Collaboration in Changing Times: Learnings from the World

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ABOUT THE COLLABORATIVE CHANGE CYCLE

Collaboration for Impact has developed the Collaborative Change Cycle to help change makers collaborate to address complex social issues. It is based on five interlinked phases of work:

- the readiness runway;
- building the foundations for change;
- creating a shared vision for change;
- scaling up for systems change; and
- achieving transformation.

Each phase includes guidance to help you understand where you are up to, suggestions for how you might make further progress, and resources to support your journey. We know it's not the only way to conceptualise change, but we hope it is a user-friendly way for you and your community to achieve your goals.

If you're familiar with collaborative change and you want to start working with some tools and resources, explore our Change Cycle Foundational Resources.

Change Cycle Phases

Phase 1: Readiness Runway

This phase of the Collaborative Change Cycle is about raising awareness about a challenge that matters to the community and working to gain support for collaboration and system thinking to address that challenge. Cultivating urgency for change involves having conversations and dialogue about the need for working differently, forming relationships, building trust and using data and stories for insight and to discover more about what is happening and why.

Phase 2: Building the Foundations

This phase is about building a shared understanding of the challenge or system, getting clearer on the issue and testing hypotheses as to why it is happening and the impact of it. This also involves becoming more open to working together and brokering agreement that business as usual is not enough to make large scale impact and partnering with community as the foundation for change.

Phase 3: Creating a Shared Vision

This phase is about refining the focus of collaborative efforts and formalising the approach, infrastructure and resources required to achieve shared goals. This involves confirming the common agenda by agreeing on the goals for change, creating a roadmap for achieving those goals, and identifying strategies to influence change based on testing and learning so far.

Phase 4: Scaling Up for Change

This phase is about building alignment to focus effort on the things that are working, while letting go of the things that aren't. It is also building the infrastructure needed for system change, including stronger collaborative governance structures with increasing authority to steward the shared agenda and systems change required and keep people engaged.

Phase 5: Achieving Transformation

This phase is about embedding new ways of working for long-term change to shift the underlying design of the system that held the problem in place. It is also about continuing to invest in working in a way that is conducive to systems change and embed the capacity for collective learning, based on real time feedback.

Enabling Conditions

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leaders motivate, organise and support others to achieve collective goals. They adapt their perspective, style and actions based on the immediate and emerging needs of the initiative. Under pressure to change, systems produce behaviours and dynamics that if left unchecked revert the system back to status quo.

Collaborative Practice

Collaboration refers to specific ways of relating to each other and working together. Collaborative practice helps people navigate the human dynamics of large-scale change and development and implement strategies to drive population level change, together.

Commmunity Leadership and Engagement

Community engagement supports people in collaborative initiatives to understand they are working with and for community and embed the practice of community-led and community-informed decision making and partnership/ownership into their ways of working together.

Measurement, Learning and Evaluation

Measurement refers to the use of quantitative and qualitative data to understand the challenges and opportunities you face, tell your story, track your progress, and continuously improve your practice and outcomes. It also incorporates the learning processes required at each phase of your journey.

Innovation

Innovation involves framing challenges or opportunities, generating new ideas, selecting, testing and improving the most promising ideas, and translating ideas into effective processes, products and services that meet the needs of the community. It also involves new mindsets and ways of working to get a different outcome.

Phase 1: Readiness Runway

- challenge of adapting from BAU
- Challenging the narratives we tell ourselves
- keep the heat on and sense of urgency
- institutions were part of the problem
- need power holders to focus on structural inequality
- There is a mismatch between how we see the power we have and how others experience it
- Default to authority is a barrier
- disconnection between communities and government
- making space for government
- tension between trust and control
- appreciation of 'expert power' eg science
- Resistance is more than just powers pushing back' because of current context
- Help people identify the leadership moments and what to do when this happens
- awareness about how power is being used in unhelpful and helpful ways
- Structure and ritual was helpful - and working more intentionally

Phase 2: Building the Foundations

- What is the world we want to live in?
- creating conditions for others to lead
- bringing together individuals
- map opportunities for collaboration
- what would it take for the system to be more consious of itself?
- Barriers of class
- willingness to collaborate and focus on new issues
- Gov need to still control the HOW
- Uprising about racial inequity was a catalyst
- Leadership and community voice was important
- decision makers can double down on old ways of doing things
- Multiple pandemics are happening eg COVID and BLM
- Covid has opened people up to seeing inequity
- need to see the issue at every level
- importance of reimagining what community looks like - this can be missed too
- Gov's are listening more to what communities need
- Reflecting on what is important - new priorities eg focus on inequity
- what does it look like to enable communities?
- Disconnect between what is happening on the ground and Gov constraints
- More focus on LOCAL
- tackle the rules to shift them - rules based to adaptive
- Interesting learning abotu how authority and power has been used - authority vs authoritarainism
- People had to be more flexible and adaptable
- 'The work of systems change can become part of the problem' but gives us tools to step into the new work
- talked about love and imagining as a 'mission'
- needed to be more porous and adaptable to cross boundaries and connect with what is important
- Structure helped make space for adaptation
- Level of comfort of adaptation and learning
- Leadership on the ground is 'hyper'local'
- The repsonse required of us is not a response we konw how to do
- What type of world do we want to create?
- Looking to other things for guidance - eg nature

