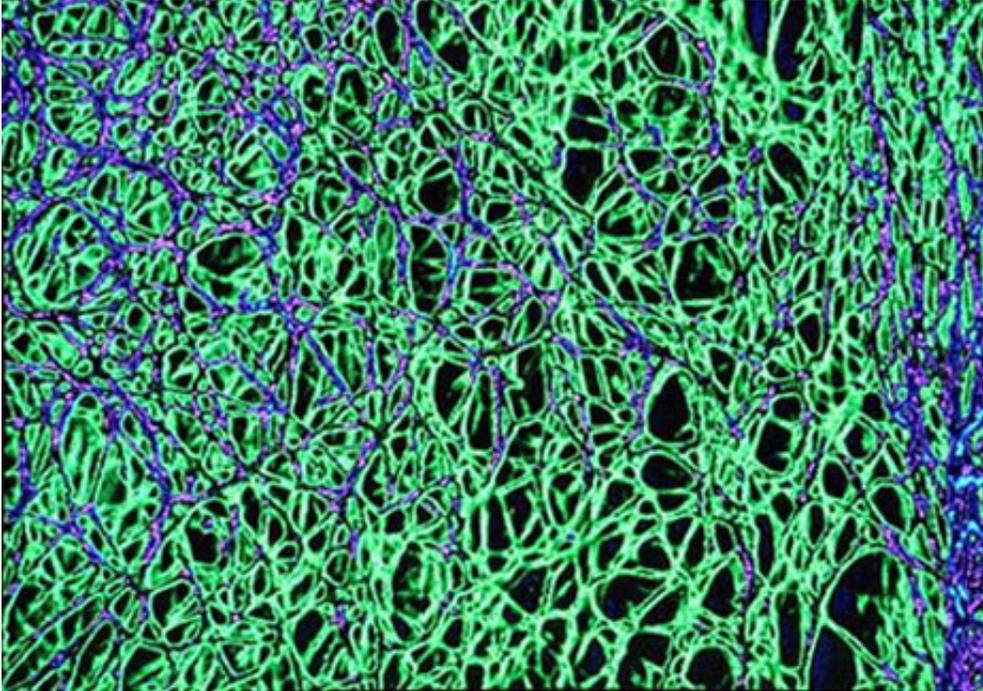


Weaving the Community Movement Colab Summary Report

October 10, 2013



Scanning Electron Micrograph of Mycelium, magnified 500 X ([P. Stamets](#))

[Hackpad link for this report](#)

Link to [Weaving the Community Movement Home Pad](#)

TRCC Members Involved

Team lead: Ben Roberts

Other members of the core team for this colab: Leslie Meehan and Jeff Vander Clute

Other TRCC Circle participants: [Jeff Clearwater](#), [Ferananda Ibarra](#), Carlyne Stayton and Gretchen Krampf

This work was sponsored by the [Thriving Resilient Communities Collaboratory \(TRCC\)](#):

The TRCC connects the growing community resilience movement to more of itself in support of large-scale social transformation towards a just and thriving society. We are a learning community of practice that hosts deep dialogues and gatherings, seeds and incubates collaborative projects and fosters synergy among leaders.

Overview

In this colab, a TRCC team interviewed selected leaders in the field to discover what's happening in their work, and then convened a full group conversation in which we invited the interviewees, together with other leaders, to sense into what new opportunities or insights had emerged and to gain inspiration from this collective vision.

Here are the interviewees (in the order interviewed, hot linked to their respective interview "hackpads"):

- [Jeff Clearwater](#)
- [Ferananda Ibarra](#)
- [Andrew Himes](#)
- [Carolyn Stayton](#)
- [Peggy Duvette](#)
- [Chris Kukk](#)

Goals

The colab was a test of the idea of "working mycelially," i.e. becoming a living and intelligent network, making many small "underground" connections, breaking down "dead matter" to help form new soil and moving information and nutrients around the system. As an additional outcome--and purely as a result of our focus on mycelial mat-weaving-- we thought that this inquiry might also give rise to beautiful, surprising and inspiring "mushrooms," i.e. to ideas that can nourish, open minds and cast spores far and wide. Whether such mushrooms sprung up or not, we were confident that the "mat" would be thicker and more energized as a result of our work.

While we expected the work create value in and of itself, we wanted to prototype a process that could continue in additional iterations, perhaps using Bioneers as a starting point for selecting the next group of interviewees.

