Collaborative Structure

PROJECT TEAMS

PILOT PROJECTS

SYSTEM-LEVEL OUTCOMES

GUIDING TEAM

NESTED GUIDING TEAMS

BACKBONE SUPPORT SERVICES

SERVE UP AND SERVE OUT

Organizational Leadership
Orchestrates actions **within** an organization

Power is what holds things together, lead by an individual leader

Determines the **role or function** of an organization from the aim of the system

Uses **top-down coordination** (hierarchies)

Addresses **complicated** organizational problems (agreed-on goals)

Oversees the efficient allocation of organizational **resources**

Examines how people process things **independently** (human capital)

Seeks a **competitive** advantage

Plans hold everything together (ends)

"Sells" finished plans **to** stakeholders

Closes the gap between the present and a projected **idealized future state**

Fundamentally an **analytical** process

Collective Leadership
Cultivates actions **across** organizations

Purpose is what holds things together, served by a guiding team of leaders

Determines the **aim of the system** to improve relationships among the parts

Uses **self-organized collaboration** (networks)

Addresses **complex** community problems (limited consensus on goals)

Oversees the effective tending of stakeholder **relationships**

Examines how people believe **interdependently** (social capital)

Seeks a system of **cooperation**

Process holds everything together (means)

Creates solutions along **with** stakeholders

Managing the **evolutionary potential** of the present (limited knowledge cause & effect)

Fundamentally a **social** process

PILOT PROJECTS
A **relationship pilot** is a low-risk, time-bound experiment that gives stakeholders the opportunity to experience new ways of working together.

Transactional and Relational Ways of Being

A **transactional** approach believes in a philosophy of entitlement: what's in it for me? Trust is conditional, much like a deal or contract. It results in a customer-supplier relationship: I'm the customer, you're the supplier and your job is to serve me. By contrast, a **relational** approach believes in a philosophy of commitment: a path chosen for its own sake. Trust is unconditional and is considered to be a promise made with no expectation of return. It results in an equal-partner relationship: we are collectively responsible for the success of the system. A relational way of being is what makes collective leadership work because its principles are in alignment with the properties of complex systems.

A Guiding Team

A guiding team is a small leadership group that works to shape the relationships among the people, programs, and organizations to achieve the essential goal of the whole system. The team acts as the glue for collaboration, serving and supporting the collective work. Rather than working vertically within organizations, a guiding team works horizontally across programs, organizations, and even the public, private, and social sectors of society.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Co-Convening Leaders nurture relationships
A few strong, facilitative leaders in the stakeholder group convene, catalyze, and sustain these collaborative efforts.

Key Stakeholders conduct the work
Stakeholders are the people and organizations that can affect or be affected by any decisions or co-created solutions. As their relationships evolve, the system is transformed.

Content Experts inform the work
Experts provide stakeholders with the information necessary for making good decisions.

Process Facilitators guide the work
Facilitators serve as a process guide, a tool giver, neutral third-party, and process educator.

Backbone Support Staff serve and support the work
Backbone support services provide strategic and operational support to the collaborative effort.

The Stakeholder Engagement Process

Mastering the principles and practices of community collaboration

THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS is both a way of thinking and a disciplined way of working together. The process creates a kind of "operating system" that guides and shapes a collective conversation among a diverse group of cross-sector stakeholders. It provides a common approach that enables people to develop a shared understanding of a problem and co-create solutions together at a systems level.

How do you solve a complex social problem?
↳ You dissolve it by redesigning the underlying system that's causing the problem.

Systemness: It's a systems thing, not a single thing.
A social system is made up of the interrelated components of people and groups organized around a clearly defined purpose or goal. Making the parts of a system better doesn't guarantee that the system as a whole will be better. What truly matters is how the parts interact with one another. Yet it is our normal preference to "solve" problems by improving the parts, rather than to reform and redesign the system itself. By redesigning a system, it's possible to "dissolve" a problem by changing the underlying conditions that caused it in the first place.

How do you redesign a system?
↳ By transforming relationships among those people who shape the system.

Relationships: Transforming a system is about transforming relationships.
A system is a set of relationships. The "system" is the way we work together. Transforming a system is ultimately about transforming relationships among people who shape the system. It's everyone's responsibility to understand how these relationships work and how they can be judiciously balanced and shaped over time, fundamentally changing the way people work together.

How do you transform relationships?
↳ Through well-structured processes that help people work together in new ways.

Process: Redesigning a system is a social process.
Transforming a system requires a well-structured approach for building trusting relationships through which stakeholders can develop a shared understanding of the system and co-create solutions together. A disciplined stakeholder engagement process is both a way of thinking and a defined way of working together. It creates a kind of "community operating system" that guides a conversation among a diverse group of stakeholders and provides a common language and a common approach that enables people to collectively address problems at a whole-systems level.

