

COLLABORATION IS BETTER THAN COMPETITION

Collaboration is the best way to address complex social issues and we need to develop leadership styles that support it. Price-based competitive tendering for public services is harming society and wasting taxpayers' money. Rather than a destructive, value-squeezing contest among a few big corporations in pursuit of shareholder profit, we need a collaborative method that brings together people with a shared interest in a common challenge.

LEADING THOUGHT BY FOLLOWING YOUR HEART NOT YOUR HEAD



A PERSONAL STORY BY KATHY EVANS

Leadership, to me, is a title given by followers not by self-proclamation. So when I was asked to share a personal story as a 'thought leader' in challenging competitive market approaches in the voluntary sector it was a great compliment, but telling that story requires a little honest humility.

It's been five years since I became CEO of Children England, a membership family of children's charities with a proud seventy five year history of collaborating to change children's policy and services for the better. I had twenty two years' experience of working in the children's charity sector so I knew the territory well, but I will openly confess I had no idea whatsoever how to fulfil the role's central expectation of becoming a sector leader – a thought leader – from a 'cold start' in my first CEO role.

'A thought leader: "Who me? Seriously?"'

People often talk about 'imposter syndrome' as if it's a low self-esteem issue, or a tendency to be self-deprecating. I disagree entirely. To me 'imposter syndrome' is simply a name for the fact that that any human being upon whom a big 'external' expectation falls will, in their private inner world where they are just their familiar inner child, be wondering 'Who, me? Seriously? But I'm just making it up as I go along!.' I don't think that's self-deprecation, just honesty about the human condition.

I thought I'd been asked to step up as CEO because they expected me to find clever answers, clever ideas, that no-one had thought of before. Both my inner child and my grown-up professional self knew I

didn't have them, I just couldn't see any. This, I thought, must be when everyone finally finds out I don't know what I'm doing, just like all those 'exam nightmare' dreams had foretold! So instead of waiting for that fated imposter-unveiling event to just happen, I decided to head it off at the pass. I spent half a day presenting to our Trustees (all respected and experienced charity CEOs) all of the things I knew I couldn't do, couldn't answer and couldn't solve: I had no answers to solve our funding problems after losing two thirds of our turnover; no clever ideas to unite our divided competitive sector; no cunning plan to end the competitive marketplace or to create a children's rights revolution.

'Following my conscience, not pretending to have clever leadership plans'

Instead of offering clever answers I asked them for an array of permissions to fail: to make Children England stridently outspoken without waiting for consensus; to spend out their reserves, and to take the charity down in a blaze of campaigning glory if need be, rather than ever seek government money again; and to challenge the competitive contracting marketplace in its entirety, even if meant some of our members might leave our family in

disagreement. This was not a clever answer, a smart plan for impact or a business plan for sustainability – it was about doing the right thing even if it put us out of business. It meant following my conscience, rather than pretending to have any clever leadership plans at all.

With their courageous agreement to my potential kamikaze mission for the charity, a mere matter of months later, in May 2014, the Department for Education sneaked out plans to allow the outsourcing of child protection teams, and everything we'd discussed in theory came hurtling at us in reality. Everyone I spoke to felt that private companies competing for the 'business' of removing children from their families was a rubicon that should never be crossed, but my members also thought the stable door was swinging off its hinges with the horse long gone; they thought charities protesting against outsourcing now would be futile, and seen as too late, too hypocritical. Deep down, I feared exactly the same.

In the space of a fortnight our 'Keep profit out of child protection' campaign achieved its aim and forced Michael Gove to announce a ban on any profit-making firms delivering public child protection functions. It was the quickest

wholesale success in my campaigning career, and we had launched it in the cast-iron belief that we would fail. We'd said nothing clever, nothing new, we'd just stated a simple truth that resonated across charities, public services and the general public – they supported in their thousands, and by joining together we achieved a massive national policy change in mere weeks.

That experience set the tone and the template for everything we've done since, from collaborating to creating our [Declaration of Interdependence](#) to our current ambition to [redesign the welfare state for the 21st Century](#). And it's what led me to become one of the founding members of the Better Way network, in which we're

committed to open-ended dialogue on a better future for public services, while all willing to admit we don't have any clever answers yet. It feels like the right way forward to me, and if my experience so far is anything to go by, then whatever role or situation you find yourself in, doing what you feel is right, even if you think it's likely to fail, stands the greatest chance of offering the kind of leadership our sector needs right now.

