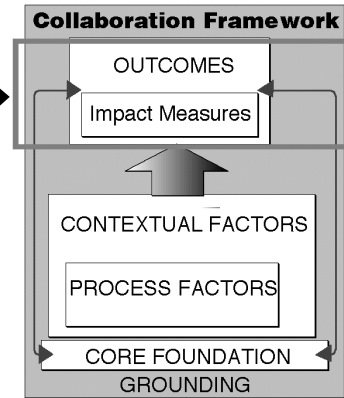




## focusing on outcomes

# unit 3 focus

a look at the fifth element in the Collaboration Framework: outcomes and their impact measures.



- Shared Vision & Outcomes.
- Outcomes & Accountability.
- Identifying Outcomes.
- Developing Outcome Indicators.
- Performing a Force Field Analysis on Outcome Measures.
- Understanding & Identifying Impact Measures.

**Time:** 45 minutes to 4 hours depending upon the number of people, the level of current knowledge, and the manner of facilitation.

**Audience:** 10-50 people collaborating together.

**Equipment:** Overhead projector, paper, pencils, flip chart, felt pens, sticky dots (for voting), colored sticky notes.

## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

### shared vision & outcomes



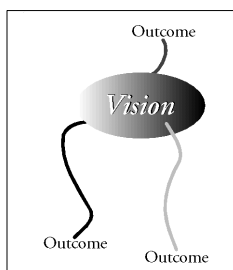
setting direction and focus



agree on outcomes

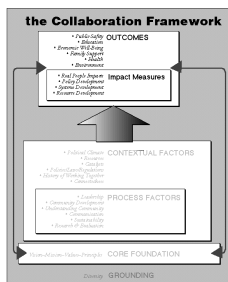


identify the foundation



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- **OUTCOMES:** To introduce the group to the Framework's Outcomes and develop an understanding of the relationship between Outcomes and shared vision.
- **DISCUSS:** Outcomes are the conditions that your collaboration wants to achieve. They are as specific and tangible as possible. In order to clarify the identity and fundamental purpose of your collaboration, all members should be able to clearly understand and articulate the outcomes that are expected through your collaborative efforts.

Because outcomes clearly express desired results they are sometimes confused with the vision of your group. But where a vision attempts to describe a picture of the future which you seek to create, outcomes address specific conditions to be achieved. Ideally, outcomes are identified at the same time as a vision, so there are no inconsistencies between the two. See Unit 2 - Initiating and Advancing Collaborations, for ways in which to develop shared vision, and think about combining parts of Unit 2 with parts of this Unit.

The Collaboration Framework has identified six Outcomes: (1) Public Safety, (2) Education, (3) Economic Well-being, (4) Family Support, (5) Health, and (6) the Environment. Within each Outcome, Indicators such as data counts, change in beliefs or behaviors, or new policies can be developed as short term measures of achievement. Your

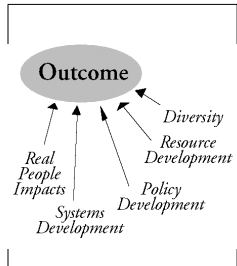


# Unit 3

focusing on outcomes



impact measures



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collaboration may develop all six Outcomes or just the ones that specifically pertain to your goals.

Five Impact Measures have been identified as specific measures related to any Outcome: (1) Real People Impacts, (2) Diversity, (3) Policy Development, (4) Systems Development, and (5) Resource Development. These categories help to articulate results that support sustainable change.

The basis for improving conditions through your collaborative efforts rests upon the group's agreement as to the results you want to achieve. These are the measurable Outcomes for your collaborations and will determine whether or not you are successful.

## outcomes and accountability (from "Shifting To Outcome-Based Accountability: A Minimalist Approach For Immediate Use," by Lisbeth Schorr)



agree on the outcomes

**OUTCOMES**

*Opportunities*

- *Common Understanding*
- *Focus on Vision*
- *Collaborative*
- *Produce Results*

*Challenges*

- *Cause & Effect is Tricky*
- *Difficult to Measure*
- *Skewing Data*

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- **OUTCOMES:** To introduce participants to the importance of outcomes and some of their risks.
- **DISCUSS:** "The current ferment around using outcomes as a way to assess the success of efforts to improve the lives of children and families has given rise to hope, fear, and confusion." -p2.

