National Collaborating Centre
for Methods and Tools

Centre de collaboration nationale
des méthodes et outils

sharing what **works**
in public health

Collaborative Co-Governance:
A checklist approach to networking and collaboration

Presentation & workshop to the NCCPH, Niagara-on-the-Lake, May 6th, 2011

Overview

- **Part I – Overview of Collaboration (60 minutes)**
  - Defining collaboration
  - Top four things to keep in mind when pursuing collaboration
    - **Discussion & feedback on applicability to NCC grids**
  - What are the most common barriers to collaboration
    - **Discussion**

  -----Break (10 minutes)-----

- **Part II – Developing a Collaboration Toolbox (60 minutes)**
  - What tools, practices & behaviours have proven useful to engage stakeholders, build trust, foster collective learning, make joint decisions, work together, and provide feedback for accountability and continuous improvement?
    - **Presentation, breakout groups & then group sharing**

  -----Break (10 minutes)-----

- **Part III – Special Issues (20 minutes)**
  - Issues to keep in mind with online collaboration
  - Special issues concerning collaboration among practitioners & researcher / practitioner collaboration
    - **Discussion & feedback**

- **Wrap up & Next steps (10 minutes)**

*Public policy is not implemented by buildings or systems or procedures: it is implemented by* *people.*

The active dynamic in relationships *between the state and civil society is human* imagination… *It is the energy of human imagination* in every encounter *that will create the relationships we need for the future."*

- Sue Goss, 2001

Helpful Definitions

- **Consultation**
  - Process of obtaining input from the public (usually 1-way) on matters that affect them. In state of disrepute: those consulting pretend to listen & those consulted pretend that their input matters

- **Cooperation**
  - individuals or organizations support each other in a common interest, instead of working separately or in competition. Informal & often commitment-lite

- **Collaboration**
  - individuals and/or organizations work together towards some defined common goal. Collaboration is usually to accomplish together what could not be done independently — cooperating in decision making, resource sharing and action. Some joint governance (steering committee) and agreement (MOU) implied

- **Partnership**
  - a collaborative entity in which participating 'partners' formally and legally agree to share risks, costs, benefits and decision making with each other. Joint governance is required & that is usually spread throughout the organizations

- **Networking**
  - the various practices involving interacting, exchanging and building relationships among people including formal and informal meetings; social media; professional exchanges, etc..No commitments implied.

- **Social traps**
  - Where people engaged in cooperation act 'rationally' to obtain short-term individual gains (*free-rider*), which in the long run lead to a loss of value for them & the group as a whole – everyone loses

Cooperation Continuum

Competition   Coordination   Cooperation   Collaboration   Partnership

Networking & Social Traps
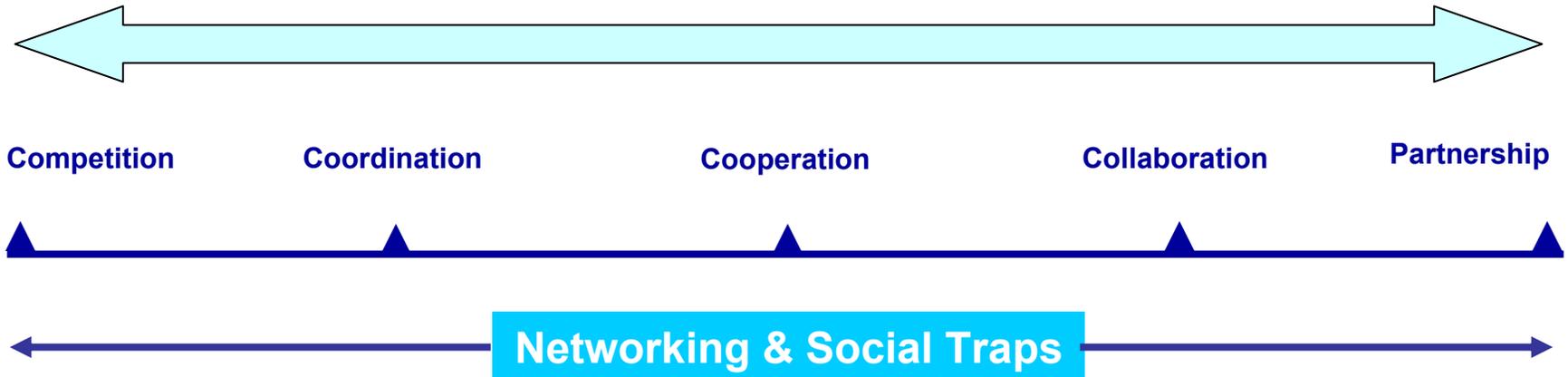
- The degree of cooperation should align with the issue complexity and level of inter-dependence
- As complexity & interdependence change, the form of cooperation should also change
- Networking will increase in both frequency and variety as complexity and interdependence increase
- The form of cooperation should be chosen to help mitigate the tendency towards rational self interest & being caught in social traps

