



# Collaborative Leaders Network

## Strategy Overviews

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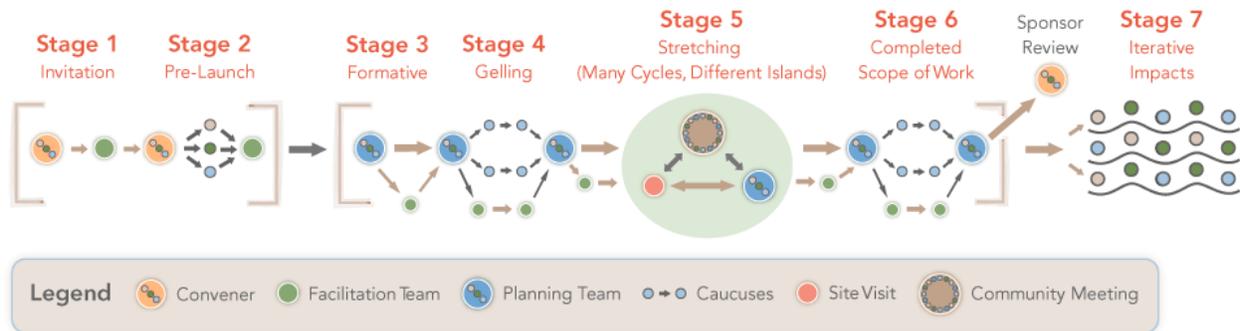


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# Community Transformation



**Linda Colburn**  
**President & CEO,**  
**Where Talk Works**

This strategy enables groups to meet their stated objectives in a way that also strengthens the people in them, so they can build on the collaborative experience and bring about lasting change in their communities.

In the course of working as a group on a particular community issue, relationships are strengthened, skill levels are raised, and individuals are empowered to tap institutional resources and one another for future endeavors.

Supporting individuals in a given group to build their capacity for long-term effectiveness involves a progressive turning over of leadership to group members as they work toward the objectives they have been convened to achieve.

Once a group is functioning well, with clearly understood objectives, protocols in place, and roles in operation, participants are ready to be “stretched,” and urged to apply what they have learned to other situations. This can take the form of site visits, community meetings, and travel to interface with non-group members from the broader context.

*Stronger individuals and groups, and the resulting relationships formed, are absolutely key to long-term change at the community level.*



## **Stages**

### **Stage 1: Invitation**

When an initiative is proposed, a key consideration for the facilitator is whether the project has the potential to positively affect the community.

### **Stage 2: Pre-Launch**

The work of this stage involves clarifying particulars of the strategy and process design with the convener to ensure that the project gets off to a strong and well-coordinated start.

### **Stage 3: Formative**

In the process of spelling out operational protocols and attitudinal expectations, participants begin to get to know one another.

### **Stage 4: Gelling**

Having internalized project goals and protocols, participants begin to work collectively and assume stronger leadership roles.

### **Stage 5: Stretching**

Site visits, community meetings, and interactions with resource people stretch the participants' content knowledge, encourage their use of judgment, and strengthen their cohesion as a team.

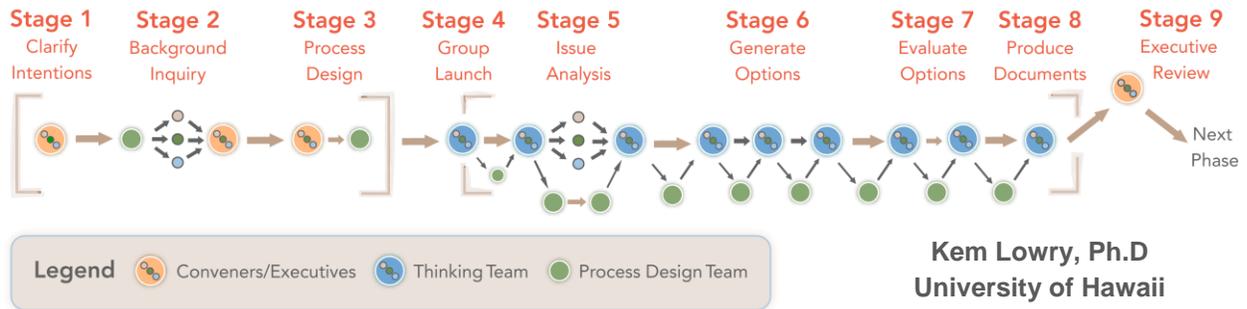
### **Stage 6: Completed Scope of Work**

