



Building & Sustaining Effective Collaborations: *What We Know So Far*

Hosted by the Calgary Urban
Aboriginal Initiative

March 7, 2006



Tamarack is a charitable organization dedicated to helping citizens build caring, prosperous and healthy communities. Through its Learning Centre, Tamarack works with its partners to build on their experience and develop practical tools, resources and learning techniques that can strengthen local efforts to address community issues. For more information on Tamarack, see the organization's website at www.tamarackcommunity.ca.



Tamarack is watching Collaborative CCI work in the following areas:

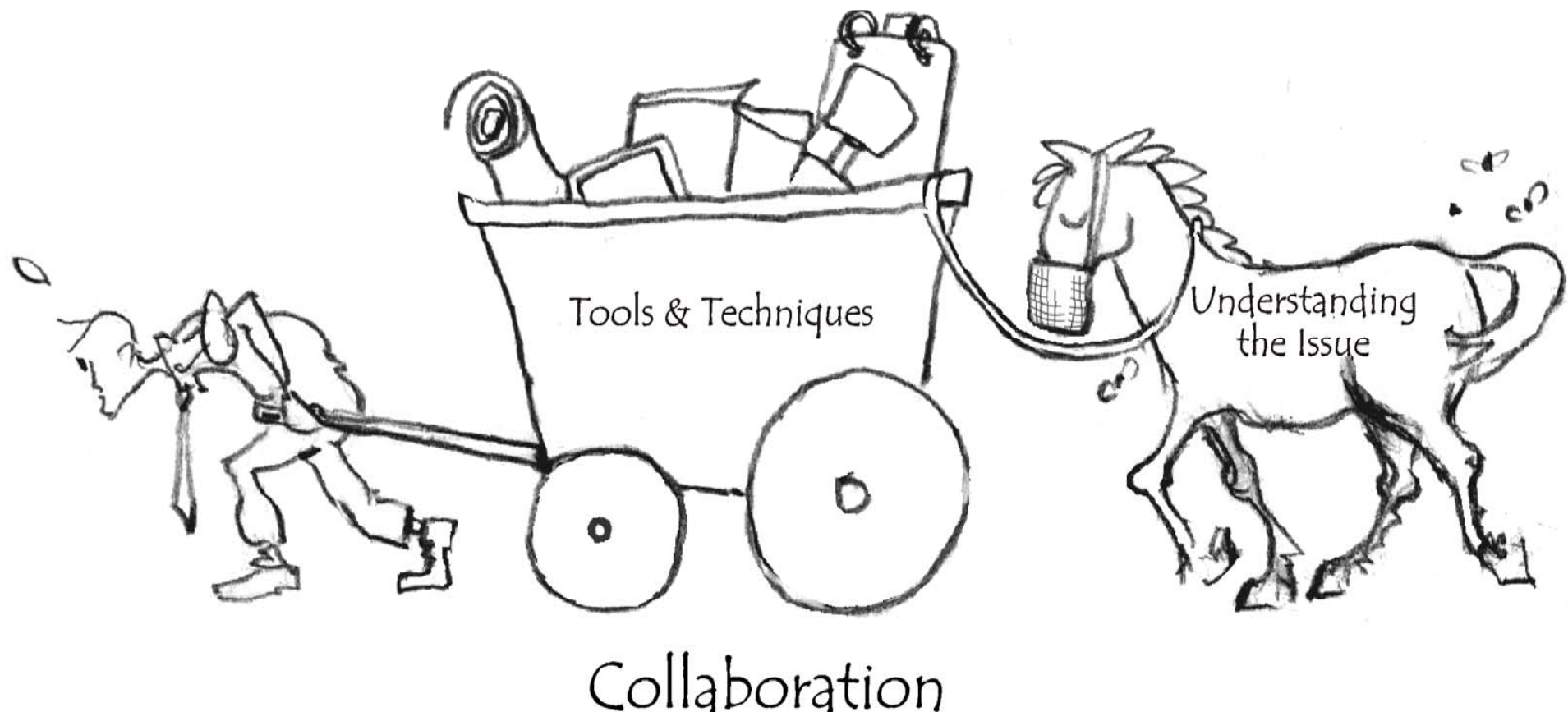
- Poverty & homelessness
- Community safety & crime prevention
- Recreation
- Philanthropy
- Quality of life for immigrants and urban Aboriginal peoples
- Arts & Culture