Technology Spectrum of Social Collaboration

Mass Collaboration
100,000+

Small Group Collaboration
< 25

Uses Physical Technologies

Quick start up
Relationships after action
Low trust requirement
Low partner monitoring
Exchange of codifiable knowledge
High standardization
Un-centralized decision making
Greater scale & exposure
Viral growth

Uses Social Technologies

Slow start up
Relationships before action
High trust requirement
High partner monitoring
Tacit knowledge exchange
High customization
Team decision making
Smaller scale & exposure
Member dependent growth

Culture of Sharing
Dissemination and exchange
Knowledge collaboration
High social learning
Shared ownership
Rigorous feedback & accountability
Innovation
Shared Commitment
New resources
Efficient implementations

Where to Find the Middle Ground?

NCCPH Complex Context

- Health issues that are evolving, non-static
- Public Health knowledge, resources & mandates are widely distributed
  - Overlapping stakeholders, funders & mandates even among NCCs
- Public, educational, private & civic stakeholders
- Federal, provincial, territorial, regional & municipal government agencies
- Need for cooperation among non-collaborative organizations. No one is in charge.
  - Dependent on willing cooperation of participants
- National scope but not national scale audience
  - suggests mix of mass collaboration & small group

Top Four Things to Keep in Mind While Pursuing Collaboration

Observational

Does the situation need changing?

Learning While Doing

How do we learn together & evaluate our progress?

**Info Gathering
Relationships
Trust
Learning
Doing
Feedback**

What is the problem?

Investigative

How can we work together?

Relationship Design

Does the situation need changing?
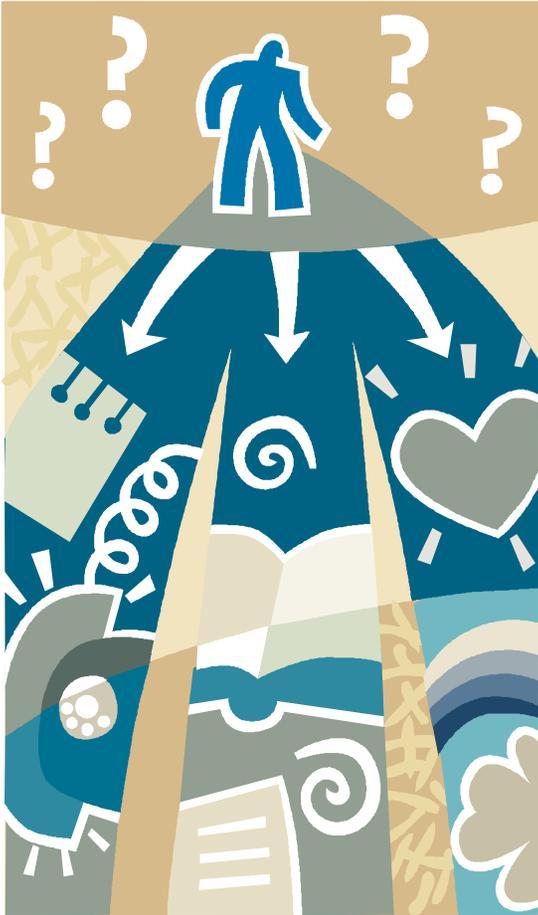
- Are there any detectable anomalies?
- What are the salient features of the issue landscape?
- What are the causal mechanisms at play?
- Can the issue be resolved by a single actor?
- Who are the key stakeholders & what could they contribute?