Kathy Evans became CEO of [Children England](#) in April 2013 with a career background spanning counselling and social care practice, policy, research and campaign roles in the voluntary sector – always with a focus on children and young people. Kathy is also a Humanist celebrant for weddings and baby naming.

'HOLISTIC SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP' TO DELIVER BETTER OUTCOMES



IDEAS FROM CATE NEWNES-SMITH

I believe that the guiding principle for me as a voluntary sector leader should be 'What is best for young people?' and not 'What is best for the third sector or my charity?' This may seem obvious, but various structural and cultural factors work against this and it can be harder to put into practice than it first seems.

When I first attended the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board I was puzzled about what people expected of me. As CEO of a connection and collaboration charity, I was there to represent the third sector but they weren't talking about the third sector. The agenda was about Serious Case Reviews and other issues that didn't seem relevant to me. Gradually, however, I started to spot opportunities where the third sector should perhaps be informed or involved. I would put up my hand and say 'What about the third sector?' It became a running

joke between me and the Chair that when I put up my hand she wouldn't even need me to speak she would know what I was going to ask.

'I began to understand my role differently – to improve whole system delivery'

Over time I gained confidence and began to see a significant role for me and it wasn't just about representing the third sector – which I see now was a partisan and unhelpful approach to the situation. Thanks to being invited to join a small group of senior public sector leaders who meet regularly to build trust, discuss problems and develop new ways of working, I began to understand my role differently: my goal at the Safeguarding board and in other forums is now to work with my colleagues as co-leaders to improve the whole system delivery of outcomes for children and young

people. For want of a better phrase, I call this 'systems leadership' (although I have had feedback from people from outside of the social care/health/charity world that this is baffling to them, so I continue to seek a better phrase). This does not mean that I have abandoned the third sector, far from it. I passionately believe that young people are best served if the third sector plays a bigger role, but expansionism must never be my guiding principle.

Existing silo working within public and charity organisations leads to each organisation attempting to solve one or two problems in a person's life. Families with a number of 'needs' are often expected to work with an 'expert' on each of their 'needs'. Systems leadership takes a broader view of beneficiaries' lives: seeing the whole person and offering help that builds on their strengths and interests and the opportunities around them. The help then comes in a much wider form than just services: community development, peer support, friendship, etc which provide a sense of purpose, hope, contribution, and more.

A key part of this is connecting people and bringing different organisations together. Systems

leaders don't say 'how can my organisation solve this problem?' they say 'who can we collaborate with to understand our beneficiaries' lives, including their strengths, issues and opportunities?' Of course, the beneficiaries must be valued, respected stakeholders in this process.

One of the barriers to collaborative working is born from a positive value: we are brought up to be loyal to organisations. However, loyalty to an organisation or sector must not take priority over doing the right thing for beneficiaries. Each and every person in the system needs to take responsibility for putting children and young people first, even if this means 'betraying' their organisation.

I recently became concerned that, due to our responses to external factors including funding cuts, we were starting to compete with another charity whom we had previously worked alongside. I approached the CEO, whom I liked and respected, to have a conversation about how we can collaborate rather than compete. It was a highly fruitful discussion and hopefully, a new interesting initiative will result.

'We need a whole community response'

No sector has a monopoly on helping and we need a whole community response to many issues. During last winter's snow, Deliveroo encouraged its drivers to contact a homeless charity if they spotted a homeless person on the streets. Women's Aid are training hairdressers and butchers to spot the signs of Domestic Abuse in their clientele and give gentle, appropriate responses.

It's early days and I can't prove that the whole systems approach is making a difference yet. However it feels right. Here are my suggestions towards developing 'holistic systems leadership':

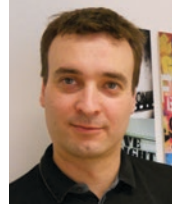
1. Start by understanding the lives of people you want to serve in conjunction with other agencies (banning the word 'service' from the conversation!).
2. Work together to set a 'Big Hairly Audacious Goal' and seek help from unusual places to achieve that goal. An example: 'our aim is for Surrey to become a great place for young people with

SEND (special educational needs and disability) to find and keep employment.'

