

April 16-18, 2013 | Toronto, Ontario



## Champions for Change:

Leading a Backbone Organization for  
Collective Impact

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# Community Engagement for Backbone Organizations



# Engagement

“When we dream alone it remains just a dream, when you dream together it is the beginning of a new reality”

**Brazilian Proverb**



## Six Core Functions for the Backbone Organization

Guide Vision and Strategy

Support Aligned Activities

Establish Shared Measurement Practices

Build Public Will

Advance Policy

Mobilize Funding

***Backbones must balance the tension between coordinating and maintaining accountability, while staying behind the scenes to establish collective ownership***

## Backbone Effectiveness: 27 Indicators

<b>Guide Vision and Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners accurately describe the common agenda</li> <li>• Partners publicly discuss / advocate for common agenda goals</li> <li>• Partners' individual work is increasingly aligned with common agenda</li> <li>• Board members and key leaders increasingly look to backbone organization for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership</li> </ul>
<b>Support Aligned Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners articulate their role in the initiative</li> <li>• Relevant stakeholders are engaged in the initiative</li> <li>• Partners communicate and coordinate efforts regularly, with, and independently of, backbone</li> <li>• Partners report increasing levels of trust with one another</li> <li>• Partners increase scope / type of collaborative work</li> <li>• Partners improve quality of their work</li> <li>• Partners improve efficiency of their work</li> <li>• Partners feel supported and recognized in their work</li> </ul>
<b>Establish Shared Measurement Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared data system is in development</li> <li>• Partners understand the value of shared data</li> <li>• Partners have robust / shared data capacity</li> <li>• Partners make decisions based on data</li> <li>• Partners utilize data in a meaningful way</li> </ul>
<b>Build Public Will</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members are increasingly aware of the issue(s)</li> <li>• Community members express support for the initiative</li> <li>• Community members feel empowered to engage in the issue(s)</li> <li>• Community members increasingly take action</li> </ul>
<b>Advance Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target audience (e.g., influencers and policymakers) is increasingly aware of the initiative</li> <li>• Target audiences advocate for changes to the system aligned with initiative goals</li> <li>• Public policy is increasingly aligned with initiative goals</li> </ul>
<b>Mobilize Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funders are asking nonprofits to align to initiative goals</li> <li>• Funders are redirecting funds to support initiative goals</li> <li>• New resources from public and private sources are being contributed to partners and initiative</li> </ul>

# Who do we Engage?

## Top 100 Partners Exercise

“Consider the top 100 people and organizations in your community that could help you realize the change you want to see. Imagine what it would be like if they worked together to change the community. This would be a dream come true for many communities”. **Paul Born**

See pages 119 – 122

- Brainstorm your partner list
- Rank your list by sector
- Rank your list by people
- Consider whom to approach first
- Craft the ask





# Multi Sector Engagement

“I cannot get to a place of unknowing by myself or with those who think like I do. But it is to that place of unknowing that I need to go if I am ever going to know.”

Paul Born (an ever so brief moment of wisdom)

See page 39...


Multi Sector Groups are prone to:	Single sector groups are more prone to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Tell stories</li><li>•Define and isolate the issues that make up the problem</li><li>•Seek to understand the other sectors point of view</li><li>•See conversation as an opportunity to learn</li><li>•Suspend their expertise. Members of the group may ask. “Am I qualified to be in this conversation.</li><li>•Suspend Assumptions. Group members are brought out of their comfort zone and asked to enter into conversations with people they normally do not engage with in dialogue.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Define the problem</li><li>•Seek Solutions to problems</li><li>•Seek to convince and to show that their solution to a problem is the most effective.</li><li>•Assume that their purpose and core service values are the same</li></ul>

# *Community Engagement for backbone leaders*



Adapted from Hashagan 2002 and Sydney Dep't of Planning 2003

# The Public Promise

**INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT** 

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public and private concerns are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision making in the hands of the public
Promise to the public	Promise to the public	Promise to the public	Promise to the public	Promise to the public
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	To place final decision making in the hands of the public

