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OVERVIEW

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2. Collective Impact Key Ideas
3. Core Principles for Community Change
4. Summary of Current Work
5. Example: Ready by 21 Theory of Change

A BIG PICTURE APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ACTION

Community partnerships, collaborations, and stakeholder groups use the stages and steps shown below to identify current community work and partners, gain a clear understanding of priority issues, identify root causes, achieve consensus for needed change, and adjust interventions until desired results are achieved.

The Forum for Youth Investment works with leaders to build their capacity to inspire and mobilize action at multiple levels — from neighborhood and issue-specific coalitions to provider networks and over-arching leadership councils. For each of the five steps outlined here, leaders learn the clear standards, organizing questions, facilitation tools and techniques, data collection methods, and analytic approaches that link each step to the next and position their group for collective impact.

What makes a community change effort "big picture?"

A Big Picture Approach takes a whole person or whole family perspective instead of a disease-specific or issue-centered one.

Communities naturally coalesce around pressing issues such as substance abuse, crime, school readiness, high school graduation, income security or homelessness. Personal experience, community tragedies or new data bring these issues to a community's attention and become a moral call for collective action. It is tempting to focus on the "hot topic," but no one experiences problems in isolation or "one at a time." Problems must be viewed as connected and understood as they are actually experienced in the day-to-day context of a child or family's life .

A *big picture approach* makes it more likely that a community can move outcomes for any one of these specific issues by addressing the problem from a child- or family-centered point of view.

A Big Picture Approach promotes alignment with other community actors and partnerships.

The first response by concerned community stakeholders is often to form a new group, partnership or coalition. The result is that most communities have more partnerships than they can sustain – sometimes upwards of 50. These partnerships can be an important venue for collective action, but not if they remain disconnected from each other and from broader community goals. Their respective work must be aligned to maximize their collective impact.

A *big picture approach* looks to existing actors and coalitions before starting new efforts. A *big picture approach* follows key steps that promote alignment with broad community goals and with the work of other community actors and initiatives. *Big picture* does not mean that everyone does everything. It means that issues are not tackled in isolation and that solutions are not implemented alone.

A Big Picture Approach focuses on root causes, underlying conditions and broader systems change to create lasting differences in population outcomes.

Faced with a moral call to action many community groups jump to selecting "evidence-based" interventions. While implementing the best of what is known is a requirement of good community work, an accurate diagnosis must precede the selection process. As in medicine, an incorrect diagnosis can lead to prescriptions for action that fail to address real causes and fail to produce desired results.

A *big picture approach* assures a localized and data-based diagnosis anchors the choices a community makes for needed action.

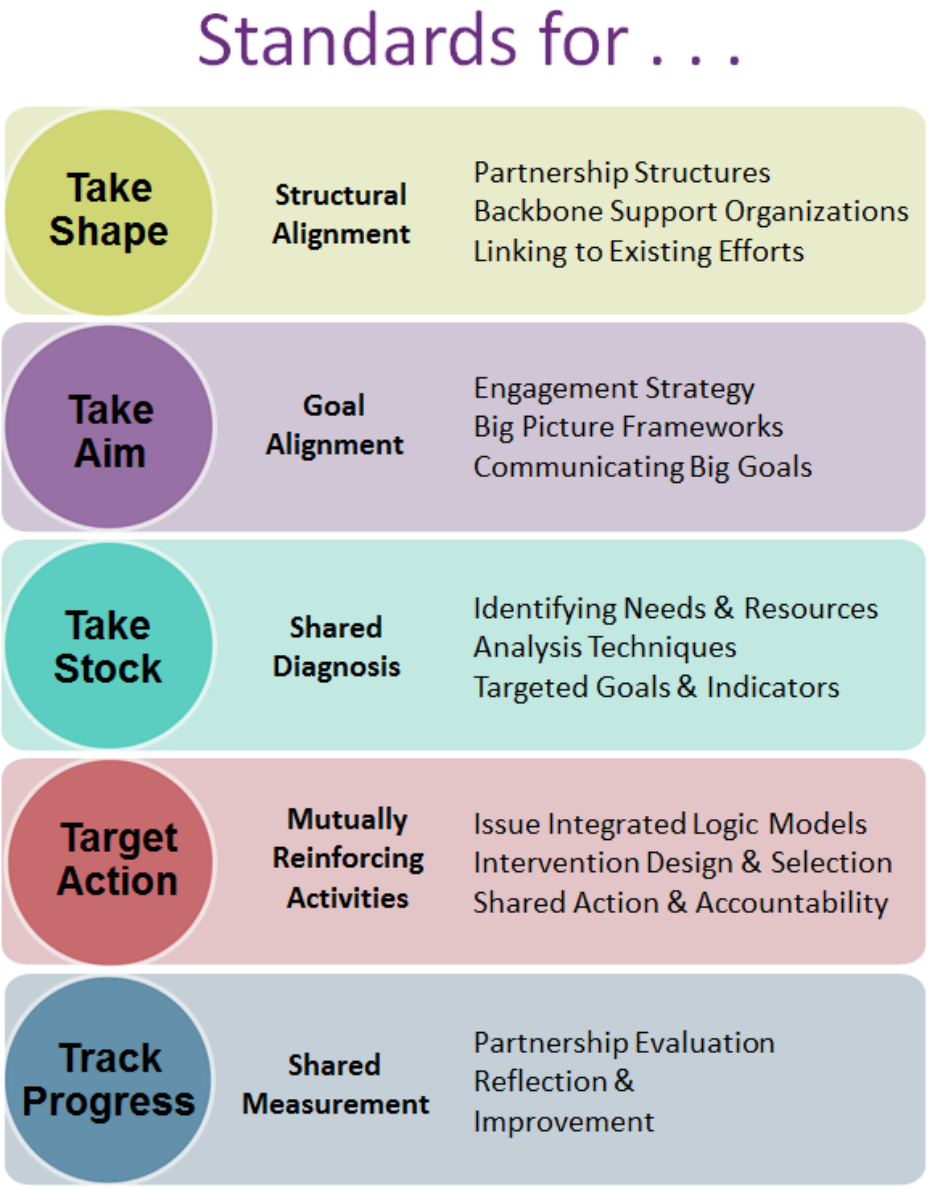
A Big Picture Approach puts pressing problems into a broader and long-term aspirational frame while committing to public accountability for progress.

Measuring impact is key, but it will take some time before community-level concerns respond to collective action. Sustaining community action therefore becomes imperative. Often problem-oriented initiatives struggle to sustain their efforts as communities fatigue from being the "no-fun police" (such as in the case of youth problem behaviors like substance abuse, juvenile delinquency or teen pregnancy). In the end, we all aspire to achieve positive goals for our children and families, not just to avoid specific problems.

A *big picture approach* tackles pressing problems directly while couching the overall effort in aspirational terms and as the pursuit of goals communities hold for long-term well-being.

A big picture approach helps align community efforts…

Each phase of the process (take shape, take stock, take aim, target action, and track progress) assures different aspects of alignment are realized.



The steps required to Take Shape promote structural alignment within and across levels of community action – ensuring transparent and appropriate connections between organizations and coalitions already engaged in the work.

The steps for Taking Aim promote goal alignment across all engaged partners.

Taking Stock assures that all partners and their members have a shared understanding of root causes and underlying conditions – a shared diagnosis.

The steps to Target Action assure that the interventions and activities pursued by multiple community actors are mutually reinforcing.

Finally, Tracking Progress sets the stage for shared measurement which strengthens all steps and provides a platform for assessing collective impact.

…and helps link efforts across multiple levels.

The five steps of community change management are relevant for community change efforts at all levels – ranging from top-level leadership groups to neighborhood coalitions.

Over-Arching Leadership Councils:

P-20 Councils, Children's Cabinets, Healthy Community Coalitions, and Poverty Reduction Task Forces are just a few examples of the kinds of broad leadership groups that are put in place to act as "coalitions of coalitions," linking together multiple networks and systems that are each focused on major pieces of a complex goal. P-20 Councils, for example, work to connect early childhood education to K-12 and higher education. *A big picture approach* is critical to creating the nested infrastructure necessary to link efforts at multiple levels under these umbrella structures.

Population-Focused Partnerships:

Success By 6 is one of the most prominent examples of a multi-issue or age range partnership. The goal of tackling all relevant barriers to health and well-being for an age group is one that is repeated at different points in the age continuum. A *big picture approach* provides a way to make sure that the issues considered for a particular age group are defined as broadly as possible and ensures that the partnership thinks about opportunities for alignment and connection with adjacent age group partnerships.

Provider Networks:

The importance of out-of-school time to the learning and development of young people has given rise to Out of-School Time Networks and these are just one example of the power service and support providers can realize through collective planning and action. A *big picture approach* provides a way for service providers to align their work with complementary community strategies such as policy and environmental change.

Single Issue Coalitions:

Many communities have a teen pregnancy, drug-free communities, immunization, active living, or literacy (to name just a few) coalition actively working to achieve population-level goals. These coalitions can tackle their individual issues in a *big picture* way and are more likely to see outcomes if their efforts are aligned and coordinated.

Neighborhood Organizing:

Promise neighborhoods, opportunity zones, and neighborhood improvement associations are typical examples of neighborhood-level organizing and are important venues for collective action. Place-based organizing requires alignment with broader community-wide efforts as many of the policies, programs, and practices that must be changed for the better are under the control of extra-neighborhood forces.

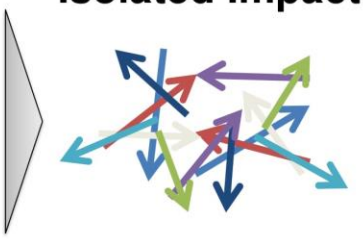
the forum FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

Collective Impact Overview

Traditional Approaches Are Not Solving Our Most Complex Social Problems

- Funders select **individual grantees.**
- Organizations **work separately** and **compete.**
- Corporate and government sectors are often **disconnected** from foundations and nonprofits.
- **Evaluation** attempts to **isolate** a particular organization's impact.
- Large-scale change is assumed to depend on **scaling organizations.**

Isolated Impact



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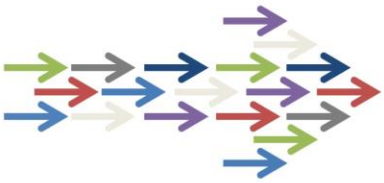
Imagine a Different Approach –
Multiple Players Working Together to Solve Complex Issues

Collective Impact



- Understand that social problems – and their solutions – arise from **interaction of many organizations within larger system.**
- **Cross-sector alignment** with government, nonprofit, philanthropic and corporate sectors as partners.
- **Organizations actively coordinating** their action and sharing lessons learned.
- All working toward the **same goal and measuring the same things.**

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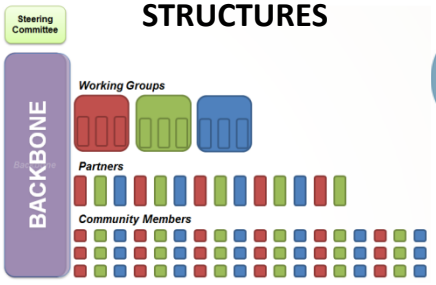
Achieving Large-Scale Change through Collective Impact Involves Five Key Elements

1. **Common Agenda** — All participants **share a vision for change** that includes a common understanding of the problem and a **joint approach** to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions
2. **Shared Measurement** — All participants agree on how to **measure and report** on progress, with a **short list of common indicators** identified and used to drive learning and improvement
3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities** — A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, **coordinate a set of differentiated activities** through a mutually reinforcing plan of action
4. **Continuous Communication** — All players engage in **frequent and structured** open communication to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation
5. **Backbone Support** — An **independent, funded staff** guides the initiative's vision and strategy, supports aligned activities, establishes shared measurement practices, builds public will, advances policy, and mobilizes resources

Creating the Conditions

For Collective Impact

PEOPLE ✖ ✖ **CULTURE** ➡ **CONDITIONS**

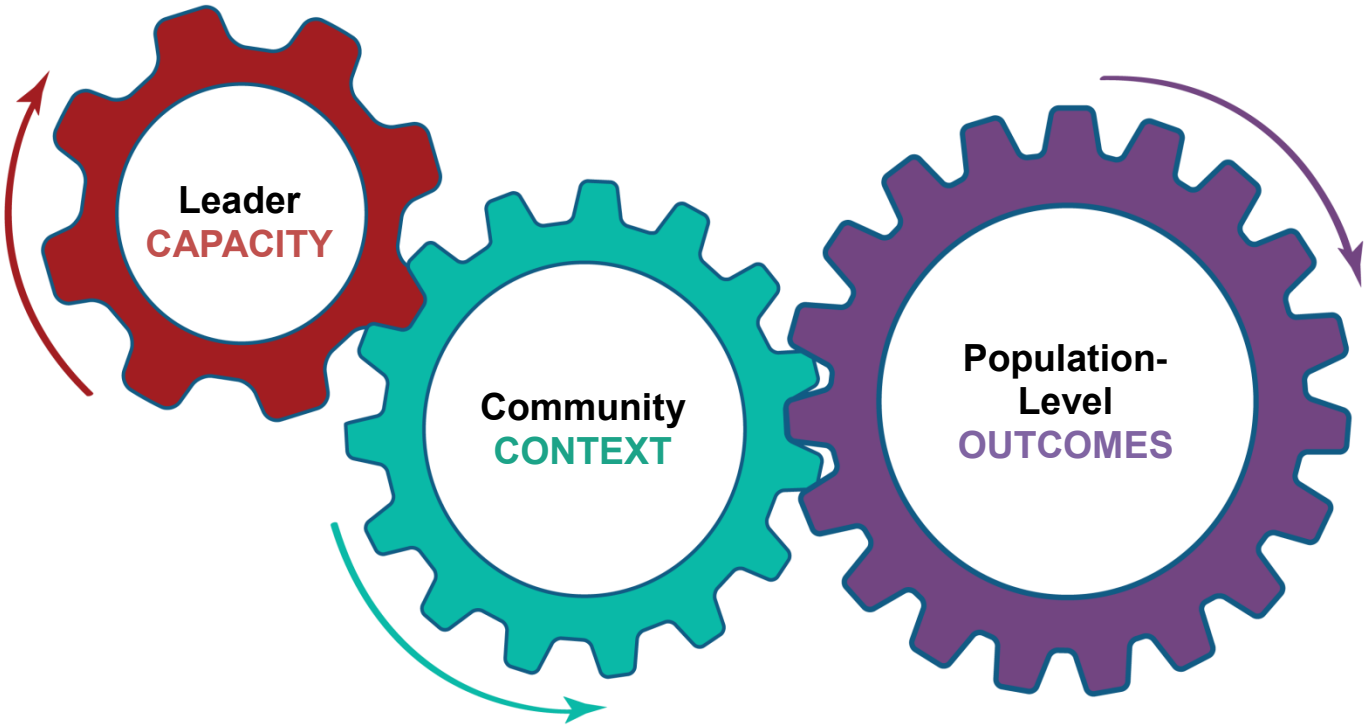


Mindset Shifts

- ***Adaptive***
- ***Evidence & relationships***
- ***Shared Credit***
- ***Content & context***
- ***'Silver Buckshot'***
- ***Whole person***
- ***Seeks alignment***
- ***Local diagnosis***
- ***Aspirational***

Sources: FSG and Forum for Youth Investment

BIG PICTURE: Core Principles for Community Change



About Leaders

- See people as change agents, not clients.
- Engage all sectors & stakeholders.
- Coordinate efforts, align resources.
- Help partners understand & embrace complexity.
- Inspire & inform the public.

About Community Context

- People live in families and communities, not programs.
- To reduce problems & promote development, both personal & environmental factors must be addressed.
- Community ecology matters – across times, places & systems.
- The quality of supports matters as much as their reach & coordination.

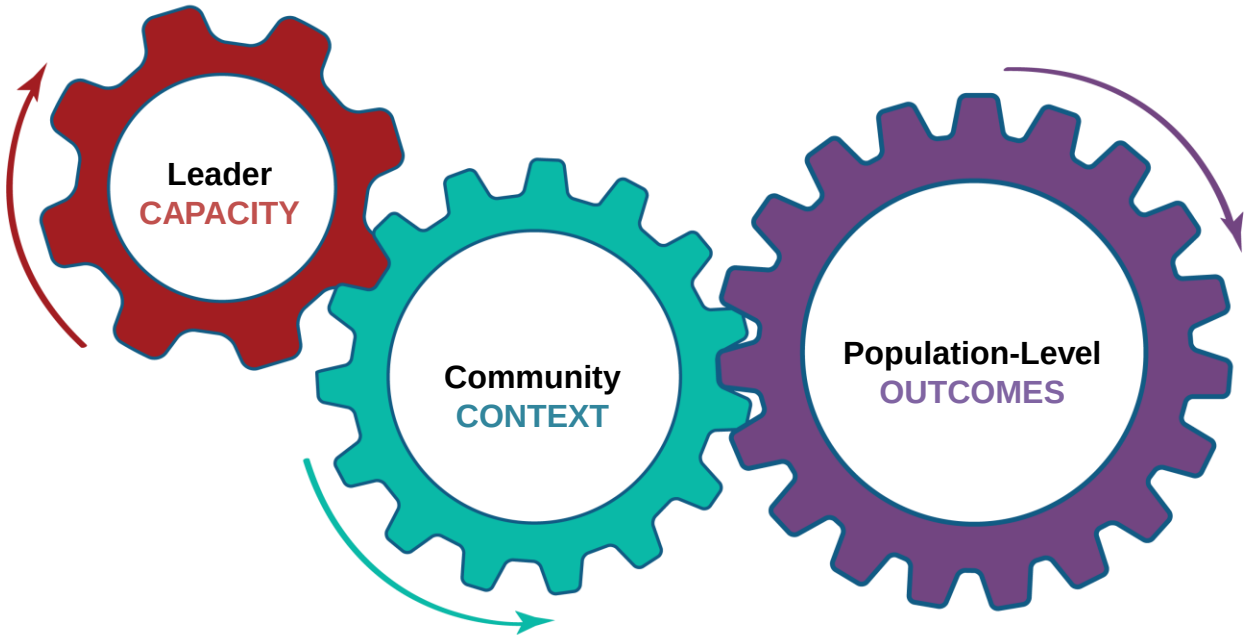
About Focus Populations

- Invest early & sustain investments over time.
- Support the whole person or household.
- Focus attention on those most in need.
- Build on strengths, don't just focus on problem-reduction.

BIG PICTURE: Summary of Current Work

INSTRUCTIONS – PART ONE:

1. Interview another participant about their work
2. Listen for the *who*, *what, how, where* and *why*.
3. Take notes against the picture below.



WHO?	WHAT & HOW?	WHY? FOR WHOM?
Who are you working with to bring about change? What is your leadership group? What are their strengths?	What are you trying to change in your community? What resources or supports are you trying to improve?	Who are you trying to impact? What outcomes do you want to see improved?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

INSTRUCTIONS – PART TWO:

Exchange pages. For your own work, make a short summary statement by filling in the blanks below.

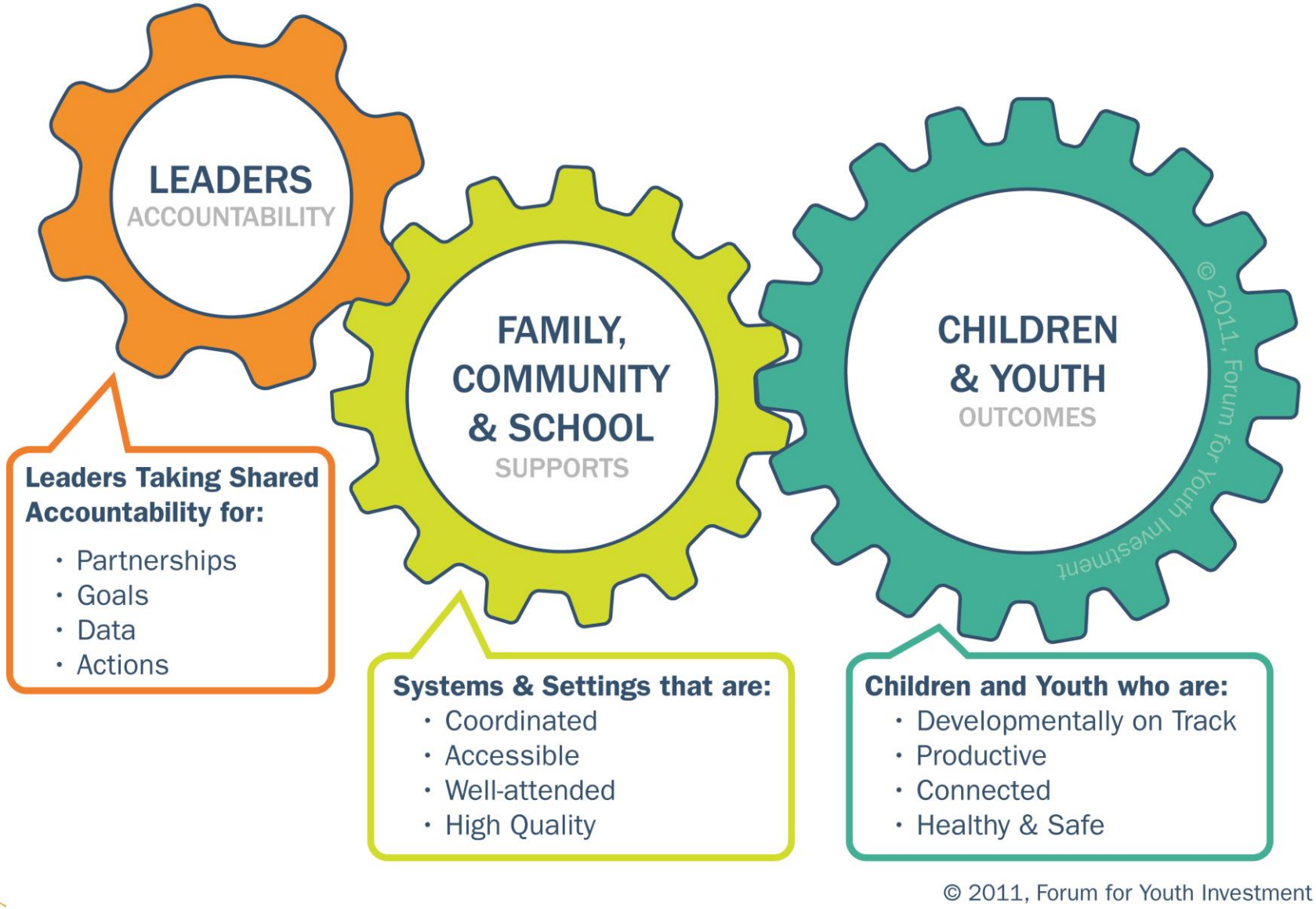
We are _____*(leader group)*

We are working to _____ so that _____*(population)*

will be _____ *(outcome).*

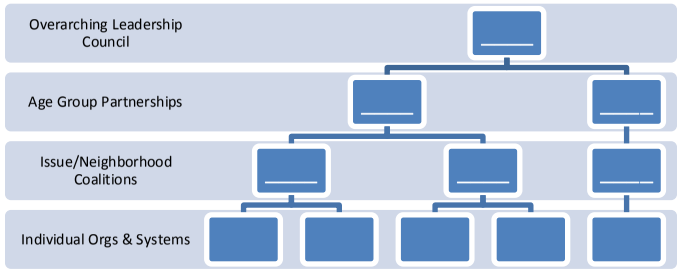
NOTE: *We will be turning this statement into a more specific theory of change and logic model over the course of the training.*

Ready by 21 Theory of Change



Ready Leaders

Civic Management Infrastructure



Leadership Capacity Standards

Broader Partnerships

- Build an overarching leadership council
- Align and strengthen coalitions, commissions and intermediaries
- Engage key stakeholders in setting priorities and solving problems

Better Data

- Collect complete data about youth outcomes, community supports and leadership actions
- Align and connect data for decision-making
- Use the best information about what works

Bigger Goals

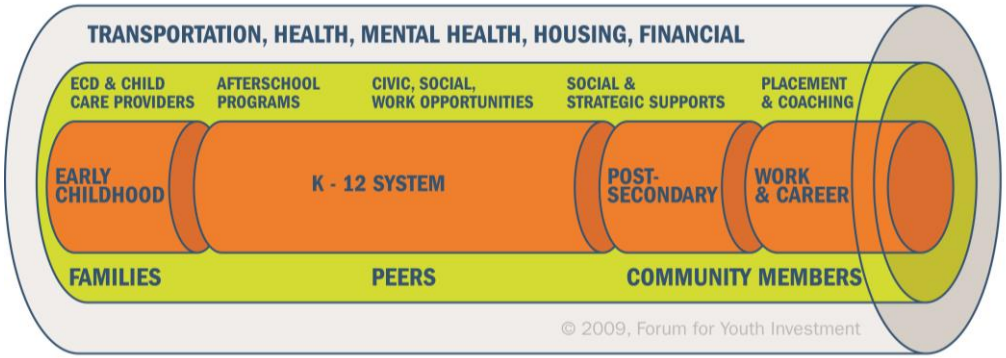
- Establish a balanced set of goals and indicators for all children, youth and young adults
- Define supports that the full community must provide
- Create a big picture, goal-oriented action plan
- Define common terms and communicate core messages

Bolder Strategies

- Improve systems and settings
- Align policies and resources
- Increase demand
- Engage youth, families and community members in solutions

Ready Communities

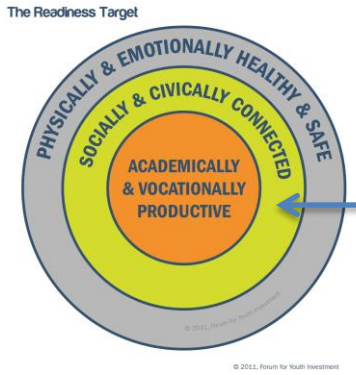
Insulated Education Pipeline



National Research Council's Features of Development Settings

- Safety
- Structure
- Opportunities to Belong
- Positive Norms
- Support for Mattering
- Opportunities for Skill-building
- Integration of Family, School, Community

Ready Youth



Socially & Civically Connected:

List adapted from the Partnership 21st Century Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation

Gallup Student Poll Measures:

- Hopeful
- Engaged
- Thriving

TAKE SHAPE – *Structural Alignment*

A. FORM

Potential partners should understand the key role local coalitions play in the work of child and youth development, education, health and well-being, and community economic development. Specifically, local leaders should be able to determine representative membership, facilitate a shared vision, define the agenda, anticipate needed resources and begin the process of creating or expanding a formal structure and business plan for the effort. If possible, partners should identify and build on existing infrastructure.

Materials:

1. Big Tent Stakeholder Wheel: You and Your Partners
2. Big Tent Stakeholder Wheel
3. Example: Local Action Planning Team Worksheet (Mass. Success4Life)
4. Partnership Characteristics and Functions
5. Collective Impact Infrastructure: Structuring for Intentionality & Uncertainty
6. Partnership Roles
7. Backbone Support Organizations – Activities & Types
8. Community Catalyst / Backbone Support Diagnostic
9. Backbone Effectiveness: 27 Indicators
10. Steering Committee & Working Group Traits & Responsibilities
11. Example: Palm Beach County

B. CONNECT

An effective community partnership infrastructure connects multiple levels of leadership from top-level to frontline, including policy makers, professionals, community members, families and young people. This helps to ensure that those that need to deliver on the strategies are informing and invested in the goals and solutions from the outset. Collective impact efforts should build on and intentionally link to the work of existing coalitions, networks and task forces.

Materials:

1. Mapping Coalitions, Networks and Other "Moving Trains"
2. From Program Performance to Collective Impact

TAKE SHAPE – *Structural Alignment*

Why this is important

- Decisions about **membership and structure** determine the horsepower of the engine that will drive the collective impact effort. It is important to be transparent and deliberative about these decisions. Moving too quickly can send signals that commitments to find and connect to the diverse leaders needed are not serious. Moving too slowly (e.g. letting the temporary design team stay in place past its prime) can send the same signal.
- Not taking the time to learn about **existing efforts** whose leaders have already been toiling away at the issue not only leads to missed opportunities to tap into existing momentum and resources. It can also build resentment, even if it not publicly expressed.
- Collective action is at the core of collective impact. **Membership and role distinctions** between the leadership group, the backbone and the work teams are critical. Members who come on board but are "assigned" to the wrong team or not given clear enough roles either won't stay or won't contribute.

What trade-offs to anticipate

- Getting membership and structure right takes time and takes iterations. Everyone can't be engaged at once. Everyone can't be on the steering committee or leadership council. Being clear may mean making hard choices.
- A high capacity, well-resourced backbone is the linchpin of successful collective impact efforts. While it can be challenging to find all of these capacities in one organization, individuals from a core group of organizations with expertise in different functions can work together as an effective backbone if their relationships are strong and their roles are clearly defined.
- Figuring out how to acknowledge, leverage and connect existing efforts to the initiative takes time and inevitably broadens the focus as new perspectives are brought in.
- Engaging the community's CEOs is critical, but CEOs are decision-makers. Getting them too involved in process decisions about structure and membership or in deep dives of data analysis may be frustrating for some.

Key principles for action

- Make "good enough, good until" decisions
  - ✓ Start with the willing while you plan for the long-term
  - ✓ Assign key backbone functions to capable staff, but don't rush to lock in
  - ✓ Create work groups to implement the collaborative' s work, knowing that these groups may change
  - ✓ Set a clear timeline and process for learning, outreach and structure decisions

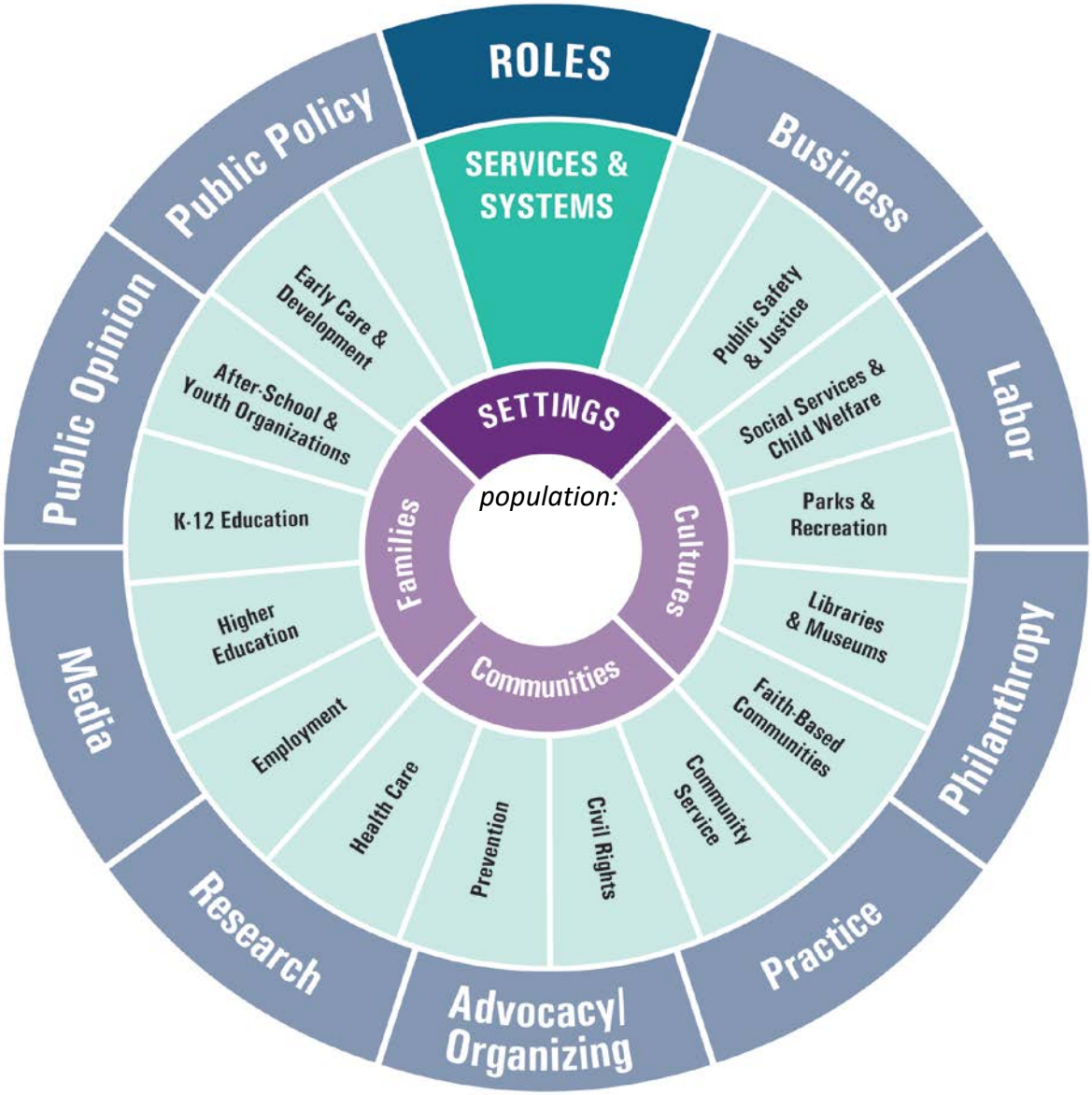
- Acknowledge and link the layers
  - ✓ Intentionally structure connections to multiple levels of leadership – from the top-level to the frontline and community members.
  - ✓ Build on, don't pave over existing efforts. Map the full set of stakeholders that are invested in the issue and focus population. Identify specific individuals that can represent multiple perspectives, including the diverse populations in your community
  - ✓ Remember that those who are engaged up front will feel forgotten and be reluctant to reengage if there are long lapses between connections. Don't do more outreach than you can sustain.

