

Decentralized Networks & Movements

Lesson: Decentralized Networks & Movements

Networks and movements are systems with structures that are less bounded than organizations so decentralization and leadership happen differently. Attention focused on the power of networks with the emergence of [Collective Impact](#), a model designed by [FSG](#). There have also been many critiques of this model. Ehrlichman describes three types of networks: learning, action and movements.

An example of a learning network is the [Cincinnati Children's Learning Health Network](#) and [Marine Learning Networks](#). Action Networks include [Ouishare](#) and [Greaterthan](#). Movements include [Black Lives Matter](#) and many climate networks such as [350.org](#), [sunrise movement](#) and [Fridays for Future](#).

He describes four principles of network leadership —

- Foster self-organization
- Promote emergence
- Embrace change
- Hold dynamic tensions

Read, Watch, Listen

After viewing the video embedded above, please review the following resources.

- Read Blog [Does Collective Impact Really Make an Impact?](#), Sarah Stachowiak & Lauren Gase, Stanford Social Innovation Review, (08/09/2018)
- Read Impact Networks: Create Connection, Spark Collaboration and Catalyze Systemic Change, [Chapter 3:](#)
- [Download Chapter 3:](#)
- Making Networks Work and [Chapter 4:](#)
- [Download Chapter 4:](#)
- Network Leadership, David Ehrlichman, (2021)

- Watch [Impact Networks: Creating Change in a Complex World](#), (19:07), Converge Channel
- Review [Network Weaver Website](#) and [Blog](#)
- [Network Weaver Handbook: A Guide to Transformational Networks](#), June Holley, (2012)
- [Regenerative Leadership: The DNA of life-affirming 21st century organizations](#), Giles Hutchins and Laura Storm, (2019)

9.1 Exercise: Decentralized Networks & Movements

Research a network or movement such as the examples shared in the Announcement. Consider interviewing someone in the network in addition to online research. Please reach out to MJ if you have difficulty identifying a case. Respond in a blog style post: Is this an effective network: why or why not?

Respond to up to four peers with feedback about their analysis. Is their argument sound? Do they back it up with specific examples that draw from the course material?

Response

For this week's assignment I decided to dive into [The Central Texas Mycological Society](#) with openness, excitement, and curiosity. Initially crossing paths while researching ways of making vegan leather for our makerspace, I bookmarked and filed them away so as to call upon their possible insights when time permitted. I'm not ready to make vegan leather and yet I'm curious to see what they are all about. The week's readings have imprinted in me many preemptive questions beyond the ;What else do they have to offer? Are they an impact network that is a learning network connected to a broader movement network? How do they recruit diversity and make space for a wide array of ideas? Do they have a strong sense of purpose? Is trust apparent? And what are they calling on to emerge?

Their website quickly offers up the vision and mission in the about drop down. *The vision of the Central Texas Mycological Society (CTMS) is to foster recognition of the field of mycology as a beneficial ally in the effort to restore and sustain the resilience of the natural world in the general public. Our mission is to strengthen the conservation, awareness, and study of Mycology in the communities of Central Texas by creating a member self-directed non-profit organization, CTMS.* A clear statement of ecological service through a non hierarchical communal structure intent. Their leadership circle re-emphasizes the organization's shared leadership ethos: *CTMS is currently a volunteer-run, sociocratic-circle organization, with leadership circle of ~30 rotating*

members. We meet online and in-person once a month. Governance that seeks to create psychologically safe environments and productive organizations. Up front, they pursue psychological safety, a core tenant of impact networks, and their meeting style allows people from all over to participate.

Further inspection implies that they are indeed a learning impact network. They offer free or low cost educational opportunities through classes at regional universities, guest speaker lectures, regional workshops, and forays into the field. Additionally, they provide and support amateur and professional research opportunities to broaden the regional ecosystem awareness and understanding. More than lecture, they give participants a real world chance to see and make impactful change. These efforts are needed more than ever in our current time of immense environmental degradation and decline.

CTMS offerings are broad, available, decentralized and impactful learning networks. And they are a part of two broader movement networks with a shared purpose. [North American Mycological Society](#) and the [Fungi Foundation](#). All pursuing increased biodiversity, improved health, and improved ecological practices through a broad array of non hierarchical approaches. Moving forward, and as time permits I plan to fully invest and participate with their worthy purpose to feel what can emerge.