What is the ~~problem~~ issue?

- What is the task at hand?
- How will value be added or certain harms avoided?
  - Appreciative inquiry
- What are the non-negotiable constraints within the mega-community?
- Who are the stakeholders that must be included?
  - Those who will contribute; those who can block; those affected by your decisions; and those with relevant knowledge
  - How will you mobilize their support?
- What are the risks and potential rewards, and how will these be aligned among the various partners?

How will you work together?

- What instruments of collaboration and social learning can you use to produce short term success and long term commitment?

- What are the conventions and moral contracts that need to be negotiated to maintain the necessary *affectio societatis*?

How will you learn together & evaluate your progress?

- What feedback & informational loops (formal & informal) do you have that will enable collective learning?
- What collective learning processes do you have in place?
  - How are you learning from the implementation of your work together?
- How will you gauge ongoing performance in terms of:
  - a) objective progress?
  - b) partner attitudes and behaviours & their capacity for fruitful collaboration?
- How will you resolve conflicts?
- What fail-safe mechanisms are in place should agreement not be reached?
- At what point would you dissolve the collaboration?

Reflection
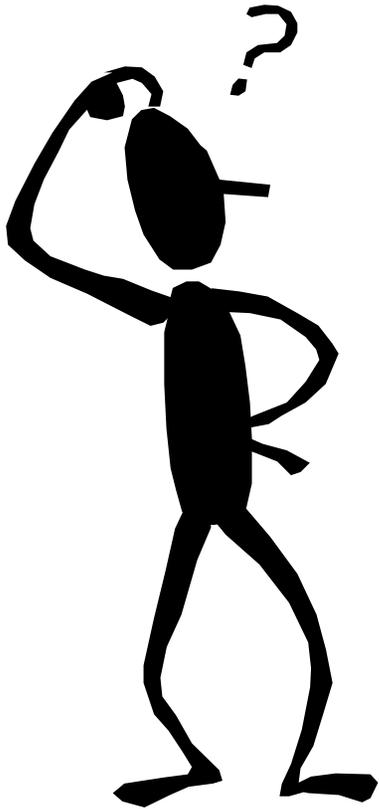
- Are these the major questions that need asking?

    - Do these questions resonate?

- Are they helpful in organizing your approach to networking & collaboration?

    - As in the preparation of your activity grid?

- Are there other major questions that you would consider when pursuing collaboration?

Top Ten Barriers to Collaboration

1. **Unclear purpose**
    - Online this may mean an unclear prototype / possibility
2. **Unable to continually demonstrate value for effort**
3. **Lack of champion (s)**
    - Is there someone responsible for building trust & moving info around?
4. **Unwillingness to invest in relationships**
    - Are you paying attention to people / giving them incentives to participate?
5. **Unable to listen to each other**
    - How do people know you have heard them?
6. **Spending too much time on decision making**
    - And not enough on learning
7. **Inappropriate decision making processes**
    - Lack of consensus. Use of coercion, selling, voting, rushing to action
    - No failsafe mechanisms
8. **Failing to treat partners as partners**
9. **Too trusting of contracts**
10. **Your (their) organization does not fully support the decisions of the partnership.**

Your experience?

- What barriers & obstacles have you found in trying to foster knowledge exchange, collaborative research or joint projects?

Break (10 minutes)

Part II – Creating a Collaborative Toolbox

- **Does the situation need changing?**

- **What is the problem?**

- **How will you work together?**

- **How will you learn together & evaluate your progress?**

- **Other toolboxes?**

Does the situation need changing?

- **Generosity**
  - Demonstrate your cooperativeness by sharing what you know/have.
- **Shopping the idea**
  - exploring vs deciding
- **Scenario exercises – "what if…"**
  - Change assumptions & where does that lead you?
- **Stakeholder mapping**
  - Value networks
- **Invitation conversation**
  - Invite them to explore an alternative future– no prior commitment
  - Not just invitation to talk but may lead to joint work & shared contributions
  - Allow them to say "no"
- **Set the agenda for your 1st on- or off-line meeting together**
- **Recognize what each participant brings to the table**
  - Potential gifts & assets of organization and/ or pers
  - Identify everyone's cost of participation
  - Each person's contribution to the problem
  - Tabling 'your story'

If you're not part of the problem, how can you be part of the solution?

