



Working together in new ways for social impact

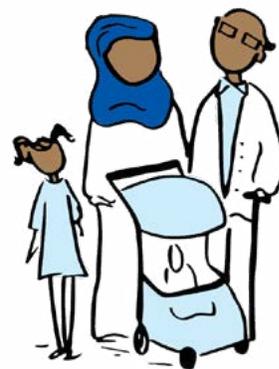
EARLY SIGNS OF CHANGE

2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Section 1 - Introduction	6
Between the Bridges	6
Collective Impact	6
Systems Change & Complexity	7
Evaluation Overview	8
Overview of Activities	9
Section 2 - Findings: Themes Across Sectors	11
BtB's Backbone Role	11
Individual Level Change	16
Organizational Level Change	17
Community Level Change	20
Systems Level Change	31
Section 3 - Analysis	35
Scaling Deep, Up & Out	35
Section 4 - Moving Forward	40



About the Report

The longer length reflects the decision to keep many quotes to preserve first voice experience, and limit filtering information. This document is holding over four years of work and 32 individuals' stories of BtB. The information is presented so that you can choose your own adventure:



DIP

For an overview of the findings see the executive summary.



DIVE

To learn more about any specific area(s) flip to the associated location in the report or click on the item in the executive summary to dive into the content and experience it through quotes.



DEEP DIVE

Enjoy the full report.

Acknowledgements

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the community of Dartmouth North is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq, Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet), and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. (source: CAUT Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory, found at www.caut.ca)

We also acknowledge the vibrant and resilient community of Dartmouth North and the diversity, talent and commitment of so many residents and community leaders who have been working tirelessly for many years and up to the present. The successes and learnings in this report have only been possible as a result of the determination of many people; open and willing to work together in new ways to make a difference in their community.

Working together in new ways for social impact: Early signs of change

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The following impacts are findings from an evaluation process which engaged 32 members of the Between the Bridges (BtB) Network (public sector, local elected officials, community sector, local businesses and residents) over the course of 2020. In Collective Impact initiatives it can take decades to observe the systemic and population-level change participants are working towards. Here, we identify early signs of change, inclusive of and building on the work of people and processes from 2015 through 2020. These learnings support ongoing adaptation and improvement.

Between the Bridges' Backbone Role

Dedicated team focusing on process design, relationship building & inclusive culture.

What: most useful activities

- Building authentic relationships
- Convening within & across sectors
- Coordinating & facilitating meetings
- Providing relevant & useful information
- Evaluating & adapting
- Building capacity



How: best qualities

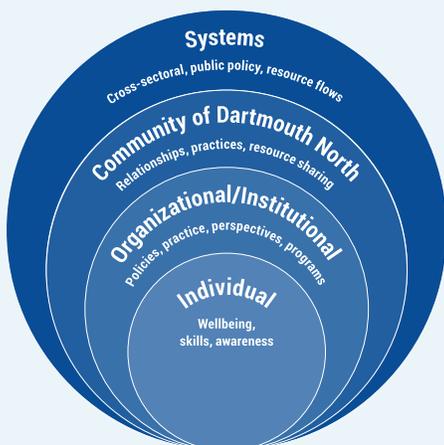
- Ways of facilitating groups & discussions
- Welcoming, caring, fun, engaging
- Creative problem solving: adaptive, flexible, & innovative
- Open to criticism & integrate feedback in meaningful ways
- Organized & dependable
- Responsive & timely
- Credibility & integrity
- Transparency



COVID-19 PIVOTS

↑ **Community resilience:** The combination of what they do and how they do it led to Between the Bridges being perfectly placed to support the community through the Pandemic.

Themes Across Sectors & Scales



Individual level change

- ↑ Wellbeing & quality of life
- ↑ Knowledge, capacity & confidence

Community level change

- ↑ Trust & relationships
- ↑ Positivity & asset-based view of Dartmouth North Residents are at the ❤️ of the work
- ↑ Champions & advocacy for Dartmouth North
- ↑ Resources are unlocking, aligning & mobilizing

Organizational level change

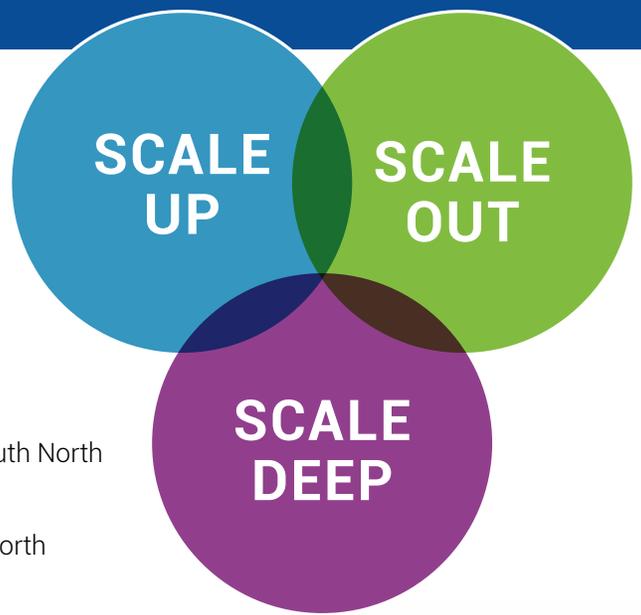
- ↑ Organizational/institutional capacity
- ↑ Impact: ↑ effectiveness in achieving organizational mandates
- ↑ Leveraged funding & ↑ efficient use of funding
- ↑ Impact: improved business/profits

Systems level change

- ↑ Information flow & transparency between sectors
- ↑ Alignment & collaboration between sectors
- ↑ Effective & efficient use of resources within & between sectors

Scaling Deep, Up + Out

Between the Bridges is one actor in a larger system, and plays a catalyzing contributing role with ripple effects throughout and beyond Dartmouth North.



SCALE DEEP
"Impacting cultural roots"
 Changing relationships, cultural values and beliefs, "hearts and minds."

SCALING DEEP

- ↑ Trust & relationships
- ↑ Positivity & asset-based view of Dartmouth North
- Residents are at the ❤️ of the work
- ↑ Champions & advocacy for Dartmouth North

SCALE UP
"Impacting laws and policy"
 Changing institutions at the level of policies, rules and laws.

SCALING UP

- Public servants are more often incorporating lived experiences into policy development
- Specific policy change: Council's approval of Tiny Houses and Backyard Suites linked in part to Affordable Housing Lab



SCALE OUT
"Impacting greater numbers"
 Replication and dissemination, increasing number of people or communities impacted.

SCALING OUT

- The Dartmouth North Library has scaled out food security and voter engagement programs, through participating with BtB
- ↑ Collective Impact initiatives modeling from BtB
- New populations being impacted: newcomers are less isolated & more involved/integrated in the community



Source: *Scaling Out, Scaling Up, Scaling Deep: Advancing Systemic Social Innovation and the Learning Processes to Support it*, Prepared for the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Tamarack Institute by Darcy Riddell and Michele-Lee Moore (October 2015)



Moving Forward

Ideas for shifting practices from the BtB Network include:

- ↑ Inclusion & diversity so that the BtB Network reflects Dartmouth North
- ↑ Action & spending ↑ concentrated time together to go deeper
- ↑ Ways to support the community, such as capacity building and help for start-ups
- ↑ Replicating BtB's model in other communities
- ↑ Communication of successes so people know change is happening
- ↑ Communication within the BtB Network to share what's happening
- ↑ Communication with the public sector so more people know what's happening
- ↑ Sustainable relationship with the public sector that could outlive BtB's funding

SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

Between the Bridges (BtB) is a community development initiative taking a **Collective Impact** approach to addressing complex social issues identified by the community of Dartmouth North. Collective Impact involves meaningful support and engagement of people with lived experience to work equitably with leaders from government, not for profit organizations and business. Their shared goal is to identify what needs to change and how they can work together, often in new ways, to generate solutions and take collective action. The complex social issues identified in Collective Impact require a long-term mindset for change and impact that can be measured in a variety of ways that are meaningful to the stakeholders.



Collective Impact

The five core conditions of Collective Impact¹ are:



BACKBONE INFRASTRUCTURE

Creating and managing Collective Impact requires a separate organization with skilled staff and resources to **serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating groups.**



SHARED AGENDA

All participants have a **shared vision for change** including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions.



CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and build common motivation.



MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

Participants lead **diverse activities that are coordinated** through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.



SHARED MEASUREMENT

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all activities **ensures ongoing learning, alignment of efforts and accountability.**

¹ Adapted from the work of **Tamarack** and **FSG**

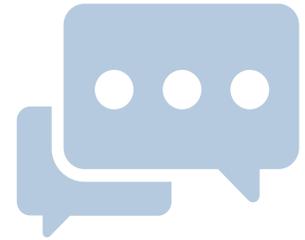
Systems Change & Complexity:

Looking at different levels of change

SYSTEMS CHANGE AND COMPLEXITY ARE CORE IDEAS IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT:

“Complexity science embraces life as it is; unpredictable, emergent, evolving and adaptable. Using insights about how the world is changed, we can become active participants in shaping those changes.”

