

COLLECTIVE
IMPACT

Week 4: Applying Business Concepts to Community Engagement

Fourth Module for “The Why and How of
Working with Communities through Collective
Impact” E-Course

April 2015



LIVING CITIES

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Applying Business Concepts to Community Engagement

This free e-course will help you better understand the process of working with community members through collective impact.

Time: ~30 minutes of reading; ~2 hours of group time

This is the fourth of five modules to help collective impact initiatives better understand why and how to work with community members. While the course can be taken as an individual, it is recommended that participants discuss the modules in a group, with other members of their collective impact initiative. We recommend setting aside a few hours each work week to discuss the resources and complete the exercises. We also offer questions for each resource to help guide discussion. This material is meant to help you continue to develop your thinking from [Module 1](#), [Module 2](#) and [Module 3](#).

This e-course is not intended to be seen as the final word on community engagement in collective impact, but rather a starting place for the conversation. We offer these curated resources as an introductory scan of the literature and a way for your collective impact initiative to begin developing strategies for partnering with community members more deeply.

This module has four components to complete: **Reading materials and video, an exercise, online discussion and a [post-module survey](#)**. There are “additional resources” listed in case you want to go deeper in certain areas.

Module 4 Purpose

This module will help you think through how to apply design thinking, Lean Startup principles and other business concepts as you implement your community engagement strategies. The reading materials introduce some of these concepts. The exercise walks you through designing an “experiment” to test the assumptions you have already identified in your work.

Learning Objectives

- Consider methods you might use to strategically implement your community engagement work
- Understand Lean Startup principles for practicing continuous iteration and improvement
- Understand Design Thinking methodologies for embedding empathy and innovation into your operations
- Design tests to check the assumptions you identified in the “Assessing Your Engagement Strategies” exercise from [Module 1](#)

Reading Materials:

These can be found in PDF form in the "Reading Materials" folder of the asset package you downloaded. The video is not available for download so the link is listed below.

Three Business Concepts You Can Apply to Community Engagement

This blog post from Living Cities introduces important opportunities to apply private sector practices to community engagement and collective impact.

Discussion Questions:

- How might you launch a "minimum viable product" version of your community engagement strategies in order to learn faster?
- What "infrastructure" or systems might you change or invest in to support enduring engagement?

How to Build Solutions that Authentically Engage Communities

This blog post featuring an interview with Laura McCluskey, a Customer Experience Leader at Wells Fargo, in which she offers concrete examples of private sector practices that can be implemented in community engagement.

Discussion Questions:

- How is building customer loyalty similar to building community trust?
- Do Laura's comments about asking and listening make you rethink any of your engagement strategies?

Design for Capabilities

This video offers an overview of design thinking and an example of applying it within the federal government.

Discussion Questions:

- How might you apply design thinking to your engagement strategies?
- How could your design thinking influence other systems in your community?

Studio C Case Study: Taking Head Start to the Hill

This case study from the United Way offers insight and lessons learned from applying design thinking to community engagement work in Cincinnati.

Discussion questions:

- When and how in the past have your assumptions been proven wrong by insights from community members?
- How could you apply the lessons from the Studio C Case Study into your own community engagement work?
- How could you more intentionally incorporate empathy building into your collective impact work?

Exercise:

The exercise guide and actual experiment loop map can be found in the “exercise” folder in the asset package you downloaded.

This exercise, developed by a top Lean Startup training firm called [Moves The Needle](#), is intended to help you think through how you could design tests to check your assumptions as quickly and as early in your design process as possible.

Online Discussion:

There are many ways you can discuss the course topics in this and other modules with participants:

Join the on-going conversation on the Collective Impact Forum [community discussion page](#), which requires free registration.

Join the conversation with other course participants, join our Twitter “study hall” on Friday, April 3rd at 1pm ET (10am PT; 6pm GMT) to ask your questions and share your insights. We will be joined by special guests from [Moves The Needle](#) to help spark and moderate the discussion. Use the hashtag [#CEinCI](#) to join in.

Post-Module Survey:

Once you and our team have completed this module, please [complete the post-module survey](#), which will take five minutes to complete. This survey lets us know you have completed this module, and it also gives us valuable feedback on how to improve the e-course.

The following resources are recommend but not required as a part of the module.

Additional Resources:

More resources on design thinking:

- [IDEO's free Human Centered Design Kit](#) (Free download, but signup required)
- Acumen's free [e-course on Human Centered Design](#)
- [Design Impact](#), including their recent article "[Turning Empathy into Action](#)"
- [DIY Toolkit](#)

More resources on Lean Startup:

- [My First Lean Startup Adventure](#)

This is a case study and introduction to how Lean Startup principles can apply to social change work.

- [Lean Impact: Lean for Social Good](#)

This is a website dedicated to helping social good organization apply Lean Startup methodology to their work.