- Remember that change only occurs when those affected are connected and engaged
  - Direct inclusion of the focus population in the partnership's structure is one of the most instrumental ways to make a community change effort "people-centered." Include people that are involved in the communities, systems and institutions under discussion. Support them in strategies for bringing the perspectives of a broader group into the process.

FORM: Big Tent Stakeholders Wheel

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Focus population.** In the middle of the wheel, write your population focus.
2. **Where are you?** Place RED DOTS in the sections that represent your work as it relates to your population of focus. (If needed, write in additional Services and Systems in the blanks provided.)
3. **Where are your partners?** Next, place BLUE DOTS in the areas that represent your partners.
4. Introduce yourself and your work to the group using the stakeholder wheel.

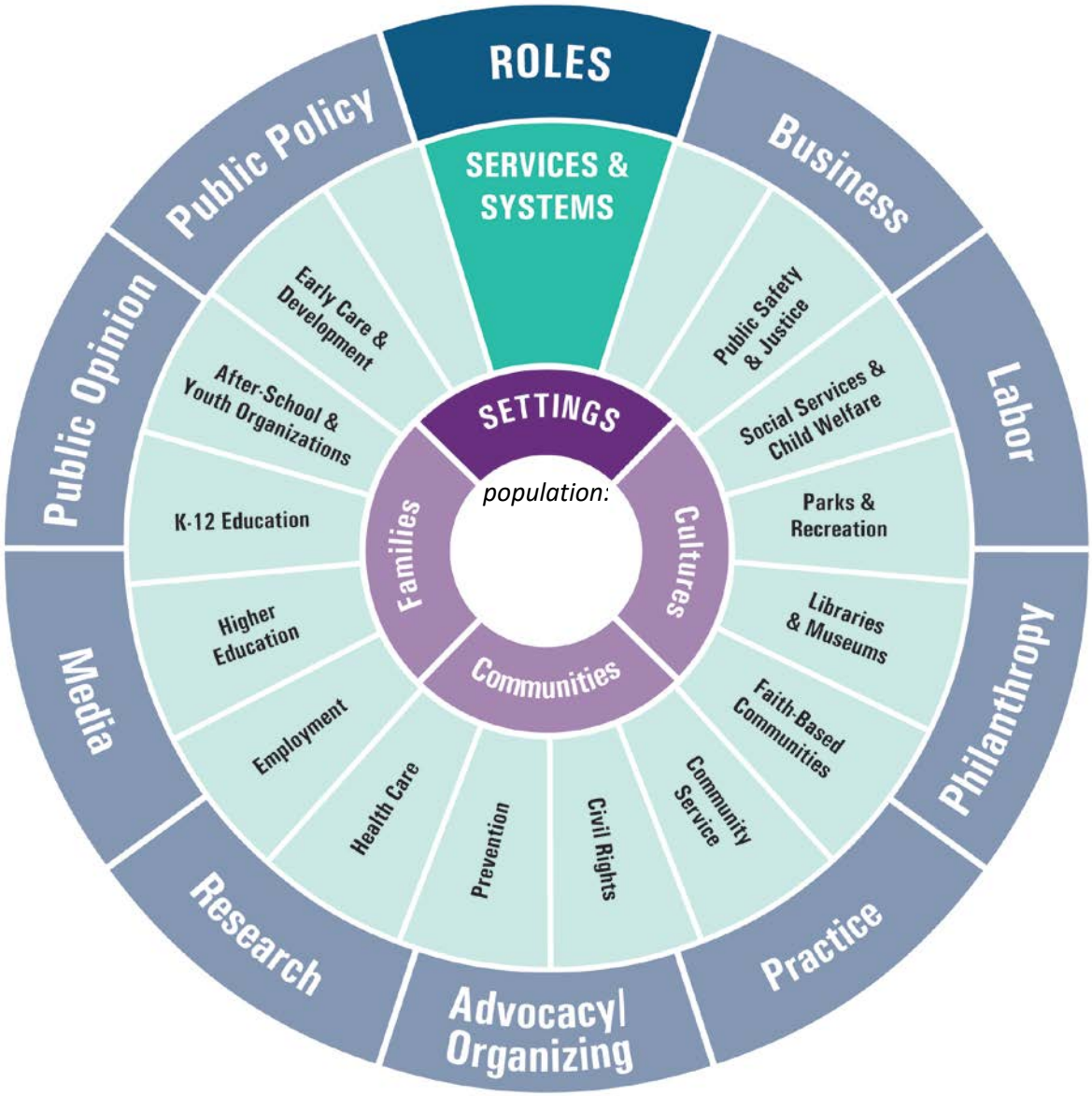


OPTIONAL: Looking across all the wheels at your table, if you were a community group, where would you have particular strengths? gaps?

TAKE SHAPE

FORM: Big Tent Stakeholders Wheel

In your discussions with partners and teams, mark this wheel by hand. Use the flip side of this sheet for more detailed mapping.



MAKE YOUR OWN KEY		Example
Top Level Managers		
Mid-Level Managers		
Front Line Workers		
Community, Parents and Youth		

TAKE SHAPE

EXAMPLE

Local Action Planning Team Worksheet

NAME First Name Last Name	CONTACT INFORMATION Title and Organization	Street Address City State Zip	Phone Email
Example Joe Sample	Executive Director Sample, Inc.	123 Main Street Yourtown, MA 12345	617-555-1212 x123 jsample@sample.org

NAME	GENDER: Female	GENDER: Male	YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FIELDS OF EXPERTISE: Provide a 21st Century Education	Pathways to Economic Security	Promoting Optimal Health	Sharing Data	Safe/Connected Community	Civic Engage. & Leadership
Example Joe Sample		✓				✓		✓

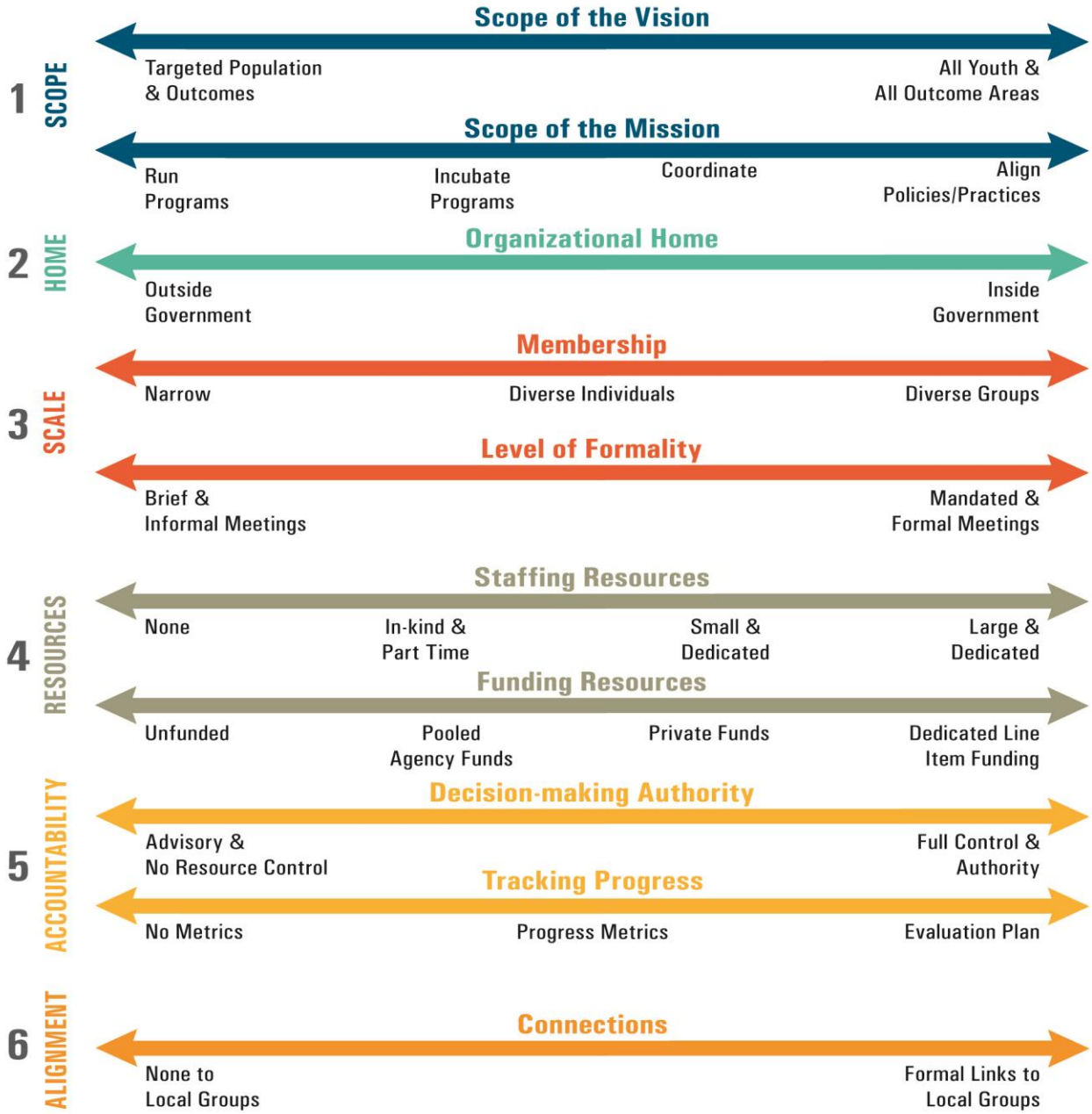
NAME	GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION (by residence): Neighborhood, City/Town, County, Region etc.	Neighborhood, City/Town, County, Region etc.	Neighborhood, City/Town, County, Region etc.	RACE/ETHNIC DIVERSITY: African American	Asian American	Latino American	Caucasian	Other
Example Joe Sample			✓					✓

NAME	OTHER STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION: Youth Representative	Parent Group / Parent R	Cultural / Community G	Early Care & Developme	After-School	Youth-Serving Organiza	Libraries & Museums	Health CareYouth Employment	Civil Rights Community Service	K-12 Education	Higher Education	Faith	Parks & Recreation	Child Welfare	Juvenile Justice	Private Funder (Philanthropy)	State Legislator	State Government (Executive/Judicial/State)	Local Government	Municipal	United Way	Researcher/Think Tank	Media / Public Opinion	Advocacy / Organizing	Business / Labor
Example Joe Sample											✓														

FORM: Partnership Characteristics & Functions

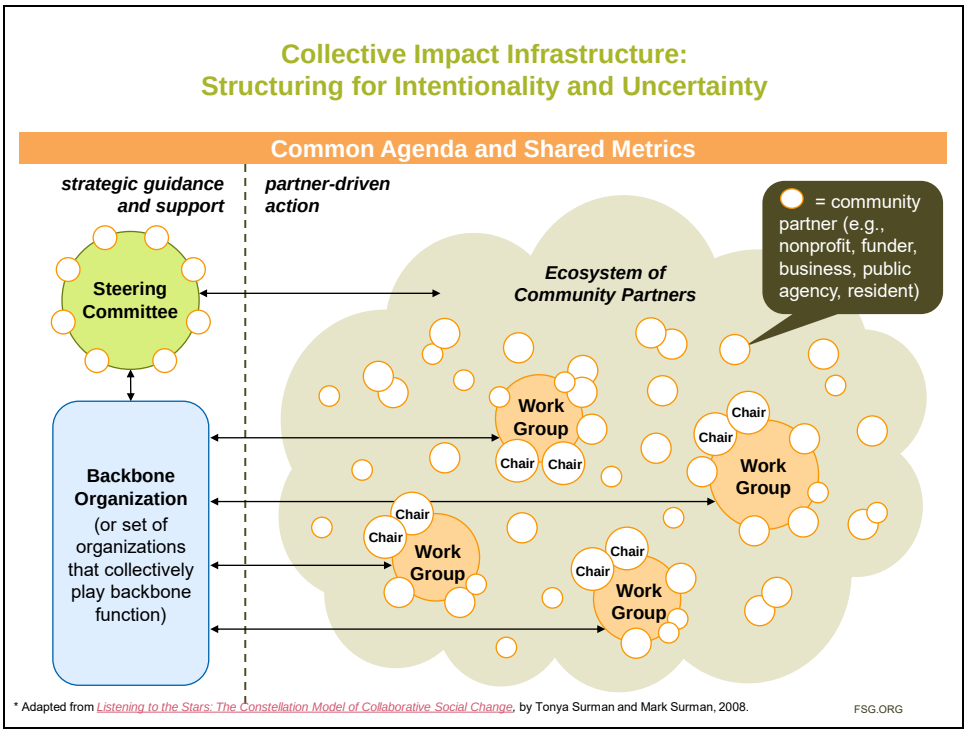
Guiding Questions to Optimize Functional Decisions Given Practical Constraints

Partnerships or coalitions often begin with some givens (e.g. scope of mission and vision). Optimizing the remaining decisions to ensure a balance between capacity and charge is critical to start up and success. Existing partnerships can usefully be described and compared to the goals to determine best fit.



TAKE SHAPE

FORM: Collective Impact Infrastructure
Structuring for Intentionality & Uncertainty



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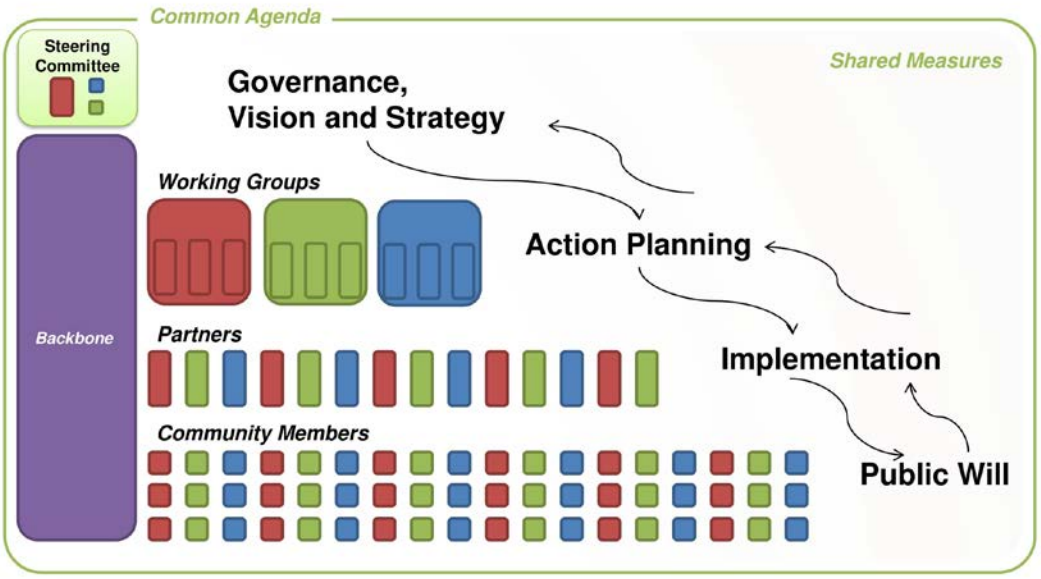
Each Stakeholder and Group Plays a Specific Role

Stakeholder / Group	*Description and Role*
Community partner	• **Individual organizations and members of the community** (e.g, nonprofit, funder, business, public agency, student, parent, resident) • Partners should have **access to a variety of opportunities to learn about and engage** in the initiative
Work Group (a.k.a. network, action team)	• Comprised of **cross-sector community partners targeting particular element of common agenda** (e.g., early childhood, K12, postsecondary, OST, data, policy, funding) • Designs and implements a targeted **action plan,** involving non-work group members as needed • Led by **two co-chairs** willing to invest time and (ideally) staff capacity • Some groups or networks serve **slightly different functions**, e.g., funders group (to identify opportunities for alignment), or inclusive community network to raise awareness about project and provide mechanism for vetting actions
Steering Committee (Strategy Group)	• Comprised of **cross-sector community partners** (representative of the large ecosystem) • Provides **strategic direction** for the initiative and **champions the work** • In some cases, committee members are **chairs for action teams**
Backbone Organization	• Provides **dedicated staff** • Supports the work of partners by assisting with **strategic guidance**, supporting **aligned activity**, establishing **shared measurement**, building **public will**, advancing **policy**, and mobilizing **funding**

FORM: Partnership Roles

Cascading Levels of Collaboration



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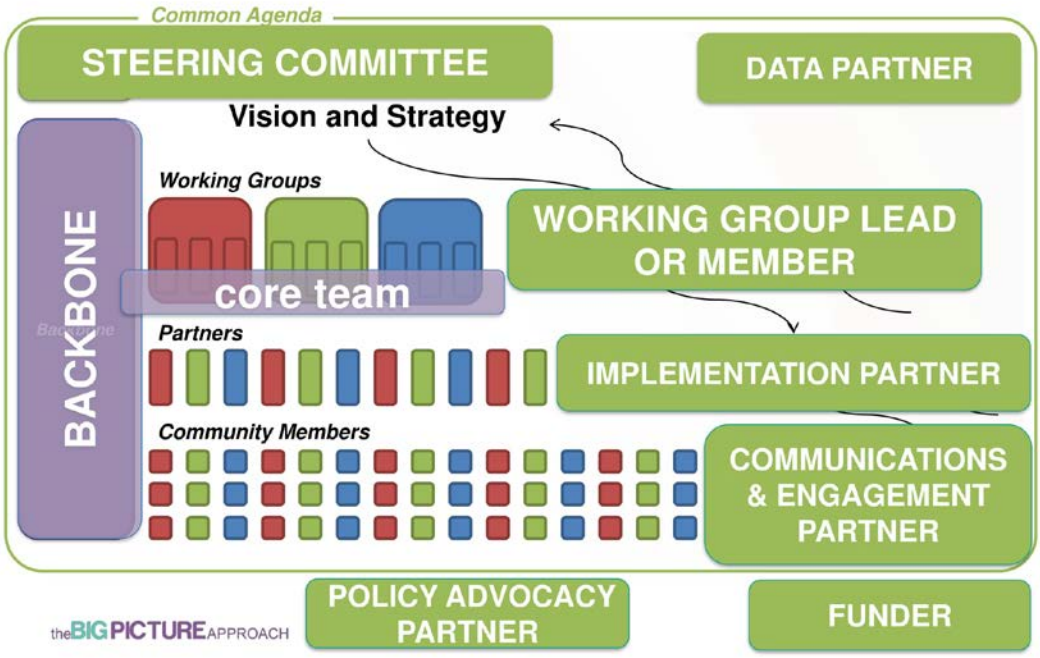
A range of possible roles



theBIG PICTURE APPROACH

FORM: A Range of Possible Roles

Directions: Community leaders are often connected to multiple partnerships and coalitions in their community.

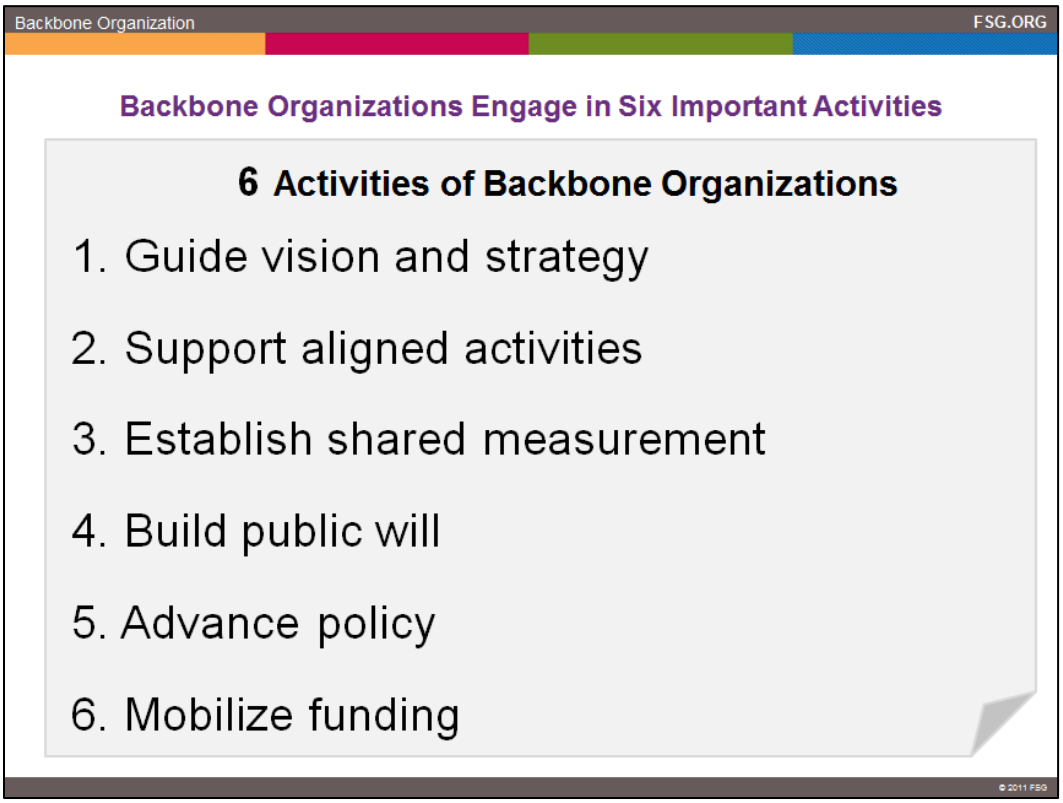
1. Across the top of the chart below, list the coalitions and networks in which you are actively involved.
2. Then, working your way down the chart, check off the roles that you are currently playing.

What roles are you currently playing?

ROLE	Partnership name:	Partnership name:	Partnership name:
Accountability Partner			
Collaborative Partner			
Working Group Member			
Core Team Member			
Data Team Member			
Communications/ Engagement Partner			
Backbone Support			
Funder			

Discuss: How do you navigate these multiple roles? What are the challenges of playing roles at different levels? How are you connecting efforts across these groups?

FORM: Backbone Support Organizations



Backbone Support Organizations: Diagnostic

Do you have the Skills?

6 Activities of Backbone Organizations

1. Guide vision and strategy
2. Support aligned activities
3. Establish shared measurement
4. Build public will
5. Advance policy
6. Mobilize funding

Do you have the bandwidth?

1. Dedicated Staff (with skills)
2. Organizational buy-in
3. Sustainability potential
4. Start-up flexibility – *willingness to serve in interim or time limited role*

Is it a Fit?

1. Partnership's vision matches your vision
2. Geographic Scope – similar to Partnership
3. Geographic Levels – neighborhood, city/county state
4. Leadership Levels – respected by grasstops and grassroots
5. Credibility – are you seen as the natural leader in this space?

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Backbones Differ Depending on Local or Issue-Specific Context

Types of Backbones	Description	Examples	Pros	Cons
Funder-Based	• One funder initiates CI strategy as planner, financier, and convener	Calgary Homeless Foundation	• Ability to secure start-up funding and recurring resources • Ability to bring others to the table and leverage other funders	• Lack of broad buy-in if CI effort seen as driven by one funder • Lack of perceived neutrality
New Nonprofit	• New entity is created, often by private funding, to serve as backbone	CCER COMMUNITY CENTER for EDUCATION RESULTS	• Perceived neutrality as facilitator and convener • Potential lack of baggage • Clarity of focus	• Lack of sustainable funding stream and potential questions about funding priorities • Potential competition with local nonprofits
Existing Nonprofit	• Established nonprofit takes the lead in coordinating CI strategy	OPPORTUNITY CHICAGO	• Credibility, clear ownership, and strong understanding of issue • Existing infrastructure in place if properly resourced	• Potential "baggage" and lack of perceived neutrality • Lack of attention if poorly funded
Government	• Government entity, either at local or state level, drives CI effort	Shape Up Somerville: Eat Smart. Play Hard.	• Public sector "seal of approval" • Existing infrastructure in place if properly resourced	• Bureaucracy may slow progress • Public funding may not be dependable
Shared Across Multiple Organizations	• Numerous organizations take ownership of CI wins	magnolia place	• Lower resource requirements if shared across multiple organizations • Broad buy-in, expertise	• Lack of clear accountability with multiple voices at the table • Coordination challenges, leading to potential inefficiencies
Steering Committee Driven	• Senior-level committee with ultimate decision-making power	MEMPHIS FAST FORWARD	• Broad buy-in from senior leaders across public, private, and nonprofit sectors	• Lack of clear accountability with multiple voices

FORM: Community Catalysts / Backbone Support Organizations

Communities often have more than one organization that can take on aspects of an overarching leadership and coordination role. Below are several attributes to consider when determining which organization(s) are the strongest candidates for playing these roles.

Directions:
1. At the top of each column, list the major entities currently playing key roles in your community.
2. Based on their track record, rate their capacity in each of the dimensions below on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).
3. Discuss implications and options for structuring the work. *(See additional discussion questions on back.)*

	Backbone support organization(s) should have the capacity to…	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
	1 (low) to 5 (high) ⇨	**1 – 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**	**1 - 5**
SCOPE	**Vision***	*. . . support a set of big picture goals (across ages, populations, outcomes, approaches).*					
SCOPE	**Geographic Scope**	*. . . mirror the geographic footprint of the partnership.*					
SCOPE	**Geographic Levels**	*. . . connect across levels – neighborhoods, city/county, local/state.*					
ALIGNMENT	**Leadership Levels**	*. . . connect with, understand and be respected by grasstop and grassroot leaders and coalitions.*					
ALIGNMENT	**Alignment***	*. . . connect and align efforts under a common agenda, resolving competing priorities, directing resources and building bridges between groups.*					
ALIGNMENT	**Convening**	*. . . convene stakeholders across sectors, systems, levels, related coalitions, provider networks and partnerships.*					
SKILLS	**Strategy & Action**	*. . . facilitate strategic planning and coordinate implementation of action plans.*					
SKILLS	**Public Will & Policy***	*. . . build public will, effectively communicate agenda and (when necessary) help advance public policy.*					
SKILLS	**Measurement & Analysis***	*. . . use data for decision making in a public, transparent way and help establish shared systems for measurement and analysis for the partnership.*					
ACCOUNTABILITY	**Accountability**	*. . . focus on accountability for own staff and the partnership.*					
ACCOUNTABILITY	**Credibility**	*. . . act with confidence based on the buy-in and engagement from those involved (e.g., top decision makers, front line staff, community members, youth and families.*					
RESOURCES	**Fund Development***	*. . . devote time to fund development priorities of the partnership, not just the organization.*					
RESOURCES	**Staffing**	*. . . dedicate staff skilled in the above functions with sufficient time to prioritize coordination and alignment efforts.*					
RESOURCES	**Organizational Buy In**	*. . . be sustained by a solid fiscal home that has an engaged and supportive board and CEO.*					
RESOURCES	**Start-up Flexibility**	*(If relevant) . . . serve in an interim or term-limited capacity, subject to review by the partnership.*					

*These items are also listed by Kania & Kramer as "6 Activities of Backbone Support Organizations."

Community Catalysts / Backbone Support Organizations – Discussion Questions

As you consider your rankings of current or potential backbone support organizations, consider the following questions:

1. Given the current context for your work, are some of these capacities more important than others?

2. Based on your assessment, is there one clear lead?

3. Are there organizations that could partner to play complementary leadership roles in the effort? Does this analysis help clarify roles?

4. Are you identifying a candidate for a start-up period? If so, consider revisiting the "backbone" question as you move into long-term implementation and management or when major shifts occur in the organization or the work.

