# Putting Collective Impact into Practice in Maine Communities

# Workbook

Friday, October 26, 2012
Lewiston Public Library

# Workshop Agenda

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|---|---|
| **8:15-9:00** | **Registration, coffee/tea, scones, bagels** |
| **9:00-9:15** | **Welcome – Mike Burke, President & CEO of Community Concepts, Inc.** |
| **9:15-10:30** | **An Overview of Collective Impact - Liz Weaver, Vice President, Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement** |
| **10:30-10:45** | **Break** |
| **10:45-noon** | **The Five Conditions of Collective Impact:  Delving Deeper and Q/A – Liz Weaver** |
| **Noon – 1 p.m.** | **Luncheon featuring sandwiches and other home-made locally grown and made foods from Forage Market** |
| **1 p.m. – 2:30** | **Putting Collective Impact into Practice – Challenges and Opportunities - Liz Weaver** |
| **2:30-2:45** | **Break** |
| **2:45-4:00** | **Collaborative Leadership and Collective Impact: Developing a Path Forward and Q/A – Liz Weaver** |

**Liz Weaver, Vice President, Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement** leads the Vibrant Communities Canada team providing coaching, leadership and support to community partners across Canada.   As lead coach, she helps initiatives develop their frameworks of change, supports and guides their projects and helps connect them to Vibrant Communities and other comprehensive community collaborations.  Liz is one of Tamarack's popular trainers and has developed and delivered curriculum on a variety of workshop topics including collaborative governance, leadership, collective impact, community innovation, influencing policy change and social media for impact and engagement.

She has held leadership positions with the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction, which was recognized with the Canadian Urban Institute's David Crombie Leadership Award in 2009, YWCA Hamilton, Volunteer Hamilton and Volunteer Canada.   In 2002, Liz completed a Masters of Management for National Voluntary Sector Leaders through McGill University and her thesis 'Storytelling and the Voluntary Sector' was published.  Liz was awarded a Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2002 for her leadership in the voluntary sector, was an Athena Award finalist and in 2004 was awarded the Women in the Workplace award from the City of Hamilton.

# Collective Impact by John Kania and Mark Kramer – Excerpt from Stanford Social Innovation Review Article – Winter 2011.

**THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS**

Our research shows that successful collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.

*Common Agenda* Collective impact requires all participants to have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. Take a close look at any group of funders and nonprofits that believe they are working on the same social issue, and you quickly find that it is often not the same issue at all. Each organization often has a slightly different definition of the problem and the ultimate goal. These differences are easily ignored when organizations work independently on isolated initiatives, yet these differences splinter the efforts and undermine the impact of the field as a whole. Collective impact requires that these differences be discussed and resolved. Every participant need not agree with every other participant on all dimensions of the problem. In fact, disagreements continue to divide participants in all of our examples of collective impact. All participants must agree, however, on the primary goals for the collective impact initiative as a whole. The Elizabeth River Project, for example, had to find common ground among the different objectives of corporations, governments, community groups, and local citizens in order to establish workable cross-sector initiatives.

Funders can play an important role in getting organizations to act in concert. In the case of Strive, rather than fueling hundreds of strategies and nonprofits, many funders have aligned to support Strive's central goals. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation realigned its education goals to be more compatible with Strive, adopting Strive's annual report card as the foundation's own measures for progress in education. Every time an organization applied to Duke Energy for a grant, Duke asked, "Are you part of the [Strive] network?"And when a new funder, the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, expressed interest in education, they were encouraged by virtually every major education leader in Cincinnati to join Strive if they wanted to have an impact in local education.[1]

*Shared Measurement Systems* Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact. Agreement on a common agenda is illusory without agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures.

It may seem impossible to evaluate hundreds of different organizations on the same set of measures. Yet recent advances in Web-based technologies have enabled common systems for reporting performance and measuring outcomes. These systems increase efficiency and reduce cost. They can also improve the quality and credibility of the data collected, increase effectiveness by enabling grantees to learn from each other's performance, and document the progress of the field as a whole.[2]

All of the preschool programs in Strive, for example, have agreed to measure their results on the same criteria and use only evidence-based decision making. Each type of activity requires a different set of measures, but all organizations engaged in the same type of activity report on the same measures. Looking at results across multiple organizations enables the participants to spot patterns, find solutions, and implement them rapidly. The preschool programs discovered that children regress during the summer break before kindergarten. By launching an innovative "summer bridge" session, a technique more often used in middle school, and implementing it simultaneously in all preschool programs, they increased the average kindergarten readiness scores throughout the region by an average of 10 percent in a single year.[3]

*Mutually Reinforcing Activities* Collective impact initiatives depend on a diverse group of stakeholders working together, not by requiring that all participants do the same thing, but by encouraging each participant to undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels in a way that supports and is coordinated with the actions of others.

