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A Collective Impact Summit: Why Now?

[By: Paul Born]

Change is happening all around us. If we are lucky, that change benefits us. If we are unlucky that change hurts us. Is it really this simple? Some would say not, they think that change is something others do *to* us and therefore, unless change benefits us, it is against us.

Leadership is most often defined by what one does. "She is a good leader. She provides amazing leadership for her organization." Can leadership be something a group of people do together? Collaborative or collective leadership describes the alignment of multiple interactions, intentions and actions

across a group of people who have chosen to lead together on an issue.

Leadership and change are deeply connected. When leadership is needed, it is most often focused on driving us towards a desired change towards something better. When leaders unite in a community to: improve living conditions; reduce poverty; strengthen neighborhoods; and build safer, happier communities, the very act of working together for this change is leadership or "leaderfulness".

Collective Impact is a framework that offers the most promising approach for translating this "leaderfulness" into action and results in a variety of settings. It is not a prescription but rather a description or guide for how many leaders have successfully worked together to advance large scale change. This work requires that leaders, build a common agenda and shared measurement system to support them in co-leading their different organizations or sectors to align their efforts.

Continuous communication allows this co-leadership group to be inspired by each other's actions; adjust their path forward when needed; add on new ideas to strengthen their work or solidify relationships of trust across individuals and organizations across their network. Backbone infrastructure is established to provide the coordination functions and foundation necessary to support the immense energy and learning that arises through this collective action.

In Canada, the work of collective impact is broad and deep. I believe Canada is demonstrating real leadership in both the scale of our collective impact initiatives and quality of outcomes. Many of our nation's collective impact approaches are more than a decade strong.

A Collective Impact Summit offers us the opportunity to come together and celebrate the work and learning we are discovering as we advance Collective Impact across the diversity of our nation. A Collective Impact Summit provides an opportunity to immerse in deep thinking and key examples that illustrate how collective impact work is unfolding in a wide variety of settings. A Gathering of this kind provides us all with an opportunity to have this pioneering work be noticed and validated. And, most importantly, it offers us a unique opportunity to learn together, and in doing so, contribute to advancing Collective Impact as a field of practice.

Please join us. The Collective Impact Summit is scheduled for October 6-10 in Toronto, Ontario. Learn more [here](#).

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Learn More:

- Register for first-ever [Collective Impact Summit](#) with John Kania, Fay Hanleybrown, Melody Barnes, Jay Connor, Liz Weaver and the Tamarack team in Toronto - October 6-11, 2014
- Find more resources on [Collective Impact and Complexity](#) at www.tamarackcci.ca

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Community Conversations: a Big Impact in a Small Village

[By: Rachel Brnjas]

What do people across North America today believe the job of community is? Where do they experience belonging and caring? What prevents them from experiencing deep and meaningful connections with others? Beyond curiosity, these questions reveal a desire to better understand what we all need to be more intentional about strengthening our connection to one another. Every day, there are many instances of caring between people and countless neighbourhood activities that deepen our ties with those around us. A key question to be

explored is: "Why are acts of community not happening more often?"

Over the last two years Tamarack has been inviting communities and individuals to join us in exploring this question as part of our *Community Conversations* campaign (formerly called, *1000 Conversations*). This [Seeking Community](#) research project has now sparked and documented nearly 200 conversations - engaging more than 2,000 people - in meaningful conversations amongst faith communities, students, schools, seniors, neighbourhood organizations, government groups, and not-for-profits. The result is a rich archive of perspectives that provide a focused look at the power of community and what we need to nurture and sustain it. [Click here](#) to access a sampling of this data.

In October 2013, Tamarack partnered with the Village of Delburne Alberta - with leadership from Nora Smith of Family & Community Support Services, and Karen Fegan, the Village's Chief Administrative Officer - to host a series of community conversations with a wide cross-section of the village's residents. Over the next 4 months, 20 conversations were hosted and 245 surveys were collected that offered a rich snapshot of the village's understanding of the meaning of community and their shared hopes for the future of Delburne.

A unique spin on the Delburne *Community Conversations* initiative was the incorporation of the "Belonging: DELBURNE" Photo Project which used the art of photography to increase community engagement and build social capital among village residents. All participants were offered a personal portrait by internationally recognized photographer John Beebe, and, the hook was that everyone was asked to bring to their photo session an object that represented a personal sense of "belonging." Audio clips were also recorded to capture the stories and significance of each person's thoughtfully-selected item and its heartfelt significance.