FORM: Backbone Effectiveness – 27 Indicators

Guide Vision and Strategy	• Partners accurately describe the **common agenda** • Partners **publicly discuss / advocate for** common agenda goals • Partners' **individual work is increasingly aligned** with common agenda • Board members and key leaders increasingly **look to backbone** organization for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership
Support Aligned Activities	• Partners **articulate their role** in the initiative • **Relevant stakeholders** are engaged in the initiative • Partners **communicate and coordinate** efforts regularly, with, and independently of, backbone • Partners report increasing levels of **trust** with one another • Partners increase **scope / type of collaborative work** • Partners improve **quality** of their work • Partners improve **efficiency** of their work • Partners feel **supported and recognized** in their work
Establish Shared Measurement Practices	• Shared **data system** is in development • Partners **understand the value** of shared data • Partners have robust / shared **data capacity** • Partners **make decisions** based on data • Partners **utilize data** in a meaningful way
Build Public Will	• Community members are increasingly **aware** of the issue(s) • Community members express **support** for the initiative • Community members feel **empowered** to engage in the issue(s) • Community members increasingly **take action**
Advance Policy	• Target audience (e.g., influencers and policymakers) is increasingly **aware** of the initiative • Target audiences **advocate** for changes to the system aligned with initiative goals • Public **policy** is increasingly **aligned** with initiative goals
Mobilize Funding	• Funders are asking nonprofits to **align** to initiative goals • Funders are **redirecting funds** to support initiative goals • **New resources** from public and private sources are being contributed to partners and initiative

Source: FSG and Greater Cincinnati Foundation

Steering Committee – Traits & Responsibilities

A Strong Steering Committee Builds the Initiative's Credibility and Brings Other Stakeholders to the Table

1. Guidance, **Vision**, and Oversight
2. Leadership in the community, and within an **organization**
3. Active Participation in **Process**

Steering Committee Members Should Be Carefully Recruited

1. **Decision Maker**
2. **Representative**
3. **Influential Champion**
4. **Content Expertise/Practitioner**
5. **Passion and Urgency**
6. **Focused on the Greater Interest**
7. **Commitment**
8. **Lived Experience**

Working Group Members – Traits & Responsibilities

FSG.ORG

Working Group Member Traits

- **Two co-chairs**
- Can **commit the time** (~3-4 hrs/month plus meetings, but time will vary)
- **Collaborative leaders** and facilitators, conveners, able to "get stuff done"
- Also possess the traits below

- **Issue-aligned, collaborative, action-oriented**
- **Can commit** to attending meetings and reviewing pre-read materials
- Are **knowledgeable** about the problem to be addressed
- Usually **one level down** from the steering committee members, but have **authority** to represent organizations and make decisions
- **Cross-sector** representation
- **7-10 members initially** (will vary by initiative)

Working Group Member Responsibilities

- **Strategy and Indicator Development**
  - Review research on effective strategies within local context (if applicable) and external best practices
  - Use data to inform identification of strategies and ongoing refinement
  - Develop and refine indicators
- **Implementation**
  - Coordinate activities among working group member organizations and other relevant partners
  - Identify resources to support and / or execute strategies
  - Provide progress updates to and learn from the steering committee, backbone, and other working groups
- **Leadership**
  - Champion the effort with relevant stakeholders
  - Align member organizations' work to the goals, indicators, and strategies of the working group where possible

FORM: Palm Beach County Partnership Structure

Starter Slide

Within the Collective Impact Framework, the Steering Committee and Backbone Organization Have Distinct Responsibilities

	Responsibilities	Typical Participants
Steering Committee	• Oversees common agenda development with community input • Provides stewardship and community accountability throughout the life of the initiative • Determines/oversees coordinating structure for initiative, including backbone • Ensures appropriate stakeholder engagement	• *High level decision-makers* from: – **School systems**/higher education – **Nonprofits** – **Government** – Business – **Funders** • Community Members
Working Groups	• Develops strategies to implement common agenda • Determines strategy level indicators to gauge process, forward momentum, and learning • Connects with or organizes appropriate community partners to implement strategies	• *Middle managers or leaders* from: – School systems/higher education – Nonprofits/coalitions – Government – Business • Community Members
Backbone	• Supports SC's oversight of the initiative • Supports work group efforts to develop, implement, and learn from strategies • Facilitates collective impact through: – Guiding vision and strategy – Supporting aligned activities – Establishing shared measurement practices – Building public will – Advancing policy – Mobilizing funding	• *2-5 staff members / consultants*

Roles & Responsibilities

Steering Committee
Suggested: Bi-Monthly
Leads/Serves on 1 Committee

Responsibilities	Membership	Recruitment/Nomination Process
• **To oversee and support agenda development** of Birth to 22 Partnership, establishing processes for overall goal setting and identification of specific priority areas with key stakeholder and community input (currently being developed through the Youth Master Plan process). • **To work with existing partners and others to identify current or future resources** (broadly defined) to be devoted to these priority areas. It is understood that as the community becomes more engaged and that as community conditions become clearer or change that new priorities will be developed. • **To provide guidance** for the Work Teams and Subcommittees. • **To ensure appropriate stakeholder engagement** (from key champions to coalitions to community members and young people themselves) • **To develop processes for tracking and monitoring** the implementation of the Youth Master Plan and the ongoing work of the Work Teams. **LEADS OR SERVES ON 1 OF THE FOLLOWING:** • **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Responsible for developing and managing recruitment and nominations process.** • **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE.** Oversees development and execution of communications strategy for Birth to 22. • **PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION COMMITTEE: (?)** NOT DISCUSSED (?) • **FUNDERS GROUP (related entity)** Focused on understanding the funding picture related to children and youth in PBC, understanding each others' funding as they relate to the Youth Master Plan in order to make more informed decisions within their institutional portfolios. Potentially, identify areas for coordinated funding.	***Members***: Diverse individuals representing multiple organizations, systems, fields, and sectors as well as the diversity of the population of West Palm Beach **Size: 16-20 members.** *Size considerations: Balancing inclusivity and representation with manageability, so that strategic decisions can be made in an environment of trust.*	* = Named executive (able to make commitments for entity) ** = By Nomination then Elected Note: Plenipotentiaries for entity may sit in for steering committee members if they can fully act on their behalf. **EDUCATION (2)** Palm Beach County School District* Higher Education** **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (1-2) CareerSource * TBD** **BUSINESS (1)** TBD** **GOVERNMENT (2)** Youth Services Department * Children's Services Council * **PHILANTHROPY (4-6)** United Way* Local Foundations *connected to work of action agenda* ** Farris Foundation Unicorn Foundation Palm Healthcare Foundation **COALITIONS/NONPROFITS (3) **** *connected to work of action agenda. Not duplicative with above.* **YOUNG PEOPLE (2) **** *Active on the Youth Council* **COMMUNITY MEMBERS (2) **** *Active on an Action Team*

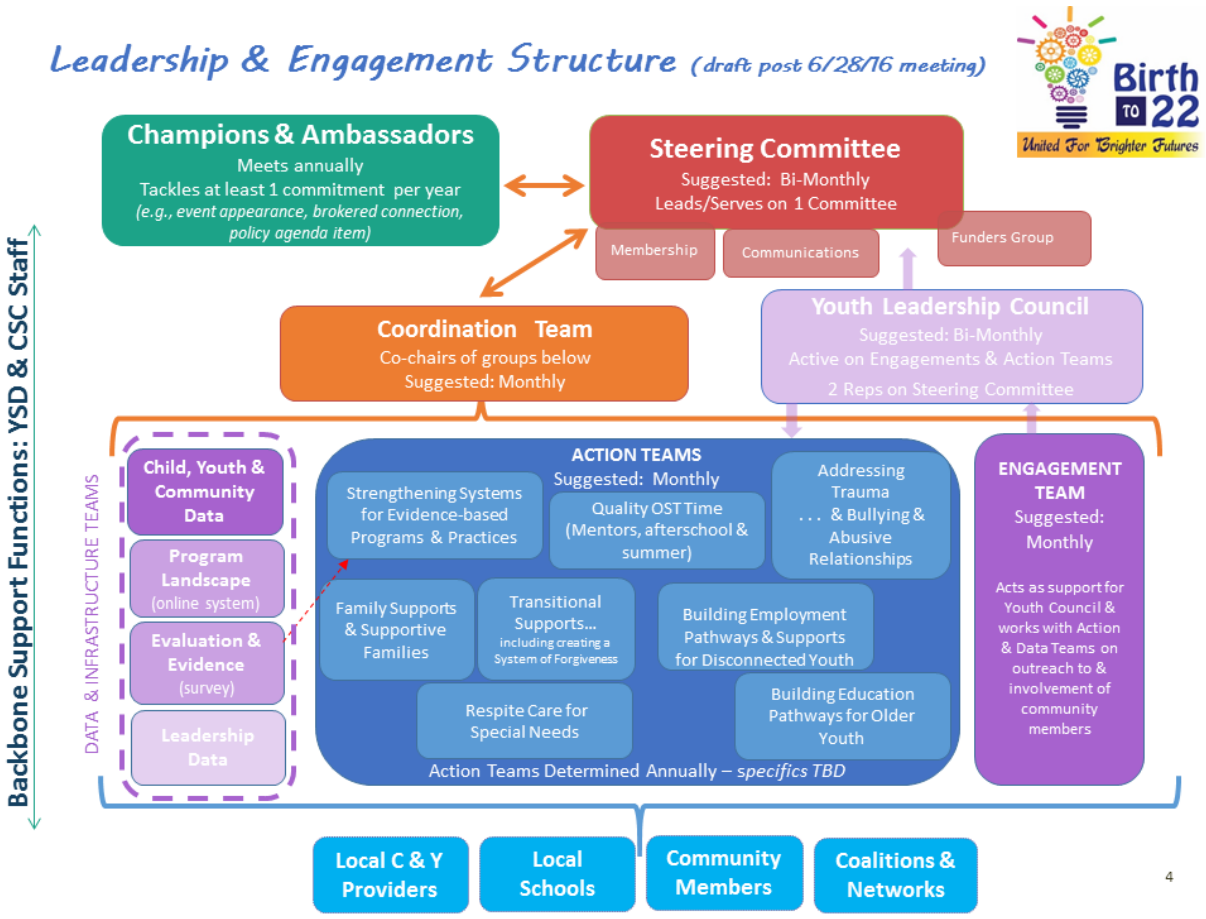
TAKE SHAPE

FORM: Palm Beach County Example Continued

Roles & Responsibilities

	Responsibilities	Membership	Recruitment/Nomination Process
Champions & Ambassadors Meets annually	• Well versed in Birth to 22 mission, goals, agenda, structure and annual objectives. • Participates in annual briefing. • Tackles at least 1 commitment per year on behalf of Birth to 22 (e.g., event appearance, brokered connection, policy agenda item)	Members: Key leaders or champions in the public and private sector who are: • not embedded in the process but whose influence and authority are essential to building public support and empowering partners. • Committed to act as "empowering facilitators" invested in the goals of Birth to 22 – opening doors and busting barriers. • Willing to lend their names to the effort and be called upon for specific tasks. • Includes champions within the governance structures of Birth to 22 partners	To be discussed: At least 1 from each entity represented on the steering committee? 1 from any entity (e.g., system or coalition) that is co-chairing a work group or action team? Staffed by Steering Committee (Staffing includes: 1) planning annual meeting; 2) tracking/supporting/celebrating annual "commitments")
Coordination Team Co-chairs of work groups Suggested: Monthly	• Aligns and coordinates work across the Data, Action and Engagement teams. • Prepares/reviews regular progress reports. • Actively seeks alignment and efficiency with work of other teams and related coalitions	• Co-Chairs of each of the teams. • Backbone Staff (also staff's team)	• Nominated/Affirmed by Teams.
Youth Leadership Council Suggested: Bi-monthly	• To provide input in the design, implementation and communication of an ongoing strategic plan for future community conversations, focus group discussions, interviews, surveys, youth summits, etc. • Participation in Action Teams • 2 Delegates on Steering Committee	• Youth mentor programs, nonprofit agencies, fraternities, sororities, sports teams, school based clubs, churches, government entities, and community groups. • Elected officials will also be involved with the group.	• Nomination process TBD.
DATA & ENGAGEMENT TEAMS **ACTION TEAMS**	• Develops strategies to implement common agenda • Determines strategy level indicators to gauge process, forward momentum, and learning • Connects with or organizes appropriate community partners to implement strategies	• Middle managers or leaders from: – School systems / higher education – Nonprofits/coalitions – Government – Business • Community Members	• Co-Chairs: Nominated/Affirmed by Teams • Open participation.. • Assignments to particular groups may be made by agency/institutional leads based upon expertise. • Active participation required for ongoing membership
Backbone Support Functions: YSD & CSC Staff	• Supports SC's oversight of the initiative • Supports work group efforts to develop, implement, and learn from strategies • Dedicated Staff	• Key staff members from YSD & CSC	

Leadership & Engagement Structure *(draft post 6/28/16 meeting)*



CONNECT: What are "the moving trains" that could be harnessed?

Change horsepower can come in many forms. It is sometimes useful to look for the "moving trains" that have already taken on an issue, such as early childhood education, AIDS education, literacy, child abuse or even economic development or community safety. "Moving trains" are organizations, coalitions or initiatives with the capacity, motivation and resources to create change.

Directions: Think of two or three major "moving trains" in your community. Write them in the numbered boxes across the top of the chart below (starting with one you are actively engaged in). Quickly check off what you know about their focus on this page. On the back of this page, check off what you know about their primary stakeholders and strategies. As you work, refer back to the Big Picture Goals categories. This tool will help you create a database of the initiatives in your community and help you identify ways to link them.

MAPPING COALITIONS, NETWORKS & OTHER "MOVING TRAINS"					
			COALITIONS, NETWORKS, INITIATIVES		
			1.	2.	3.
	Type of Structure	Coalition			
		Provider network			
		Task force			
		Initiative			
		Partnership			
		Coordinating body			
		Intermediary			
	Age Group	Early childhood			
		Middle childhood			
		Preadolescence			
		Adolescence			
		Young adults			
		Young/New parents			
		Mid-career adults			
		Seniors			
		Families			
	Outcomes	Learning			
		Working			
		Thriving			
		Connecting			
		Contributing/Leading			
	Levels of Impact	Improve individual and family access			
		Improve community/neighborhood conditions			
		Improve systems			
	Geographic Area	Neighborhood			
		City			
		County			
		School district			
		Region			
		State			

MAPPING COALITIONS, NETWORKS & OTHER "MOVING TRAINS" (CONTINUED)

		COALITIONS, NETWORKS, INITIATIVES		
		1.	2.	3.
Professional Roles	Public policy makers			
	Media/Communications/Public opinion			
	Researchers			
	Advocates/Organizers			
	Practitioners			
	Philanthropists/Funders			
	Labor			
	Business			
Community	Children & youth			
	Families			
	Cultural/Community context			
Services & Systems	Early care & development			
	After-School & Youth organizations			
	K-12 education			
	Higher education			
	Employment			
	Health care			
	Prevention programs			
	Civil rights			
	Community service			
	Faith-based communities			
	Libraries & museums			
	Parks & recreation			
	Social services & child welfare			
	Public safety & justice			
Improving Systems & Settings	Program services coordination			
	Workforce strengthening			
	Capacity building & technical assistance			
	Improving quality			
	Performance measurement/evaluation			
Aligning Policies & Resources	Needs/assets inventories			
	Coordinating policies & practices			
	Establishing funding priorities			
	Exploring Funding Alternatives			
	Assessing, changing & creating policies			
Increasing Demand	Constituency building			
	Public awareness/education			
	Opinion polling			
	Collecting, using & sharing data			
	Public outreach			
	Advocacy & organizing			
Engaging Youth, Families & Community Members	Skill/Leadership development			
	Volunteer service			
	Governance/Organizing/Advocacy			
	Philanthropy			
	Entrepreneurism			
Use of Data	Collecting data			
	Sharing data			
	Using data to guide action policy			
	Using data to improve quality			
	Using data to evaluate impact of efforts			

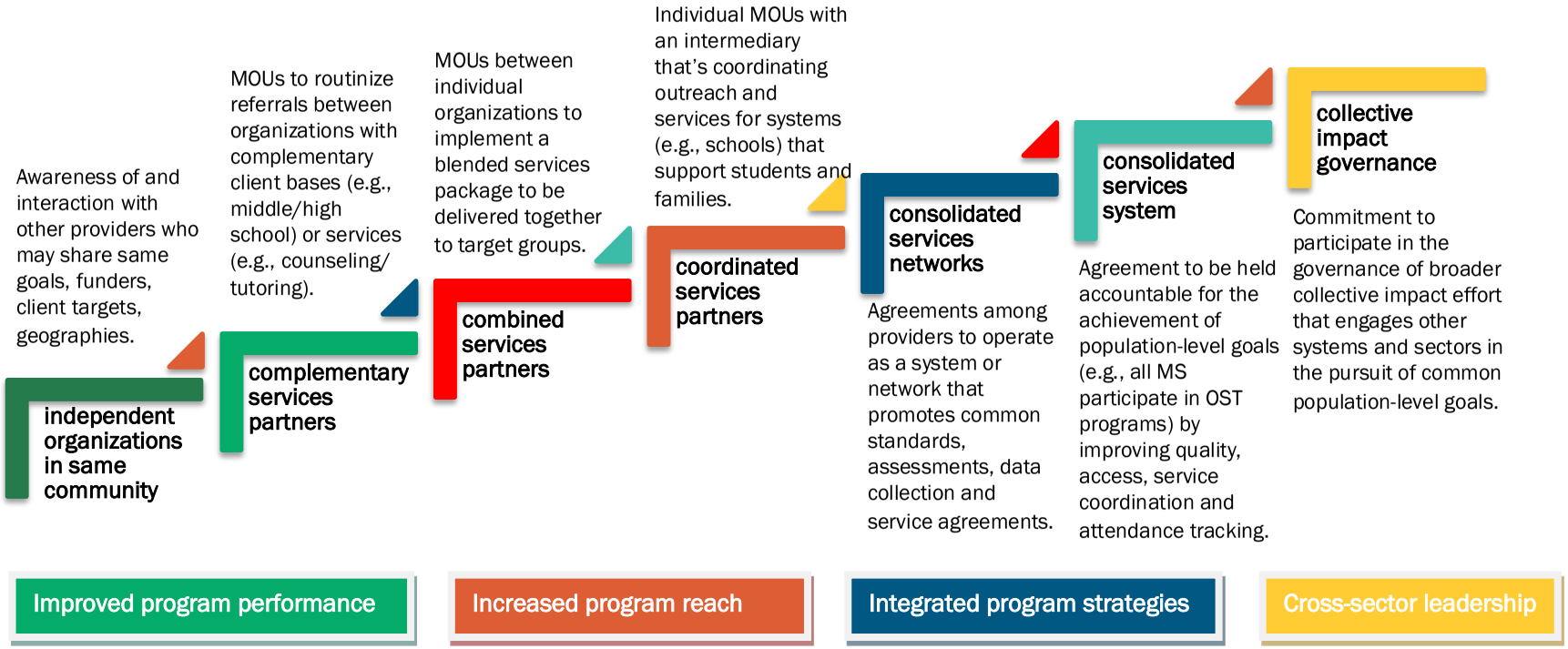
CONNECT: From Program Performance to Collective Impact

Direct service programs, by design, focus on improving the quality of services they offer and expanding the number of people they serve. The typical performance questions asked are: How many? How well? What difference? *(Mark Friedman, Results Based Accountability)*

Programs often use population-level data (e.g., city dropout rates) to make the case for their services but they do not usually set their performance goals against this data (such as, "We will reduce the number of dropouts in the city by 3 percent"). This is because in most cases, the percent of the total population (e.g., middle school students) served by a single program or a network of local affiliates is usually small; thus, the change that they could make at the population level would be a decimal point at best (less than 1 percent). The need to provide funders with attribution data can make programs reluctant to commit to population goals that they can contribute to but not meet on their own.

Collective impact initiatives, by contrast, focus on population-level change. The collective impact strategy: Engage a range of programs to align their activities in service to a common agenda (e.g., on-time graduation) that is anchored in shared measures. Collective impact initiatives that focus on youth development frequently include nonprofit leaders at the table. These leaders are seen as key for achieving the goal of "mutually reinforcing activities." More often than not, however, these leaders are not formally representing a system of providers that can make commitments to shift priorities, resources or practices. They provide important perspectives, but they do not wield sufficient power to make them true peers at the table.

Programs, on the other hand, can and do change lives. How can program providers partner to demonstrate the essential role they play in collective impact efforts?



TAKE SHAPE

TAKE AIM – *Goal Alignment*

A. ENGAGE

Engagement of a broad set of stakeholders that have the capacity and commitment to guide change is one of the hallmarks of effective collective impact work. A range of individuals that represent multiple perspectives, including the diverse populations in your community, can come together around a common focus on improving outcomes. Direct inclusion of young people, families and community members is one of the most instrumental ways to make a big picture planning process not only cross-system but "person-centered." This requires explicit strategies for including community members and focus populations in not just problem identification, but in problem-solving and solutions design.

Materials:

1. Community Map
2. Engaging Community in Assessment, Planning & Action

B. FRAME

Partnerships should agree on a set of concise, public-ready statements that have communications value for their key audiences. Common statements help break down barriers and build bridges, giving actors focused on different outcomes and representing different institutions (e.g. schools, health, business, etc.) a reason to work together. An approach based on core principles helps establish a common framework and common terms so groups can talk across traditional "silos." Articulating the "bigger picture" helps keep the full range of stakeholders at the table. A common framework also helps to create sharper lenses for scanning and organizing existing community data to inform the engagement process.

Materials:

1. Outcomes Dashboard
2. From Core Principles to Common Language
3. Example: Translating Parallel Frameworks
4. Example: Outcomes Dashboard
5. Example: Indicators Dashboard – Top Picks

TAKE AIM – *Goal Alignment*

Why this is important

- **Defining common outcomes that resonate** with the range of individuals who represent multiple perspectives, including the diverse populations in your community, is critical for sustaining and achieving collective impact.
- Taking the time up front to **name not only the systems but the communities** – communities of interest, experience and place – that have a stake in the issue being addressed creates public accountability for who should be engaged in the work from beginning to end, and ensures that key stakeholders are not overlooked.
- The commitment to include community members and focus populations in not just problem identification, but in problem-solving and solutions design requires **developing explicit engagement strategies** that may have an impact on how the work is staffed and structured.
- **Articulating the "bigger picture"** helps these diverse groups get to agreement on common outcomes because they can see how their concerns and their work fits into the larger picture and communication across traditional silos, cultures and neighborhoods.
- **Distinguishing between population-level outcomes and the community contexts and supports** needed to produce them helps tell a compelling story and build realistic timeframes for change. It also helps underscore how multiple systems play important roles and helps steer the group toward useful research about what works.

What tradeoffs to anticipate

- Smaller groups can move more nimbly, but they can come to conclusions that don't resonate with all and may not bring "all eyes on the problem" that are required for new solutions. Broader engagement of a diverse set of individuals will lay the groundwork for long-term, large scale change.
- Oftentimes, groups want to start with the solutions, believing that they "know the problem." Starting off with a clear picture of the desired outcomes, and a focus on why they are not currently being achieved, helps dissipate the tendency to name the same solutions, creating room to move beyond "business as usual."
- Using only the easily available data on an issue can lead to a narrow and negatively oriented set of solutions. Compelling outcome statements help address the challenge that the preponderance of available data focuses on problems to be reduced rather than more aspirational goals.

Key principles for action

- Avoid viewing community engagement as a one-time thing that happens at the beginning of a collective impact effort and then is done.
    - Think up front about how you are going to structure for engagement in each aspect of the work – from goal setting to issue identification to problem solving – is critically important.
    - Recognize that engagement strategies may need to be different for different communities.
- Frame the issue in "big picture" ways so that key actors can see themselves as part of the picture and part of solution.
    - Common statements help break down barriers and build bridges, giving actors focused on different outcomes and representing different institutions (e.g., schools, health) a reason to work together.
- Distinguish between population-level outcomes and community context and supports:
    - It helps tell a compelling story and build realistic timeframes for change.
    - It underscores how multiple systems play important roles and helps steer the group toward useful research about what works.
- Learn to focus in two ways:
    - Zoom in to tackle specific areas of common concern
    - Zoom out to keep the overall picture in focus.
    - By keeping the larger picture in focus, you will be able to more nimbly respond to emerging realities without inadvertently suggesting that existing efforts are being abandoned.

ENGAGE: Community Map

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Draw an outline of the community your coalition is mobilizing.
2. Name this community and note which of the three types of communities it is.
3. Establish the denominator for assessment data by providing a figure for the total number of members.
4. Draw the “communities within this community” that will be important in the work.
5. Name and provide a denominator for each of these communities.

ENGAGE: Community Description Summary

A. Define your community (provide population and “denominator”)

B. Are there other relevant “communities within your community?”

C. Describe the population’s demographics.

D. Describe the population’s geographic community.

E. Describe the historical origins of the issue.

F. Describe the population’s history with organizing on the issue.

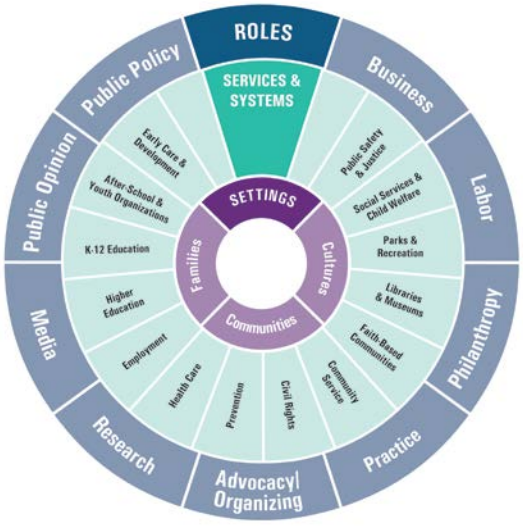
ENGAGE: Community Assessment – Strategy

Engagement of a broad set of stakeholders that have the capacity and commitment to guide change is one of the hallmarks of effective collective impact work. An intentional engagement strategy that considers "who," "when" and "how" for different stakeholder groups is essential. Direct inclusion of young people, families and community members is one of the most instrumental ways to make a big picture planning process not only cross-system but "person-centered." The stakeholder wheel can be used for thinking through engagement not only at the community-wide level but for "communities within."

Instructions: In your discussions with partners and teams, mark this wheel by hand. Use the flip side of this sheet for more detailed mapping.

1. Keeping in mind the specific community (and the "community within your community") you are seeking to engage identify who specifically needs to be the focus of outreach?
2. Who is best positioned to reach out to these community members? (For example would the most respectful approach come from a church leader, a peer CEO, or from a young person?)

WHOLE COMMUNITY "WHO"		WHO SHOULD ASK?
Top Level Leaders		
Mid-Level Managers		
Front Line Workers		
Community Members		
Parents and Youth		



COMMUNITY WITHIN "WHO"		WHO SHOULD ASK?
Top Level Leaders		
Mid-Level Managers		
Front Line Workers		
Community Members		
Parents and Youth		

"HOW"		"WHEN"		
		RECENT PAST	PLANNED	POSSIBLE
Town Hall Meeting				
Listening Session				
Focus Group				
Key Informant Interviews				
Surveys				

Stakeholders Summary Worksheet

Engaged Stakeholder Instructions:

Use the following chart to count who you engage with and at what level they are operating.

- Column A: List the Big Tent Partners you are working with by name or organizational name. Also, highlight and put a star (*) next to the stakeholders on your core team (if you have one).
- Column B: List the different services and systems, roles and settings that those specific stakeholders work in. Refer to and select from the Stakeholders Wheel on the flip side of this sheet. Add any categories that you think are missing from the wheel.
- Column C: Indicate the number of each type of participant under the applicable sub-headings.
- Column D: Rate each stakeholder on each engagement category and on overall engagement, from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

Target Stakeholder Instructions:

List who you want to engage that is not already at the table. If you do not have specific names or organizations, fill in Columns B and C only. Add extra rows as needed.

ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS												
A	B	C						D				
		HOW MANY?						HOW ENGAGED? 1 (low) – 5 (high)				
		Top-Level Leaders	Mid-Level Managers	Front Line Workers	Community Members	Parents	Youth	Urgency	Commitment	Collaboration	Big Picture	OVERALL
Example 1: Boys and Girls Club	Youth-Serving Organization	1	2				2					
Example 2: City Council	Policy	1										
Example 3: Neighborhood Assoc.	Neighborhood Mobilization	1		1	4							
TARGET STAKEHOLDERS												

FRAME: Outcomes

OUTCOME:

A condition of well-being for children, adults, families or communities.*

Children born healthy
Children succeeding in school
Civically engaged young people and adults
Economically stable families

*Friedman, Mark, 2007, *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*

INSTRUCTIONS

For your focus population, what are the major outcomes that you hope to see?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

FRAME: Outcomes Dashboard

INSTRUCTIONS

1. For your population focus, note major categories of **subpopulations** across the top of the dashboard.
2. Keeping in mind a whole child or whole person approach, what are the major **outcome areas** for your population? If useful, edit the terminology in the first column of the dashboard.
3. For each subpopulation, what are the **major outcomes** that are the focus of your work? Map these into the relevant cells.

WHO? WHO?

WHY?

WHY?

subpopulations (e.g., age groups, household types) / **outcome areas**					
Academic/ Cognitive					
Vocational/ Employment					
Physical Health					
Mental/ Emotional Health					
Social Connection					
Civic Engagement					
Spiritual					

TAKE AIM

Discuss: Are there areas that are not your primary focus that need to be taken in consideration in order to meet your primary focus. Put an "x" in these areas.

FRAME: From Core Principles to Common Language

Research, practice and public opinion offer a set of principles that can help us think more broadly about what it takes to improve outcomes. But are we really compelled to act on this knowledge?

These principles are not just suggestions about ways to improve our efforts. They are the instructions for doing business differently. Moving these principles consistently into practice requires establishing a new system of checks and balances to counter learned habits that keep us doing the same things even when they aren't working just because they are safe.

The Big Picture Approach encourages leaders to start with developing common terms that can be translated not only into vision and goal statements, but also into planning frameworks that provide a new people-centered way of looking at information. Once you have learned this new way of thinking, you are able to take it into the subsequent steps of action planning – taking stock, targeting action and tracking progress – but in a big picture way.

FROM CORE PRINCIPLES

About Focus Populations

Invest early & sustain investments over time

Support the whole person or household

Focus attention on those most in need

Build on strengths, don't just focus on problem-reduction

About Community Context

People live in families and communities, not programs

To reduce problems & promote development, both personal & environmental factors must be addressed

Community ecology matters – across times, places & systems

The quality of supports matters as much as their reach & coordination

About Leaders

See people as change agents, not clients

Engage all sectors & stakeholders

Coordinate efforts, align resources

Help partners understand & embrace complexity

Inspire & inform the public

TO COMMON LANGUAGE – *Fill in your terms.*

Expect adequate progress across OUTCOME AREAS:	Support all AGE GROUPS & POPULATIONS:	Address range of GOALS using range of APPROACHES:	Ensure adequate SUPPORTS:	Across TIMES:	Enlist full range of SETTINGS:	Implement all CHANGE STRATEGIES:	Engage all STAKEHOLDERS:

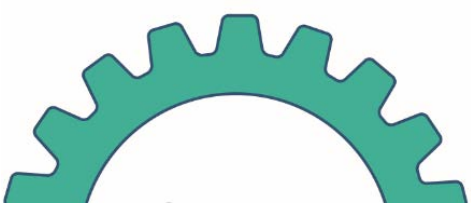
(See sample on back)

Ready by 21 Version

Core Principles to Common Language when taking a whole child, whole community approach

Please note that the detailed lists below are provided as examples of commonly used language (e.g., America's Promise Alliance 5 Promises). A Big Picture Approach doesn't prescribe the specific language in each list but rather challenges leaders to be intentional in addressing all of the categories.

FROM CORE PRINCIPLES



About Youth

Invest early & often

Support the whole child.

Focus attention on those most in need.

Build on strengths, don't just focus on problem-reduction.

About Community Supports

Children don't grow up in programs, they grow up in families & communities.

Support a full range of learning opportunities, formal/informal, in school and out.

Assess and improve quality, reach and impact across all the places young people spend their time.

Recruit, train and retain good staff.

About Leaders

See youth and families as change agents, not clients

Engage all sectors and stakeholders

Coordinate efforts, align resources

Help partners understand & embrace complexity

Inspire and inform the public.

TO COMMON LANGUAGE: *A child & youth-focused example**

Expect adequate progress across OUTCOME AREAS:	Support all AGE GROUPS & POPULATIONS:	Address range of GOALS using range of APPROACHES:	Ensure adequate SUPPORTS:	Across TIMES:	Enlist full range of SETTINGS:	Implement all CHANGE STRATEGIES:	Engage all STAKE-HOLDERS:
Learning	Early Childhood	Problem-Reduction	Caring Adults	During School	Families	Increase Demand	Educators
Working	School Age	Prevention	Safe/ Structured Places	Weekends	Schools	Alight Polices & Resources	Funders & Catalysts
Thriving	Middle School	Preparation/ Development	Healthy Start & Supports	Before/ After School	Community Organizations	Engage Youth/Families	Advocates
Connecting	High School	Engagement/ Leadership	Effective Education	Summers	Parks & Rec	Improve Systems, Services & Programs	Providers
Leading/ Contributing	Young Adult		Opportunities to Make a Difference	Evenings	Faith		Faith
	_____			Holidays	Juvenile Justice		Business
	such as				Child Welfare		Policy Makers
	Low Income				Work/Business		Public Agencies
	Disabled				Neighborhoods		Parents
	Rural				Other		Youth
	Minority						

* Ready by 21 © example

TRANSLATING PARALLEL FRAMEWORKS

WHAT ASSETS DO YOUTH NEED TO BE READY FOR COLLEGE, WORK AND LIFE?

THE FORUM FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT'S READY BY 21 OUTCOME AREAS	NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL'S PERSONAL & SOCIAL ASSETS THAT SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT	SEARCH INSTITUTE'S INTERNAL ASSETS
Learning	Intellectual Development	Achievement Motivation
		School Engagement
		Homework
		Bonding to School
		Reading for Pleasure
Working		Planning & Decision Making
Thriving	Physical Development	Restraint
		Resistance Skills
Connecting	Psychological & Emotional Development	Integrity
		Honesty
		Responsibility
		Peaceful Conflict Resolution
		Personal Power
		Self-Esteem
		Sense of Purpose
		Positive View of Personal Future
Leading	Social Development	Caring
		Equality & Social Justice
		Interpersonal Competence
		Cultural Competence

WHAT SUPPORTS DO YOUTH NEED TO BE READY FOR COLLEGE, WORK AND LIFE?

AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE'S FIVE PROMISES	NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL'S FEATURES OF POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL SETTINGS	SEARCH INSTITUTE'S EXTERNAL ASSETS
Safe Places	Physical & Psychological Safety	Safety
	Appropriate Structure	Family Boundaries
		School Boundaries
		Neighborhood Boundaries
		Time at Home
	Opportunities to Belong	Caring Neighborhood
		Caring School Climate
Caring Adults	Supportive Relationships	Family Support
		Positive Family Communication
		Other Adult Relationships
		Adult Role Models
	Positive Social Norms	Positive Peer Influence
Opportunities to Help Others	Support for Efficacy & Mattering	Youth as Resources
		Service to Others
Effective Education	Opportunities for Skill Building	Creative Activities
		Youth Programs
		Religious Community
	Integration of Family, School & Community Efforts	Parent Involvement in Schooling
Healthy Start	Basic Services (Implied)	

INDICATORS DASHBOARD (based on one state's starter list)

1. Highlight in green things you want to promote or increase.
2. Highlight in red problems you want to reduce or decrease.
3. Discuss: What do you think of this picture? What's missing? What do you want to add?