Source: Social Innovation Generation

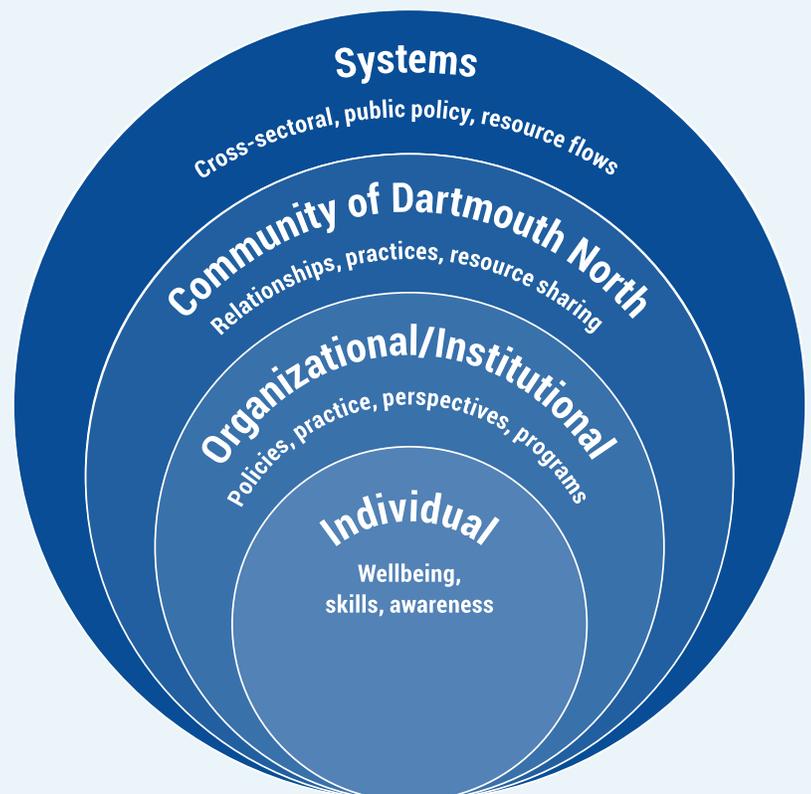


“Systems change is about addressing the root causes of social problems... It is an intentional process designed to fundamentally alter the components and structures that cause the system to behave in a certain way.”

Source: londonfunders.org.uk

For intentional systems change to occur, such as with Collective Impact, change must happen at multiple scales. To illustrate the changes that BtB network members are experiencing, we sorted them into different levels of change as illustrated in the diagram: individual, organizational, community, and systems.

There are blurring lines, overlap, and interrelationships between the different levels, which is a characteristic of complex systems. However, we found it to be a helpful exercise to separate out themes and try to understand at what scale impact is occurring. The goal is to adjust practices going forward to increase impact.



Evaluation Overview



What?

This document is a summary of evaluation findings from confidential interviews, focus groups and surveys with 32 members of the Between the Bridges network. The evaluation process focused on the experience, value, and benefit that BtB network members from different sectors received through their participation, spanning the timeframe of BtB's inception to present (2015-2020). In a Collective Impact initiative it can take decades to observe the systemic and population-level change participants are working towards. The goals of this evaluation process are to identify the early signs of change, to understand the impacts at this stage, as well as to support on-going adaptation and improvement.

Why?

Working from BtB's original premise of finding new ways for members of the public sector to invest and show up in, and with, the community of Dartmouth North, there was interest to learn what was changing at this stage in the experience of public sector members. Further discussions with the BtB Network indicated a strong interest to expand the initial scope to hear from residents of Dartmouth North and people working in the community sector to generate a holistic story.

How?

The evaluation process was completed in 3 stages, focusing on network members from different sectors who had been, or are directly involved with Between the Bridges:

SECTOR	TIMEFRAME	# OF INDIVIDUALS & METHOD
Public Sector: In this case, people who are working for or in government, elected or staff, as well as people who are working for institutions that are publicly funded and managed.	March, April, and May of 2020	9 interviews
Residents: People who reside within the geographic area of Dartmouth North.	August and September 2020	6 surveys 6 interviews, small groups
Community Sector: In this case, the community sector includes non-profits, non-governmental organizations, voluntary groups, as well as local community-minded businesses.	October 2020	11 interviews

There are many quotes throughout the document, with the goal of centering direct experience. They are attributed in short form:

Public sector - ps

Dartmouth North resident - dnr

Community sector - cs



Overview of Activities:

Structures for working together in new ways for social impact

This is an overview of Between the Bridge's activities, focused on the ones most mentioned through this report. This is not an exhaustive list of everything BtB has worked on from inception in 2015. For more information please see [past BtB reports](#).

STRUCTURE OR GROUP	PURPOSE / FOCUS	EXAMPLES OF IMPACT
Dartmouth North Community Planning Health Team	<p>To increase access to health services in Dartmouth North with an additional focus on Mental Health & Addictions.</p> <p>Approximately 12-15 members meeting monthly (pre-COVID-19), all year round, beginning in the fall of 2016.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This community-initiated group is now formally part of the BtB Network after working together for several years. NSHA integrally engaged as a member. Relationships are now developed with Mental Health Promotions to explore options for activities.
Student Success Alignment Team	<p>Statement of Purpose: The BtB Student Success Alignment Team is committed to the success of every student in Dartmouth North. We strive to honour the principles of inclusion and equity with ongoing attention to strengthening relationships. Our current area of focus (shared agenda) is: Strengthening transitions between schools and grades through changes to policy and practices that serve learners well. (Endorsed January 2020)</p> <p>Approximately 20-25 members meeting monthly through the school year (pre-COVID-19), beginning January 2018.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive strengthening of relationships of trust, respect and safety between community members and public sector leaders. Identified focus on transition of early years to primary via virtual Jolly Phonics program. Working with HRCE, 3 local schools, and SchoolsPlus, facilitated the provision of 58 School Chromebook loans, 12 free computers, and 2 home internet accounts after the start of COVID-19.
Residents Roundtable	<p>To provide the experience and insights of community members on ideas and initiatives being suggested and implemented around priority social issues.</p> <p>Approximately 10 members meeting monthly (pre-COVID-19) since November 2017.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members are now comfortable and confident convening virtually. Developed convening skills to plan and host a community conversation on the 2020 municipal election. This session took place in November, a month before the election.
Food for Youth Task Group*	<p>To increase access to adequate amounts of quality and healthy food for students who are in need, without creating stigma or social exclusion.</p> <p>Approximately 10 organizations plus three schools, meeting monthly since September 2016.</p> <p>*Initiated and led by Dartmouth North Librarian.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased collaboration between local schools and the community around non-academic and priority issues such as hunger for students. Youth engagement with food security has expanded from one to three schools so far.
Social Innovation Housing Lab	<p>Between the Bridges invited 23 multi-sector stakeholders to work together on the housing affordability and quality challenges of Dartmouth North through a Social Innovation Lab. The Lab was used to expedite the process of generating ideas about how to create more affordable housing in Dartmouth North, identifying leverage areas, and move into implementation. The process resulted in 3 prototype teams who met independently to forward their ideas: Tiny Homes, Neighbourhood Beautification, and Affordable Housing Development Navigator.</p> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nov 2018: 1-day convening to identify problem statement Feb 2019: Days 1-3 of lab workshops April 2019: Days 4-5 of lab workshops April-Nov 2019: 3 teams prototyping Nov 2019: 1-day reconvening of prototyping teams to identify learnings and make adjustments to prototypes <p>BtB continues to offer nesting support to Tiny Homes and Navigator teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-sectoral relationships between community and 3 levels of government to work together on housing related topics. 3 community members were supported to bring "first voice" to United Way Housing Symposium. Members of the BtB Affordable Housing Lab presented to HRM Council in support of the successful amendment to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to allow secondary suites and backyard suites. Continuing the work of the Housing Development Navigator team, the Public Good Society has been successful in their grant application to create an Affordable Housing Development Navigator, to be on the ground in Dartmouth North to support community organizations who want to develop new affordable housing.

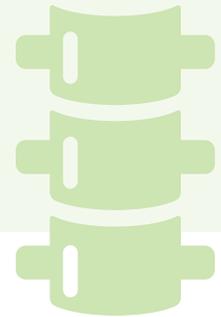
NEW AS A RESPONSE TO COVID-19 (MARCH 2020 ONWARDS)

STRUCTURE OR GROUP	PURPOSE / FOCUS OF THE GROUP	EXAMPLES OF IMPACT
Dartmouth North Organizations (DNO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtually convening biweekly and now monthly the organizations that serve Dartmouth North. • Engaging 45+ members of the BtB Network with open-door for new members (typical attendance is 10-20). • Facilitating the sharing of information so everyone can share with their clientele so the community knows what is available to them. • Contact information sharing so collaborations can take place between meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms established in the crisis, to share timely information about what programs and services are available and how to access them. • Housing found for a single mother with 3 children. • Free storage and fiscal agent found for new gluten free pantry set up to address dietary needs. • 100s of winter coats and mitts donated or purchased and distributed. • Free water bottles supplied to all students at John Martin.
Food Bank Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing together 3 Dartmouth food banks & Feed Nova Scotia for the first time. • Working together to identify needs and then establish processes for delivery of food for people who had health issues and could not travel to the foodbank. • Adding gluten free options for people who could not previously access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Good Society's van and a driver, which had been sidelined due to COVID-19, was made available at no cost to deliver food from the food banks to homebound clients. • Via DNO, introduced gluten free food program to the food banks. • From April-December 2020, approximately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 526 Food Bank deliveries, and • 335 gluten free food packages distributed.
Digital Literacy Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group formed from 5-6 members of DNO who wanted to focus on digital inclusion. • Researching three pillars of digital equity: (1) internet in the home, (2) access to devices and (3) digital literacy, as well as what other communities are doing so as not to duplicate work. • Confirm focus now on digital literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted sharing session of 6 service providers who offer digital inclusion programs or services. • Developed article and advertisement in the Dartmouth Echo to raise awareness in the community of digital devices and where residents can access supports for digital literacy. • Exploring digital literacy prototype with organizations in Dartmouth North.
Prototype of Getting Everyone Online (GEO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with the Public Good Society of Dartmouth, designed and implemented a pilot to get residents of the BtB Network, and others identified by referral partners, free internet and devices with audio and visual. 	<p>Facilitated provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 internet accounts • 50 computers plus accessories • 9 organizations as referral partners
Community Health Supports for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing real time support to Public Health on approaches for connecting to community members re: COVID-19. • Sharing Public Health messages widely within the BtB Network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised on plain language wording for Dartmouth North COVID-19 testing sites. • Organized plain language posters, delivered fliers, facilitated posters going out in food bank deliveries, ensured a glow sign was set up.
Residents Zoom Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting 50 x 1 hour sessions of Residents Zoom Socials when COVID-19 hit (twice weekly, then weekly). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting residents in combating social isolation. • Building digital capacity through the fun and learning of trivia games. • 15+ different individuals participating.