What is the Issue?

- **The possibility conversation**
  - What is the future you would like to bring into reality?
    - Use discussion papers, online mock-ups, "photo shopped" pictures
    - What new value will be created for everyone?
    - What issues, problems, harms must be avoided & what can be mitigated?
- **Business planning**
  - What milestones need to be achieved?
  - What are the assumptions you are working with & how will you tell if they are right?
  - Define the 'pains & gains' for each partner
  - Who is best positioned to deal with what risk?
- **Which stakeholders do you include in the process?**
  - Those who will contribute; those who can block; those affected by your decisions; & those with relevant knowledge
  - How will you mobilize their support?
    - Always invite them
  - Circles of involvement
    - Let them choose when and how they want to participate
- **The commitment conversation**
  - What are the promises am I willing to make to this enterprise?
  - What is the price <u>I am willing to pay</u> for the success of the whole effort?
    - Reject lip service
- **Contracting & MOUs**
  - Define the tangible & intangible risks / benefits for everyone?
  - Treat as learning opportunity to discover your partners

How will you work together?

- **Conventions for engagement**
  - Establish agreements with those most directly involved
  - Reduce / eliminate entry and exit barriers
    - Aids in inclusivity & focuses on relationships and contingent cooperation
  - Develop the same expectations of one another and of the work
    - Express your goals as a single win (not win-win-win…)
  - Ownership & dissent conversations
    - People create best that which they own and co-create. It is the bedrock of accountability, the belief that I am the cause
    - Allow people space to say "no" & express their doubts and reservations
    - Create space to air objections, explore concerns, address blocking, & allow stand asides?
  - Introduce as many possibilities for informal conversation as possible
  - Work in teams (on or offline)
  - Showcasing & joint media announcements
    - Forming moral contracts

How will you work together?

- **Co-Design the process**
  - How will the process get you where you want to go?
    - Is it your agenda or theirs?
    - What do people want to talk about?
  - Begin with face-to-face meeting
    - Establish personal relationships
      - You're not mass collaboration
  - Avoid situations of forced advocacy
  - Use a process facilitator / moderator for meetings
    - Eg. moderated Twitter meetings
  - Build group memory
    - wikis, video capture, flip charts, etc.
    - recorders, timekeepers, 'vibe' monitors
  - Structure the architecture of the physical / online space
    - Does the space encourage people to contribute?
  - Design for a consensus process
  - Create process maps to reduce uncertainty

