



Resources for Connected Non Profit Leadership
A collection of research

This is a collection of readings that make up the basis for Impact Brokers activities. It includes links and abstracts of titles in three main sections: Networks & Leadership; Social Capital & Leadership; Social Capital & Those That Non Profits Serve.

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Networks & Leadership

[Collaborating for Systemic Change](#)

By Peter M. Senge, Benyamin B. Lichtenstein, Katrin Kaeufer, Hilary Bradbury and John S. Carroll

Currently, businesses and organizations across the globe are facing the need to make changes in the name of sustainability. However, at this time, no real precedent exists as to how to go about making these systemic changes through collaborative efforts. In this article, Peter Senge and colleagues help provide a framework for stakeholders to develop cross-sector collaborations that can effectively meet the sustainability challenge. Using the Society for Organizational Learning as a model organization, this paper focuses on interweaving three areas – the conceptual, the relational, and the action-driven – in order to develop the most successful collaborations.

[The Connected Republic 2.0: New Possibilities & New Value for the Public Sector](#)

By Paul Johnston and Martin Stewart-Weeks

This paper explores the implications of an increasingly connected world for the public sector. This new world favors a more collaborative and flexible approach to getting things done and provides a platform for empowerment, choice, and personalization. The authors from Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group discuss their vision of an e-government: an environment where citizens reconnect with each other, with their elected leaders, and with their public institutions. The authors intend to provoke new thinking about ways in which the emerging technologies of communication and collaboration can improve the basic operations of the public sector and fuel a deeper process of innovation and transformation.

[Constellation Collaboration: A model for multi-organizational partnership](#)

By Tonya Surman

The Constellation model is a complexity-inspired governance framework for multi-organizational collaboration. It is a way of organizing a group of interested parties to meet a need without having to create a new organization to 'hold' the issue. This paper explores the model thoroughly, including the main components, assumptions, core systems, and philosophical underpinning.

[The Impact of Collaborative Planning on Governance Capacity, Urban & Regional Development](#)

By Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher

This paper is concerned with governance and how some new forms of collaborative dialogue, policy making, and action are filling the gaps left as our formal institutions of government are failing to carry out their responsibilities or where no agency has jurisdiction. These collaborative processes, engaging public and private sector players representing many interests working on tasks that are about public welfare, have become part of an emerging governance system. Our goal in this paper is to outline an evaluative framework to assess these emerging collaborative governance efforts in terms of how they are changing our capacity to manage our systems, whether economic, social, or environmental. We hope in this process to explore how these developments may be changing the very concept of governance in contemporary times.

[The Networked Nonprofit](#)

By Jane Wei-Skillern and Sonia Marciano

Although traditional management wisdom says that nonprofits must be large and in charge to do the most good, some of the world's most successful organizations instead stay small, sharing their load with like-minded, long-term partners. This paper points to three nonprofits in particular that exemplify the network approach: Habitat for Humanity Egypt (HFHE), Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA), and Women's World Banking (WWB). Three common traits found in effective networked nonprofits include a focus on the mission, not the organization; on trust, not control; and on being a node, not a hub. The authors suggest that networked nonprofits are uniquely poised to face the perennial challenge of the nonprofit sector: achieving lofty missions with decidedly humble means.

[Organizational Networks as Catalysts for Strategic Sustainable Development](#)

By Molly H. S. Doyle, Dermot C. Hikisch, and Shawn M. Westcott

In an increasingly connected and interdependent world, the global sustainability challenge needs to be addressed by organizational networks from a whole-systems perspective. This study explores organizations through the lens of network theory and the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development, with a special focus on networks already considering sustainability issues. The purpose of the research was to identify key factors critical to the success of an organizational network in the sustainability field, as well as define specific barriers to success for these networks. These specific factors and barriers to success are identified and explored across: Academic, Business, and Non-Profit sectors, with the ultimate objective of increasing the performance of Emerging Sustainability Networks (ESNs), removing barriers in the field, and planning strategically to achieve success in the sustainability movement.

[The Stars: The Constellation Model of Collaborative Social Change](#)

By Tonya Surman and Mark Surman

Developers Tonya and Mark Surman explain how the constellation model, developed for the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment, offers an innovative approach to organizing collaborative efforts. The constellation model gains strength by building itself around the natural energy flows of a group. The authors discuss three main elements of the model – lightweight governance, action-focused work, and third-party coordination – which help create a system of teamwork, while preserving organizational autonomy at the same time.

[The ties that lead: A social network approach to leadership](#)

By Prasad Balkundi and Martin Kilduff

This article investigates, for leadership research, the implications of new directions in social network theory that emphasize networks as both cognitive structures in the minds of organizational members and opportunity structures that facilitate and constrain action. We introduce the four core ideas at the heart of the network research program: the importance of relations, actors' embeddedness, the social utility of connections, and the structural patterning of social life. Then we present a theoretical model of how network cognitions in the minds of leaders affect three types of networks: the direct ties surrounding leaders, the pattern of direct and indirect ties within which leaders are embedded in the whole organization and the inter-organizational linkages formed by leaders as representatives of organizations. We suggest that these patterns of ties can contribute to leader effectiveness.

