



Unlikely Avengers

Kaseina Dashe
FEF-OSC Workshop
May 2025

The CHALLENGE – Working in Silos

- In the social impact sector, we often find ourselves grouped according to themes such as education, gender, climate & health
- This makes a lot of sense. **But there's a catch!!!**
- These **silos**, while administratively efficient, can become walls. They unintentionally limit how we **connect, share, and innovate**. And in doing so, we miss opportunities for **synergy, shared learning**, and even **amplified visibility**.

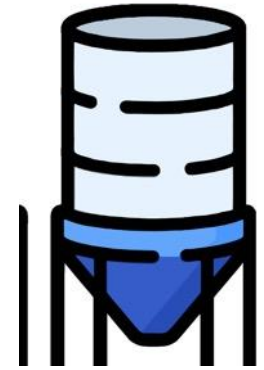


Photo Credit: [vecteezy.com](https://www.vecteezy.com)

The PURPOSE: Advantegous Positioning

- This game is **NOT** just an icebreaker or team-building exercise.
- ✓ It is a **strategic disruption** of the usual ways we relate to one another as grantees and practitioners.
- ✓ It is grounded in the idea that collaborative advantage often lies at the edges of our differences, not just within our similarities.
- ❖ The goal here is to discover:
 - Hidden intersections
 - Synergies we can leverage
 - New stories we can tell together



The WHY – Theoretical underpinnings

- **The Contact Hypothesis** - first proposed by Gordon Allport (1954) is a psychological theory asserts that **structured, cooperative interaction** between members of different groups reduces prejudice and fosters empathy.
- **Complex Adaptive Systems Theory:** According to John Holland (2006), innovation often emerges not from tightly controlled systems, but from **interactions between diverse, adaptive agents**. In other words, complex solutions come from unlikely conversations.
- In his 2020 book **Crossing Boundaries: Work and Industrial Relations**, **Russell Lansbury** explores the evolution of work and employment relations over the past 50 years, highlighting the importance of crossing disciplinary boundaries in a rapidly changing world.



Let's EXPLORE → Real-life Scenarios

Scenario 1: Mental Health Meets Climate Justice

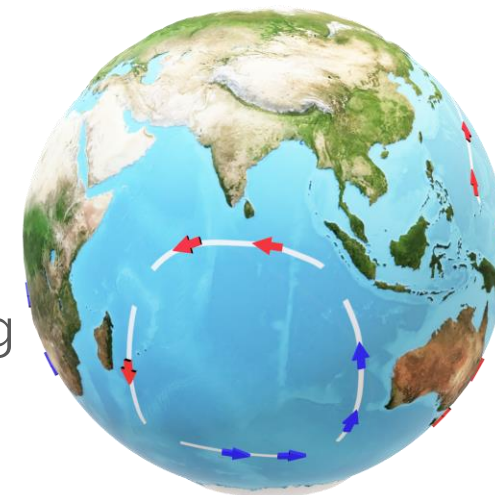
- A mental health initiative and an environmental sustainability project discover they are both working in a community heavily affected by climate anxiety and grief as a result of decline in rainfall and loss of crops. What can they do together?

Scenario 2: Gender Rights Meets Digital Inclusion

- A women's empowerment NGO and a digital literacy startup realize they can help women in rural areas tell their stories using accessible technology. How can they work collectively?

Scenario 3: A Plot Twist!

- A post-incarceration reintegration NGO and a food justice group believe they have nothing in common. What type of idea can they collaborate on?



One last thing ...

Before we dive in, I invite you to consider this:

- *“What if the move that takes your mission to the next level isn’t someone working on the same thing—but someone working on something **completely different?**”*
- This activity isn’t just about fun—it’s about experimenting with **what’s possible** when we stop asking, “**Who’s like me?**” and start asking, “**Who can I learn from?**”
- This is like the DISCOVERY channel. **Anything is possible!**



The BRIEF: Build Bridges →



The world has been hijacked by a terrorist group of alien villains. We need the **AVENGERS** to solve the **TASK** and save the day

TASK: Gather the Avenger troops

- One **word** to describe what your FEF projects have in common (Write)
- One **emoji** to describe your team (Draw)
- One **pidgin** word for the greatest challenge that all your projects have in common (Write)
- Imagine there's a funder in the room, write One **sentence** describing a project Idea that you can collectively work on (Write)
- One **sentence** to justify to the funder why this idea deserves funding (Write)
- Take a team selfie



Group Reflection: The **RESULTS** are in!



Personal Reflection time

Respond to the following (**One (1) sentence** each):

1. **The Surprise:** 1 thing that surprised you the most during the game
2. **The Learning:** 1 thing you have learnt from the game
3. **The Application:** 1 thing that you can do going forward



*Thank
You*