



Developing a Collective Impact
Strategy for Youth-Related
Issues in Wood Buffalo:

MEETING 1 REPORT

This report presents the proceedings from the first meeting in Social Prosperity **Wood Buffalo's** workshop series, Developing a Collective Impact Strategy for Youth-Related Issues in Wood Buffalo. The report reviews key concepts in collective impact and summarizes the knowledge generated by participants during the meeting. It concludes with results from the workshop evaluation.



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1.0 Developing a Collective Impact Strategy for Youth-Related Issues in Wood Buffalo

This workshop series brings together stakeholders from across the community to develop a collective impact strategy to address youth-related issues in Wood Buffalo. The first workshop presented the key elements of collective impact, engaged participants in identifying values and gaps related to the emergent collective impact landscape in the community, and brainstormed strategies for overcoming these gaps.

Subsequent workshops in this series will involve:

- Mapping the system of youth services in Wood Buffalo to determine key issues and leverage points for change
- Creating a common agenda or shared vision for collective impact
- Developing a shared measurement system
- Identifying mutually reinforcing activities
- Working to secure backbone support for the continuation of the initiative

1.1 Meeting 1, Intended Outcomes

Meeting 1 was designed to:

1. Increase understanding of the collective impact framework
2. Enable participants to better understand their place in the system surrounding youth issues in Wood Buffalo
3. Identify gaps in our current collective impact approach in Wood Buffalo
4. Identify key people and actions (influencers) that could help us achieve a collective impact approach
5. Identify concrete action steps for our next meeting



2.0 Key Concepts in Collective Impact

2.1 When to Use a Collective Impact Approach

John Kania and Mark Kramer, who coined the term in 2011, define [collective impact](#) as “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.”¹

A collective impact approach is particularly well suited to addressing [complex social problems](#), which have some or all of the following characteristics:²

- Complex problems are difficult to frame
- The cause and effect relationships are unclear
- There are diverse stakeholders and their perspectives do not necessarily align
- Each experience is unique
- The characteristics & dynamics of the issue evolves
- There is no obvious right or wrong set of solutions

Some examples of complex problems include poverty, homelessness, climate change, student success, and social inclusion.

The White House Council on Community Change suggests posing the following [Framing Questions](#) to determine whether collective impact would be an effective approach for addressing an issue:³

1. Do we aim to effect needle-change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
2. Do we believe that a long-term investment (i.e., 3 to 5-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
3. Do we believe that cross-sector engagement is essential for community-wide change?
4. Are we committed to using measurable data to set the agenda and improve over time?
5. Are we committed to having community members as partners and producers of impact?

Traditional approaches to social issues assume that problems can eventually be solved by the isolated efforts of individual organizations. While isolated programs, products, and services can effectively solve simple or even complicated problems, most social issues are complex problems that require greater alignment and coordination to address.

¹ [“Collective Impact.”](#) John Kania and Mark Kramer. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 2011, p. 36.

² [Collective Impact Slides From Liz Weaver](#). 2012 Collective Impact Workshop, Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement.

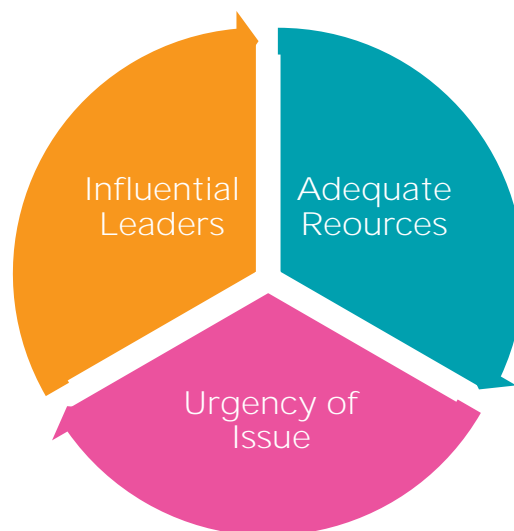
³ [Collective Impact Slides From Liz Weaver](#). 2012 Collective Impact Workshop, Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement.

The figure below illustrates the difference between isolated impact and collective impact.⁴



2.2 The Preconditions for Collective Impact

In order to establish a successful collective impact initiative, the following three preconditions should align:⁵



First, there needs to be an issue urgent enough to inspire meaningful and sustained collaboration. Necessary resources must surface to support the initiative for its duration (usually multiple years), and influential leaders must be committed to championing the work in the community.