Social Capital & Leadership

[Generating Self-Organizing Capacity: Leadership Practices and Training Needs in Non-Profits](#)

Allen, Beverlyn Lundy & Lois Wright Morton (2006). Generating Self-Organizing Capacity: Leadership Practices and Training Needs in Non-Profits. Journal of Extension [On-line], 44(6) Article 6FEA6.

Capacity building is a major goal of today's organizations. The complex problems that organizations face along with conditions of uncertainty require increased capacity to effectively respond. We propose a self-organizing capacity framework (organizational identity, information flows, and interdependent relationships) and link it to 18 leadership and organizational practices. We find that visioning, mobilizing resources, technology, and building teamwork are self-identified key training needs. Visioning and mobilizing resources are central to organizational identity; technology is necessary for information flows; and building teamwork contributes to interdependent relationships. These are shared leadership skills that build capacity within the organization.

[How Nonprofit Organizations Develop and Leverage Social Capital](#)

By Nancy K. King

This paper is the product of an ethnographical study that was conducted to illustrate how one nonprofit organization – a zoological park – uses social capital as a way of furthering its mission. The paper depicts how the organization's culture supports the development and retention of social capital. The research sheds light on various practices by which nonprofit organizations can improve their effectiveness, increase their community ownership and attract the resources necessary to continue their mission into the future.

[Leadership Development and Social Capital: Is There a Relationship?](#)

By Association of Leadership Educators

Significant resources of time, money and expertise are invested in leadership development programs, and networking is often cited as a benefit of participation in these programs. Previous research has traditionally focused on leadership as an individual attribute, but researchers and practitioners are increasingly recognizing leadership as a social process. Social capital has emerged as an important theme in leadership research, and networking and relationship building are important steps in enhancing social capital. Based on this review of recent literature, I conclude that the relationship between social capital and leadership is well documented, but we have an incomplete understanding of the dynamic nature of this relationship, and lack sufficient evidence to support a causal assertion that one leads to the other. Researchers and practitioners should develop new leadership development program evaluation methods and designs, in the context of social capital, to answer these questions.

[Leading Boldly](#)

By Ronald A. Heifetz, John V. Kania, and Mark R. Kramer

This article challenges organizations to move beyond traditional social change approaches, and to enact imaginative, and even controversial, leadership. An example interwoven throughout the article of three foundations who revoked their funding to the Pittsburgh Public School district in 2002 in order to draw attention to the dysfunction present in the city's school system, provides readers with a concrete leadership model. The authors suggest adopting an adaptive leadership style, which includes attacking

complex problems head-on, mobilizing stakeholders to develop their own solutions, using distress productively, and being prepared to take the heat that goes along with involvement in controversial issues.

[A New Look at Leadership in Collaborative Networks: Process Catalysts](#)

By Myrna P. Mandell, Ph.D. and Robyn Keast, Ph.D.

It is now argued that the network approach with its horizontal orientation operates differently to conventional management. Collaborative network management, with its unique characteristics, requires fresh leadership skills. Drawing on two collaborative network case studies this paper examines the impact of these unique characteristics on the concept of leadership. The critical characteristics of these types of networks are the interdependence of the participants, the emphasis on process rather than only on achieving tasks, and the need for systems change. Based on these characteristics a new concept of leadership called “process catalysts” is presented.

[Nonprofits and social capital: Measurement through organizational surveys](#)

By Andrew Passey and Mark Lyons

Nonprofit organizations are said to play important roles in the reproduction of social capital, although research suggests that some types of nonprofits add more to stocks of social capital than others and that they vary in the types of social capital they reproduce. Such findings typically come from surveys of individuals or households, as opposed to surveys of nonprofits themselves. In this research article, we draw on a survey of a sample of Australian nonprofit organizations to demonstrate a method of empirically testing some of the ways that nonprofit organizations are said to reproduce social capital and to assess differences in any contributions by important organizational characteristics such as industry or primary beneficiary. We aim to show how surveys of organizations might add to our understanding of the contribution of nonprofits to stocks of social capital.

[Organizational social capital: self-regenerational ability in organizations](#)

By Carlos Fernández Isoird, Ainhoa Unamuno Aranburu and Iñigo Urkidi Diez

In this paper, we establish the hypothetical theory, which asserts that social capital is the source from which communities of practice may emerge. This is a worthwhile aspect for organizations, because it helps towards the self-regenerative ability that allows them to co-develop. At the same time, this system feeds itself back, since communities of practice themselves contribute to strengthening the organizational social capital. This way, new practical corporations can emerge more easily from the confidence and knowledge acquired in previous processes.