This was also an experiment with the "[Cynefin](#)" framework for engaging with complexity, using a "probe, sense, respond" approach. We "probed" with the discovery interviews, then sensed together what might want to emerge in collaborative space. The response phase was seeded in our full group conversation, was continued via the gatherings before and during Bioneers, and is now informing TRCC's work for the period from November 2013-February 2014.

Deliverables

Here are the specific deliverables for this Colab. *See the "Detailed Process Description" section which follows "Outcomes" below for more on the process by which these were generated.*

- [Hackpads](#) with the content and synthesis from each interview and from the interviews as a whole, as well as detailed notes from the group conversation.
- Connections made and/or strengthened between participants
 - General "weaving of the mat"

- Specific opportunities found, such as the recommendation of Pyramid Marketing to Transition US
- Insight and energy generated
 - For each interviewee
 - For the field
 - To support TRCC work at Bioneers and beyond
- New processes for dialogue successfully tested out
- New people engaged with TRCC and a proposed new outreach process
- Co-creation process (prototyping) seeded

Outcomes

Insights/Themes

An [overall synthesis](#) was collaboratively drafted, the key themes of which are summarized below, along with illustrative quotes from interviewees:

- **Weaving as a transformative movement-building process.** It was a very powerful, moving and inspiring experience both for the interviewers and interviewees. That energy also flowed into our full group conversation, where even our new participant for that phase only found the experience highly compelling. This translated into enthusiasm for doing much more of what we had just offered, in order to build community and more broadly "weave the mycelial mat."
 - *Ferananda Ibarra: "They spoke my mind, they spoke my heart, they spoke my soul. To appreciate the gratitude of seeing fields where we create together, where we can step as our authentic selves, as who we fully are with all our of dimensionalities and to be fully seen... I feel that I'm in the presence of people who have reached a level of integrity in themselves that I can be fully present with all of you and know you more and more every time. That is a huge gift in what for me is the code and the genes for our social organism, whatever it might be."*
- **"We work for the Movement."** All of us, even those who are executive directors of organizations, loved the idea that we are really working for something far larger--that the Movement is in some way "our employer." This stretches and challenges us to move beyond traditional collaboration between organizations. How we live into that more fully is a question that emerges, and brings us straight to money, as a related challenge...
 - *Andrew Himes: [W]e can identify ourselves with the entire movement and pull ourselves out of narrow or parochial points of view - [it's] not about fundraising for my specific organization, hiring staff, etc. - it's about how we [work on behalf of the whole] more consciously. The natural tendency that I have is to sink back into a concern for me or my organization's particular needs. The very specific challenges of the work I'm doing today, how I can support it, and what my work needs. But when I step back and identify myself with the entire movement... If I'm an employee, I'm an employee of the movement. If there are resources available, they are the resources of the movement. When I say that I have to acknowledge that I don't even know what the movement is!*

- **Money, money money money!** Old paradigm financial dynamics can strangle potentially transformational initiatives. We need to move away from a situation where many separate organizations compete for the same small pool of funds in parallel. Meanwhile, as more people are waking up to the need for a Shift, financial flows may be opening up. At least one interviewee is experiencing this, with the money finding him, rather than the other way around. This leads into the next theme...
 - *Peggy Duvette (imagining it is five years from now and looking back): [W]e started working across networks. We talked with Transition Towns. We finally brought forth the collective intelligence of all these networks and shifted the financial models so we could work together. This was an impediment-- philanthropy, fundraising and appeals. So we shifted philanthropy-- seeing that we needed one network and one movement. We went away from our names into being one, not in silos.*
 - *Chris Kukk: "Successful businessmen are already starting to change, and already recognizing the importance of this. They're stepping up to the plate. They're finding me, I'm not going and getting them... This group keeps growing and they're amazing. I feel very fortunate. They're hosting a big donor event next month, where they each committed to bring other wealthy people to raise more money, so that we can just do what we need to do."*
- **The power of asking/saying "yes."** All the interviewees expressed a sense of being at a tipping point, where the right invitation or request can lead to a flood of interest, activity and perhaps funding. We may be limited by our failure to recognize what "wants to happen" and our reluctance simply to make the bold request. Perhaps it is also a matter of thinking on a scale that is big enough to register with the powerful currents of change that might be at play.
 - *Andrew Himes: "A big question [is]... 'how do you explain this massive surge in interest?' The only real answer is that we just invited it... We started communication with people, we started sending out emails, we developed something of a plan. All we did was open the door and then people started piling through the door. There is some kind of real pent-up energy around connecting with the Charter, wanting to be part of the movement, wanting to hear stories of what other people are doing."*
- **Sharing the resources we have.** Meanwhile, we can also do more with what we already have, especially if we share it. This requires relationships and containers in which cross-silo/sector connections can be made and community can be built.
 - *Peggy Duvette: "I was talking with Transition and saw that we had already done things they needed to do. So we shared that with them. We need to make this much more of a priority. If we could solve the funding piece there would be much more collaboration."*
- **The importance of Youth.** The importance of structuring initiatives that are lead, co-lead or build on a base of young people and their energy resonated strongly.
 - *Chris Kukk: "Having the students be such an integral part of this is one of the coolest parts of this. It's also trickling down to students in high school... There will always be students. It's never going away because it started there. It's not top-down. No matter who the leaders are, that idea will still be there."*
- **Umbrella Organizations that provide credibility, support and capacity**

