

Leadership in conversation with Jon Stokes, Nigel Ball and Ian Taylor interview transcript

The Ordinary Hope project, delivered in partnership between UCL Policy Lab and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, argues that the big change needed to tackle the growing social and economic issues facing millions will not come from government or civil society alone. It will require deep collaboration across sectors and need leaders who can respond to this challenge. The project is supported by a diverse group of individuals – from movement builders and journalists to researchers and pollsters – who all believe in this vision and are working together to scope and deliver this work. Here, co-project manager, Yasmin Ibison, speaks to three of them about the changing landscape of cross-sector collaboration, what defines collaborative leadership and how to balance questions of power, trust, and ethics. Below is an edited extract from that conversation.

So, let's start with you all introducing yourselves...

So, I'm a clinical psychologist. I previously worked in the ^KTavistock Clinic before getting interested

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There are frameworks in the book that seek to help people understand different perspectives and manage them. For example, stakeholder analysis, which Professor Van de Ven came up with in the 90s, is a framework of 6 dimensions of stakeholders. You can use it with your colleagues, partners and think about all the different aims that you have as a collective entity and as separate entities and individuals. You can look at the results and decide whether there is an alignment of interests. Tools like this will help surface any underlying tensions and help build trust and transparency.

I think very closely linked to this concept of trust is the concept of process. If you want to build trust, you need to build a sequence of events that progressively reveal to others what's the kind of practical route to building trust. We talk a bit about this in the book. It's going for some time, some of us have been doing it for a while. It's not always easy, but if it seems a bit trivial, it's worth trying. It's a bit of a process, but you can do it.

It's also useful for a group to have a check in somewhere in a meeting, possibly at the start, where you ask 'How is everybody doing?' because people will often be dealing with all sorts of emotions.