The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action. Each stakeholder's efforts must fit into an overarching plan if their combined efforts are to succeed. The multiple causes of social problems, and the components of their solutions, are interdependent. They cannot be addressed by uncoordinated actions among isolated organizations.

All participants in the Elizabeth River Project, for example, agreed on the 18-point watershed restoration plan, but each is playing a different role based on its particular capabilities. One group of organizations works on creating grassroots support and engagement among citizens, a second provides peer review and recruitment for industrial participants who voluntarily reduce pollution, and a third coordinates and reviews scientific research.

The 15 SSNs in Strive each undertake different types of activities at different stages of the educational continuum. Strive does not prescribe what practices each of the 300 participating organizations should pursue. Each organization and network is free to chart its own course consistent with the common agenda, and informed by the shared measurement of results.

*Continuous Communication* Developing trust among nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies is a monumental challenge. Participants need several years of regular meetings to build up enough experience with each other to recognize and appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts. They need time to see that their own interests will be treated fairly, and that decisions will be made on the basis of objective evidence and the best possible solution to the problem, not to favor the priorities of one organization over another.

Even the process of creating a common vocabulary takes time, and it is an essential prerequisite to developing shared measurement systems. All the collective impact initiatives we have studied held monthly or even biweekly in-person meetings among the organizations' CEO-level leaders. Skipping meetings or sending lower-level delegates was not acceptable. Most of the meetings were supported by external facilitators and followed a structured agenda.

The Strive networks, for example, have been meeting regularly for more than three years. Communication happens between meetings too: Strive uses Web-based tools, such as Google Groups, to keep communication flowing among and within the networks. At first, many of the

leaders showed up because they hoped that their participation would bring their organizations additional funding, but they soon learned that was not the meetings' purpose. What they discovered instead were the rewards of learning and solving problems together with others who shared their same deep knowledge and passion about the issue.

***Backbone Support Organizations*** Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative. Coordination takes time, and none of the participating organizations has any to spare. The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails.

The backbone organization requires a dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly. Strive has simplified the initial staffing requirements for a backbone organization to three roles: project manager, data manager, and facilitator.

Collective impact also requires a highly structured process that leads to effective decision making. In the case of Strive, staff worked with General Electric (GE) to adapt for the social sector the Six Sigma process that GE uses for its own continuous quality improvement. The Strive Six Sigma process includes training, tools, and resources that each SSN uses to define its common agenda, shared measures, and plan of action, supported by Strive facilitators to guide the process.

In the best of circumstances, these backbone organizations embody the principles of adaptive leadership: the ability to focus people's attention and create a sense of urgency, the skill to apply pressure to stakeholders without overwhelming them, the competence to frame issues in a way that presents opportunities as well as difficulties, and the strength to mediate conflict among stakeholders.

For more:   [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

**Additional Resources:**
- **Channeling Change:  Making Collective Impact Work.** [http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work?cpgn=WP%20DL%20-%20Channeling%20Change](http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work?cpgn=WP%20DL%20-%20Channeling%20Change)
- **Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives – A Promising Approach to Addressing America's Biggest Challenges.** [http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Revitalizing-Communities/Community-Collaboratives/Needle-Moving-Community-Collaborative-s-A-Promisin.aspx](http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Revitalizing-Communities/Community-Collaboratives/Needle-Moving-Community-Collaborative-s-A-Promisin.aspx)
- **Tool Box Overview for Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives.** [http://www.serve.gov/new-images/council/pdf/CommunityCollaborativeToolkit_all%20_materials.pdf](http://www.serve.gov/new-images/council/pdf/CommunityCollaborativeToolkit_all%20_materials.pdf)

