# Getting the Work Done: Continuous Communications and the Role of the Backbone

Engaging Underrepresented Youth –

Collective Impact Webinar Series

Webinar #4

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In the Tamarack **Learning Centre** we support our learners in the **five interconnected practices** that we believe lead to impactful **community change**.

Evaluating Impact

Collective Impact

Community Innovation

COMMUNITY CHANGE

Community Engagement

Collaborative Leadership

**CITIES REDUCING POVERTY** | **CITIES DEEPENING COMMUNITY**
Vibrant Communities

In **Vibrant Communities** we support **cities and local leaders** to implement large-scale change initiatives to **reduce poverty** and **deepen community**.

# Goals for the Webinar

1. Review the Collective Impact Framework
2. Learn more about the conditions of continuous communication and backbone infrastructure
3. Be introduced to tools that will help you maximize continuous communications and backbone infrastructure

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# Collective Impact Defined

A disciplined, cross-sector approach to solving complex social and environmental issues at scale.

FSG – Collective Impact Forum

# Pre-Conditions of Collective Impact

- Influential Champions

- Urgency of Issue

- Adequate Resources

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# Collective Impact

**Common Agenda**

All participants have a **shared vision for change** including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions

**Diverse Voices * Responsive * Community Aspiration**

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**Shared Measurement**

**Collecting data and measuring results consistently** across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable

**Exploring * Alignment * Tracking Progress * Results**

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**Mutually Reinforcing Activities**

Participant activities must be **differentiated while still being coordinated** through a mutually reinforcing plan of action

**Weaving * System * Supportive * Centered**

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**Continuous Communication**

**Consistent and open communication** is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and appreciate common motivation

**Trust * Transparency * Ongoing * Engagement**

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**Backbone Support**

Creating and managing collective impact requires a dedicated staff and a specific set of skills to **serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies**

**Facilitate * Convener * Coordinate * Movement**

**Source: FSG**

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# Continuous Communication

# Continuous Communications

- Create formal and informal measures and processes for keeping people informed

- Communication is open and reflect a diversity of styles

- Difficult issues are surfaced, discussed and addressed

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# Collective Impact: 8 Principles of Practice

- Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on equity.

- Include community members in the collaborative.

- Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners.

- Use data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve.

- Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills.
- Focus on program and system strategies.
- Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect across participants.
- Customize for local context.

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Who needs what information?
Packaged how?
For what purpose?

The Role of Backbone Infrastructure

While there are many different forms and structures of collective impact backbones, the most common structure is a combination of volunteer leaders and a small paid staff team working collectively to achieve outcomes.

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# Characteristics of Backbone Leaders

Characteristics of backbone leaders:

**Visionary**

**Results-Oriented**

**Collaborative, Relationship Builder**

**Focused, but Adaptive**

**Charismatic and Influential Communicator**

**Politically Sensitive and Savvy**

**Humble**

**They have a big picture perspective and understand how to bring all the pieces together, are energetic and passionate about community change.**

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# Backbone Roles

- Guide overall Vision and Strategy
- Support aligned activities
- Established shared measurement and learning practices
- Build public will
- Advance policy change
- Mobilize funding

# Common Misconceptions about Backbones

- The Backbone sets the agenda for the group
- The Backbone drives all the solutions
- The Backbone receives all the funding
- The role of the Backbone is self appointed rather than selected by the community
- The role of the Backbone is not fundamentally different from business as usual

# Essential Governance Documents

**The Big Picture**

- A challenging common agenda and strategies

- Guiding principles about working together

- A clear framework for change

**The Technical Agreements**

- A memorandum of understanding

- Terms of reference for the leadership table

- Conflict resolution mechanism

**Areas of Focus**

- Membership and decision making

- Funding

- Communications and reporting

- Policies and procedures

- Innovation and learning processes

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# Resourcing Collective Impact

