Putting Collective Impact into Practice in Maine Communities

Lewiston, Maine
October 26, 2012
My Background
Key Themes for Today

• Complex community problems
• Collective Impact as a Response
• Delving Deeper – The Five Conditions
• Putting Collective Impact into Practice
A Neighbourhood Story
The North Central Neighbourhood of Regina
Develop common ground, compromise or compete.

Learn-by-doing, see what emerges, adapt.

Follow the 'best practice' recipe.

Create stability, look for opportunities to innovate.

Use expertise, experiment and build knowledge.
Different Types of Problems

Simple
Bake a Cake
Best Practice

Complicated
Rocket to the Moon
Good Practice

Complex
Raise a Child
Emergent Practice

Traditional approaches are not solving our toughest social issues. We need a different approach with multiple players working together in new ways to solve complex problems.
Complex

Unbounded Systems
No Experiments

Complex
Causal Chains

Difficult to Measure

Limited
Explanation
Prediction
Control

Results in an Educated Guess

A limited number of features are captured by the Model
An Early Exploration of Collective Community Solutions

Jay Connor
The Collaboratory for Community Change

Community Visions, Community Solutions
Focusing 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.*

**Dynamics of Community Change**

– Changed mindset
– Working differently across organizations
– Core supports
– Community held aspiration
– Respect work already in place
– Broad community engagement
The Wisdom of Jay Connor:

• 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
A Collective Impact Approach can be used for Complex Issues

Teen Pregnancy

Health

Education

Homelessness

Community Safety

Poverty
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
Five Conditions for Collective Impact
Five Conditions for Collective Impact

- Specialized Agendas
- Fragmented Measurements
- Independent Activities
- Sporadic Communication
- Unsupported Efforts

- Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Organization
ART OF COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

“This experience was deeply inspiring ... it made me challenge a lot of my assumptions, made me realise a lot of things I underestimated, and a lot more things I did not know. I have discovered the power of empathy, genuine interest and care for people, humbleness in front of complex problems...”
Delving Deeper: Preconditions for Collective Impact

- Influential Champion(s)
- Urgency of issue
- Adequate Resources
Delving Deeper: The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

<table>
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Common Agenda

• Define the challenge to be addressed.
• Acknowledge that a collective impact approach is required.
• Establish clear and shared goal(s) for change.
• Identify principles to guide joint work together.
According to the Health Department summary, Tillamook county "found that forming partnerships and working together toward a desired result can bring about astounding results. ... Their turn-around was an evolutionary process, with new partners bringing contributions forward at different times."

**Evolution of the Local Agenda**

- No Shared Agenda
  - Reduce Teenagers Giving Birth
  - Reduce Teenagers Getting Pregnant


Tillamook County Success Strategies

• Community leaders got everyone involved in a community wide strategy to change the condition
• Got everyone to acknowledge the problem and do something about it
• Mutually reinforcing actions: schools, churches, health department, YMCA, community college, general hospital, women’s crisis centre, family counselling centre, child care centre
Common Agenda

What makes the difference between a good movie and a bad movie?

“Getting everyone involved to make the same movie!”

- Francis Ford Coppola
Shared Measurement

• Identify key measures that capture critical outcomes.

• Establish systems for gathering and analyzing measures.

• Create opportunities for “making-sense” of changes in indicators.
Collaboration in Cincinnati

Educational Achievement

STRIVE in Cincinnati
• Over three hundred educational organizations, human service groups, government agencies and philanthropies and private businesses.
• Shared agreement on 15 key milestones and 72 measures along a student road-map of success.
• A strong back-bone organization supporting a variety of “networks” supporting each key milestone.
• Measureable progress in most key indicators in recent years.
• **Network:** 144 non-profits and foundations across 8 mid-western states

• **Focus:** climate change and energy policy

• **Goal:** reducing global warming pollution economy-wide 80% by 2050
• Shared understanding of problem/system
• Involve funders and organizations from the start
• Design for a Network – invest in collective infrastructure
• Cultivate leadership at all levels
• Build connections and communication
• Be adaptive and emergent but committed to the long term
Shared Measurement RESULTS

• Direct Outcomes
  – Stopped the building of 28 coal plants
  – Reduced overall coal usage rates

• Legislative/Advocacy Outcomes
  – State renewal energy standards in 5 states
  – New transportation legislation

• Process/Network Outcomes
  – Greater strategic coordination between partners
  – Greater overall power and influence
Mutually Reinforcing Activities

• Agreement on key outcomes.

