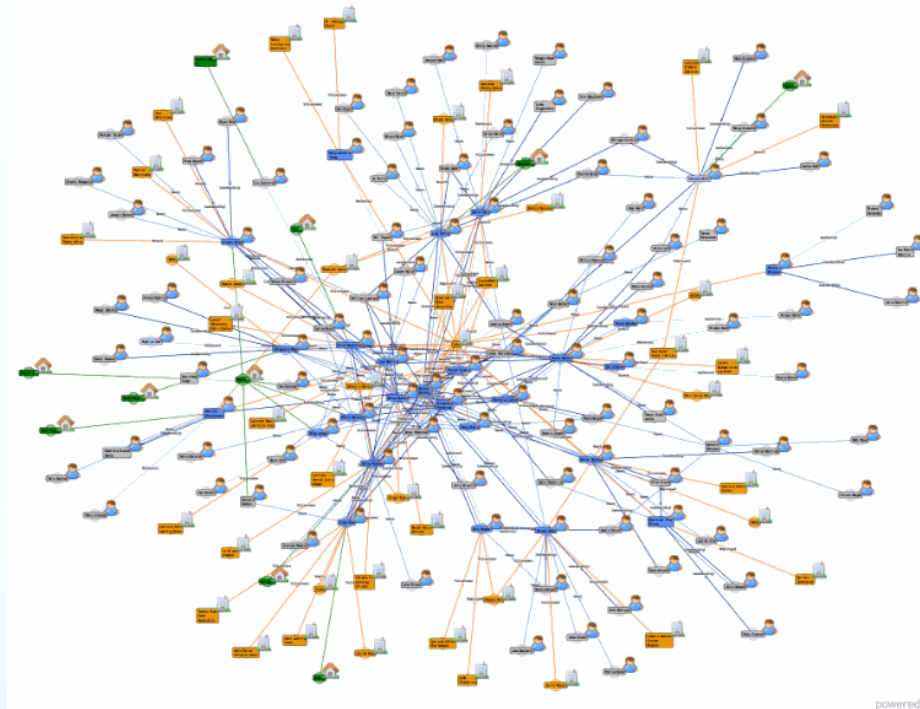# THE NETWORK IS US

Mass NonProfit Network: Solutions 2013 Conference
October 29, 2013

Workshop Outcomes

By the end of this session, we will have developed a shared understanding of:

- *how we are all part of networks and ability to see and leverage these more readily*

- *how different network "forms" can advance our work toward different outcomes*

- *how "network thinking" can change how we approach problems and solutions*

- *how to maximize network connectivity and weaving to achieve impact*

- *key roles to support effective network "action"*

Defining Networks

Networks are a set of "nodes and links," of [things] that are connected to each other.

People and organizations link to achieve *collective* goals; i.e., produce net gains

SOURCE: NetGains, Plaistrik & Taylor, 2006
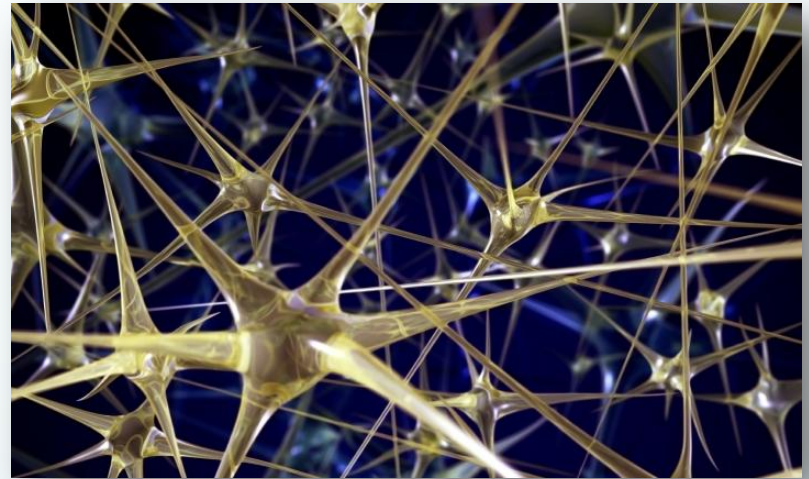
Traditional vs. Network Approach

