

Public Sector Track: Mayors' Neighborhood Academy Opening Session

Dr. Jorrit de Jong

Emma Bloomberg Senior Lecturer,
Harvard Kennedy School;
Director, Bloomberg Center for Cities
at Harvard University



EdRedesign
OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL



#PowerofPlace



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Leading Collaboration in Cities

What to Expect, How to Make Progress, and Where to Begin

Mayor's Academy – Summer Institute 2025 – Harlem Children's Zone and EdRedesign Lab

Dr. Jorrit de Jong, Faculty Director, Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University

Session Plan

1. What to Expect? Common Barriers to Collaboration

- The Hartford Case
- Insights from Research
- Small Group Discussion

2. How to Make Progress? Collaboration as a Learning Journey

- The Louisville Case
- Insights from Research
- Small Group Discussion

3. Where to Begin? Identifying Useful Entry Points

- The South Yorkshire Case
- Insights from Research
- Small Group Discussion

300+ mayors
3000+ officials
30+ countries



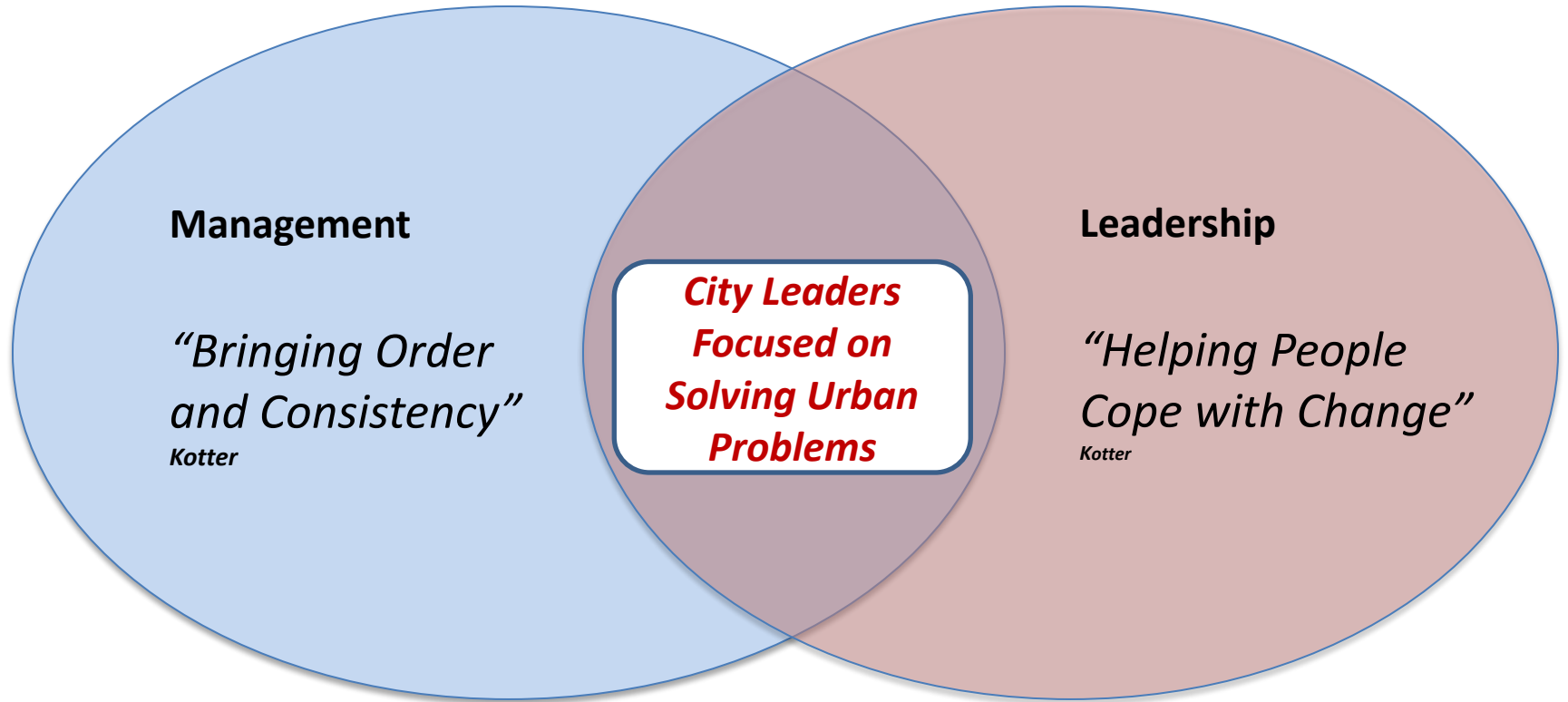
City leaders face similar challenges





Trust the People
One Engagement and Collaborative Imagination
in Bologna, Italy
Katharina Lacey, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor, University Medical School &
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Learning to manage and lead cities



Adapted from John Kotter: Leading Change



**A focus on
capabilities**

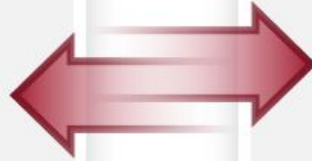
Individual Capabilities (Skills) and Organizational Capabilities (Practices)