Example

Tamarack &
Vibrant Communities

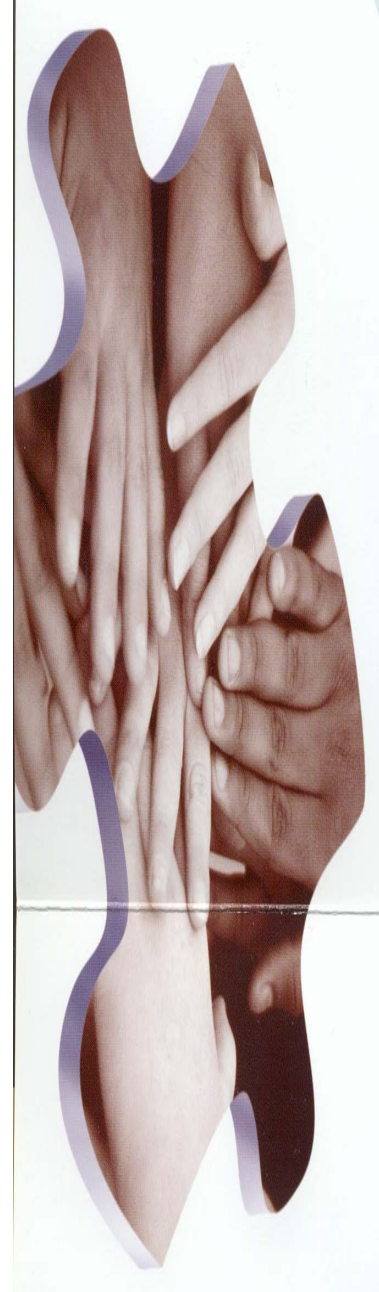


Getting Past Groundhog Day



Our Work Today

- A conversation to 'flush' out what we know about collaborations based on our experience in Calgary
- An introduction to research, frameworks and tools from across North America that might assist you in your collaborative efforts.



Key Discussion Points

- The Case for Collaboration
- The Good, The Bad and The Uncertainties of Collaboration
- Types of Collaborations
- Characteristics of Successful Collaborations & Key Challenges
- The Phases of Collaboration
- Sorting Through Challenges
- Invitation to Continue The Conversation

The Case for Collaboration

Conversation #1

- Why are there more and more collaborations emerging?
- What are the advantages of working in collaborations?
- What are the disadvantages of working collaboratively?

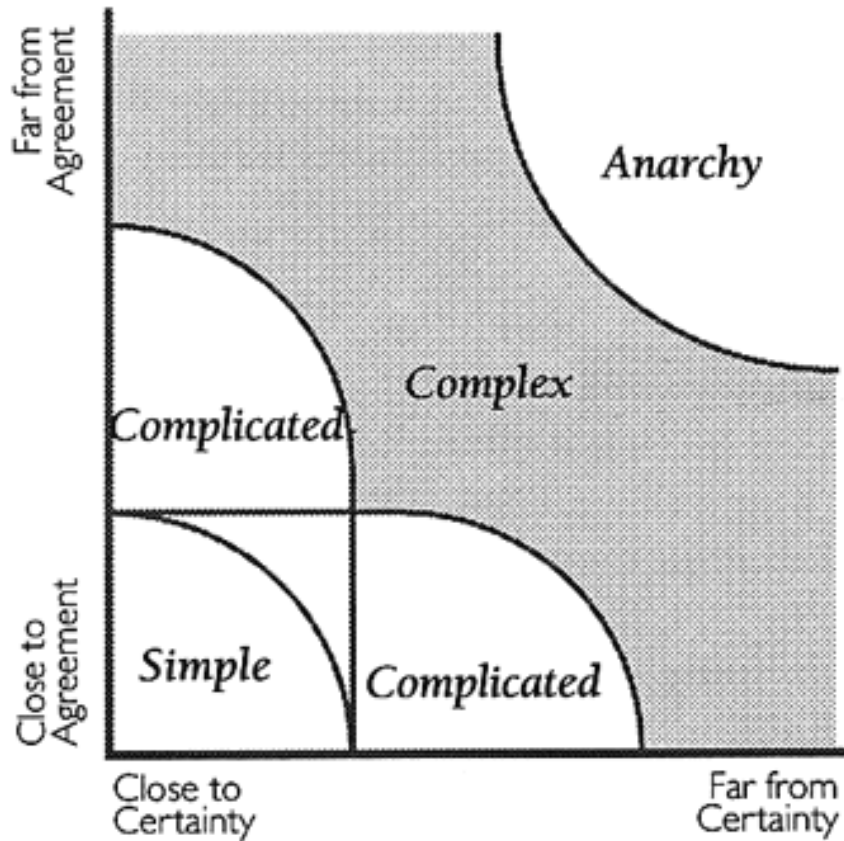


Roots of Local Collaborations

- A natural evolution of a 'loose' group of organizations or a single group seeking partners.
- An explosion of frustration
- "Induced" or "mandated from the outside"
- A moment of inspiration
- A combination of the above