SECTION 2 - FINDINGS: THEMES ACROSS SECTORS

BtB's Backbone Role

Feedback from network members about the backbone role played by the BtB team was overwhelmingly positive. Rising to the top is the consistent and intentional relationship building, as well as the way in which meetings are facilitated.



What: most useful activities

BUILDING AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

BtB creates multiple opportunities to support the development of authentic relationships including processes that prioritize social inclusion, relationship building and participation in things that matter to network members. Relationships are being built in all directions, both within and between sectors (e.g., between residents, between residents and decision-makers).

“ I do believe that the relationships that have been built would not ever have happened without Between the Bridges being there. ”

-dnr

“ ...group building activities.... that's a valuable strategy... Which helps people get to know each other... bring some guards down and helps build... relationships. ”

-CS

CONVENING WITHIN & ACROSS SECTORS

BtB is celebrated for their role of convener, particularly after the COVID-19 lockdown occurred. Convened groups in 2020 included: Resident Zoom Socials, Dartmouth North Organizations (DNO), Food Banks, Digital Literacy and GEO (Getting Everyone Online).

“ ...the simple act of gathering people together in one room, whether it's physically... or virtually, is really impactful in our community. ”

-CS

COORDINATING & FACILITATING MEETINGS

Across the board, BtB's thoughtful organization, coordination and facilitation has been named as a key strength and role. The consistency in this area has created stability and trust both with the organization and within the new relationships formed through the work.

“ The meetings are extremely well run. ”

-ps

“ Between the Bridges makes sure people are meeting and listening. To have an organization that is just about facilitating is so valuable. No other organizations have those resources or sole mandate. ”

-ps

“ The value of what Between the Bridges offers... is the coordination. ”

-CS

PROVIDING RELEVANT & USEFUL INFORMATION

The information that BtB gathers and curates for groups and meetings allows for informed decision-making. Many BtB members also noted they learn a lot.

“...really appreciate all the visuals to bring us along, diagrams, etc. excellent communications.”

-ps

“I've learned a lot about the area that I've chosen to live in.”

-dnr

EVALUATING & ADAPTING

BtB consistently creates opportunities for feedback and has demonstrated many instances of timely adaptation. For example, one individual noted their delight that during COVID-19 a weekly food bank meeting was shifted to bi-weekly as soon as the group felt it was no longer as urgent.

“Every meeting is evaluated... Never in my career had that level of check-in. Issues are addressed immediately or next meeting.”

-ps

“I've heard [BtB staff] say: 'So do you feel like this is a valuable use of your time?' [They are] always checking in with people to make sure that we're not having a meeting to just have a meeting.”

-cs

BUILDING CAPACITY

BtB strives to build capacity for deeper and more sustainable change, and feedback from BtB members confirmed the effectiveness of these efforts. One example is the numerous one-on-one sessions BtB staff did with residents, as COVID-19 began, to build digital literacy and connect virtually.

“So many community organizations want to do the work themselves because it's easier, rather than building the capacity to support residents to do the work.”

-dnr

“[They are]... so good at building that capacity in the community. They built up capacity in people.”

-ps

“...support that lets the community help itself. Which is what Between the Bridges does.”

-ps



How: best qualities

Welcoming, kind, caring, supportive,
fun, engaging, friendly



“They have been so caring
and trustworthy”

-dnr

Creative problem solving: adaptive,
flexible, & innovative

Open to criticism & integrate
feedback in meaningful ways

Organized and dependable



“they do what they say they're
going to do”

-CS

Big picture thinking & long term vision

Responsive & Timely:



“They're very responsive,
which I love”

-CS



WAYS OF FACILITATING GROUPS & DISCUSSIONS

Feedback commonly included appreciation for how BtB's facilitation style creates an equal footing for all, helps everyone have a voice, and brings together multiple perspectives. Many people mentioned how BtB staff guide, support and "hang back", rather than take control or fix, allowing the group to make decisions. They are strong listeners, they set a tone of slowing down, and are able to summarize well to support forward momentum.

“ I learn from them about **listening, slowing down**. Their style is fantastic. I bring it to my other work and meetings. ”

-ps

“ They do a good job of engaging and respecting everyone's opinions. No opinion is dismissed. [They] created quite a way of communicating and staying **private and respectful**. Asking for opinions. ”

-ps

“ [The BtB staff member] was very good at keeping us on track, but if something came up that was really important, [they] would make room for it without making a big deal that it was not on the agenda. ”

-CS

“ [They] **support groups** to move towards an answer/ an action, without trying to direct or lead, in a **very supportive and respectful way**. ”

-CS

“ [Their] **facilitation skill in bringing folks together**. Because we... come from different backgrounds... really **helps everyone have a voice**, which isn't easy... residents don't always feel their voice is heard. It takes real skill to **bring everybody to the same level**... to convey the message that we're all here for the same thing. ”

-CS

CREDIBILITY & INTEGRITY

“ All their work has been done with such **respect and sensitivity**. They've really done a great job at building a credibility base. You've really seen that in the way that they've been **able to respond to COVID** and have helped other community groups respond to COVID, because of **the credibility they've built**. ”

-CS

“ It's the **sense of humility** and respect that has really helped to develop the trust and credibility. ”

-CS

TRANSPARENCY

“ They're not impolite, but they're **direct and frank**. And I think that really creates an **atmosphere of transparency** amongst everybody and people **feel safe** to share what they're actually thinking and feeling about things. And that **accomplishes a lot more**. ”

-CS

COVID-19 Pivots

↑ **Community resilience:**

The combination of what they do and how they do it led to Between the Bridges being perfectly placed to support the community through the Pandemic.

BtB network members spoke very highly of how BtB was able to adapt so quickly and effectively when the COVID-19 lockdown happened in March 2020. As a result of the relationships and trust BtB has built in the community and the way they show up (i.e., creating spaces for residents to share, meaningfully contribute and shape the direction of the initiatives), they were able to play a successful convening role, enabling people and organizations to work together quickly during the COVID-19 crisis to find solutions.

“ *All the slow but steady work at making connections and building relationships, treating people with respect, building trust all began to show itself when the community was trying to figure out how to respond to the pandemic. And the coordination/facilitation place that all of that happened was BtB. BtB not only stayed in contact with our organization, but they communicated with the different levels of government, brought them in when necessary, and different individuals. It was very dynamic and purposeful.* ”

-CS

“ *Between the Bridges has been shifting since the COVID crisis. Everyone has become isolated and they have immediately asked 'how do we support people now?'. They are just working to keep connecting people. They've been hosting DNO meetings... Social zooms for residents. They have a great ability to respond to what's happening.* ”

-ps

DARTMOUTH NORTH RESIDENTS HIGHLIGHTED THE FOLLOWING ABOUT BTB'S COVID-19 PIVOTING:

Continuous communication:

BtB immediately changed how they communicated: more emails and phone calls. Residents felt very informed and in the loop.

New resources made available:

The Getting Everyone Online (GEO) project provided residents with internet and devices so they could be connected.

Capacity building for residents:

Creating weekly Zoom Socials, along with many hours of one-on-one support with residents to learn how to use new devices and become proficient with Zoom.

New meetings and new relationships:

BtB started new virtual tables including one for Dartmouth North Organizations and one for Food Banks to better meet the needs of residents in the changing COVID-19 landscape.

“ *Communication was always present with Between the Bridges by emailing and keeping in touch with scheduled Zoom meetings or telephone. Being isolated did not stop in any way being updated and informed.* ”

-dnr

“ *[BtB] got everyone online quickly after lockdown began.* ”

-dnr

“ *They're there and they figure out how to work with community in very creative ways, especially with the pandemic.* ”

-dnr

“ *They did an excellent job of pulling the organizations together to have regular virtual meetings.* ”

-dnr

“ *They manage to continue to build relationships even during COVID.* ”

-dnr

Individual Level Change

Network members in each sector named aspects of individual level impact; however, Dartmouth North residents were most significantly impacted personally.

↑ Wellbeing + quality of life

↓ Social isolation & ↑ mental health

↑ Sense of belonging, sense of community & community pride

↑ Feeling of being valued, appreciated & supported

“ I've been doing the Socials on Tuesdays. This has been extremely helpful for me. I have clinical depression. The Socials give me contacts with people, with friends, and **it helps tremendously for me.** ”
-dnr

“ I really appreciated **the support, mentally and physically,** just seeing other people's faces during those zoom calls was fantastic for me. ”
-CS

“ The way that [BtB staff] consistently do what they say they're going to do, it takes your stress level away. ”
-dnr

“ I shared a problem and 3 people reached out to help. ”
-dnr

“ I'm feeling more a **part of the community because of BtB,** because I feel like I am accomplishing something in BtB. ”
-dnr

↑ Knowledge, capacity + confidence

↑ Learning, personal growth, & professional development

↑ Personal growth, accomplishment, & meaning

↑ Fun, learning, & enjoyment

“ My role with BtB is something I've never done. A new opportunity and **new set of skills.** Makes me feel useful. **It's given me confidence.** ”
-dnr

“ I've grown... tremendously as a person, because of my involvement with Between the Bridges. ”
-CS

“ I've **learned a lot...** being part of Between the Bridges. And I think some of that learning has also informed our work as an organization. ”
-CS

“ I always look forward to those socials on zoom 'cause they're fun. ”
-dnr

Organizational Level Change

Network members involved in community organizations, local community-minded businesses, and the public sector named different aspects of increased organizational/institutional capacity. In addition, some named greater impact of their work and greater ability to achieve their mandate due to taking part in Between the Bridges. Some examples are provided here.