SKILLS

are capabilities that reside in **individuals**



- Approaches
- Behaviors
- Mental models



PRACTICES

are capabilities that reside in **organizations**



- Routines
- Working processes
- Systems

Collaborating Across Boundaries

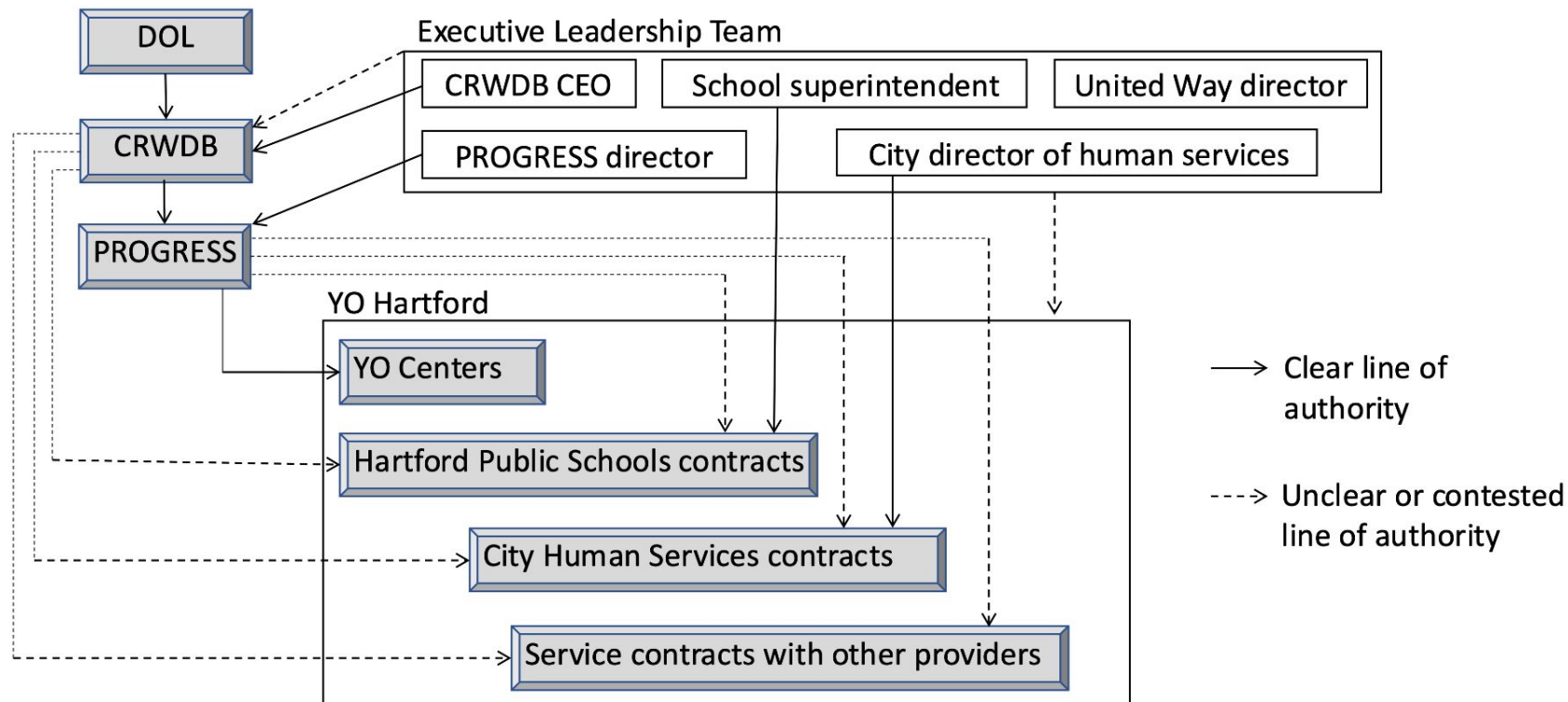


What happened in Hartford, CT.?

Struggling to collaborate on opportunities for youth...



Lines of Authority in Youth Opportunity Hartford





How Could This Happen?

- Secured a \$27m DOL grant for Youth
- Fought over the Governance Structure
- No Youth To Participate in Programs
- No Providers to Design Programs
- No Facilities to Host Programs
- Nobody Willing to be Executive Director

Top 3 Challenges of Cross-Boundary Collaboration

1. Substance

- Agreeing on problem and solutions
- Developing a robust joint action plan

2. Accountability

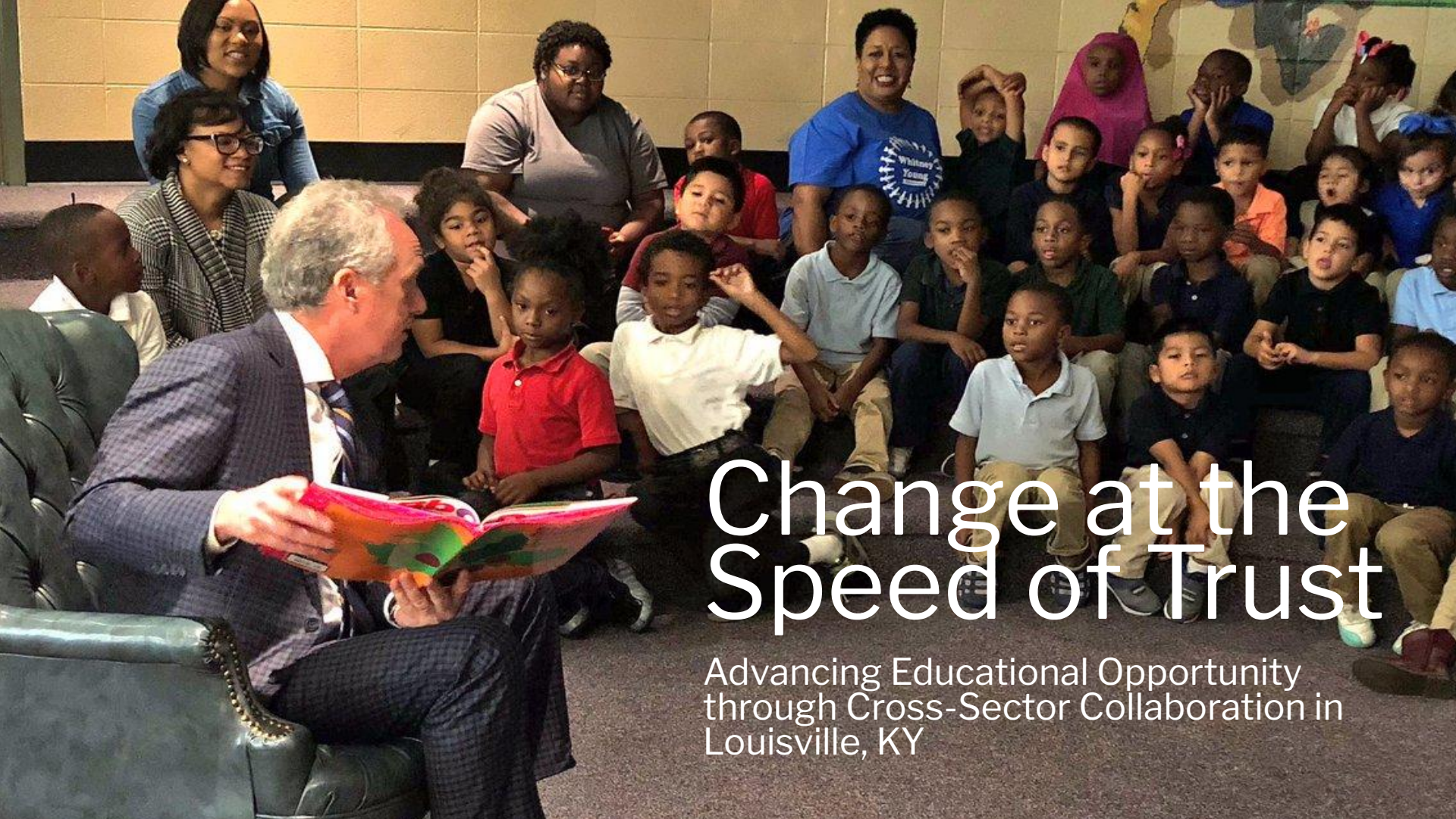
- Committing to the collaboration
- Loyalty to own department