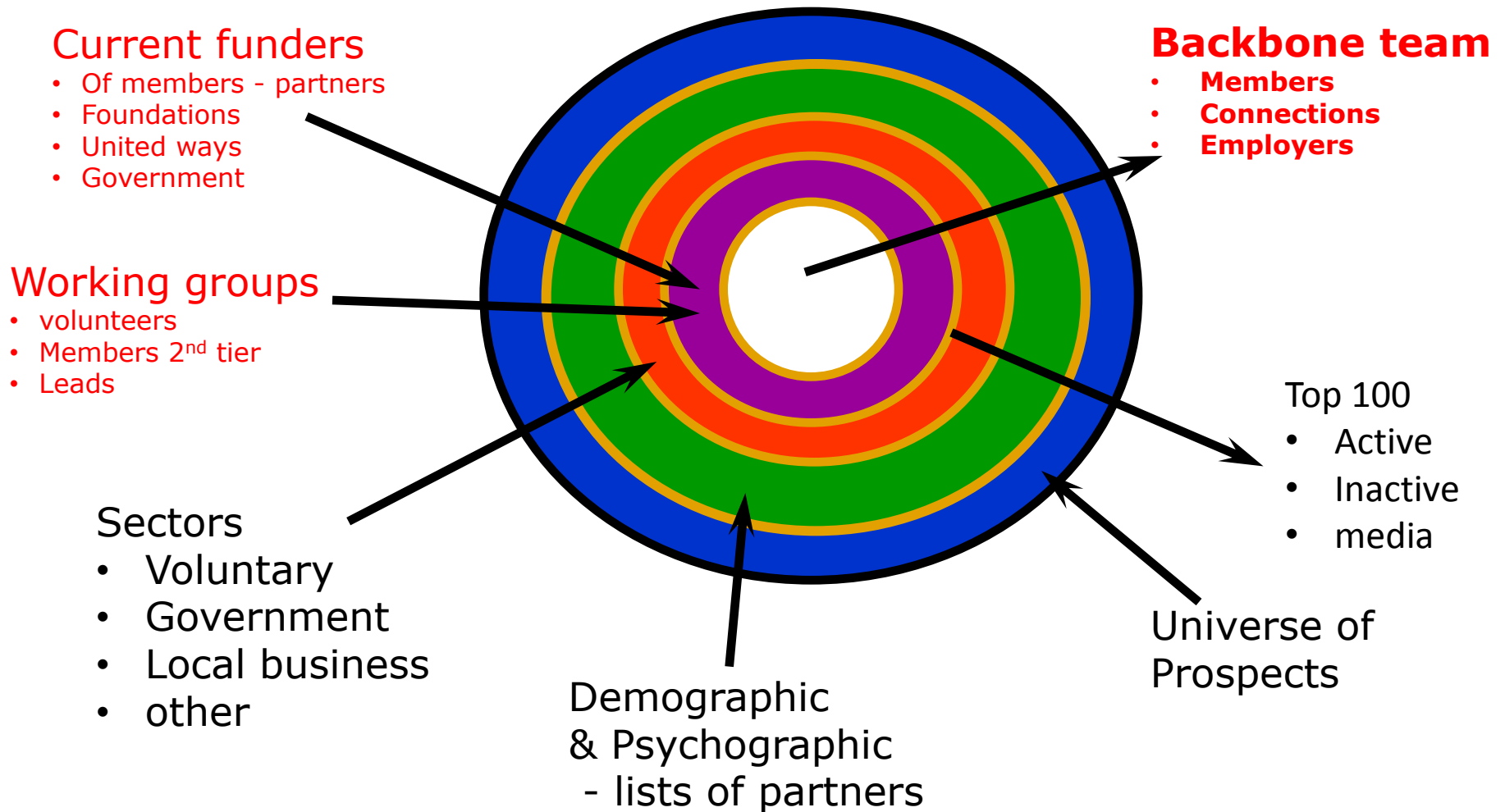
# Create a Common Agenda

## The role of Community Engagement Plan

- Conversations are the emergent phase and provide the opportunity for **engaging** new people, for new donors to build common understanding and also create the “momentum of the possible.”
- People, when they are engaged, desire to create their own common agenda rather than adopt someone else's.
- There is no right or wrong way to build a common agenda plan – the only defining principle is that **people who are engaged in building it - own it**

