

Understanding Community Collaboration:

An exercise in local governance

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INVENIRE

Governance Definitions

- **Governance** -- the process by which organizations guide themselves
- **Distributed governance** – coordination when power, knowledge and resources are widely distributed
- **Subsidiarity** – the idea that services are best delivered by the level of organization closest to the problem and end user. Higher order participation occurs only as necessary to augment lower order.

Cooperation Definitions

- **Cooperation** – working or acting together
- **Alliance** – informal, non-binding, voluntary governance
- **Joint Venture** – formal contract, time & resource limited, autonomous governance
- **Partnership** – formal, open ended, interdependent governance
- **Collaboration** – informal, time limited, issue centric, harmonized governance
- **Civic collaboratives** – local collaboration by private, public, civic interests catalyzed by civic entrepreneurs

What are civic collaboratives?

- Hybrid of many kinds of organizations
- Community exchange

Government

Education



Business

Community

- Meeting ground for ‘social learning’
- Generator of ‘collective intelligence’

Why Civic Collaboratives?

Public Sector

- Mitigate risks associated with complex social problems
- Invests resources & gives up some control

Private Sector

- Gains access with public and civic levers
- Invests time and financial resources

Civic Sector

- Gains access to private and public resources
- Invests legitimacy and credibility

Forums for ‘learning conversations’

- ‘richer’ solutions

Key Success Factors

- Grass-roots approach
- Facilitating not directing good ideas, good people and good communication
- Don't take ownership
- Project based co-operative
- Open management style
- Focus on people and relationships
- Choice of projects that can significantly contribute to principal assets

Principal Assets of Civic Collaboratives

- Non-profit organization
 - non threatening
- Intangible profit stemming from reputation
- Delegated leadership position
- Speaks to many communities
- Profits from generosity

Lessons Learned

- **In distributed governance arenas, networks of community players & civic entrepreneurs are better forging cooperation & fostering trust**
 - Governments can't fail (too risk averse)
 - Perceived self-interest of business makes them ill-suited as credible community champions
 - Civic sector too fragmented & w/o resources
- **Recipe for successful civic collaboratives**
 - establish common needs
 - multilogue is key (frame reconciliation)
 - achievable programs
 - frequent positive outcomes
 - repeat

What's the Model?

- **Form gets outgrown**
 - Projects
 - Partners
 - Resources
 - Vision, focus commitment

- **However, the process may continue**
 - Networks of people
 - Reputational assets
 - Capacity to make a change

Policy Implications

- Resource core networking activities
 - networks of people are key
- Avoid public appropriation
 - institutional orientation
- Accountable but not prescriptive funding
 - principle of subsidiarity
- Service style leadership
 - how can we help?
- Don't focus on form
 - every flower has its day

Thank You

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