## Complex Community Problems
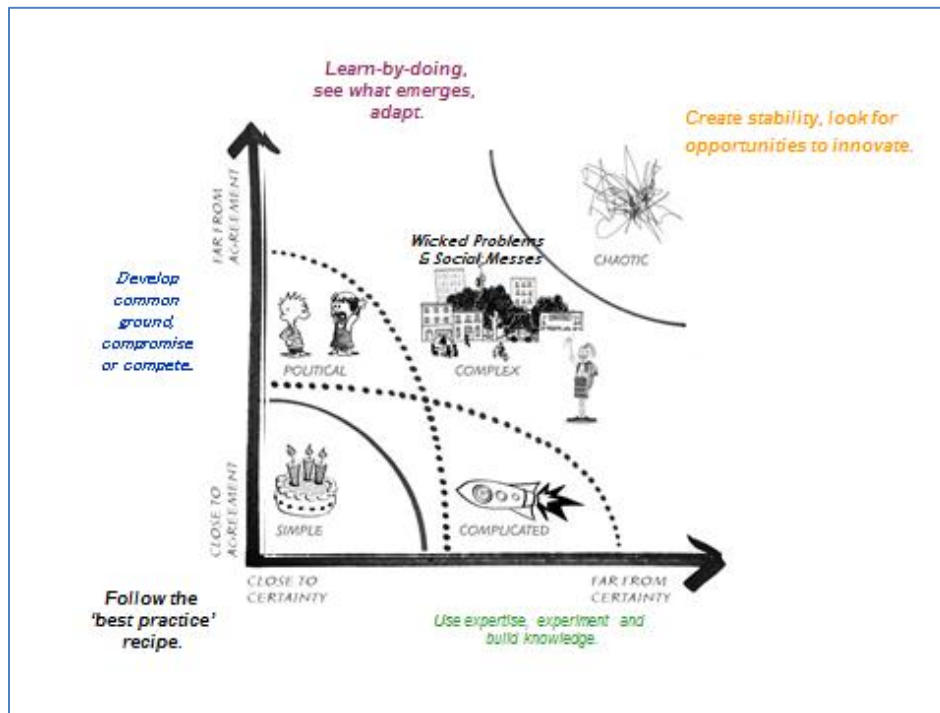


## A New Approach to Community Change Efforts
**Jay Connor.  Community Visions Community Solutions**

**We need to focus on community outcomes:**
We need to change our mindset from activities, strategies and programs to what is the change state we desire for our community.

**The Dynamics of Community Change**
- Changed mindset
- Working differently across organizations
- Core supports
- Community held aspiration
- Respect work already in place
- Broad community engagement

**Strategies for Community Change**
- Shift mindset from activities to a focus on a community outcome (change state)
- Focus efforts on activities which move the needle on community change
- Provide resource capacity for cross-sector, cross-organizational efforts

# From Isolated Impact to Collective Impact

## Current State: Isolated Impact

- Funders select **individual grantees**

- Organizations **work separately**

- Evaluation attempts to **isolate** a particular organization's impact

- Large scale change is assumed to depend on **scaling organizations**

- Corporate and government sectors are often **disconnected** from foundations and non-profits.

## Collective Impact

- Funders understand that social problems – and their solutions – arise from multiple interacting factors

- Cross-sector alignment with government, nonprofit, philanthropic and corporate sectors as partners

- Organizations actively coordinating their actions and sharing lessons learned

- All working toward the same goal and measuring the same things

*Isolated Impact*

*Collective Impact*

# The Essential Pre-Conditions for Collective Impact Initiatives

- Influential Champion(s)

