



# **In the service of Canada: From measuring funds to measuring impact**

**How a renewed commitment to community  
building has transformed the  
United Way-Centraide Movement**

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# Transforming to a Community Impact Organization: an Overview

- I. Our goal
  - I. implications
- II. Our gameplan
- III. Our learnings
- IV. Closing reflections



# I. Our Goal

- Changes in philanthropic landscape have forced a rethinking
  - What is the value-added role of ‘middle person’ between donors and recipients?
    - Don Tapscott’s concept of disintermediation
- Strategic alignment initiative begun in 2000
  - Environmental scan
  - Change to take place at four levels: external [ie, community], internal [ie, organizational], Movement-wide [ie, collaboration and interdependence] and individual [ie, leadership]



# ...Implications ...

## Transformation in relationships and partnerships

- UW-C sets priorities
  - UW-C funds service delivery
  - Agencies apply for UW-C funds
  - Agencies see UW-C solely as funder
  - Immediate solutions
- ➔ UW-C works with community to set priorities
  - ➔ UW-C invests in service delivery, capacity and community building
  - ➔ Agencies are partners in addressing or changing community conditions
  - ➔ UW-C recognized as partner and convenor
  - ➔ Sustained solutions



# Our Goal...

- Back to our roots as a social movement
  - 1886-7 in Boston and Denver and in 1917 in Montreal and Toronto
    - To encourage and stimulate collective community planning and the development of better standards of community organization for social work, while preventing duplication in relief-giving through a federated fund-raising schema
  - 2003: Community impact through community building



## II. Our game plan

- Three streams for addressing change:
  - **Stream One: new Mission and aspirations**
    - Alignment with core values and brand promise [valued at \$34.7B U.S.]
  - **Stream Two: working differently**
    - Experimentation with new models
      - 211 National Initiative and Action for Neighbourhood Change [ANC] action learning project [external]
      - Business Transformation Coalition [BTC] pilot of 5 United Ways [internal]
        - » Focus on *Constituent Relationship Management*
      - Task forces on key policy issues, eg [TAFR] Transparency, Accountability and Financial Reporting [Movement-wide]
  - **Stream Three: leadership and effectiveness of Movement**
    - Value added role of National Board/Office
    - Relationships with United Way of America and United Way International



## III. Our learnings - collective

- Achieved acceptance of mission
  - Need deeper understanding
  - Meaningful examples: Centraide Quebec around poverty; United Way of Greater Toronto around homelessness
- Ability to work as a Movement – a systems approach
  - Now need to focus on *agility*
- Evidence-based research fundamental to success
- Advocacy for social change will require new competencies
  - National Learning Initiative survey lists *public policy and political acumen/savvy* as major gaps
- And reflection of country's demographics and diversity



# Our learnings...individual

- **Imagine a bold future, have passion about it and a bias towards action – towards realizing it.**
- **Identify and concentrate on a very ‘vital few’ big rocks. Expect excellence and say no to distractions.**
- **Build critical mass for change. I know it’s easier said than done. But without it, the ‘tipping point’ can’t happen. This includes outside the organization and unlikely supporters in places like the media. And find your confidants.**
- **Stay focused on your ‘true north’; and be your authentic, honest, frank self.**
- **Be prepared to get fired – or marginalized or ostracized. It happens, and there is life after.**
- **Measure change, but even more so, celebrate each and every successful step on the journey.**



## IV. Closing Reflections

**“One thing I believe profoundly [is that] we make our own history. The course of history is directed by the choices we make and our choices grow out of the ideas, the beliefs, the values, the dreams of the people. It is not so much the powerful leaders that determine our destiny as the much more powerful influence of the combined voices of the people themselves.”**

*Eleanor Roosevelt*