Process Map

	Education	Possibility	Needs	Problem Def'n
Senior Mngt				
Steering Committee				
Task Force				
Outreach				
Results	Ground rules	Possibility	Needs Assessment	Issue Statement
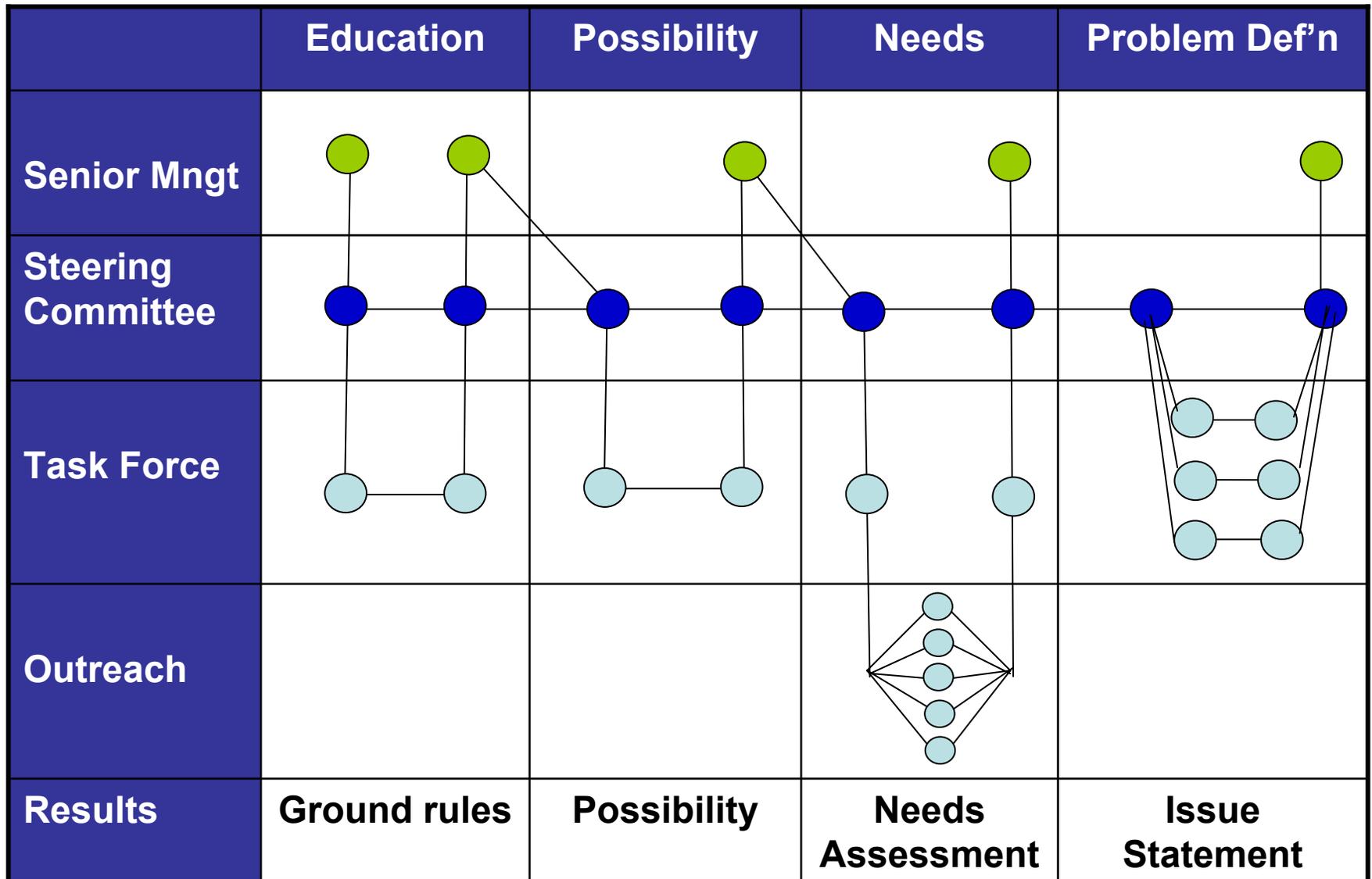
How will you work together?

- **Design of Governance**
  - How will you be together?
    - Changing how you are together today, changes the future you want to share
  - Build stewardship over leadership
    - how can I help?
  - Work by consensus
    - Agreement by most, acquiescence by the rest
    - Avoid voting & arbitrary decision making except as failsafe
    - 'There is no such thing as almost equal'
  - Use empowered and devolved decision making
  - Structure more time for learning than deciding
    - Questions vs answers
    - Have 50-70% of time dedicated to learning
  - Make accountability for mutual learning
    - Not compliance accountability
  - 360° accountability
    - Formal accountability, mutual accountability & imposed accountability (media, public)
  - Formalize how collaborative decisions are transferred to home organizations

How will you work together?

- **Conventions of Trust**
  - Use brokers / trusted mavens & connectors
  - Use more endogenous (value laden) feedback as interdependence increases
    - Informal meetings, face-to-face, coffee, meals, networking
  - Practices of generosity
    - Don't take exclusive ownership, you're not in charge
    - There is profit from having a reputation of generosity
  - Monitoring
    - Coordinator, staff exchanges, co-location, reporting, networking, forums
  - Application of sanctions
    - Willingness to confront & deal with deception and misinformation
    - Define the penalties of non-cooperation
  - Define & use failsafes
    - What are the unacceptable conditions if collaboration fails
    - Who makes the decision if the group can not?
    - Establish conflict resolution method upfront, contract conditions
  - Have you created safe-fail spaces?
  - Celebrations
    - Define & publicly celebrate milestones

How will you learn together?