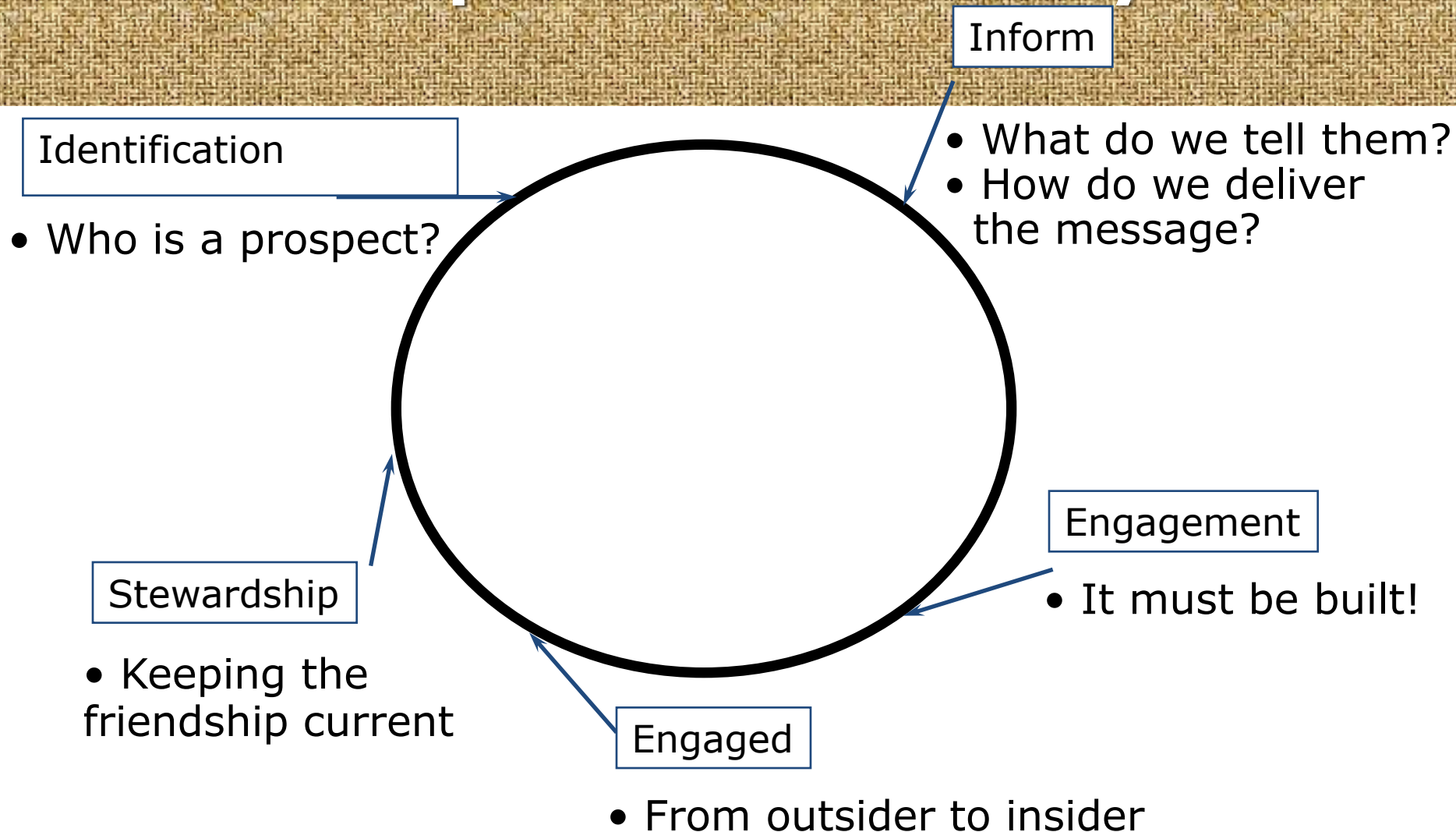


# Engagement for Backbone Organizations

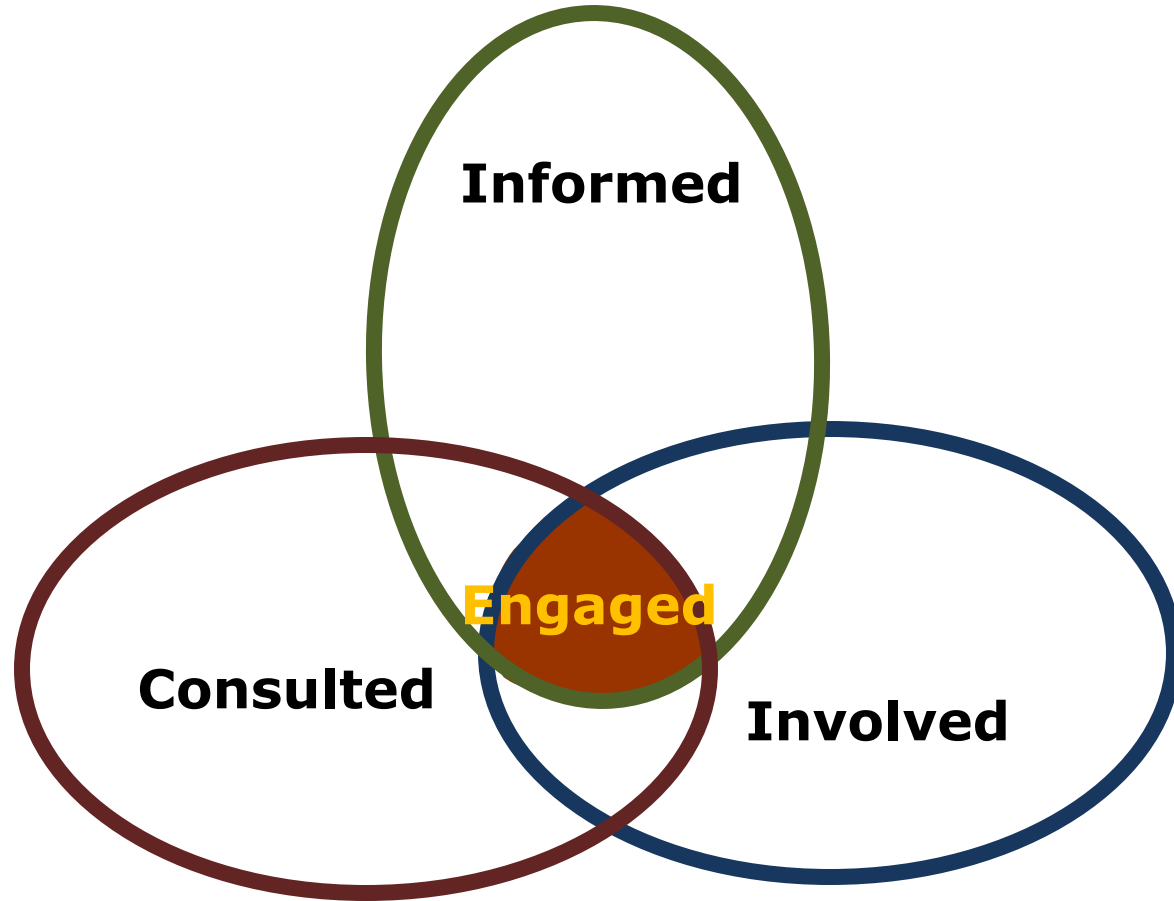


# Engage!

## The Prospect Cultivation Cycle



# Why People Commit



An abstract graphic in the top left corner consisting of several thick, overlapping lines in various colors (red, blue, green, yellow, purple) that appear to be moving or converging towards the center.