| Challenge	Traditional Approach	Network Approach
Build community assets	Administer social services	Weave social ties
Develop better designs and decisions	Gather input from people you know	Access new and diverse perspectives
Spread what works	Disseminate white papers	Openly build and share knowledge
Mobilize action	Organize tightly coordinated campaigns	Create infrastructure for widespread engagement
Overcome fragmentation	Bring players and programs under a single umbrella	Coordinate resources and action

# Networks Structures

Network structures make revealing pictures.

• When many nodes connect to a single node, a **Hub-and-Spokes** or **Star** structure is created. Each Of the spoke nodes has one link, while the central node is linked to all other nodes.

• When many nodes connect to each other in various configurations, a **Many Channels** structure is created. Each node may have several links through which it can reach other nodes.

• When a number of nodes are all connected to each other, a **Dense Cluster** is created. Each node is connected directly to all of the other nodes.

• When hubs connect to one another, either directly or through spokes, a **Branching** or **Multi-Tiered** structure is created. Nodes may have fairly long paths, through central nodes, to reach each other.
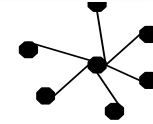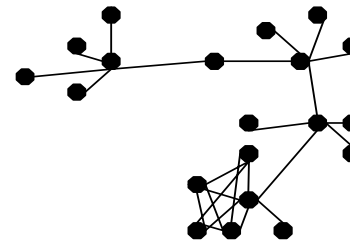

Hub-and-Spokes
(Eureka)
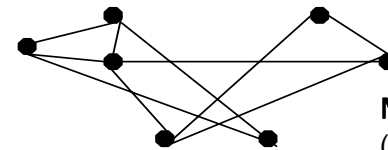
Many Channels
(Lawrence CommunityWorks)
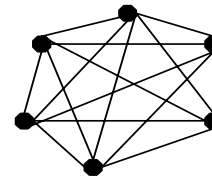
Dense Cluster
(VT Smart Growth Collaborative)

Branching
(Boston Parents Organizing Network)

SOURCE: Plastrik and Taylor, NET GAINS Handbook, 2006)

Your Network(s)

1. In triads, take a minute to introduce yourself to your team members.

2. Share the kinds of networks you are a part of and/or developing.

3. Draw your network on a piece of paper.

4. Of the 5 network types, which does yours most resemble?
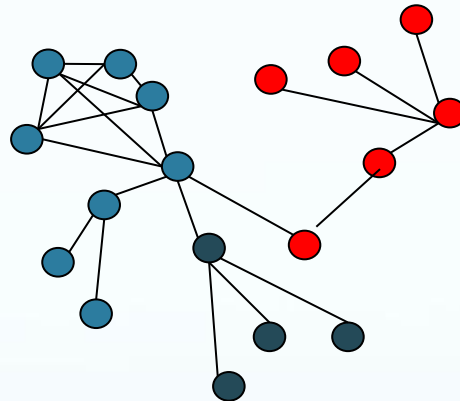
Why Networks?

- The scale of complex systems we are working to change is much larger than one organization

- Problems are interdependent (e.g., land use, health equity, nutrition)

- Why reinvent the wheel? Peer learning and sharing speeds progress.
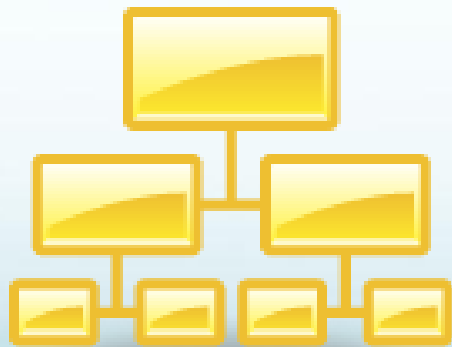
Types of networks have distinct attributes