- Contracting & MOUs seen primarily as tools for mutual understanding not for forcing compliance
- Build common knowledge resources, shared language
- Use action as a tool for co-learning
  - Don't rush to action
  - Baby steps to build confidence & mutual understanding
  - Set up feedback mechanisms to monitor progress
- Bricolage
  - Trial & error (heuristic problem solving)
  - Action, assessment, evaluation & adjustment
  - Double loop learning
    - How does implementation change your business model?
- Build in necessary staff training
  - Training in collaboration skills, practices and mechanisms
  - Change management & technical training
- Prior distribution of materials & documents w/ appropriate lead times before meetings
  - Make meetings mostly about learning

How will you evaluate your progress?

- Contracting & MOUs
  - Vehicles for goal setting, targets and baseline data
- Establish agreeable metrics
  - Metrics for trust
  - Metrics for learning
  - Metrics for results
  - Re-visit regularly the efficacy of the metrics you use
- Establish coordinator / champions
  - Use as channels for moving both codifiable & tacit knowledge
- Coffee, meals, networking
  - Informal info exchanges often have the biggest payoff
- Electronic info exchanges, wikis
  - Ensure ownership remains with partners & not any one group
- Regular reporting

Break Out Groups

- What practices, tools, mechanisms or gimmicks have you used to foster collaboration in the 4 key areas?
    - Changing status quo?
    - Problem / possibility?
    - Working together?
    - Co-learning & evaluating progress?

Christopher Wilson & Associates

Break (10 minutes)

Part III Special Issues

- **Online Collaboration**
- **Collaboration Among Practitioners**
- **Researcher / Practitioner Collaboration**
- **Wrap up**

Online Collaboration

"No tool is going to make people share something they don't want to share, but if people are willing to share, a good tool that supports the community of practice and knowledge sharing increases the velocity of that sharing in a worldwide organization."

Online Collaboration

- Define minimal rules
  - minimize the 'hardwiring' of specialized functions
- Make extensive use of prototyping
  - release early and release often
- Create a *plausible online promise*
  - engage both users and developers & track that engagement
- Create a sense of shared identity and belonging
- Build in as many ways as possible to listen to your stakeholders
  - The more interdependent the more practices for creating mutual awareness
- Be generous
  - Make other people powerful
- Mix online & offline interactions
- Create repositories for collaboration support information

Not-for-profit Trends

- The last 15 years saw a dramatic shift away from 'mission-based' core funding to 'project-based' funding targeting specific initiatives, many of which were alternatives for public service delivery

    - Funders have imposed strict accounting and reporting rules to control how each dollar is spent and for what purpose.

- Most NFP organizations have become less strategic, less capable of meeting the complex customized needs of their communities.

    - Almost all time is spent on project deliverables & raising new money

    - NFP orgs forced to compete over same pool of limited funding

- 90% of NFPs in one survey felt governments do not co-operate with NFPs when implementing social policies & programs

    - NFPs believe governments do not provide mechanisms to allow them to provide meaningful input into policy or to advocate with policy makers

    - Highly patriarchal relationships

- NFPs less capable of performing the brokering and facilitating roles that were traditionally part of their core function.

    - Most NFPs do not have the collaborative skills needed to work together

Not-for-profit Trends

- NFP "funding crisis" & concerns about NFP effectiveness
- Governments are distancing themselves from service delivery in a period of growing fiscal (*program)* restraint (as distinct from infrastructure spending)
- NFPs assume more responsibility for ever more demanding services
- Public confidence in NFPs is being undermined
  - Declining confidence could see decline in volunteering & charitable giving.
- Growing perception among policy makers that government is out of the business of social service delivery (a tragedy of the commons)
  - Govt tells people what to do & contributes $$ but chooses to remain at arms length.