A final report is produced in this stage, along with a strategy for its distribution. Closing activities recognize the group's accomplishments and set the scene for future alliances.

### **Stage 7: Iterative Impacts**

Participants are emboldened to build on the relationships and skills they've developed to pursue change in their communities going forward.

# Collaborative Problem Solving



It is increasingly difficult to craft plans, policies, and programs that are regarded as legitimate and sustainable without the direct engagement of representatives from multiple agencies, corporations, and non-governmental organizations. Cross-sector collaborations of this type are designed to engage well-informed stakeholders in a process of sustained problem solving; the end product is often a policy document that can help to establish legislation, regulations, and standards.

This strategy requires that participants understand the logic of each stage of the process in order to build commitment toward a consensus perspective. Group members engage in clarifying the problem, analyzing potential strategies, crafting recommendations, evaluating draft documents, and delivering a report for which there is a high level of consensus and commitment.

An issue that is of sufficient importance and a convener who is of sufficient stature are among the critical success factors that will mobilize the necessary resources and participants for a cross-sector collaboration of this type.

*Cross-sector collaboration provides both the forum and the strategy for engaging the most knowledgeable stakeholders in sustained problem solving.*



## Stages

### **Stage 1: Clarify Intentions**

Identify the expectations of conveners to help them envision how the process might be organized, who might be participating, what time and resources will likely be required, and what the outcomes might be.

### **Stage 2: Background Inquiry**

Gather first- and second-hand background information to determine which issues should figure into the tailored design of a collaborative process.

### **Stage 3: Process Design**

Develop a provisional process design explaining the logic and outputs of each phase in order to garner participants' early commitment to the process and the products.

### **Stage 4: Group Launch**

Introduce the participants and process, and start building trust and confidence by collaborating on a group charter and amending the process plan to reflect group concerns.

### **Stage 5: Issue Analysis**

Develop a shared understanding of the issue and identify those aspects that are most amenable to intervention.

### **Stage 6: Generate Options**

Identify and analyze a range of alternative strategies for addressing a problem or taking advantage of an opportunity.

### **Stage 7: Evaluate Options**

Evaluate strategies and choose between them using criteria the group selects.

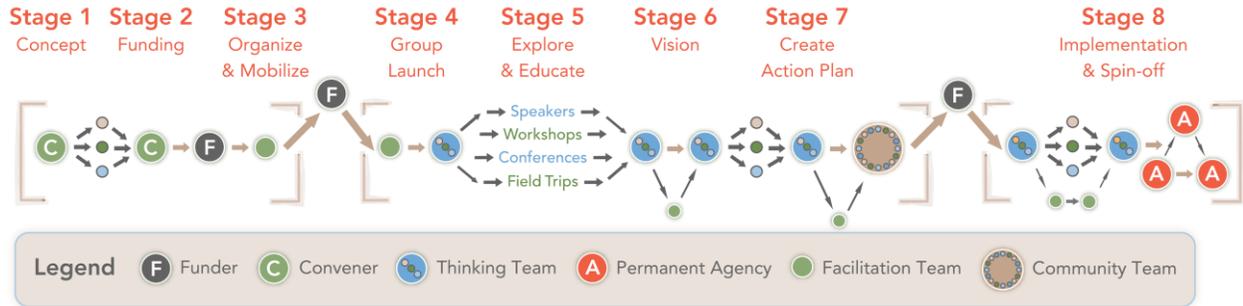
### **Stage 8: Produce Documents**

Develop a plan, set of recommendations, or policy document that describes the strategy the group has developed, the rationale for the strategy, and the process by which it was developed.