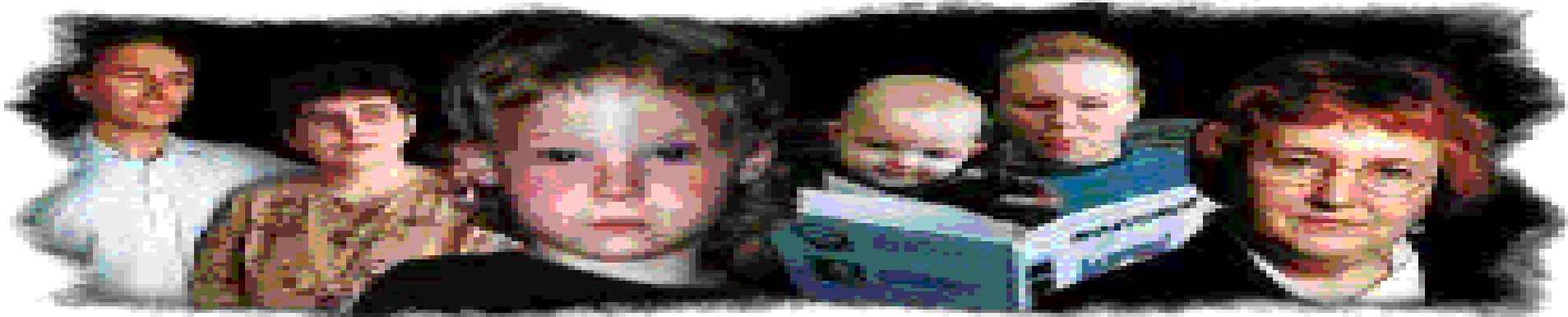


Nature of Complex Problems

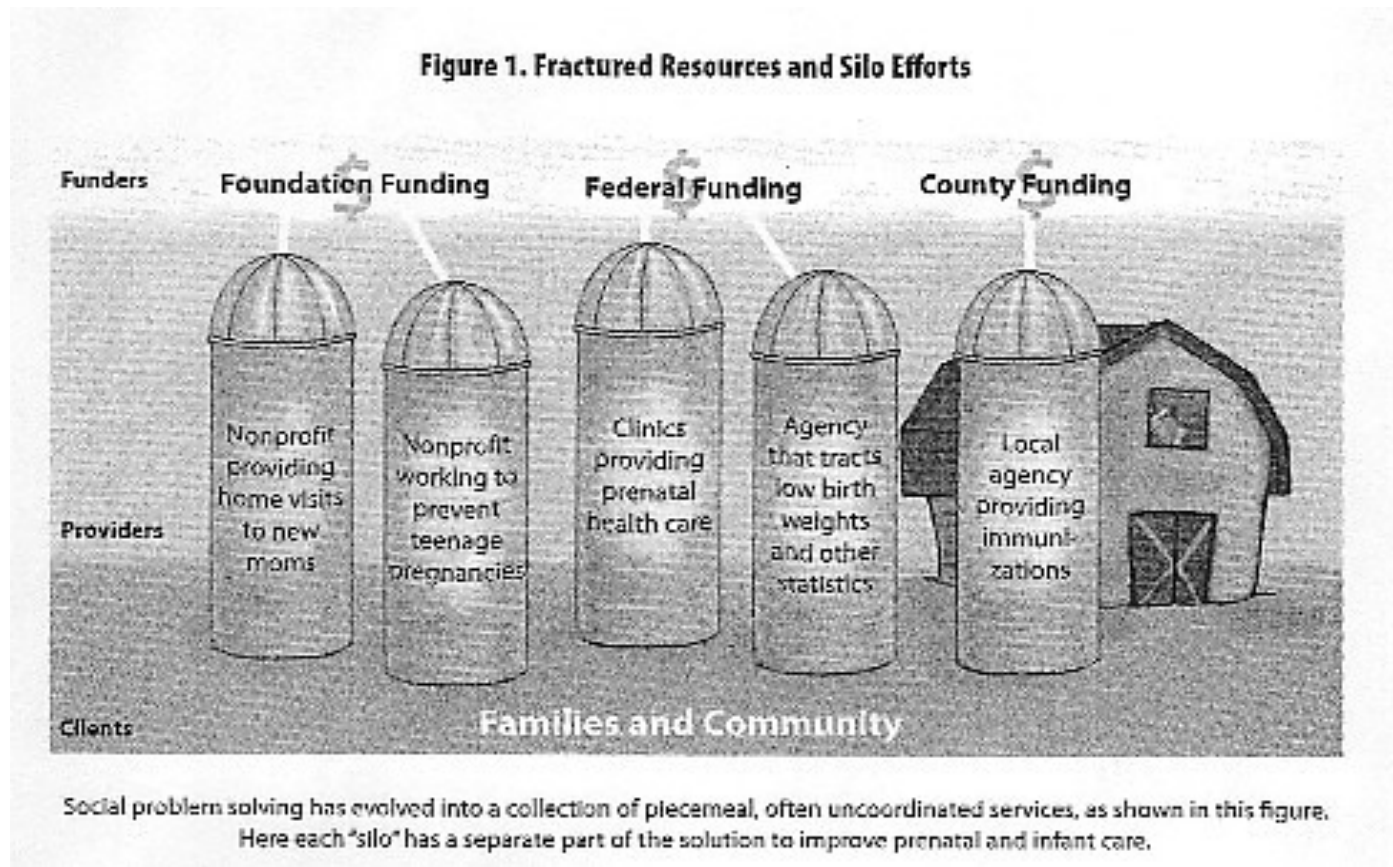


The Current State

- Fractured Problems (e.g. Crime, Poverty, Homelessness, etc.)
- Fractured Resources
- Fractured Responses
- Fractured Solutions



Fractured Responses to Complex Problems



Pulling, Pushing & Holding Back

Pulling

Desire to do more together.



Pushing

Being told we have to work together.