When the project concluded, more than 400 people (48% of Delburne population) from "all sides of the street" had participated in photos and conversations. The project's oldest participant was 94 years old and the youngest 5 months old. The next creative step will be to install gigantic Belonging: DELBURNE photo collage murals on high profile exterior building surfaces throughout the village.

At the **Stone Soup Celebration** that marked the completion of this *Community Conversations*' project, approximately 90 participants reached consensus on 7 opportunities for shared action and engaged in some initial action planning around each opportunity. These plans were then prioritized based upon participants' personal energy to contribute to that plan's implementation.

For project organizers, five important early measures of success have already been identified from the *Community Conversations* and Belonging Delburne Photo Project. These are:

1. The number of "new people" (well beyond the "usual suspects") who became engaged in the initiative, and are now contributing their leadership.
2. The affirmation by Village residents of the themes and patterns emerging from their community conversation data and the consensus around specific projects needed to work towards the Village's shared vision.
3. The degree of shared community ownership and responsibility around the specific projects to be actioned. One early fear about the project was that citizens would turn to their 5-member Village Council and say, "Okay, so now how are YOU going to make this all happen?" Happily, this has NOT been the case.
4. The extraordinary uptake of the Belonging: DELBURNÉ art component which gave community members an equal opportunity to be heard and seen. The use of personal portraits and stories, helped foster understanding amongst residents and had a deep and lasting impact on participants' sense of belonging; and,
5. The attention and commitment this Project has generated with new potential provincial partners/funders who are eager to support the results of this powerful community engagement process.

Recently, Peter Block said, "community has a job to do." By asking one another what they understand this to be, the Village of Delburne Alberta now has a clear, shared sense of this job is for them and a deepened commitment to care for one another as they work together to make their shared vision a reality.

Share this:   

Learn More:

- [Visit the website](#) of Delburne, Alberta
- Join John McKnight, Vickie Cammack, Peter Block, Sherri Torjman and more at [Community: Programs and Policies](#), June 23-26, 2014 in Kitchener, Ontario
- Register for the June 9th Webinar [Programs that Build Community](#)
- View the *Community Conversations* archive at www.seekingcommunity.ca
- [Learn more](#) about the work of photographer John Beebe

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Crowdfunding: Rules of the Road LIVE

[By: Jay Connor]

Much like an "over-night success" that was 20 years in the making; the buzz about crowdfunding doesn't really capture the maze of choices needed to have a successful campaign.

I thought it would be fun (and maybe a little scary) to step out from the safety of looking in the rear view mirror as I do in my numerous Tamarack/CCI blog postings and let us learn together via a live crowdfunding campaign running from mid-June into July 2014. That's the idea behind the [Learning Ovations Crowdfunding Campaign](#) that I've just launched on [Kickstarter](#).

Every choice my colleagues and I made in preparing for the campaign will be on display in real time. You can check on the quality of our campaign decisions and results of the campaign itself multiple times throughout June and July. And of course, I'll follow up with blog postings and a Tamarack webinar in early Fall to share my own reflections on this learning journey.

I've shared a brief listing of a few of the myriad of choices that need to be made along the way to creating an effective campaign. Below I've detailed the first three. A full description on the others will come in the future blogs at www.tamarackcci.ca and via the Fall webinar posting.

1. **Choose your Mission** - Be very clear and sure that your campaign's mission is important enough for

the "crowd" to care. At Learning Ovations, our goal is for all children to be reading at grade level by the end of third grade. In many of our communities in Canada and the US, this percentage is often below 50%.

2. **Choose your "Ask"** - It's not enough that the crowd cares. The crowd must also feel that it can make a difference through your crowdfunding campaign. The Learning Ovations Campaign Ask is to fund the development of an app that empowers all teachers to support children in reaching the goal of reading at grade level by the end of Grade Three.
3. **Choose your Model** - There are two main types of crowdfunding - donor based and investment-based. All your other campaign choices flow from the model of crowdfunding you choose. Choose your crowdfunding site; your reward structure; your story; your video; your goals; your launch date; your e-mail marketing service provider; your social media strategy; your network; your payment system; your PR, and more.

By August, my hope is that Learning Ovations will have secured the funds it needs to develop a useful app for students and teachers. And, along the way, I know I will have benefitted from a very rich, hands-on, learning experience that I'm eager to share with you all. Stay tuned!