What kind of leadership is needed?
↳ Complex systems demand two complementary styles of leadership that act in concert: organizational leadership and collective leadership.

Leadership: Complex systems demand a different approach to leadership.
Systems are composed of both parts and the interrelationships among them. These two distinct aspects of a system must be tended to in very different ways. Accordingly, complex systems are best served by two complementary styles of leadership that act in concert. Organizational leadership works on improving the parts of a system (efficiency). Collective leadership works on developing the relatedness of the whole toward the essential purpose of the system (effectiveness). And, because complex systems cannot be controlled, there must be a willingness to take responsibility for the well-being of the whole system by operating in service, rather than in control.

EXPECTATIONS

THE ESSENTIAL GOAL OF THE SYSTEM

DESIRED OUTCOMES
UNDESIRED PROBLEMS

THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

WHO — GET THE SYSTEM IN THE ROOM

WHY — HELP PEOPLE SEE THE SYSTEM

WHAT — CO-CREATE SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

HOW — REDESIGN THE SYSTEM

SERVES, SUPPORTS AND FACILITATES

CHANGING WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER

PROBLEM-SOLVING

SYSTEMS-BUILDING

PILOT TEAMS

GUIDING TEAM

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP: EFFICIENCY OF THE PARTS

COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WHOLE

CivicLab
An Institute for Civic Collaboration

The Stakeholder Engagement Process

START HERE: Identify a key community issue

Central inner ring (clockwise):
- Focus on the system
- Identify the right people who want to address the issue
- Establish and build trusting relationships
- Gather and understand the data
- Create a current and future state picture
- Identify and prioritize catalytic projects
- Conduct a project with deliverables and metrics
- Disciplined continuous improvement

Quadrant labels: **WHO** · **WHY** · **WHAT** · **HOW**

Axes: Shared Commitment / Shared Understanding · BEHAVIORS / BELIEFS

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1. WHO: GET THE SYSTEM IN THE ROOM

The first stage of the engagement process is about the relatedness of the people and organizations that make up the system. It's the transformation of the key stakeholder relationships that ultimately transform the system itself.

The Compelling Challenge
All community challenges emerge from the highly localized dynamics of a particular place. Has the group articulated a compelling challenge that it wants to work on together?
Frameworks 10, 15 / Guide Page 40

The Social System
It's possible to dissolve a complex social problem by redesigning the underlying system that caused it in the first place. Has the group named, defined, scoped and identified the essential purpose of the system?
Guide Pages 40-44

The Guiding Team
Is there a guiding team who wants to take responsibility for the success of the whole system? Have the key roles been defined and filled: co-convening leadership, key stakeholders, content experts, process facilitator(s)?
Framework 12 / Guide Pages 32-34

The Engagement Process
Has the group designed a collaborative process for conducting a collective conversation among a group of diverse stakeholders who must change their ways of working together in order to create a solution?
Framework 2 / Guide Pages 34-39

The Key Stakeholders
Have the key stakeholders been identified? Have the key relationships been mapped out and made visible to all stakeholders? Is there a strategy for levels of engagement?
Framework 13 / Guide Pages 45-48

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2. WHY: HELP PEOPLE TO SEE THE SYSTEM

The second stage of the process is about creating a shared understanding of the challenge and its underlying system. Through a collective conversation, and by gathering and sharing information and data, this process stage helps people see the larger context, showing them they are a part of something bigger than themselves.

The Shared Outcomes
Outcomes are the difference made in the world as a result of the shared work. Have the stakeholders defined the outcomes that the system should be producing?
Framework 16 / Guide Pages 50-52

Primary Information: The Current Landscape of Work
Has the group collected information about the current work underway including: who is doing what for whom, why are they doing it, and how is success being measured?
Framework 17 / Guide Pages 52-53