# Ideas

- On being Engaged
- Engage the System
- Collective Wisdom

A decorative graphic in the top left corner consisting of several thick, overlapping lines in various colors (red, blue, green, yellow, purple) that curve and intersect, creating a dynamic, abstract shape.

## **Exercise**

### **Think - Pair**

**Share a story of a time when you were really engaged.**



## **Group conversation:**

**How do backbone organizations  
create this experience for people?**

An abstract graphic in the top left corner consisting of several thick, overlapping lines in various colors: red, green, blue, yellow, and purple. The lines are set against a white background and appear to be part of a larger, partially visible image.

**Engage the System**

Showing up is  
eighty percent of life.

Woody Allen

....meet Father Myles Cavanaugh pg. 15

An abstract graphic at the top of the slide consists of several thick, overlapping lines in various colors (pink, yellow, blue, green, red) that appear to be moving or intersecting, creating a sense of dynamic energy.

# Gaining a corner on the Obvious

“If I had one hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first fifty - five minutes determining the proper question to ask.”

*Albert Einstein*

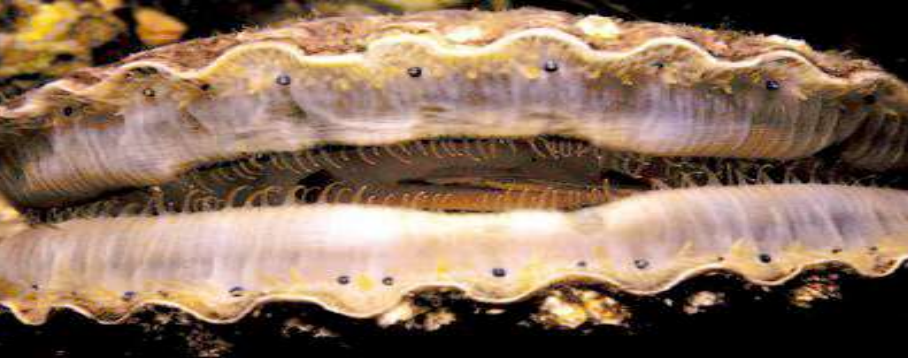
**Engagement is essential as  
we tackle complex issues**



# *Gaining a Corner on the Obvious*

- *Get close to the people - understand their needs*
- *Build trust and empathy.*
- *Let what needs to be done emerge.*
- *Involve everyone: Embrace diversity*
- *Build a collaborative culture*

**Showing up is eighty percent of life.** – Woody Allen



# Collective Wisdom

The scallop principle:

Each one of us is an eye (I); the whole discerns through us.

The corollary: when we don't hear from any eye (I), the whole is at greater risk.

Stances that support the arising of collective wisdom

- Suspend certainty
- See the whole
- Seek diverse perspectives
- Welcome all that is arising
- Trust in the transcendent



Over 12,000 copies sold

*"If you're going to do it, do it right. Don't be afraid to ask for the money. Community is the power. Community Conversations are the best way to make the necessary transition to a sustainable future. This is a critical time for our planet and for our future."*

# Community Conversations

Mobilizing the Ideas, Skills, and Passion of Community Organizations, Governments, Businesses, and People

SECOND EDITION

# PAUL BORN

# Conversations that Engage Thinking Together

The goal really is to create a conversation that helps people to think together.

At some stage, we would share opinions without hostility, and we would then be able to think together;

....whereas when we defend opinion we cannot.”

