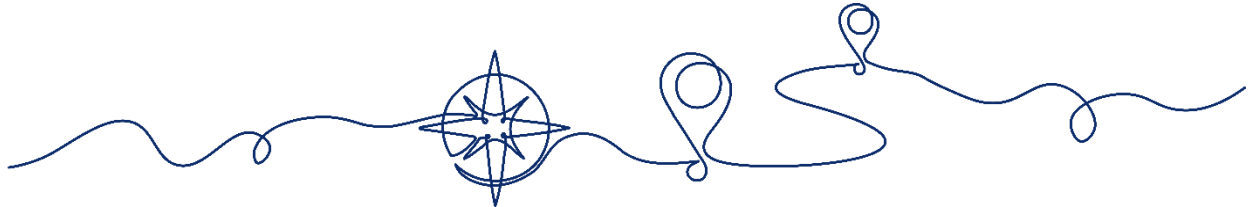


# Stories of Change:

## How a Systems Change Approach is Transforming a Region



### A Reflection & Discussion Guide for the Systems Change Curious

This reflection and discussion guide accompanies the publication [Stories of Change: How a Systems Change Approach is Transforming a Region](#), written by Jessica Conrad with Rotary Charities of Traverse City. This version has been designed for anyone who is curious about systems change. It is meant to be valuable both as an individual reflection tool and/or as a guide for group discussion.

#### Intro & Using a Systems Change Approach (pp. 1 - 12)

- What social or ecological problem(s) are you focused on? Would you describe any of them as *complex* (p. 5)? If so, what makes them complex?
- Stories of Change presents the work of systems change in four phases (pp. 10-11). How is this approach similar to and different from the way you are approaching the problem?

#### Case Studies (pp. 13 – 67)

- The four case studies share the story of changemakers transforming the systems at the heart of complex community issues. Reflecting on the stories, what strengths among the characters stand out most to you, and why?
  - Which of these strengths do you and/or your team already have? Which ones might you want to build?
- The four case studies share the story of changemakers transforming the systems at the heart of complex community issues by *working together differently* and *working on different things* (pp. 19 – 20). What ways of *working together differently* spotlighted in these stories might you like to try more of in your work? What's one action you can take right away?

- Systems change work generally aims to change the policies, practices, resource flows, relationships, power dynamics, and/or mental models that are holding a problem in place. Do you feel like you have an adequate picture of how these factors relate to your problem area? If not, how might you go about getting a more complete picture?

### **Insights from Systems Change in Action (pp. 68 - 71)**

- The following five insights emerged across the four case studies, pointing to the practices that can accelerate changemakers' progress in advancing systems change:
  - Systems change through trusting relationships and clear roles.
  - Systems change when we see them as completely as possible.
  - Systems change when we make equitable power shifts.
  - Systems change when learning becomes strategy.
  - Systems change—bring patience.

Which insight(s) stands out most to you, and why? Which one(s) challenges your understanding of how change happens? Why might that be? What lesson(s) from these insights might you be able to apply right away?

*Did this guide spark any new insights or action? Do you have a question to add or other feedback? We'd love to hear from you! We're eager to connect with and learn from others who are engaged in, or interested in, systems change strategies. Please reach out to Freya Bradford, Rotary Charities Director of Systems Change & Learning: [fbradford@rotarycharities.org](mailto:fbradford@rotarycharities.org), or on [LinkedIn](#)*