Private foundations

Community foundations

United Ways

Corporate foundations

Local businesses

Individual donors

Government funding
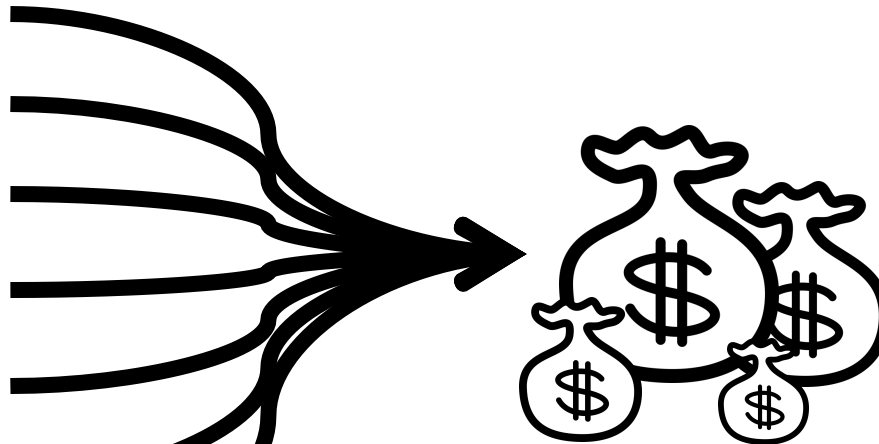
**Also…**

**Reallocation of existing resources**

**Secondments**

**Repurposed Staffing**

**In-kind Contributions**

**Associations at work**

**Citizens**

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# Tools for Continuous Communications

# Collective Impact – Plan on a Page

## The Header and Footer of the Plan on a Page

- The Name of the initiative and common agenda in a banner across the top of the page
- The address and contact information about the initiative across the bottom of the page with links to social media accounts

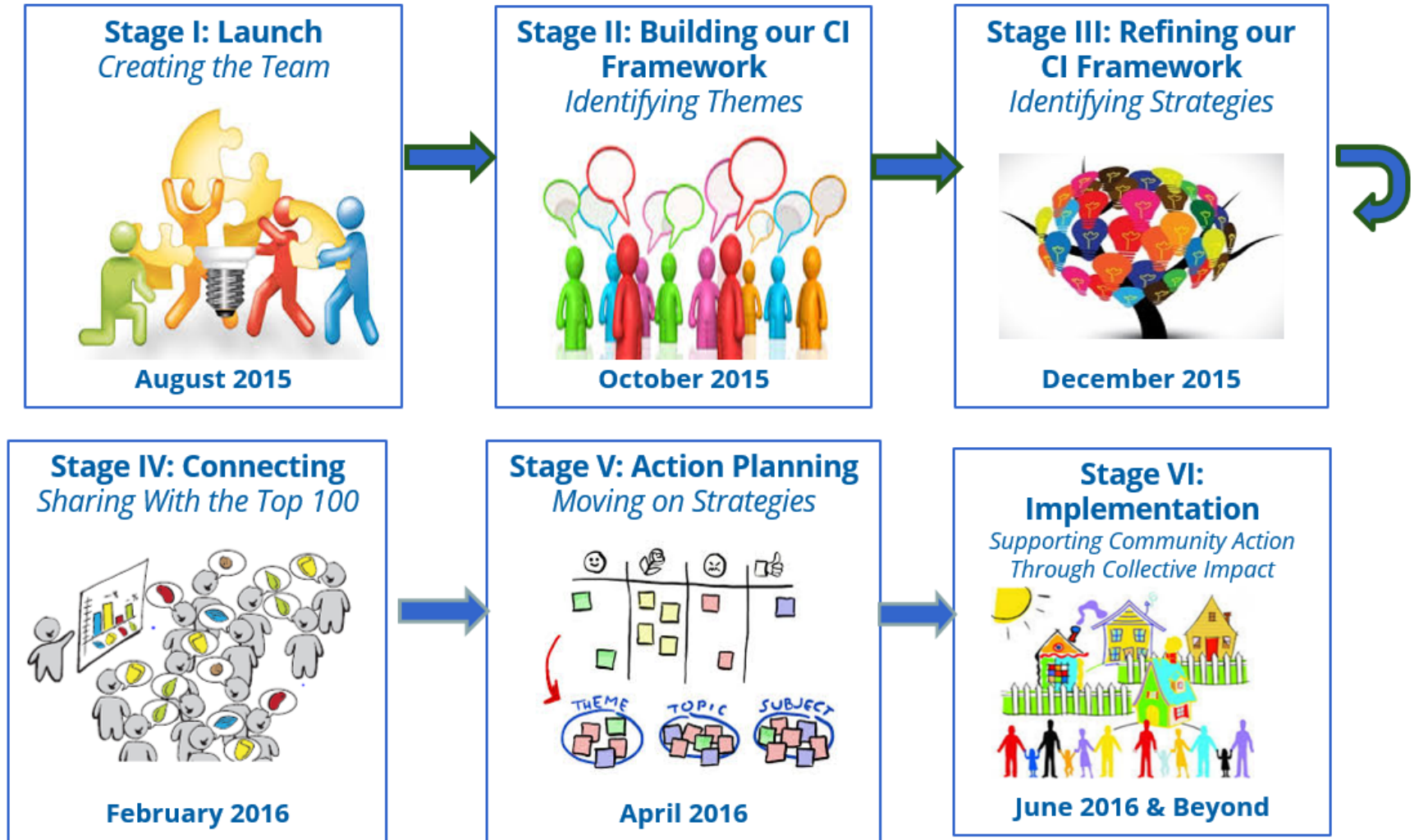## The Centre Sections of the Plan on a Page (Pick the 4 items to Include)