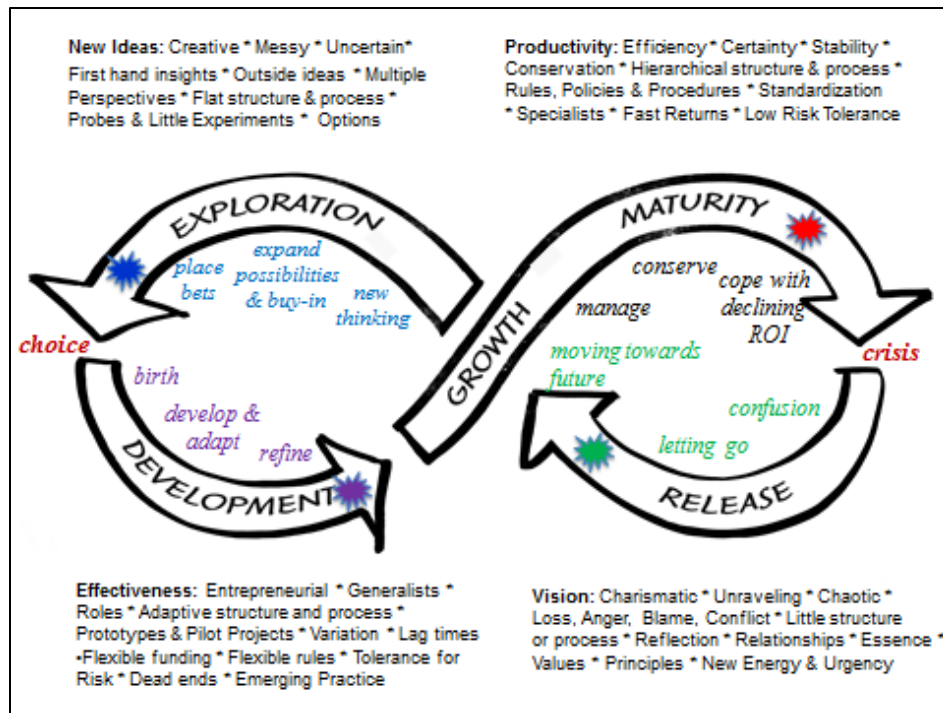- Urgency of issue

- Adequate Resources

## The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

| | |
|---|---|
| **Common Agenda** | All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. |
| **Shared Measurement** | Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable. |
| **Mutually Reinforcing Activities** | Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action. |
| **Continuous Communication** | Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation. |
| **Backbone Support** | Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies. |

## The Collective Impact Continuum

| Compete | Co-exist | Communicate | Cooperate | Coordinate | Collaborate | Integrate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competition for clients, resources, partners, public attention. | No systematic connection between agencies. | Inter-agency information sharing (e.g. networking). | As needed, often informal, interaction, on discrete activities or projects. | Organizations systematically adjust and align work with each other for greater outcomes. | Longer term interaction based on shared mission, goals; shared decision-makers and resources. | Fully integrated programs, planning, funding. |

## Collaborative Life (Eco) Cycle

**New Ideas:** Creative * Messy * Uncertain* First hand insights * Outside ideas * Multiple Perspectives * Flat structure & process * Probes & Little Experiments * Options

**Productivity:** Efficiency * Certainty* Stability * Conservation * Hierarchical structure & process * Rules, Policies & Procedures * Standardization * Specialists * Fast Returns * Low Risk Tolerance

EXPLORATION
expand possibilities & buy-in
place bets
new thinking
choice
birth
develop & adapt
refine
DEVELOPMENT

GROWTH

MATURITY
conserve
cope with declining ROI
manage
moving towards future
confusion
letting go
crisis
RELEASE

**Effectiveness:** Entrepreneurial * Generalists * Roles * Adaptive structure and process * Prototypes & Pilot Projects * Variation * Lag times •Flexible funding * Flexible rules * Tolerance for Risk * Dead ends * Emerging Practice

**Vision:** Charismatic * Unraveling * Chaotic * Loss, Anger, Blame, Conflict * Little structure or process * Reflection * Relationships * Essence * Values * Principles * New Energy & Urgency

## Putting Collective Impact into Practice

### Overarching Challenges and Opportunities
- Building Trust – requires dedicated engagement, patience, deliberation, debate and conflict
- Long Term Focus – doing the most measureable is not always the right measure
- Building Strong Communities – not just strong institutions, build leadership to sustain change

### Common Agenda:  Questions to consider
- Is the issue you want to work on a 'needle moving ' issue?
- Who is already working on this issue in the community?
- Is there urgency, leadership and support?

### Shared Measurement Challenges
- Process may require facilitators, web-based tools and financial resources
- Difficult to agree on a common set of indicators
- Silo'd funders and organization missions
- Web-based systems can be expensive
- Contribution and commitment from partners
- Many community capacity building elements are not or cannot be counted

**Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
- All strategies pursued clearly link into the common agenda and shared measures

**Continuous Communication**
To + From Communication

- The community
- Members of the collaborative
- Members of the working groups
- To/From the Backbone
- To/From the convening partners and their boards of directors
- To/From collaborative funders

= Multiple Layers of Accountability

**Backbone Organization**
Six essential functions:
- providing overall strategic direction
- facilitating dialogue between partners
- managing data collection and analysis
- handling communications
- coordinating community outreach
- mobilizing funding.

## Final Thoughts
## Key Questions in the Collective Impact Process

- Do we aim to effect —**needle-moving"** change (i.e.10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
- Do we believe that **a long-term investment** (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
- Do we believe that **cross-sector engagement** is essential for community-wide change?
- Are we committed to **using measurable data** to set the agenda and improve over time?
- Are we committed to **having community members as partners and producers** of impact?