

**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:**

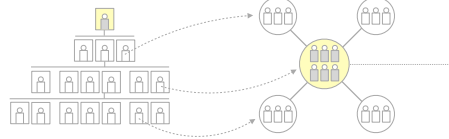
**Co-Convening Leaders** nurture relationships. A few strong, facilitative leaders in the stakeholder group convene, catalyze, and sustain these collaborative efforts.

**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.



**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 with the stakeholders

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

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

Oversees the effective tending of stakeholder **relationships**

Examines how people behave **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

**A PROCESS OVERVIEW**

**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 "community operating system" that guides and shapes a collective conversation among a diverse group of cross-sector stakeholders. It provides a common language and 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.**

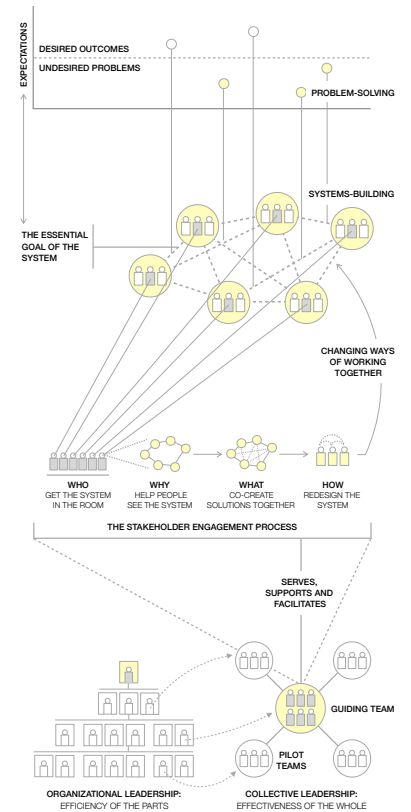
Transforming a system requires a well-structured approach for building trusting relationships through which stakeholders can develop a shared understanding of the system and co-create solutions together. A disciplined stakeholder engagement process is both a way of thinking and a defined way of working 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.



**Guiding Questions**

- How can we shape our relationships to improve the way we work together?
- How can we coordinate and align our work to achieve better outcomes?
- How can we structure ourselves to increase our collective capacity?
- How is success measured?
- How can we continuously improve upon our work and the process itself?

**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.

**I. 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.

**Guiding Questions**

- Who wants to take responsibility for the success of the whole system?
- Whose relationships most shape the outcomes of the system?
- Who needs to be engaged to get a microcosm of the system in the room?\*
- Who do we need in the room to make something different happen?

**BEHAVIORS**

**BELIEFS**

**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.

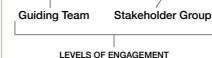
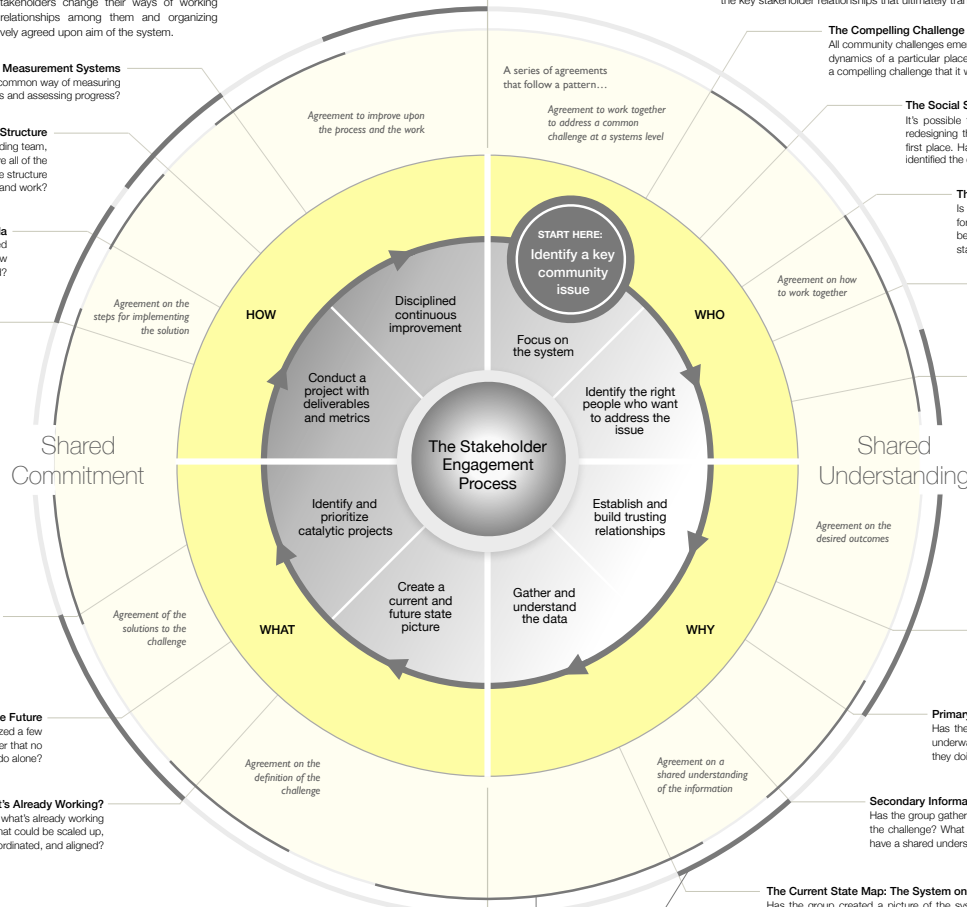
**Guiding Questions**

- What are the high-level things we could do together that no one organization could do alone?
- What do we want to co-create together?
- What is working well and how could we do more of it—what could be scaled up, connected, coordinated, and aligned?
- What improvements might we contribute to the collective 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.

Shared Commitment

Shared Understanding



**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 Questions**

- Why are we here and why are we working together?
- Why is the challenge worth addressing?
- Why is the current system of relationships structured like it is?
- Why is the system currently producing the outcomes that it is?