Production/Action Network

Fosters joint action for specific outcomes

Alignment/Peer Learning

Aligns and connects people with shared identity with opportunities to learn and advance their work

Connectivity

Connects people to allow easy flow of and access to information and transactions

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S C

Network Outcomes

Action

- Agree to take coordinated action for collective impact towards shared vision (advocacy, prototyped project, common support venture, fundraising, etc.)

Alignment

- Align around context, current reality, goals
- Achieve conceptual congruence &
- align around terminology
- Agree upon and promote vision
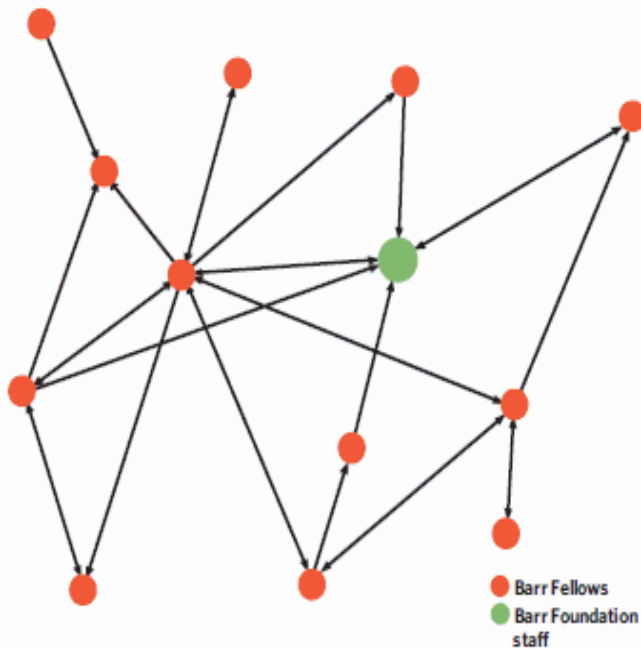- Agree upon and promote values

Connectivity

- Build strong connections and trust
- Share information, build new understanding re: state of our system(s)
- Create new knowledge together
- Create new resource channels

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Connectivity Network

Barr Fellows Network Development

Hub and Spoke 2005

Multi-hub 2011

- ● Barr Fellows 2005
- ● Barr Fellows 2007
- ● Barr Fellows 2009
- ● Barr Fellows 2011

Node size indicates how often a person was named by others (in degree)