⁴ [Collective Impact Slides From Liz Weaver](#), 2012 Collective Impact Workshop, Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement.

⁵ Innoweave: The Collective Impact Opportunity developed by Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement, September 2013.



2.3 The Five Key Elements of Collective Impact

Research into successful collective impact initiatives has identified the following [five key elements of collective impact](#):⁶

Common Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Common understanding of the problem •Shared vision for change
Shared Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Collecting data and measuring results •Focus on performance measurement •Shared accountability
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Differentiated approaches •Coordination through joint plan of action
Continuous Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consistent and open communication •Focus on building trust
Backbone Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Separate organization(s) with staff •Resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating organizations

⁶ [“Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work.”](#) Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Jan 2012.

3.0 An Example of Collective Impact Addressing Youth-Related Issues

3.1 STRIVE: Cincinnati⁷

Collective Impact Need

- The complexity of the US educational system made reform difficult
- More than 1 million secondary school students drop out every year

Solution and Goal

- Establishment of Strive (nonprofit)
- GOAL: Bring together local leaders to improve education, student performance/completion
- More than 300 local organizations joined (including school districts, city government, universities, colleges, education-related advocacy and social profit groups – “Cradle to Career”)

Implementation

- There was a realization that the system needed alignment
- Shared measurement allowed stakeholders to conceptualize and structure the system
- Identified 53 shared indicators of success (including high school graduation, test scores, children enrolled in preschool)
- Established 15 different Student Success Network
- There was a realization that data improvements and shared measurement were needed

⁷ [“Collective Impact.”](#) John Kania and Mark Kramer. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 2011.



4.0 Surfacing the Wisdom in the Room

The second half of the meeting explored how a collective impact approach could be used to address youth-related issues in Wood Buffalo. Participants identified values and gaps associated with the community's existing collective impact landscape, brainstormed the key factors influencing these gaps, and suggested remedial actions.

4.1 Identifying Values and Gaps

In small groups, participants were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What might be the value of a collective impact approach in addressing the youth-related issues in Wood Buffalo?

Value is defined as a skill, resource, capacity, or attitude that you or your organization has to offer.

Participants were asked to consider the “values” associated with each of the five conditions of collective impact (keeping in mind the individual, organizational, sector & system level). Using sticky notes, participants placed values on the wall under the appropriate condition.

2. What is preventing a collective impact approach?

Looking at the five conditions of collective impact, participants were asked to consider where gaps exist in our ability to achieve collective impact. Participants wrote their gaps on sticky notes and posted them on the wall beside the values.

A gap is defined as an absence of knowledge, capacity, skill; obstacle to action, collaboration, communication.

Common Agenda

Values

- Common interest in improving life for youth in Wood Buffalo
- Social Policy Framework (Provincial / Municipal)
- Interest in services for youth
- Childhood studies wants to support and serve children through adult education

Gaps

- Shared vision
- One data location for / of resources
- Lack of leadership
- Remove “personal” agendas for the greater community good
- Being able to move beyond “systemic handcuffs” ©LB 2013
- Common agenda and common definition



Shared Measurement

Values

- Partnerships with other organizations for same clients
- 40 developmental assets (Assets in Action)
- Community development model
- EDI results, U of A results
- Early Childhood Mapping Project

Gaps

- Lack of data on youth in Wood Buffalo
- Lack of Leadership: Who measures? Who holds the data?
- Place to collect and store all youth data
- No shared outcomes amongst youth serving agencies
- Lack of knowledge on youth at risk and how all agencies can serve them better

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Values

- Friendship centre
- Grade 7 youth conference
- Career connect
- Y-connect agencies
- Willingness to work together (collaborative mindset)
- The Children's Project (FCS)
- Who do you tell? (FCS)
- Mental health first aid (SOS)
- FMPD, FMCD, Northlands
- Take back the night (FCS)
- M.A.C.O.Y
- Snack Attack
- Mega Boyz and Girl Power
- Professional Development in Community (Keyano)
- Youth employment opportunities and information
- YMCA youth opportunities
- Basic Shelf
- HUB Family Centre

Gaps

- Staff turnover
- Coming up with shared events where all youth are welcomed (a challenge)
- Not enough staff
- Turf war
- Sense of ownership that inhibits us from openly sharing and communicating
- Lack of participation available to youth



Continuous Communication

Values

- Y-Connect
- Use of social media allows information to travel quickly
- Social Media (twitter, facebook)
- The HUB: monthly outreach connection meetings

Gaps

- Are we sharing the right information? (data)
- Lack of “youth” networking
- No common location to post events: one common community calendar
- Not all organizations come to the monthly meetings who are working towards similar issues
- No common networking place for youth (that they know about...Timberlea?)

