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What

Communication is foundational to Connected Communities. Communicating across languages, across literacy levels, and across values and priorities is a difficult task: using a multimedia approach to communication including graphic design, photographs, experiential learning, and storytelling to illustrate ideas, concepts and actions accelerates shared understanding and momentum.

Why

Community building is full of complex ideas and projects that are often hard to articulate. Making community building visible can help people make meaning of what is going on around them, it can help attract resources and explain projects, initiatives and connections. Making community building visible can motivate individuals and groups to get more involved in their community, work together more, feel pride in what's happening in their communities, learn from each other and create shared narratives of their community, its history and future plans.



How

Key Question(s)

- What are the iconic images and stories that galvanize people towards a common goal?
- Who are the storytellers, the graphic artists, the photographers in the network; how can their skills being leveraged to craft a shared narrative?

Actions

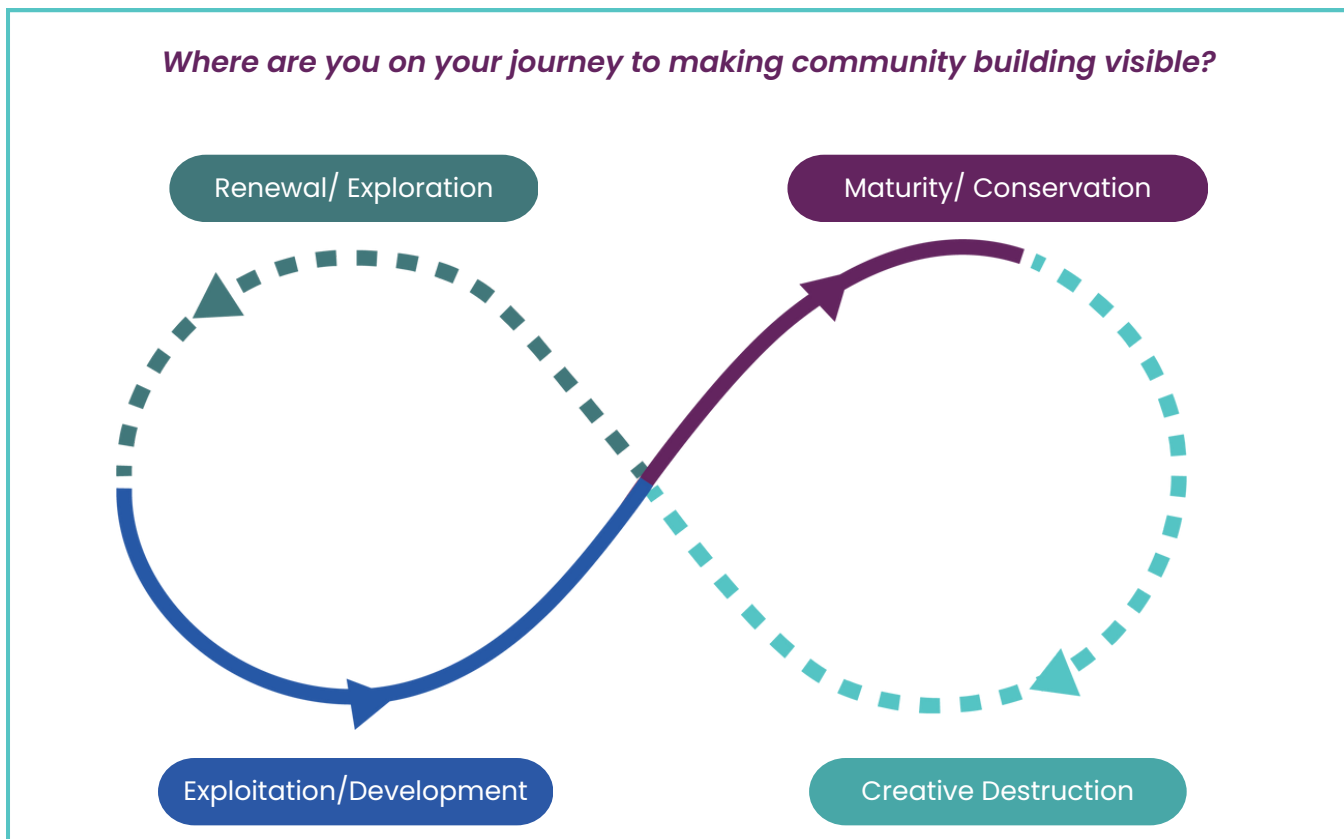
- Data in and of itself can excite some, but leave others confused and overwhelmed. A key part of making community building visible is using imagery and stories to make data and information accessible, understandable, and compelling. [This graphic](#) is both an illustration of the use of imagery, and provides a tool for how to think about and use data effectively
- Experiment with different tools to support you in conveying complex ideas. [These six ideas](#) are just a starting point. You can adapt, adjust and explore creative, engaging ways for people to get comfortable with complexity. Trying lots of different tactile and visual ways for people to engage will incrementally build confidence in complexity.
- Network mapping can be a powerful visual for understanding the ecosystem and how it is evolving. Digitizing network maps can make them visible and usable across contexts. There are various kinds of free software available: CCA projects have often used [Kumu](#).
- To help people to understand the existing ecosystem and where you are trying to get to, you can use a [community ecosystem illustration](#) or issue/sector specific drawing like this [workforce development pathway drawing](#) to illustrate.
- Preparing short, meaningful presentations as the foundation for discussion can be impactful; presentations, however, can also make people feel that they are an audience rather than active players in the process. Practice creating [effective presentations](#) so that they become key tools in your network weaving and workforce integration efforts.
- People learn through stories. Stories help paint a picture, focus an idea or lay foundation for discussion. Crafting a narrative is a powerful way to communicate ideas and worldview. This [narrative design toolkit](#) can help guide the ways in which you are shining a light on what's important.

Indicators of Success

- ❑ Illustrations of various kinds are introduced and referred to when discussing concepts related to community building
- ❑ Visuals and stories are adopted, adapted and used by players in the community to convey messages they believe are important to their community
- ❑ The community building initiatives in your community are visible at events, through art, in the media that people consume

Reflection Questions

- Are you using multiple approaches to sharing complex concepts? Are there visuals, stories or other illustrations that resonate more with people than others?
- Do your graphics, stories, presentations and other illustrations provide a catalyst for discussion?
- Are you using plain language or jargon when you communicate?
- What role do visuals play in advancing your community building efforts?



We hope you find these tools useful in continuing the momentum to build on local strengths, facilitated collaborative processes and learn together. Catalysts' Circle offers workshops, coaching and strategy design services that can further help you dig deeply into these keys and explore the others that can help you make a truly Connected Community.



Catalysts' Circle can be found at www.connectedcommunities.ca or email agloger@catalystscircle.ca for more information