↑ Organizational/institutional capacity

FACILITATION & COLLABORATION

Members experience new ways of facilitation and collaboration through BtB, and take practices back to their work.

“ *I brought consensus decision-making to my team, and we're starting to use other Between the Bridges processes back in my workplace. ”*
-ps

“ *And I learned a lot every time I'm there from them about slowing down, listening, consulting. I'll have to go to a [Between the Bridges] meeting and I'll go away. I will apply this in a meeting tomorrow. ”*
-ps

EVALUATION

Members experience new ways of evaluation through BtB and take some practices back into their work.

“ *I think it's helpful as an organization to always look at... best practices around evaluation and we are not evaluators... we're program staff... evaluation is not an expertise we have. So just looking at how other organizations are doing evaluations, and there's been several evaluators as part of BtB... each... brings a different vantage point... and it's been helpful to learn from each of the evaluators. ”*

-CS

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Members experience increased access to information through BtB that directly support organizational mandates or business goals.

“ *Between the Bridges has been helpful to our work because the government has been so free to give information to Between the Bridges that they don't usually give to community organizations. So that's been really helpful. ”*

-CS

“ *helped me understand... some of the details of the center plan to do a higher degree to look at some of the effects and visions of my business perspective, what I should be doing or considering. ”*

-CS

↑ Impact: ↑ effectiveness in achieving organizational mandates

The Dartmouth Learning Center named increased impacts for family literacy.

“Because there’s **different people at the BtB tables than who we would normally work with... we’ve been able to build family literacy work further through the partnership between the library and the Dartmouth Family Centre... The more we can trust each other as organizations... the more we can work together and collaborate. Support one another.**”

-CS

Food Banks have been able to continue their work during COVID-19 because of BtB convening.

“It’s been really great to have this extra support throughout [the COVID-19 lockdown]... it would have been tougher to try and figure out things on my own... **our main goal was just to keep providing food to people that needed it... we were able to do it.** There were some food banks that closed down completely, because they just felt they couldn’t do it.”

-CS

The Public Good Society has expanded its reach and ability to provide services through stepping into hosting the new housing navigator role that emerged from the Housing Lab process.

“**BtB has helped us... to expand our ability to provide services by giving us their support.** Not so that we’re dependent on them, but **given us resources to sharpen what we do a little bit.** Being involved with BtB has **expanded our reach,** so that we’re involved with more organizations and **involved in more things.**”

-CS

↑ Leveraged funding + ↑ efficient use of funding

The MacPhee Centre was supported through BtB to more effectively and efficiently get youth online.

“A funder had approached us about... types of funding that they could provide to us [in light of COVID-19]. And one of the things that they provided to us was funding so that we could provide technology to folks. It was really helpful learning some best practices from the work [BtB] was doing. And we’re implementing some of that into the technology pieces that we’re going to be deploying.”

-CS



↑ Impact: improved business/profits

A local business person has improved business in many ways and in turn improved the quality of affordable housing properties for residents.

LakeCity Woodworkers has increased profit through selling more computers than ever through the GEO project.

“ [Taking part in BtB has] helped me think about my business and... how I operate. So, to... take advantage of some grants that are available for efficiency... insulating and... windows, **cuts down on my expenses... improves the properties for the residents...** I'm in the affordable housing sector. **So this... has been a resource for me to... improve my business.** ”

-CS

“ We have now sold, I don't know, 50, 60, 70 computers... **we've seen more computer sales through COVID than we probably did in the previous three years.** So because of the amount of people who needed a device, but couldn't afford to go out and pay \$800 for a computer, but they could pay \$100 for one that we had refurbished... **it was Between the Bridges [that] definitely connected us with organizations...** we're purchasing the computers on behalf of people who needed them. ”

-CS



Community Level Change

↑ Trust + relationships

BtB members from each sector highlighted the trust and relationship building work, often stating that the time it took was incredibly worthwhile.

Residents named that BtB has mended broken trust from decades of short term interventions and has built strong cross-sectoral relationships that are mobilized effectively and efficiently for the community when a need or opportunity arises.

Members from the community sector noted that relationship building is the most valuable aspect of BtB. In particular, the uniqueness and importance of being able to build meaningful relationships with residents. Individuals shared how they feel more human at the BtB tables, rather than a one-dimensional service provider.

Public sector members noted how valuable it is to have more direct connections with the community. They're able to develop more insights and empathy for realities faced in Dartmouth North, and are able to work together in new and different ways based on trust.

BELOW, WE EXPLORE TRUST AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING THROUGH FOUR DIFFERENT ANGLES:

↑ **Relationships & connections**

↑ **Awareness & understanding:** ↓ prejudices & ↑ compassion

↑ **Trust**

↑ **Importance of relationships, collaboration & community-led change**

↑ RELATIONSHIPS & CONNECTIONS

Relationships have been built and strengthened both within sectors (e.g., residents ↔ residents, community sector ↔ community sector) and between sectors (e.g., residents ↔ public sector).

“*The most useful thing has been... the community connections piece... Getting to know other service providers, getting to know residents... figuring out what's going on in the neighborhood, and... seeing... how we fit in, and how we can... help out to... make the neighborhood a better place.*”

-CS

Community sector ↔
community sector

“The way that we’ve been connected now is that **we’re dealing directly with each other a lot, a lot more frequently.**”

-CS

“The connection with HRCE has been really helpful. Because we do a lot of work within the school system itself.”

-CS

“We’ve developed a much better relationship with a public library.”

-CS

Residents ↔ community
sector

“It’s really different sitting at a table, **not there as a service provider, but there as a peer.**”

-CS

“For me, it’s felt like... a way to engage with residents in a different way.”

-CS

Residents ↔ residents

Newcomers and long-term residents forming relationships

“*[My involvement in BtB] gave me the ‘in’...when I went to community events, I knew people. I was comfortable and welcome. And so... I could invite newcomers to participate. So it actually increased newcomer participation in community events, so that newcomers are less isolated.*”

-CS

Residents ↔ public sector/
elected officials

“...puts a real personality to public figures you may not have known before.”

-dnr

“All three levels [of government] show up for events and commit to doing work.”

-dnr

Community sector ↔ public
sector & elected officials from
all levels of government

“[BtB is the] only place I’ve been around a table with the federal level.”

-CS

“I’m seeing [public servants] at the table for the first time.”

-CS

“The roundtables that I sit on in [other HRM neighbourhoods], there is involvement from... municipal and... provincial but not often federal... I think that **they did a good job at... connecting with all levels of government... as an organization.**”

-CS

“**They’ve connected in the public servants... department of education, community health boards, NSHA... I’ve been on Zoom calls where there’ve been one to three there... [They’ve never been] more available and connected.**”

-CS

↑ AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING: ↓ PREJUDICES & ↑ COMPASSION

Through BtB's relationship building, folks have become more humanized with one another. Members of the community sector and the public sector shared how much they've learned of residents' day-to-day lived realities and the positive impact that's had on the work. There is more awareness and understanding:

Of lived experiences

“It's taught me to... step out of my position and understand some of the struggles... that people have. To be... more empathetic..., to be more patient. ”

-CS

Of long-term residents

“It's been very, very helpful for me to know perspectives of long term residents and relationships with long term residents. ”

-CS

Of organizations struggling through COVID-19

“I found that very helpful... understanding some of the challenges that... different organizations have gone through as a result of COVID. ”

-CS

Between residents & decision-makers

↑ understanding of the community and its challenges: Public sector members have a more comprehensive grasp of the challenges at hand and a greater understanding of the community.

“Hearing [resident's] concerns really helps me and my colleague, when developing a policy. Grounds our policy development work, in a different way. ”

-ps

Between residents

“It's let me get to know some people really well, in some cases has changed first impressions. We may come from different viewpoints, but we do have some things in common: 'hey! we can work together'. ”

-dnr

↑ TRUST

Through the relationship building processes consistently offered by BtB, trust has been built both within and between sectors:

Residents ↔ public sector

The improved relationship between public sector service providers and residents has been most noted, due to a historical narrative of broken trust, including the experience of short-term investments/programs with little input from residents.

“ We have been so fortunate to have our trust back again after so long. ”
-dnr

“ Through the processes we were able to build that trust, and it did take a long time. The residents didn't trust the public [sector] and the public [sector] didn't trust the residents. ”
-dnr

“ I am a little bit more trusting of people in [the public sector] and they are a bit more trusting of residents. ”
-dnr

“ I think they stopped seeing me as representing the system and started seeing me as [me], as someone that can help the community navigate the system, and I became sort of a bridge to the... system. ”
-ps

“ I am often perceived as [my professional role], as opposed to a neighbour, despite being a resident. Being on the table together puts us on equal footing. I'm no longer viewed so formally. Over time I have become seen as a peer, as a collaborator. ”
-ps

“ Because of the opportunities to sit on Between the Bridges tables, residents see me differently. People are comfortable to reach out to me and ask for help now. It's opened a door to the community that wasn't there before. ”
-ps

BtB ↔ Dartmouth North

Many individuals noted that trust for BtB has been built, which has allowed the work to move further with BtB as a neutral, credible and trusted convenor. For example, service providers feel they are able to build trusting relationships through their involvement with BtB.