### **Stage 9: Executive Review**

Present and explain the report to the executive or convener in a way that it is understood, accepted, and supported.

# A Collaboration Incubator



**Diane Zachary**  
**President and CEO**  
**Kauai Planning & Action Alliance**

The intention of this strategy is to successfully launch collaborative initiatives that will help Kauai resolve some of its challenges and find a permanent home for each of the projects that is incubated.

Kauai Planning & Action Alliance (KPAA) is a nonprofit organization that serves as a neutral convener and facilitator, bringing together diverse groups to achieve targeted community goals that are drawn from the *Kauai General Plan*.

KPAA identifies those issues that could benefit from collaborative processes and that have the potential of yielding new ideas and solutions to challenges the island faces. As a collaboration incubator, KPAA launches two or three new multi-stakeholder initiatives each year, and has the organizational flexibility to be involved to different degrees, depending on a project’s need: conceiver, convener, or interim manager.

Key community leaders, business people, agency leaders, and citizens with a stake in the outcome are brought together to engage in a collaborative process that can vary in length from months to years and result in a shared vision and viable action plan.

*In a collaboration incubator, the focus is on finding a permanent home for each project once it has been incubated.*



## **Stages**

### **Stage 1: Concept**

Identify an issue in the community that has the potential to benefit from a collaborative process, and which is likely to engage participants and garner long-term support for implementing solutions.

### **Stage 2: Funding**

Secure sufficient funding to ensure that a thoughtful and comprehensive collaborative process will be adequately resourced.

### **Stage 3: Organize and Mobilize**

Develop a resource infrastructure; conduct additional research; design a comprehensive process; and secure commitments to participate.

### **Stage 4: Group Launch**

Make everyone feel welcomed and valued, focus the group on the purpose and task of the group, and get their agreement on the group charter and communications plan.

### **Stage 5: Explore and Educate**

Ensure that the group develops a well-informed understanding of the issue and knows about available assets related to the issue.

### **Stage 6: Envision**

Create a collective vision statement that describes a successful outcome for the issue and establish core values that will guide action planning.