	Early Childhood (0-5)	Elementary Age (6-10)	Middle School (11-14)	High School (15-18)	Young Adults (19-24)
Learning	• Readiness to learn	• Readiness to learn • 3rd grade reading • 3rd grade math skills	• 8th grade reading • 8th grade math skills	• High school dropout rate	
Working				• High school dropout rate	
Thriving *(Physical Health)*	• Child maltreatment • Immunizations	• Child maltreatment	• Child maltreatment • Teen alcohol use • Teen drug use • Teen tobacco use • Teen pregnancy • Youth suicide	• Child maltreatment • Teen alcohol use • Teen drug use • Teen tobacco use • Teen pregnancy • Youth suicide	
Connecting *(Social/Emotional Well-Being)*			• Juvenile arrests • Youth suicide • Juvenile recidivism rate	• Juvenile arrests • Youth suicide • Juvenile recidivism rate	
Leading *(Civic and Community Engagement)*			• Juvenile recidivism rate	• Juvenile recidivism rate	

EXAMPLE

Example using Ready by 21© Developmental Dashboard

Table Excerpted from Indicators Guide developed by Forum and Child Trends (forthcoming)

Stages/Ages	Early Childhood	Elementary Age	Middle School	High School	Young Adults
0 – 5 yrs	6 – 10 yrs		11 – 13 yrs	14 – 18 yrs	
Learning: Children & Youth Succeed in School					
% children ages 0-5 read to by a family member 6 or 7 times in the past week	*% third/fourth-graders with proficient reading*	*% of students with high levels of "school connectedness"*	*High school graduation rate*	*% 18-24-year-olds enrolled in college, or completed college*	
Data Power	M	M	L	M	H
Communication Power	H	H	M	H	H
Proxy Power	H	H	H	H	H
Data source(s)	NSCH, NSAF	NAEP	Communities That Care; Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors; Add Health	NCES CCD, local administrative data	ACS
Working: Youth & Young Adults Are Ready for Work					
% children (0-5) with at least one employed parent	*% children given useful roles in family and community*	*% students who participate in career awareness activities*	*% students with job internship/apprenticeship experience*	*% 18-24-year-olds employed*	
Data Power	H	L	L	H	H
Communication Power	H	H	M	H	H
Proxy Power	H	M	M	H	M
Data source(s)	21	Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors (Search Inst.)	Local school district data	local administrative data	ACS
Thriving: Children & Youth Make Healthy Choices					
% low birth weight	*% children with a medical home*	*% youth who drank alcohol before age 13*	*% youth who drank alcohol in the past 30 days*	*% young adults overweight or obese*	
Data Power	H	M	M	M	H
Communication Power	M	M	H	H	H
Proxy Power	H	M	H	H	M
Data source(s)	NVSS	NSCH	YRBS	YRBS	NSCH
Connecting: Children & Youth Have Positive Relationships with Peers and Adults					
% of children whose parent describes the parent-child relationship as "very warm and close"	*% of children who eat a meal with their family 6 or 7 days per week*	*% of children who "receive support from three or more nonparent adults"*	*% of students with high levels of "school connectedness"*	*% parents where parents are 20 or older, married, have at least 12 years' education, and at least one is employed*	
Data Power	L	L	L	L	H
Communication Power	H	H	M	M	H
Proxy Power	M	M	M	H	H
Data source(s)	Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors (Search Inst.)		Communities That Care; Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors; Add Health	ACS	
Leading: Youth Contribute to Their Community					
% of children ages 0-5 taken by family members on outings in the community one or more times within the past week	*% children ages 6-17 who participated in sports teams, clubs, organizations, or other organized after-school activities in the past 12 mos.*	*% of children who participate in school decision-making*	*% youth volunteering in their community*	*% of 18-24-year-olds who voted in the previous general election*	
Data Power	M	M	L	M	H
Communication Power	M	H	M	H	H
Proxy Power	M	H	H	H	M
Data source(s)	NSCH, NSAF	NSCH, NSAF	Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors (Search Inst.)	NSCH	CPS; local administrative data

EXAMPLE

TAKE STOCK – *Shared Diagnosis*

A. ASSESS

The variety of perspectives, data and information made possible by a diverse coalition membership base enables a more complete understanding of community problems and solutions. Effective assessments include a definition of community, identification of needs and concerns, identification of resources and strengths, and an understanding of relevant community history. Key themes that emerge from this process help to articulate the overall agenda and focus the communications, analysis and problem-solving efforts that follow.

Materials:

1. Framing Questions for Community Assessment
2. Developing Your Community Scan – Population Outcomes
3. Developing Your Community Scan – Community Context

B. ANALYZE

Each community is perfectly engineered to produce the results they are currently seeing. The function of the stakeholder group is to identify and change those features of community life that are contributing to the problem or hindering the community from realizing its aspirations – to create a different community that produces a different result. Goal or problem analysis is a group process where participants "unpack" complex issues and identify the root causes and relevant local conditions.

Once identified, community problems or goals should be framed in a manner that is respectful of the community and that set the stage for action. Goals should be analyzed to discover root causes and local conditions that make these causal factors more prevalent in the community.

The power of a group analysis of shared goals is that it can elicit the knowledge of all participants. The danger of the brainstorming process is that the results can reflect the prejudices and assumptions of the participants. Results of community brainstorming should be validated to assure that the ideas are backed by local data, resonate with known science, and reflect the best wisdom of the community. Many of the ideas generated will fail to meet these important validation tests.

Materials:

1. Goals Statement Worksheet
2. Analysis Techniques
    a. 5 Why's Technique
    b. Local Causes Technique
    c. WWW Technique
    d. ABC Technique
3. Overview of Techniques and Approaches
4. Retaining Ideas from Group Analysis

TAKE STOCK – *Shared Diagnosis*

Why this is important

- Often community planning processes move directly from goal-setting to action, skipping over a community-specific diagnosis of the issues. Taking the time to understand the local community's reality helps ensure the right solutions are identified and avoids the well-intentioned but often misguided implementation of off-the-shelf, evidence-based solutions that have no connection to local context, needs, and resources.
- Community leaders often feel like they are drowning in data or playing a game of "whoever has the most data wins." Using a big picture framework to organize and scan existing data helps paint a backdrop for more targeted work. Identifying key questions to be answered focuses what data you need to inform the problem-solving and decision-making process.

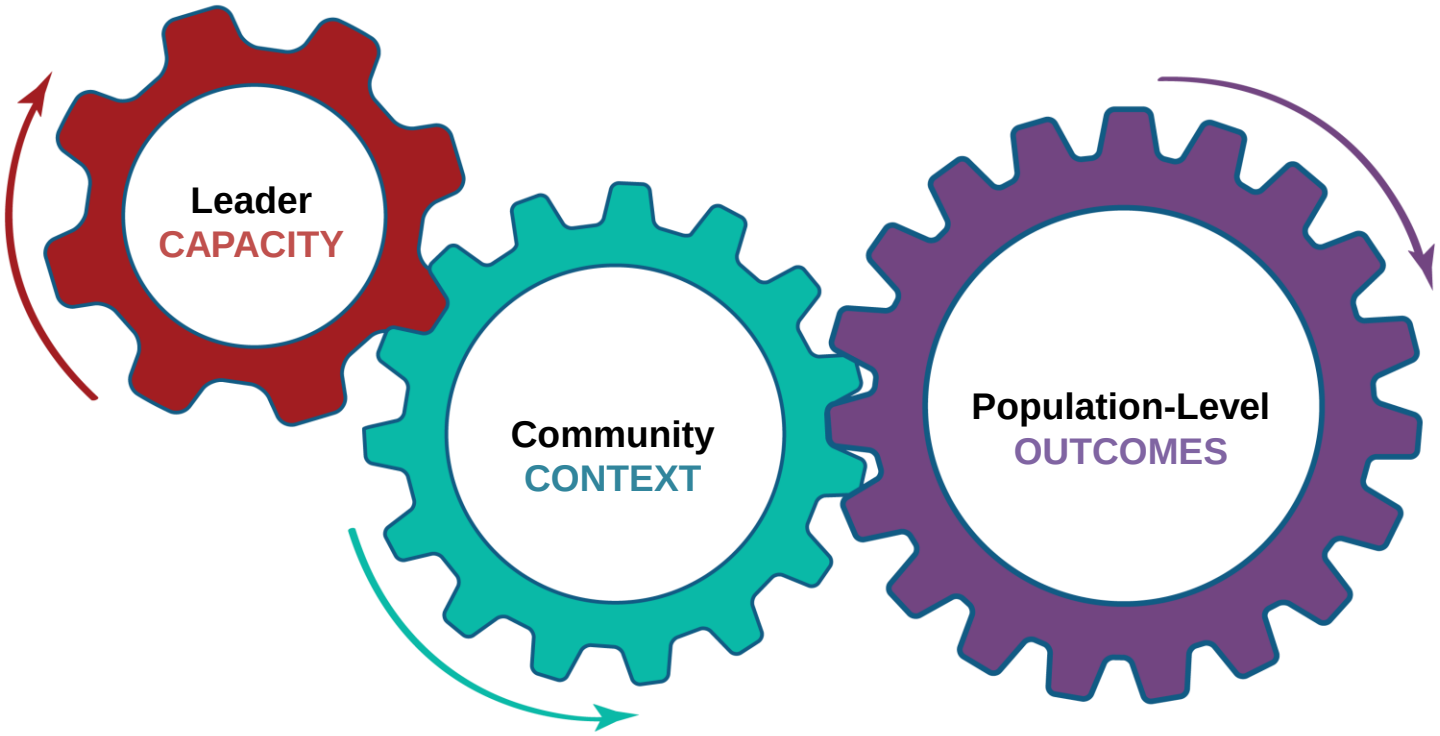
What tradeoffs to anticipate

- The power of a group analysis of shared goals is that it can elicit the knowledge of all participants. The danger of the brainstorming process is that the results can reflect the prejudices and assumptions of the participants. Results of community brainstorming should be validated to assure that the ideas are backed by local data, resonate with known science, and reflect the best wisdom of the community. Many of the ideas generated will fail to meet these important validation tests.
- Getting to a "balanced set" of population-focused indicators measure changes in skills, behaviors and attitudes, including both "problem-reduction" as well as "promotion" across key areas of development takes time and, inevitably, leaves indicators valued and used by some on the cutting room floor. There should be a commitment to keeping a broader set of indicators on the radar screen even as priority indicators are identified.
- Even this narrowed-down list may be too many to create a sense of focus and include in high level communications. Identify a subset of indicators with the greatest data and communications power for high-level messaging but select these priority measures in a way that leads back to the full set.

Key principles for action

- Develop a more complete understanding of the community problems and solutions through a variety of perspectives, data and information made possible by a diverse coalition membership base.
- Prioritize a "balanced set" of population-focused indicators that act like a radar screen by helping to:
  - ✓ Measure changes in skills, behaviors and attitudes, including both "problem-reduction" as well as "promotion" across key areas of development.
  - ✓ Allow for priority measures to be set that represent the most pressing areas of concern and have high communications value.
  - ✓ Allow for changing priorities as other issues come to the fore (e.g., spike in obesity rates)
  - ✓ Ensure that a diverse set of actors can still see that their primary areas of concern are a part of the picture even as immediate priorities are set.
- Make compelling presentations of data that do more than share trends one indicator at a time. They provide a more complex view by bringing data about different indicators together. Explicitly highlighting gaps and inequities and committing to address them is one way to get the full range of stakeholders. Juxtapositions can include:
  - ✓ Varying outcomes for different populations (e.g., achievement gap).
  - ✓ Relationships between outcomes and assets (e.g., between achievement and school quality).
  - ✓ Variations in outcomes (e.g., by neighborhood) compared to variations in support (e.g., by neighborhood).

ASSESS: Framing Questions for Community Assessment



HOW? BY WHOM?

What actions are needed?

Who should be engaged? How?

What does "good" look like"

WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? HOW WELL?

What supports are needed?

When & where should they be available?

What does "good" look like?

WHY? FOR WHOM?

Who are you trying to impact?

What outcomes do you want to see improved? What does "doing well" look like?

- What do you want to promote? (assets, strengths)
- What are you trying to reduce? (risky behaviors, challenges)

ASSESS: Developing your Community Scan – Population Outcomes

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Imagine you are conducting a data scan. What **key questions** do you want to answer?

   a. **FOR YOUR POPULATION – WHO ARE THEY? BASIC DESCRIPTION / STATUS.** What basic information do you want to have about your population & subpopulations? What do you need to know to address disparities/gaps? *(e.g. What are the basic demographics? Population size? Location? Income? Family status? Race/Ethnicity?)*

   b. **FOR YOUR POPULATION – WHAT ARE THEY DOING? HOW WELL ARE THEY DOING?** *(e.g., What behaviors, attitudes, skills are they demonstrating?*

   c. **WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM SOCIETAL IMPACTS?** WHAT ARE THE KEY DATA POINTS THAT HELP YOU MAKE THE CASE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS WORK? *(e.g. prepared workforce)*

2. On the questions of …**"WHAT AND HOW WELL ARE THEY DOING?"**… **what data** would you want to track?
   ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE: Update axes to match your Outcomes Dashboard & make notes on chart
   Are you your indicators balanced? both promoting development and preventing risks?

3. What are the **existing sources of information** that you can tap into for this scan?

A.

What data sources are currently available?	What would it take to access this data?

B.

Are there recent reports or data summaries? *(e.g., Task Force Reports, Needs Assessments)*	Who produced them?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR #2.

On the questions of …**"WHAT AND HOW WELL ARE THEY DOING?"**… **what data** would you want to track?

a. Update axes to match your Outcomes Dashboard
b. Make notes on chart re: specific data you want to include in your scan.
c. Check: Are you your indicators balanced? both promoting development and preventing risks?

WHO? WHO?

WHY? WHY?

subpopulations (e.g., age groups, household types) / outcome areas					
Academic/ Cognitive					
Vocational/ Employment					
Physical Health					
Mental/ Emotional Health					
Social Connection					
Civic Engagement					
Spiritual					

ASSESS: Developing your Community Scan - Community Context

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Imagine you are conducting a data scan. What are the **key questions** you want answered?

   a. **BASIC DESCRIPTION.** What basic information do you want to have about your community (and communities within) given the issues that you are working on? (e.g., What is the status of the local economy? Across subgeographies?)

   b. **FOR YOUR COMMUNITY SUPPORTS / CONTEXTS – ARE THEY AVAILABILE, ACCESSIBILE, HIGH QUALITY WELL-USED AND WELL-COORDINATED?**

2. **WHAT DATA WOULD YOU WANT TO TRACK?**
   ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE: Fill in axes to for your Community Context dashboard & make notes.

3. What are the **existing sources of information** that you can tap into for this scan?

A.

What data sources are currently available?	What would it take to access this data?

B.

Are there recent reports or data summaries? *(e.g., Task Force Reports, Needs Assessments)*	Who produced them?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR #2.

On the questions of …"**WHAT IS THE CURRENT AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, QUALITY AND USE OF ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS? … what data** would you want to include in your scan?

a. From your "Common Language" list, fill in the axes below
   i. Down the sides: What are the key SUPPORTS?
   ii. Across the Top: **TWO OPTIONS:**
      1. What are key SETTINGS or SYSTEMS?
      2. What are key GEOGRAPHIES (e.g., neighborhoods, school catchment areas)

b. Make notes on chart re: specific data you want to include in your scan.

WHERE? WHERE?

WHAT?

WHAT?

PLACES e.g. systems settings neighborhoods / SUPPORTS					
Basic Services					
Safe Places					

ANALYZE: Outcome Statement Worksheet

Proposed outcome: _____

_____

_____

Review your outcome statement to assure it complies with the following criteria:

1. **Names one issue at a time.**
   (*If your statement names more than one, identify each issue and complete an outcome statement worksheet for each one.*)

2. **Is specific to behaviors or conditions.**

3. **Avoids blame.**

4. **Does not jump to solutions.**

5. **Is (or is potentially) measurable.**

Revised outcome: _____

_____

_____

ANALYZE: Outcome Statement Worksheet

Proposed outcome: _____

_____

_____

Review your outcome statement to assure it complies with the following criteria:

1. **Names one issue at a time.**
   (*If your statement names more than one, identify each issue and complete an outcome statement worksheet for each one.*)

2. **Is specific to behaviors or conditions.**

3. **Avoids blame.**

4. **Does not jump to solutions.**

5. **Is (or is potentially) measurable.**

Revised outcome: _____

_____

_____

ANALYZE: Outcome Statement Worksheet

Proposed outcome: _____

_____

_____

Review your outcome statement to assure it complies with the following criteria:

1. **Names one issue at a time.**
   (*If your statement names more than one, identify each issue and complete an outcome statement worksheet for each one.*)

2. **Is specific to behaviors or conditions.**

3. **Avoids blame.**

4. **Does not jump to solutions.**

5. **Is (or is potentially) measurable.**

Revised outcome: _____

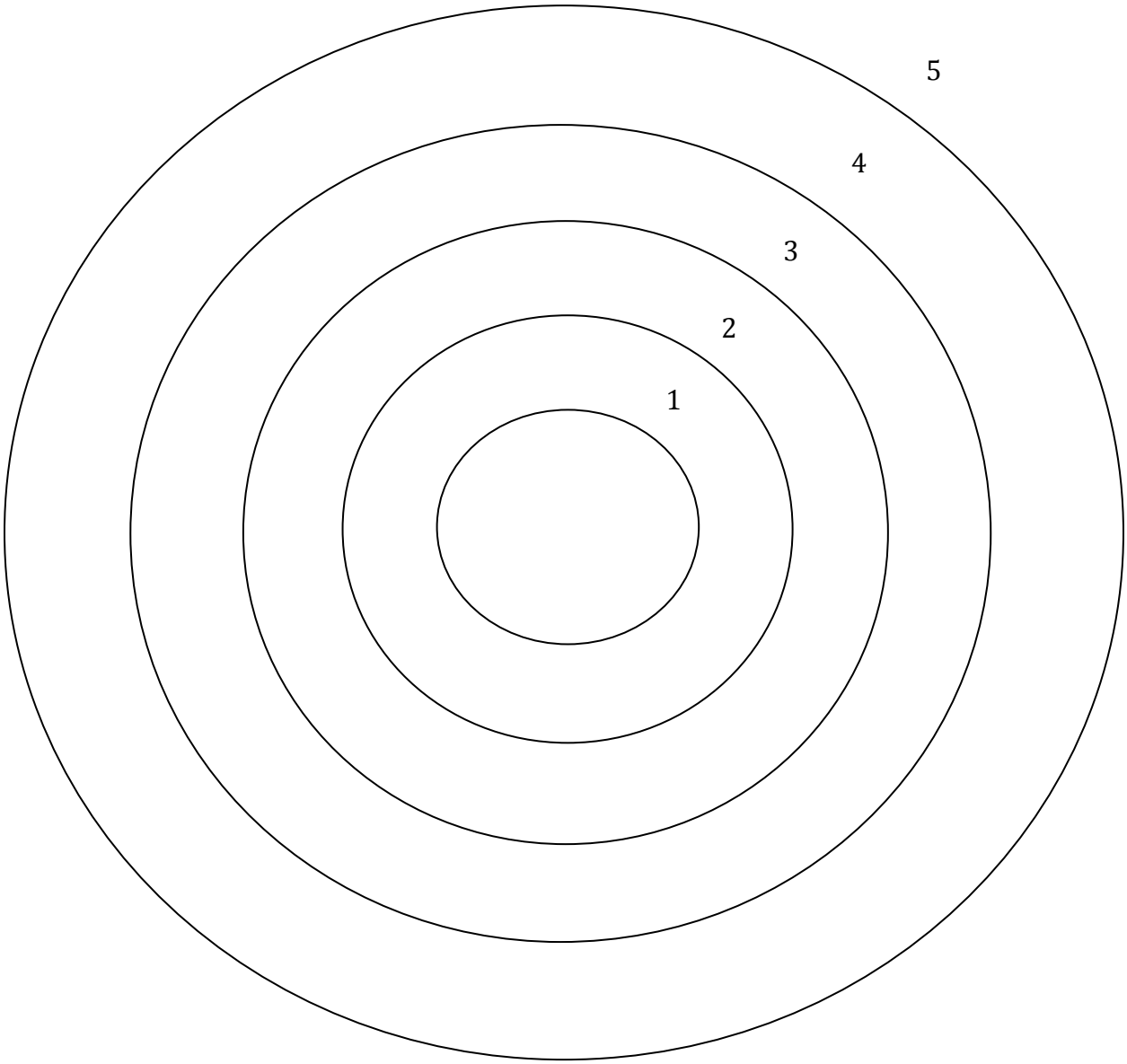
_____

_____

ANALYZE: Five Why's Technique

INSTRUCTIONS

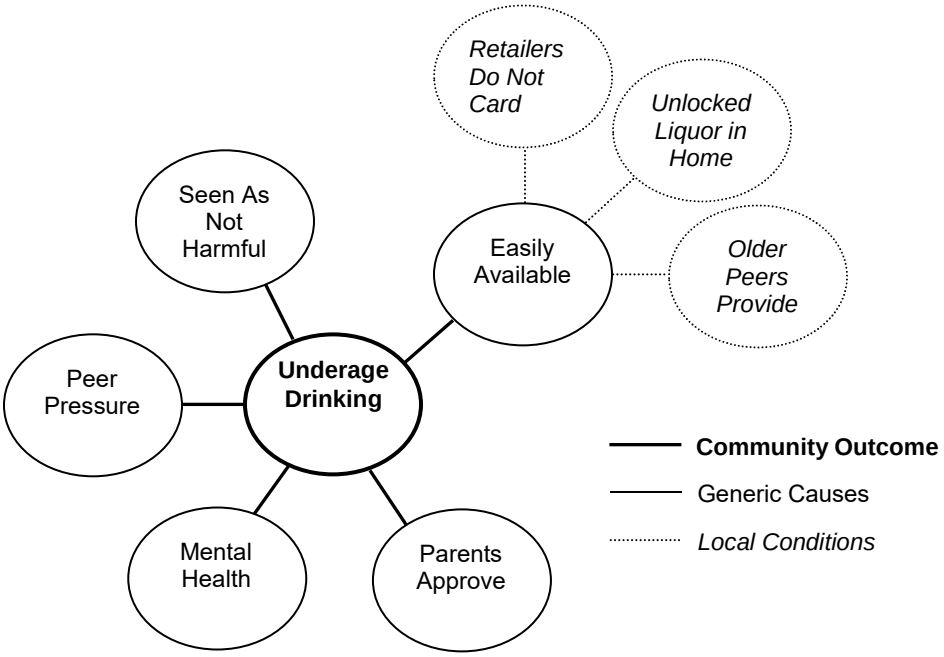
1. Write your outcome statement in the center circle.
2. Ask, "Why is this happening?" and place your answers in the next circle layer.
3. For each answer you brainstormed ask again, "Why is this happening?" and place your answers in the next circle layer.
4. Continue until you have completed "Five Why's?"



ANALYZE: Local Causes Technique

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write your outcome statement in a center circle.
2. Ask, "Why is this happening?" and place your answers in circles around your outcome statement.
3. For each idea you brainstormed ask, "Why is this happening here, in our community?" and place your answers in another layer of circles.



ANALYZE: WWW Technique – When, Where, Why?

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write your outcomes statement: _____

2. Ask: Does the behavior of concern happen at all times of the day?
   Ask: Does the behavior of concern happen every day?

   If you answered "no" to either of these questions then chart in the table below the days and times when this behavior is most likely to occur by placing an "X" in the appropriate cell.

3. Ask: Does the behavior of concern happen in all locations?

   If you answered "no" then chart in the table below the locations where the behavior is most likely to occur by placing the location's name in each cell where you have already placed an "X."

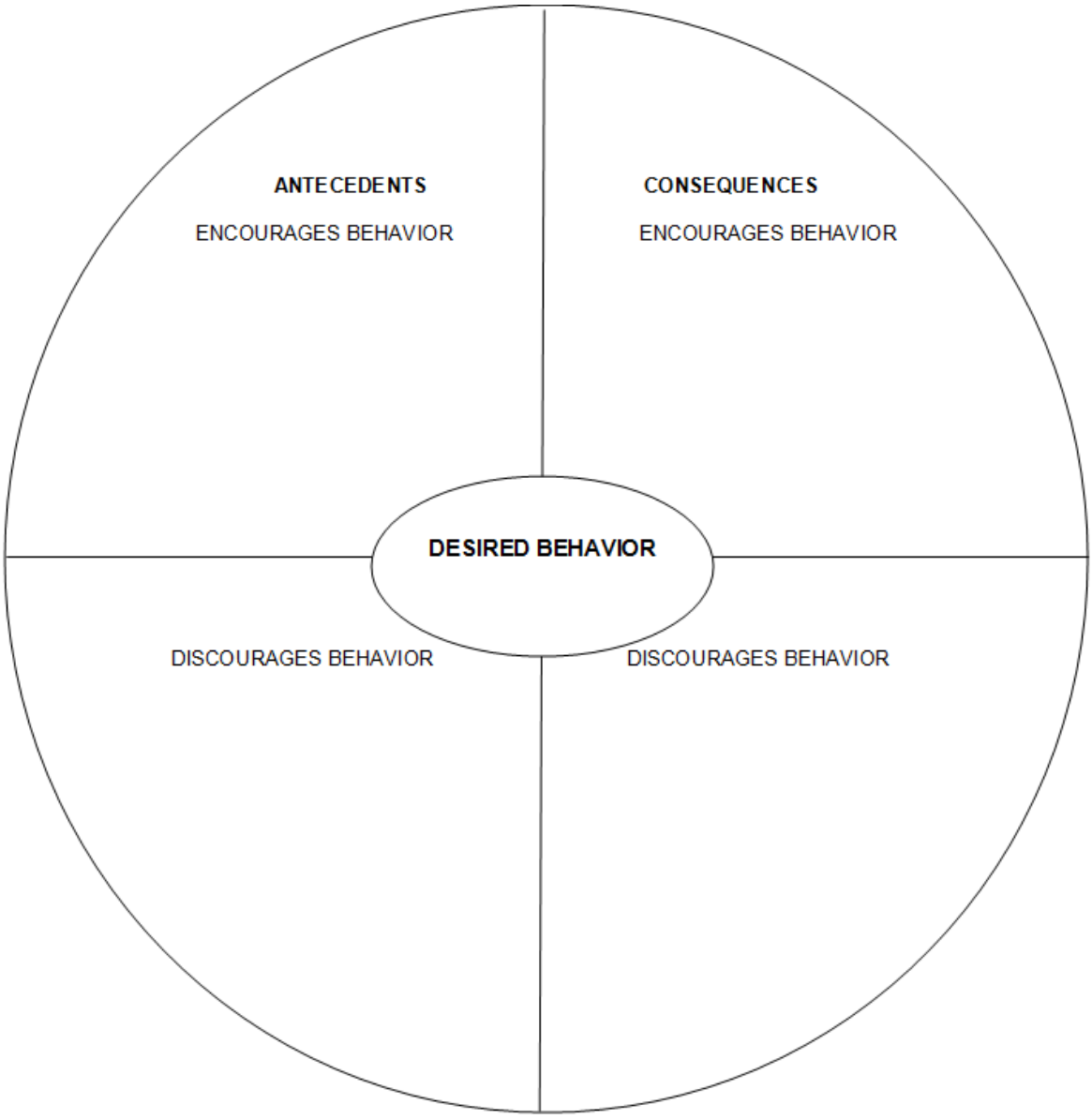
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Early Morning **Morning**							
Mid Day **Early Afternoon**							
Late Afternoon **Early Evening**							
Evening **Late Night**							
Overnight							

5. For each time and location pairing ask, "Why is this happening at this time and in this place?"

ANALYZE: ABC Technique-Antecedents, Behavior, Consequences

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the desired behavior (or problem) in the center circle.
2. Ask, "What happens before this behavior to encourage it?" Place your answers in the upper left hand quadrant.
3. Ask, "What happens before this behavior to discourage it?" Place your answers in the lower left hand quadrant.
4. Ask, "What happens after this behavior to encourage it?" Place your answers in the upper right hand quadrant.
5. Ask, "What happens after this behavior to discourage it?" Place your answers in the lower right hand quadrant.



Overview of Analysis Techniques and Approaches

	Name	Central Purpose / Emphasis	Strengths & Weaknesses	Typical Visual Result (Logic Model)
Problem Analysis	Local Cause Analysis	Identify true causes for elimination	+ Well suited to problems with known set of risk factors + Takes advantage of data rich environments - Can serve to reinforce prevailing assumptions - Can isolate problems from related concerns	Fault Tree, Limited Metaphorm
	Five Why's Analysis	Discover relationships and interrelationships	+ Good for new or relatively unstudied problems + Deals well with co-occurring problems / syndemics - Can surface too many relationships and ideas - Can lead group to seemingly "unmovable forces"	Multiple (Typically: Spider Charts, Metaphorms, Relations Diagrams & Cultural Symbols)
	ABC Analysis	Program for behavior change	+ Micro-analysis or sub-analysis of enabling behaviors + Discovering environment-behavior relationships - Can exclude longer term health & social consequences - Multiple pictures can be difficult to integrate	Modified Johari Window
	WWW Analysis	Identify relevant local	+ Identifies the times and places that merit attention. + Companion to other techniques, extending an analysis. - Ill suited to general or universal behaviors. - Can exclude broader causes and conditions.	Cross Tab Table, Relations Diagrams
Situational Analysis	SWOT Analysis	Find the "soft spots" of a problem for initial action	+ Determining optimal courses of action + Identifying strategic opportunities - Can produce short-sighted plans - Relationship between identified elements left uncharted	Johari Window
	Power Analysis	Identify and change those interested in maintaining the status quo	+ Understanding individual and institutional interests + Learning how to exercise your group's influence - Can overestimate potential conflict and resistance - Can focus on single issues vs. coordinated, multi-front campaign	Flow / Process Chart
	Force Field Analysis	Understand opposing forces	+ Attention is paid to enabling and hindering forces + Combines situational with some elements of problem analysis - Can produce oversimplified picture of complex problems - Struggles with forces that operate in multiple directions	Dichotomous Key / Is, Is Not Diagram

"Our imagination is stretched to the utmost, not as in fiction, to imagine things that are not really there but just to comprehend those things which are there."
Richard Feynam, *The Character of Physical Law*

ANALYZE: Retaining Ideas from Group Analysis

Analysis Results	Criteria for Retaining Ideas			
	Local Data	Science	Community Experience	Community Expectations
Availability: Merchants are not carding.	68% sales rate at last compliance check, 11/2011 83% of seniors report they think it easy to buy, annual youth survey 2011	Hawkins & Catalano, Risk Factors Study, Psychological Bulletin, 1992.	Prom 2008 crash that killed two students. Investigation found purchase at liquor store two hours prior with sales to minors.	MAD Chapter continues publicity campaign re: compliance rates. Not biggest source of alcohol but is a legitimate issue.

TARGET ACTION – *Mutually Reinforcing Activities*

A. VISUALIZE

Logic models are a visual diagram of the community problem and why it is happening (or a goal and how it will be made to happen). The elements of the picture identified through the team's analysis are informed by science, best practice, and community wisdom. This picture allows the partnership to clearly communicate their understanding with the broader community. The picture also assures that any selected interventions can be clearly aligned with their intended effects. Ideally, no group should begin taking action until it can show an evidence-based, issue-integrated picture of the community problem and why it is happening.

Diagrams of outcomes, root causes and local conditions enable concise and clear communication, planning and evaluation. Such diagrams, or logic models, also allow a coalition to critically analyze its progress toward shorter term or intermediate goals which can facilitate needed improvement and celebration.

Materials:

1. Representational Model
2. Common Cause
3. Common Cause Summary
4. Metaphorm Model

B. ALIGN

Every community team wants to get to action as soon as possible. By first analyzing the goal and identifying community conditions the partnership is now able to select interventions specific to their community and that can build on local assets. Further the team can map the interventions to the anticipated outcomes. As in medicine, the benefit of any intervention is largely determined by the quality of the diagnosis.

A key to realizing a partnership's impact is distributing the work across the entire membership. Partnerships often develop strong plans but then look to limited numbers of staff for implementation. This essentially turns the coalition or partnership into an advisory board. Collective impact is not achieved by channeling the power of the coalition's membership through one or more staff. Rather, collective impact is achieved by having each partnership member contribute to needed action in line with their role, capacity, and interests.