3. Teaming

- Trusting and understanding each other
- Figuring out how to talk, decide and work together

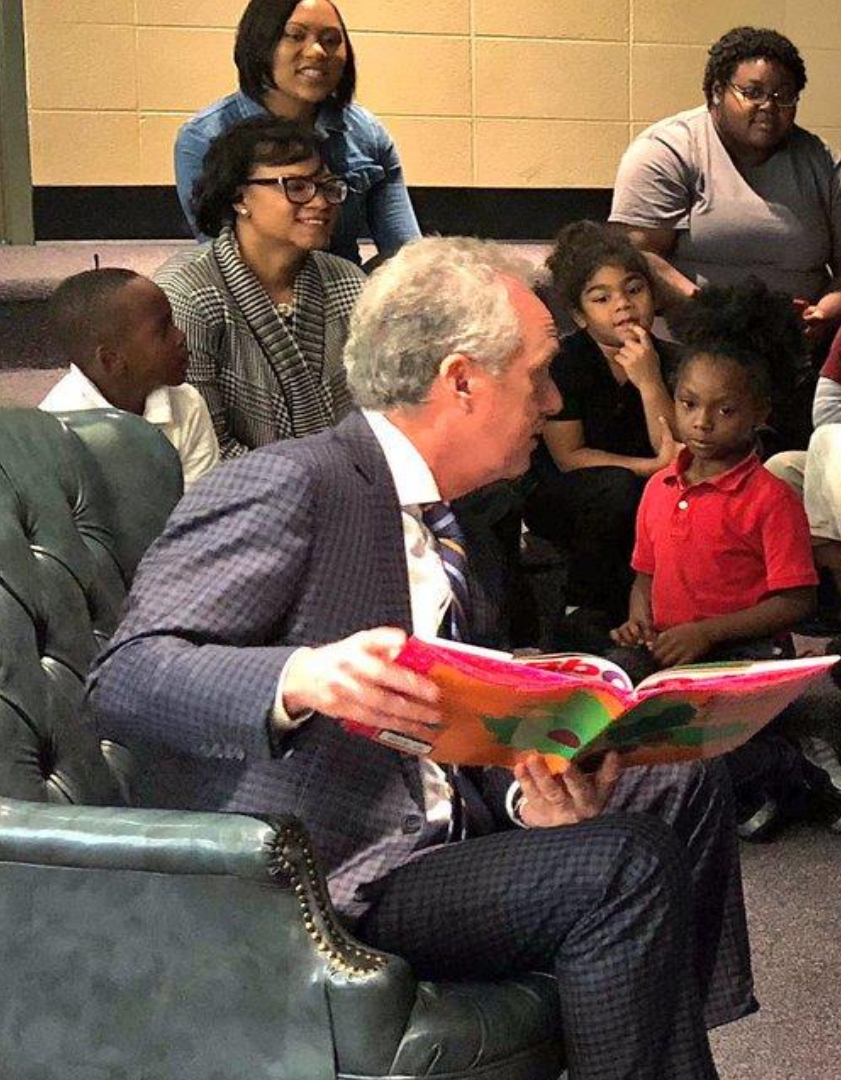
What Barriers is Your Collaboration Facing?

- Talk to Two Other Cities for 10 Minutes



Change at the Speed of Trust

Advancing Educational Opportunity
through Cross-Sector Collaboration in
Louisville, KY



“The nature of these collective models is not speed. What kind of leadership do you bring to these massive collective impact models? Most of them fail, it seems to me, as I look at them around the country.

A lot of progress has been made about the vision and what we want. But then people start turning over and you bring in new people.... So, you're getting consensus on something that there was consensus about two years ago.

I find myself wondering:

‘Are we not moving fast enough or is it just me?’”

—Mayor Greg Fischer

Cross-Sector Collaboration in Cities: Learning Journey or Blame Game?