Backbone Support

Values

- United Way
- SPWB
- M.A.C.O.Y
- ACWS
- College level instructors to provide PD / courses to community / extended community (distance, Fort Chip, etc.)
- Youth volunteers
- Catholic, Public, and Northlands schools
- RMWB

Gaps

- The municipality needs to take a bigger role as a connector
- We are not aware of what resources and services are available
- Getting people / organizations to step up to the plate
- Dedicated staff for youth collective impact initiative



4.2 Identifying Influencers and Taking Action

Next, each of the five conditions for collective impact was assigned to a table and participants were asked to sit at the table representing the gap cluster they felt was most important. In small groups, they then brainstormed 3 things influencing the gap, which influence is the most powerful and why, and which influence they feel they or their organization could act on. Groups also identified one thing they could do to affect the gap, whether this could be accomplished by the next meeting, and if not, when it could be accomplished⁸. Results from this exercise are as follows:

Identifying Influencers and Taking Action

Common Agenda

Identify 3 things that influence this gap:

1. No shared vision
2. Lack of coordination
3. Lack of identified issues/ parameters around the issue

Which influence is the most powerful and why?

- Stakeholders – make or break what kind of path

Shared Measurement

Identify 3 things that influence this gap:

1. Good data (local, provincial, national) – How do we compare?
2. Data is easily accessible for all organizations
3. Place to store / update data:
 - a. No central place to store data
 - b. Data is not coordinated
 - c. Everybody is doing their own data but no one is coordinating it

Which influence is the most powerful and why?

Lack of coordination and tabulating data from all organizations. Who can do that?

- Michel Collins – FMFCS
- Ashlee Cook – MBFBA

Willingness to work together to develop shared measurement indicators.

Which influence do you feel you and / or your organization can act on?

Willingness to work together to develop shared measurement indicators

What is one thing you can do to affect this gap?

Willing to enter data (indicators) on a shared measurement system

⁸ Some groups completed all questions, while other groups focused on the first few and were unable to complete the whole exercise due to time constraints. All information collected from the groups is included in the table in section 4.2.

Identifying Influencers and Taking Action

Would it be possible to complete this task by November 7th? If not, when would it be possible?

We have to collectively develop the shared measurement and find a shared measurement system

Mutually Reinforcing Activities (focus on turf wars / sense of ownership that inhibits sharing)

Identify 3 things that influence this gap:

1. Client usage stats for reporting back to funders
2. Agency wants referrals to increase clients - competition for funding
3. Community profile & credit & funding - being perceived as a leader / expert in your field

Which influence is the most powerful and why?

Competition for funding

- emphasis on client usage stats
- drives the planning, staff capacity

Which influence do you feel you and / or your organization can act on?

Reduce perception of need to compete

What is one thing you can do to affect this gap?

Be a role model to other organizations

- Encourage and promote collaboration
- Example: Take back the night event open to other organizations to put up booths

Continuous Communication

Identify 3 things that influence this gap:

1. No place for key sharing, posting of agency events and services
2. No common shared meeting place for youth serving agencies
3. No shared communications regarding program sharing to increase knowledge and training (PD) opportunities

Which influence is the most powerful and why?

No shared meeting space and communication space creates / enables silos. WB is not social media savvy when utilizing social media, updating websites. One consistent meeting place / calendar is key to success.



Identifying Influencers and Taking Action

Which influence do you feel you and / or your organization can act on?

Take a community lead to seek out a common meeting place. All agencies can capitalize on this and all agencies can make it their common goal. Jumping from place to place does not work anymore. Not always "AM meetings." We may have to look beyond 9-5 workdays.

What is one thing you can do to affect this gap?

Be constant and consistent with communication through real partnerships and shared interest of their youth.

Would it be possible to complete this task by November 7th? If not, when would it be possible?

Yes - with assistance from SPWB to help with sourcing.