Need for Collaborative Governance

Hybrid governance leading to an exchange of different currencies

Public Sector
- Seeks currency of legitimacy
- Invests financial resources & a degree of control
- Gains risk mitigation associated with complex social problems

Private Sector
- Seeks resources & predictable environment
- Invests time and financial resources
- Gains access with public and civic levers

Civic Sector
- Seeks resources & policy influence
- Invests legitimacy and credibility
- Gains access to private and public resources
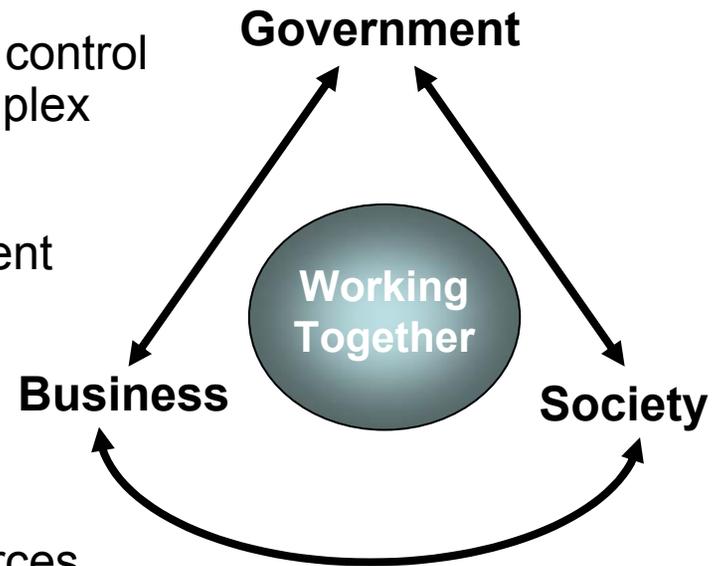
Meeting ground for 'social learning'

Government

Working Together

Business

Society

Collaboration Among NFP Practitioners

- Needs to be led locally on issues of shared fate
  - Need for crisis?
- Group boundaries must be clearly defined
  - If the goal is comprehensiveness then integration should take place where it can be most effective, usually where personal relationships can develop
- Key role of partner manager / project champion
- Rules governing the use of shared goods & services are matched to group needs and conditions
  - The rights of community members to devise their own rules is respected by external authorities
  - Members affected by shared rules can participate in their modification
- Needs a system for monitoring members' behaviour
  - Members themselves undertake this monitoring
  - A graduated system of sanctions is used
  - Community members have access to low cost conflict resolution mechanisms
- Funders need to support collective learning

Researcher / Practitioner Collaboration

- Involve practitioners at the earliest stages
- Research processes & outcomes should be clear on how they will benefit community.
- Community members should be part of the analysis and interpretation of data, & should have input into how the results are distributed.
- Encourage productive partnerships between researchers & practitioners to last beyond the lifespan of a single project.
- Empower practitioners to initiate their own research that addresses needs they have identified.
- Researchers should focus less on theory & more on practical impacts when communicating results

Wrap Up / Next Steps

- Think through your processes with an eye for their impact on collaboration

- Can you clearly state:
    - Why the status quo needs changing?
    - What problem / possibility engages your group?
    - How will you work together?
    - How will you learn together & evaluate your progress?

- What mechanisms & affordances do you use & how many others are you aware of?

- Can the NCCs construct a collaboration toolbox?

Thank you
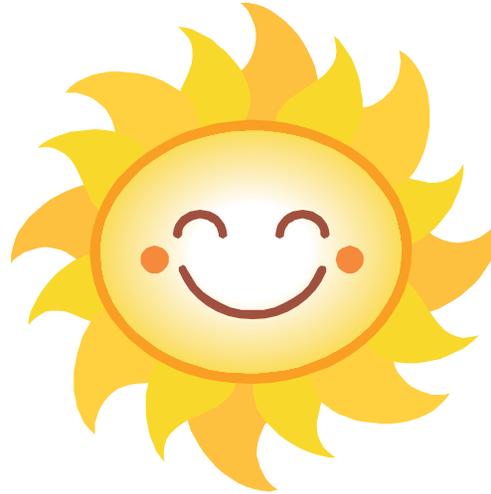
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