CHRISTOPHER WILSON
& ASSOCIATES

UNDERSTANDING
COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
WORKSHOP SERIES

Workshop Outline

Background

> *"In our conversations with Canadians, we found that community success did not come from size or opportunity alone, but from meeting challenges and adversity, seizing and maximizing possibilities, and developing a collection of creative solutions to apparently insoluble problems… our communities are not simply places where policy decisions play out, but also transformative places that create opportunities. Challenges may be global, but responses are local"*
>
> *External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, 2006.*

The aim of this workshop is to explore the nature of community collaboration and complex coordination challenge that such initiatives impose on their local and institutional partners. As the above comment suggests, communities are no longer simply the passive beneficiaries of policy and program decisions made centrally, but are increasingly the furnaces in which those policy and program solutions are forged into tailored responses to suit local conditions and problems. Community partnerships are not just the recipients of public sector largesse but are significant contributors to local governance and of key assets and resources that are often unavailable to government at any price. And while senior levels of government struggle with silos and integration issues, communities collaborations are often developing systems of horizontal governance that are helping to restore the faith of citizens in the democratic process – largely by facilitating what citizens can learn to do for themselves rather than by what can be done for them.

According to the Aspen Institute in the US, which has been following the development of community collaboration there for the better part of three decades, community-based partnerships are expressions of a new wave of governance and civic engagement that seeks local solutions to local problems. These partnerships neither expect nor desire someone else to solve their problems for them. While such partnerships may cover an extremely diverse scope of activities, they share a) a recognition of the

systemic and interdependent nature of a community's assets, people, processes and organizations and b) the need to apply concerted, collaborative efforts to address community issues.

Community based collaboration promises:

1. More coordinated and therefore more effective (better outcomes) and efficient (less costly) responses to community-based 'wicked' problems

2. More civic responsibility and active citizen engagement in the issues of importance in their community

3. More individual and community self sufficiency and less dependence on transfers from central governments

4. Increased local innovation, regional competitiveness, and prosperity

5. Improved community vitality, coherence, environmental stewardship and fewer social maladies

The applicable *Theory of Change* is that through the cooperation of local stakeholders from government, business, and the third sector, complex community issues can first be understood better and then be better resolved through concerted efforts that lead to increased individual and community well being and greater self-sufficiency. This theory of change has explicitly or implicitly been adopted in many countries, although with different program emphases and impacts.

Therefore, this workshop will undertake to identify some of the public sector challenges posed by more horizontal and collaborative local action and to try and determine how best to support community collaborators so as to make better use of local assets and commitments in solving local issues. **Session 1** will examine some of the drivers of community collaboration from both local and national perspectives. **Session 2** will present an overview of collaborative community initiatives in Canada while **Session 3** will offer a similar outline of the community-based experience internationally. **Session 4** will examine the challenges, critical success factors and lessons learned that have been derived national and international community-based practice. **Session 5 will** explore some of the mechanisms, techniques and tools that may be applied to foster more effective community collaboration as well as the roles for federal and provincial partners in order to positively impact the effectiveness and outcomes of community-based work. Finally in **Session 6**, the workshop ends with a discussion of the idea of how accountability may be re-framed in community collaborations to better reflect community learning and to emphasize results.

Workshop Objectives

- To provide an overview of the driving forces which are encouraging community collaboration throughout Canada and the western world;
- To understand the challenges, success factors, and lessons learned that have been gleaned from community collaborations in many countries;
- To identify some of the roles in which federal and provincial partners may contribute to improving the effectiveness of community collaborations;
- To identify some of the mechanisms and 'winning conditions' that may be employed to facilitate more effective local partnerships; and
- To explore how accountability for community learning and results may be utilized to effect shared and mutual accountability in the environments of distributed governance that are characteristic of community collaboration.

Approach

This workshop is instructor led and will be presented through a series of six workshop sessions, lectures, and discussions typically over three days. The primary reading materials will be provided at the beginning of the course and will be organized according to each session.

Schedule

Session 1   **The Drivers of Community Collaboration**
Readings:
Shared Space: The Communities Agenda, Sherri Torjman
P*lace-based Public Policy: Towards a New Urban and Community Agenda for Canada*, Neil Bradford

Additional Readings:
Recapitalising Australia's Cities: A Strategy in the National Interest, Allen Consulting Group

Session 2   **The Canadian Experience of Community Collaboration**
Readings:
Reflecting on Vibrant Communities, Eric Leviten-Reid
Final Reflections from the Action for Neighbourhood Change Research Project, Cheryl Gorman
Looking Down the Road: Leadership for Canada's Changing Communities, Judith Maxwell

Additional Readings:
Whither the Federal Urban Agenda? A New Deal in Transition, Neil Bradford
Co-Creative Power: Engaging stakeholder networks for learning and innovation, Ann Svendsen & Myriam Laberge

Session 3   **International Perspectives on Community Collaboration**
Readings:
Attention to Place, Christopher Wilson
http://www.optimumonline.ca

Additional readings:
Local Governance And Partnerships: A Summary Of The Findings Of The OECD Study On Local Partnerships, OECD
Voices from the Field II: Reflections on Comprehensive Community Change, the Aspen Institute

Session 4   **Lessons**
Readings:
Managing Complexity: The Lessons of Horizontal Policy-Making in the Provinces, Ian Peach
Community Building: What makes it work, Amherst Wilder Foundation

The Practice of Stewardship: Developing Leadership for Regional Action, Alliance for Regional Stewardship

Additional Readings:
Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook, David Chrislip
The Contribution of Community Building Project: Crosscutting Issues and Lessons, Patricia Auspos

Session 5   **Strengthening Community Collaboration**
Readings:
Facilitating Contingent Cooperation: I will if you will, Wilson
http://www.optimumonline.ca/article.phtml?id=271

Added Reading available on website:
Betting On Mechanisms, Hubbard & Paquet
Making Local Governance Work, Sue Goss

Session 6   **Improving Accountability in Community Collaborations**
Readings:
Who Does What in Comprehensive Community Initiatives? Torjman, Leviten-Reid, and Cabaj
The Burden of Office, Ethics and Connoisseurship, Gilles Paquet

Additional Readings:
"Third Party Governance: Accountability Challenges*", in Comparative Trends in Public Management* (pg 48-70), Posner http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/p135_e.pdf
What is Shared Accountability? Donald G. Lenihan, John Godfrey, Tony Valeri, and John Williams

Assignment

Prepare a stakeholder map of a community-based activity or initiative in which multiple interdependencies exist. Conduct an assessment of the collaborative activities in your organization utilizing the *CWA Partnership Test.* Identify some of the tangible and intangible exchanges that take place among the partners in the initiative. Prepare to discuss how cooperation might be sustained over time and the supports that may be required in the process.

Text

While there is no specific text, key handouts will be provided at the beginning of the workshop and additional materials provided online.

Bibliography

- *Getting to Maybe: How the World Has Changed*, Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman and Michael Quinn Patton, Random House Canada, Toronto, 2006
- *The New Geo-Governance*, Gilles Paquet, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 2005
- *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook: A Guide for Citizens and Civic Leaders*, David Chrislip, ed., Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2002
- *Nobody in Charge,* Harlan Cleveland, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2002
- *Making Local Governance Work: Networks, Relationships and the Management of Change*, Sue Goss, Palgrave, 2001
- *Crossing Boundaries: Collaboration, Coordination, and the Redefinition of Resources*, S. Sarason & E. Lorentz, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1998
- *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems*, Barbara Gray, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1989

Important Administrative Information

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Readings: A package of suggested readings will be provided online at the beginning of the workshop

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