- ● Barr Fellows
- ● Barr Foundation staff
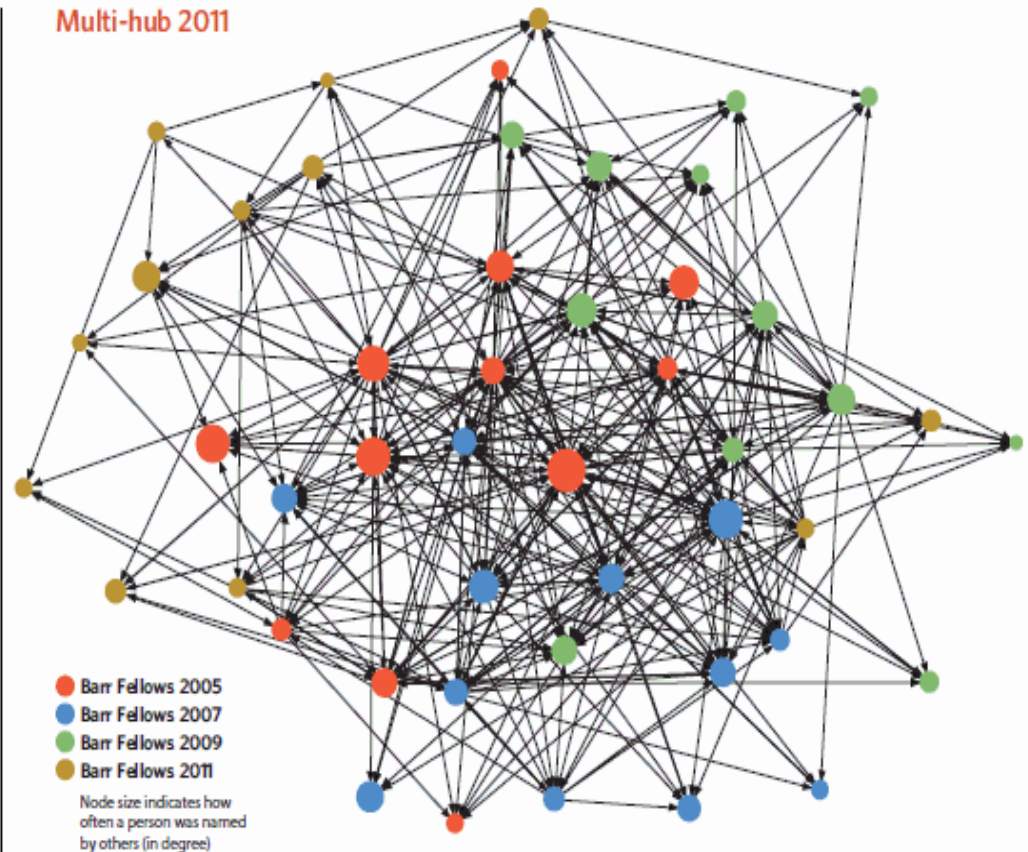
Source: SSIR, Networking a City

Alignment Network

Action Network

Rhode Island Food Policy Council

www.rifoodcouncil.org/

RIFPC Vision

The Rhode Island Food Policy Council envisions a day when Rhode Island's food system will be a national model because of the strength of its local food system and its success at achieving community food security and optimal public health.

We envision a Rhode Island where safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food is accessible and affordable in every Rhode Island community and in which an increasing proportion of the state's food supply is raised, caught, and processed locally.

We envision a Rhode Island in which the local food system is a growing component of the state's economy, a connecting framework for stakeholders across multiple sectors (production, distribution, access, public health and resource recycling) and a creator of new jobs and cottage industries that contribute to the state's long-term economic viability.