Materials:

1. Intervention Mapping
2. Designing and Selecting Interventions
    a. Selection Criteria
    b. Resources for Finding Evidence-Based Causes, Strategies & Interventions
3. Action Planning for Distributed Responsibility Worksheet

TARGET ACTION – *Mutually Reinforcing Activities*

Why this is important

- Given the complexity of social problems, it is essential to develop clear visual models that show the collective understanding and hypotheses of how planned actions are intended to address those underlying causes and, ultimately, improve outcomes. These models should be annotated with clear data points so that that the hypotheses about how change is going to happen can be understood and modified over time.
- Understanding how the underlying causes are often the same even though the outcomes that they affect seem very different can help diverse stakeholders understand why they would want to come together to take joint action. It is important to help stakeholders see how critical supports and assets can address multiple outcomes, leading to joint efforts that cross traditional silos.
- A balanced set of strategies focuses on the frontline as well as on broader program and system improvement, but it doesn't stop there. It also maximizes policy and resource alignment, harnesses community demand, and powerfully engages affected populations.
- Prioritization of the range of possible strategies should be informed by the best of "what works," and allowing for innovation. The strategies should address the specific indicators of focus. Recommendations should be concrete, addressing who, what, where, when & how much. Explicit connections should be made between each recommendation, improved supports/assets, and changes in outcomes.

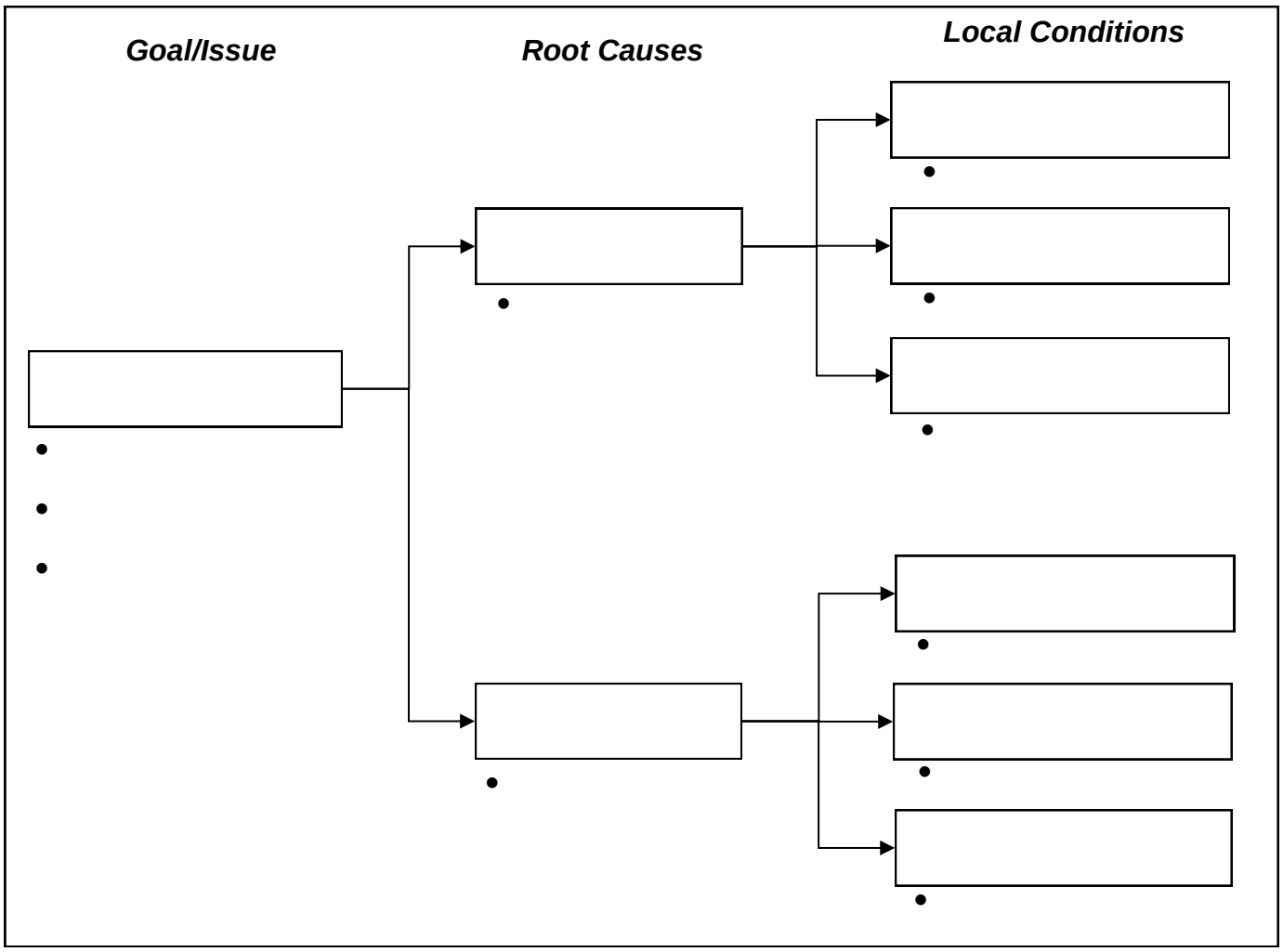
What tradeoffs to anticipate

- Everything cannot be tackled at once – prioritizing action areas allows progress to be made in the most important places and concentrates available horsepower. Clearly linking those action areas to multiple desired outcomes, however, can help keep the full range of actors at the table.
- Some people like neat "representational" logic models that connect boxes with arrows. Others can more easily connect with "organic" or "mechanical" models (e.g. trees, gears) that show the relationships between key elements. It may be useful to have both. Organic models are easier to evolve as assumptions change. Both should connect intended actions to intended outcomes clearly. Flexibility and clarity in any visual model is essential.
- Programmatic solutions are often the easiest for community players to generate. A balanced set of strategies requires thinking outside the programmatic box. In identifying solutions, challenge stakeholders to also think about changes in the physical environment, in rewards and consequences, in reducing barriers and increasing access, in strengthening constituent voice and action, and in modifying policies and aligning resources.

Key principles for action

- Draw a clear connection between outcomes and inputs, which doesn't take much time and gives you increased horsepower to:
  - ✓ Tell a compelling "cause and effect" story and ensure buy-in and ownership at all levels of your partnership.
  - ✓ Give people confidence that they can report and claim progress on improving key supports even though it takes longer to improve specific outcomes, reducing the pressure to set unrealistic timeframes for improving outcomes; and
  - ✓ Draw upon useful research to help prioritize and link improvements in community supports to measurable improvements in skills, behaviors and attitudes at the population-level.
- Identify actions that not only address broad policy issues but also reflect the "power of the individual," speaking to what everyone involved has to offer, given their resources, skills and connections.

VISUALIZE: Representational Model Worksheet

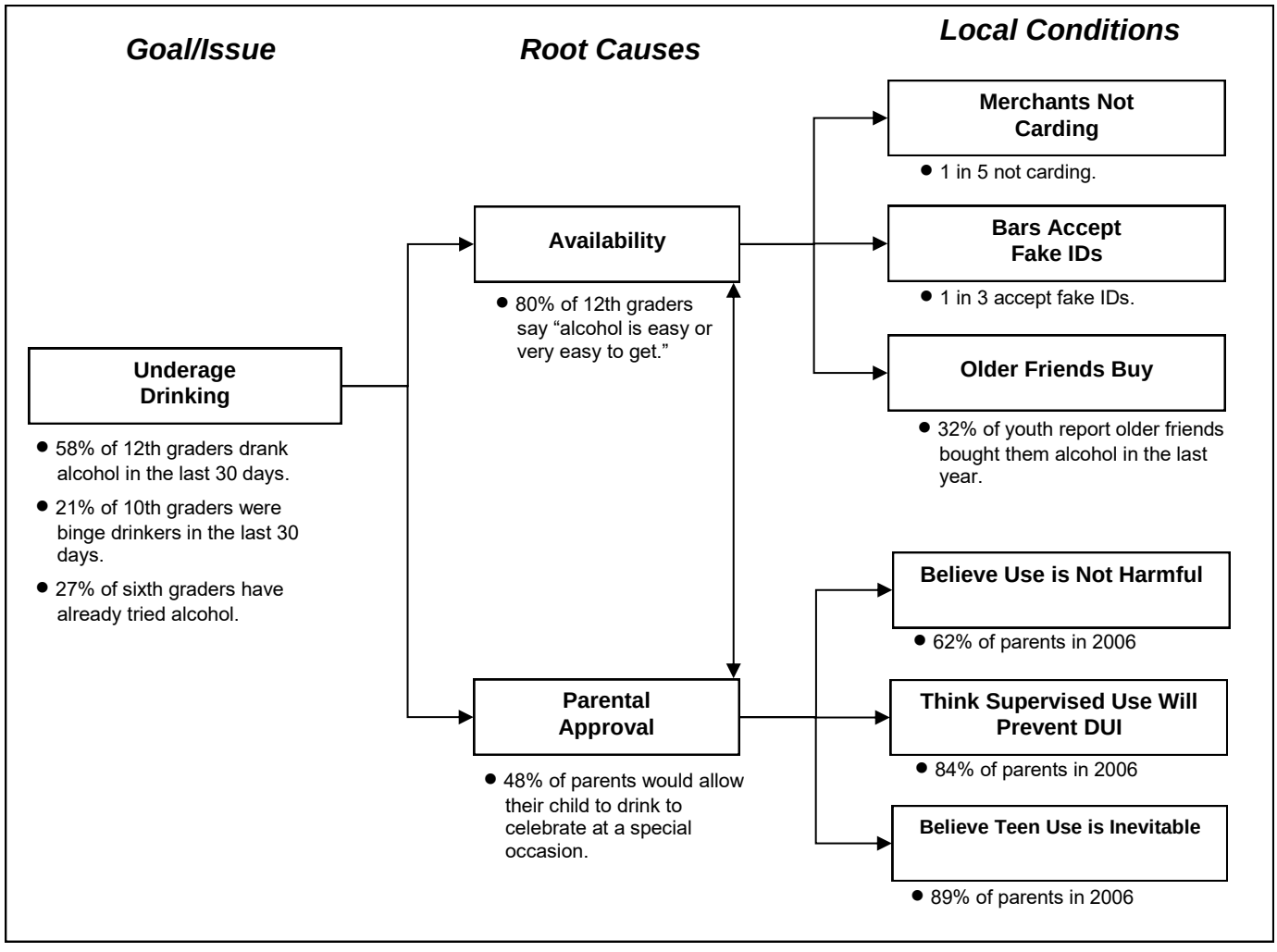


1. Place your goal/issue in the first box to the left. Under your issue provide up to three measures or indicators that describe the current level or demonstrate the importance of the issue.

2. Select at least two root causes from the brainstorming exercise that meet the criteria (have data, support by science, supported by community experience and wisdom). Place these in the two boxes in the middle. Provide at least one measure or data element for each.

3. For each of the root causes select up to three local conditions that meet the criteria (have data, supported by science, supported by community experience and wisdom). Place these in the six boxes at the far right. Provide at least one measure or data element for each

Example: Representational Model



VISUALIZE: Common Cause Analysis

Moving from "root cause" to "common cause" with a clustering technique that helps groups working on a range of different issues identify the underlying challenges that they want to work on together.

Facilitator's Notes:

- Each group had already done their "5 Why's" or "Root Cause/Local Condition" analysis.
  (In a community brainstorming meeting, they've been asked to discuss the likelihood that they meet standard reality checks – e.g., local data, science, community experience, community expectations.)

- Each group is given a stack of paper strips in a unique color.

INSTRUCTIONS:

AS A TABLE GROUP

1. In big, block lettering, transfer your "local conditions" onto the colored strips of paper – 1 per strip

2. Prioritize your top five "local conditions." Write #1, #2, #3, etc. in the upper corner of each one.

AS A FULL GROUP – ON THE WALL

1. Starting with someone's #1 priority, ask, "Does anyone have a similar 'local condition?'"
   Cluster similar conditions (or root causes) together.
   (Facilitator's note: It helps to have in mind the "community supports" categories from your common language framework as you facilitate this step. Other categories may emerge as well.)

2. Repeat with someone else's #1 priority.

3. Continue until you have worked through everyone's top #1-#5 priorities.

FULL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. No matter what your starting issue, are there areas that you can work on together?

2. How can you tackle some of these "common cause" clusters together?

NOTES:

1. Review your table's issues. List them here . . . or summarize directly into top of columns on next page.

   Team One: _____

   Team Two: _____

   Team Three: _____

   Team Four: _____

   Team Five: _____

2. Review your results from the Common Cause "Sort & Shift" activity.

   What root causes and local conditions were shared? (Note the most frequently cited on next page.)

   Which were unique? (Note here.)

VISUALIZE: Common Cause Summary – *"the shift"*

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Across top of middle columns, list each Goal/Issue that your table worked on.
2. For each "common cause" cluster of root causes and local conditions, list 2 or 3 of the most frequently cited causes in column one.
3. For each Goal/Issue, put a check in the related Goal/Issue column.
4. Come up with a summary "name" for each Action Area. Note this in the final column.
   Discuss: What are the implications of these named clusters for carrying out your joint work?

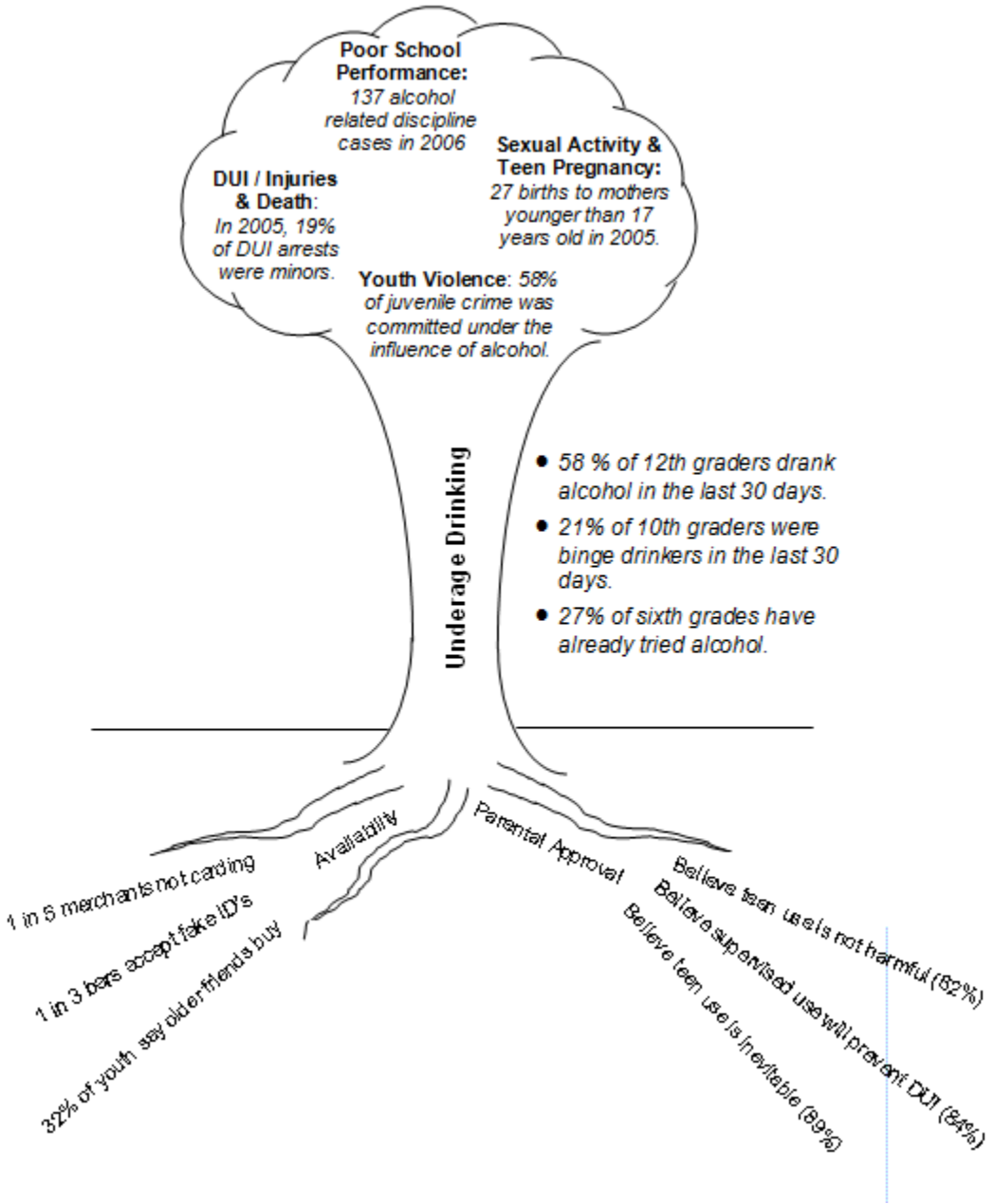
	Root Causes or Local Conditions (list most common)	**Goals/Issues** 1	2	3	4	5	**Name the Cluster**
CLUSTER 1							
CLUSTER 2							
CLUSTER 3							
CLUSTER 4							

VISUALIZE: Metaphorm Logic Model

How might your team explain or display these shared causes to community or family members? Is there a metaphor that could help community members visualize your analysis? Examples might include rivers, trees, pipelines, automobiles (anything organic or mechanical is a good candidate).

Draw your picture or metaphor and place the shared root causes and local conditions in your picture.

Example: Metaphorm Model



ALIGN: Intervention mapping

Common Cause Condition: _____

To which issues/goals and root causes is this condition related?

Strategy for Changing the Condition	Potential Actions	Who Could Do This In Your Community?	How Much? *Effort* Hi/Med/Lo	*Cost* Hi/Lo/No
Provide Information to change agent				
Build Skills of change agent				
Provide Support to change agent				
Change the Physical Design of the Environment				
Reduce Barriers & Enhance Access				
Change the Consequences				
Modify Policies				
Align Resources				
Strengthen Constituent Voice				

Local Condition: Merchants are selling alcohol to minors.

Measure 1: 19% of 12th grade students report being able to buy alcohol at a local outlet.
Measure 2: 45% of alcohol outlets failed compliance checks in the past year.
Measure 3: The last three youth focus groups have identified retailers as a key source.

Strategy for Changing the Condition	Potential Interventions	Who Could do This in our Community?
Provide Information to change agent	Mass mailing to all outlets providing information about existing laws and consequences. [Jones County Model]	The Chamber of Commerce, the local Association of Petroleum Retailers, Quick Print, Inc. and AdCo Advertising.
	Inform key local leaders about the problem and data documenting the current problem. [Use Model from Last Policy Campaign]	Coalition policy committee, chief of police and Commissioner Bowden of the Alcohol and Beverage Control Commission.
Build Skills of change agent	Provide training to retail clerks on how to identify fake id's and correct id check procedures. [Use National Curriculum]	The Chamber of Commerce, the local Association of Petroleum Retailers and two coalition volunteer trainers.
Provide Support to change agent	Convene liquor outlets at an annual owners meeting to facilitate sharing of ideas to increase compliance. [Use the Texas, "Business Town Hall Meetings" Model]	The Chamber of Commerce, the local Association of Petroleum Retailers, the coalition special events committee, KTVR Channel 5, Crown Regional Distributing.
Reduce Barriers and Enhance Access	Offer recurring retail clerk training on-site. [Use National Curriculum]	ABC Commission, coalition volunteer trainers, M.A.D.D. volunteers, Mr. R. Smith (owner of North Town Liquors).
	Offer non-English version of retail clerk training. [Use National Curriculum]	ABC Commission, coalition volunteer trainers, M.A.D.D. volunteers, Lawndale Community College foreign language department teachers and students.
Change the Consequences	Provide recognition for high compliance outlets in quarterly advertising section of the newspaper. [Mercer County Model]	The Daily News and Gazette, coalition media committee.
	Create "thank you business cards" (with 10% mall discount incentive) for distribution to clerks who are seen to follow correct id process. [Mercer Co. Model]	AdCo Advertising, Chamber of Commerce, Quick Print, Inc., South County Mall Merchants Association.
	Increase the number of compliance checks to at least two per quarter.	County Sheriff's office, ABC commission, youth committee volunteers.
Change the Physical Design of the Environment	Increase the amount of in-store signage reminding patrons of id check law and procedures followed by store clerks.	AdCo Advertising, Chamber of Commerce, Quick Print, Inc., ABC Commission.
	Create yearly "born on this date" reminder stickers for each point of sale.	AdCo Advertising, Chamber of Commerce, Quick Print, Inc., ABC Commission.
Modify Policies	Increase fines for consecutive compliance check failure by 50%	ABC commission, Lawndale County Council
	Make rates of past compliance a condition for awarding new / renewing licenses.	ABC commission, Lawndale County Council
	Establish a probation period of one year for newly awarded liquor licenses requiring 100% compliance or revocation.	ABC commission, Lawndale County Council
Align Resources	Work with corporate sponsors of the various "We Card" programs to coordinate outreach efforts to retailers.	Chamber of Commerce
	Coordinate county sheriff and city police chief resources to increase the number of compliance checks.	County Sheriff; Police Chiefs, ABC Commission
Strengthen Constituent Voice	Engage young people as compliance testers.	Youth organizing group, student leadership groups
	Coordinate outreach efforts with local MADD and SADD Chapters.	Coalition advocacy committee; MADD, SADD (four area chapters)
	Identify champions among retailers.	Coalition advocacy committee; Owner of Huck's Speedway

ALIGN: Designing and Selecting Interventions

Selection Criteria

1. Have evidence of effectiveness.
2. Target the specific local conditions of interest.
3. Provide an opportunity to build local capacity.
4. Provide an opportunity to build community.

Resources for Finding Evidence-Based Causes, Strategies, and Interventions

From Government Sponsored Research Summaries:

http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost
WSIPP's mission is to carry out practical, non-partisan research at the direction of the legislature or the Board of Directors. WSIPP works closely with legislators, legislative and state agency staff, and experts in the field to ensure that studies answer relevant policy questions for the following areas: education, criminal justice, welfare, children and adult services, health, and general government.

http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/
This resource is focused mainly on problem behaviors among adolescents and on building skills and resiliency among youth.

http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html
This resource provides evidence based interventions for a broad range of health and social outcomes including: adolescent health, alcohol, asthma, birth defects, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, health equity, HIV/AIDS, housing, mental health, motor vehicle injury, nutrition, obesity, oral health, physical activity, tobacco, vaccines, and violence amongst others.

From Private Sector Research Summaries:

http://www.cssp.org/publications/pathways-to-outcomes
This resource is focused on youth development, school readiness, 3rd grade success, and preventing child abuse.

https://www.childtrends.org/what-works/
Child Trends' What Works is a searchable register of over 700 programs that have had at least one randomized evaluation to assess child or youth outcomes related to education, life skills, and social/emotional, mental, physical, behavioral, or reproductive health.

http://collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/community-engagement-toolkit
The Community Engagement Toolkit share a series of tools for planning community engagement to be more purposeful, equitable, transparent, and strategic so that community members are true partners for achieving impact.

From University Research Summaries:

http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/resources/hexagon-tool-exploring-context
The Hexagon Tool can help states, districts, and schools appropriately select evidence-based instructional, behavioral, and social- emotional innovations and prevention approaches by reviewing six broad factors in relation to the program or practice under consideration.

http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/
Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, out of the University of Colorado Bolder, helps you easily identify evidence-based prevention and intervention programs that are effective in reducing antisocial behavior and promoting a healthy course of youth development.

ALIGN: Action Planning for Distributed Responsibility

Who?	Will do what?	By when?	Resources needed.	Who should know?

Figure 6.3

TRACK PROGRESS – *Shared Measurement*

A. TRACK

Partnerships have to implement a comprehensive set of interventions in order to change the local conditions that contribute to community problems or enable community goals. The package of needed interventions can include changes to the physical design of the environment, changes to the practices and policies of area organizations, media campaigns, and targeted programs. Keeping track of all of this work and effectively managing the actions of multiple partners is essential to successful implementation.

Coalition evaluation should help the team *improve* its work, *coordinate* more effectively, and be *accountable* to participants, funders and the community for the effects of coalition work. Evaluation should also help *celebrate* progress along the way to achieving community-level outcomes and contribute to *sustaining* the coalition effort long enough to make a difference in community life. Evaluation of coalitions is fundamentally different from program evaluation since the target of coalition work is the health and behavior of the entire community.

Materials:

1. Coalition Outcome Measures
2. Evaluating Collective Impact – Mindset Shift; Evaluation & Shared Measurement
3. Evaluating Collective Impact – Four Aspects of the Work
4. Focus of Evaluation Will Evolve Throughout Life of the Collective Impact Initiative

B. IMPROVE

No matter how carefully a partnership analyzes their community and no matter how strategically a partnership plans its interventions, adjustments will be needed. Despite the best intentions of all involved some interventions will falter and even the basic community conditions will change. Likewise new partners will make additional interventions possible. The reality is that community work is dynamic and unfolds in unpredictable ways, and the partnership will need to consider new questions that arise and consider adjustments to be made. With initial planning and intervention the work has only just begun. Leaders must manage and improve the intervention effort until desired outcomes are achieved.

Materials:

1. Analyzing Your Contribution
2. Critical Reflection Guide
3. Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity

TRACK PROGRESS – *Shared Measurement and Evaluation*

Why this is important

- Continuous learning is critical to collective impact success. Collective impact, by definition, is a process for collective seeing, learning and doing. Data and insights from evaluation help an initiative learn as it goes, so it can adapt and improve its work over time – ultimately leading to achieving the outcomes that the initiative sets for itself.
- Without learning what is working, and what is not working so well (about the functioning of both the collaborative and the programs / work that leaders undertake), we cannot adapt and adjust our work toward what is truly making a difference toward our outcomes.
- Data showing progress from evaluation (both the early process indicators and shared measures) can help a group maintain momentum, energy and enthusiasm.
- It is important to recognize the importance of evaluating "process". (i.e., it is important to recognize that the reconfiguration of organizations into a more aligned and coordinated system through a collective impact initiative is itself a powerful short-term outcome; this evaluation should not be dismissed as just a "process" evaluation.)

What tradeoffs to anticipate

- Balancing the cost of hiring a third party and building the initiative's own capacity for data collection and evaluation (both are needed, but at different intensities at different points in the initiative's evolution).
- Balancing evaluation of the initiative itself (e.g., development of the five conditions, leader capacity) and evaluation of the programs and systems work (e.g., new collaborative programs; work to change local conditions).
- Knowing when to adapt the evaluation plan and framework as the initiative evolves, and continuing to monitor the work as originally planned.

Key principles for action

- Embed evaluation in the initiative's DNA
  - ✓ Have the evaluation look both for *what* progress is being made, as well as *why* that progress (or lack of) is being made.
  - ✓ Be intentional about continuous learning.
  - ✓ Commit to measuring progress of the initiative itself, as well as evaluating effectiveness and impact of programs that are part of the initiative.
- Set reasonable expectations
  - ✓ Be patient about outcomes but track interim indicators to see if we are moving toward outcomes.
  - ✓ Manage expectations about results and accountability – a collective impact evaluation should both provide data in the service of learning *and* accountability.
- Be thoughtful about your evaluation partners
  - ✓ When possible, provide sufficient financial and logistical support for evaluation – it's worth it.
  - ✓ When hiring an evaluator, find one who understand complexity and is willing to flex and adapt to emergent information needs and changing contexts as the initiative evolves.

TRACK: Coalition Outcome Measures

Table of Coalition Outcome Measures

	Outputs	Local Conditions (Near-Term)	Root Causes (Intermediate)	Behavioral	Health & Social Consequences
Process Evaluation	Measure the amount and type of outputs generated by the coalition.	Measures the immediate effects of coalition outputs (Expected to change in <12 months and usually measured monthly or quarterly)	Measures aggregate effects of near term outcomes on root causes.	Measures the level of the behavior(s) of interest.	Measures the downstream consequences of targeted behaviors.

TRACK: Coalition Outcome Measures

DEFINITIONS & EXAMPLES

Early Performance Indicators | **Shared Measures**

Coalition Characteristics & Capacity	Coalition Activities	Coalition Outputs	Local Conditions	Root Causes	Behavior Skill / Attitude	Societal Consequence
Structure, capacity & process measures of Backbone, Steering Committee & Working Groups to organize and support coalition partners	Amount & type of coalition activities focused on selected interventions against plan	Results of efforts by type (e.g. funding flow) and intervention (e.g. vacant lot clean up)	Measures the immediate effects of coalition outputs (expected to change in <12 months and usually measured monthly or quarterly)	Measures aggregate effects of near term outcomes on root causes	Measures the level of the behavior(s), skills, attitudes of interest	Measures the downstream consequences of the targeted behaviors
such as •Mayor's Office •Juvenile/Family Courts •Police Department •Interfaith Coalition •Metro United Way •Metro Schools •Metro PTA •Neighborhood Councils •Tenants Association •Realtors Association •Chamber of Commerce •YouthNet Works •Seniors Together	*activity types* • Provide Information to community actors • Build Skills of community actors • Provide Support to community actors • Change the Physical Design of the Environment • Reduce Barriers & Increase Access • Change the Consequences • Modify Policies • Align Resources • Strengthen Constituent Voice	*result types* • Coalition capacity building • Media Coverage • Resources Generated • Modified programs, policies & practices *such as* • Adequate lighting • Reclaimed vacant lots • Landlord Controls • Liquor zoning restrictions • Community policing • Active Tip lines • Neighborhood Patrols • Afterschool/Teen Clubs • Youth Jobs Program • Community Rec. Centers • Senior Escort Service • School Safety Zones • Mentoring • Drug Courts	Broken street lights Vacant lots Absentee landlords Unsafe streets Lack of things to do Easy access to alcohol Unequal response of justice system	Lack of Opportunities Unsafe environment Sense of Isolation Lack of Justice System Response	Neighborhood Level Indicators # thefts per 100 housing units # arrests per 1000 residents # arrests per 1000 youth <24 # gang related incidents per month	More participation in community events Higher property values People move to neighborhood

Example based on safe streets coalition

TRACK: Evaluating Collective Impact
Mindset Shift; Evaluation & Shared Measurement

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Evaluating Collective Impact Requires a Mindset Shift for Many Funders and Practitioners

Typical Focus of Program Evaluation	Evaluating CI as a Complex Intervention
Assessing the impact of a **specific intervention**	Assessing **multiple parts of the "system" / collaborative,** including its components and connections
Evaluating effects and impact according to a **predetermined set of outcomes**	Evaluating intended and unintended outcomes as they **emerge over time**
Using logic models that imply cause and effect, and **linear** relationships	Evaluating **non-linear and non-directional relationships** between the intervention and its outcomes
Providing findings **at the end** of the evaluation	Embedding **feedback** and **learning** through the evaluation

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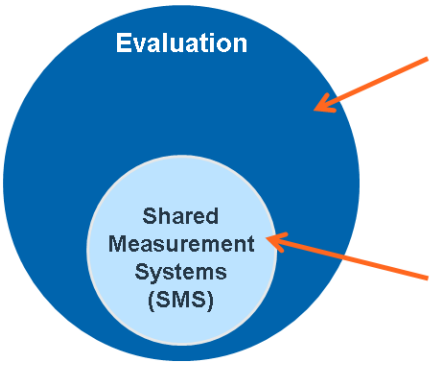
Collective Impact Efforts Should Use Both Shared Measurement and Evaluation to Understand Their Effectiveness and Impact

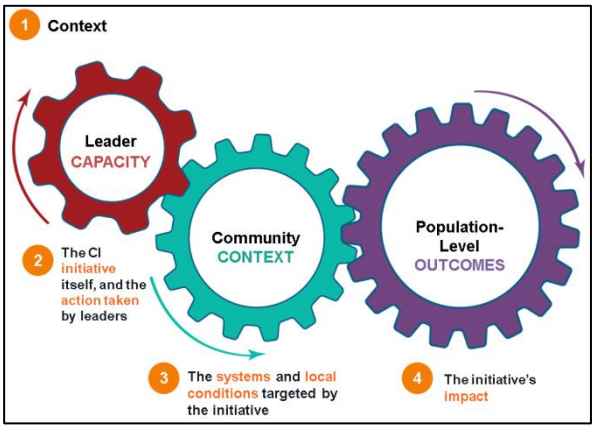


Evaluation refers to a range of activities that involve the planned, purposeful, and systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of a CI initiative

Shared measurement systems (SMS) use a common set of indicators to monitor an initiative's performance and track its progress toward goals

SMS can be both an input to evaluation (by providing data and/or shaping evaluation questions) and an object of evaluation

TRACK: Evaluating Collective Impact
Four Aspects of the Work



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Evaluating a Collective Impact Effort Involves Looking at Four Aspects of the Work

		For example…
1	The initiative's context	• Community culture and history • Demographic and socio-economic conditions • Political context • Economic factors
2	Leader Capacity: The CI initiative itself, and the action taken by leaders	*…the effectiveness of* • The five core elements of collective impact • The initiative's capacity • The initiative's learning culture • The initiative's (or community's) capacity for problem-solving *…leading to changes in:* • Individuals' and organizational behavior . . . • Funding flows • Cultural norms • Policies
3	Community: The systems and local conditions targeted by the initiative	*…resulting in:* • Improved professional practice • Coordinated actors / systems / programs • New / improved programs & community conditions
4	Population Level: The initiative's impact	*…changes in:* • Population-level outcomes

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Collective Impact Partners Should First Identify the Key Learning Questions They Seek to Answer

Sample Learning Questions

1 Context

- What are the cultural, socioeconomic, and political factors that are influencing the design and implementation of the CI initiative?