Backbone Support

Identify 3 things that influence this gap:

1. Dedicated staff - making it a priority within each organization to give staff the opportunity to participate in the collaborative work
2. Time, commitment by organization at a systemic level, champions
3. Staff turnover and funding: not high enough salaries to keep people in positions. Hard sell (non-program funding). Municipality could play a role.

Which influence is the most powerful and why?

Leadership level setting this as a priority and then empowering through money and mandate.

- People think there are bigger fish to fry
- Putting out fires as opposed to planning
- Going for flashier projects vs. impact
- Youth programming could be preventive for many other issues
- Attracted to new, shiny projects

Which influence do you feel you and / or your organization can act on?

Identify the organizations involved and possible leaders

- Who has the capacity?
- Everyone told they can't take a leadership role (who in the community will take ownership?)
- Need to determine what we're doing. What's the need? This is essential to know first.



4.3 Next Steps

At the end of the meeting, participants identified the following general action items:

Action Items

Develop shared measurement system(s) and indicators

We need a common agenda 1st

We don't have an issue

We don't have someone to coordinate

We need an urgent issue

Find common and consistent meeting space

Meet outside 9-5 time, find a time that works for all

Encourage coordination and collaboration, ie. Take back the night

The group then brainstormed a list of who should be invited to subsequent meetings. Including these organizations is a step toward ensuring that representatives from the entire system impacting youth issues in Wood Buffalo are engaged in the development of this collective impact strategy.

Who Should Come to the Next Meeting?

Youth opportunity YMCA

Children's services

Community policing

The Hub

Boys & Girls Club

Girls Inc.

MACOY (youth)

Justin Slade Youth Foundation

School councillors

Y-connect agencies

SADD (students against drunk driving) chair

Student council presidents

Church representatives

How do we invite the kids that are not in school?