Learn More:

- Visit the [Learning Ovations Website](#)
- Learn more about the [Learning Ovations Kickstarter Campaign](#)
- Visit the [Kickstarter Website](#)
- Read [Jay Connor's past blogs](#) on [Tamarack CCI](#)

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Deepening Community Rap Wins Award

[By: Sylvia Cheuy]



Community is a deeply-held Mennonite value. For Michael Born, a high-schooler at Waterloo's Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, it is also the focus of **Deepening Community Rap** a multi-media project that he created with his friend and fellow-student Matthew Steinman. Michael explains it this way, "Community is why I associate myself as a Mennonite...(it) is part of my identity..."

This rap video was recently awarded First Prize in the Cornelius Krahn Multimedia Contest for high school students where it earned praise for both its message and its production quality.

At a time when a record number of young people are reporting feelings of isolation and loneliness, Deepening Community Rap reaches out to in a way that they can hear, to provide a clear and compelling message about why community matters and how simple it can be to cultivate a sense of community through the choices we make every day.

Learn More:

- Watch and share the Award-winning [Deepening Community Rap](#) on Youtube
- Visit the [Mennonite Life Website](#) and view other award-winning multi-media projects

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Updates from Tamarack's Learning Communities

- [Reminder](#) - [Mark Holmgren](#) offers us all a reminder to pause and pay attention to what is truly important

and happening in the lives of people we care about. He includes a beautiful poem he was inspired to write when a client reminded him of this important lesson.

- [For Barbara: The Power of One](#) - [Tom Klaus](#), Non-profit Doc, writes a tribute to Barbara Humberman a mentor and inspiration in his work which spans the fields of community engagement, leadership and sustainability. He also shares an important lesson that she taught him: that one person **can** make a difference.
- [15 Years of CCEDNet: Taking Flight Together](#) - [Sherri Torjman](#) reflects on the impact and importance of CCEDNet, a group of caring peers, united by shared values and aspirations, who have provided invaluable peer support to one another and, offered collaborative leadership to advance economic development in communities across Canada.
- [What is Community Economic Development?](#) - [Mike Toye](#) shares his conundrum in finding a definition for community economic development that moves beyond the dry, "action by people locally to create economic opportunities and better social conditions, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged" to encompass the very wide range of dynamic organizations and people whose work is grounded in a recognition that community conditions won't improve without changes to economic systems.
- [Are Starts Really That Hard to Find?](#) - [Joe Schaeffer](#) reflects on our cultural emphasis on responsibility and accomplishment over the celebration of the diverse talents, abilities and intelligences that surround us every day. How much creative and positive change might we reap, he asks, if we were each given the opportunity to explore and express all our talents and abilities?
- [Neighbourhood Community Connector](#) - [Kimberley Sproul](#) shares her excitement and fear as she embarks on a one-year contract as neighbourhood community connector to help identify, and mobilize informal supports for those she serves. Her first task to begin what's already happening in her community of Waterloo Region.

Tamarack Events

- **June 9th, 2014** - [Programs that Build Community](#) [WEBINAR] with Paul Born and Sylvia Cheuy
- **June 10th, 2014** - [Deepening Community Book Launch](#) in Toronto. Join us for fun and celebration to help Paul launch his new book.
- **June 19th, 2014** - [Exploring the Soul of Place: Re-imagining Leadership through Creative Placemaking](#) [WEBINAR] with Michael Jones and Sylvia Cheuy
- **June 23rd-26th, 2014** - [Community: Policies & Programs 2014](#) with Peter Block, John McKnight, Vickie Cammack, Al Etmanski, Sherri Torjman & Paul Born, Kitchener, ON
- **July 10th, 2014** - [The Intersection Between Living Wage and Minimum Wage](#) [WEBINAR] with Trish Hennessy and Adam Vasey
- **Oct 6th-10th, 2014** - [Collective Impact Summit](#) with John Kania, Fay Hanleybrown, Brenda Zimmerman, Melody Barnes, Jay Connor & Liz Weaver, Toronto, ON
- **Nov 18th-20th, 2014** - [Evaluating Community Impact](#) with Liz Weaver & Mark Cabaj, Winnipeg, MB
- **Tamarack Communities of Practice** - [Join](#) one of these small, interactive groups of practitioners who are regularly learning together

About Engage!

Engage! e-magazine is published by [Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement](#), to bring you inspiration, ideas, and resources to envision and create vibrant communities. We would love your ideas to help us improve our format. Please [email us](#) with your comments.

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