*David Bohm, On Dialogue*



# When people are engaged

- *Read pages 9-11*
- *Select a table facilitator*
- *Answer the Following Questions*
  - *Why a conversation?*
  - *What can we learn about engagement from this conversation?*



# *The role of “conversations” in community change*



- ***Engages people***
- ***Builds trust/empathy***
- ***Better probability of asking the right questions***
- ***Creates a safe space for learning and innovation***
- ***Advances collaboration***
- ***Foundational for resilience in policy and systems change***

# Conversations that Engage Listening

*Conversations through...*

- *Engagement with the others meaning*
- *Suspending what we know for awhile*
- *Moving from unknowing to shared understanding*



# Conversation the Engage Creating a Space

Conversations to....

- *create a space for exploring new territory”.*
- *grow trust and belonging and build a common experience and language.*
- *“Seek agreement” on what to do together*



# Engagement and Friendraising

- Involve donors very early
- Ensure you include them in your top 100
- Engage! Build relationships and then build the relationship – people give to people they trust.
- Communicate the opportunity to invest as an invitation to learn. Engage your funder in the work as it unfolds, so they will be better able to recognize your successes while understanding the challenges you face.
- Donors give more than money. They bring ideas, connections and ultimately power
- Donors/funders as a group have significant power to influence a system change



# Engagement through the Conditions

1. Toward a Common Agenda
2. When we have Shared Measurement
3. Mutually reinforcing activities - Collaboration
4. Continuous communication – Truly Engaged
5. Backbone Organization role in getting and keeping people engaged?



# Engagement Examples

*“The collaborative premise says: If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways (**engagement**) with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of your organization and community.” (**because they are engaged**)*

- David Chrislip



# Hamilton: the Best Place to Raise a Child



## Foundational Community Supports

Civic engagement and broad social inclusion

Universal access to health care supports that focus on prevention, early intervention and mental health

Strong educational institutions

A solid economy producing quality employment and a living wage

Affordable housing opportunities in neighbourhoods across the city

Accessible and reliable transportation system

Accessible amenities at the neighbourhood level (supermarkets, pharmacies, banks, libraries, recreation, etc.)

Adequate and responsive income security programs

Institutional and community behavior that values the participation and contributions of youth

## Our Steering Committee

Bob Baynham, Co-Chair

Dave Holwell, Co-Chair, Lord Dufferin Centre

Cam Ballantyne, Past Chair

Bob Borden, Upper Grand District School Board

Kerry Braniff, ACTS Headwaters Family Fitness

Sheryl Chandler, Community Living Dufferin

Leesa Fawcett, York University Faculty of Environmental Science

Gord Gallagher, Orangeville Agricultural Society

Barbara Horvath, Independent Consultant

Katy Leighton, Local Resident

Margaret Long, Local Resident

Ron Munro, President of the Greater Dufferin Chamber of Commerce

Cynthia Rayburn, Orangeville Police Service

Sylvia Cheu, Project Director, Mandala Associates

Holly Greenwood, Project Consultant, Mandala Associates

Research has shown that "well-connected communities are more resilient. They have greater capacity to assess problems, nurture leaders, build stronger organizations and mobilize resources." We at Headwaters Communities in Action have been inspired by the passion and commitment of so many of our citizens – from every sector – who are willing to share their time and knowledge in the spirit of building a strong and healthy future for us all.

## Our Funders

In addition to the tremendous volunteer and in-kind support we have received from individuals and organizations throughout the community, in the past year we have received financial support from the following organizations:



Headwaters  
Communities  
in Action

Building A Better Quality of Life Together.

Photos by Marni McDevitt, Scenery House and coaching Team of Orangeville

[www.headwaterscommunities.ca](http://www.headwaterscommunities.ca)



Headwaters  
Communities  
in Action

Building A Better Quality of Life Together.

Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA) is a grassroots citizens' group with a mandate to improve the social prosperity of residents in the Headwaters region. Our goal is to promote a vigorous, sustainable and resilient community. We do this by bringing together different sectors of the community to create solutions to shared problems and pursue creative opportunities together. Specifically, we act as a catalyst, supporting collaborative projects while they take root.