Pulido-Gomez et.al. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART)*

Question:

“What helps and hinders the design and management of CSCs in the longer term”

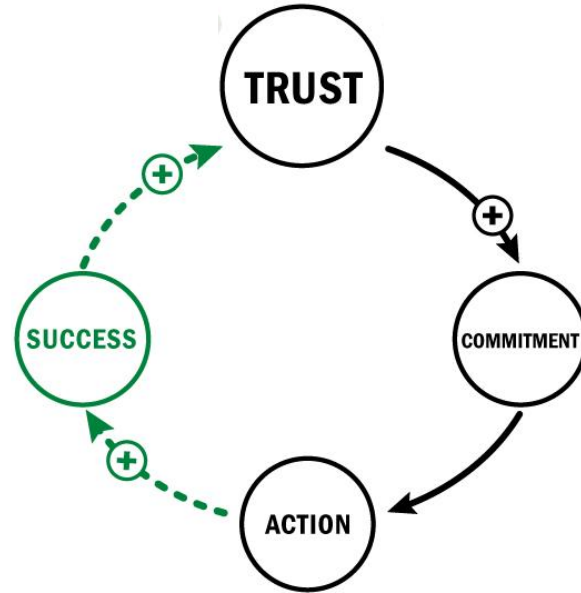
Methods:

- Study 9 CSCs across three cities and three policy areas
- (Group) interviews, document analysis, surveys, exercises

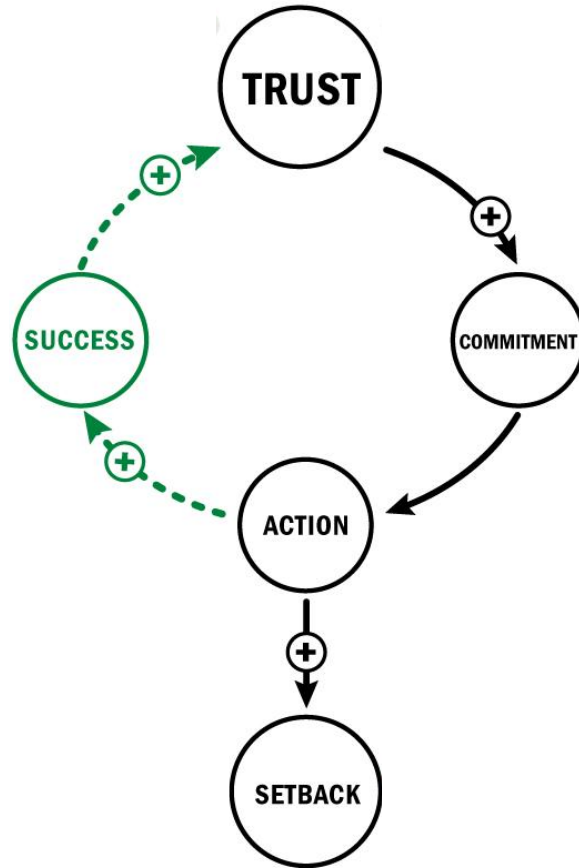
Findings:

- **Formal structure** is no predictor of success.
- **Adaptable** collaborations are more likely to succeed.
- Five **key actions** contribute to a virtuous learning cycle:
 1. Build on prior relationships and social capital
 2. Leverage a trusted individual/group as navigator
 3. Engage the community in all stages
 4. Use data to focus, learn, and improve
 5. Invest in joint problem-solving

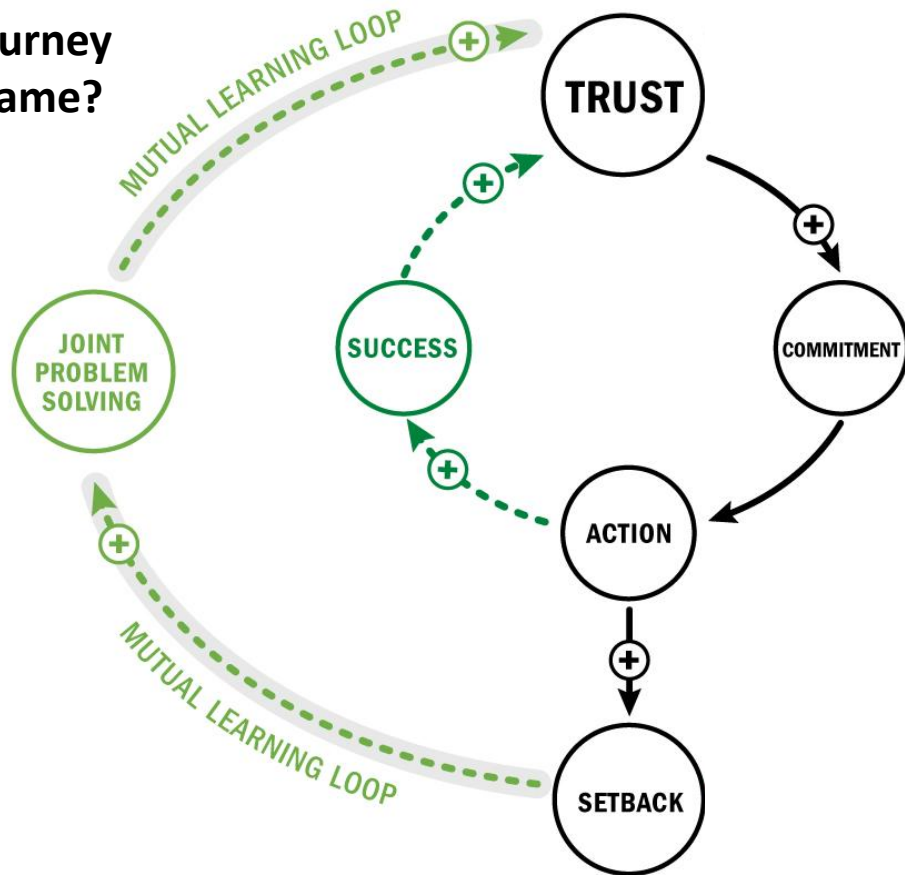
Learning Journey or Blame Game?