5.0 Evaluation of Meeting 1

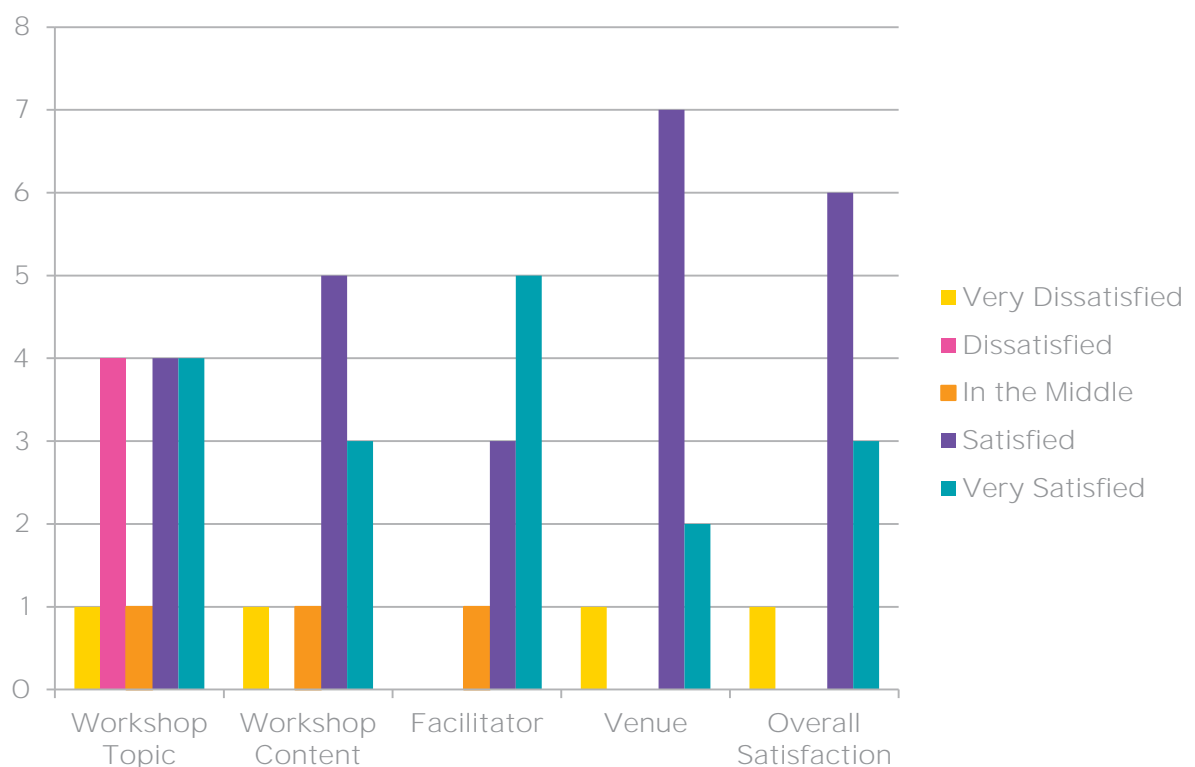
Number of Attendees: 15

SPWB Staff and Guests: 4

Number of Survey Respondents: 10

Percentage of Wood Buffalo Attendees who Completed This Evaluation: 67%

1. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the first meeting in the Collective Impact Workshop Series:

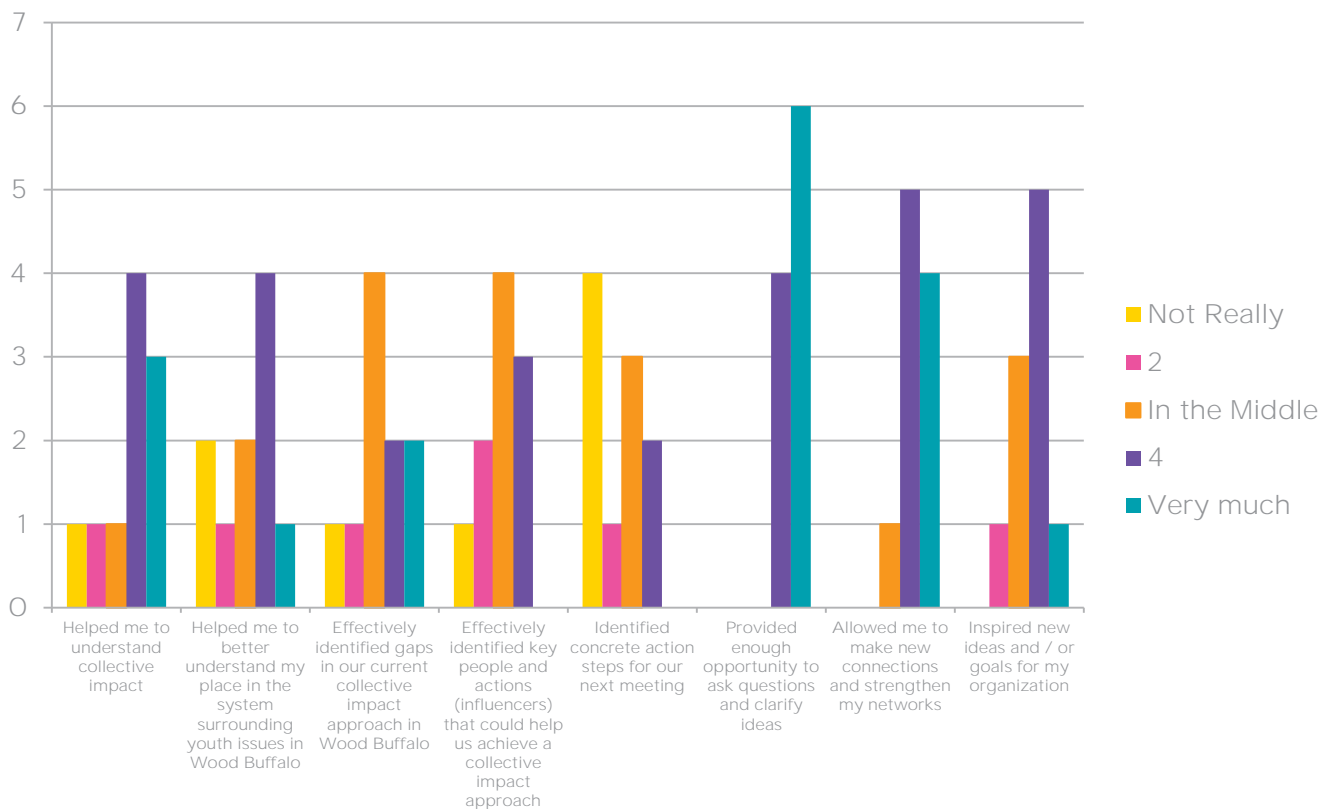


Comments:

- I enjoyed this workshop very much, and am extremely glad we are coming together as a group to pick each others brain's on how to come together more as a community.
- I didn't appreciate the facilitators reference to "people are here for their pay cheque". It may have not been intended but it came across as portraying a negative image of our residents.
- It was the first meeting so I'm hopefully that the "topics" will become more focused on a specific issue. Its important to discuss the concept so we understand it - but I believe the people in the room were results orientated people. We're really busy - let's figure out the issues and get going on them.
- You ladies did a great job of presenting the information and concept!

