

# The Ogre Story

## Explaining “lasting changes in community conditions”

*For a Community Impact United Way, “community impact” is  
“Improving lives by mobilizing communities to create lasting changes in community conditions.”*

*The relationships among the three parts of this definition can be shown like this:*



*The meaning of the middle box can be hard to explain.  
This story brings the idea of “lasting changes in community conditions” to life.*

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A villager is walking by the river early one morning. The villager looks out into the water and sees a baby floating down the river. Horrified, the villager races into the water, grabs the baby, and brings the baby to shore. The baby is fine.

Relieved, the villager looks back into the water and sees another baby floating down the water. The villager again dives into the water and rescues this baby as well.

Once more, the villager looks into the water . . . and sees dozens of babies floating down the river. The villager calls out an alarm, and the entire village comes running to the river to rescue as many babies as they can before the water carries them away.

This is a village that is mobilized. Every villager is at the river, trying to save the babies from the water.

This is a village that is improving lives. Many of the babies are being saved.

But the babies keep on coming . . . because no one is going upstream to put a stop to the ogre that is throwing the babies into the water in the first place.

United Way needs to gather a contingent of villagers to go upstream and stop the ogre.

Otherwise, we will be pulling babies out of the water forever.

Pulling babies out of the water is essential. How can we live with ourselves if we don't try? But it is by going upstream — to re-direct the ogre and put its energies to better use — that we create a *lasting* change in the conditions that are causing this nightmare to begin with.