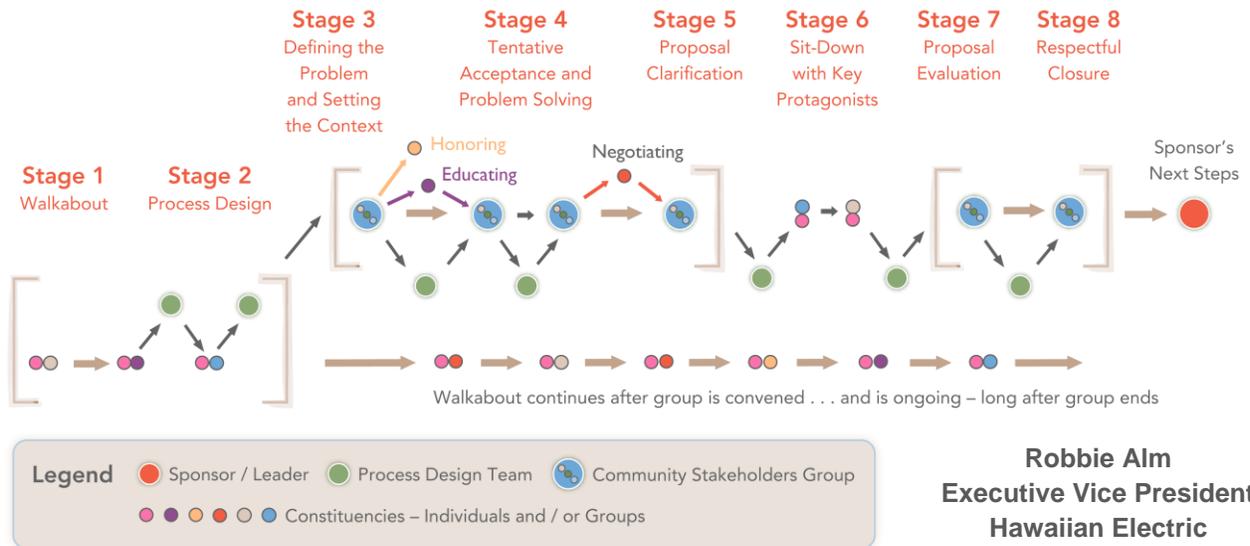
### **Stage 7: Action Planning**

Agree on actions plans—consisting of goals, strategies, activities, a timeline, and set of responsibilities—to provide basic guidelines for how desired outcomes will be achieved.

### **Stage 8: Implementation and Spin-Off**

Ensure that action plans are implemented, and that the activities become integrated into the long-term fabric of the community.

# A Community Engagement Strategy for Negotiating a Package of Community Benefits



The dual goals of this strategy are to move forward on a development project that will impact a community and build strong relationships with the affected parties.

When a company or an agency (“sponsor”) wants to take an action that will significantly impact a community, working with that community to find a way forward is worth the time and effort. For this to happen, the process must be co-developed with the community.

This starts with the sponsor’s efforts to discern the worldview and motivations of community stakeholders. By learning what really matters to affected individuals and groups, the sponsor can work with them to define a set of community benefits that will honor stakeholders for the adjustments they might have to make and the burdens they carry. A package of agreements is central to this strategy ... whether the community approves, opposes, or is silent about the proposed project.

Critical to the success of this process is the fact that it is led by a company executive who stays fully involved. This ongoing involvement by the “sponsor/leader” can take a number of forms; the executive may serve as the group’s facilitator, or may simply be present at the meetings to provide clarification on issues when asked by the group or by a third-party facilitator. The engagement of a senior level representative sends a message to the community and to the company about just how important the issue, the process, and the relationship with the community are. A good process can help to move a project forward and build a positive relationship with the community.



*This strategy places control of the process in the hands of the community;  
it models and encourages integrity, transparency, humility,  
and the honoring of vastly differing perspectives.*

## **Stages**

### **Stage 1: Walkabout**

Through conversations with community leaders, the work of this stage is to understand community perspectives and build sufficient trust to enable a process to take place.

### **Stage 2: Process Design**

The goal of this stage is to decide whether to launch a community engagement process, and if so, to allow for its joint design by the group participants and process design team.

### **Stage 3: Defining the Problem and Setting the Context**

In this stage, the group process is explained, the proposed project is presented, and every effort is made to put and keep control of the process in the hands of the community.

### **Stage 4: Tentative Acceptance and Problem Solving**

This stage moves the community toward a greater comfort with the sponsoring company's goals and with the notion of givebacks for the burden being shouldered by the community.

### **Stage 5: Proposal Clarification**

In this stage, the group develops a tentative list of givebacks.

### **Stage 6: Sit-Down with Key Protagonists**

This stage arises when a breakdown occurs and meetings need to be suspended so that the leader and affected parties can sit down separately and off-line.