Holding Back

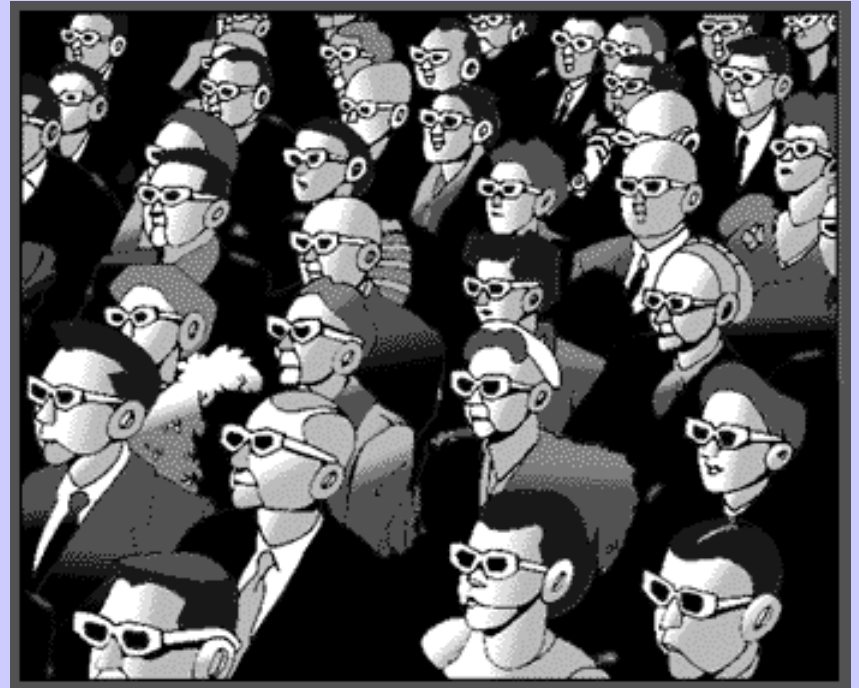
Environment & history encourages us to work alone:

- Specialization
- Short timelines
- Direct Accountability
- Limited Resources
- Human Nature

**What kinds of
collaborations are
possible?**

Exercise

Exploring
different types of
collaborations



Collaborations can:

- Focus on different areas of work.
- Involve different types and numbers of partners.
- Vary in intensity and length.



A “Working Definition” of Collaboration

A mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to:

- A definition of mutual relationships & goals;
- A jointly developed structure and shared responsibility;
- Mutual authority and accountability for success
- Sharing of resources and rewards.



Different Areas of Work

1. Administration & Management
2. Research & Development
3. Program & Service Delivery
4. Fundraising & Revenue Generation
5. Social Marketing & Public Awareness,
6. Advocacy
7. Sector Capacity Building



Different Partners



LABOUR



BUSINESS



COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS



SEMI-PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS



FOUNDATIONS & SERVICE CLUBS



GOVERNMENT

Different Levels of Intensity

A mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

Cooperation Coordination Collaboration Merger



Example 1: Improving Administration

Cooperation

- Joint board & staff development
- Information distribution to customers or clients
- Sharing survey or study results

Coordination

- Co-location of staff
- Shared temporary staff (bookkeeper, grant writer)
- Shared equipment

Collaboration

- Centralized purchasing or benefits programs
- Fiscal agent or sponsor for a project with joint staff
- On-site administration of a jointly provided service

Example 2: Improving Communications & Advocacy

Cooperation

- Mapping program locations
- Sharing advertising expenses for arts performances

Coordination

- Advocacy on policy issues (welfare reform, community violence)
- Co-sponsor community forums

Collaboration

- Packaged funding requests
- New funding streams

Example 3: Improving Service Delivery

Cooperation

- Providing best practice information on a specific program model
- Sharing customer and audience information

Coordination

- Creating a common intake form
- Joint support of an information and referral system
- Co-location of services

Collaboration

- Seamless service delivery system
- Shared staff (intake person, case manager)
- Services provided in new ways

Pick an example of collaboration from your organization:



- With whom are you collaborating?
- In what area of work?
- How intense is the collaboration?
How long has it lasted/will it last?
- Are the benefits of the collaboration greater than the costs? Why?

Collaboration

The Good, The Bad & The Uncertain

Each collaboration has:

- Benefits
- Costs
- Uncertainty

Your job, and that of your prospective partner, is to understand and improve the collaboration equation.



Four Possible Benefits

- New Resources
- Additional Knowledge, Skills, Perspectives, Attitudes
- Expanded networks, connections and clout
- Greater commitment and confidence



Four Possible Costs

- Extra time and resources to build relationships, planning and connecting.
- Longer period of time to do things.
- Loss of control.
- Reduced flexibility to respond to new opportunities.



Four Possible Unknowns

- The length of time it will take to start and sustain a collaboration.
- Whether or not results will be achieved.
- The extent to which the collaboration becomes more important than the outcomes it is trying to achieve.
- Interpersonal, inter-organizational, intercultural, intersectoral dynamics.



A Collaboration Formula?

$$\begin{aligned} &(\text{Benefits} - \text{Costs}) \times \text{Uncertainty} \\ &= \\ &\text{Value of a Collaboration} \end{aligned}$$

The formula changes over time.

Your job and that of your prospective partner is to understand and improve the collaboration equation.

**Improving the
probabilities of
successful collaboration**

Conversation #2

- What are the characteristics of successful collaborations?
- What are the common challenges?
- How do you improve the chances of success?



KEY POINTS

- There are some common “ingredients of success” and common challenges in each collaboration.
- Your job and that of your prospective partner is to understand and improve the collaboration equation - if possible - by strengthening the ingredients and minimizing the challenges.
- You can do this over each phase of collaboration development and renewal process.