- A graphic illustrating the framework or theory of change and the core strategies
- Key data points that make the compelling case for this approach
- Information about important research that informs the work
- A list of the key strategic partners leading or supporting the initiative
- The success measures used to track progress or progress to date
- A list of outcomes that have been achieved to date
- A way for the audience to connect and participate

Source: http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/building-a-plan-on-a-page

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# Collective Impact Strategy Map

- Provides partners with a timeline and key outcomes along the way
- Can be brought forward at each partner meeting
- Can be adjusted as the project moves forward
- Shows movement and progress
- Can include a history of the project as well

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# Collective Impact Strategy Map



**Stage I: Launch**
*Creating the Team*

**August 2015**

**Stage II: Building our CI Framework**
*Identifying Themes*

**October 2015**

**Stage III: Refining our CI Framework**
*Identifying Strategies*

**December 2015**

**Stage IV: Connecting**
*Sharing With the Top 100*

**February 2016**

**Stage V: Action Planning**
*Moving on Strategies*

**April 2016**

**Stage VI: Implementation**
*Supporting Community Action Through Collective Impact*

**June 2016 & Beyond**

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# Key Milestone Report

- A living document
- Captures the core decisions made
- Is regularly updated
- Can be used as a marketing and orientation tool
- Keep it short (2 – 3 pages)

# Tools for Backbone Infrastructure

# Establishing Principles for Working Collectively

Tamarack Resource: http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/establishing-values-and-principles-for-working-together-tool

- Determine from the list of values below which are most relevant to your collective impact effort.

- Frame as 'we will' statements, for example:
    - We will ensure that equity is the core focus of our work.

| Equity | Inclusion | Transparency | Fairness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Responsiveness | Dependability | Efficiency | Commitment |
| Open-Mindedness | Innovation | Creativity | Compassions |
| Positivity | Optimism | Respect | Courage |
| Learning | Service to Others | Environmentalism | Consistency |