“Organizations and the people that work in the community to support each other will not only let BtB in, but will ask them to come in to help them figure out how to do this better. ”

-CS

“As BtB's credibility has been established in the community, **outside organizations see BtB as a place to enter [the community].** ”

-CS

Residents ↔ residents

“More compassion and understanding of other people's challenges. ”

-dnr

Residents ↔ community sector

“Yeah... [residents] knew my name, and so they trusted me... on a personal level... We joked around, we talked, we got to know each other, not just as a service provider, they just got to know me, individually. ”

-CS

“[BtB has brought about a] leadership and equality between service providers and residents that I don't often see. ”

-CS

↑ IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS, COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE

Members of the public sector and community sector noted placing more importance on partnership and collaboration than before their involvement with BtB. They now spend more time building and maintaining relationships and see more of a role for the community in decision-making.

“I find that I don't make my decisions as quickly as I would have in the beginning. I didn't feel that need, that urgency to discuss with so many other partners before decisions... **my idea of collaboration has really evolved.** Because I feel it's so important now that everybody plays a role and I value the role differently now. ”

-ps

“...having more partnerships... thinking more collaboratively... Before, maybe we were a bit... isolated... just working with ourselves. But now... we're thinking more in terms of other partners, and I'm connecting with people that I've never connected with before. ”

-CS

“...gives me a point of reflection, a different perspective... when I'm doing work in the community, that the community is leading and I'm following... and **if I feel like the community isn't leading then I have to take a step back,** regardless of if I think what I'm doing is right or wrong. ”

-CS

↑ Positivity + asset-based view of Dartmouth North

BtB has been creating a swell of energy in the community and has shifted mindsets from challenges and barriers to strengths and possibilities. Part of this shift was through the SPAN Grants (2016/17) and the BtB Community Grants (2018) which supported a number of community events and projects that brought folks together to celebrate. Examples shared by the BtB network members include:

↑ Inspiration & motivation

Among residents there is a sense that BtB is re-invigorating community engagement:

“You feel that individually and collectively there is some progress being made.”

-dnr

↑ Community events, supports & beautification

Some examples include:

“We've done a sports equipment giveaway... backyard barbecues... new and improved Festival of Lights... chili cook offs, and we're doing a winter clothing drive... I'd say, **none of that would have been possible without the community connections that have been built up through relationships through Between the Bridges.**”

-CS

SPAN Grants:

- one grant went to support a celebration of Canadian films and filmmakers with a big pizza party.
- one grant went towards

“...building benches and planter boxes at Harbour View School... when people are coming to watch a sports game at the field for kids at the school... [they now have] a place to sit.”

-CS

Shift from deficit → asset mindset about Dartmouth North

“If I had rejected the invitation I would have missed out on so much learning. **It's made me fall in love with the community.** Made me see it as a **thriving community, despite the challenges.** People want to see change and have passion to make change.”

-ps

“I've definitely come such a long way from the beginning. Because in the beginning... I was more... of a **deficit thinker.** Blaming and looking at all the things that had to be fixed. Versus now... I see... children can be successful and will be successful if everybody's given the tools that they need... And so **I definitely shifted my mindset** in how we get our community to be successful. And that's by working together to provide the tools that are needed.”

-ps

Residents are at the of the work

Because BtB creates inclusive spaces where residents feel safe and able to speak up, service providers (i.e., public servants, elected officials, community organizations, local businesses) and residents with lived experience are meaningfully connected for the first time. As a result, lived experiences are driving the work, rather than a distanced sense of what could work for the community.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">RESIDENTS</p>	<p>Residents feel more connected to decision-makers/public sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ↑ Access & interactions • New support from all 3 levels of government • ↑ Relationships between residents & public sector • Public sector is more aware of & informed about Dartmouth North <p>Residents feel more connected to the community sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ↑ Access, interactions & information sharing • ↑ Awareness & understanding • ↑ Points of connection & involvement 	<p><i>"We in Dartmouth finally have support from all three levels of government." - dnr</i></p> <p><i>"[Decision-makers have a] stronger connection and I believe a better understanding about this community." - dnr</i></p> <p><i>"They were surprised at what a person on social assistance has to deal with on a daily/monthly basis. They were shocked!" - dnr</i></p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">COMMUNITY SECTOR</p>	<p>↓ Competition & scarcity mindset</p> <p>↑ Cooperating & sharing resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers are more effective at serving the community now that there is more cooperation and sharing resources. <p>↑ Wrap-around supports available to residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the BtB convening/relationships, clients of the various community sector organizations are better served by existing resources. 	<p><i>The Community Sector in Dartmouth North has shifted from a mindset of scarcity and competition: "I only get so much, and I got to keep it for my folks" - cs; to a recognition that they're serving the same people/clients "... we're actually trying to support the same people... So how do we share these resources and make the most out of them?" - cs.</i></p> <p><i>"...the better in support of the people we're in support of..." - cs</i></p> <p><i>"Between the Bridges... have engaged... residents, people... from different backgrounds and resources, and brought people together and brainstormed to work solutions." - cs</i></p> <p><i>"[BtB's] facilitation approach was really inclusive... I really get to hear residents' voices... [There is] leadership and equality between service providers and residents." - cs</i></p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">PUBLIC SECTOR</p>	<p>↑ Incorporation of community voice in policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through BtB, public servants have built relationships with residents and are more able to develop policies grounded in reality. 	<p><i>"From a policy perspective, hearing from the ground, and other professionals, hearing their concerns really helps me and my colleague, when developing a policy. Grounds our policy development work, in a different way." - ps</i></p> <p><i>"When I started [working in the community], it just stressed me out, because I didn't know what the issues were and I didn't know how to work with everybody. At first I needed time to observe and time to experience the culture of the [community] and to try to understand the families and where their problems were coming from. I needed time to be able to really understand. How is this going to work? How's the collaboration going to work? How do I invite others into our conversations, to be able to make meaningful decisions for the [community] that were effective and will make the biggest impact? Now I know how to do this." - ps</i></p>

↑ Champions + advocacy for Dartmouth North

At all levels there are now more champions for Dartmouth North. Residents have named having more capacity and confidence to self-advocate, while community sector and public sector members feel better able to advocate on behalf of the community.

RESIDENTS

↑ Capacity & confidence to self-advocate

- Residents are increasingly self-advocating or on behalf of their community. Many residents involved with BtB now have personal relationships with decision-makers, the confidence to share their voice, as well as the experience that it can lead to direct change in their lives and the lives of their family and friends.

"It's given me the confidence to say 'I have a question' and get the answer. To stand up for myself." - dnr

"My role with BtB is something I've never done, a new opportunity and new set of skills. Makes me feel useful, it's given me confidence." - dnr

"[BtB's] facilitation approach was really inclusive... It's not often that I really get to hear residents' voices... Usually... the service providers... take a more leadership role, and so that I find often community voices are silenced. And in this case.. I felt like they were... facilitating but not too overly involved and I saw... lots of community residents... long term residents, stepping up and taking... pride in being part of Between the Bridges in a way that I have not seen in other stakeholder groups that I'm part of." - cs

PUBLIC & COMMUNITY SECTORS

↑ Advocating for the needs of the community

- Public sector and community sector members are becoming champions of Dartmouth North as they get to know it better, advocating for the needs of the community and investment in the community.

"I've gotten to know a few more people through [my work]. I continue to see the big gaps that there are in support. And I think it's just made me really see the value of the work that we all are doing to make a difference and to really listen, and not come up with Band Aid solutions, but to really listen to individuals and ask what would most help them? And if they're unable to share that themselves with levels of government, you know, to do it on their behalf, but to do it really in their words." - cs

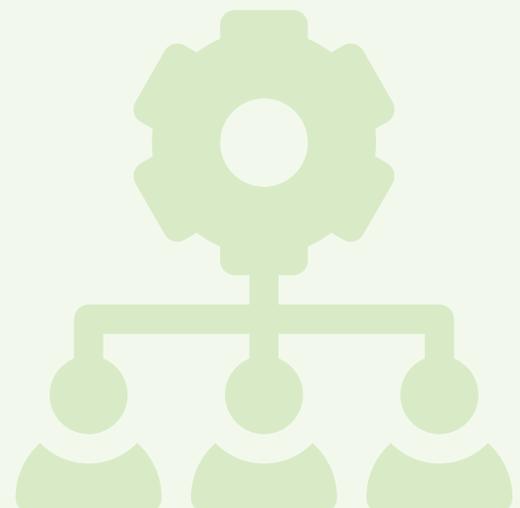
"[My involvement in BtB] gave me the 'in' so that when I went to community events, I knew people. I was comfortable and welcome. And so... I could invite newcomers to participate. So it actually increased newcomer participation in community events so that newcomers are less isolated and more visible in large scale and small scale public events, as well as local services like childcare, like daycares, recreation programs like I facilitated involvement... through those relationships so it started to change how many newcomers were civically, or community involved." - cs

"And that... enables me as a systems leader, to be able to... have these conversations with my colleagues and with our vice presidents... that I wouldn't be able to have otherwise... if we got more money to invest..., then where would we want to invest it?... That's part of our role as systems leaders is to think about... where do we proceed from here?... I'm able to say, this community is doing this. A) it's the right thing to do, from a community perspective to invest in; B) It's a high needs community;... C) on top of that, I'm able to speak directly to my colleagues about these issues and experience." - ps

↑ Resources are unlocking, aligning + mobilizing

BtB's multiple convenings create more chances for collaboration, leading to an increase in active partnerships and resource sharing that adapt in response to real-time community needs. There are countless examples of services aligning, less duplication, and more resource sharing. Existing resources are being used more effectively and efficiently, and new resources are being mobilized.