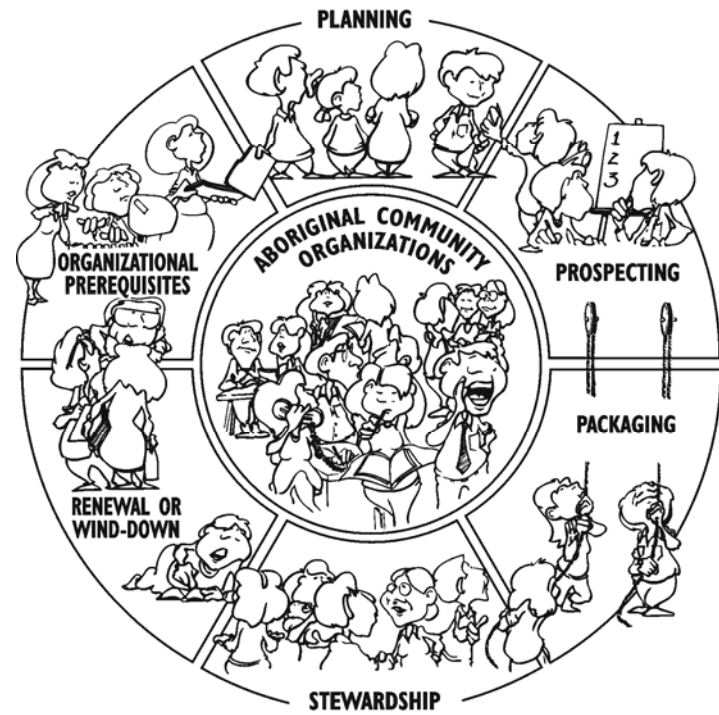


20 Factors Influencing Success of Collaborations

- Environment
 - History of community collaboration
 - Group perceived as community leaders
 - Favorable social & political climate
- Membership
 - Mutual understanding, respect & trust
 - Good cross section of members
 - Members perceive collaboration in their self-interest
 - Ability to compromise
- Process & Structure
 - Members share stake in process & outcome
 - Multiple layers of decision-making
 - Flexibility
 - Clear roles and guidelines
 - Adaptability
- Communication
 - Open & frequent
 - Informal and formal links
- Purpose
 - Unique purpose
 - Shared vision
 - Concrete, attainable goals
- Resources
 - Sufficient resources
 - Skilled convenor

Six Stages of Collaborations

- Preparing Organizational Pre-requisites
- Planning Your Collaboration
- Prospecting Potential Organizations
- Developing & Packaging the Collaboration
- Stewarding the Effort
- Renewing or Winding Down



Stage One: Organizational Prerequisites

- Assessing your organization's readiness to collaborate with another organization.

Normal Outcome:

Organizational Self-Assessment &
Plan for Improving Capacity

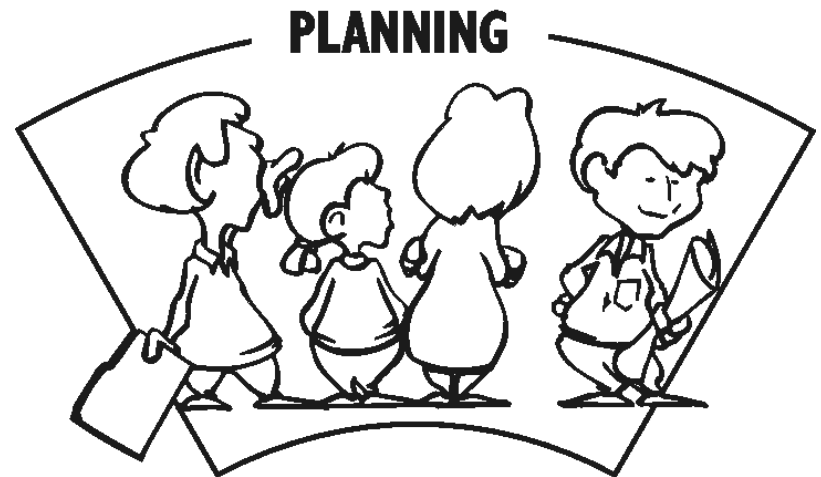


Stage Two: Planning

- Clarifying what kinds of things you are seeking in a collaboration and what you can offer in return.

Normal Outcome:

List of things your organization is seeking and assets in which other organizations might be interested.