3. If you are competing with another organisation, approach the leader to discuss how you can shift paradigms so that you collaborate around a shared goal. Currently your combined social contribution may be one plus one makes one. Can you make one plus one makes three together?
4. In every decision you take, ask yourself whether you are putting the beneficiaries first or your organisation?
5. Play a networking and connection role – it doesn't matter whether it is in your job description, always look out for opportunities to connect people.

Cate Newnes-Smith is CEO of [Surrey Youth Focus](#), a connection and collaboration charity working to improve the lives of young people in Surrey. Cate has extensive experience in both the private sector and charities. Cate loves her family, being out in the countryside, connecting with friends old and new, finding out about new social ideas and playing hockey.

COMPLEXITY DEMANDS COLLABORATION AND A NEW PARADIGM THAT SUPPORTS THIS



IDEAS FROM TOBY LOWE

Almost all social interventions are complex. There are three key reasons for this: issues, people and systems are all complex, but we often pretend otherwise. We need 'trust based' funding and alliance contracting to recognise this.

Issues are complex: First, the issues with which social interventions are typically concerned are complex, in that they are the result of multiple, intertwined factors. We can see this in the amazing systems map of obesity, produced by the UK Government in 2007. It maps the 108 different factors, and the relationships between them, that lead to a person being obese (or not).

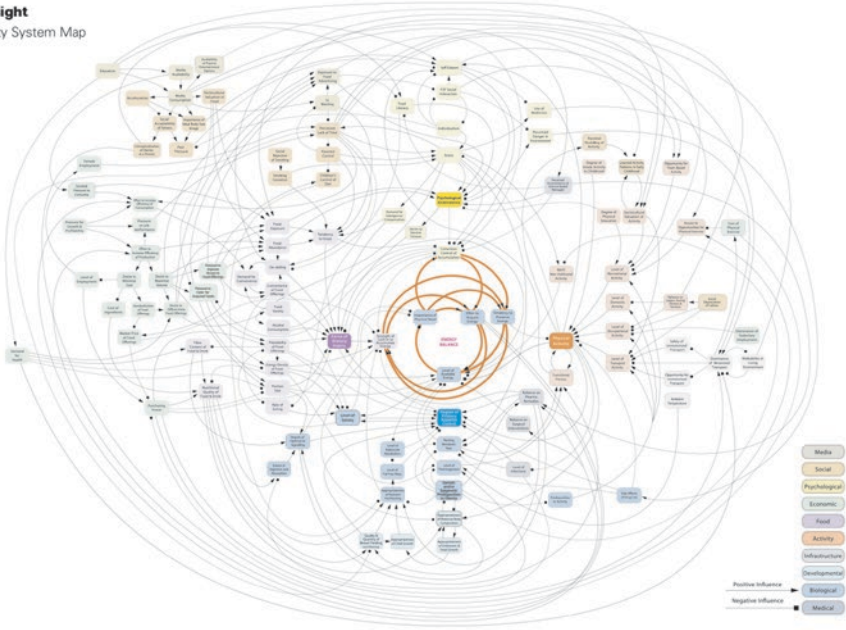
People are complex: We now routinely use the language of 'complex needs' and apply it to groups of people who seem to have

particularly difficult combinations of problems. Understanding complex needs is important, but this can mask a deeper truth. From the perspective of seeking to create positive outcomes in the world, all people's lives are complex. What makes my life meaningful to me is different than what makes your life meaningful to you. Consequently, what an outcome like obesity (for example) looks like for me will be different than for you.

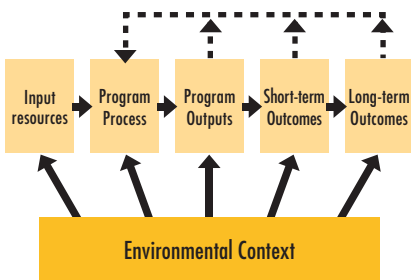
'For too long we have tried to ignore this complexity'

Systems are complex: A wide range of people, organisations and relationships contribute to creating the outcomes that people experience in their lives – from informal relationships of friends and family, through to a whole range of services and other interventions.