2 CI Design & Implementation

- *Backbone Infrastructure*: To what extent and in what ways is the backbone infrastructure providing the leadership, support, and guidance partners need to do their work as planned?

3 Intermediate Outcomes

Changes in Systems and Local Conditions

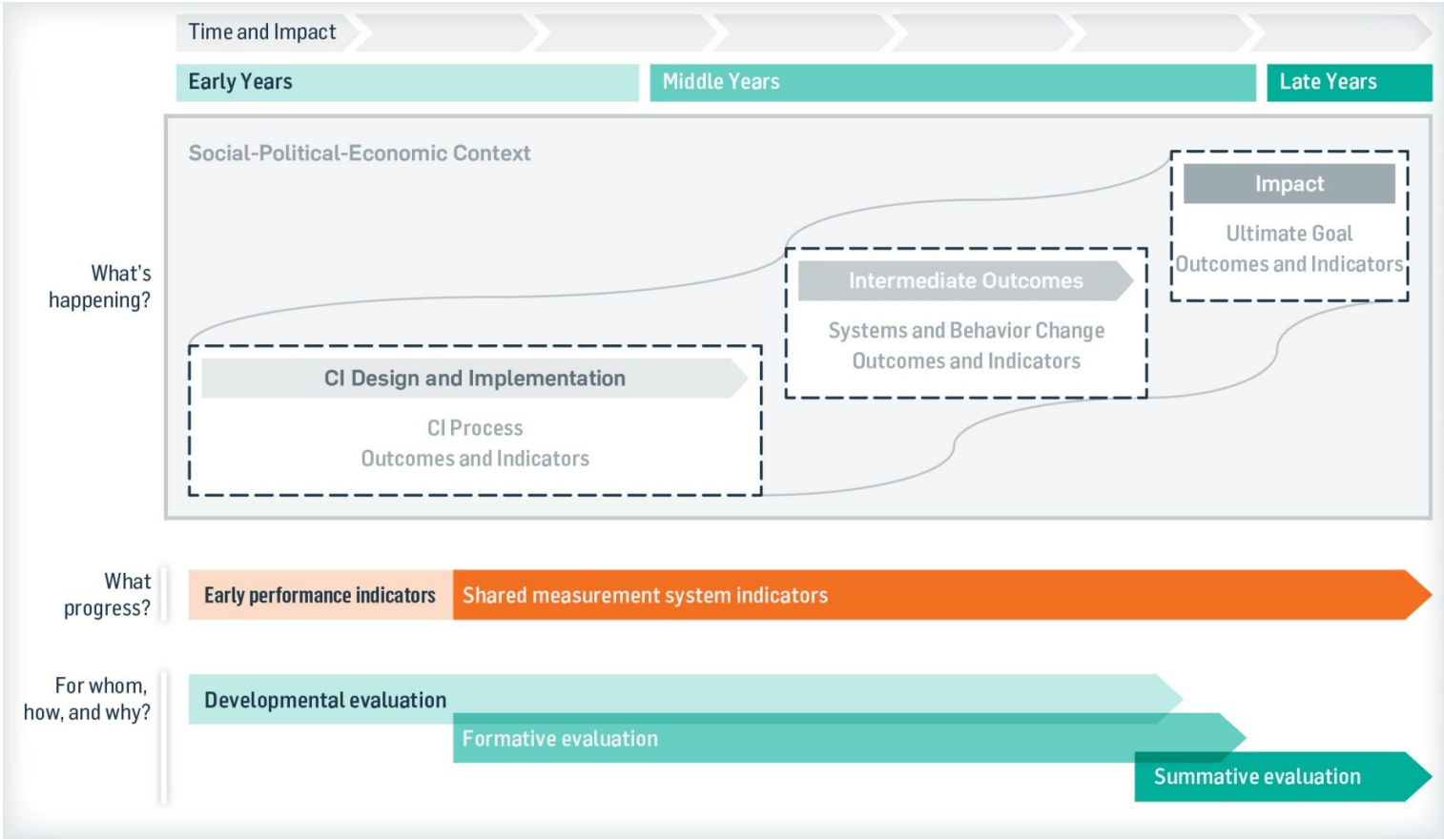
- To what extent / in what ways are social and cultural norms evolving in ways that support the goals of the CI initiative?
- To what extent are programs in the community, related to our issue, more coordinate?

4 Impact

- To what extent has the CI initiative achieved its ultimate outcomes?
- What has contributed to or hindered the achievement of the CI initiative's goals?

TRACK: The Focus of Evaluation Will Evolve

The Focus of Evaluation – and the Data Collection Methods Used - Will Evolve Throughout the Life of the Collective Impact Initiative



CI partners can use the framework to help focus their evaluation

IMPROVE: Analyzing Your Contribution

5 STEPS FOR CONDUCTING AN ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTION.

(1) Collect output data (the dose). It is impossible to analyze a foundation's contribution to improved community conditions, reduced risk and changed behaviors if the foundation cannot describe what it produced. The measure of "dose" is the essential part of the story. The first step in an analysis of contribution is to implement an output monitoring system. The Mary Black Foundation uses a science-based system for monitoring the outputs produced by grantees. These data are collected regularly from grantees via an on-line collection system. This evaluation system allows the Foundation to pull together the work of very different grantees into one, unified and coherent picture of everyone's work to improve a targeted health outcome in Spartanburg County.

(2) Establish a time sequence. With a measure of the dose in hand, the Foundation can look to see if there is a relationship in time between the Foundation's work and targeted outcomes. A relationship in time does not prove a contribution to outcomes: it is simply a prerequisite. If improvements in targeted outcomes happen before the work funded by the Foundation, then it cannot be the result of that funding. If improvements in targeted outcomes happen after the Foundation's work then it is worth exploring to see if there is a causal relationship between the two.

In logic, the belief that one thing causes another merely because they follow each other in time is called an *ex post facto* error. The term *ex post facto* comes from the Latin phrase "Post hoc, ergo propter hoc." Which literally translates as, "After the fact, therefore because of the fact." We see this type of error in logic all of the time.

Sports fans wear a lucky hat or shirt because their team always wins when they wear it. Is there really any cause and effect relationship between wearing lucky clothing and a team's winning percentage? Of course not. But because one follows the other in time people begin to believe there is a solid relationship. The next two steps in an analysis of contribution are necessary to avoid this type of logical error.

(3) Demonstrate a plausible mechanism. Part of the reason we cannot believe that a lucky hat improves the winning percentage of the sports team is that there is no plausible mechanism of effect. By what means does the hat affect team play? There is not any, and so logical thinkers reject the hat as an adequate explanation for why the team might have won a championship.

Foundations can demonstrate a mechanism of effect in two ways. First, by documenting their grantees' outputs a foundation can describe how the "dose" is likely to lead to intended outcomes. For example, a grantee may pass a keg registration law, embark on a social marketing campaign to discourage adults from hosting parties with alcohol, and increase fines and penalties for providing alcohol to minors. These and other community changes, services provided and media describe how it is that the grantees' work may have been a contributing factor in reducing the number of adults in the community who were arrested or fined for hosting underage drinking parties.

A second way foundations demonstrate a mechanism of effect is by showing a pathway through targeted community-level outcomes. For example, if a grantee has worked to reduce the number of merchants that sell alcohol to minors and the number of adults who host parties for minors (both local conditions) then these changes are a logical reason why overall measures of availability (a risk factor) have gone down. Changing local conditions are a way of showing how risk factors were reduced. Changing local conditions and lowering risk are a way of showing how rates of use in the last thirty days (behavior) were changed. This is why logic models are such an important part of how foundations demonstrate a mechanism of effect. Without a logic model and an output monitoring system a foundation is left with not much more than the "lucky hat theory" to explain their contribution to community-level health outcomes.

The Mary Black Foundation created a logic model for each priority area by working with expert scientists and local community leaders. The conclusions drawn by these panels of experts are summarized in two important "white papers" that describe what fosters early childhood development and what explains rates of physical activity. These form the basis of the Foundation's funding strategies to improve health outcomes in both of these priority areas for Spartanburg County. These strategies represent the best scientific recommendations for "mechanisms of effect." They provided the demonstrated means by which the Foundation's grantees are likely to contribute to improved health outcomes in the community.

(4) Account for alternative explanations. If there is a time sequence between grantee work and improved outcomes and if there is a plausible mechanism by which the two are linked, there are still other possibilities. The outcome could have improved because of other factors inside or outside the community. In an analysis of contribution these alternative explanations are named and accounted for. By contrast, in research for attribution, these alternative explanations must be "controlled for" which is an expensive and complicated process beyond the budget and skill of most foundations and grantees.

(5) Show similar effects in similar contexts. If a foundation has established a time sequence between grantee work and improved outcomes, a plausible mechanism by which the two are linked and accounted for alternative explanations, it has gone a long way to documenting a potential contribution. This case can be strengthened when the Foundation sees the same story repeat itself with similar effects on outcomes.

For example, a grantee may begin work with a school district because the superintendent, key school board members and several principles are all committed to reducing childhood obesity. Taking advantage of these commitments from school leaders, the grantee may help put in place a broad range of changes in policy, needed programming, and increased resources that appear to contribute to improved community conditions. Because of this apparent success, a neighboring school district might become willing to work with the grantee. If the same intensive effort with this new district also results in improved community conditions then case for the grantee's contribution is significantly strengthened.

IMPROVE: Rapid Reflection Process- *Generic Steps in Critical Reflection*

1. What type of data are we looking at?
    a. What is the data being charted? (Unit of measure.)
    e.g. community changes, % reporting 30-day use, etc.
    b. How is the data being charted? (Type of graph.)
    e.g. cumulative, time series, pie chart, etc.
    c. Who does the data describe? (The "n" or population represented.)
    e.g. 8th grade in Ross County, the Policy action team, etc.
    d. When were the data collected? (The time period.)
    e.g. monthly data, from 2000 to 2008, etc.
2. What are we seeing?
    a. What pattern we are seeing? (Trends and distribution.)
    e.g. increasing, decreasing, mixed, etc.
    b. When or where is the data different than this overall pattern? (Discontinuity.)
    e.g. a spike in 2006, missing data for Oct, etc.
3. What does it mean?
    a. Is the observed pattern what we would have expected? (Compared to theory or our plan.)
    b. Why do we think the observed patterns are occurring? (Underlying causes and influences.)
    c. What additional information do we need to fully understand the observed patterns?
4. What should we do about it?
    a. Given what we have seen, what adjustments should be made in our work? (Improvement)
    b. Given what we have seen, what can we celebrate about our work? (Celebration)
    c. Given what we have seen, who else should know about our conclusions? (Coordination)
    d. Given what we have seen, what can be said about our ability to achieve outcomes? (Accountability)

IMPROVE: Embracing Emergence

How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity

While not predictable in detail, emergence unfolds in complex systems as a result of identified occurrences

- "Neighbor to neighbor" interaction
- Feedback loops
- Self organization
- Evolution to higher order patterns of success

What do emergent opportunities in collective impact look like?

1. A previously unnoticed **evidence-based practice, movement or resource** from outside the community is identified and applied locally
2. A **successful strategy** that is already working locally, but is not systematically or broadly practiced, is identified and spread more widely
3. Local individuals or organizations begin to **work together differently than before** and therefore find and adopt new solutions

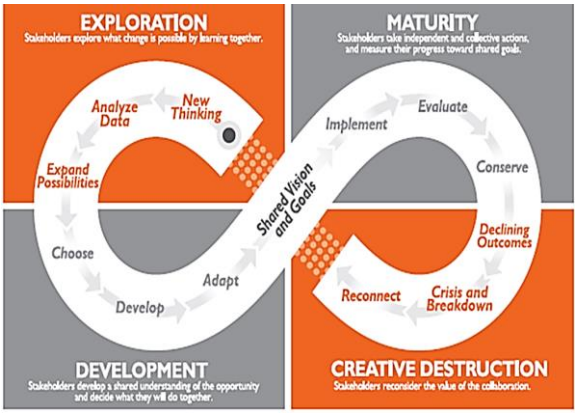
How does collective impact embrace emergence?

- **Create a common intent**
- **Structure to take advantage of emergence**
  - **Collective seeing**
  - **Collective learning**
  - **Collective doing**

The Phases of Community Change Eco-Cycle Mapping Tool

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION:

Community change efforts are dynamic and typically unfold according to four phases. From our own work in collaborative community change, Tamarack recommends to think in terms of 3-5 year "campaigns" when planning your collaborative effort. Regular opportunities for learning and reflection need to be intentionally included into every phase of the change effort and deliberate thought and planning needs to be devoted to succession, renewal and sustainability.



The Phases of Community Change

Transitional traps are common as a collaborative effort moves from one phase to another in the eco-cycle. It is valuable for leaders to periodically come together and map their progress using the eco-cycle – with a careful eye on the transitional traps.

Traps	Description	Challenges
SCARCITY	• Too few resources to explore new ideas so few or none take root. • Struggle to "birth" outcomes and support from broader community.	• The ideas are not compelling. • Underdeveloped decision-making process & criteria. • Members disagree on what to pursue. • Members have insufficient credibility. • Energy spread too thin across many directions.
CHARISMA	• Unable to sustain or grow the work without original founder, host or primary funder. • "Parasitic" on the host(s) that gave it birth.	• Over reliance on key – often founding – members • Dependence on start-up pool of resources. • Approach works well only at a certain scale or in unique context.
RIGIDITY	• People are unable or unwilling to change or end an approach that no longer fits its context • Resistance to new ideas	• Focus on immediate return • Fear of uncertainty and self-Interest. • Lack of clear exit rules, Pressure to continue by core constituency • Concern over perception of failure
CHRONIC DISASTER	• People are 'spinning' • Unable to get traction on a compelling new vision, values and intent	• Inability to let go of the past • Weak trust among members, volatile culture • Difficulty agreeing on shared vision and values.

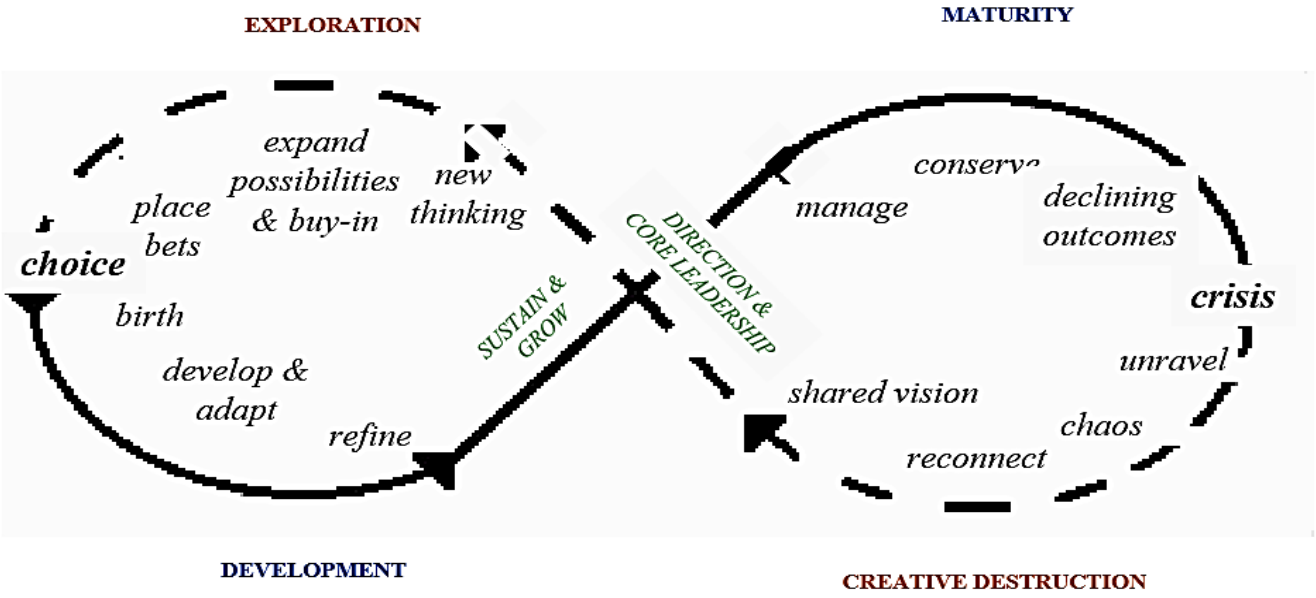
EXERCISE HOW-TO:

1. Individually, map the progress of yourself, your department, your organization and/or your collaborative on the eco-cycle worksheet (on back).

EXERCISE DEBRIEF:

- What does the mapping exercise mean for your work right now?
- How might you improve outcomes for your organization or with your community partners?
- What are some possible first steps?

The Phases of Community Change Eco-Cycle Worksheet



Map the following on the Eco-Cycle:

M = Me
D = Department
O = Organization
C = Collaborative

Reflect on the following:

- What does the mapping exercise mean for your work right now?

- How might you improve outcomes for your organization or with your community partners?

- What are some possible first steps?

RESOURCES

WHOLE CHILD/WHOLE COMMUNITY

From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope, Executive Summary
Building Partnerships in Support of Where, When & How Learning Happens (Back Pocket)

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Collective Impact
Collective Impact 3.0 – An Evolving Framework for Community Change
Collective Impact Principles of Practice
Embracing Emergence

TAKE SHAPE

TRIZ: Stop Counterproductive Activities and Behaviors to Make Space for Innovation
Don't Stop Collaborating, Just Stop Creating New Collaboratives
Aligning Collective Impact Initiatives
Diagnostic: Does Your Community Have the Change Horsepower That It Needs?
Three-Gear Capacity Survey: Harnessing a Community's Leadership Horsepower
Ready Leaders: Aligning a Community's Moving Trains

TAKE AIM

Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever)

TAKE STOCK

Ready Communities: Mapping the Landscape of Programs for Young People
What Do You Want to Take Stock Of? *(Ready by 21 Version)*

TARGET ACTION

See Target Action Tab – Align Document #2 – Intervention Creation or Selection

TRACK PROGRESS

Learning in Action: Evaluating Collective Impact
A Framework for Performance Measurement and Evaluation of Collective Impact Efforts
When Collective Impact Has An Impact – A Cross-Site Study of 25 Collective Impact Initiatives

FROM A NATION AT RISK TO A NATION AT HOPE

Recommendations from the National Commission on Social, Emotional, & Academic Development

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, & ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After two decades of education debates that produced deep passions and deeper divisions, we have a chance for a fresh start. A growing movement dedicated to the social, emotional, and academic well-being of children is reshaping learning and changing lives across America. On the strength of its remarkable consensus, a nation at risk is finally a nation at hope.

The National Commission on Social, Emotional, & Academic Development began with the simple intention of listening—really listening—to young people, parents, teachers, school and district leaders, community leaders, and other experts. This document, in many ways, is a report from the nation. What we heard is profoundly hopeful. There is a remarkable confluence of experience and science on one point: Children learn best when we treat them as human beings, with social and emotional as well as academic needs.

More specifically, children require a broad array of skills, attitudes, character traits, and values to succeed in school, careers, and life. They require skills such as paying attention, setting goals, collaboration, and planning for the future. They require attitudes such as internal motivation, perseverance, and a sense of purpose. They require values such as responsibility, honesty, and integrity. They require the abilities to think critically, consider diverse views, and problem solve. And these social, emotional, and academic capacities are increasingly demanded in the American workplace, which puts a premium on the ability to work in diverse teams, grapple with difficult problems, and adjust to rapid change.

The promotion of social, emotional, and academic learning is not a shifting educational fad; it is the substance of education itself. It is not a distraction from the "real work" of math and English instruction; it is how instruction can succeed. It brings together a traditionally conservative emphasis on local control and on the character of all students, and a historically progressive emphasis on the creative and challenging art of teaching and the social and emotional needs of all students, especially those who have experienced the greatest challenges.

Educating the whole learner cannot be reduced to a simple set of policies or proposals. It is, instead, a mindset that should inform the entire educational enterprise. This is the message from the nation on learning. We want to add our voice to these voices. And through this report, we want this hopeful consensus to be understood and spread as widely as possible.

HOW LEARNING HAPPENS

More than two decades of research across a range of disciplines—psychology, social science, brain science—demonstrates that the social, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of learning are deeply linked. These skills grow and change over time, based on children's environment and experiences, and can be taught.

Educating the whole student requires rethinking teaching and learning so that academics and students' social, emotional, and cognitive development are joined not just occasionally, but throughout the day. Students are intentionally taught these skills and asked to exercise them as they learn academic content and interact with peers and adults. Learning environments that support the whole student are

physically and emotionally safe and are based on warm, supportive relationships—including those between children and teachers that are fundamental to learning.

Evidence confirms that supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development benefits all children and relates positively to the traditional measures we care about: attendance, grades, test scores, graduation rates, college and career success, engaged citizenship, and overall well-being. Although these skills are important for all students, equity means acknowledging that not all students are the same. Providing equitable opportunities for developing young people's social, emotional, and academic growth requires calibrating to each student's and school's individual strengths and needs—ensuring that those with greater needs have access to greater resources.

When *all* children and youth possess a full array of these skills, attitudes, and values, they are better equipped to prosper in the classroom, perform in the workplace, and thrive in life, as contributing and productive members of society. By integrating—rather than separating—young people's social, emotional, and academic development, we position each and every student for success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are aimed at the array of practitioners, individuals, and organizations who support young people. We view policy and research as playing essential, enabling roles to support effective practice in classrooms, schools, and communities.

ONE: **SET A CLEAR VISION THAT BROADENS THE DEFINITION OF STUDENT SUCCESS TO PRIORITIZE THE WHOLE CHILD**

Create a clear vision for young people's social, emotional, and academic development.

- Broaden existing definitions of a successful high school graduate to include the social, emotional, and cognitive skills and competencies demonstrated to contribute to success in school, work, and life.
- Align strategic action plans, budgetary resources, and adult workforce development in support of the vision.
- Develop and use measures to track progress across school and out-of-school settings, with a focus on continuous improvement rather than on rewards and sanctions.

Policymakers can support this work through state standards, guidance, and frameworks that signal to districts and communities the importance of prioritizing the whole child. Policymakers also can support these efforts by supplying measurement tools as well as training and assistance in interpreting and using data.

TWO: **TRANSFORM LEARNING SETTINGS SO THEY ARE SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE**

Build settings that are physically and emotionally safe and foster strong bonds among children and adults.

- Build structures that support relationships—such as advisory groups, class meetings, team teaching, and multi-grade looping—so that every student is known well by at least one adult.
- Create schoolwide cultures that encourage student voice and agency through practices such as student-led parent-teacher conferences, choice in assignments, and participation in collaborative decision-making structures.
- Affirm the cultural backgrounds of the diverse students that schools serve, so all young people and adults feel a sense of belonging and respect for who they are.
- End punitive and counterproductive disciplinary strategies, such as zero-tolerance policies, that push students out of schools and classrooms.
- Bring the assets of community organizations—including art, music, sports, and health and mental health services—into the life of the school.

Policymakers can support this work by providing equitable access to high-quality learning environments for each student through funding and technical assistance. They can also enable the flexible use of existing resources—including the allocation of staff, time, and facilities—to support the whole child and to encourage the integration of community partners into the school environment. They should hold schools, districts, and youth-serving organizations account-

able for improvements in the quality of the learning environment as part of accountability systems, but with a focus on continuous improvement.

THREE: **CHANGE INSTRUCTION TO TEACH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND COGNITIVE SKILLS; EMBED THESE SKILLS IN ACADEMICS AND IN SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES**

Intentionally teach specific skills and competencies and infuse them in academic content and in all aspects of the school setting (recess, lunchroom, hallways, extracurricular activities), not just in stand-alone programs or lessons.

- Explicitly teach social, emotional, and cognitive skills by using evidence-based instructional materials, practices, programs, and resources.
- Embed those skills in academic instruction and schoolwide practices. During lessons, educators prioritize with students the skills, attitudes, and values of effective learners and use this focus to boost academic performance and personal character.
- Use a broader range of assessments and other demonstrations of learning that capture the full gamut of young people's knowledge and skills.

FOUR: **BUILD ADULT EXPERTISE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

Ensure educators develop understanding and expertise in child development and in the science of learning. This will require major changes in educator preparation and in ongoing professional support for the social and emotional learning of teachers and all other adults who work with young people.

- Redesign educator preparation so that all graduates have expertise in child and adolescent development and the science of learning.
- Create collaborative decision-making structures that engage all adults in the school in owning young people's healthy development and learning.
- Prioritize social, emotional, and cognitive skills and competencies in recruitment, hiring, and orientation. Follow through with ongoing professional learning and support for adults to foster the whole learner.

Policymakers can restructure the rules and regulations that govern the adult workforce to hire, retain, pay, and promote people with the skills and knowledge to develop students socially, emotionally, and academically. They can provide incentives for innovations in educator preparation and change the rules and regulations regarding educator licensure and the approval of educator preparation programs. They can ensure that induction programs for new teachers support social, emotional, and academic learning.

FIVE: **ALIGN RESOURCES AND LEVERAGE PARTNERS IN THE COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THE WHOLE CHILD**

Build partnerships among schools, families, and community organizations to support healthy learning and development in and out of school; blend and braid resources to achieve this goal.

- Engage families and young people in discussions about the resources they need when designing and implementing approaches to support students' comprehensive development. Involve them in opportunities to learn and lead, such as through home visits and student and parent advisory groups.
- Fund dedicated positions in schools and districts to intentionally engage partners through collaborative planning and open communications.
- Provide access to quality summer school and afterschool programming for each young person.
- Use data to identify and address gaps in students' access to the full range of learning opportunities in and out of school.

Policymakers can ensure resources are invested wisely and distributed equitably. The equitable distribution of resources should account for qualified educators, reasonable class sizes and ratios of counselors and other support staff to students, and adequate health and mental health services. Policy leaders should evaluate the adequacy of resources in each community in relation to student needs as a basis for making investments. They can allow states, districts, and schools to blend and braid school and other child-serving resources on behalf of children.

SIX: **FORGE CLOSER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

Bridge the divide between scholarly research and what's actionable in schools and classrooms. Build new structures—and new support—for researchers and educators to work collaboratively and bi-directionally around pressing local problems that have broader implications.

- Create new research-practice partnerships to generate useful, actionable information for the field. Build multi-disciplinary teams that include people at various levels of the system and with diverse perspectives and use iterative inquiry cycles and collaborative data analysis to learn together and test proposed changes.
- Use data and evidence to build and strengthen partnerships among research institutions, community organizations, and schools. This includes robust data-sharing agreements between schools and other youth-serving agencies to collaboratively address strengths and challenges.
- Build new tools for the strategic dissemination and communication of knowledge and effective strategies to a wide audience. This includes moving beyond producing articles for academic journals to also crafting field-facing summaries that provide guidance for educators and call out specific applications in practice.

Historically, the federal government has been instrumental in advancing research through funding and priority setting; it must continue to do so both within and across federal agencies. To continue to encourage innovation and understanding of the integrated nature of social, emotional, and cognitive development, the federal government should encourage more cross-sector research investments, particularly those that incentivize vertical, collaborative, multidisciplinary teams of researchers and practitioners. In addition, the federal government must continue to support the translation of research to inform state-level policy and district-level practice.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Decades of scientific evidence point to the most important missing ingredient in classrooms and schools today: making sure that all children have the social, emotional, and academic skills they need to learn and thrive.

This idea is rooted in the best educational and neurological research. But it has taken shape in local schools and communities. Students, families, educators, and leaders are galvanizing around a growing recognition that we must support the whole learner; and they are making it happen in ways that fit their unique circumstances. Their efforts have revealed the emerging outline of a way forward and have fueled, informed, and shaped the Commission's task of bringing together all that we know and all that's been done into a unified framework for action. It is time to gather this momentum into a movement with the potential to improve the lives and performance of students across the country.

"In dreams begin responsibilities," wrote William Butler Yeats. All of us dream of creating environments where the minds and spirits of children can thrive. Now it is our responsibility to make it happen. That is the high calling of education and the urgent task of our time.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development was created to engage and energize communities in re-envisioning learning to support the whole child. The Commission's members are leaders from education, research, policy, business, and the military. The full Commission team includes Councils of Distinguished Scientists and Educators, a Youth Commission, a Parent Advisory Panel, and Partners and Funders Collaboratives.

This culminating report ***from*** the nation, ***to*** the nation, draws on input we received over the past two years from conversations, meetings, and site visits across the country, as well as from the members of all these groups. It reflects the more detailed recommendations for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers contained in three separate, related reports: *A Practice Agenda in Support of How Learning Happens*, *A Policy Agenda in Support of How Learning Happens*, and *A Research Agenda for the Next Generation*. A full citation and reference list are available in these related reports and the final report. To get more involved, view all four reports and related resources on our website at **www.NationAtHope.org**.

Collective Impact

LARGE-SCALE SOCIAL CHANGE REQUIRES BROAD CROSS-SECTOR COORDINATION, YET THE SOCIAL SECTOR REMAINS FOCUSED ON THE ISOLATED INTERVENTION OF INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS.

By John Kania & Mark Kramer

Illustration by Martin Jarrie

The scale and complexity of the U.S. public education system has thwarted attempted reforms for decades. Major funders, such as the Annenberg Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Pew Charitable Trusts have abandoned many of their efforts in frustration after acknowledging their lack of progress. Once the global leader—after World War II the United States had the highest high school graduation rate in the world—the country now ranks 18th among the top 24 industrialized nations, with more than 1 million secondary school students dropping out every year. The heroic efforts of countless teachers, administrators, and nonprofits, together with billions of dollars in charitable contributions, may have led to important improvements in individual schools and classrooms, yet system-wide progress has seemed virtually unobtainable.

Against these daunting odds, a remarkable exception seems to be emerging in Cincinnati. Strive, a nonprofit subsidiary of KnowledgeWorks, has brought together local leaders to tackle the student achievement crisis and improve education throughout greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky. In the four years since the group was launched, Strive partners have improved student success in dozens of key areas across three large public school districts. Despite the recession and budget cuts, 34 of the 53 success indicators that Strive tracks have shown positive trends, including high school graduation rates, fourth-grade reading and math scores, and the number of preschool children prepared for kindergarten.

Why has Strive made progress when so many other efforts have failed? It is because a core group of community leaders decided to abandon their individual agendas in favor of a collective approach to improving student achievement. More than 300 leaders of local organizations agreed to participate, including the heads of influential private and corporate foundations, city government officials, school district representatives, the presidents of eight universities and community colleges, and the executive directors of hundreds of education-related nonprofit and advocacy groups.

These leaders realized that fixing one point on the educational continuum—such as better after-school programs—wouldn't make much difference unless all parts of the continuum improved at the same time. No single organization, however innovative or powerful, could accomplish this alone. Instead, their ambitious mission became to coordinate improvements at *every* stage of a young person's life, from "cradle to career."

Strive didn't try to create a new educational program or attempt to convince donors to spend more money. Instead, through a carefully structured process, Strive focused the entire educational community on a single set of goals, measured in the same way. Participating organizations are grouped into 15 different Student Success Networks (SSNs) by type of activity, such as early childhood education or tutoring. Each SSN has been meeting with coaches and facilitators for two hours every two weeks for the past three years, developing shared performance indicators, discussing their progress, and most important, learning from each other and aligning their efforts to support each other.

Strive, both the organization and the process it helps facilitate, is an example of *collective impact*, the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Collaboration is nothing new. The social sector is filled with examples of partnerships, networks, and other types of joint efforts. But collective impact initiatives are distinctly different. Unlike most

collaborations, collective impact initiatives involve a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants. (See "Types of Collaborations" on page 39.)