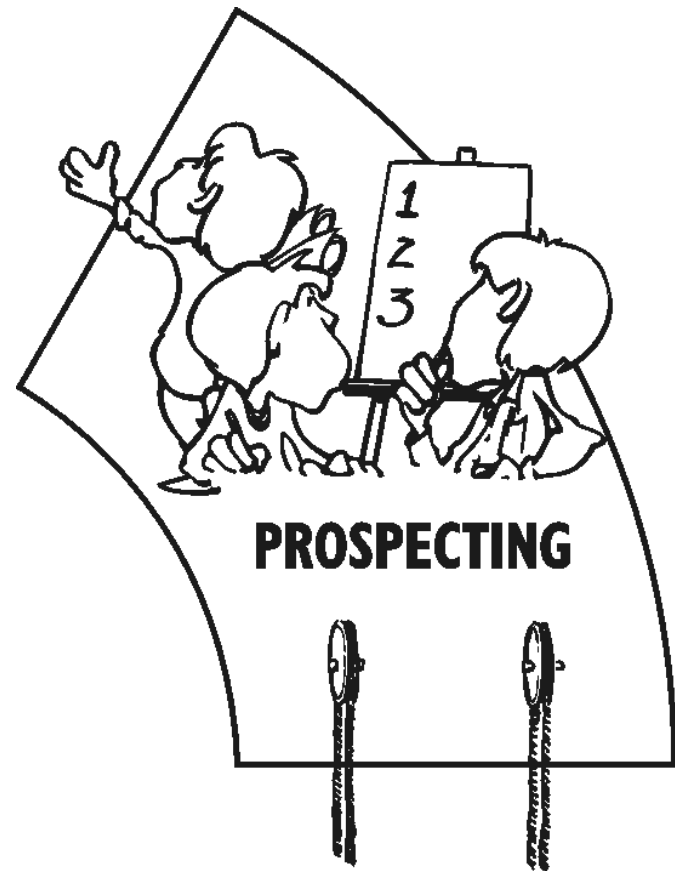


Stage Three: Prospecting

- Seeking out organizations with whom to collaborate.

Normal Outcome:

A continually updated prospect list.

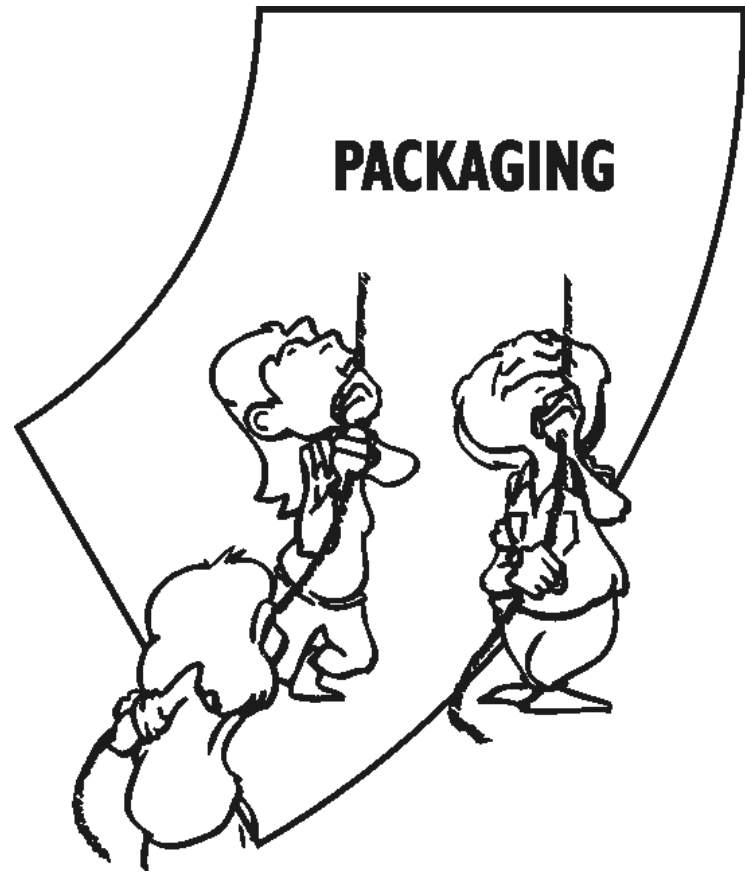


Stage Four: Developing & Packaging the Collaboration

- Putting together a collaboration that works for everyone.

Normal Outcome:

A well defined collaboration agreement, workplan and working relationship between organizations.