• Orchestration and specialization.

• Complementary – sometimes “joined up” - strategies to achieve outcomes.
Coordination in Saint John

Poverty

• Housing
• Transportation
• Education to Employment
• Early Childhood Development
• Workforce Development
• Neighborhood Renewal

WHAT’S BEING ACCOMPLISHED?
Declining Poverty
Continuous Communication

• Create formal and informal measures for keeping people informed

• Communication is open and reflect a diversity of styles

• Difficult issues are surfaced, discussed and addressed
Cooperation in Karelia, Finland

Heart Disease

Common Agenda: reduce heart disease.

Focus on measuring & reducing a variety of key risk factors (e.g. high fat food diet, smoking, etc.)

Emphasis on mutually reinforcing strategies with multisectoral actors (e.g. changing farming practices, media profile, trade policy around production and consumption of dairy products).

Backbone support provided by regional health authority.

In and Out Communication
Backbone Organization(s)

- Guide vision & strategy
- Support aligned activities
- Established shared measurements
- Build public will
- Advance policy
- Mobilize funding

- Like a manager at a construction site who attends to the whole building while carpenters, plumbers and electricians come and go, the support staff keep the collaborative process moving along, even as the participants may change.

Vibrant Communities Canada – A Backbone Organization
Vibrant Canada Supports

• Learning Community
  – Virtual and Face to Face Meetings
  – Web-based tools and promotion
  – Dissemination of Learning across Tamarack

• Documenting the Stories

• A Focus on Policy Implications and Impact

• Common Evaluation Framework
A Continuum of Collective Impact
## The Continuum

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<td>As needed, often informal, interaction, on discrete activities or projects.</td>
<td>Organizations systematically adjust and align work with each other for greater outcomes.</td>
<td>Longer term interaction based on shared mission, goals; shared decision-makers and resources.</td>
<td>Fully integrated programs, planning, funding.</td>
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The Continuum model illustrates a spectrum from Compete to Integrate, with a range of interaction levels between. The table above outlines the characteristics of each level, from left to right: Compete, Co-exist, Communicate, Cooperate, Coordinate, Collaborate, and Integrate. Each level describes the nature of relationships and cooperation, ranging from competition and no connection to fully integrated programs and planning.
### The Continuum

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Multiple Roles
Multiple Roles

• Organizations can get involved in collective impact initiatives as a leader, a follower, a member – and just like a jazz band – their role can change over time.
In Tables

- Where have we seen a collective impact approach in our region already?

- Where do you think that a collective impact approach could be used most effectively in our region?

- Which of these answers made your group say “whoa”? 
Lunch

Forage Market
Putting Collective Impact into Practice
Phases of Collaborative Change

The Performance Loop

The Renewal Loop

Key Ideas

1. **Crisis & creative destruction precedes renewal**: the unraveling of old patterns & structures releases energy & resources and creates the space for new ideas and approaches.

2. **Situational leadership & management**: different aims, cultures, structures & processes and resources for different stages of the work.

3. **Patch dynamics & “firebreaks”**: resilient and responsive systems enable performance and renewal concurrently.

4. **Transitional Traps**: there are internal and external barriers that prevent a group or system moving through change.
**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

**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
Traps & Gates

- Scarcity trap
- Parasitic trap
- Chronic disaster trap
- Rigidity trap

Crisis
Rigidity Trap

• Stuck in old thinking, patterns and institutional arrangements

• Can’t escape the performance engine culture and arrangements

• Organizational self-interest

• Too big (or important) to fail

• Unclear about options
Chronic Disaster

• Unable to get sufficient traction to leave the past and move forward

• Putting out fires

• People come and go

• The context shifts constantly

• Still stuck in the past
Scarcity Trap

- Insufficient time, energy resources to give an idea a robust birth and good start.

- Resources for trying something new don’t exist

- There are too many options – can’t choose (paradox of choice)

- A demand for clarity and predictable outcomes (paralysis by analysis)

- Ideas are not compelling nor appear robust.
Parasitic Trap

• The innovation is parasitic on the host(s) that gave it birth and nurtured it in the early years.

• The uniqueness of the innovators

• Flexibility of rules, decision-making and resources

• Works in unique context

• Works at certain scale
Key Ideas ... Again

1. **Crisis & creative destruction precedes renewal**: the unraveling of old patterns & structures releases energy & resources and creates the space for new ideas and approaches.