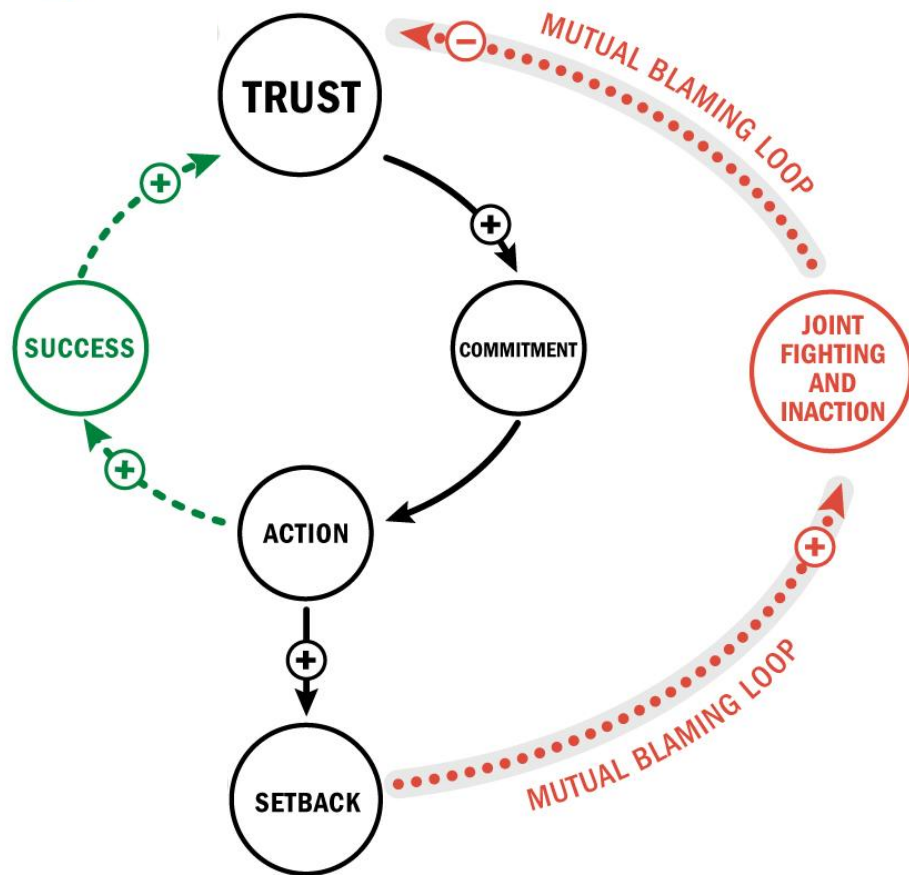
Learning Journey or Blame Game?



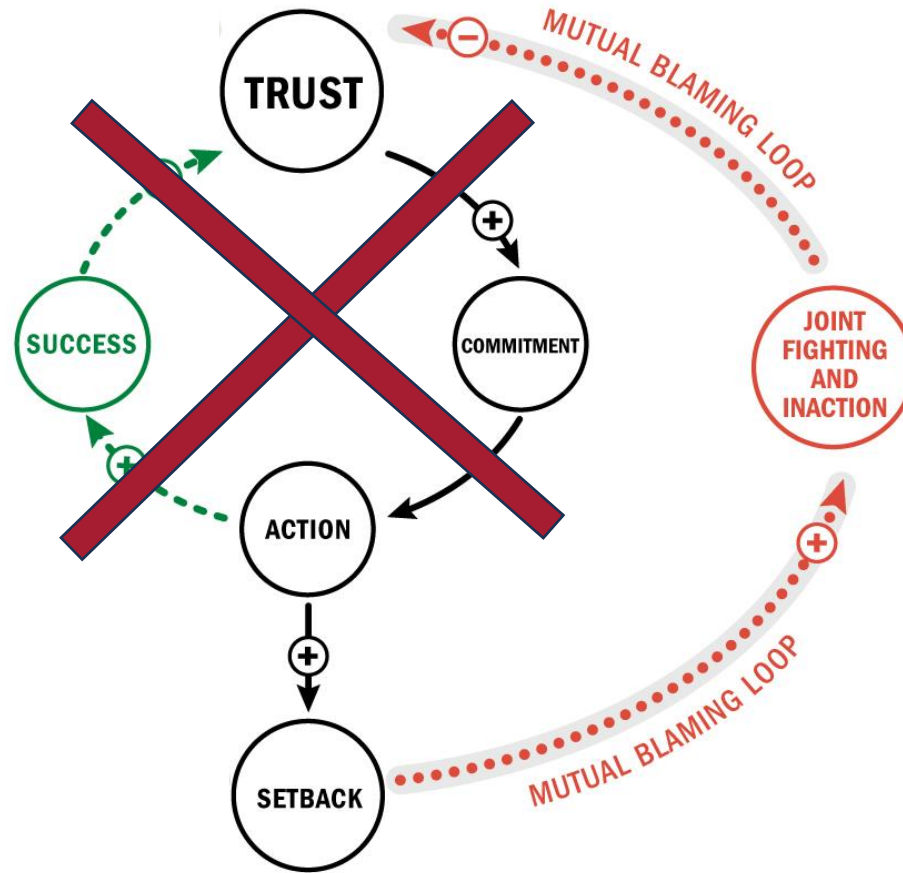
Learning Journey or Blame Game?