Foresight
Obesity System Map



Vandenbroeck, P., Goossens, J. and Clemens, M. (2007), Foresight Tackling Obesity: Future Choices – Building the Obesity System Map, London: Government Office for Science, www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295153/07-1177-obesity-system-atlas.pdf



The false model of linear processes

Schalock, R. L. and Bonham, G. S. (2003), Measuring outcomes and managing for results, *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 26, 4: 229–35.

What all of the above tells us is that our work is inescapably complex. For too long we have tried to ignore this complexity and pretend that the work is simple. We have pretended that standardised proxy measures can represent the complexity of people’s lives. And we have pretended that outcomes are made by linear processes of change which can be modelled as shown here.

'Complexity requires collaboration'

Collaboration is a necessary response, if we want to help people's lives to improve.

The key message is that positive outcomes aren't 'delivered' by interventions or services. Systems produce outcomes. And they do so in irreducibly unpredictable ways – because the range of factors interacting with each other produce emergent outcomes which cannot be predicted in advance, and which cannot be controlled by any single person or organisation.

We must nurture the health of these systems so that they are more likely to produce positive outcomes than not. In particular, it is the job of those who have responsibility for places and services – such as public and voluntary sector leaders and charitable funders – to take responsibility and ensure that the actors in these systems – the people and organisations who live, work and volunteer within them – can work effectively together to respond collaboratively to the particular strengths and needs of each person and community.

'A Whole New World'

Last year, we undertook research with a range of charitable funders and public sector commissioners to explore what they can do to make this real. What we found was an emerging new paradigm – a different way of thinking and acting – for funding and commissioning. We called this 'A Whole New World'.

The key elements of this new world are:

- **Intrinsic Motivation.** Funders and commissioners working in this complexity-informed way recognise that the people who do this work are intrinsically motivated to do so. They do not require extrinsic motivation – external rewards and punishments – to be motivated to do a good job.
- **Learning drives improvement.** This shift opens up space for learning to be the engine of performance improvement, rather than relying on vertical accountability (your boss watching over you) to create improvement. Funders, commissioners and delivery

organisations who work in this way create learning environments: they create cultures in which groups of practitioners reflect together, they create 'positive error cultures' in which people are able to talk openly with their peers about mistakes and uncertainties and improve their capacity to make difficult judgements in situations of uncertainty. And they use measurement to learn and improve, rather than to 'demonstrate their effectiveness'.

- **Nurturing system health.**

Finally, to improve the health of the system they invest in networks and information sharing mechanisms, helping the actors in the system to communicate and co-ordinate their work. And beyond the structures, they invest in nurturing trust – building positive relationships between the actors in those systems, so that the communication is authentic, honest and meaningful.

What this looks like in practice: trust-based funding and alliance contracting: Trust is central to this new paradigm. Charitable funders describe their practice as 'trust-based funding'. This means funding given without KPIs or other performance targets – unrestricted funding which

allows organisations to respond to the rapidly changing environments in which they work, and which allows those organisations to provide the bespoke responses to each person and communities particular strengths and needs. They find the organisations they can trust to navigate the complexity of people and systems effectively. They find the organisations they trust to do the right thing when the world changes – because the world will change.

'Funders trust organisations who collaborate well'

Key to this paradigm is therefore finding out what are good reasons for funders and fundees to trust one another. What funders said was that they trust organisations who collaborate well, who know what role they play in wider systems, organisations who learn well, and who use evidence to inform their practice.

Commissioners are also using 'alliance contracting' as a way of distributing resources – allocating resources to networks of collaborating organisations and trusting them to use these resources well. In order to enable adaptive responses to the ever-changing complexity of the work, commissioners don't use KPIs or other

targets. Instead they support the organisations to use measurement as a way to reflect on and improve their practice and they hold the organisations they fund accountable for learning and improving.

A growing movement: Over 300 funders, commissioners and delivery organisations have already said they would like to join a Community of Practice where they can explore how to work in this way together. You can begin to see what they're talking about at <https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/tobyloew/2018/01/10/a-whole-new-world-is-beginning-to-take-shape/>. And if you would like to find out more, you can sign up to receive further information at <http://eepurl.com/dgg3Lr>. And if you're already working in this way, or would like to start, we've just

started an action-research project which will help us to answer some of the key 'how do we do this?' questions. These include: 'how does accountability work, if we can't hold organisations accountable for results?', 'what are good reasons for trust?' and 'what does a healthy system look like, and how do we know if we've got one?' Drop me a line if you'd like to be part of this.