## Foundations of a Healthy Community



[www.headwaterscommunities.ca](http://www.headwaterscommunities.ca)

# Foundations of a Healthy Community



[www.headwaterscommunities.ca](http://www.headwaterscommunities.ca)

[www.headwaterscommunities.ca/trails/trails-video.php](http://www.headwaterscommunities.ca/trails/trails-video.php)

# Conversation

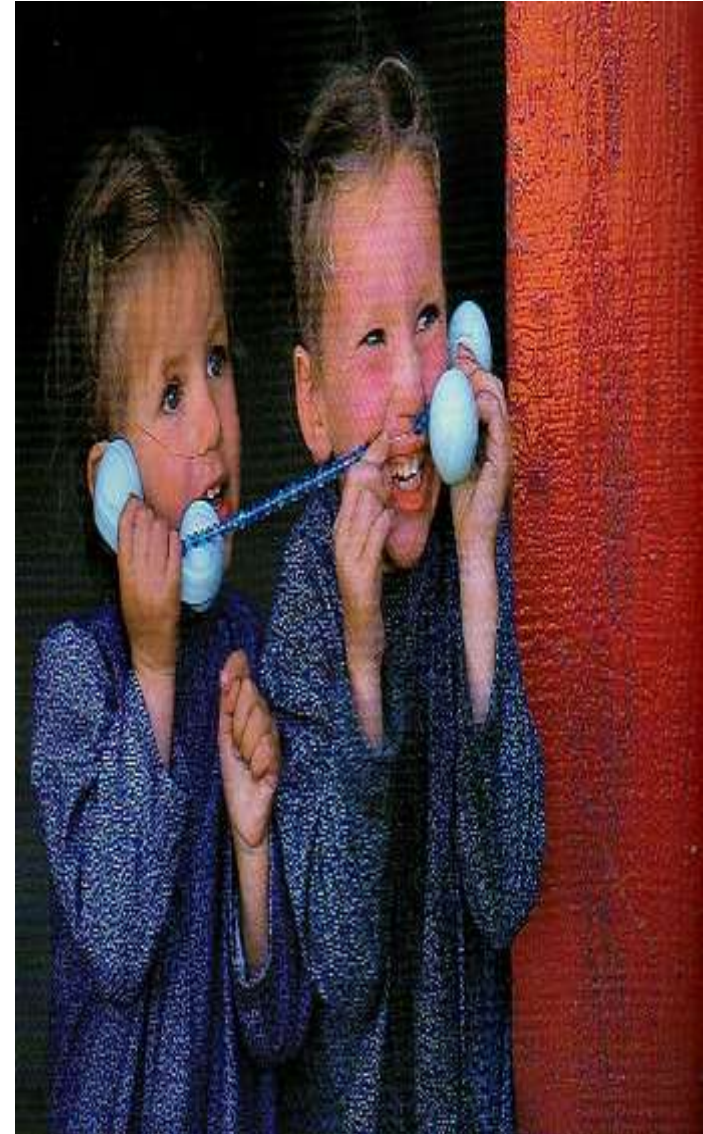
Where do we need further research and learning about engagement for backbone organizations?



# Communities that Care

When we ask “who Cares?” we invite in others who are passionate about an issue. And, when we ask “what's possible?” it opens us up to unprecedented creativity.

*Margaret Wheatley – Turning to one another – pg. 87*



# Summary Engagement for Backbone Organizations

## Entering the system that is inviting change

- Hear the call
- Systems are alive
- Be present
- Engage deeply
- Believe that systems can heal

## Converse to build a common agenda

- Listen to the whole system
- Bring together those calling forth change – embrace diversity
- Suspend what we know for a while
- Welcome all that arises

## Engage for resilience and power

- A strategic process
- Inform, consult, involve, collaborate, collective impact
- Identify your Top 100 people
- Multi sector engagement is key

## Collaborate

- The power of collective Wisdom
- Multi sector action
- Harnessing assets
- Mobilize agreement

## Casting a vision (ALL)

- Action
- Leadership
- Learning and change



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