United Way Hubs Convening Project
Monthly Learning Report

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Introduction

This learning report is the second of several that will be prepared monthly as the United Way Halifax's hubs convening project progresses. It will include generalized learning from relevant literature as seems fitting, and learnings from the convening project itself. By proceeding in this way, the hubs project support team hopes these 'integrated' reports will help with the creation of an overall long-term strategy for hub development in Halifax.

Goals for the Project

1. Build Relationships / Learning Network
2. Increase knowledge about hubs and role in community building
3. Build stronger neighbourhoods

What's a Hub, again?

At the launch in November, there was a lot of discussion about what is a hub. In December, we revealed what the United Way Halifax is using as a draft working definition of a hub, and what the overall outcome is that they are hoping for in supporting hubs. The following is a composition of the two.

Neighbourhood hubs...
- *bring diverse groups together,*
- *connect people to services they need,*
- *connect them to other residents,*
- *foster development of resident organizations and grassroots groups*
- *and grow resident leadership to ensure people have the skills and community supports they need to build strong, vibrant neighbourhoods.*

This definition seemed to resonant well with what the group came up with during the launch event. It does not seem to need any changes at this time, but it may be something the group might want to review / tweak as we go forward.

So, what does a hub DO for a neighbourhood?

It encourages volunteerism and community engagement. It helps to revitalize the neighbourhood, develops leadership skills, acts as a meeting place, connects people to resources, builds partnership, provides programming and support, fosters action and is flexible and 'responsive'.

What do we need to build strong neighbourhood hubs?

Participants identified the need for a hubs learning network to help individual hubs build on their strengths, share resources and ideas for collaboration. Learning opportunities about different kinds of hubs, a 'toolkit', a vision, fundraising experts, a plan, a home base and strong leadership.

Action Priorities

As part of the second meeting of the Halifax project, participants were also invited to brainstorm ideas again for the 'backlog' (in group referred to as 'action priorities') and then identify which ideas they could take action on in the next month before meeting again. These periods in between meetings are often referred to as 'sprints.'

Some key action items that came out of the Dec 3rd meeting included:

under Community Engagement…

- ● initiate best practice question on facebook group (NS Hubs Working Group),
- ● learn more about other hubs by checking out reports from Toronto and Calgary; there was also a request to share a new to us - old to them report out of Ontario about different kinds of governance models,
- ● review concept of Halifax libraries and see how this conversation can help inform public libraries in Halifax as hubs,
- ● look into different mapping tools (ie. AHANS) to identify where there are neighbourhood hubs, and where there might be some 'hub' deserts,
- ● look at ways to engage university students in hub work,
- ● meet to look into idea of collecting stories of different hubs through video,

under Partnerships…

- ● everyone look around in their own communities for potential partners,
- ● reach out to Halifax Regional Schoolboard via letters or attending board meeting in December,
- ● checking out HRM link for budget,
- ● checking out opportunity to pitch to Regional Council,
- ● individuals finding out where groups already can meet in neighbourhoods,

under Sustainability…

- ● identify potential sources of funding; look into HRM budget process,
- ● develop list of HRM supports for hub work,
- ● develop social enterprise ideas that fit community hubs,
- ● look into insurance issues as barrier.

For more details, see Appendix 'A'
UW Hubs Project Backlog / Action Priorities , Version 2.0

Keeping Process Open

We have decided to keep the group open and welcoming to any newcomers to increase representation from under-represented groups. This is challenging for the group to integrate new people as we go, but we believe the value of increased diversity balances out this challenge.

And the work continues...

This concludes the 'learnings' processed to date. Next group meeting is Jan 7th.