Stage Five: Stewarding

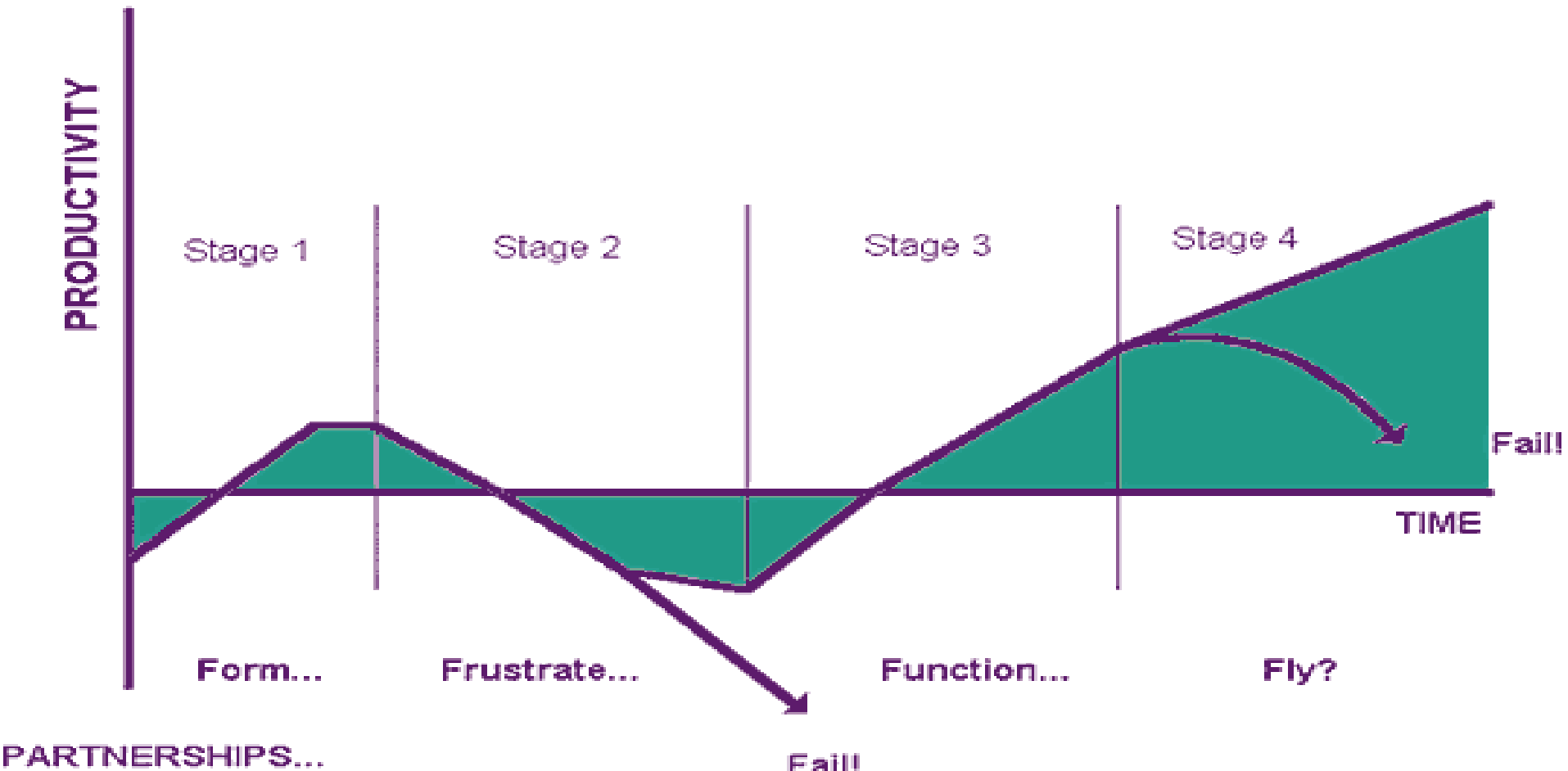
- Managing the day to day work, troubleshooting, adapting and communicating.

Normal Outcome:

A continually updated strategy, workplan, adjusted set of resources for the collaboration and deeper relationships.



The Little Phases in Stage Five

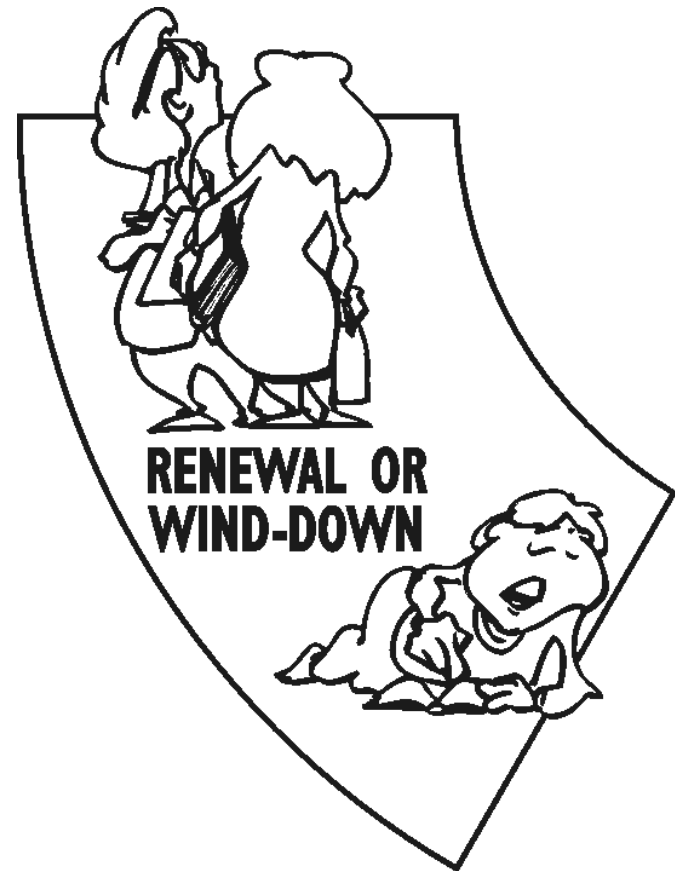


Stage Six: Renewing or Winding Down the Collaboration

- Explore the willingness and capacity of the organizations to discontinue the collaboration, continue as is, or redefine it.

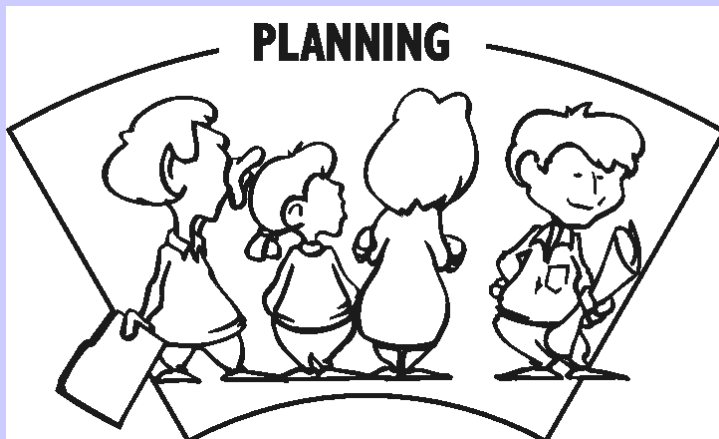
Normal Outcome:

A decision on if and how to proceed with the collaboration and - possibly - a revised collaboration agreement.