Although rare, other successful examples of collective impact are addressing social issues that, like education, require many different players to change their behavior in order to solve a complex problem. In 1993, Marjorie Mayfield Jackson helped found the Elizabeth River Project with a mission of cleaning up the Elizabeth River in southeastern Virginia, which for decades had been a dumping ground for industrial waste. They engaged more than 100 stakeholders, including the city governments of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach, Va., the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Navy, and dozens of local businesses, schools, community groups, environmental organizations, and universities, in developing an 18-point plan to restore the watershed. Fifteen years later, more than 1,000 acres of watershed land have been conserved or restored, pollution has been reduced by more than 215 million pounds, concentrations of the most severe carcinogen have been cut sixfold, and water quality has significantly improved. Much remains to be done before the river is fully restored, but already 27 species of fish and oysters are thriving in the restored wetlands, and bald eagles have returned to nest on the shores.

Or consider Shape up Somerville, a citywide effort to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in elementary school children in Somerville, Mass. Led by Christina Economos, an associate professor at Tufts University's Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, the program engaged government officials, educators, businesses, nonprofits, and citizens in collectively defining wellness and weight gain prevention practices. Schools agreed to offer healthier foods, teach nutrition, and promote physical activity. Local restaurants received a certification if they served low-fat, high nutritional food. The city organized a farmers' market and provided healthy lifestyle incentives such as reduced-price gym memberships for city employees. Even sidewalks were modified and crosswalks repainted to encourage more children to walk to school. The result was a statistically significant decrease in body mass index among the community's young children between 2002 and 2005.

Even companies are beginning to explore collective impact to tackle social problems. Mars, a manufacturer of chocolate brands such as M&M's, Snickers, and Dove, is working with NGOs, local governments, and even direct competitors to improve the lives of more than 500,000 impoverished cocoa farmers in Cote d'Ivoire, where Mars sources a large portion of its cocoa. Research suggests that better farming practices and improved plant stocks could triple the yield per hectare, dramatically increasing farmer incomes and improving the sustainability of Mars's supply chain. To accomplish this, Mars must enlist the coordinated efforts of multiple organizations: the Cote d'Ivoire government needs to provide more agricultural extension workers, the World Bank needs to finance new roads, and bilateral donors need to support NGOs in improving health care, nutrition, and education in cocoa growing communities. And Mars must find ways to work with its direct competitors on pre-competitive issues to reach farmers outside its supply chain.

These varied examples all have a common theme: that large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organizations. Evidence of the effectiveness of this approach is still limited, but these examples suggest that substantially greater progress could be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if nonprofits, governments, businesses, and the public were brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact. It doesn't happen often, not because it is impossible, but because it is so rarely attempted. Funders and nonprofits alike overlook the potential for collective impact because they are used to focusing on independent action as the primary vehicle for social change.

ISOLATED IMPACT

Most funders, faced with the task of choosing a few grantees from many applicants, try to ascertain which organizations make the greatest contribution toward solving a social problem. Grantees, in turn, compete to be chosen by emphasizing how their individual activities produce the greatest effect. Each organization is judged on its own potential to achieve impact, independent of the numerous other organizations that may also influence the issue. And when a grantee is asked to evaluate the impact of its work, every attempt is made to isolate that grantee's individual influence from all other variables.

In short, the nonprofit sector most frequently operates using an approach that we call *isolated impact*. It is an approach oriented toward finding and funding a solution embodied within a single organization, combined with the hope that the most effective organizations will grow or replicate to extend their impact more widely. Funders search for more effective interventions as if there were a cure for failing schools that only needs to be discovered, in the way that medical cures are discovered in laboratories. As a result of this process, nearly 1.4 million nonprofits try to invent independent solutions to major social problems, often working at odds with each other and exponentially increasing the perceived resources required to make meaningful progress. Recent trends have only reinforced this perspective. The growing interest in venture philanthropy and social entrepreneurship, for example, has greatly benefited the social sector by identifying and accelerating the growth of many high-performing nonprofits, yet it has also accentuated an emphasis on scaling up a few select organizations as the key to social progress.

Despite the dominance of this approach, there is scant evidence that isolated initiatives are the best way to solve many social problems in today's complex and interdependent world. No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single

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TYPES OF COLLABORATIONS

Organizations have attempted to solve social problems by collaboration for decades without producing many results. The vast majority of these efforts lack the elements of success that enable collective impact initiatives to achieve a sustained alignment of efforts.

Funder Collaboratives are groups of funders interested in supporting the same issue who pool their resources. Generally, participants do not adopt an overarching evidence-based plan of action or a shared measurement system, nor do they engage in differentiated activities beyond check writing or engage stakeholders from other sectors.

Public-Private Partnerships are partnerships formed between government and private sector organizations to deliver specific services or benefits. They are often targeted narrowly, such as developing a particular drug to fight a single disease, and usually don't engage the full set of stakeholders that affect the issue, such as the potential drug's distribution system.

Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives are voluntary activities by stakeholders from different sectors around a common theme. Typically, these initiatives lack any shared measurement of impact and the supporting infrastructure to forge any true alignment of efforts or accountability for results.

Social Sector Networks are groups of individuals or organizations fluidly connected through purposeful relationships, whether formal or informal. Collaboration is generally ad hoc, and most often the emphasis is placed on information sharing and targeted short-term actions, rather than a sustained and structured initiative.

Collective Impact Initiatives are long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Their actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, and ongoing communication, and are staffed by an independent backbone organization.

organization cure it. In the field of education, even the most highly respected nonprofits—such as the Harlem Children's Zone, Teach for America, and the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP)—have taken decades to reach tens of thousands of children, a remarkable achievement that deserves praise, but one that is three orders of magnitude short of the tens of millions of U.S. children that need help.

The problem with relying on the isolated impact of individual organizations is further compounded by the isolation of the nonprofit sector. Social problems arise from the interplay of governmental and commercial activities, not only from the behavior of social sector organizations. As a result, complex problems can be solved only by cross-sector coalitions that engage those outside the nonprofit sector.

We don't want to imply that all social problems require collective impact. In fact, some problems are best solved by individual organizations. In "Leading Boldly," an article we wrote with Ron Heifetz for the winter 2004 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, we described the difference between *technical problems* and *adaptive problems*. Some social problems are technical in that the problem is well defined, the answer is known in advance, and one or a few organizations have the ability to implement the solution. Examples include funding college scholarships, building a hospital, or installing inventory controls in a food bank. Adaptive problems, by contrast, are complex, the answer is not known, and even if it were, no single entity has the resources or authority to bring about the necessary change. Reforming public education, restoring wetland environments, and improving community health are all adaptive problems. In these cases, reaching an effective solution requires learning by the stakeholders involved in the problem, who must then change their own behavior in order to create a solution.

Shifting from isolated impact to collective impact is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration or public-private partnerships. It requires a systemic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the progress toward shared objectives. And it requires the creation of a new set of nonprofit management organizations that have the skills and resources to assemble and coordinate the specific elements necessary for collective action to succeed.

THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS

Our research shows that successful collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.

Common Agenda | Collective impact requires all participants to have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. Take a close look at any group of funders and nonprofits that believe they are working on the same social issue, and you quickly find that it is often not the same issue at all. Each organization often has a slightly different definition of the problem and the ultimate goal. These differences are easily ignored when organizations work independently on isolated initiatives, yet these differences splinter the efforts and undermine the impact of the field as a whole. Collective impact requires that these differences be discussed and resolved. Every participant need not agree with every other participant on all dimensions of the problem. In fact, disagreements continue to divide participants in all of our examples of collective impact. All participants must agree, however, on the primary goals for the collective impact initiative as a whole. The Elizabeth River Project, for example, had to find common ground among the different objectives of corporations, governments, community groups, and local citizens in order to establish workable cross-sector initiatives.

Funders can play an important role in getting organizations to act in concert. In the case of Strive, rather than fueling hundreds of strategies and nonprofits, many funders have aligned to support Strive's central goals. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation realigned its education goals to be more compatible with Strive, adopting Strive's annual report card as the foundation's own measures for progress in education. Every time an organization applied to Duke Energy for a grant, Duke asked, "Are you part of the [Strive] network?" And when a new funder, the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, expressed interest in education, they were encouraged by virtually every major education leader in Cincinnati to join Strive if they wanted to have an impact in local education.[1]

Shared Measurement Systems | Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact. Agreement on a common agenda is illusory without agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures.

It may seem impossible to evaluate hundreds of different organizations on the same set of measures. Yet recent advances in Web-based technologies have enabled common systems for reporting performance and measuring outcomes. These systems increase efficiency and reduce cost. They can also improve the quality and credibility of the data collected, increase effectiveness by enabling grantees to learn from each other's performance, and document the progress of the field as a whole.[2]

All of the preschool programs in Strive, for example, have agreed to measure their results on the same criteria and use only evidence-based decision making. Each type of activity requires a different set of measures, but all organizations engaged in the same type of activity report on the same measures. Looking at results across multiple organizations enables the participants to spot patterns, find solutions, and implement them rapidly. The preschool programs discovered that children regress during the summer break before kindergarten. By launching an innovative "summer bridge" session, a technique more often used in middle school, and implementing it simultaneously in all preschool programs, they increased the average kindergarten readiness scores throughout the region by an average of 10 percent in a single year.[3]

Mutually Reinforcing Activities | Collective impact initiatives depend on a diverse group of stakeholders working together, not by requiring that all participants do the same thing, but by encouraging each participant to undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels in a way that supports and is coordinated with the actions of others.

The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action. Each stakeholder's efforts must fit into an overarching plan if their combined efforts are to succeed. The multiple causes of social problems, and the components of their solutions, are interdependent. They cannot be addressed by uncoordinated actions among isolated organizations.

All participants in the Elizabeth River Project, for example, agreed on the 18-point watershed restoration plan, but each is playing a different role based on its particular capabilities. One group of organizations works on creating grassroots support and engagement among citizens, a second provides peer review and recruitment for industrial participants who voluntarily reduce pollution, and a third coordinates and reviews scientific research.

The 15 SSNs in Strive each undertake different types of activities at different stages of the educational continuum. Strive does not prescribe what practices each of the 300 participating organizations should pursue. Each organization and network is free to chart its own course consistent with the common agenda, and informed by the shared measurement of results.

Continuous Communication | Developing trust among nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies is a monumental challenge. Participants need several years of regular meetings to build up enough experience with each other to recognize and appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts. They need time to see that their own interests will be treated fairly, and that decisions will be made on the basis of objective evidence and the best possible solution to the problem, not to favor the priorities of one organization over another.

Even the process of creating a common vocabulary takes time, and it is an essential prerequisite to developing shared measurement systems. All the collective impact initiatives we have studied held monthly or even biweekly in-person meetings among the organizations' CEO-level leaders. Skipping meetings or sending lower-level delegates was not acceptable. Most of the meetings were supported by external facilitators and followed a structured agenda.

The Strive networks, for example, have been meeting regularly for more than three years. Communication happens between meetings too: Strive uses Web-based tools, such as Google Groups, to keep communication flowing among and within the networks. At first, many of the leaders showed up because they hoped that their participation would bring their organizations additional funding, but they soon learned that was not the meetings' purpose. What they discovered instead were the rewards of learning and solving problems together with others who shared their same deep knowledge and passion about the issue.

Backbone Support Organizations | Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative. Coordination takes time, and none of the participating organizations has any to spare. The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails.

The backbone organization requires a dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly. Strive has simplified the initial staffing requirements for a backbone organization to three roles: project manager, data manager, and facilitator.

Collective impact also requires a highly structured process that leads to effective decision making. In the case of Strive, staff worked with General Electric (GE) to adapt for the social sector the Six Sigma process that GE uses for its own continuous quality improvement. The Strive Six Sigma process includes training, tools, and resources that each SSN uses to define its common agenda, shared measures, and plan of action, supported by Strive facilitators to guide the process.

In the best of circumstances, these backbone organizations embody the principles of adaptive leadership: the ability to focus people's attention and create a sense of urgency, the skill to apply pressure to stakeholders without overwhelming them, the competence to frame issues in a way that presents opportunities as well as difficulties, and the strength to mediate conflict among stakeholders.

FUNDING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Creating a successful collective impact initiative requires a significant financial investment: the time participating organizations must dedicate to the work, the development and monitoring of shared measurement systems, and the staff of the backbone organization needed to lead and support the initiative's ongoing work.

As successful as Strive has been, it has struggled to raise money, confronting funders' reluctance to pay for infrastructure and preference for short-term solutions. Collective impact requires instead that funders support a long-term process of social change without identifying any particular solution in advance. They must be willing to let grantees steer the work and have the patience to stay with an initiative for years, recognizing that social change can come from the gradual improvement of an entire system over time, not just from a single breakthrough by an individual organization.

This requires a fundamental change in how funders see their role, from funding organizations to leading a long-term process of social change. It is no longer enough to fund an innovative solution created by a single nonprofit or to build that organization's capacity. Instead, funders must help create and sustain the collective processes, measurement reporting systems, and community leadership that enable cross-sector coalitions to arise and thrive.

This is a shift that we foreshadowed in both "Leading Boldly" and our more recent article, "Catalytic Philanthropy," in the fall 2009 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. In the former, we suggested that the most powerful role for funders to play in addressing adaptive problems is to focus attention on the issue and help to create a process that mobilizes the organizations involved to find a solution themselves. In "Catalytic Philanthropy," we wrote: "Mobilizing and coordinating stakeholders is far messier and slower work than funding a compelling grant request from a single organization. Systemic change, however, ultimately depends on a sustained campaign to increase the capacity and coordination of an entire field." We recommended that funders who want to create large-scale change follow four practices: take responsibility for assembling the elements of a solution; create a movement for change; include solutions from outside the nonprofit sector; and use actionable knowledge to influence behavior and improve performance.

These same four principles are embodied in collective impact initiatives. The organizers of Strive abandoned the conventional approach of funding specific programs at education nonprofits and took responsibility for advancing education reform themselves. They built a movement, engaging hundreds of organizations in a drive toward shared goals. They used tools outside the nonprofit sector, adapting GE's Six Sigma planning process for the social sector. And through the community report card and the biweekly meetings of the SSNs they created actionable knowledge that motivated the community and improved performance among the participants.

Funding collective impact initiatives costs money, but it can be a highly leveraged investment. A backbone organization with a modest annual budget can support a collective impact initiative of several hundred organizations, magnifying the impact of millions or even billions of dollars in existing funding. Strive, for example, has a $1.5 million annual budget but is coordinating the efforts and increasing the effectiveness of organizations with combined budgets of $7 billion. The social sector, however, has not yet changed its funding practices to enable the shift to collective impact. Until funders are willing to embrace this new approach and invest sufficient resources in the necessary facilitation, coordination, and measurement that enable organizations to work in concert, the requisite infrastructure will not evolve.

FUTURE SHOCK

What might social change look like if funders, nonprofits, government officials, civic leaders, and business executives embraced collective impact? Recent events at Strive provide an exciting indication of what might be possible.

Strive has begun to codify what it has learned so that other communities can achieve collective impact more rapidly. The organization is working with nine other communities to establish similar cradle to career initiatives.[4] Importantly, although Strive is broadening its impact to a national level, the organization is not scaling up its own operations by opening branches in other cities. Instead, Strive is promulgating a flexible process for change, offering each community a set of tools for collective impact, drawn from Strive's experience but adaptable to the community's own needs and resources. As a result, the new communities take true ownership of their own collective impact initiatives, but they don't need to start the process from scratch. Activities such as developing a collective educational reform mission and vision or creating specific community-level educational indicators are expedited through the use of Strive materials and assistance from Strive staff. Processes that took Strive several years to develop are being adapted and modified by other communities in significantly less time.

These nine communities plus Cincinnati have formed a community of practice in which representatives from each effort connect regularly to share what they are learning. Because of the number and diversity of the communities, Strive and its partners can quickly determine what processes are universal and which require adaptation to a local context. As learning accumulates, Strive staff will incorporate new findings into an Internet-based knowledge portal that will be available to any community wishing to create a collective impact initiative based on Strive's model.

This exciting evolution of the Strive collective impact initiative is far removed from the isolated impact approach that now dominates the social sector and that inhibits any major effort at comprehensive, large-scale change. If successful, it presages the spread of a new approach that will enable us to solve today's most serious social problems with the resources we already have at our disposal. It would be a shock to the system. But it's a form of shock therapy that's badly needed. ■

Notes

1 Interview with Kathy Merchant, CEO of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, April 10, 2010.

2 See Mark Kramer, Marcie Parkhurst, and Lalitha Vaidyanathan, *Breakthroughs in Shared Measurement and Social Impact*, FSG Social Impact Advisors, 2009.

3 "Successful Starts," United Way of Greater Cincinnati, second edition, fall 2009.

4 Indianapolis, Houston, Richmond, Va., and Hayward, Calif., are the first four communities to implement Strive's process for educational reform. Portland, Ore., Fresno, Calif., Mesa, Ariz., Albuquerque, and Memphis are just beginning their efforts.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT 3.0
AN EVOLVING FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

MARK CABAJ AND LIZ WEAVER

FROM THE IMPROBABLE TO THE POSSIBLE

In 2015, the leaders of Medicine Hat, a small city of 60,000 on the Canadian prairies, declared that they had eliminated chronic homelessness. While admitting their limited influence on many of the drivers that create homelessness – such as poor jobs, mental health, family breakdown, or high-priced housing – they had developed a system that can place someone in an affordable house, with an array of support services, within 10 days of being on the street. Emboldened by this success, Medicine Hat is now turning its attention to eliminating food insecurity and poverty.

The citizens of this prairie city are not alone in their efforts to "move the needle" on complex issues. Across Canada there are hundreds of community-wide initiatives to end homelessness, reduce poverty, improve early childhood development outcomes, increase high school graduation rates, and strengthen community safety. There are thousands more across the world.

Many of them are inspired and informed by the Collective Impact (CI) framework. CI was coined in 2011 by John Kania and Mark Kramer of FSG Consulting. Their Stanford Social Innovation Review article of the same name distils some of the key ingredients of successful community efforts to move "from fragmented action and results" to "collective action and deep and durable impact." These ingredients (or "conditions") are a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support.[i]

The article's effect on the field of community change has been electric. The innovators whose work the article described praised its distillation of the key elements of an approach to community change. Paul Born, a collective impact pioneer, said: "Kania and Kramer understood the work we were doing so well, and described it so effectively, that they essentially laid out a new operating system for community change." Jay Connor, an early practitioner and coach for community-wide collaboration, noted: "I am grateful to FSG for what they have done. We have been trying in our own way to describe these ideas for so many years, trying in our own way to explain it clearly. We can spend more time doing the hard work on the ground."

The article excited early adopters even more. Countless community organizations, government agencies, philanthropies, and socially minded businesses embraced CI in hopes that it might help them to make deep and durable changes in the social, economic, and even environmental challenges facing their communities. Tom Wolff, an experienced coalition builder (and vocal critic of CI), credited the response as a "revolution" in the way that governments and funders thought about and approached community change. [ii]

FSG and other CI advocates have done much to expand and elaborate the original five conditions described in that first article. They have laid out what they feel are the pre-conditions for CI, the phases of the approach, a variety of key practices (e.g., strategy, governance, funding, evaluation), and more recently, eight key principles of practice. The Collective Impact Forum, an online community administered by FSG, is one of the world's most comprehensive resources on community change and a platform for practitioners to share and build knowledge, skills, and tools for the work. CI is now a permanent – even dominant – part of the landscape of community change.

AN EVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION

We believe that it's time for an evolution in the revolution. While the CEO of one philanthropic organization argues that support and buy-in for CI is now at "fever pitch," there are two compelling reasons for advocates to find ways to upgrade – not simply elaborate upon – the framework. [iii]

First, there has been enough experimentation with CI, by diverse communities working on diverse issues in diverse settings, to shed light on its limitations. These include: insufficient attention to the role of community in the change effort; an excessive focus on short-term data; an understatement of the role of policy and systems change; and an over-investment in backbone support. [iv] Our colleague Mark Holmgren warns that if these limitations are not taken seriously, the field may experience a "pendulum swing" away from collective change efforts. [v]

The response of the FSG team to the feedback has been excellent. They have welcomed the critiques on the CI Forum, admitted the framework's shortcomings, and worked diligently with others to address them or expand on areas that deserve elaboration. Their recently released "principles of practice for collective impact," for example, address many concerns about the framework. As Karen Pittman, head of the Forum on Youth Investment, noted: "Kania, Kramer and the FSG team get high marks in my book for being consistently open to adapting their theory to better reflect practice." [vi]

Yet the criticisms continue to roll in. And it is good that they do. Like all frameworks, CI reveals a great deal about how people tackle tough issues at scale, but is simply unable to capture the full complexity of the work. It is important for those who have devoted their lives to community change to point out where these gaps or weaknesses lie, because the stakes involved are so high.

Secondly, in the rush to embrace CI, many in the field have ignored the less well-packaged and promoted frameworks of community change developed by other organizations and practitioners. Some of these include the Bridgespan group's work on Needle Moving Collaboratives, the Aspen Institute's work on Comprehensive Community Initiatives and the grassroots Turning Outward model of the Harwood Institute. [vii] Each of these approaches is based on solid experience and research, and offers (slightly) alternative perspectives on community change. They deserve to be taken seriously. Many of the observations and strategies in these community change approaches can be woven into effective CI implementation.

Are CI's limitations significant enough to warrant throwing it away? No. The framework has too much "roughly right" and is too successful in expanding the field of those who want to work together to build stronger communities.

The correct response is to move beyond simply fine-tuning the original framework and begin upgrading it to reflect important criticisms and limitations. Hardware and software developers relentlessly upgrade their operating systems to reach the next level of capability and performance. So too should we look to upgrade the design and implementation of the CI framework.

The task cannot be left to FSG alone. The organization and its leaders have been exemplary in incorporating new learnings. However, the framework's redevelopment is simply too much work for one organization – and it disempowers the rest of the field. If CI is going to get to the next level, community change practitioners and those who support them must step up and partner in building the framework's next iteration.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT 3.0

We are willing to do our share. This article is the first of a series which will lay out a number of upgrades to the CI framework.

We call it Collective Impact 3.0, a term that emerged during our annual CI summit in Vancouver in 2015. At that event, we described the evolution of CI in terms of three phases. The 1.0 phase refers to the days prior to 2011 when diverse groups spontaneously prototyped CI practices without reference to the patterns identified by FSG. The 2.0 phase spans the five years following Kania and Kramer's article. Many communities adopted the CI framework laid out there, and FSG made diligent efforts to track, codify, and assess this second generation of CI initiatives. In the third phase, Collective Impact 3.0, the push is to deepen, broaden and adapt CI based on yet another generation of initiatives.

Who are we to offer Collective Impact 3.0? We at Tamarack have been knee-deep in community change initiatives for more than 20 years, including the sponsorship of Vibrant Communities, an evolving network of prototypical CI initiatives focused on poverty reduction. Tamarack made CI one of its top five themes. Our staff and associates have been involved in scores of CI efforts across North America and beyond.

We are committed to the basic structure of CI, which in our view has "good bones." However, we want to reframe many of the basic ideas and practices due to the limitations of the original framework, the insights of other frameworks, our own experience, and FSG's own work.

We do not believe that what we produce will be the only iteration of CI, or the best one. Like everyone else, we are prisoners of our own experience and limitations. We do hope, however, that our contribution adds to the next generation of the CI framework and encourages other practitioners to do the same. Our field needs diverse voices and perspectives moving forward.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: REVISITING THE FOUNDATIONS

This article, the first in our 3.0 series, revisits the foundational elements of the CI framework. This includes a new look at the Leadership Paradigm which underlies it, as well as CI's five conditions.

From	To
The Leadership Paradigm	
Management	Movement Building
The Five Conditions	
Common Agenda	Community Aspiration
Shared Measurement	Strategic Learning
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	High Leverage Activities
Continuous Communication	Inclusive Community Engagement
Backbone	Containers for Change

Some of these shifts are significant and some are modest. All broaden the original elements laid out in Kania and Kramer's 2011 article.

FROM A MANAGERIAL TO A MOVEMENT-BUILDING PARADIGM

Al Etmanski and Vickie Cammack, two of Canada's most celebrated social innovators, have developed a simple philosophy to guide their efforts: "Act like an organization, but think like a movement." [viii] Would-be change-makers must tend to the day-to-day tasks of research, raising money, planning, and management. But the chances that their efforts will achieve scale improve dramatically if the work is undergirded with relationships based on a common vision and value – relationships that span diverse organizations, sectors, and political affiliations.

In a management approach, the leaders of institutions responsible for a domain – such as health, education, or criminal justice – come together to find ways to get better outcomes than they might achieve independently. While they may consult with the broader community on the nature of the problem and how it might be addressed, they perceive themselves to be primarily

responsible for developing and implementing new responses to an issue. As a result, CI participants employing a managerial approach typically (but not always) focus on improving existing systems through such measures as data-sharing, coordination of services, and joint action on policy or regulation barriers.

The management approach can generate results. In the case of Strive in Cincinnati (the example that FSG used to illustrate CI), educational institutions and community agencies agreed to organize their activities around a comprehensive "cradle to career" framework with 60 key measures. They have succeeded in getting dozens of organizations to align their efforts and produced a score of innovations. Cumulatively, these have resulted in improvements in reading and math scores, high school graduation rates, and post-secondary enrollment and completion. [ix]

In a movement-building approach, by contrast, the emphasis is on reforming (even transforming) systems where improvements alone will not make a difference. Movement-building leaders bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including those not in traditional institutions or seats of power, to build a vision of the future based on common values and narratives. Movements "open up peoples' hearts and minds to new possibilities," "create the receptive climate for new ideas to take hold," and "embolden policymakers" and system leaders. [x] Movements change the ground on which everyday political life and management occur.

Participants of the End Poverty Edmonton initiative state clearly that they are creating a movement to end – not reduce – local poverty within a generation. [xi] To achieve this, one of their game-changing priorities is to eliminate racism, including a powerful six-point plan to support reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Racism, participants assert, is at the root of the difficulty that many residents experience when securing adequate housing, education, human services, and income. This bold commitment has cleared the way for the community to pursue some atypical initiatives. One is training local police and safety officials to improve their cultural literacy and reduce the stigmatization of racialized groups. More importantly, this initiative also challenges all the city's residents to become actively involved in dozens of little ways. It's too early to judge whether their gamble will pay off. But their prospects for large-scale impact now seem so much greater, it's hard not to be impressed.

This is not to say that a management orientation to CI is incapable of changing systems. Between 2010 and 2014, hundreds of organizations in New York state came together to reform its broken criminal justice system. Youth who committed even minor offences encountered an array of programs and regulations so disconnected and ill-designed as to increase, not decrease, the likelihood that the young person would re-offend or commit an even more serious crime. Through a variety of innovations (one being the requirement that young offenders are served in local day programs, not residential programs in another part of the state), the number of youth in custody fell by 45 percent without an increase in youth crime. Buoyed by these successes, state leaders are now working on a bill that will raise the criminal age of responsibility from 16 to 18, a key move to reduce the number of youth exposed to the harsher edges of the adult system. [xii]

It's possible to point to several other successful CI efforts led by mainstream institutions. Even so, we feel that the chances for impact are dramatically better if would-be changemakers explicitly bring to their work a movement-building orientation. Why? Because when people operate from a management paradigm, their emphasis tends to be on improving systems rather than changing them. As a consequence, participants typically are suspicious of bold measures. In some cases, they resist or block transformative ideas because their instinct is to preserve the systems they manage. As Eric Bonabeau, CEO of Icosystems, observes: "Managers would rather live with a problem they can't solve than with a solution they can't fully understand or control." [xiii]

Compare, for example, how the leaders of two major Canadian cities approached the challenge of ending poverty. In one western city, several

reputable non-profit leaders made the case that reducing wage inequity and introducing a guaranteed annual income should be key features of the poverty reduction plan. Key philanthropic leaders co-convening the plan's development vetoed the idea. It was alleged that such measures were unlikely to gain widespread support in a community that celebrates "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps." Moreover, they risked alienating several of the funder's generous conservative contributors. In Hamilton, on the other hand, the chair of the poverty roundtable declared that poverty was a public health crisis on the scale of SARS. A guaranteed annual income and living wage policies, he said, were as key to poverty reduction in the 21st century as the abolition of slavery and child labour were in the 19th century. Rather than alienate local leaders, the call to action has inspired them. The municipality, the Chamber of Commerce and local school board have signed on as living wage employers. [xiv]

Mainstream leaders are right to heed the interests of the organization they are paid to operate. But we believe that broad, deep, and durable changes in communities are more likely when CI participants embrace a movement-building rather than a managerial approach to their work. By approaching CI in the same way you would a movement, we are far more likely to "shift boundaries for what is socially acceptable and politically expected." [xv]

UPGRADING THE FIVE CONDITIONS

In their 2010 article, Kania and Kramer identify five conditions that communities must fulfill in order to get from isolated impact (where organizations operate independently and scale is achieved through the growth of individual organizations) to collective impact. These are: agreement on a common agenda; the development of a shared measurement approach; leveraging resources through mutually reinforcing activities; building continuous communications; and a backbone structure to mobilize the collective effort.

Although we reaffirm that these conditions are "roughly right," we believe they are too narrowly framed to capture how successful CI actually operates, particularly efforts that are explicitly embedded in a movement-building approach to community change. The following section describes how we would upgrade each of the five conditions and why.

FROM CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION TO AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One of the biggest critiques of the earlier version of the CI framework is its apparent failure to put community at the centre of the change process. While FSG in no way set out to diminish the role of community in the work, there appears to be a strong emphasis on "CEO-level cross-sector leaders" in some of the early articles. [xvi]

The case for authentic and inclusive involvement of a broad spectrum of system stakeholders, particularly those most affected by complex issues, is overwhelming. It allows participants to draw on "360-degree insight" into the nature of the problems and how they might be addressed. It creates a broader constituency for change – so critical in any effort to disrupt and change systems. It cultivates broad ownership and long-term commitment to the change process which is essential when the initial excitement begins to flag and the going gets tough. Most importantly, the idea that those most affected by an issue should participate fully in attempts to address it (aka "Nothing about us without us!") is a fundamental democratic and moral principle.

Robust community engagement is back-breaking work. It takes time to map out which stakeholders to invite to the table, skill to create good opportunities to engage people at each stage of the change process, and confidence and humility to navigate the inevitable conflicts between participants who differ in their values, interests, and power. Tamarack has been working on the craft of community engagement for over a decade. Some of that experience is captured in Paul Born's books, *Community Conversations* (2012) and *Deepening Community* (2014). As central as

community building is, we still feel like we are merely scratching its surface.

The FSG team has since more than made up for this initial omission. In 2015, Kania and Kramer's fourth article in the CI series focused on the importance of equity and argued that inclusion in the change process of the people most affected by an issue is "imperative." [xvii] More recently, of their Eight Collective Impact Principles of Practice, three concern equity, the inclusion of community members, and relationship, trust, and respect. FSG is working with organizations that have a long history in these issues to promote these principles to CI efforts across the world.

The original article on CI identified "continuous communication" as a condition for mobilizing stakeholders, building trust, and structuring meaningful meetings and work. Somehow, "continuous communication" hardly seems to convey all the work that is involved. Why not call a spade a spade? Authentic and inclusive community engagement is, without a doubt, a condition for transformational impact and therefore a condition for CI 3.0.

FROM COMMON AGENDA TO SHARED ASPIRATION

Jay Connor is fond of quoting an exchange between a journalist and Francis Ford Coppola, the movie director famed for *The Godfather* and other hits. When asked to explain the difference between what made a good movie versus a bad one, Coppola responded, "In a good movie, everyone is making the same movie." [xviii]

Kania and Kramer quite rightly point out that many participants who profess to be working on a common problem are in fact working with different perspectives on the nature and root causes of that problem and how it might be resolved. So the results they generate are likely to be fragmented, not collective. A true common agenda requires leadership to bring key stakeholders together; to review the key data which informs the problem or issue; to develop a shared vision for change; and to determine the core pathways and strategies that will drive the change forward. This is more than a simple planning exercise. Indeed, it requires would-be collaborators to find (or create) common ground despite their very different values, interests, and positions.