Toby Lowe is a Senior Research Fellow at Newcastle University Business School, who is helping to create a new complexity-informed paradigm for the funding, commissioning and delivery of social interventions – helping organisations to escape from the shackles of the failing New Public Management approach. He's also an ex voluntary sector Chief Executive, and an over-enthusiastic dancer.

THE ROLE OF CONNECTORS IN CREATING COLLABORATION



IDEAS FROM AUDREY THOMPSON

Is collaboration about including everyone, whatever their background or ability, being kind and caring and sharing, ideas, resources, workload and leadership? Is it also hard to put into practice? My life experience of 83 years says yes it is, and the key to making it happen is a funded 'connector' role.

Competition has its place in certain situations but can be unkind, exclusive, and a 'survival of the fittest' attitude, without regard for the feelings or the wellbeing of those who for various reasons cannot overcome or cope with some of life's problems.

My first experience of being a connector was back in 1970 in the Doncaster area. When a new school was built in Arksey and the old school became the Youth Club, I was appointed Leader-in-Charge, paid for two nights a week. With the help of

the community it soon developed into a youth and community centre used by all age groups in the community, with a collaborative spirit and young people very much in the lead.

In 1973, on the basis of my previous work, I was asked to work in the mining community of New Village, based at the primary school where I had attended as a child. The role was new and was to work with young people to create family activities after school, especially for those within the catchment area of the secondary school. My brief as a tutor was 'to develop more opportunities for all from the 'cradle to the grave', with the emphasis on informal/social education especially with 'hard to reach' people in the community. A new post was also created in Toll Bar for the youth leader to work with that community. Toll Bar and New Village were and still are areas of high deprivation.

Many great things happened by working in collaboration and partnership with all the community in and out of school. We established a community association that initiated many projects and educational opportunities working with the Northern College at Barnsley. But in 1974, as a result of a local government reorganisation and a change of officers and policies in education, the funding came to an end. One of the biggest barriers to change is the lack of continuity by policy makers mainly in governments and councils, especially in education. However no matter what changes there are communities still remain and have to find ways of changing or coping with whatever happens.

‘In some areas, a connector role is essential to increase social mobility and opportunities’

In some areas, this kind of connector role is essential for collaboration between different agencies, groups and individuals in order to work together in partnership to increase social mobility and make more opportunities for all, wherever they are in life.

Four years ago I became a volunteer/Director of the Bentley Area Community Library, staffed by

volunteers. The last four years have not been easy, but with a lot of information from the Carnegie UK Trust and the Community Managed Libraries Peer Network, some good volunteers, council workers, councillors, NHS support and Manna Community CIC and more, we have created a building where lots of people feel welcome and can find support for housing and debt, as well as personal counselling. The library also offers lots of leisure groups helping to combat isolation, support groups for carers, activities for people suffering from Alzheimer’s, well being groups, children’s activities, and WEA literacy classes, to name a few. We also have family well-being days, and primary school displays. The library has become a Hub, a contact point with information, contacts, and resources, and a place of welcome shared with the wider community.

‘I’ve experienced that support in the past, but also seen it taken away’

Not everything happens in the library!!! But it can be a springboard and connector in the wider area and is a vivid example of collaboration in action. We have convinced some, but not all, that a change is needed and is working. But unless the role of the connector is seen as a professional, paid, supported

role working in and alongside the Education department in the structure of Doncaster council, we will not achieve change for the people who really need it. I've experienced that support in the past, but also seen it taken away, which is why we are still asking the same questions.

Over the last fifty years, many people including myself have produced evidence across the country and the world, that new ways of working have to be found

and people have to change their thinking and their ways if we are to have a fairer society. The connector role is key to collaboration.

Audrey Thompson was born in 1935, her father was a miner, she was married in 1954 and her husband died in 2003. She has five children and thirteen grandchildren. She worked for Doncaster Council as a Youth/Community/Social Education worker. She is currently a volunteer/Director of Bentley Library. Her hobbies include: gardening, textile and other crafts and listening to music.

