Relationship-Led Economies In Action: Collaborative Pathways to Inclusive Entrepreneurship







Tarsha Hearns

Founder/CEO
Economic Growth Strategies
Former VP of Entrepreneurship
Small Business Majority

- Program Design and Strategy
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Access to Capital Initiatives
- Incubator/Coworking Space Consulting
- Inclusive Ecosystem Building

My why:

"Inspire people to live their dreams through entrepreneurship."

There are many organizations doing great work to meet the needs of their communities, however we often operate in silos. If we can break silos and build trusted relationships then we will have community transformation.



Vice President + Director of Entrepreneurship





- Entrepreneurship-led economic development
- Innovation industry assessment
- Asset mapping
- Business incubator and accelerator feasibility
- Place-based, small area strategies
- Metrics design and program evaluation
- Economic and fiscal impact analysis
- Entrepreneurship advocacy and training

My why:

Economic equity is created through entrepreneurship.

If you help someone **get a job**, you can change their life. If you help someone **create a job**, you can transform an entire community.



Nicola Brown

President, KOKORO
Practitioner in Residence, Bright
Ventures

- Foresight Planning
- Partnership Development
- Incubator, Accelerator- Consulting
- Asset Mapping
- Financial Resilience

My why:

"To solve complex challenges through the power of genuine understanding and human connection."

I believe when we create environments where people genuinely engage, we unlock extraordinary potential for innovation and partnership. By nurturing meaningful relationships in entrepreneurial communities, we can connect different viewpoints, find common ground, and develop solutions that truly work for the people they serve. Through this relationship-centered approach to ecosystem building, we create not just better enterprises—we foster a more connected and considerate world.

Importance of Collaboration



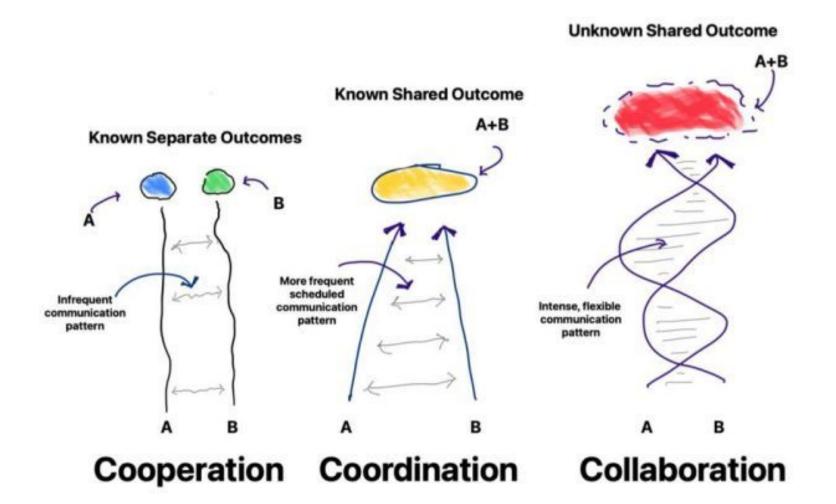


While both coordination and collaboration involve working towards a common goal, coordination focuses on aligning individual efforts and tasks, while collaboration emphasizes shared creation and problem-solving.

	Coordination	Collaboration
FOCUS	Aligning efforts and tasks	Shared creation and problem- solving
APPROACH	Pre-defined processes, clear roles	Brainstorming, discussion, shared decision-making
KEY SKILLS	Basic communication, planning, execution	Advanced communication, trust-building, creativity, conflict resolution
оитсоме	Efficient workflow, achieving specific objectives	Enhanced innovation, knowledge sharing, shared accomplishment

Generative AI Sources.[1] https://www.neostella.com/work-relay/article/coordination-vs-collaboration/ [2] https://asana.com/resources/collaboration-vs-coordination [3] https://emilms.fema.gov/is_0913a/groups/42.html [4] https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-collaboration-cooperation-and-cooperation [5] https://testbook.com/key-differences/difference-between-coordination-and-cooperation [6] https://calbucci.com/collaboration-vs-coordination-why-aren-t-you-achieving-as-much-as-you-could-bd61dc8f1ae8 [7] https://www.hrdconnect.com/

Collaboration Explained: A Practitioner Perspective



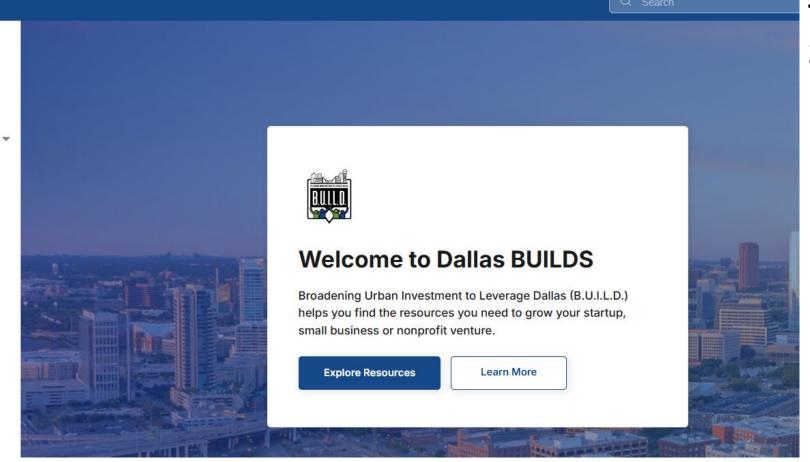


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Both <u>coordination</u> and <u>collaboration</u> play critical yet distinct roles in fostering strong relationships and creating pathways to inclusive entrepreneurship