Social Capital and Those That Non Profits Serve

[Service Delivery and Community: Social Capital, Service Systems Integration, and Outcomes Among Homeless Persons with Severe Mental Illness](#)

By Robert Rosenheck, Joseph Morrissey, Julie Lam, Michael Calloway, Marilyn Stolar, Matthew Johnsen, Frances Randolph, Margaret Blasinsky, and Howard Goldman

This study evaluated the influence of features of community social environment and service system integration on service use, housing, and clinical outcomes among homeless people with serious mental illness. After conducting structural equation modeling, one prominent finding included that social capital was associated with greater service systems integration, which was associated in turn with greater access to assistance from a public housing agency and to a greater probability of exiting from homelessness at 12 months. The researchers concluded that community social capital and service system integration are related through a series of direct and indirect pathways with better housing outcomes, but not with superior clinical outcomes for homeless people with mental illness. Implications for designing improved service systems are discussed.

[Problem Behaviors of Homeless Youth: A Social Capital Perspective](#)

By Denitza Bantchevska, Suzanne Bartle-Haring, Pushpanjali Dashora, Tatiana Glebova, and Natasha Slesnick

As homeless youth are one of the most marginalized groups in our society, many researchers identify much higher levels of various problem behaviors among these youth in comparison to their non-homeless peers. The current study examined the utility of social capital in predicting problem behaviors among homeless youth. Overall, the theoretically derived social capital variable significantly predicted substance use frequency, sexual risk behavior, depression, delinquent behavior, and number of days homeless. Thus, social capital was useful in understanding and predicting the current life situation among these youth and may be worthy of further study. Findings suggest that meaningful change should utilize interventions that go beyond the individual and are geared towards modifying the social context of individuals' lives.

[Tapping the Power of Social Networks: Understanding the Role of Social Networks in Strengthening Families and Transforming Communities](#)

By Audrey Jordan, PhD

This is the first in a series of reports produced by the Casey Foundation, published to tell the story of network development and to share the lessons learned through the Making Connections initiative. Making Connections is a community change initiative situated in ten cities around the country, dedicated to improving outcomes for families and children in tough neighborhoods. This first paper compiles relevant definitions, and key findings from the literature and their limitations when applied to practice and measurement. Also thoroughly discussed is the understanding that the Foundation came to about the importance and dynamics of social networks and providing well-placed resources to support and strengthen them, in order to ensure the best outcomes for the Making Connections neighborhoods.

[Ties that Bind: The Practice of Social Networks](#)

By Terri J. Bailey

This report is the second in a series of reports by the Annie E. Casey Foundation on the importance of social networks, and the effort to improve the life chances of vulnerable children by helping to strengthen their families and neighborhoods. Six intermediary organizations across the country were visited, in order to learn about and explore the successful practices they employed when working with families who come from neighborhoods similar to those taking part in the Making Connections initiative. This paper summarizes the findings from these visits, and helps lay the groundwork for the development of a social networks point of view for the Foundation's practice and measurement work in Making Connections sites.

[Relationships Matter: How Agencies Can Support Family and Social Network Development](#)

By Elena Pell

The third report in the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s series focuses specifically on the discussions with the participating families and their experiences in social networks. The paper chronicles some of what was learned during an exploration of two innovative agencies – Lawrence Community Works (LCW) and Family Independence Initiative (FII) – and the unique ways they have developed to support families and social networks. The Foundation recognizes that strong social ties are important to the welfare of a community and that the lack thereof can have deleterious effects on individuals, families, and neighborhoods. However, it is not fully understood how participation in social networks impacts families and, conversely, how families impact social networks. This report attempts to further the understanding of this interaction in the context of the work of these two agencies.

[Social Capital and the Educational Performance of Latino and Non-Latino Youth](#)

By Elias S. Lopez

Using the High School and Beyond dataset, this report assesses the importance of social capital in determining academic outcomes of Latino youth. An introduction explains J. S. Coleman's definitions of financial, human, and social capital in the student's environment, social capital being the norms, social networks, and social relationships that benefit the child. Factor analyses revealed that education attainment was lowest for students in vocational programs, whether Latino or White; and also that White students in vocational programs had less social capital from home than Latinos in both college-bound programs and vocational programs. The study concludes that the social capital of home and school environments is very important in determining educational outcomes of both White and Latino youth, holding SES constant. Suggestions are offered for improving social capital formation in public schools.

[Social Networks Make a Difference: Family Economic Success](#)

By Nilofer Ahsan

This report presents promising approaches for integrating social networks into existing Family Economic Success strategies within Making Connections sites. It is the fourth report in the series by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This paper starts with a simple typology of the differences that social networks make – both within general populations and among the most vulnerable families – and then presents a discussion of specific strategic opportunities to integrate social networks into existing work. Also discussed are key insights about engaging families who are most vulnerable and supporting the “success trajectories” of these families individually and collectively.