'COMPANY CITIZEN SEEKS PARTNER FOR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE'



CASE STUDIES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR BY TOM LEVITT

Once upon a time big companies did CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). It subtly reminded employees that they were team members whilst ticking a few philanthropy boxes and was delivered by – well, that didn't really matter. Maybe volunteers, perhaps a dedicated department with no other role in the company, rarely the HR people. And adopting a 'Charity of the Year' allowed the company's goodness to be more widely appreciated; charities liked it because it was easier to get money from a new source each year than wring it out of an old one. For them, raising money was, mostly, what it was all about.

Things have changed.

First, some companies realised that their choice of charity partner was significant: the right choice

signposted the purpose and mission of the business far more than did random fluffy animals, well-known diseases or distant children, causes that polls of employees were prone to promote. Second, they realised that a year was not long enough to build a proper relationship or learn from missed opportunities. And third, cash was not necessarily king: time and skills could be at least as much appreciated as money when appropriately deployed.

This meant that new ideas could take root:

- Flexibility, rather than the rigid 'corporate volunteering day', was more attractive both to charities and to participating employees.
- As sceptics pointed out, employee volunteers were not really volunteers: they were being paid whilst working alongside

those 'doing it for nothing'. It was the company, not the individuals, that was contributing its time and skills.

- Integrating CSR into the mainstream operation of the company, rather than treating it as an optional extra, could benefit the company.

'A less altruistic, possibly more honest approach'

This new generation of company citizens talked of 'purpose', 'mission' and 'partnership', leading to a less altruistic, possibly more honest approach: there was nothing wrong with the company profiting indirectly from its engagement with good causes. Indeed, this justifies any investment made in the process.

So, we've moved from employees taking initiatives to sponsor each other, bake cakes and ride bikes for money, through communal days out for painting or gardening, through providing the skills that charities and community groups need – right through to a company expressing its own mission and purpose through a strategic approach to its relationship with the community.

'Health at Work' is a multifaceted British Heart Foundation (BHF)

campaign. Companies that engage with it gain from reduced sickness absence, higher morale, better team building and reduced early retirement on illness grounds. The return on investment for a workplace health strategy can be as much as 34:1 based on reducing absenteeism, accidents and staff turnover and the resulting improvement in productivity. Participating companies also report better employee engagement and internal communications.

At Asda's distribution centre in Leicestershire BHF promotes its Workplace Wellbeing Charter. Here, on-site gym membership costs employees £3 per month and the company supports free fruit days, helps employees buy bicycles, offers smoking cessation clinics and health checks and even stages a 'coast-to-coast' static cycle event to raise money for BHF. The Asda scheme initially reduced absenteeism by 1.5 per cent – worth £200,000 to the company, a massive return on a £20,000 investment, in a single year.

Four hundred employers and 10,000 individuals have backed the Time to Change pledge. Led by charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness it's a commitment to change attitudes and risks around mental health. The charities help create bespoke

workplace plans including events to support mental health Champions. Longstanding supporters include Transport for London, Imperial College, E.ON, Anglian Water and Lloyds Bank. A manager in a big white-collar company noted that the main cause of death in adult males under forty is suicide. He said: 'Ours is a stressful business and our median employee is a twenty-nine year old male; we need to manage them carefully.'

'A shift away from cash and towards skills and expertise'

In America the Dell Foundation, a major source of philanthropic funding, has identified a significant shift in their charity partners' needs, away from cash and towards skills and expertise. They describe the shift as from capital to competence, intervention to innovation, coordination to collaboration and short-term fix to long-term involvement. Given a choice between a \$100,000 gift and an equivalent value in counselling, skilled volunteering or access to decision-makers only four in ten of Dell's 700 partner NGOs,

worldwide, would today choose cash. Just four years earlier that figure was seven in ten.

Collaboration between charities and businesses has always existed and is ever evolving. No longer is it acceptable for corporates to write cheques to hide their misdemeanours, boost short-term sales or please the apocryphal chairman's wife; one way traffic is, in many cases, over. What's happening today in the best cross-sector partnerships between the private and voluntary sectors is mutual respect and common advantage, longer-term relationships based on shared interests and complementary skills.

Unlike the 'here today, gone tomorrow' era of the Charity of the Year, this is a truly sustainable development.