There is hope outcomes can restore citizen's faith that organizations can accomplish their purpose, fear that equity will be neglected or specific agencies will be penalized for not achieving results; and



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

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confusion about how to devise outcomes and reliable ways of measuring results.

Shifting to Outcomes diminishes our need to develop and adhere to bureaucratic rules that more often than not interfere with our ability to respond effectively and flexibly to a wide range of needs. Outcomes can reflect common sense and a common understanding. They help focus attention on our vision and mission rather than prescriptive rules. Questions shift from "Did you do what they told you to do?" to "Did it work?" A different environment begins to actualize in which we respond to the needs of children and families and communities, rather than being constrained by bureaucratic interests. Outcome information is easily assimilated by citizens and assures funders and the public that our efforts and their investments are producing real results. Common outcomes and outcome measures make collaboration easier, and promote a community-wide "culture of responsibility" for children and families.

There are risks, however, which must be reduced by careful consideration and implementation. Not nearly enough is known about the links between cause and effect, and presently we have real difficulty measuring outcomes. Demands for documented outcomes may drive collaborations or programs to emphasize activities which show rapid results and neglect more important efforts harder to quantify or whose results don't show up as quickly.

- EXAMPLE: "A church-sponsored children's choir or a



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

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recreation center for teenagers may add to a sense of community, and thereby contribute to improved outcomes, without being able to demonstrate a direct outcome impact." -p6.

- DISCUSS: Schorr recommends the following criteria for assembling a core list of Outcomes:
  - (1) Include outcomes considered important and meaningful by skeptics, not just supporters.
  - (2) Indicators that measure processes and capacities (rather than outcomes) are a significant part of your effort.
  - (3) The distinction between outcome measures and process (or capacity) measures should be clearly maintained.
  - (4) The least ambiguous available measure of an outcome should always be used.
  - (5) Outcomes chosen should be able to respond to known interventions, policies, services, or supports.
  - (6) Whether a given measure is an outcome or something else depends upon the nature of what is being measured (for example, the availability of decent, affordable housing could measure the effects of a housing program, or be an input in a community development program, or a factor in a child development program).



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

### identifying outcomes



...outcomes



agree on outcomes

**OUTCOMES**

- *Public Safety*
- *Education*
- *Economic Well-Being*
- *Family Support*
  - *Health*
  - *Environment*

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- **OUTCOMES:** To assist the group in identifying their Collaboration Outcomes.
- **PREPARATION:** Have the group's vision statement on a flip chart (or overhead transparency) somewhere where everyone can see it easily. It may help if the vision is still in draft form and hasn't yet been "wordsmithed", because as the group identifies its outcomes the vision may shift to some degree. If the vision has been completed assure the group that it can be changed if need be - it's their vision.
- **DISCUSS:** There are probably as many different outcomes as there are people to think about them. But let's take a look at some examples for the six identified categories which may help you begin to focus your vision and develop measurable results for this collaboration:
  - (1) Public Safety - Communities are safe, enriching, and participative, with access to essential services.
  - (2) Education - Well educated and capable people along with individual, family and social well-being are ends in themselves.
  - (3) Economic Well-being - Economic diversity exists which generates desirable jobs and higher incomes for citizens.
  - (4) Family Support - Families are competent, self-reliant, skilled and globally knowledgeable. Families are cohesive and nurturing.



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

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(5) Health - A healthy society defined by individuals who are physically and mentally healthy. The harmony of social relations as neighborhoods and places of employment become more heterogeneous.

(6) Environment - Retaining and bettering a quality of life characterized by natural environment, vital communities, accessible services, and responsive political and social institutions.

- **ACTIVITY:** Have the large group select the categories of Outcomes they wish to develop for their collaboration. This may be a couple or all six.