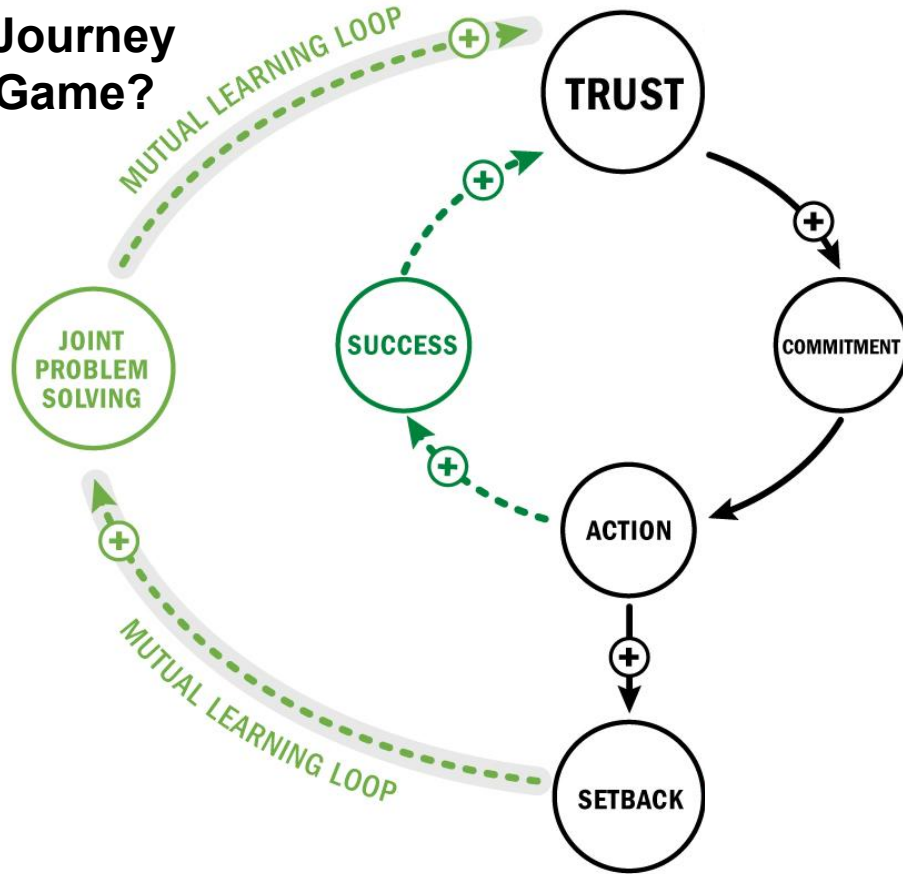
Learning Journey or Blame Game?



Learning Journey or Blame Game?



Learning Journey or Blame Game?



- **Invest in Team Design and Launch**
- **Acknowledge and address the common barriers**
- **Task conflict does not have to be negative per se**
- **Create conditions for learning, adaptation and growth as a team**
- **Celebrate milestones and learn from what goes well**

Epilogue

Executive Director Marland Cole
of Evolve502
(previously Louisville Promise)

EPILOGUE VIDEO

New Executive Director:

Marland Cole

New Name:

Evolve502

How Is Your Collaboration Dealing with Setbacks?

- Talk to Two Other Cities for 10 Minutes

Addressing Health Inequalities In South Yorkshire



What to Do?

- The Problem is Too Big To Tackle
- The Mayor Has Limited Resources and Authority
- The Low Hanging Fruit Has Already Been Picked
- Where To Start and How to Move on From There?

Cities

Cross-Boundary Collaborations in Cities: Where to Start

How public, for-profit, and civic organizations working to address the same city-wide social challenge can find a common starting point.

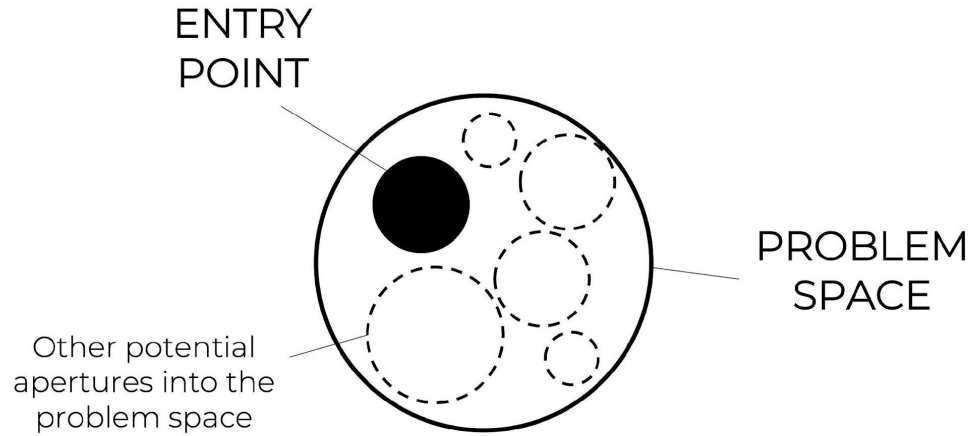
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ORDER REPRINTS

By Jorrit de Jong, Eva Flavia Martínez Orbegozo, Lisa Cox, Hannah Riley Bowles, Amy C. Edmondson & Anahide Nahhal | Jul. 6, 2023



- **Entry Point:** A meaningful, actionable, acceptable, and provisional opening into a large, complex, and partly unknown problem space.
- **Execution as Learning:** a dynamic process focused on learning from data and stakeholder feedback, adaptation, and iteration.

Entry Points: Gaining Momentum In Early- Stage Cross-boundary Collaborations (2022)

Martinez-Orbegoza et. al., *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* and *Stanford Social Innovation Review*

Question:

“What helps CBCs overcome common barriers when they start?”