Since 2010 Tom Levitt, a former Labour MP, has been a writer and consultant on responsible business, with clients of all sizes in all sectors. His latest book, *The Company Citizen: Good for Business, Planet, Nation and Community*, was published early in 2018.

TOWARD SHARED LEADERSHIP

INSIGHTS FROM BETTER WAY DISCUSSIONS

In discussions in the London cells in the second half of last year, we started to talk about a new model of leadership to deliver a Better Way. Much of what we identified came down to collaboration, or ‘shared leadership’.

‘A command and control model of leadership is deeply embedded’

A command and control model of leadership is deeply culturally embedded in Britain, including in the public and social sectors, we concluded. Leaders are expected to focus on the management of their agencies and on the delivery of specified outputs and outcomes, treating their organisations like industrial production units, rather than acting as change agents. CEOs feel under pressure to conform to (gendered) stereotypes and adopt behaviours that are neither natural nor effective. Competition between leaders, rather than collaboration, is ingrained.

However, many of the issues facing society cannot be solved by a single agency, or even by a number of

organisations working together. There are many factors affecting health and well-being, for example. A complex system of influences and organisations are important and individuals and communities are critical actors.

The social sector is also not exercising a sufficiently strong thought leadership role in society, tending to comment on the agendas set by others in order to seek marginal changes, rather than pointing out fundamental problems in the system and arguing for paradigm shifts. It tends to talk politics, rather than about what really matters to people.

What is needed is a bigger scale of ambition and more collaboration and shared leadership.

‘Shared leadership is about exercising influence and empowering others to become leaders too’

Shared leadership is not something simply exercised by people at the top of organisations, we concluded. It is about exercising *influence* and happens when others choose to

follow you, not because of a job title. This is not about becoming a 'saviour' or a 'guru' but about empowering others to become leaders too.

This kind of leadership is exercised in collaboration and demonstrates the generous qualities which can be summarised as 'love'. Qualities of respect, kindness, generosity, nurturing, enabling and empowering are all important. Such leadership is more about demonstrating the right behaviour and values than setting specific goals from on high. In one organisation, for example, everyone is encouraged to exercise 'nine habits', which include hope and love, and to attend workshops with a mix of people at different levels of the organisation to explore how to put these qualities into practice.

'Shared leadership is far more effective than conventional models in relation to so-called complex issues'

The evidence points to shared leadership being far more effective than conventional models in relation to so-called complex issues, as opposed to 'complicated' and 'simple' ones. These distinctions are drawn from science, which distinguishes between systems that may be *complicated*, such as computers, but are man-made and

systems that are so *complex* that we will probably never fully understand them, such as the human brain or a rain forest. Command and control forms of leadership have their place in relation to simple and even complicated problems and this is an important message. Any organisation is likely to face a mix but in complex situations, leadership is about getting the conditions right for everyone involved to be able to work with complexity. This is achieved, for example, through the creation of networks within and across organisations, and showing leadership by demonstrating core values rather than giving instructions or setting precise goals. It is recognised that the final outcome may be unknowable when the work starts.

Obstacles to shared leadership:

- Lip-service is often given to shared leadership but change will not happen unless it is shown that it works and will be recognised and rewarded.
- Network-orientated leaders often find it hard to access circles of power and for their voices to be heard.
- The versions of shared leadership tried out in the collectives of

the 1970s and 80s were often chaotic and often led to factional dominance.

- Community development, including community organising, is intended to grow bottom-up leadership but there is a danger that citizens themselves end up adopting command and control leadership models.
- Often people do not see themselves as leaders and do not recognise the power and resources available to them. They lack self-efficacy.

As well as making the case for shared leadership, we need to have a better sense of what it means in practice and how best to embed and promote it.

‘Systems change brings real change, not individual leaders’

Better Way members recognised that leadership does not work in isolation. Culture and systems are important too. Indeed one member had come to the conclusion that it is systems change that brings real change, not individual leaders. The Sheffield Microsystem Coaching Academy, for example, trains coaches to work in the health service to redesign services, involving patients in the process. A RSA report identified three forms of power important to leadership – personal agency; the power of shared values and norms; and the hierarchical power of expertise.

Context matters too. What might work in a start up industry would not work in the culture of the public sector.