building/training. Trans-local organizing is being supported through a model of local, independent nodes that also benefit powerfully from their connection to a national or global network. It empowers small groups simply to know that they are part of something larger. The organizations providing this support successfully are also managing to let things emerge from the bottom up as much as possible, offering support and capacity building rather than a rigid template.

- *Carolyn Stayton: "Mostly what Transition US does is stand behind and give support and lend a hand and step in with credibility... if needed. Being supportive is its main stance... A main need is for folks in resilience-building and social movements in general to get better group process skills. This is not a new thing I'm talking about, but it's still the main need."*
- **Theory U: from [Ego-system to Ecosystem Economy Revolution](#).** Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer's new presentation of this model for transformation turned out to be an excellent way to understand retrospectively what we were doing and why it was so valuable. An excerpt [from Otto's Blog](#) (9/10/13):

Many people think that what's missing in order to move to a new economy is just a set of better ideas. That, of course, is not the case. We need much more than new ideas. We need new innovation structures and social technologies that will allow groups to move from their habitual levels to the new co-create level 4. These infrastructures will include:

- *Co-initiating: Creating spaces for convening stakeholders around a shared ecosystem.*
- *Co-sensing: Going to the places of most potential and observing with one's mind and heart wide open.*
- *Co-inspiring: Creating spaces for connecting to the sources of creativity and self.*
- *Co-creating: Creating spaces for exploring the future by doing (prototyping).*
- *Co-shaping: Creating spaces for embodying and scaling the new through practices.*

Of these infrastructures, the co-sensing and co-inspiring ones are particularly underdeveloped in society today. Trying to advance societal innovation by just talking about them or by talking about their final stages (number 4 or 5 of the above infrastructure list) is like playing a violin without a body, or to use another analogy, building a house without a foundation and ground floor.

What would be necessary today is an interconnected set of global sensing hotspots that would allow for local, regional, and global players to connect around specific issue areas in order to co-sense, co-inspire and co-create through multi-local prototyping...

Questions for further consideration

Many powerful questions came out in the syntheses of each interview, as well as [the overall synthesis](#). Here is a sample:

- How do we connect to the large wealth flows of the world?
- What is the right project and the right size group, and who are the right people to work with NOW?
- Where do we see opportunities for people to give all of the gifts they have?
- What doors can we open and what invitations can we make now that have the potential

to release pent-up positive energy?

- What beliefs no longer serve us, and what do we have faith in that does?
- How do we move to a place where the vision is so compelling that we have all the funding we need to do what we want right now?
- How do we do give ourselves fully to our work without giving ourselves away in the process?
- What do leadership and teaching look like in a movement based on peer-to-peer relationships?
- How can we weave the younger generations into everything we do? What are young people inspired to do? How can we create more contexts in which youth is empowered to lead?
- How might we shift from competition to collaboration in our search for funding?
- Where are there opportunities for powerful weaving of virtual and in-person networks?
- How might we support more cross-sector connecting, and what sectors are most under-represented in our conversations at this time?

Next steps

- At Bioneers, we will take the insights, questions and energy from this colab into our TRCC meeting and our hosting of the networking space. This inquiry has encouraged us to dig into possibilities for prototyping:
 - Collaborative economic structures that unlock financial flows.
 - Mycelial weaving processes that build connections and community at greater scale.
- We received a strong "yes" on doing more weaving. Does that take the form of another colab, a core offering of TRCC (like HeartSpace) or perhaps something TRCC develops, partners in, or catalyzes in the field?
 - Future iterations might include an expansion of the process:
 - A larger number of interviewees and interviewers
 - Greater diversity among the participants in terms of the roles they play in the movement and the sectors they represent (not just NGOs, but corporations, government and the grass roots), as well as across more traditional dimensions such as age and ethnicity.
 - Additional rounds of conversation where the Movement is invited into the inquiry on a much larger scale.
 - An opportunity for co-creating (i.e. designing prototypes) in addition to co-initiating, co-sensing and co-inspiring.