Break into small groups to develop specific outcomes for the collaboration and discuss ramifications and circumstances for each. Each group may take one Outcome category, a few, or all — it is up to you and the group as to what will work best.

Prepare the small groups for the type of report they will need to give back to the large group. Have them select a "singer" and an "artist". The singer will act as spokesperson, and the artist will document the group's recommendations on a flip chart page.

After all small group reports have been given, each participant votes for their priority outcome in each category as a way of prioritizing the collaboration's outcomes. Give each participant a sticky dot for each outcome category and have participants place the dot next to the priority outcome. This is only a way of prioritizing the outcomes, it's up to the group to keep as many outcomes as they deem



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

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necessary.

- **CONSIDERATIONS:** This type of training exercise can be lengthy. Be prepared to offer breaks at different times during the exercise. Be careful small groups not become invested in specific topics - they may not receive votes. There's a danger in taking on too many outcomes early on - encourage limiting the group's first effort to build their confidence through early successes.

### developing outcome indicators



public safety,  
education,economic...



how are outcomes  
commonly measured

Outcome  
Indicators  
are  
Measurable  
Standards  
for Progress

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- **OUTCOMES:** To assist participants in understanding and identifying outcome indicators for the collaboration.
- **DISCUSS:** Indicators are short term measures of achievement with respect to specific Outcomes. Indicators for the examples given in the previous exercise are as follows:
  - (1) Public Safety - lower index in crime rate and increased youth participation in out-of-school programs.
  - (2) Education - an increase in student skill levels and literacy rates.
  - (3) Economic Well-being - an increase in personal income, employment rate increases and contained costs.
  - (4) Family Support - civic and occupational participation, family participation in intergenerational





## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

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support.

(5) Health - improved live birth rates, lower alcohol and drug rates, and numbers of people receiving prenatal care.

(6) Environment - air quality, land use policy, transportation services and available housing.

- DISCUSS: "Benchmarks" is a term being used widely these days regarding standards for measuring progress and performance in areas such as economic development, school dropout rates, crime, teen pregnancy, adult literacy, children living above the poverty line, and air quality standards. States as diverse as Mississippi, Texas and Oregon are embracing the idea of benchmarks to help shift away from the old-style line-item budgeting measuring inputs or what the state is currently spending on programs, to a budgeting system that measure outcomes or the effect of their spending.

Benchmarks focus on results and as such are getting a lot of attention. The idea is catching on at the local level, too. Municipal governments, private business, and non-profit agencies see benchmarking as a way of measuring whether or not they're reaching their goals.

Remember there are risks, which we discussed in the last section, Developing Outcome Indicators: some activities defy precise gauging and may be long-term in nature. Oftentimes we don't know the precise relationship between our intervention strategies and what is actually going on in the "real"



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

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world (We know how to boost childhood immunization rates, but the connection between our activities and child abuse prevention is not nearly as clear.) Any system based on statistical accountability tempts agency heads to skew their numbers or pick those numbers which are most flattering.

Given these caveats, "benchmarks" are here to stay, and are tied intrinsically to any discussion surrounding outcomes. Try to check the availability of data sources for the area in which your collaboration training is taking place, so that you have some specific examples of easily obtained measurable standards to help steer the collaboration as it develops Outcome Indicators.

- **ACTIVITY:** (1) Break into small groups as the group did for Identifying Outcomes, (2) Incorporate the identification of Indicators with Identifying Outcomes and have the group work on them at the same time, (3) Have participants individually develop indicators for one or more outcomes, write them on colored sticky notes and place them on the flip charts of prioritized Outcomes.

### performing a force field analysis on outcome measures (with information from "Intervention and Collaboration", and "The Winning Trainer" by Julius Eittington)



outcomes



how are outcomes commonly measured

- **OUTCOMES:** To assist participants in understanding and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration in relation to its outcome measures.



### Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

- **DISCUSS:** A force field analysis is like a tug-of-war, with forces favoring the change pulling on one side and forces resisting the change pulling on the other. The balance between these forces is never static, as your analysis will suggest. The visual representation of the positive and negative forces at play in relation to a specific goal or outcome is extremely helpful for groups to understand the dynamic balance of relationships surrounding their efforts.