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# A Collective Impact Governance Structure
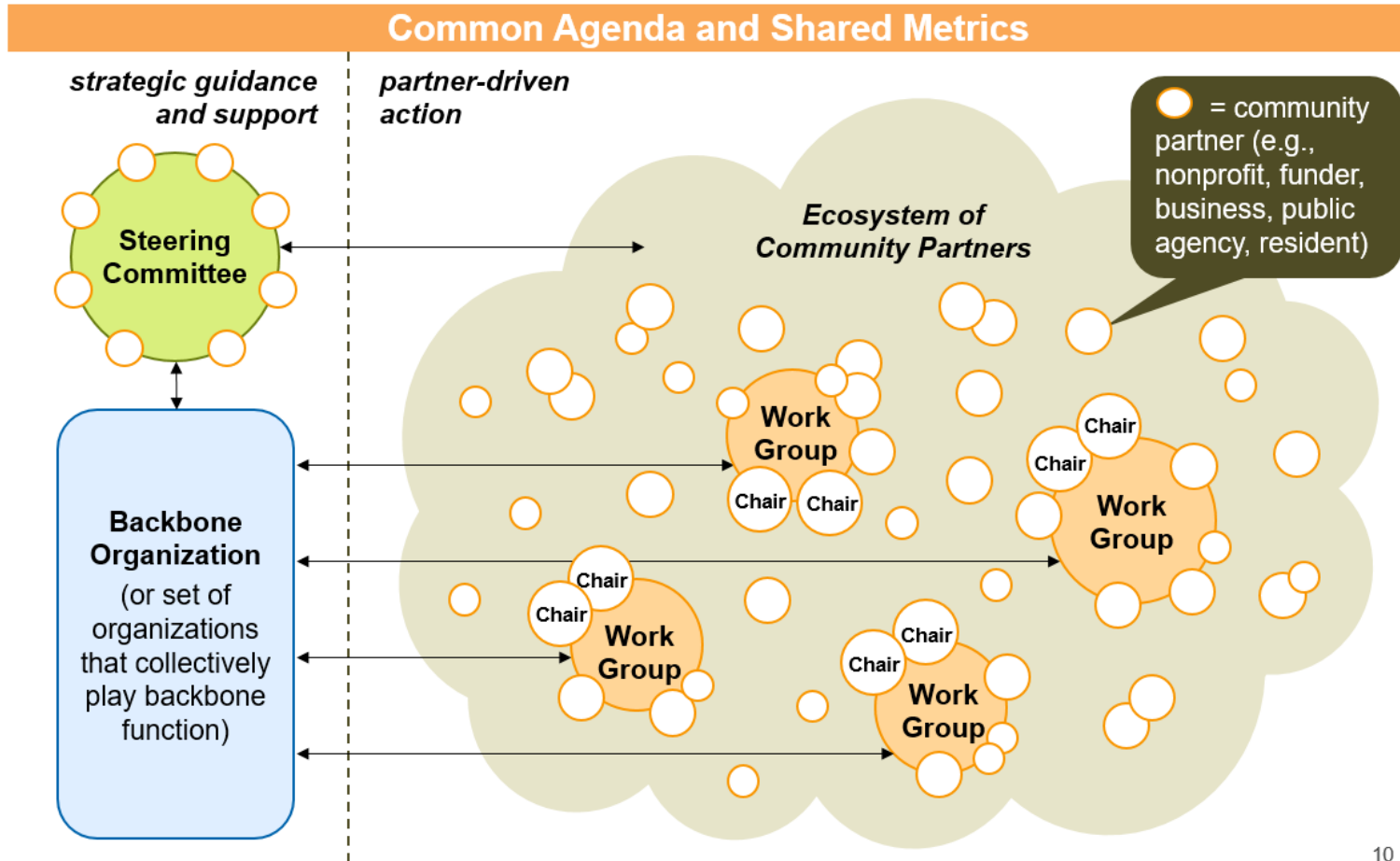


Adapted from *Listening to the Stars: The Constellation Model of Collaborative Social Change,* by Tonya Surman and Mark Surman, 2008.

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For More Collective Impact Resources
visit:  www.tamarackcommunity.ca

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This webinar is sponsored by Employment and
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