### **Stage 7: Proposal Evaluation**

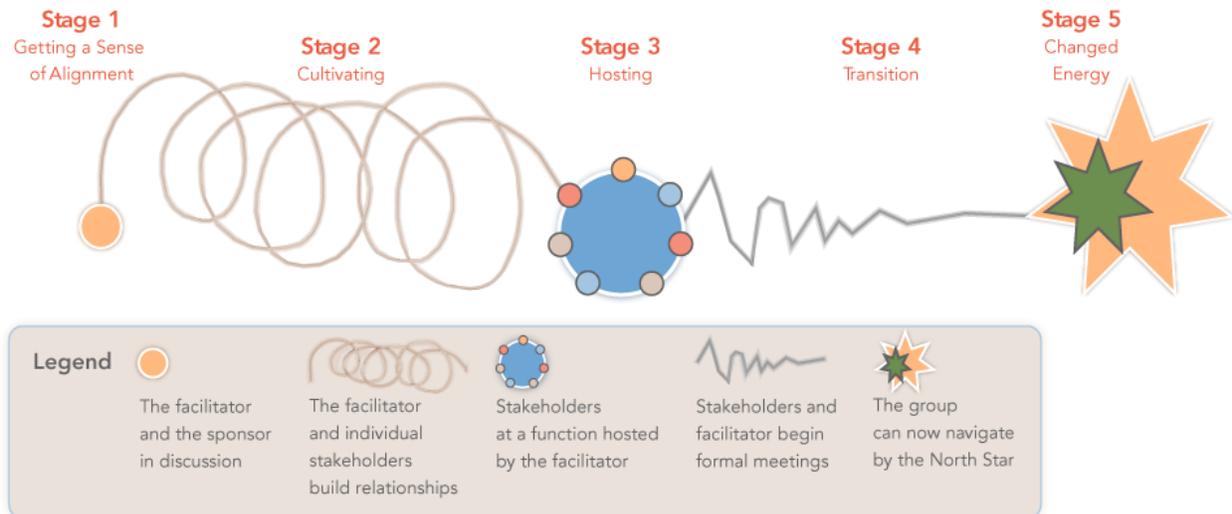
A package of givebacks is evaluated for its value to the community and agreed to in this stage.

### **Stage 8: Respectful Closure**

In this stage, it is between the company and the community to see if they can jointly wind up at the same place.



# A Collaborative Strategy Grounded in Polynesian Values



**Papalii Dr. Tusi Avegalio**  
Director, Pacific Business Center  
University of Hawaii

The overall goal of this strategy is to develop a spirit of collaboration – whether it takes one night, several days, or months.

The collaborative process described here is based on the worldview of its originator, Papalii Dr. Tusi Avegalio. His royal lineage as an *alii* impacts the way he views collaboration and the way participants experience the process under his leadership. Working *malu alii* (“in the shade of the alii”), individuals are guided to a recognition of their interconnectedness and their capacity for collaboration.

Tusi’s approach is rooted in the Polynesian precept that all people are kin, connected through the spiritual energy of *mana*, which can be found in all things. In the human realm, *mana* is expressed by *faaaloalo* (Samoan for “trust and mutual respect”) and *alofa* (“love”). When people exemplify these qualities, they are behaving in ways that produce balance, harmony, and mutual sustainability — the three foundations of a healthy universe and the essence of effective collaboration.



## Stages

### **Stage 1: Getting a Sense Of Alignment**

The facilitator's first goal is to determine whether or not he feels sufficiently aligned with the initiative to accept the engagement.

### **Stage 2: Cultivating**

By meeting with key stakeholders one by one, the facilitator begins to build a foundation of mutual trust and respect that will be necessary for working well together in the future.

### **Stage 3: Hosting**

The goal of this stage is to use the experience of being hosted in a Polynesian style to awaken the spirit of collaboration within and between people.