Methods:

- Study 10 CBCs over 9 months
- (Group) interviews, document analysis, surveys, ranking exercises

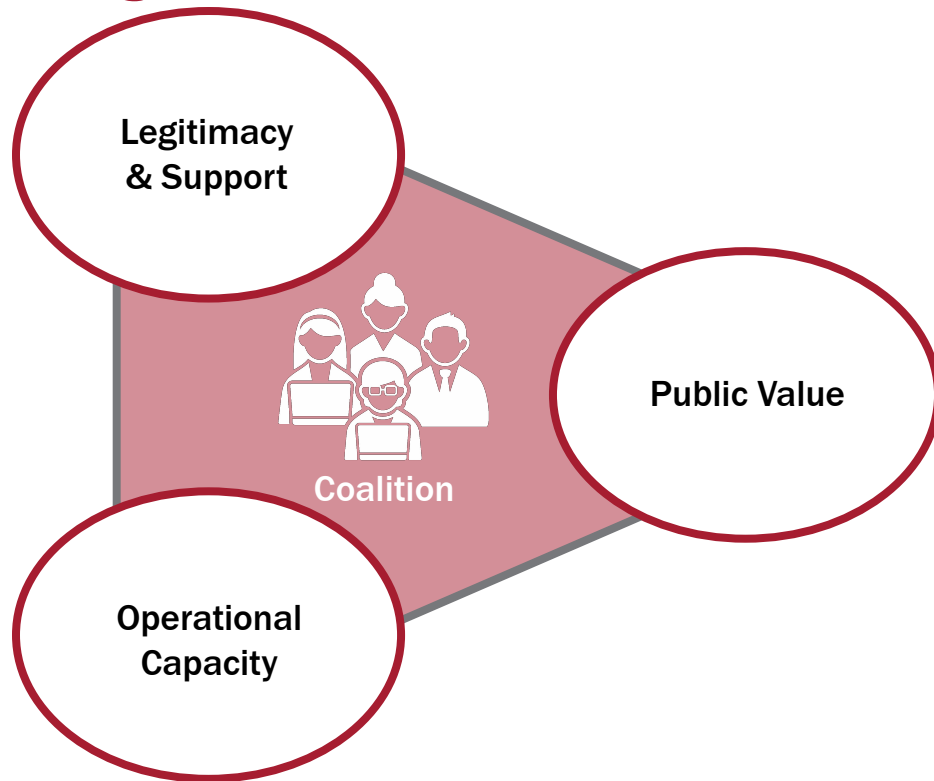
Findings:

- Without an **entry point** CBCs just keep talking or perish
- **Successful** CBCs had three things in common:
 1. **Diverse**: meaningful representation
 2. **Outward-looking**: engaged the community
 3. **Agency**: took initiative despite ambiguity

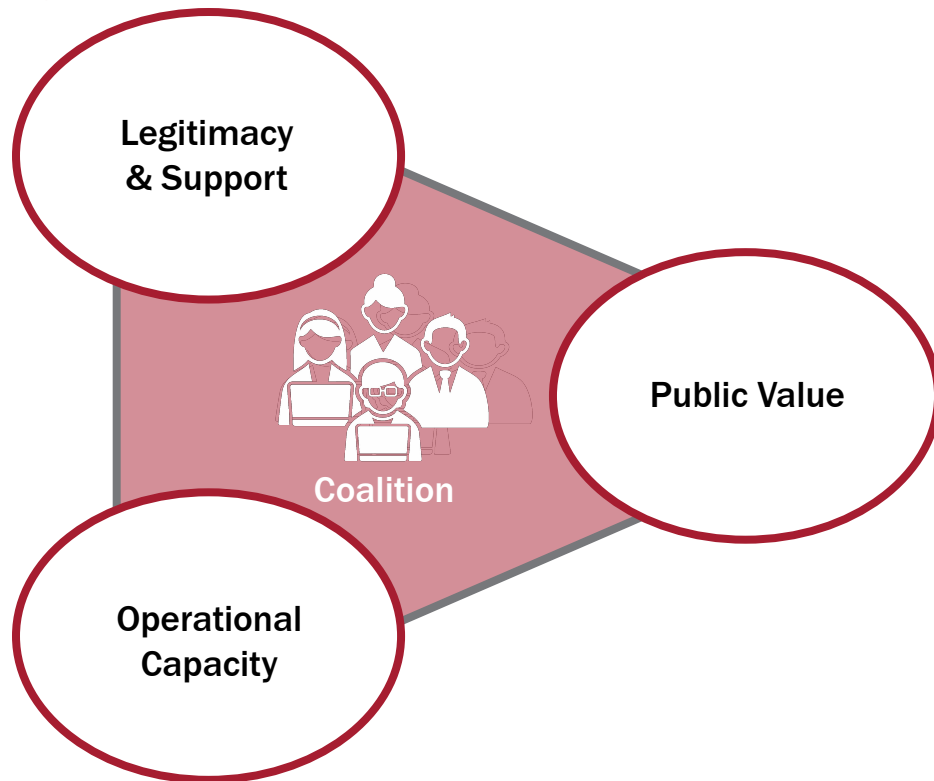
What Might Be A Meaningful Entry Point for You?