Using networks to save lives

http://www.dragonflyeffect.com/blog/dragonfly-in-action/case-studies/the-story-of-sameer-and-vinay/
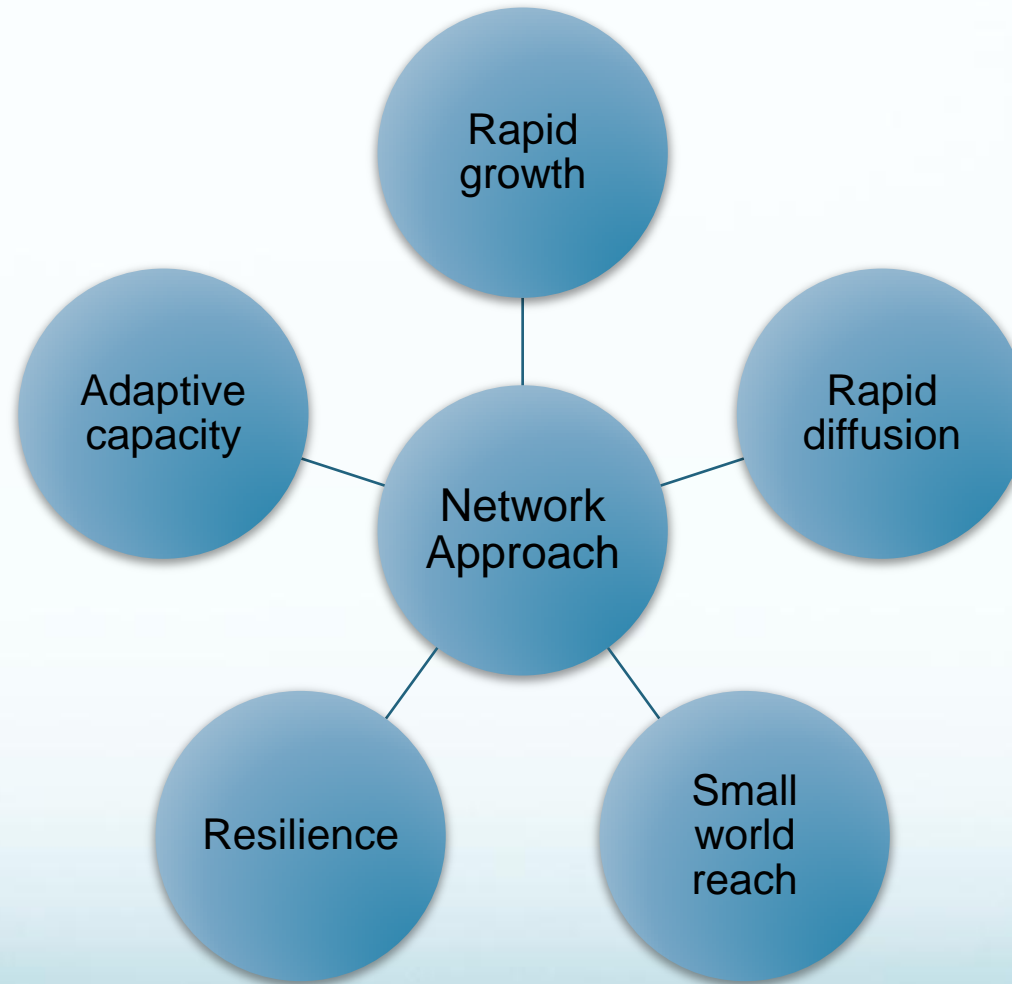
The world doesn't change one person at a time. It changes as networks of relationships form among people who discover they share a common cause and vision of what is possible. It is critical connections not critical mass.
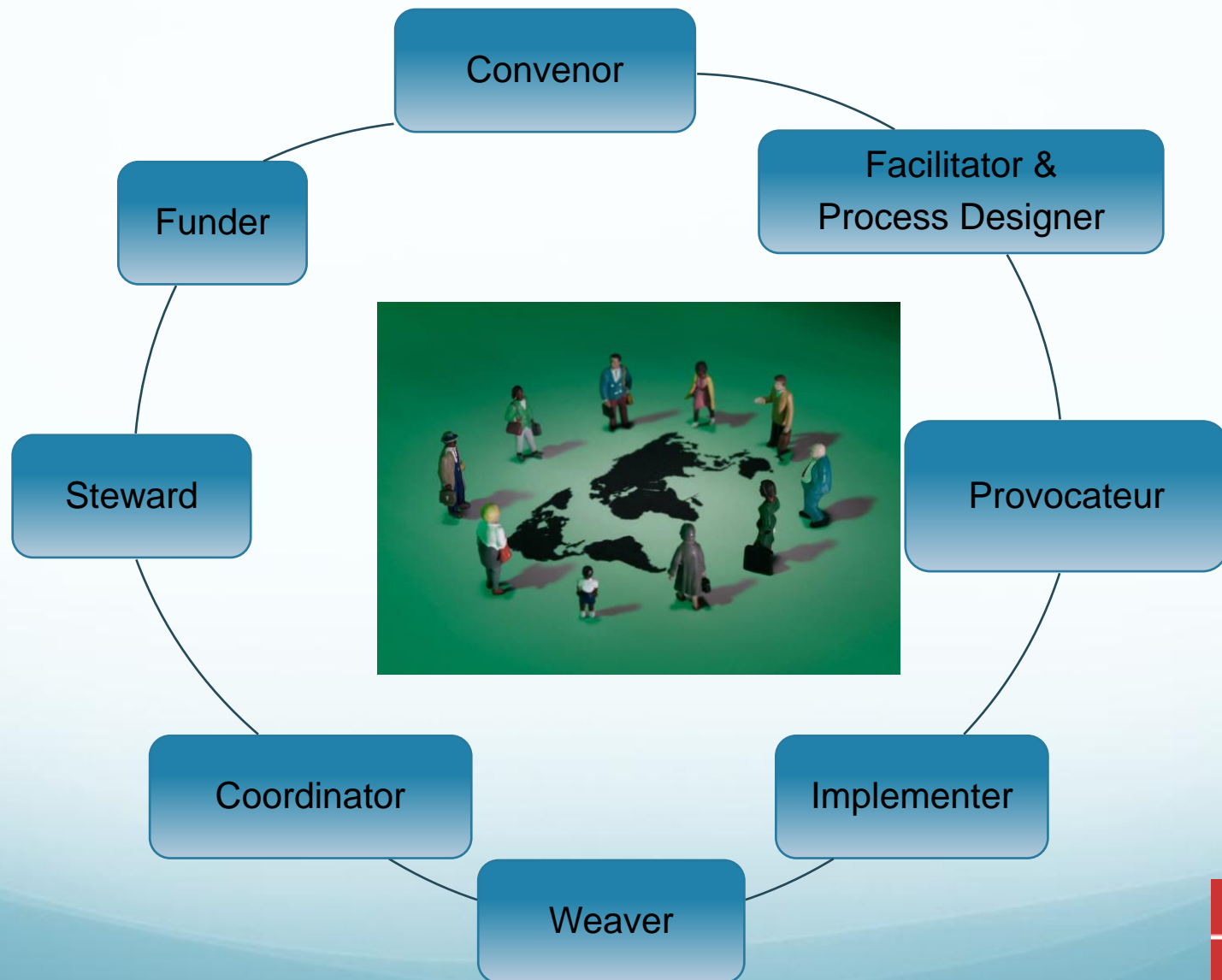
Margaret Wheatley

