Network Building for Social Change

Unleashing Collaborative Action
We envision a future

where all children experience a meaningful daily connection to nature
We believe a network approach is valuable in letting go of control and encouraging people to act out of passion and inspiration that results in more action and greater impact.
The emerging movement to reconnect children and nature is grassroots. It is diverse. It is worldwide. It is spontaneously generating, and self-organizing.

— Cheryl Charles
Defining Self-Organizing
DEFINING SELF-ORGANIZATION

1. Sees an opportunity
2. Decides to do something
3. Finds other people & resources
4. Notices what is working & not working
5. Shares what they are learning
6. Helps others adapt & spread
Five ways self-organizing leads to transformation

• Gets more people involved
• Creates trust and expands leadership
• Builds culture of innovation
• Inspires breakthroughs
Inspiration to make this abandoned park into a safe and vibrant place for children

CASE STUDY: POGO PARK IN RICHMOND, CA

Seeing an opportunity

Deciding to act

Connecting with others interested
What worked?

Changing the approach from “Build it and they will come!” to “Come and build it!”

Seven years of neighborhood mobilization, design, and construction
CASE STUDY: POGO PARK IN RICHMOND, CA

What is Working

Elm Lot Park now serves more than 3,500 children who live within a seven minute walk of the park.

Children play soccer and chess, speed down the zip-line, build forts, invent stories, create art projects and do homework.
Based on their experience, Pogo Park built another nearby park in just six months.
Helping others through developing a model of community engagement

Transforming lives by transforming public space
“Self-organizing is, without a doubt, the aspect of networks that is most likely to bring transformation.”

— June Holley
Self-Organizing Helps Build A More Effective Network
SELF-ORGANIZING AND NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Scattered clusters

Hub-and-Spoke

Multi-hub

Smart Network

Where most network-building begins

This is where self-organizing starts

Self-sustaining network

Source of network maps: Jeff Mohr, kumu.io
Develop Your Relationship
Connect two people with interests (Twosies)
Help them find others to create a cluster
Developing Clusters

Multiple Hubs
You need to make sure self-organized projects share what they are learning and find synergies where they can connect their actions.
Twosies build relationships

Small projects build skills

Large projects generate impact

Reflection
Small projects
Larger projects

Tipping Point to Self-Organization & Innovation

1993
2006

0
50
100 projects

SELF-ORGANIZING AND NETWORK DEVELOPMENT
QUESTIONS

What questions do I have?

How can I use these ideas in my work?
Catalyzing Self-Organizing

How does it start? How does it spread?
Family Nature Clubs

How did it get started?

Engaging thousands of families
Ontario Children’s Outdoor Charter

How did it get started?

Engaging organizations to support children’s right to nature
Role of Catalyst/Coach

- Identify one or more clusters (3-12 people) and several people willing to be champions/coordinators.
- Meet with each coordinator (or as a group) to discuss how to move group to action – provide mini-training.
- Meet with coordinator again to address challenges.
Getting started involves an inner shift to:

1. Let go of control
2. Be comfortable with risk and uncertainty
3. Move from a doer to a connector & catalyst
4. Learn how to support others
5. Learn how to listen and ask questions
6. Be open to other’s leadership
Letting Go

Being
Comfortable with
 Uncertainty

An unplanned project was influenced, supported, driven and activated by people who were excited and wanted to contribute.
Different forms of Self-organizing that you can try:

• **Clustering and interest groups**: finding others with similar interests

• **Self-organized and collaborative projects**: initiated independently and in partnership with others

• **Working groups**: larger focus area
Clustering and Interest Groups

Three ways to cluster: meetings, surveys, system analysis
Self-organized projects and collaborative projects

Try out small acts or collaborations in your community
Working groups
Larger focus

Empowering the next generation of nature-smart change makers
Support System for Self-Organizing
Ways to support

- Coaching and Communities of Practice
- Resources: Money and expertise
- Communications
- Tracking and Learning
Coaching and communities of practice

SUPPORTING SELF-ORGANIZING

• New Learning
• Sharing
• Peer Assist
• Virtual Platforms

Coaching and communities of practice
Restructuring money and resources

- Money to support small experiments and projects
- Money to access expertise quickly
Projects may need training to set up Google Docs, learn Zoom, etc.
Creating a prototype to connect residents in the Tenderloin district in San Francisco with nature
Next Steps
NEXT STEPS: What specific next step or steps are you going to take in the next month?

1. Share these materials with others

1. Convene a catalyst group together (2-5 people) to talk about self-organizing

1. Support one person who wants to do something
Resources and Acknowledgements
An Introduction to Network Weaving (use code SPECIAL at www.networkweaver.com)

Network Weaver Handbook, A Guide to Transformational Networks (use code SPECIAL2 at www.networkweaver.com)

Network Weaving Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/339757846085496/
• Download and share the recording of this webinar and slides that will be sent within a week.
• See previous webinar recordings: http://www.anymeeting.com/childrenandnatur
• Access the Self-Organizing Toolkit: http://www.childrenandnature.org/act/webinar/
• Ask questions and continue the conversation by joining the Network for Social Change Google Group: https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/networks-for-social-change-webinar-series
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