Exercise

- Determine the benefits your organization might seek in a collaboration with a business.



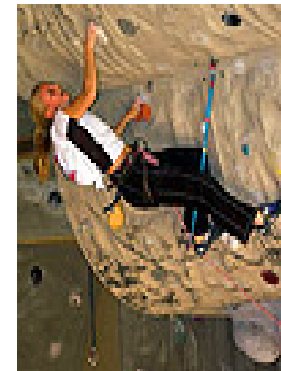
KEY POINTS

- All organizations will eventually come across challenges and opportunities that appear not to have an obvious best solution or response.
- Making progress on these issues requires you, at a minimum, to be clear about the specific challenges/opportunities you face.
- Exploring these challenges openly with your colleagues in a structured way can help.



The Messy Stuff

- Balancing Acts & Trade Offs
- Dilemmas
- Paradoxes
- Relentless Incrementalism

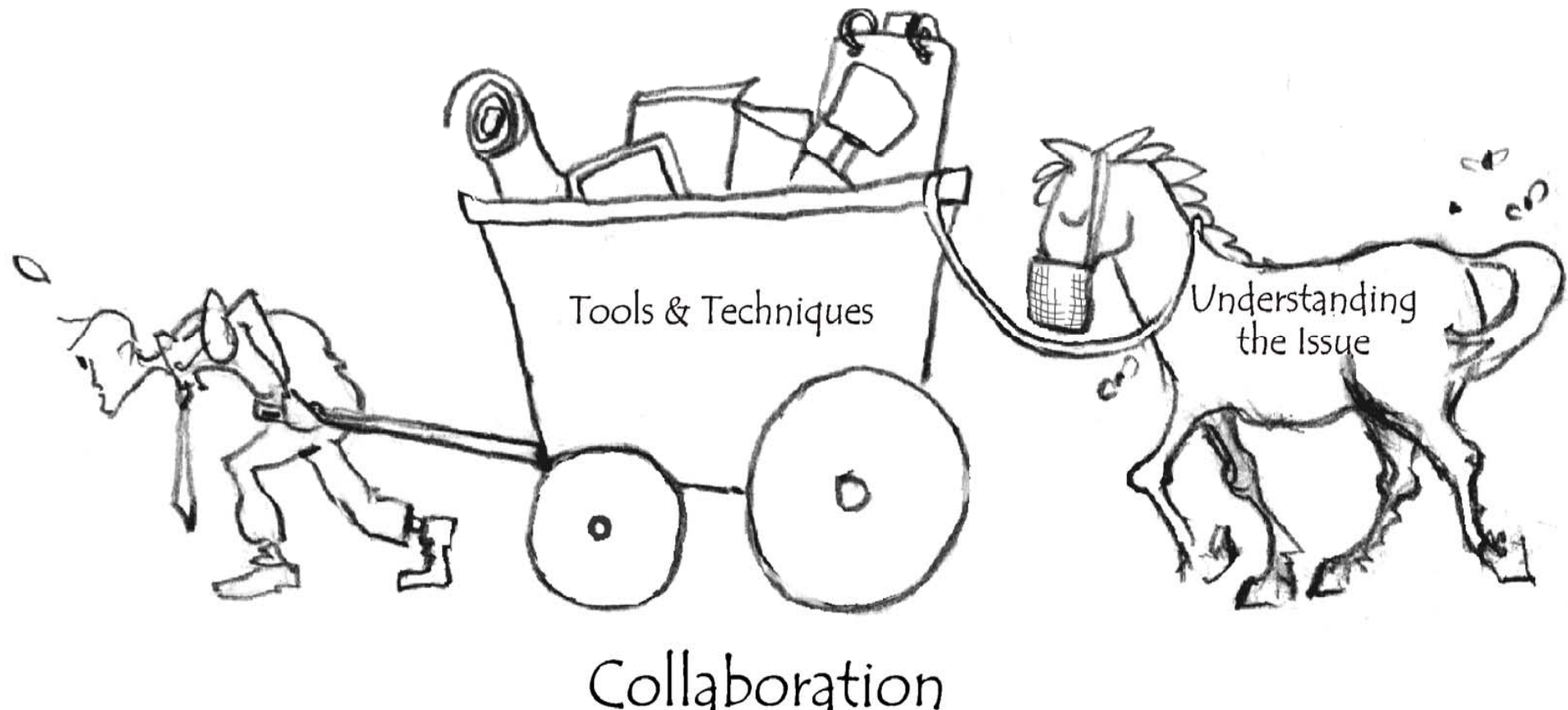


Peer Input Session

Assisting your peers to tackle tough challenges in their collaboration.



Is it February 3rd yet?



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Conversation #3

- What are your greatest fears of collaboration?
- What are your greatest hopes?
- What would you make you and your organization more willing and able to collaborate?





An Invitation to Continue the Conversation

- An initial list of helpful collaborative resources.
- Peer Learning opportunities with other people from across Canada, including people involved in UAS related initiatives in other cities.
- Engage! e-newsletter updates on new resources, stories and tools related to collaboration.



Click here to visit the Tamarack website for more engaging content! www.tamarackcommunity.ca