Phase 3: Creating a Shared Vision

- There was a focus on networks
- adapting to focus on the issues in a time of disruption
- stepped up strategies to be the Sat Nav around the goal

Phase 4: Scaling Up for Change

- Stepping back to let community (BLM) lead
- Use influence to influence others - to give voice of what is important
- we are of a system - not trying to intervene in it
- how to mantain focus on the disruption
- HOld the focus where it needs to be based onwhat is emerging
- The crisis is what we are moving into - adaptive challenges are being exposed
- Focussing on supporting practice change
- using resources and position to influence change
- keep strategies clear
- knowing what stages to transform and working differently
- Moved to collaboration online
- keep messages simple and clear
- Moved to collaboration online
- changed how the money flowed
- areas of incompletence become concious - this is something we can focus on
- new solutions emerge in this space
- new terrain of conscious incompetence

Phase 5: Achieving Transformation

- Keeping focus on the issue, long term view and goal and keeping focus on this
- Collaborating across racial boundaries
- BIPOC community speaking up, there is too much work in this space to manage now

Reflective Questions for Exploration

- What resonated with you about what you are seeing in the context you are exercising change?
- What conditions are enabling change and collaboration?
- What's resonating about the conditions?
- What are the patterns showing up?
- What else needs to be in place that you haven't heard?
- What resonated with you that has enabled you in making change?
- What do you need to develop or nuture further and what do you need to shift or let go of?

How the Story was Captured Today

- What speakers said
- What small groups heard
- Barriers shared by participants

Kelly Bates | Julian Corner | Julie Diamond | Eric Martin

About the Speakers Today

Julian Corner
Julian is the CEO of Lankelly Chase and he says this is his "opportunity to support a growing movement of people who are grasping the opportunity of difficult times to imagine a very different system and to act boldly to achieve it". He worked in the UK Government's Social Exclusion Unit where he led work on reoffending by ex prisoners.

Kelly Bates
Kelly is a social changer, nonprofit civic leader, and lawyer who for more than twenty years has led advocacy, organizing, racial justice, and women's organizations promoting collaboration, equity, and civic engagement, both locally and nationally. She seeks each day to develop the heart, skills, and mindset to be a facilitative leader and civic innovator for progressive movement building across the country and in communities. She is the President of the Interaction Institute of Social Change.

Julie Diamond
Julie is an author, executive coach and international leadership consultant. For over 25 years Julie has been at the forefront of creating transformational learning and leadership solutions across a range of sectors and disciplines, from graduate degree programs to leader development programs. Julie's research and work with leaders has focused on the problems of power— the ways power is expressed and how it impacts culture, interpersonal dynamics, decision making, and leadership ability. Her latest book Power: A User's Guide, dives into the problems and promises of being in position of power.

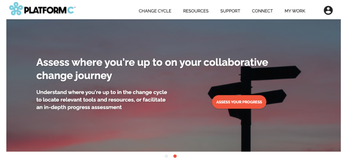
Eric Martin
Eric is the Managing Director of Adaptive Change Advisors (ACA), whose mission is democratise leadership – putting leadership tools that drive change into the hands of anyone who drives positive outcomes. He has served in an advisor, speaker or leadership trainer role at many organisations including the Rockefeller Foundation, Google, Microsoft, Verizon, US Business Council for Sustainable Development, the White House Presidential Personnel Office, United Nations Innovation Network, World Bank, Patagonia and USAID.

See Videos online for

Liz Weaver
Liz Weaver is the Co-CEO of Tamarack Institute where she is leading the Tamarack Learning Centre. The Tamarack Learning Centre has a focus on advancing community change efforts and does this by focusing on five strategic areas including collective impact, collaborative leadership, community engagement, community innovation and evaluating community impact. Liz is well-known for her thought leadership on collective impact and is the author of several popular and academic papers on the topic. She is a co-catalyst partner with the Collective Impact Forum and leads a collective impact capacity building strategy with the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Paul Schmitz
Paul Schmitz is CEO of Leading Inside Out, a nonprofit and philanthropic advisory firm, Senior Advisor to The Collective Impact Forum, and the first Innovator in Residence at Georgetown University's Beeck Center for Social Innovation and Impact. Paul is the author of Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up. Paul previously served as CEO of the national leadership development organization Public Allies, was a social innovation advisor to the White House, and has been named three separate years to The Nonprofit Times list of the 50 most influential non-profit leaders in America.

Thank you to participants today...

Carmen Stewart, Jane Clifton-Bassett, Dimity Podger, Terri Soller, Seanna Davidson, Charlotte Siddle, Anna Powell, Pippa Bailey, Trina Jones, Michelle Bates, Kyrstie Dunn, Geoff Hazell, Ariella Helfgott, Christine Grose, Angela tui Samoa, Jessica Wilson, Tessa Boyd-Caine, Renee Jones, Gillian Coutts Jennie Courtney, Danielle Antaki, Anandini Saththianathan, Randa Warda, Alison Harwood

For more information, tools and resources about tackling compelx issues - check out platformc.org