heavily on aid & development

But you don't have to work in aid & development to do this course

This course is for anyone whose work touches the lives of  
community members...

Bridging Peoples Podcast interview  
with Prof. David Hicks (Stonybrook University)

“In Washington, they seem to flip between these poles. There’s a time when it’s always top-down. Then somebody says, hey, this doesn’t work. And enough voices are raised; influential voices are raised...

“And so then you find, the great craze then is for bottom-up, bottom-up. And then that seems to come to an end. And then it’s back to top-down again.”

Community development not just a local version of international development!

International aid & development began with decolonisation

'Modernisation theory' created to support aid & development sector

This history influences aid & development today

Ignores history of economic growth via colonisation (theft & slavery)

Ignores politicisation/other darker motivations for giving aid

For example, tied aid - using aid to exercise political influence

Community development/engagement/mobilisation/organising has more radical roots...

Grassroots initiatives

Community empowerment

Social work

These theoretical roots very different to international development!

Up and down not the only two directions available to us!

Side-by-side: agencies & communities collaborating together

**BUT!** This requires shift in culture & mindset



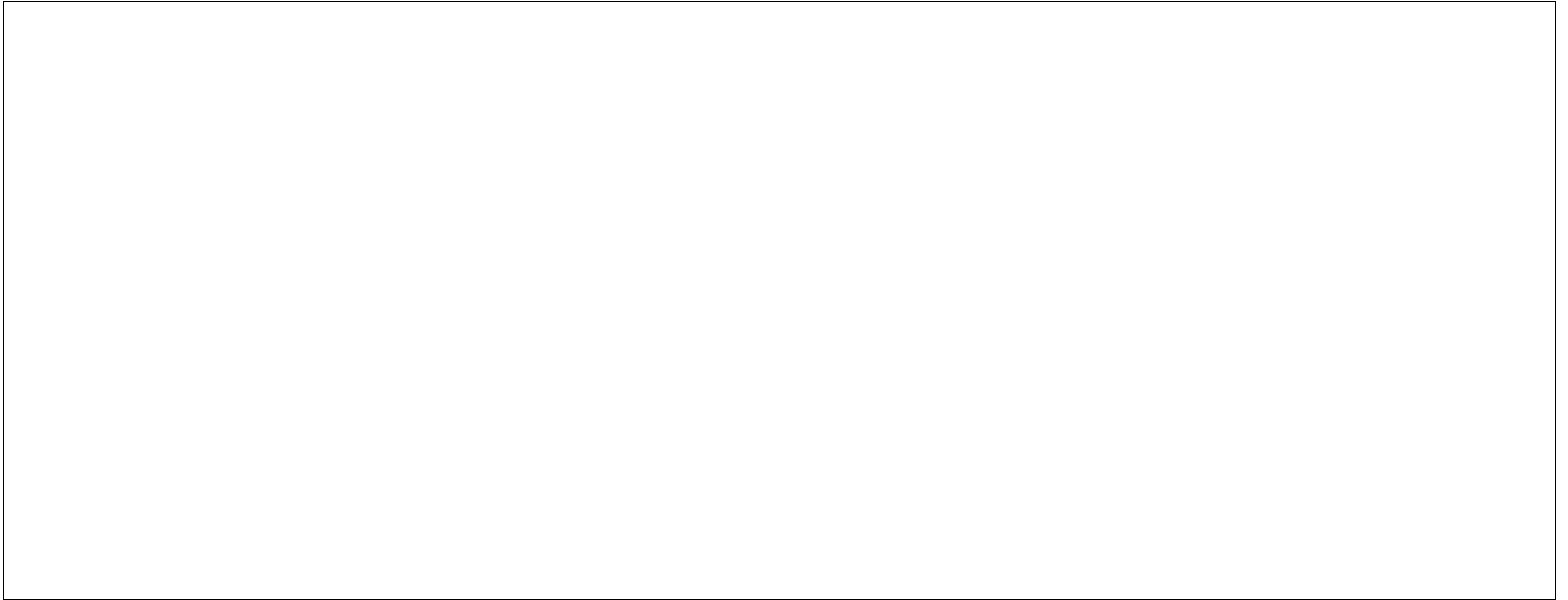


History & theory of top-down & bottom-up

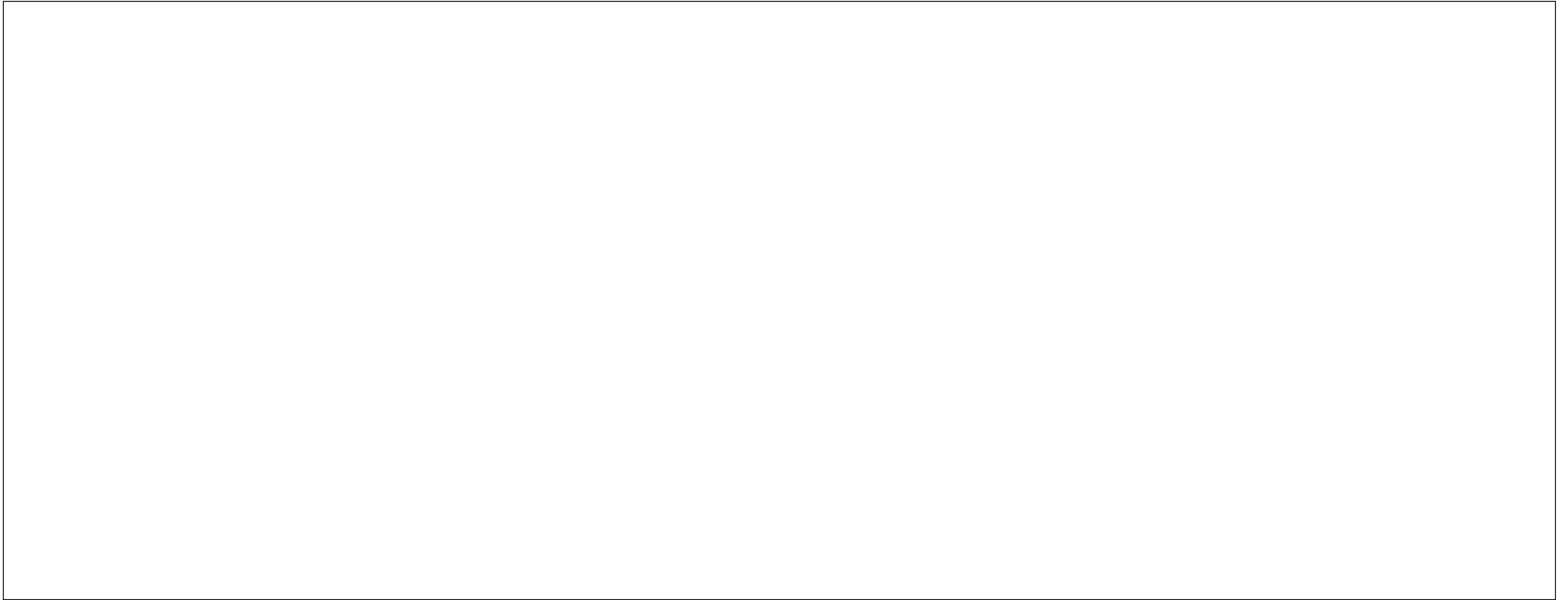
Community development not just a local version of international development!

Going beyond top-down and bottom-up approaches

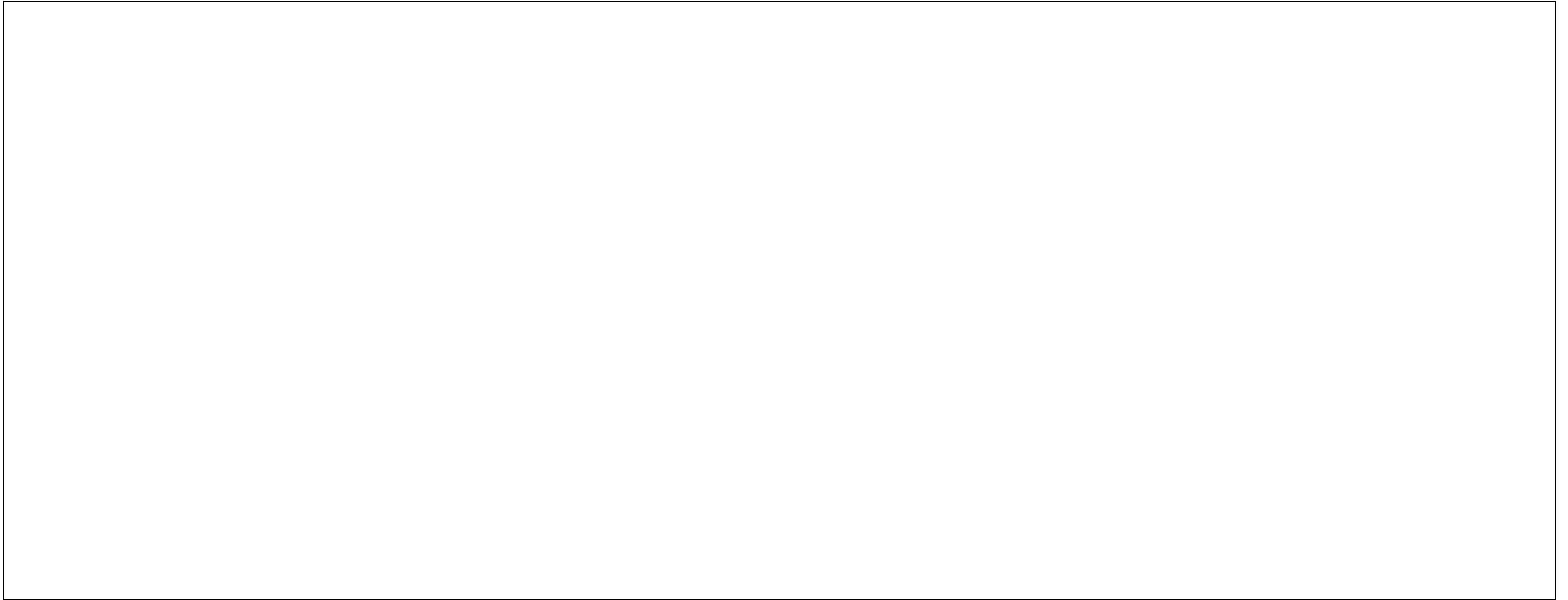
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