Network Effects

A leader these days needs to be a host –
one who convenes people –
who convenes diversity,
who convenes all viewpoints
in creative processes where
our intelligence can come forth.

-Margaret Wheatley

Roles of Network Leadership

Role	Description
Convenor	Offers initial purpose and value propositions of the network. Establishes first links to nodes for the network. Attracts initial resources for the network
Funder	Provides initial resources for organizing the network, supporting development of connections, alignment, and production, and coordination for the network. May play role of initial organizer of Network
Weaver	Works to increase connections among nodes, both the number of links and the bandwidth quality of links. Also may focus on growing the network by connecting to new nodes
Facilitator & Process Designer	Helps network members design processes by which to establish collective value proposition, negotiate collective action plans for production and make decisions about network governance and structure
Coordinator	Helps nodes to undertake collective action for production, by ensuring flow of necessary information and other resources, development and implementation of agreements among nodes. Support relationship building
Coach	Advises organizers, weavers, facilitators, and coordinators about how best to perform their roles in building networks
Steward	Informally helps to build the network, but as a member of the network, not as a formal position-role within the network

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"Most of the barriers to group action have collapsed and without those barriers we are free to explore new ways of gathering together and getting things done."

– Clay Shirky

New technologies enable new ways of network self-organizing

Find & connect to people & resources: **OpenMap**

Communicate/curate: **Storify and Tumblr**

Share content: **Google Doc and Hangout**

Inform or survey many people quickly: **PollAnywhere**

Track progress & shared work: **Basecamp and Symphonical**

What is resonating?
What is moving for you?

Triangles!

do what
you do
best
and link
to the rest.

jeff jarvis

Thank you….it's been fun working with you!

For more information about IISC, please visit us at

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