- e) This was a great workshop - the time frame was great, and the information shared including those who weren't there was fabulous.
- f) It was a little disorganized in regards to timing.

2. The first meeting in the Collective Impact Workshop Series:



Comments:

- a) I truly believe we're already doing a really great job with collective impact approach in WB.
- b) At the risk of sounding arrogant, I 'get it" with respect to Collective Impact. I don't see this as a new concept but more so a re-iteration of 'best practise' in social work that is being presented in a new package. Social work practise should always be working towards affecting change on a more macro level. So my saying "not really" is not a reflection on your teaching or the content but more a reflection of it really isn't new information to me.

3. The most useful aspects of the first meeting in the Collective Impact Workshop Series were...

- a) Finding out each individuals idea's on how to come together as a community
- b) Meeting new people and sharing information.
- c) Other agencies that attend.



- d) Understanding how collective impact can assist me tackle issues in my own organization
- e) A review of what is already available in the community and identification of some gaps in services.
- f) Networking with others, seeing the new people in our ever changing community. I have been a social worker for 25 years and all my time has been spent working in Fort McMurray. There is such a high turn over in staffing so it's nice to see the faces attached to the new names. Also was really nice to reconnect with some others that have been around for a while as well.
- g) To me the Five Key Elements (the Common Agenda, Shared Measurement, Mutually Reinforcing Activities, Continuous Communication and Backbone Support.
- h) Learning, information sharing, networking
- i) I enjoyed networking and learning about other organizations in the RMWB.

4. The Collective Impact Workshop Series would have been more useful if...

- a) We had more time.
- b) More youth agencies and their funders.
- c) There were more opportunities for networking and more specific action plans.
- d) We had picked and identified a specific issue that needed to be tackled. Unfortunately, I think that the mix of people in the room were too focused on different issues - i.e. children vs youth.
- e) More key partners at the table. An identified goal. I completely understand this is about process and creating large scale social change. Collaboration and coordination of the community are critical for Collective Impact. However I am not sure how to get people to come together without an identified issue and goal. People can commit to the process but will leave in short order if they do not know "why" they are committing to the process. Additionally, while I know you briefly stated that you were not suggesting anything was wrong with 'isolated interventions' and individual programs, I didn't find that overly believable and I think people will pull back if they believe their current programs are at risk or being criticized. While we strive to work together to affect change on a macro level, people need to know their micro level programs are valuable, meaningful and purposeful.
- f) Everything is useful.
- g) copies of the powerpoint would have been available either ahead of time to print out or as slide handouts to make notes on.
- h) I think it was great
- i) There were youth at the workshop providing some insight into what they want to see in our community and what gaps they see.



5. I could have used more information about...

- a) What organization each person was from, what they do and how they could help achieve a collective impact approach
- b) Canadian examples of Collective Impact initiatives and their positive outcomes.
- c) The specific areas of concerns and opportunities in our area.
- d) Who has been invited and did not attend. Why did they not attend? I don't believe we can move forward effectively without some key partners such as the schools and the CFSA.
- e) a contact list of those in attendance would be helpful
- f) I already have a lot of information - can't think of anything
- g) Collective impact and youth. I found that it was more focused on collective impact as a whole and it made me forget that this workshop is about youth at some points.

6. Can you think of any other organizations or individuals who are part of the system affecting youth-related issues in Wood Buffalo who should be invited to our next meeting?

- a) Stepping Stones
- b) None other than the list we put together that day :)
- c) McMurray Gospel Assembly and other church organizations. Justin Slade Youth Foundation.
- d) Need to have champions present to move forward in addition to front line staff who understand the issues and see opportunities for collaboration.
- e) I believe we established a fairly comprehensive list at the session but most certainly the schools and CFSA should be at the table.
- f) The HUB, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Human Services(CYS), McMan
- g) Boys and Girls Club YMCA
- h) At risk youth, Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc,



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