Once an analysis is completed the group can strategize the best ways to reduce the restraining factors and empower the forces favoring their change. It's a tremendously powerful tool. Exploring the worst things that might happen helps collaborations clarify their fears and blockages and often times helps free them up to constructive planning. Understanding the supporting factors within the community can help collaborations move along more quickly and engage willing partners.

- **ACTIVITY:** Using the handout have participants enter a selected Outcome in the top box. Participants list all the forces preventing this Outcome from occurring on the right side of the sheet. These are the restraining forces. On the left side of the sheet participants list all the forces pushing for the change you desire. These are the driving or facilitating forces.



[click on image above for handout and use back button to return to this page](#)

After completing the activity have the participants assess the driving and restraining forces at work and discuss the following questions: (1) Our change strategy is to (a) increase the driving forces or (b)



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

weaken the restraining forces or (c) do both, (2) Explain the rationale for their strategy, and (3) Explain how they will go about implementing their strategy.

- **OPTIONS:** This activity may be done in dyads, triads, or small groups with great effect. Whichever grouping you choose make sure there is enough time, commitment and energy to develop a full analysis. There's a lot to this exercise, and depending upon the expertise and knowledge of participants, they may need more or less guidance. An important result for this activity is to obtain good examples of driving or facilitating forces because they will form the foundation for the next and final activity in this unit — identifying Impact Measures for each selected Outcome.

Another approach to analyzing strengths and weaknesses is to divide a flip chart into four equal quadrants: (1) Strengths in the upper left, (2) Benefits in the upper right, (3) Vulnerabilities in the lower left, and (4) Dangers in the lower right. Use this grid to understand goals or collaborative issues.



real people



how are outcomes commonly measured



identify the foundation

### understanding and identifying impact measures

- **OUTCOMES:** To assist the group in understanding and identifying impact measures for their collaboration.
- **DISCUSS:** Impact Measures highlight the results



IMPACT MEASURES

- Real People Impacts
  - Diversity
- Policy Development
- Systems Development
- Resource Development

[click on image above for handout and use back button to return to this page](#)

which support the change for Outcomes. Five categories of impact measures have been identified: (1) Real People Impacts, (2) Diversity, (3) Policy Development, (4) Systems Development, and (5) Resource Development. Definitions and examples for each follow:

(1) Real People Impacts - The behavior change that occurs within individuals, groups, families and communities. This might include sharing gifts or building community capacity. Example: As a result of a collaboration focused on providing parenting education, child care and a parenting support network, 18 two-parent families and 23 single-parent families are now practicing learned parenting skills and behaviors.

(2) Diversity - The degree to which people value the uniqueness that each person brings to the desired outcome. Example: It has become commonplace in a community for community-wide decision making groups to include in a meaningful way a wide cross-section of youth and adults in its membership.

(3) Policy Development - The evidence of policies and procedures that support and sustain on-going efforts. Example: A collaboration of child care providers, consumers, eight agencies, and four community organizations focused on the issue of providing 24 hour child care for infants through 12 years of age. The collaboration led state-legislated policy to provide matching budget for the services. Policy was developed to provide quality care standards for private childcare providers which sup-



## Unit 3

focusing on outcomes

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ported interdependent relationships with community childcare.

(4) Systems Development - Organizations, agencies and groups of people who work together in a common cause. Example: Teens, parents, schools and agencies joined together to create a new program for teen parents, including mothers and fathers, which provides education, family support, and job skills training.

(5) Resource Development - A range of resources including skills, time, people and money realigned to focus on common issues. Example: In a three county, community-supported effort, a new \$450,000 administration building for private nonprofit social services has been built. A \$120,000 grant with a realignment of existing resources in the community valued at \$320,000 in materials, supplies, and labor was leveraged to complete the structure. The incentive for the community was to provide services with low or no administrative costs to allow more resources to be provided for the people of the community.