- Talk to Two Other Cities for 10 Minutes

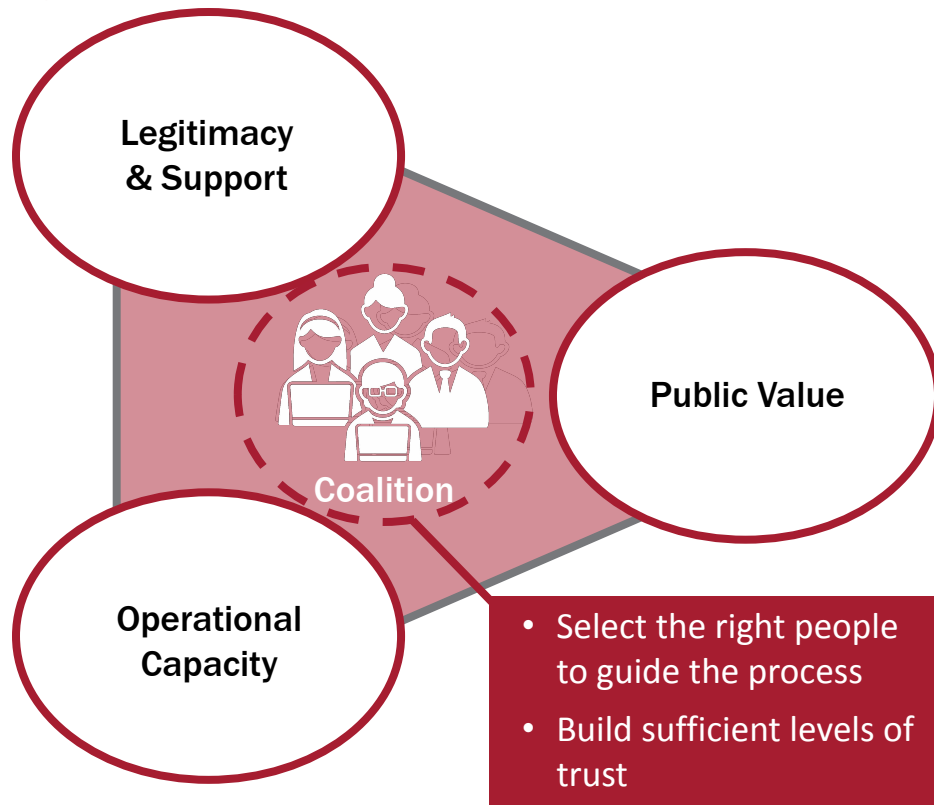
Strategic Triangle for a Collaborative Team



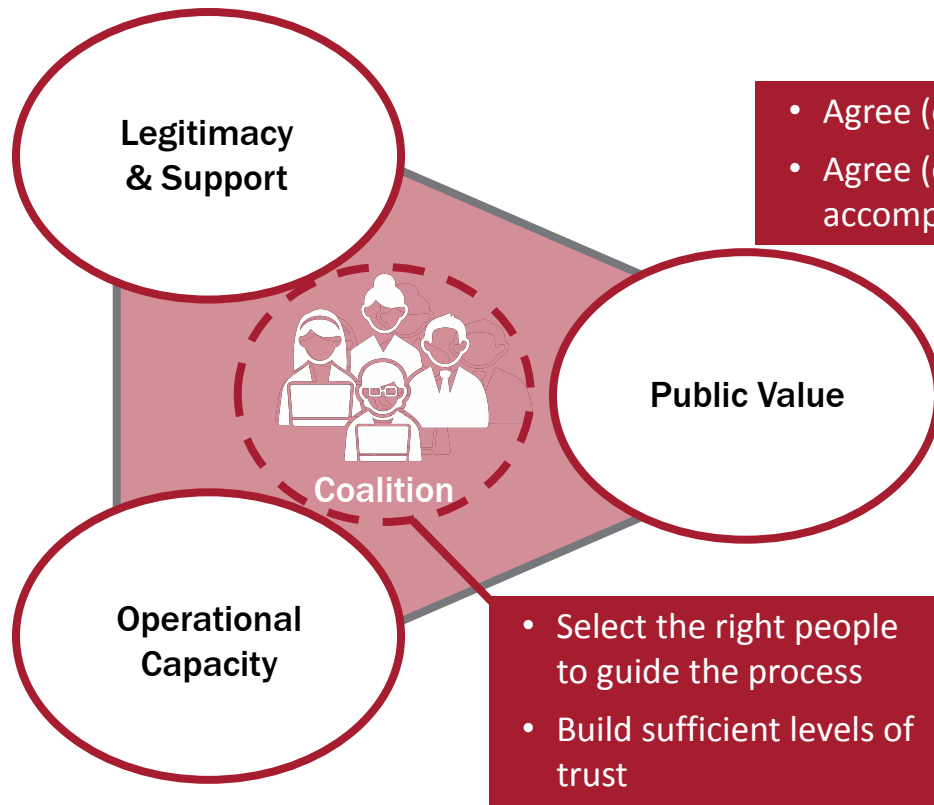
Key Challenges for a Collaborative Team



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Key Challenges for a Collaborative Team

- Get onboard the parties who lend legitimacy to what we're trying to accomplish
- Secure the required resources from each party

Legitimacy & Support

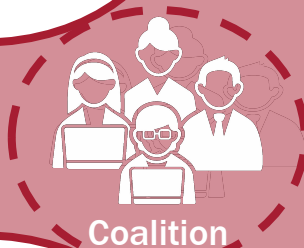
- Agree (enough) on what the problem is
- Agree (enough) on what we're trying to accomplish

Public Value

- Agree on how we'll accomplish the objective
- Come up with a workable plan

Operational Capacity

- Select the right people to guide the process
- Build sufficient levels of trust



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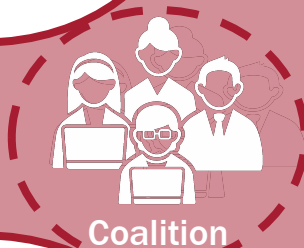
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- Agree on how we'll make decisions
- Set up communication channels
- Agree on who will do what
- Set up a governance structure that encourages parties to do what they agreed to do



Key Challenges for a Collaborative Team

- Get onboard the parties who lend legitimacy to what we're trying to accomplish
- Secure the required resources from each party

Legitimacy & Support

- Agree (enough) on what the problem is
- Agree (enough) on what we're trying to accomplish

Public Value

- Agree on how we'll accomplish the objective
- Come up with a workable plan
- Parties do what they said they would do
- Agree on how to understand and measure progress
- Learn and adjust

Operational Capacity

- Select the right people to guide the process
- Build sufficient levels of trust
- Agree on how we'll make decisions
- Set up communication channels
- Agree on who will do what
- Set up a governance structure that encourages parties to do what they agreed to do



Resources

- On leading urban problem-solving
- On collaborative governance in cities
- On managing innovation and change



The background of the image is a dark red color with a white line-art map of the Harvard University campus. The map shows various building footprints, courtyards, and streets, including the iconic 'H' shape of the main campus.

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Leadership
Initiative