Detailed Process Description

Planning and design

The core team, consisting of Ben Roberts, Leslie Meehan and Jeff Vander Clute, met regularly beginning in August 2013 to plan and design the inquiry. It was decided that the "hackpad" platform would be used as the primary online tool, especially as a means of sharing the interview output. Interviews were to be conducted using either Skype or MaestroConference. An interview guide was designed and each member of the core team suggested people they thought would be good candidates as interviewees, including both members of TRCC and others outside the "Circle."

Invitation process

The interview prospects were ranked by each team member according to "resonance," and the top twelve were selected to receive invitations for the first round. Sixteen others were ranked as prospects for future interview rounds. The twelve first round prospects were given a range of dates and times from mid-August through September 12th. Invitations were made via email and in some cases a phone follow-up. The three core team members shared this work, although scheduling and most email follow-ups were coordinated by Ben Roberts

Ten out the twelve prospects on the initial list agreed to be interviewed, but in the end, only six were able to make time within the scheduling window. Here are the interviewees (in the order interviewed, hot linked to their respective interview hackpads):

- [Jeff Clearwater](#)
- [Ferananda Ibarra](#)
- [Andrew Himes](#)
- [Carolyne Stayton](#)
- [Peggy Duvette](#)
- [Chris Kukk](#)

The Interviews

Each interview lasted one hour, with the bulk of the time devoted to the three questions in the interview guide:

- Tell a story of a time when you (and your organization) were most inspired, effective and engaged in your work. *Optional follow-ups...*
 - What did you and others contribute to the strength/power of this situation?
 - What did you learn at that time that might be applied to the current moment?
 - How did this experience influence the way that you and your organization operate today?
- What is most alive in your work right now?
- Imagine it is five years from now and you have succeeded wildly in your work--what have you catalyzed in the world?
 - Looking back, what steps did you take five years ago to help bring this about?
 - What resources, partnerships or collaborations were a key to your success?

Ben took the lead as interviewer, Leslie offered an attunement and held space, and Jeff took detailed notes during five out of the six interviews, with Ben acting as scribe on the sixth.

Interview Syntheses

Ben reviewed the interview and created a synthesis of each one as part of their hackpad record. These were made up of Core Themes, Powerful Questions and Resonant Quotes [*see the interviewpads, [listed here](#)*].

Prior to the group conversation on Oct 4, and building upon the notes from each individual interview, Leslie compiled a set of reflections on the interview content and process as a whole, identifying common themes and discussing ways that these resonated for her. Ben expanded on this list and added a number of quotes from the interviews. The result is this

Overall Synthesis pad.

Full Group Conversation

All six interviewees attended a ninety minute MaestroConference call on 10/4, along with the three core team members. This was preceded by a thirty minute attunement. The TRCC Circle and a few other people were also invited, leading to Gretchen Krampf of the Circle also attending.

Process Feedback

Overall, this process worked wonderfully, like being in a warm bath of connectivity and inspiration. The mycelial mat grew thicker, wider and more dynamic. At least a few small mushrooms popped up right away in the form of specific connections and opportunities. Meanwhile we sense that a rich harvest may yet await as the energy and ideas of this group have a chance to flow through our work around Bioneers in the next few weeks and on into the New Year.

It was a significant effort to produce this inquiry. The three core members put in about ten hours each as co-hosts of the interviews and the group conversation, plus perhaps another dozen hours of meetings for planning, design and processing. In addition, Ben spent about twenty hours on the invitation process, setting up hackpads, compiling syntheses and drafting this report. The \$1000 in compensation he received was in line with his expectations. Jeff and Leslie did this work without any direct financial compensation of their time, which they had agreed would be acceptable from the start. *Regardless of the immediate financial flows, the learning, connections made, and inspiration released were priceless.*

There is no sense of wishing we had done anything differently, although there is a clear desire to expand the form, as noted above. Our interviewees said it best:

I'm energized that we're finally talking together. The list of interviewees is impressive. I know there are many more. It's beautiful, well-organized. This process feels very solid and has sustainability in its growth (Peggy Duvette).

This is the freakin' coolest interview I've ever had! (Chris Kukk)