Secondary Information: System and Programmatic Data
Has the group gathered and shared information and data about the challenge? What information may still be needed? Do they have a shared understanding about the information?
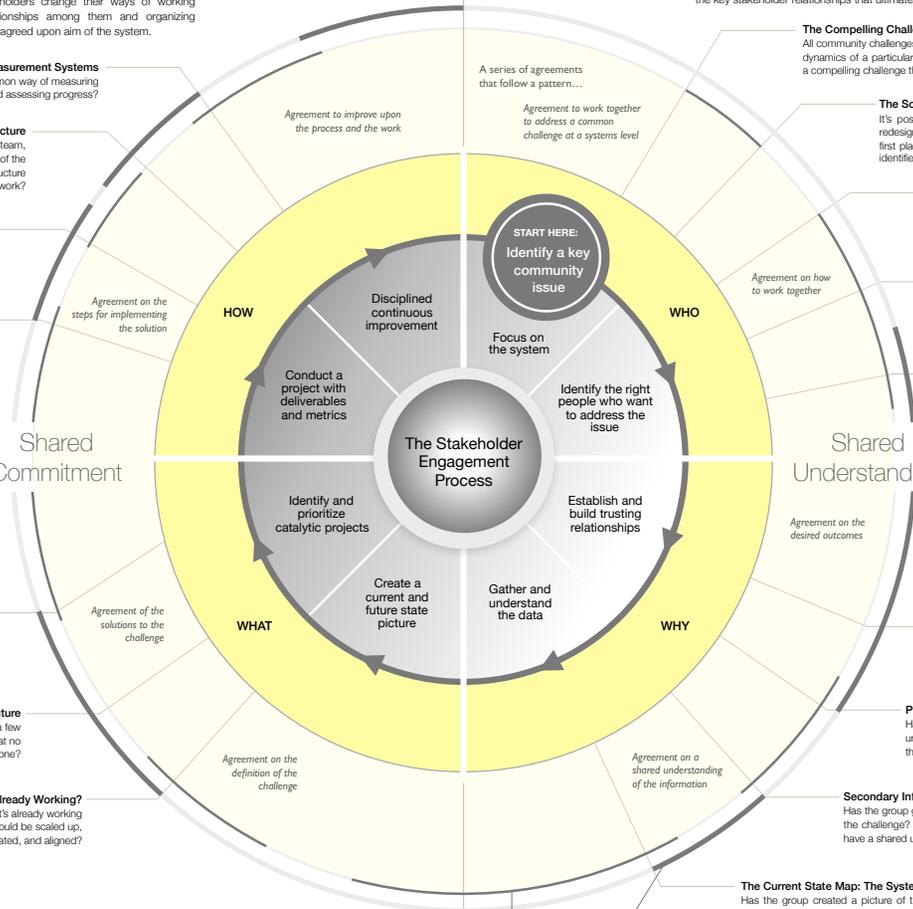*Guide Pages 53-55*

The Current State Map: The System on a Page
Has the group created a picture of the system as it is today—the "system on a page"? Types of current state maps include:
- Geographic Data Maps
- Systems or Network Maps
- Data Charts and Graphics
- Program Maps
- Customer Journey or Experience Maps
- Asset Maps and Timelines
Framework 18 / Guide Pages 55-57

Guiding Team — Stakeholder Group
LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

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3. WHAT: CO-CREATE SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

The third stage of the process is about shifting the collective focus from problem-solving to co-creation. This is the stage where people begin to see the possibilities of building things together, strengthening their collective commitment to redesigning the system in the spirit of a virtual barn raising.

Mutually Reinforcing Actions
Is there a portfolio of projects that offer a combination of substantive short-term wins, as well as more ambitious, long-term systemic strategies that may not show impact for several years?
Framework 22 / Guide Pages 65-66

Co-Creating the Future
Has the group identified and prioritized a few high-level things they could do together that no single organization could do alone?
Frameworks 20,21 / Guide Pages 61-64

Positive Deviance: What's Already Working?
Has the group determined what's already working well in the system that could be scaled up, connected, coordinated, and aligned?
Guide Pages 60-61

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4. HOW: REDESIGN THE SYSTEM BY CHANGING WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER

The fourth stage of the process is about redesigning the system by fundamentally changing ways of working together. The redesign of the system demands that the stakeholders change their ways of working together by improving the relationships among them and organizing themselves around the collectively agreed upon aim of the system.

Shared Measurement Systems
Has the group identified a common way of measuring success and assessing progress?
Guide Pages 72-73

The Collaborative Structure
What is the structure for the collaborative—guiding team, working teams, support organizations, etc.? Are all of the stakeholders aware of the structure? Did the structure emerge from the context, relationships, and work?
Frameworks 27,28 / Guide Pages 70-72

A Common Agenda
Has the group developed a coordinated and aligned work plan, including resources, that visually depicts how the shared outcomes will come to be realized?
Frameworks 25, 26 / Guide Pages 69-70

Catalytic Pilot Projects
Has the group designed and developed a few rapid-cycle experiments or relationship pilots that let stakeholders experience new ways of working together?
Guide Pages 69

Agreement labels (inner yellow ring):
- A series of agreements that follow a pattern…
- Agreement to work together to address a common challenge at a systems level
- Agreement on how to work together
- Agreement on the desired outcomes
- Agreement on a shared understanding of the information
- Agreement on the definition of the challenge
- Agreement of the solutions to the challenge
- Agreement on the steps for implementing the solution
- Agreement to improve upon the process and the work

As both an overarching set of principles and a hands-on practice for improving a community, the stakeholder engagement process provides people with a common language and common approach for dissolving complex social problems. It's a way of thinking and a disciplined way of working together to redesign a social system whose underlying conditions are causing the unwanted problems in the first place.