	SBA ComNav Dallas	Dallas B.U.I.L.D
FOCUS	Hub & spoke model: Hub convened partners, coordinated resources and events	Key community stakeholders co- created an ecosystem focused on women, minorities & veterans
APPROACH	The Hub set strategy, goals, and strategized w/partners on programs	Formed 3 working groups to design a program (TA & grants) to address sustainability and capital
KEY SKILLS	The Hub established communication channels, aligned stakeholders and promoted program	Relationship & trust building, active listening, creating safe spaces, storytelling
оитсоме	Worked together to serve 810 unique clients, 2400 hours of counseling, \$5M in funding	Co-creation of goals. Awarded \$136K in grants



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Solution: A framework for building inclusive ecosystems and connecting founders to resources, capital and technical assistance. Powered by EcoMap.

Partners: City of Dallas, ESOs, CDFIs and Corporations

The Problem 2018-2019

- Access to resources and opportunities were not evenly distributed.
- No comprehensive analysis of the SBO landscape and challenges of Black and Latinx SBOs.
- Ineffective tools connecting SBOs to resources.



COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR DALLAS PROGRAM

Connecting YOU to the resources that matter!

About the Program

The Community Navigator Program is designed to help business owners with financial coaching, finding business training, access to small business loans, and more. We focus on serving women, business owners of color, and veterans.

What We Provide

- financial assistance and access to capital
- · business development
- · industry-specific training

Contact Us







- BUILD Ecosystem pivoted to focus on financial assistance (Grants, PPL, EIDL)
- Six partners including a community college
- Capacity building grants for participating ESOs
- Conclusion of the program showed a \$33M access to capital gap among Black and Latinx SBOs



An Ecosystem for Underrepresented Founders

The Dallas Collaborative for Capital Access (DCCA) is dedicated to convening the entrepreneurial ecosystem to close the access to capital gap by educating business owners on how to increase their chances of securing funding and connecting them to capital providers whose mission is to fund underrepresented small businesses. We will act as resource navigators connecting Southern Dallas businesses with essential capital resources.

Catalyzed by the 2022 <u>Dallas Capital Access Study</u>, which highlighted significant barriers faced by Black and Latinx businesses in Dallas County, revealed that 53% were declined by nonprofit lenders, 31% of entrepreneurs surveyed did not know why their loan applications were declined, and 51% didn't apply due to fear of rejection.

The DCCA will make access to capital more obtainable. Get connected to free training, resources and business support.

GET STARTED

2023 - Current



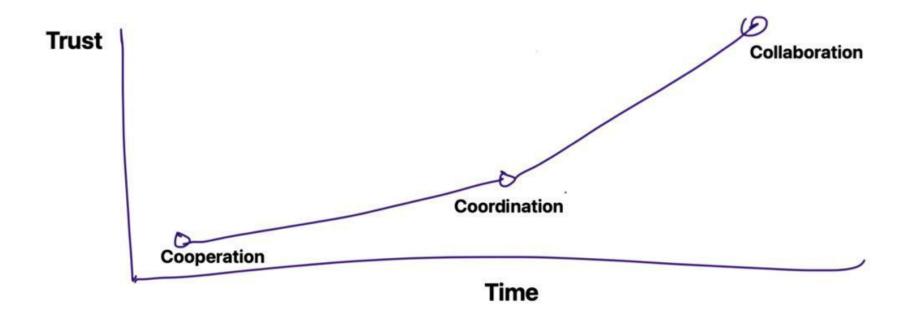
- Loan readiness and preparation
- Focus on connecting to capital providers
- Referral hand-off platform powered by EIC

The Role of Trust





The Role of Trust





Why does trust feel so fragile today?

Institutional & System Disruption

- Declining faith in public and private institutions
- Lack of transparency and accountability

Social + Cultural Division

- Political polarization
- Fragmented communities and civic disengagement

Economic Disconnection

- Inequality and lack of inclusive opportunity
- Promises made and not kept

Information Overload

- Misinformation and media distrust
- Social media echo chambers
- Rise of AI, lack of authenticity

Rate the trust in your ecosystem.

0 - No Trust (Distrust)

Complete lack of confidence; expect dishonesty or harm.

1 - Minimal Trust

Highly skeptical

2 - Low Trust

Some reliability

3 - Moderate Trust

Generally reliable

4 - High Trust

Strong confidence

♥5 - Complete Trust

Total confidence

Economic Development is...