### **Stage 4: Transition**

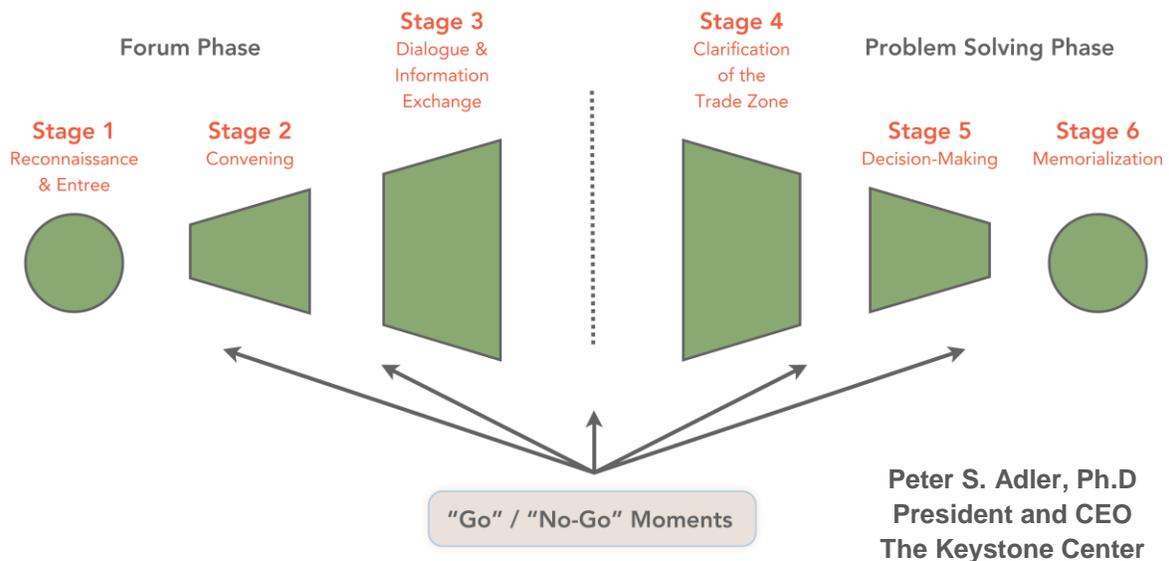
Building on the inclusive spirit that was fostered in the hosting experience, the group meets to define what it seeks to accomplish and how.

### **Stage 5: Changed Energy**

Individuals in the group have attained a level of mutuality that enables them to work toward larger goals with an understanding of how these will enrich the entire community.



# Assisted Dialogue and Negotiation



This strategy typically engages a broad range of participants who bring with them varied and potentially conflicting self interests.

*"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."*  
- African proverb

The general arc of this strategy is comprised of two broad phases: a "Forum Phase" in which people are encouraged to effectively communicate with each other and a "Problem Solving Phase" in which they are encouraged to negotiate. As multiple issues are worked through, the sequence of the dialogue can and must stay flexible.

The work of the Forum Phase involves:

- Creating comfort with the process
- Enabling good communication
- Reducing emotional heat when it is an impediment to productive interchange
- Establishing a climate of trust and rapport
- Enhancing working relationships
- Deepening multilateral insights and understandings
- Allowing a full expression of the conflict, most especially the hopes and fears
- Creating a relevant and useful foundation of facts that can springboard into the Problem Solving Phase

The work of the Problem Solving Phase involves:



- Creating a “we against problem” (rather than an “us against them”) focus
- Creating the momentum and political will to resolve matters
- Generating and analyzing options
- Narrowing differences
- Discovering possible trades
- Negotiating potentially optimum solutions
- Managing or saving face
- Choosing best options and an agreeable pathway forward
- Reaching trustable agreements

Depending on the kind of problem the collaborative process specifically seeks to address, there are six kinds of possible deliverables:

- A transactional agreement
- A guidance to other decision makers
- A joint fact finding
- A plan
- A record of discussions
- An explicit alliance or partnership

*The highest goal is always to produce substantive, procedural, and relational results that are more valuable than would have otherwise been achieved in the minds of everyone involved.*



## **Stages**

### **Stage 1: Reconnaissance & Entrée**

The primary goal of this stage is to build “the table” and get the process organized.

### **Stage 2: Convening**

The overarching goal of this stage is to bring people together and formally start the process.

### **Stage 3: Dialogue & Information Exchange**

Through discussion and deliberation, group members create a pertinent information base and sharpen their collective clarity on the problem to be solved.

### **Stage 4: Clarification of the Trade Zone**

The primary goal of this stage is to array and evaluate options and position the group for making choices.

### **Stage 5: Decision Making**

The paramount goal of this stage is to reach an agreeable and acceptable conclusion.

### **Stage 6: Memorialization**

In this stage, decisions are finalized and the collaboration is brought to a close.