<p>↑ Resources mobile/unlocked in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources distributed more through new relationships/connections to those who need them (e.g., by increasing networking opportunities: oh, I met so-and-so, here's their #, they can help you with xyz) 	<p><i>"[BtB] increases the resources that are available to me and other people I talk to." - dnr</i></p> <p><i>"...pulling the resources of [the] community together."- cs</i></p>
<p>↑ More coordinated action in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between service providers/community sector. 	<p><i>"During COVID we were able to re-allocate resources very efficiently with Between the Bridges." - cs</i></p> <p>Collaboration examples sparked through relationship building within the BtB Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library and the North Grove collaborated on voter engagement and the Library started offering free meals. The MacPhee Centre met the Take Action Society and started a new after school program once a week.
<p>↑ Alignment of services & ↓ duplication in service provision</p>	<p><i>"In Dartmouth North there's a lot of service providers, and Between the Bridges, they really help align them. It's more streamlined now, by putting common goals in the community." - ps</i></p> <p><i>"Accessing more wrap-around* supports for our clients... Between the Bridges helps us with... broadening that [base of resources to draw on]" - cs</i></p> <p><i>*"a wraparound support would be the supports that our clients require that are beyond the scope of what we do." - cs</i></p>



EXAMPLES FROM COVID-19 COLLABORATIONS WHERE RESOURCES HAVE BEEN UNLOCKED, ALIGNED AND MOBILIZED:

Food Banks

BtB started to convene a weekly call for Food Banks and the Public Good Society when COVID-19 began, to support conversations about possibly providing delivery for clients who were homebound due to COVID-19. The sessions transitioned to monthly as needs changed. It was the first time Dartmouth North Food Banks had coordinated, and the first time many were introduced to each other. During the holiday season they cooperated on the Christmas hampers, another first.

“By far where *Between the Bridges* has had **the greatest impact** on my work and **on the clients in Dartmouth North** and downtown Dartmouth for that matter, would be the way that they **brought together the food banks.**”

-CS

“...if you want to know what silos look like, go to food banks. I mean, they all are independent operators, each one. And so because of *Between the Bridges*, and because of the pandemic, that all changed... **they've all been operating as a real partnership. And that's all because of *Between the Bridges*.**”

-CS

“...it has really **opened up channels of conversation** between people, which is so important and sharing of knowledge, and contacts, resources and tools. So in that respect, the simple act of gathering people together in one room, whether it's physically in one room, or virtually, is really impactful in our community.”

-CS

“**One specific example** is when a small start-up project that wanted to offer gluten free food, needed “...a way to process funds. People wanted to make donations and I couldn't take them. I'm not an organization or a nonprofit. So the Public Good Society came on board and said 'we can process five transactions for you'.”

-CS



Dartmouth North Organizations (DNO)

BtB convened bi-weekly (now monthly) Zoom meeting for organizations to navigate their way through the changing COVID-19 landscape:

“...it was helpful just to have people to **help with problem solving**, the issues that we were facing as organizations, and I've seen some best practices from what people were doing. ”

-CS

Specific examples include when the library donated masks to LakeCity Woodworkers:

“...they were able to set aside, I think about, 275 masks from the ones that the City [HRM] were giving out. So that was a huge help, financially. ”

-CS

As well as when the library made activity packs and distributed to the North Grove and LakeCity Woodworkers:

“The library created... **adult and youth activity packs**, and we would distribute them... For the North Grove and LakeCity... but **that wouldn't have happened without... the Between the Bridges contact... and those meetings... and how they were dealing with COVID.** ”

-CS

Getting Everyone Online (GEO)

GEO is an off-shoot from the DNO meetings, specifically supporting residents to get online by providing home internet access and computers at no cost to people who couldn't otherwise afford it.

“...people just didn't have access to the internet during the COVID locked down. And it was a huge problem. And a lot of people didn't have computers. And lo and behold, [BtB] ran out there, and... got ahold of LakeCity. And they started providing computers... that wouldn't have happened if we didn't have those **Between the Bridges meetings.** ”

-CS

Specific examples include how the MacPhee Centre was able to direct more funding into technology and getting youth online with the guidance of BtBs work:

“...we could provide technology to folks. It was really helpful learning some **best practices from the work [BtB] was doing.** And we're implementing some of that. ”

-CS

LakeCity Woodworkers was able to provide and sell their refurbished computers/devices and get some of their clients online. In addition, the Dartmouth Learning Center was able to better support clients:

“Our learners directly benefited from that... who **now have internet and computers because of that relationship.** ”

-CS

Systems Level Change

↑ Information flow + transparency between sectors

RESIDENTS	<p>↑ Information available to residents</p>	<p><i>"[I] met people I wouldn't have met before and have access to information that I didn't have before. The resources are always there for anything you participate in." - dnr</i></p> <p>At every BtB meeting, "...everyone receives paper information applicable to what we have done and what we are doing that day." - dnr</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being kept up-to-date about things going on with the City (HRM), such as the Centre Plan. • Information on BtB is posted in many community locations, especially in the free community newspaper (the Dartmouth Echo), which is circulated every two months to the Dartmouth North Community as well as other locations in Dartmouth. This includes accomplishments completed and future plans.
COMMUNITY SECTOR	<p>↑ Access, interactions & information sharing</p>	<p><i>"And... information about what other people are doing... We're all doing great work, but we don't always do a great job of promoting the great work that we're doing." - cs</i></p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calendar of free summer youth activities across the neighbourhood • Food calendar of free food programs in Dartmouth <p><i>"So some other things that... came about as a result of... Between the Bridges conversations: ...every summer we developed... some free summer youth activities across the neighborhood... as well, the the food calendar, which is... information about... food banks, free food programs that... came about... through... the network meetings." - cs</i></p>
PUBLIC SECTOR	<p>↑ Access to information to directly support organizational mandates</p>	<p><i>"Between the Bridges has been helpful to our work because the government has been so free to give information to Between the Bridges that they don't usually give to community organizations. So that's been really helpful." - cs</i></p>
PUBLIC SECTOR	<p>↑ Communication between government & community that is consistent & open</p>	<p><i>"My decisions have shifted and now I'm always considering 'who do I need to communicate with?' Not just staff-based decisions, constantly collaborating with partners in the community. Now I don't make decisions as quickly as I may have... Didn't feel the urgency or need to discuss with partners before making a decision. My idea of collaboration has really evolved. I play the role differently now. My partners... look different now. It's more meaningful... The relationships are a lot deeper, and the care and concern that I feel is so genuine from the partners." - ps</i></p>
PUBLIC SECTOR	<p>↑ Effort to make processes & structures ↑ transparent & collaborative with community</p>	<p><i>"We're trying to structure my work so that it's inclusive and it actually connects with community. Whenever I have an opportunity, I can apply this as a different way of working rather than just going into community and saying, 'Okay, here's the program. Implement it.' Because that's the old style of government... thinking that we know what's best already." - ps</i></p>
PUBLIC SECTOR	<p>↑ Openness/ invitations to collaboration & involving community in government decision-making</p>	<p><i>"We were trying to get people to access our programs, and having no luck. Through my involvement with Between the Bridges, we could learn what the community was already doing, and how we could help." - ps</i></p> <p><i>"We can't deliver our services in isolation. We have to be able to know the pulse of the community. We are providing a service in a way that's accessible. So I regularly rely equally on that group for stuff outside of Between the Bridges. And if I need somebody to talk about what it's like to be a resident of Dartmouth, I've got those connections to have somebody speak on their behalf. I've got the connections now with local politicians and local businesses. This really gives me an advantage." - ps</i></p>

↑ Alignment + collaboration between sectors

BtB creates spaces and opportunities for sectors to come together, combined with processes to build relationships, leading to cross-sectoral collaborations and less duplication.

<p>↑ Spaces created & opportunity for cross-sectoral collaboration</p>	<p>BtB coordinates many tables and convenings with representation from multiple sectors, including: GEO, DNO, Housing Social Innovation Lab, Student Success Alignment Team and the Community Health Planning Team.</p>
<p>↑ Relationships & points of connection between sectors</p>	<p><i>"The connections and relationships they've done in the past few years is more than has happened in the past 20 years." - dnr</i></p>
<p>↑ Cross-sectoral collaboration</p>	<p>For example:</p> <p>The Housing Social Innovation Lab brought together key individuals including residents with lived experience, public and community sector leaders who work in housing, and a local landlord, most meeting each other for the first time. The Lab has led to ongoing cross-sectoral collaborations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the BtB Affordable Housing Lab presented to HRM Council in support of the successful amendment to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to allow secondary suites and backyard suites. As one Lab participant said: "The crowning moment was when Council approved Tiny Houses and Backyard Suites, BtB was a part of this for sure." • Continuing the work of the Housing Development Navigator team, the Public Good Society of Dartmouth has been successful in their grant application to create an Affordable Housing Development Navigator, to be on the ground in Dartmouth North to support community organizations who want to develop new affordable housing. <p>The Student Success Alignment Team brings together key individuals including residents, parents, educators, government representatives, a school liaison officer, and not-for-profit sector representatives working in areas related to literacy, education, and youth. Residents shared that trust was slowly built between multiple sectors: "I am a little bit more trusting of people in education and they are a bit more trusting of residents." It's now "a really good group that can really make a difference within the schools." - dnr</p>
<p>↑ Alignment within & between sectors & ↓ duplication in service provision</p>	<p><i>"What it's done for us is really... helps us to align ourselves better within the community." - cs</i></p> <p><i>"There's less fracturing within the community. Less ownership [ego]... everyone is encouraged to share resources. Used to be that the library wanted to put on workshops, and it would be isolated. Now other service providers are saying how can I help promote? Or offer skills from someone on my team? Services are no longer happening in isolation. No longer... doing things separately." - ps</i></p> <p><i>"In Dartmouth North there's a lot of service providers, and Between the Bridges, they really help align them. It's more streamlined now, by putting common goals in the community." - ps</i></p>

↑ Effective + efficient use of resources within + between sectors

Through a combination of many impacts including: increased trust and relationships; increased opportunities to interact; as well as increased alignment and collaboration, overall resources are being used more effectively and efficiently. Here are some examples:

FASTER: FEWER RESOURCES ARE BEING USED TO NAVIGATE CROSS-SECTORAL DECISION-MAKING

Because of the direct relationships and regular convenings, supports and resources can get to folks faster:

“ We can facilitate... things happening faster... because we get to talk to each other directly... and it's often decision-makers within the organization that can say yes or no, right on the spot. ”

-CS

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUILDING IS TRANSLATING TO INCREASED ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Because of taking part in BtB, folks working within organizations and institutions named beneficial individual level impacts that rippled through their work, increasing capacity and effectiveness across the organizations. See examples of increased organizational capacity and impact in the section above.