2. **Situational leadership & management**: different aims, cultures, structures & processes and resources for different stages of the work.

3. **Patch dynamics & “firebreaks”**: resilient and responsive systems enable performance and renewal concurrently.

4. **Transitional Traps**: there are internal and external barriers that prevent a group or system moving through change.
Common Agenda

Two steps:

• Creating the boundaries (issue, root causes, geographic) of the system or issue to be addressed

• Developing a strategic action framework to guide the activities of the initiative
Elements of a Framework for Change

The Process of Thinking, Deciding & Acting

Framing
- What features do we feel are important?

Causality
- How do we make sense of what we see?

Options
- What are the options for making progress? Which do we choose?

Planning
- What tasks will occur in what order?

Implementation & Evaluation
- How are things unfolding? Corrections required? How am I doing? Is it worth it?
Putting Collective Impact into Practice

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

» Paul Schmitz, Public Allies
Common Agenda

• 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

• Common set of measures to monitor performance, track progress toward goals and learn what is not working

• Requires participants to gather regularly to share results, learn from each other and refine their individual and collective work

• Focus is on continuous improvement
Shared Measurement

• Shared Measurement Platforms – web-based tools used to collect, analyze and report on performance

• Comparative Performance Systems – all participants report the same measures using identical definitions and methodologies

• Adaptive Learning Systems – complement shared measurement systems with a systematic and facilitated process of evaluation, learning and planning
Challenges of Shared Measurement

• 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

• Memphis Fast Forward: Levers of change
  – Public safety, education, jobs, government efficiency – all sub-initiatives cascade into working groups focused on strategic actions

• All strategies pursued clearly link into the common agenda and shared measures
BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY in Saint John

INVEST IN:
- LEADERSHIP
- RESEARCH
- A COMMUNITY STRATEGY
- MULTI-SECTOR ACTIONS
- TARGETS & MEASURES
- COMMUNICATION

CHILDREN And TEENS
Close the gap for school success

PREGNANT & PARENTING TEENS
Help young moms achieve their education and be good parents

PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS
Affordable housing solutions and the revitalization of low-income neighbourhoods

SINGLE PARENTS
New polices and programs that remove the Welfare Wall
The Aspiration: Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
Tackling Root Causes: Affordable Housing, Food Security, Income Security, Accessible Transportation, Safe Neighbourhoods

How we will do our work:
- Move from alleviation to prevention
- Tackle root causes
- Work collaboratively across sectors
- Abandon blame – all can be part of the solution
- Emphasize innovation, risk taking, long term change

Linking & Facilitating Role
- Strategic Poverty Focus
- Community Engagement
- Change & Action
- Learning & Accountability

Changes in:
- Structures
- Processes
- Policies
- Indicators

Knowledge Transfer:
- Outputs
- Evaluation
- Learning

Community-Level Macro Strategy
Critical Points of Investment Strategy
Community-Led Initiatives
Our aspiration: Windsor Essex is a thriving community where every family and individual builds potential through access to quality opportunities, supports, and resources that work for them.

Our Focus Areas and Community Outcomes

Together with community partners, we will focus on the following priorities and achieve the following community outcomes:

**Education & Literacy**
Increase literacy rates for all ages
Increase graduation rates for post-secondary education

**Employment & Training**
Remove barriers to workforce participation and improve employment outcomes

**Income**
Improve income security system and increase wages

- Support efforts in the following areas:
  - housing
  - health - recreation and food security
  - childcare
  - civic participation
Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Building our Low Tech Social Network

Name:

Organization:

The Collective Impact
Condition that Intrigues Me:
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
Continuous Communication

- Common Messaging
- A clearly articulated Framework for Change
- Clearly defined measures and indicators – what does success look like?
- Regular and consistent communication
- Social media
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.
• Resources
• Staffing
• In-kind support
• Long term commitment
Table Discussion

• What does this mean for me?
• What questions do I have?
• What are the challenges my collaborative is facing?
Interview Each Other (1 on 1)

1. What is most alive for you (or not) right now about collective impact?

2. What are your burning questions?

3. What would it take for your organization to more fully participate in collective impact work in Red Deer and area?
Exit Interviews

• What conversations would you like to have with your colleagues about collective impact in the future?
Collective Impact