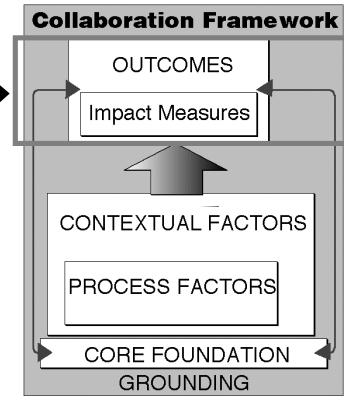
- **ACTIVITY:** Using the results of the Force Field Analysis regarding the driving and facilitating forces, have participants identify impact measures for each Outcome.
- **OPTIONS:** Depending upon how much time the group wants to spend on this exercise, you may facilitate a large group exercise or break into small groups again.



# guide

unit 3

to materials.

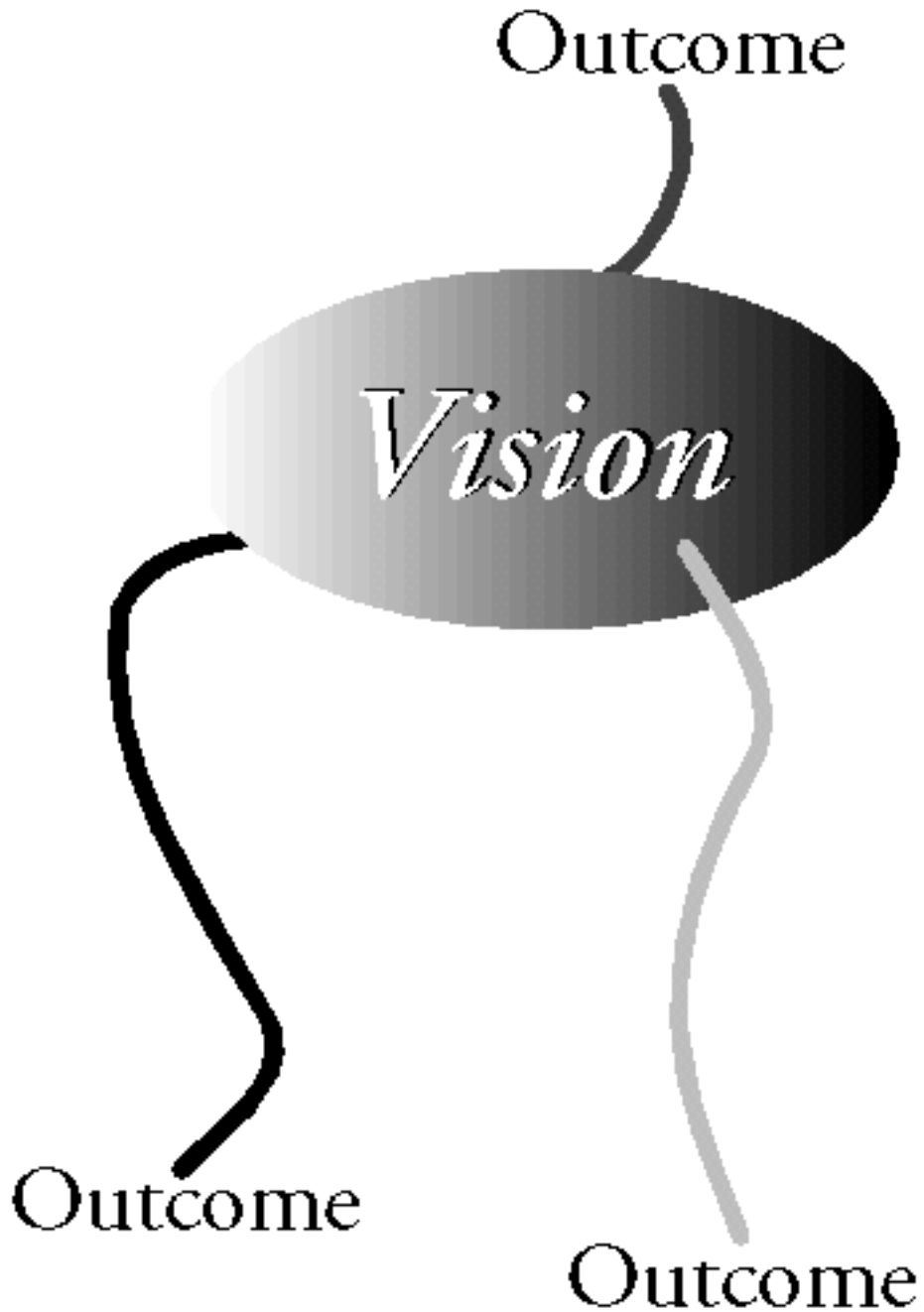


- **Shared Vision & Outcomes.**  
vision & outcomes - framework outcome focus - impact measures for outcomes.
- **Outcomes & Accountability.**  
outcome opportunities & challenges.
- **Identifying Outcomes.**  
Framework outcomes.
- **Developing Outcome Indicators.**  
outcome indicators.
- **Performing a Force Field Analysis on Outcome Measures.**  
force field analysis.
- **Understanding & Identifying Impact Measures.**  
impact measures.