RESOURCES ARE BEING USED MORE EFFICIENTLY BETWEEN COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, AND THEY ARE ABLE TO MORE EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT COMMUNITY MEMBERS TOGETHER:

Food is getting to those in need in a more effective and efficient way through the coordination of the Dartmouth North Food Banks calls hosted by BtB since the start of the Pandemic.

“They... **brought more coordination than there has ever been in Dartmouth in the history of food banks... it would never have happened without Between the Bridges.**”

-CS

“**The coordination of the food delivery system has allowed us to reach clients in a coordinated way, instead of just doing it haphazardly... as a result, we were able to reach clients in a more efficient and a more effective way. And each food bank was assisting the other food bank to reach a maximum number of clients in a maximum efficient way.**”

-CS

More residents are being reached:

“So for instance, some of the food banks found themselves **getting phone calls from clients after they had already delivered all their food.** So what they could do is then call the food bank that was open tomorrow, and say, **I got this client who desperately needs food, but we can't serve them because we just finished our work today. But you guys are open tomorrow. Could you serve that client? And the answer was yes, of course we can.**”

-CS

Through the DNO calls BtB started hosting at the onset of COVID-19, human and material resources among community service organizations are being used more effectively and efficiently. For example, every year multiple organizations run their own winter clothing drives, and for the first time in 2020 they all banded together in the face of the COVID-19 challenge (e.g., not being able to take used donations):

“**The winter clothing drive, that we're all coordinating together, that came about directly from Between the Bridges. So we're working with churches, and... we've just never... even talked to churches before... It's opening us up to... a whole new... world.**”

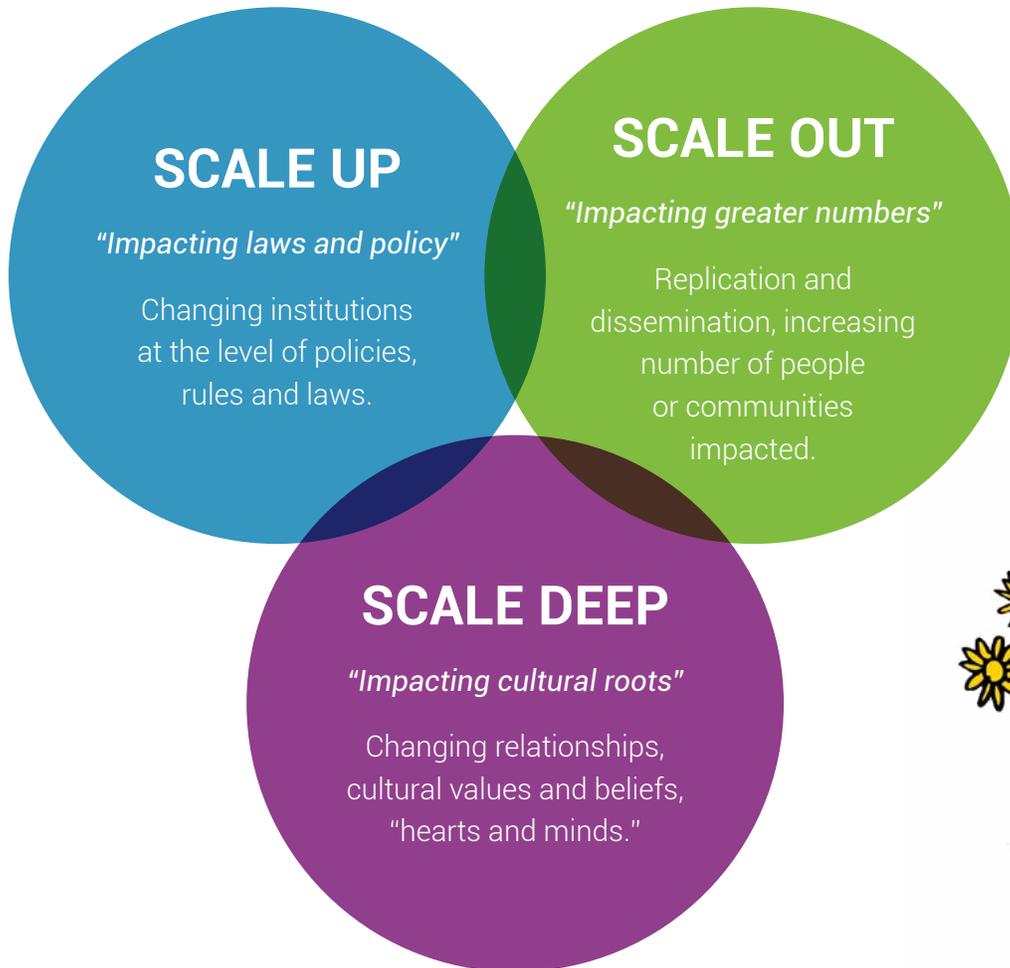
-CS



SECTION 3 - ANALYSIS

Scaling Deep, Up + Out

Between the Bridges is one actor in a larger system of actors, and plays a catalyzing role resulting in ripple effects throughout and beyond Dartmouth North. As captured in the findings above, there is evidence that BtB is contributing to scaling impacts.



Scaling out, up and deep are **“three approaches... in advancing large systems change.”**



"Scaling out" is often the first goal, "emphasizing replication of successful innovations in different communities, with the hopes of spreading those same results to more people." However, it's been "found that reproducing an initiative might never address deeper systems holding social problems in place. For many initiatives... greater impact lay in changing institutions, policy and law - "scaling up" to change the "rules of the game". In contrast, "scaling deep" relates to durable change that can only be achieved "when people's hearts and minds, their values and cultural practices, and the quality of relationships they have, are transformed."

Source: *Scaling Out, Scaling Up, Scaling Deep: Advancing Systemic Social Innovation and the Learning Processes to Support it*, Prepared for the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Tamarack Institute by Darcy Riddell and Michele-Lee Moore (October 2015)

SCALE DEEP

"Impacting cultural roots"

Changing relationships,
cultural values and beliefs,
"hearts and minds."

MAIN STRATEGIES:

Spreading big cultural ideas and using stories to shift norms and beliefs

Investing in transformative learning and communities of practice

Scaling deep is where BtB has consciously focused its efforts as the foundation for sustainable social change. It's not surprising that so many impacts named by members of the network align here. Below are examples of scaling deep impacts at the community level. For more information refer to their sections in the findings section above.

↑ Trust & relationships

"I do believe that the relationships that have been built would not ever have happened without Between the Bridges being there."

-dnr

- ↑ Relationships & connections
- ↑ Awareness & understanding
- ↑ Trust
- ↑ Importance of relationships, collaboration & community-led change

↑ Positivity & asset-based view of Dartmouth North

- Residents are ↑ inspired & motivated
- Public servants named a shift from deficit → asset mindset about Dartmouth North

Residents are at the ❤️ of the work

- ↓ Competition & scarcity mindset amongst community service organizations who are now cooperating in order to collectively serve residents

↑ Champions & advocacy for Dartmouth North

- Residents have ↑ capacity & confidence to self-advocate
- Public servants are ↑ advocating for the needs of the community

SCALE UP

"Impacting laws and policy"

Changing institutions at the level of policies, rules and laws.

MAIN STRATEGIES:

Policy or legal change efforts: New policy development, partnering, advocacy to advance legal change and redirect institutional resources.

Though scaling up in terms of changing laws and policy is not part of the BtB mandate, working with government to "show up" differently in community is. An example here is how the process of policy development is being impacted. Another unintended outcome is specific policy changes.

Public servants are incorporating lived-experiences to policy development more

During interviews, public servants referenced that policies are being made differently, incorporating community voice more than before their involvement with BtB. Through BtB, public servants have built relationships with residents and are more able to develop policies grounded in reality.

“From a policy perspective, hearing from the ground, and other professionals, hearing their concerns really helps me and my colleague, when developing a policy. Grounds our policy development work, in a different way.”

-ps

Specific policy change

Members of the BtB Affordable Housing Lab presented to HRM Council in support of the successful amendment to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy to allow secondary suites and backyard suites. As one Lab participant said: *"the crowning moment was when Council approved Tiny Houses and Backyard Suites, BtB was a part of this for sure."*



SCALE OUT

"Impacting greater numbers"

Replication and dissemination, increasing number of people or communities impacted.

MAIN STRATEGIES:

Deliberate replication: Replicating or spreading programs geographically & to greater numbers
Spreading principles: Disseminate principles, with adaptation to new contexts via cogeneration of knowledge

The scaling out examples emerging from the findings are largely unintended consequences of the scaling deep activities that network members have attributed back to quality of BtB relationship and trust building.

THE DARTMOUTH NORTH LIBRARY HAS SCALED OUT IN MULTIPLE WAYS, THROUGH PARTICIPATING WITH BTB

Library staff have shared a number of examples of ripple effects that have stemmed from relationships formed through BtB network engagement and backbone support.

Youth engagement with food security has expanded to multiple schools

The Food for Youth Task Force Program's goal is to increase access to adequate amounts of quality and healthy food for students who are in need, without creating stigma or social exclusion. Through the increased collaboration between local schools and the community around priority issues such as hunger for students, the program has expanded from one to three schools so far.