Planning, Organizing, and Acting to Support the Economy

Common end goals:

Job stability and creation

Tax base stability and growth Conveniently available goods and services

Economic prosperity and equity

Supporting community improvements



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH...



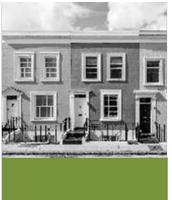
Business Retention & Expansion



New Business Attraction



Infrastructure & Sites



Housing





Targeted Industries & Clusters



& Innovation



Workforce



Supply Chains



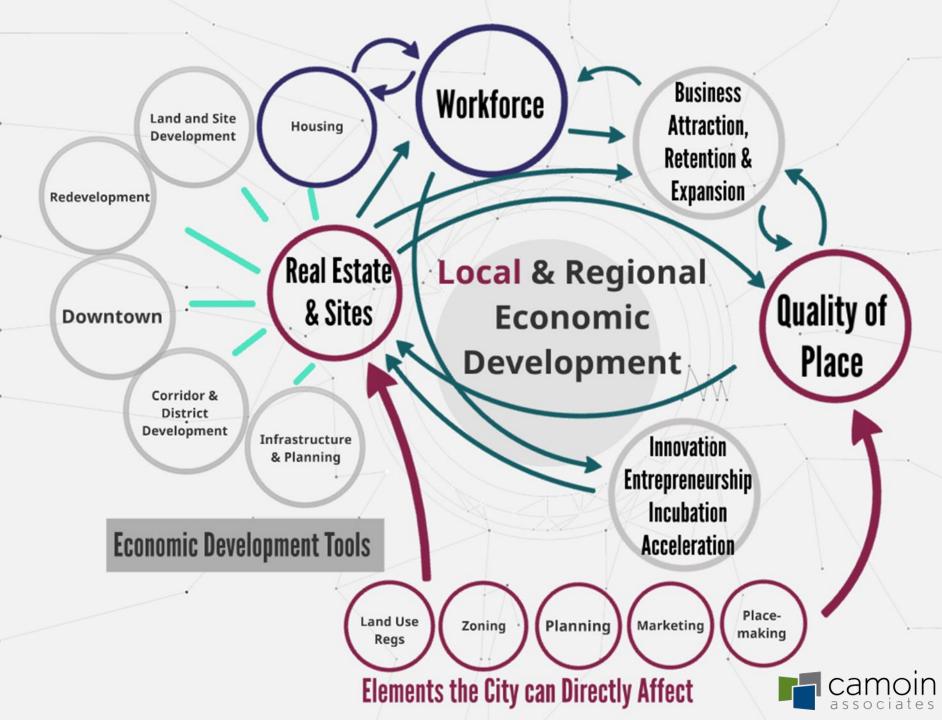
Small Business



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A HOLISTIC SYSTEM

Complex?

Yes – but even this is only part of larger network, ecosystem, meta-networks



Economic Development is more than just goals and tools and programs!

Economic development operates within a dynamic system of:



Key functions: Interactions, relationships, communications, collaboration

Economic development requires TRUST



Rate the trust in your economic development system.

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How do we build trust?

- Clear, Consistent, Communication
- Reliability and Accountability
- Shared Values and Goals
- Empathy and Understanding
- Collaborative Action
- Transparency and Openness
- Communicate a strong "why"

What's a Why, and Why Do I Need One?

Your why is:

The story you tell about your reason for choosing this field or this work.

Purpose:

Our individual stories shape our collective actions.

"You don't want to buy oranges from an apple orchard."

Authenticity matters.

The stories that we remember are those that move us.

Ecosystem development is a long game, we need to be consistent authentic, and memorable.

Elements of My Why:

Main Street Revitalization

Entrepreneurial Energy

Economic Opportunity

What are the elements of your why?

When did you feel most energized or passionate about your work?

What drew you to this field?

Why at your current organization?

Relational Practice

Nicola Brown

In entrepreneurship ecosystems, relationships are the infrastructure (technology) through which:

- → Opportunities emerge
- → Knowledge flows
- → Support becomes systemic
- → Innovation finds fertile ground



Understanding Your Relational Economy

Workbook:

- Relational Mapping
- Current Relationship Inventory
- Relational Commitments
- Pledge





A Curious Guide to Relational Economies

Content Created & Developed by: Nicola Brown, KOKORO Layout Design by: Aaron Moreno

This work is dedicated to all ecosystem builders courageously reimagining economic potential, one relationship at a time.

Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so tomorrow. 'Tis profitable for us both, that I should labour with you today, and that you should aid me tomorrow.

I have no kindness for you, and know you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains upon your account; and should I labour with you upon my own account, in expectation of a return, I know I should be disappointed, and that I should in vain depend upon your gratitude.

Here then I leave you to labour alone; You treat me in the same manner. The seasons change; and both of us lose our harvests for want of mutual confidence and security.

- David Hume, Scottish Philosopher of Human Nature

Contact Us

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