If you cannot imagine the future, you cannot create it.

C. Prahalad, 1999
A living organism....
GROW, ADAPT OR GO
Benefits of a Stage-Wise Approach

- Establishes a diagnostic starting point (What stage are we in? Where should we be by now?)
- Sets realistic expectations
- Recognizes when behaviors are out of sync
- Depersonalizes leadership and process weaknesses
### Similarities and Differences between Life Cycles of Organizations and Collaborations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Situational awareness is essential</td>
<td>• Buy-in by key contributors is less certain</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Patterns are present</td>
<td>• Alignment across portions of strategic plans of participating organizations over time is essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Solid design and purpose must be clear</td>
<td>• Systems thinking is essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Buy-in by key contributors helpful but “purchasable” in organizations</td>
<td>• Early trust formation a priority</td>
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<td>• Emergence and constant change is to be expected</td>
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Lifecycle Realities

- No exact number of lifecycle stages
- Diagnostic, not deterministic
- Not necessarily sequential nor evolutionary
- Not age or size dependent
- No shortcuts
- Holistic and emergent
- Expectations
- Alignment
Lifecycle Stage #1: The Idea – Know Community/Build Trust

Overview

*Perceived community need sparks a founding idea or vision of what could be*

Challenges of the Idea Stage

- Identifying an unmet need
- Developing vision and intentionally designing an approach from a place of seeing the system
Lifecycle Stage #2: Start-up – Co-Construct Purpose, Build a Strong Team

Overview
The beginning stage of operations when energy and passion are at their highest, but systems awareness and design of approach generally lag far behind.

Challenges of the Start-Up Stage
- Sharing vision, responsibility, and paying adequate attention to trust building
- Hiring and attracting the right constituencies - Leveraging sweat equity into outside support
- Knowing when to say no - Living within financial means and relational readiness
Lifecycle Stage #3: Act Together to Cultivate Growth and Effectiveness

Overview
Program opportunity and service demand exceed current systems and structural capacities

Challenges of the Growth Stage
• Too much to do, too little time - Identifying distinctive competence
• Developing governance ownership - Formalizing structure
• Creating a program and strategic focus - Diversifying revenues and managing cash flow
Lifecycle Stage #4: Deepen, Sustain, Make this Work a Way of Life in Order to Make the Change

Overview
Collaborative has a reputation for providing steady, relevant and vital services to the community and operates with a solid organizational foundation and an overall sense of security

Challenges of the Maturity Stage
• Remaining client-centered, rather than policy-bound
• Keeping staff motivated around the mission and multiple organizations strategically aligned
• Building sustainable funding sources
• Becoming position rather than person dependent
Lifecycle Diagnostic Indicators

• At what overall lifecycle stage is the collaboration?

• At what stage are its programs? Typically, program delivery is far superior to its other infrastructure components.

• Do the current key contributors have the right characteristics to lead the collaboration through this stage of development?
Lifecycle Diagnostic Indicators, cont’d.

- Is the advisory group assuming roles and responsibilities consistent with the requirements of the life stage?
- Are the financial resources of the effort consistent with those required for that stage of maturation?
- Are current financial and administrative systems in line with the system change needs, factoring in programs and life stage?
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<td>Program</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Outcome objectives, Performance-based contracts, Contractual accountability, Program results, Partner new programs with established ones, Secure sources of funding</td>
<td>Space</td>
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<td>Management</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Consistent policy implementation, Regular management meetings</td>
<td>Demand exceeds ability to supply service, Management fatigue</td>
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<td>Governance</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Moral support, Informal advice, Technical expertise, Financial support, Fiscal supervision</td>
<td>Little hierarchy between advisors and delivery people, Demands of ownership need to be explored</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Safe sources of funds, Diversity, Quality accounting, Fiscal management, Performance-based contracts</td>
<td>Sporadic payments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
<td>Job descriptions, Personnel policies, Employee handbook</td>
<td>Managers need to take more responsibility for budget and spending</td>
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Focus not just on competitors, but on collaborators and “complementors”. How well do you understand the system? What has changed? What do you anticipate will change? How does the collaborative effort adapt to changing realities?