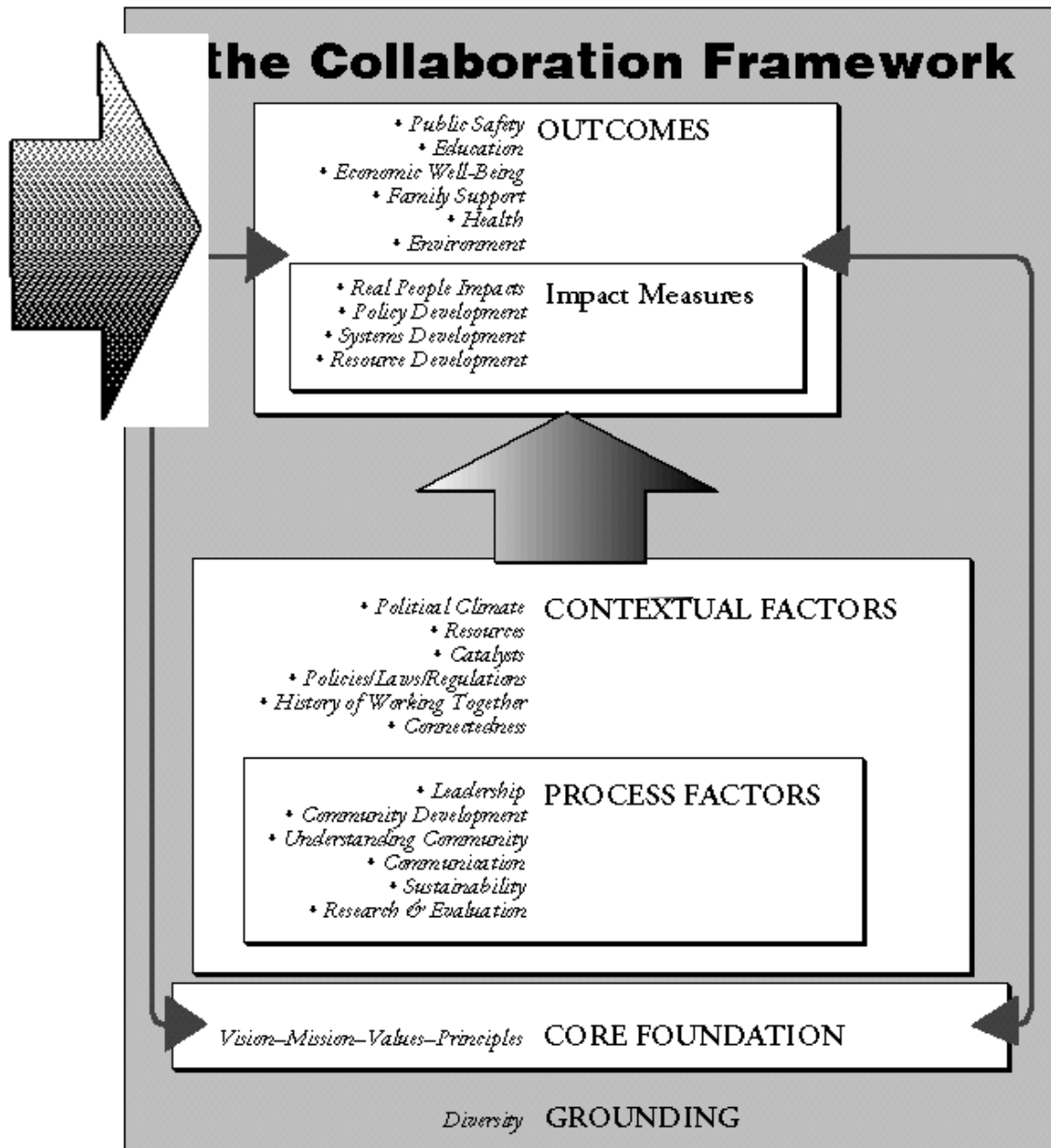


## Unit 3

vision & outcomes







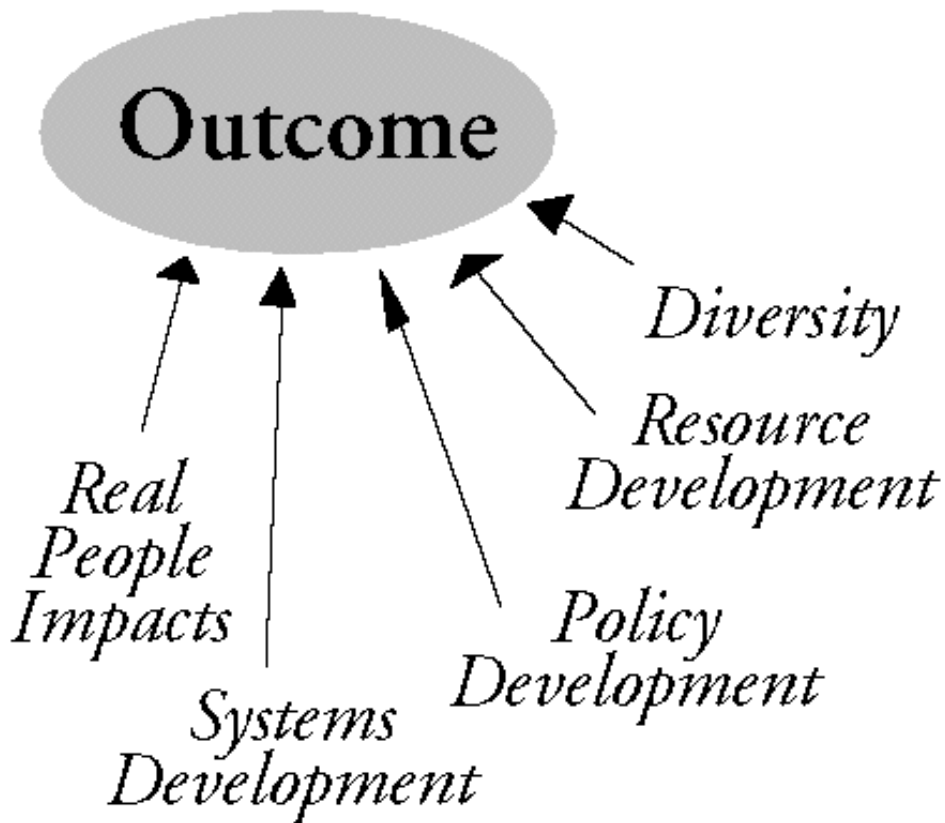
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### Unit 3

impact measures for outcomes

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# OUTCOMES

## Opportunities

- *Common*
- *Understanding*
- *Focus on Vision*
- *Collaborative*
- *Produce Results*

## Challenges

- *Cause & Effect is Tricky*
- *Difficult to Measure*
- *Skewing Data*



## Unit 3

framework

outcomes

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# OUTCOMES

- *Public Safety*
- *Education*
- *Economic Well-Being*
  - *Family Support*
  - *Health*
- *Environment*