Providing food is now part of the core budget for all Halifax Public Libraries

A lunch and snack program was started at the Dartmouth North branch, which grew from a partnership with the Farrell Benevolent Society, that began through BtB network meetings. Food programming is now institutionalized as a budget line item for all HRM libraries.

“ So... all that came from little Dartmouth North Library and partially from Between the Bridges, so yay! ”

-CS

Voter engagement programs now happen in libraries across Canada

Through partnership with the North Grove, initiated through BtB, the Dartmouth North Library started voter engagement activities:

“ [North Grove] initially started it. And then I was like, how can we help out... because I see... you... doing something really awesome. And so... we work together... that's how it starts. ”

-CS

From the success of Dartmouth North's initiative, libraries across the country have gotten onboard:

“ So we've started a trend for libraries across Canada for voter engagement. ”

-CS

↑ COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES MODELING FROM BTB

Members of the community sector shared they are seeing more Collective Impact because of BtB:

“ I see so many round tables that are now following similar models... because people have seen the best practices that happen. It's opened more doors for people to do this work. ” - cs

“ We see different towns, and communities within Nova Scotia are looking to this project to see how they can duplicate this... take some wins from it, and, model themselves in different aspects. ” - cs

Dartmouth North Library's experience with community collaboration through BtB has rippled out to libraries across Canada:

“ I think [Between the Bridges has].. had an impact on... other libraries. So not just... Dartmouth North... I'm connected with all the... Halifax Public Libraries... 14 different branches... I've been sent to a number of conferences over the last couple of years... I've... talked about... the importance of community collaboration... I know for sure, I've reached at least half of the libraries across Halifax Public Libraries and convinced them of the ways of... collaboration... But I want to say that... I've at least impacted some other libraries across Canada as well. ” - cs

Members of the public sector shared that they are integrating Collective Impact approaches into their work:

“ I brought consensus decision-making to my team, and we're starting to use other Between the Bridges processes back in my workplace. ” - ps

“ I learned a lot every time I'm there from them about slowing down, listening, consulting. I'll... go to a [Between the Bridges] meeting and I'll go away. I will apply this in a meeting tomorrow. ” - ps

NEW POPULATIONS BEING IMPACTED: NEWCOMERS ARE LESS ISOLATED & MORE INVOLVED/ INTEGRATED IN THE COMMUNITY

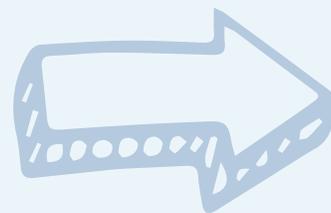
“ So [my involvement in BtB] gave me the 'in' so that when I went to community events, I knew people. I was comfortable and welcome. And so... I could invite newcomers to participate. So it actually **increased newcomer participation in community events so that newcomers are less isolated and more visible in large scale and small scale public events, as well as local services** like childcare, like daycares, recreation programs like i facilitated involvement... through those relationships so it **started to change how many newcomers were civically, or community involved.** ”

- CS

SECTION 4 – MOVING FORWARD

Integrating Voices: Evolving Practice to Strengthen BtB

The BtB Collective Impact process has involved learning and adaptation cycles since day one. The table below summarizes the cycle captured through this evaluation. The first two columns are conclusions based on the interviews completed through 2020 and the third column contains updates from the Backbone Team of how things have evolved from early 2020 to winter 2021.



ASPECT	EVALUATION MESSAGES	ONGOING EVOLUTION AND ADAPTATION
<p>↑ Inclusion & diversity</p>	<p>The most commonly named suggestion for the future of BtB is to continue the work of inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to increase diversity and representation; • to experiment with recruitment methods; and • to continually strive for the community of Dartmouth North to be reflected in the BtB Network. 	<p>BtB strives to hold a lens of inclusion/diversity.</p> <p>At the time of this report, BtB is actively evolving from the larger themed tables towards specific topic groups. This allows for a new round of focused recruitment, with a lens on inclusion and diversity of perspectives.</p>
<p>↑ Action & spending ↑ time together to go deeper</p>	<p>Overall there is a feeling of readiness for implementing a collective plan of action, particularly at the Student Success Alignment Team, alongside an appreciation of the relationships and foundations laid.</p> <p>Suggestions included hosting longer working sessions closer together, more than meeting one evening per month. For example, full day sessions, two days of work in a row, or 3 mornings in 2 weeks.</p>	<p>Student Success has evolved since Dec 2020 following consultations to identify 1-2 areas for action. Honouring the original priority area of <i>“supporting transitions between classes and schools”</i>, the network identified two groups to go forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. exploring learnings from initiatives that are focusing on transitions between school levels; and 2. supporting evaluation for the collaboration of the Dartmouth Learning Network, Dartmouth North Library and the North Grove in providing an early learning phonics program.
<p>↑ Communication of successes</p>	<p>Celebrate successes and show the community that things are changing.</p> <p>Given a long history of intervention in Dartmouth North with few tangible changes, the suggestion is that as outcomes arise, <i>“celebrate it, because the community is going to wonder if any outcomes will ever happen... it’s on you [BtB] to tell the community what the outcome was, because the community’s default is nothing.” - cs</i></p> <p>Communications are timid and respectful. The suggestion is to get a little louder.</p>	<p>BtB is planning to design and distribute a regular <i>Between the Bridges Snapshot</i> with action and impact highlights.</p> <p>BtB is creating an <i>Annual Report</i> to the Community to share learnings and celebrate the collective leadership.</p>
<p>↑ Communication between the BtB Network and the public sector</p>	<p>Increased engagement with Public Sector</p> <p>Multiple public servants named they would like others in their department and more broadly in the government to know about BtB, to learn from it, and be influenced by the work. There was a big question of how to do this. Suggestions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build more awareness within government, and • share more updates to government in some way that helps them stay connected. 	<p>See above plans to increase communications and distribution.</p>

ASPECT	EVALUATION MESSAGES	ONGOING EVOLUTION AND ADAPTATION
<p>↑ Communication within the BtB Network</p>	<p>Learning about what's happening at other BtB tables, "to... find out what's going on in the neighborhood in... some of these other committees." - cs</p> <p>Many individuals mentioned they would like more information about parts of BtB they aren't involved in. Suggested methods for this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updated website, • updated Google doc., • email updates (e.g., Susan LeBlanc's bi-weekly emails are very informative and easy to share further if relevant info), and • having individuals from different tables cross-pollinate, go and share at another table, and bring back what they learned. <p>Learning about what's happening at other Inspiring Communities Collective Impact initiatives: to learn from, to see connections, to feel motivated, and contribute to the ripple effects. Let's not start from scratch, but instead build on what other projects are doing.</p>	<p>BtB recognizes that there is a lot of activity happening, and the continued importance of engaging the BtB Network to determine the best way to identify and distribute content. To this end communications will be integrated into the agendas of the various groups and teams. The goal is to tap into perspectives about content and processes for communication going forward.</p> <p>This planning may include a diversity of approaches (e.g., regular snapshot and annual report mentioned above) that bring relevant information to a variety of stakeholders including community members, organizations, government and business.</p>
<p>↑ Sustainable relationship with government</p>	<p>Build a sustainable channel from community to government. Individuals are calling for a more long lasting way of supporting the government relationship, a way that could outlast funding for BtB. This is based on fear and past experience that the valuable relationship brokered by BtB is at risk of funding changes.</p> <p>Make the one-way channel of information from community to government reciprocal: Public servants are saying that community experience/voice is being integrated into policies/decision-making, however neither residents nor community sector mentioned this. The observation is that public servants are not sharing back with the BtB Network what impacts are happening within government due to their relationships and collaboration.</p>	<p>BtB is holding many questions related to this theme about longer term planning and funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What roles might BtB try as a more active conduit of the relationship? • How can BtB make those direct links between government and community/residents?
<p>↑ Replicating BtB's model in other communities</p>	<p>Members of the BtB Network would like to see this model replicated: "...it's highly valuable... having Between the Bridges duplicated or expanded... pulling the resources of each community together... repeat those synergies in other neighborhoods, and pull the resources together." - cs</p>	<p>BtB plans to stay open to invitations or seek opportunities to share the learnings in a variety of ways such as panels, conferences, speaking engagements and presentations.</p>
<p>↑ Ways to support the community</p>	<p>A couple of suggestions related to supporting the community emerged from interviews:</p> <p>Can we do more WITH the community; more capacity building (not necessarily the grants)? For example, bring someone in from Dartmouth Housing that tells us what they do and how it impacts the community and that gives us a connection right there.</p> <p>Can BtB do more to support more community start-up organizations?</p>	<p>Community capacity and fiscal agency</p> <p>BtB is currently convening network members around the question of: How might there be new processes/structures to support new projects/initiatives in Dartmouth North that are emerging from the informal community network?</p>

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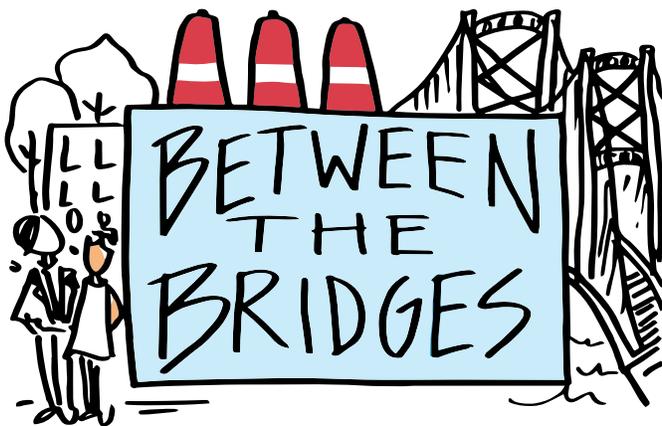
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