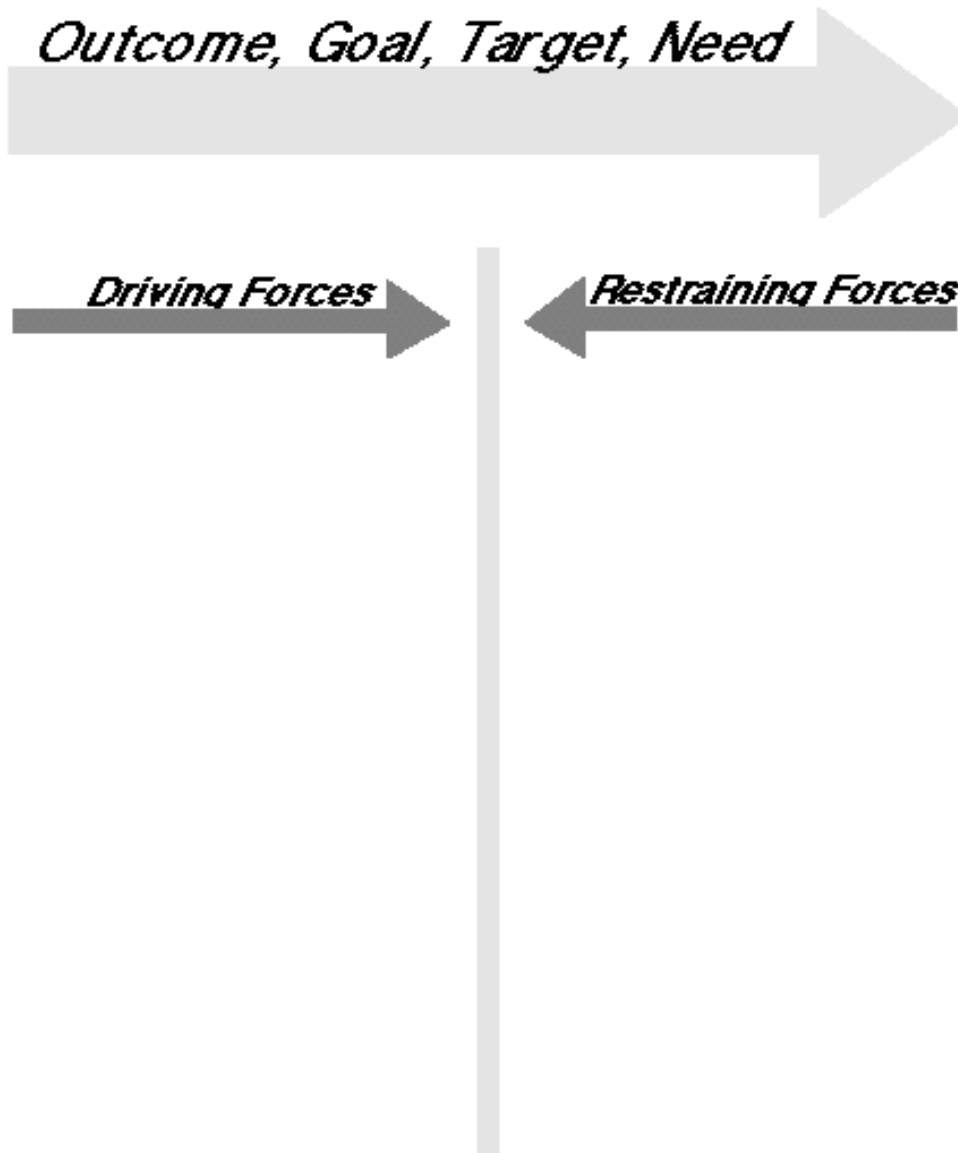
# Outcome Indicators are Measurable Standards for Progress



## Unit 3

force field analysis

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*Note: The length of the line suggests the strength of the force*



# IMPACT MEASURES

- Real People Impacts
  - Diversity
- Policy Development
- Systems Development
- Resource Development