As much as we believe this to be true, a focus on a community aspiration can have an even more powerful impact when creating a broader movement for change. This requires participants to develop outcomes that are based on community values sufficiently ambitious that they cannot be realized through business as usual. A solid community aspiration can also create the kind of "big tent" under which a wide range of participants can pursue the interdependent challenges underlying tough issues. (See sidebar on *Perverse Consequences*).

Take, for example, the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. Formed in 2002, it drew members from the city's business, government, and voluntary sectors, and community leaders with the lived experience of poverty. After extensive consultations in the broader community, Roundtable leaders concluded that "poverty reduction" would not mobilize the energies of a large and diverse network of people. Instead, they called for the effort to embrace a bolder aspiration: "Make Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child." They consequently organized a framework around five critical points of investment (from early learning and parenting to employment) that engaged dozens of networks and organizations.

The aspiration was contagious. In October 2005, Hamilton's major paper, the Spectator, announced that it would make poverty coverage a priority. It published a front page that was blank except for one statement: "The stories have been removed from this page to remind us that nearly 100,000 children, women and men live in poverty in Hamilton, people whose stories rarely make the front page. We're going to change that." [xix] Soon afterwards, city council embedded the words "Best Place to Raise a Child" in Hamilton's mission statement and a local marketing expert praised the

aspiration for its ability to inspire community-wide action. [xx] By 2011, a Nanos survey reported that 80 percent of respondents felt that municipal investment in poverty reduction should be the city's number one priority. It was a result that startled the veteran pollster administering the survey. "There are very few issues that you get 80 percent of anybody to agree on," he remarked in surprise. [xxi]

THE PERVERSE CONSEQUENCES OF NARROWLY FRAMED AGENDAS

Focusing on one slice of a complex problem may make the challenge less overwhelming and improve the chances of developing a shared agenda. It may also have some perverse consequences.

Take, for example, the efforts to reduce malaria and HIV, two leading causes of child mortality in the developing world. Spearheaded by the generous support and relentless leadership of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, international donors for the last decade have focused on developing and deploying high-impact vaccinations. While their efforts have saved millions of lives, they have created other problems. Funders, governments, and health organizations have diverted so many human and financial resources from other types of medical care, nutrition, and education that there has been a sharp jump in more common ailments, such as birth sepsis, diarrhoea, and asphyxia. One report described how some patients walked nine hours to clinics to get their HIV and malaria medications, only to vomit them back up due to hunger and fatigue. In some countries, malaria and HIV rates have begun to climb again.

In response, many international funders have adjusted their effort to focus on a bigger aspiration, "broader, integrated child survival," and have broadened their strategies to focus on prevention and treatment of diseases and on strengthening the entire health care delivery system. [xxii]

FROM SHARED MEASUREMENT TO STRATEGIC LEARNING

> "Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact. Agreement on a common agenda is illusory without agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures." [xxiii]

This sums up one of the most popular conditions of CI. It has generated the greatest experimentation across CI initiatives.

Five years later, we've discovered a great deal about the mechanics of developing shared measurement systems, and have concluded we still have a long way to go. [xxiv] One of the biggest of these insights is that CI participants have more success with shared measurement if they treat them as one part of a larger system of learning and evaluation.

Consider, for instance, the different measurement approaches taken by General Motors and Toyota in the 1980s and 1990s. General Motors was a data-heavy and report-heavy organization. It employed sophisticated systems to gather, analyze, and develop thick reports for senior managers. Toyota, on the other hand, emphasized management practices that were data-light and learning-heavy. It chose to focus on a few select measures, real-time feedback loops, and floor-level decision making. [xxv] While the performance gap between the companies has recently closed (due in part to a worrisome decline in Toyota's once-vaunted quality control), researchers and business leaders credit the different evaluation and measurement processes for Toyota's consistently better outcomes in earlier years.

A robust learning and evaluation process is even more critical in community-wide change efforts. Unlike the relatively routinized nature of an automotive production line, social innovators are trying to change the dynamic and complex systems that underlie social problems. They want measurement systems that (a) provide real-time

feedback on the multiple outcomes expressed in their theory of change or strategy; (b) are manageable; (c) have robust processes for sense-making and decision-making; and (d) can co-evolve with their ever-changing strategies. CI participants are known sometimes to rush right into shared measurement with the question, "What should and could we measure together?" Unfortunately, without first having laid the foundations for strategic learning, they find themselves wrapped up in messy, frustrating, tail-chasing processes with slim prospects for producing useful data.

The experiences of the many 10-year plans to end community homelessness illustrate the point. These initiatives are able to employ relatively sophisticated homelessness management information systems (HMIS). This is due in part to a well-developed "Housing First" philosophy that identifies the key outcomes whose measurement deserves extra attention. Most of the groups have also developed good processes for using the data to inform decisions about their overall strategy. Not only have these resulted in adaptations to the Housing First model, they have prompted many to recognize their need to develop entirely new models for the prevention of homelessness. [xxvi] Community-based initiatives to end homelessness are exemplars in strategic learning and data use.

A formal shift to a strategic learning approach, which includes shared measurement as a component rather than a central feature of the process, should be straightforward. It will appeal to more experienced community builders to know that measures are only part of learning. It also will be welcomed by evaluators who want to build measures for outcomes that matter – social innovators will use the feedback, rather than consign it to the shelf.

Happily, much of the groundwork for adopting a strategic learning stance in CI initiatives has already been laid. The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Center for Evaluation Innovation, the pioneers of the approach, feature multiple tools and examples on their websites. FSG has produced a comprehensive, easy-to-use, and solid resource on building strategic learning systems. The next generation of CI practitioners would do well to adopt and adapt these frameworks.

FROM MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES TO A FOCUS ON HIGH-LEVERAGE AND LOOSE/TIGHT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Of the five conditions, "mutually reinforcing activities" is our favourite. It so elegantly captures the need of CI to add up to more than the sum of its parts.

Yet, as elegant as it is, the focus on mutually reinforcing activities has two limitations. The first is that it may unintentionally encourage CI participants to focus on areas that offer great opportunities for cooperation rather than the greatest opportunities for results. This is nicely captured by two practitioners, Peter Boumgarden and John Branch. In their article, "Collective Impact or Collective Blindness," they remark:

> "While we do not doubt the benefits of collaboration, we argue that 'collective impact' over and above competition often results in coordinated but misdirected effort." [xxvii]

CI participants must see beyond collaboration and instead focus on strategies that focus on "high leverage" opportunities for change. They must commit to a systemic reading of the complex systems they are trying to change, and to making a realistic assessment of where local actors have the knowledge, networks, and resources to make a difference. [xxviii] Finding this "sweet spot" where these two intersect is not easy.

Just ask the thousands of CI participants working hard to replace fragmented programs for vulnerable families with more holistic, coordinated, and accessible services. The two most typical strategies, co-locating of services and case management methods, offer excellent prospects for cooperation: they are relatively easy to implement and "don't require co-locators to give up funds, authority or turf". [xxix] It turns out that they are also low leverage: while families benefit from having services in one place and an advocate

willing to help them navigate them, the majority of programs still operate with inflexible eligibility criteria, offer cookie-cutter supports, and are so poorly coordinated that accessing them is a full-time job. With few exceptions, these strategies have not resulted in better outcomes for struggling families. The higher leverage strategy is for policy makers and funders to decentralize responsibility for program design to regional and local organizations and hold them accountable for broad – rather than discrete – outcomes. While these measures are more far more likely to lead to comprehensive, flexible, and quality services, along with better results for families, they consistently meet with resistance from people within the systems because they are messy and require shifts in power and resources. [xxx]

The second limitation of a strong emphasis on mutually reinforcing activities is that it seems to exclude the periodic necessity to allow participants to pursue independent – even competing – pathways to a common goal. In the case of Tillamook County, Oregon, for example, health organizations, education groups, and faith-based organizations settled on a common aspiration to eliminate teen pregnancy. But they could not agree on a common strategy. As a result, each pursued its own unique path. Public health advocates promoted safe sex. Educators focused on increasing literacy on sexuality. Faith-based organizations preached abstinence. The cumulative result of their efforts was a 75 percent reduction in teen pregnancy in 10 years. [xxxi] Why? Because different strategies triggered different outcomes for different groups of vulnerable families and teens.

Pursuing different pathways is particularly productive when social innovators are unclear about the nature of the problem they are trying to address. In these situations, it makes good sense for people to fan out and try different approaches. In the case of Opportunities 2000, a pioneering CI effort to reduce Waterloo Region's poverty levels to the lowest in Canada, non-profit organizations worked together to advocate the creation of a fund to invest in innovative ways to reduce poverty. They then applied to access the fund through competitive bidding, with many non-profits participating in multiple proposals. This not only resulted in a range of innovative responses, including Canada's first head-hunting service for working poor immigrants and the country's first Individual Development Accounts, but also an increase in the monthly income of nearly 1,600 low-income families. [xxxii]

The late Brenda Zimmerman, a world expert on managing complex systems, concluded that one of the key attributes of successful social innovators was their ability to know when and how to "mix cooperation with competition." [xxxiii] This flies in the face of conventional wisdom, which suggests that collaboration is always the best response. So it may well be that conventional wisdom is a barrier to what appears to be a critical condition of Collective Impact 3.0: a focus on high-leverage strategies, and permission to participants that they work as loosely or as tightly as the situation requires.

FROM BACKBONE SUPPORT TO A CONTAINER FOR CHANGE

Backbone support, CI's fifth condition, was warmly received by veteran community builders and changemakers.

> "Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative. Coordination takes time, and none of the participating organizations has any to spare. The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails." [xxxiv]

This simple statement reaffirms what community builders have been saying since the 1960s: work on community change across organizational and sectoral boundaries must be placed firmly in the centre – rather than on the side – of participants' desks. It warrants an investment of extra resources in an intermediary or coordinating body whose job it is to see to the day-to-day work of collaboration. Even CI's outspoken critics acknowledge how the

framework has encouraged practitioners and funders to invest greater time, energy, and financial resources into ensuring this support is in place. [xxxv]

The renewed emphasis on backbone support has also led to a much better understanding of the infrastructure required for community change. This includes an elaboration of the various roles that the backbone group can play (e.g., guiding the creation of a vision and strategy, mobilizing funding, and advancing policy) as well as the governance structures, funding models, and leadership styles required to support them. [xxxvi] These insights represent significant steps forward in practice in five short years.

PLENTY OF MISTAKES, TOO

CI practitioners have made plenty of mistakes in our newfound exuberance for backbone supports.

In many instances, people have been confused by what backbone support involves. It simply means to appoint one or more organizations to fulfill various essential functions, sometimes with extra financial resources. Instead, the term has been taken for a recommendation to create specialized organizations from scratch. This may lead to investing substantial time and energy in creating and managing a new legal body. It also increases the risk that leading organizations feel less ownership and responsibility for the change effort. They let the "the new organization" run the show.

In other cases, well-meaning CI leaders working on different challenges (including poverty, homelessness and early childhood development) have created their own boutique backbone groups. This has spread thin what few human and financial resources are available for backbone work. It has also served to strengthen silos and impede joint action across the boundaries of such artificial domains.

Tamarack staff will explore these – and other – missteps in backbone practices in a future article on CI 3.0.

While these capture the "outer game" of change, the next generation of CI practitioners needs to turn its attention to creating a "strong container" to assist CI participants with the inner game of personal change. Put simply, a strong container is where social innovators can:

> "… transform their understandings [of the system they are trying to change], the relationships [with others in the systems] and their intentions [to act]. The boundaries of this container are set so that the participants feel enough protection and safety, as well as enough pressure and friction, to be able to do their challenging work." [xxxvii]

Building a strong container requires paying attention to a variety of dimensions of backbone stewardship. Some of the more important ones are the following:

- The mobilization of a diverse group of funders, backbone sponsors, and stewardship arrangements that demonstrate cross-sectoral leadership on the issue.
- The facilitation of the participants' inner journey of change, including the discovery and letting go of their own mental models and cultural/emotional biases, required for them to be open to fundamentally new ways of doing things.
- Processes to cultivate trust and empathy amongst participants so they can freely share perspectives, engage in fierce conversations, and navigate differences in power.
- Using the many dilemmas and paradoxes of community change – such as the need to achieve short-term wins while involved in the longer-term work of system change – as creative tensions to drive people to seek new approaches to vexing challenges without overwhelming them.

- Timely nudges to sustain a process of self-refueling change that can sustain multiple cycles of learning and periodic drops in momentum and morale.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of creating a container for change. Some argue that it is more important than "charismatic leadership, technical expertise, or even funding." [xxxviii] Others argue that the critical "soft stuff" is more difficult to manage than the "hard stuff" of research, planning, and program design. Peter Senge notes:

> You cannot force commitment. What you can do is nudge a little here, inspire a little there, and provide a role model. Your primary influence is the environment you create. [xxxix]

The Energy Futures Lab in Alberta demonstrates the value of creating that kind of environment. It's an effort to help actors in the province's export-oriented, oil-and gas-dominated energy sector to "accelerate the transition to a carbon-constrained future" that is economically vibrant, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable. The design team invested significant time and energy laying the effort's foundations:

- A formal commitment to create a radical middle position in the polarized mainstream debate over the energy system (e.g., "economy versus the environment," "resource development versus community well-being").

- The creation of a backbone group comprising five diverse organizations – an energy company, a key government department, two well-respected environmental non-governmental organizations, and an outstanding leadership development institute with growing expertise in Aboriginal leadership.

- The recruitment of a "whole system team" of participants who are a microcosm of the diverse values, interests, and perspectives of the energy system's current stakeholders, and the engagement of their organizations, networks, and the broader public.

Having laid this groundwork, the backbone team worked diligently to create space for Lab participants to learn more about the energy system, themselves, and other participants. They carried out "deep interviews" with Fellows to surface their hopes, aspirations, and fears of energy transition; facilitated structured conversations about social and political narratives that shape people's perspectives on tough issues and how to empathize with alternative viewpoints; sponsored learning journeys to explore different parts of the energy system from a worm's-eye view, and systems-mapping sessions to look at the same systems from a bird's-eye view; and facilitated methods for dialogue that allowed people to have unspeakable conversations (e.g., can Albertans really maintain this standard of living in a carbon constrained future?). [xl]

The commitment to building a strong container has paid off. The participants signed their names to an op-ed piece in a major newspaper that advocated cross-sectoral leadership to shape – rather than endure – the energy transition already in progress. They crafted a vision document with 11 "pathways to energy system innovation" that they intend to upgrade once it has been tested with scores of networks and organizations across the province. There are nearly a dozen teams developing prototypes to test breakthrough technologies, policies, and business models that comprise the Lab's portfolio of promising initiatives. As one veteran of sustainability activism commented: "The commitment and the progress of this diverse group have been simply remarkable." [xli]

Bill O'Brien, a well-regarded business leader, noted: "The success of an intervention depends on the inner conditions of the intervenor." [xlii] In the same vein, the success of the next generation of CI initiatives depends on the ability of backbone teams to create the strong containers for change that support participants to dig deep when tackling stubborn social challenges.

CONCLUSION

The jury is still out on the ability of CI efforts to generate deep, wide, and sustained impact on tough societal challenges. In their study of 20 years of comprehensive community initiatives, the top-drawer researchers of the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Community Change concluded that while there have been an impressive number of successful changes in policy and system changes, along with innovative programs, "few if any [initiatives] were able to demonstrate widespread changes in child and family well-being or reductions in the neighbourhood poverty rate." [xliii]

The CI framework has breathed new life into the weary efforts of many long-standing community change initiatives. It has also dramatically increased the number of new and aspiring changemakers. For all that, the exemplary stories of impact (like Medicine Hat's success in eliminating homelessness, or the slow but steady improvement of academic outcomes in the environs of Cincinnati) are still the exception rather than the rule.

The success of this next generation of community change efforts depends, in part, on the willingness of CI participants not to settle for marginal improvements to the original version of the CI framework. Instead, they must take on the challenge to continually upgrade the approach based on ongoing learning of what it takes to transform communities. The CI approach is – and always will be – unfinished business.

In this article, we've laid out what we feel are foundational elements of a CI 3.0 framework. Our core argument is that CI efforts are more likely to be effective when their participants operate from a movement-building paradigm. It is impossible for a leadership table compromised of 20 to 40 leaders – no matter how committed and influential – to tackle issues and make deep and durable change on their own. It requires the engagement, commitment, and investment of an entire community striving to be the best it can be and willing to make whatever changes to community systems – and its own behaviours – that are necessary to build safe, prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

This is only the beginning. In subsequent articles we plan to weigh in on other elements of the approach, namely:

- Preconditions for CI
- Phases of CI
- Principles of practice for CI
- A selection of key practices (e.g. governance, shared measurement).

We encourage others to do the same. While there is no sure-fire recipe for community change, there are patterns of effective ideas and practices that can improve the probabilities of success. In a world that seems a bit more fragile, disruptive, and anxious than normal, we need all hands on deck to uncover, frame, and share those patterns. It'll make it easier to create newspaper headlines like those now appearing in the local papers of Medicine Hat.

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ABOUT TAMARACK INSTITUTE

Tamarack is a connected force for change. We believe that when we are effective in strengthening community capacity to engage citizens, lead collaboratively, deepen community, and innovate in place, our collective impact work contributes to building peace and a more equitable society. Learn more at www.tamarackcommunity.ca.

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Collective Impact Principles of Practice

We have been inspired watching the field of collective impact progress over the past five years, as thousands of practitioners, funders, and policymakers around the world employ the approach to help solve complex social problems at a large scale. The field's understanding of what it takes to put the collective impact approach into practice continues to evolve through the contributions of many who are undertaking the deep work of collaborative social change, and their successes build on decades of work around effective cross-sector collaboration. Accomplished practitioners of collective impact continue to affirm the critical importance of achieving population-level change in the five conditions of collective impact that John Kania and Mark Kramer originally identified in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* in winter 2011. (For an explanation of the conditions, see the end of this document.) Many practitioners tell us that the framework developed in the original article has helped to provide the field with a shared definition and useful language to describe core elements of a rigorous and disciplined, yet flexible and organic, approach to addressing complex problems at scale.

Successful collective impact practitioners also observe, however, that while the five conditions Kania and Kramer initially identified are necessary, they are not sufficient to achieve impact at the population level. Informed by lessons shared among those who are implementing the approach in the field, **this document outlines additional principles of practice that we believe can guide practitioners about *how* to successfully put collective impact into action.** While many of these principles are not unique to collective impact, we have seen that the combination of the five conditions *and* these practices contributes to meaningful population-level change. We hope that these principles help funders, practitioners, and policymakers consider what it takes to apply the collective impact approach, and that they will bolster existing efforts to overcome challenges and roadblocks in their work. We also hope these principles can help guide those who aspire toward collective impact, but may not yet be implementing the approach fully, to identify possible changes that might increase their odds of success. As we continue to apply the conditions and principles of collective impact, we fully expect that, over time, our shared understanding of what constitutes good practice will evolve further.

1. **Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on equity**. For collective impact initiatives to achieve sustainable improvements in communities, it is critical that these initiatives address the systemic structures and practices that create barriers to equitable outcomes for all populations, particularly along the lines of race and class. To that end, collective impact initiatives must be intentional in their design from the very outset to ensure that an equity lens is prominent throughout their governance, planning, implementation, and evaluation. In designing and implementing collective impact with a focus on equity, practitioners must disaggregate data and develop strategies that focus on improving outcomes for affected populations.

2. **Include community members in the collaborative**. Members of the community—those whose lives are most directly and deeply affected by the problem addressed by the initiative—must be meaningfully engaged in the initiative's governance, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Community members

can bring crucial (and sometimes overlooked) perspectives to governance bodies and decision-making tables, can contribute to refining the collective impact initiative's evolving goals, strategies, and indicators, can help co-create and implement solutions that are rooted in lived experience and have the potential for significant uptake, can participate in building communities' capacity to lead and sustain change, and can participate in data interpretation and continuous learning processes. Sometimes, decision-makers or other stakeholders may inadvertently face power dynamics or other structural barriers that can hinder particular partners from participating candidly and fully; true inclusion requires intentional examination of group needs and processes to ensure that all stakeholders have full opportunity to contribute to the process. Engaging community in these ways helps collective impact efforts address the issues most important to those most directly affected, builds capacity and enables community participation in and ownership of solutions, and helps embed the work in the community so that it will be more effective and sustainable.

3. **Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners**. Collective impact collaboratives are created by and composed of actors from across sectors and parts of the community, including nonprofits, government, private sector, philanthropy, and residents. While not all initiatives will engage *all* sectors actively at the same time, collaboratives made up of only one or two types of actors (e.g., all nonprofits, all funders) do not have the diversity of actors required to create the systems-level view that contributes to a robust collective impact initiative. These cross-sector partners, who all have a role to play in the solution, share in co-creating the common agenda, identifying shared measures, and implementing the work required to achieve the effort's goals.

4. **Use data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve**. Collective impact is not a solution, but rather a collaborative problem-solving process. This process requires partners to remain aware of changes in context, to collect and learn from data, to openly share information and observations with others, and to adapt their strategies quickly in response to an evolving environment. To accomplish this, initiatives should have clear learning priorities, build strong structures and processes for learning, and create a learning culture that enables the group to use meaningful, credible, and useful qualitative and quantitative data for continuous learning and strategic refinement. Many initiatives find it valuable to use a disciplined and formalized process to guide their use of data.

5. **Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills**. For collective impact initiatives to achieve transformational change, leaders must possess strong facilitation, management, and convening skills. They must be able to create a holding space for people to come together and work out their disparate viewpoints, they must possess the capacity to foster shared meaning and shared aspirations among participants, they must be able to help participants understand the complexity and non-linearity of system-level change, they must be dedicated to the health of the whole and willing to change their own organizations in service of the group's agenda, and they must be adept at building relationships and trust among collaborators. These system leadership skills are essential for the backbone, and also other leaders in the collaborative such as steering committee members, community leaders, and action team leaders.

6. **Focus on program *and* system strategies**. The mutually reinforcing activities that the initiative takes on to achieve its goals should focus on collective program and system change strategies rather than individual programs or organizations. System strategies include strategies that increase communication and coordination across organizations, change the practices and behavior of professionals and beneficiaries, shift social and cultural norms, improve services system wide (by spreading techniques that already work within the community across organizations, or by bringing a new evidence-based practice into the community), and change policies.

7. **Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect across participants**. Collective impact partnerships require participants to come to a common understanding of the problem and shared goals, to work together and align work in new ways, and to learn from each other. Authentic interpersonal relationships, trust, respect, and inclusion are key elements of the culture that is required for this difficult work to occur. The backbone and other initiative leaders must be proactive in their efforts to create this culture.

8. **Customize for local context**. While the five conditions are consistent across collective impact initiatives, and initiatives benefit a great deal by learning from each other, customizing the initiative for the local context is essential. Initiatives can do their best work when they deeply understand the problem they are trying to solve locally—both from the data and input from the community and from understanding the existing work and coalitions that may be working on similar issues. Customizing the work to fit the local community context enables the coalition to honor, build on, and/or align with existing work and pursue system and program strategies that are most relevant to local needs.

These principles of practice were identified based on the work of the field of practitioners by the Collective Impact Forum in partnership with the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, FSG, the Forum for Youth Investment, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, Living Cities, PolicyLink, the Tamarack Institute, and United Way Worldwide.

Five Conditions of Collective Impact

While our understanding of how to put collective impact into practice has deepened and expanded, the five conditions outlined in the original article *Collective Impact* remain the core of the approach.

- Common Agenda: All participants have a shared vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.
- Shared Measurement: Agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported, with a short list of common indicators identified and used across all participating organizations for learning and improvement.
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities: Engagement of a diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinating a set of differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

- Continuous Communication: Frequent and structured open communication across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
- Backbone Support: Ongoing support by independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative, including guiding the initiative's vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing funding. Backbone staff can all sit within a single organization, or they can have different roles housed in multiple organizations.

Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity

Collective impact efforts are upending conventional wisdom about the manner in which we achieve social progress.

BY JOHN KANIA & MARK KRAMER

Organizations around the world have begun to see collective impact as a new and more effective process for social change. They have grasped the difference our past articles emphasized between the isolated impact of working for change through a single organization versus a highly structured cross-sector coalition.[1] Yet, even as practitioners work toward the five conditions of collective impact we described earlier, many participants are becoming frustrated in their efforts to move the needle on their chosen issues. (See "The Five Conditions of Collective Impact" to right.)

Collective impact poses many challenges, of course: the difficulty of bringing together people who have never collaborated before, the competition and mistrust among funders and grantees, the struggle of agreeing on shared metrics, the risk of multiple self-anointed backbone organizations, and the perennial obstacles of local politics. We believe, however, that the greatest obstacle to success is that practitioners embark on the collective impact process expecting the wrong kind of solutions.

The solutions we have come to expect in the social sector often involve discrete programs that address a social problem through a carefully worked out theory of change, relying on incremental resources from funders, and ideally supported by an evaluation that attributes to the program the impact achieved. Once proven, these solutions can scale up by spreading to other organizations.

The problem is that such predetermined solutions rarely work under conditions of complexity—conditions that apply to most major social problems—when the unpredictable interactions of multiple players determine the outcomes. And even when successful interventions are found, adoption spreads very gradually, if it spreads at all.

Collective impact works differently. The process and results of collective impact are emergent rather than predetermined, the necessary resources and

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The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

Common Agenda	All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
Shared Measurement	Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
Continuous Communication	Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
Backbone Support	Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

innovations often already exist but have not yet been recognized, learning is continuous, and adoption happens simultaneously among many different organizations.

In other words, collective impact is not merely a new process that supports the same social sector solutions but an entirely different model of social progress. The power of collective impact lies in the heightened vigilance that comes from multiple organizations looking for resources and innovations through the same lens, the rapid learning that comes from continuous feedback loops, and the immediacy of action that comes from a unified and simultaneous response among all participants.

Under conditions of complexity, predetermined solutions can neither be reliably ascertained nor implemented. Instead, the rules of interaction that govern collective impact lead to changes in individual and organizational behavior that create an ongoing progression of alignment, discovery, learning, and emergence. In many instances, this progression greatly accelerates social change without requiring breakthrough innovations or vastly increased funding. Previously unnoticed solutions and resources from inside or outside the community are identified and adopted. Existing organizations find new ways of working together that produce better outcomes.

Leaders of successful collective impact initiatives have come to recognize and accept this continual unfolding of newly identified opportunities for greater impact, along with the setbacks that inevitably accompany any process of trial and error, as the powerful but unpredictable way that collective impact works. They have embraced a new way of seeing, learning, and doing that marries emergent solutions with intentional outcomes.

COMPLEXITY AND EMERGENCE

It would be hard to deny that most large-scale social problems are complex. Issues such as poverty, health, education, and the environment, to name just a few, involve many different interdependent actors and factors. There is no single solution to these problems, and even if a solution were known, no one individual or organization is in a position to compel all the players involved to adopt it. Important variables that influence the outcome are not and often cannot be known or predicted in advance.[2] Under these conditions of complexity, predetermined solutions rarely succeed.

Predetermined solutions work best when technical expertise is required, the consequences of actions are predictable, the material factors are known in advance, and a central authority is in a position to ensure that all necessary actions are taken by the appropriate parties. Administering the right medicine to a patient, for example, generally gives predetermined results: the medicine has been proven to work, the benefits are predictable, the disease is well understood, and the doctor can administer the treatment. Much of the work of the nonprofit and public sectors is driven by the attempt to identify such predetermined solutions. In part, this is due to the expectations of funders and legislators who understandably want to know what their money will buy and predict how the discrete projects they fund will lead to the impacts they seek.

Unlike curing a patient, problems such as reforming the US health care system cannot be accomplished through predetermined solutions. No proven solution exists, the consequences of actions are unpredictable, and many variables—such as the outcome of elections—cannot be known in advance. Furthermore, any solution requires the participation of countless government, private sector, and nonprofit organizations, as well as a multitude of individual citizens. In these circumstances, emergent solutions will be more likely to succeed than predetermined ones.

Taken from the field of complexity science, "emergence" is a term that is used to describe events that are unpredictable, which seem to result from the interactions between elements, and which no one organization or individual can control. The process of evolution exemplifies emergence. As one animal successfully adapts to its environment, others mutate in ways that overcome the advantages the first animal has developed. There is no ultimate "solution" beyond the process of continual adaptation within an ever-changing environment.

Leaders of succesful collective impact initiatives have embraced a new way of seeing, learning, and doing that marries emergent solutions with intentional outcomes.

To say that a solution is emergent, however, is not to abandon all plans and structures.[3] Rather than deriving outcomes by rigid adherence to preconceived strategies, a key tenet of addressing complex problems is to focus on creating effective rules for interaction. These rules ensure alignment among participants that increases the likelihood of emergent solutions leading to the intended goal. Consider, for example, how flocks of birds are able to demonstrate such amazing coordination and alignment, with thousands of independent bodies that move as one, reacting together in nanoseconds to changes in geography, topography, wind currents, and potential predators.[4] Scientists have discovered that just three simple rules govern their interaction: maintain a mini-

mum distance from your neighbor; fly at the same speed as your neighbor; and always turn towards the center. All three rules are essential for flocking. When they are in place, it is as if all birds collectively "see" what each bird sees and "respond" as each bird responds.[5]

The five conditions for collective impact similarly serve as rules for interaction that lead to synchronized and emergent results. A common agenda, if authentic, creates intentionality and enables all participating organizations to "see" solutions and resources through similar eyes. Shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, and continuous communication enable participants to learn and react consistently with the common agenda to emerging problems and opportunities. Meanwhile, the backbone organization supports fidelity by the various cross-sector players to both the common agenda and rules for interaction.

When properly put into motion, the process of collective impact generates emergent solutions toward the intended outcomes under continually changing circumstances. As with evolution, this process is itself the solution. And, as with a flock of birds, effective collective impact efforts experience a heightened level of vigilance that enables participants to collectively see and respond to opportunities that would otherwise have been missed.

COLLECTIVE VIGILANCE

It is commonplace to bemoan the insufficiency of resources and solutions needed to address the world's most challenging problems. As successful collective impact efforts around the world are discovering, however, the problem is not necessarily a lack of resources and solutions, but our inability to accurately see the resources and solutions that best fit our situation.

When each organization views the availability of resources and the range of solutions through the lens of its own particular agenda, the resulting kaleidoscope conceals many opportunities. Collective impact efforts, however, sharpen a community's collective vision. Having a shared understanding of the problem and an appropriately framed common agenda increases the likelihood that communities will see relevant opportunities as they emerge. The novelty of working with people from different sectors brings a fresh perspective that encourages creativity and intensifies effort. This, in turn, can motivate more generous support from both participants and outsiders. The rules for interaction from collective impact create an alignment within complex relationships and sets of activities which, when combined with shared intentionality, causes previously invisible solutions and resources to emerge.

In 2008, for example, the city of Memphis, Tenn., and Shelby County initiated a multi-pronged collective impact initiative called Memphis Fast Forward that includes a focus on improving public safety called Operation: Safe Community. After three years, cross-sector stakeholders looked at data regarding progress in public safety and concluded they were making good headway on two of three priority thrusts: policing and prosecution. Unfortunately, they saw little progress in the third area of violence prevention. The parties agreed to double down their efforts and re-tool the plan for prevention. Three months later, the U.S. Department of Justice announced the formation of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, with federal support available to communities aspiring to higher levels of performance in prevention activities. Memphis Fast Forward quickly jumped into action and, three months later, was one of six communities nationwide to be selected for funding.

The leaders of Memphis Fast Forward could not have anticipated and planned for the new resources that came from the Department of Justice. Had the participating organizations been acting in isolation, they most likely would not have been aware of the new program, and even if one or two solitary nonprofits knew of the potential funding, it is unlikely that they could have mobilized a sufficient community-wide effort in time to win the grant. Collective impact enabled them to see and obtain existing resources that they otherwise would have missed.

The vigilance inspired by collective impact can lead to emergent solutions as well as resources. In 2003, stakeholders in Franklin County, a rural county in western Massachusetts, initiated an effort called Communities that Care that focused on reducing teen substance abuse by 50 percent. A key goal in the common agenda was to improve the attitudes and practices of families. The initial plan was to "train the trainers" by working with a cadre of parents to learn and then teach other parents. Unfortunately, in 2006 and 2009, the data showed no improvement in parental behaviors.

The initiative then decided to try something new: a public will-building campaign designed to reach all parents of 7th through 12th grade students. The initiative worked with schools to send postcards home, and with businesses to get messages on pizza boxes, grocery bags, paper napkins, in fortune cookies, in windows, on banners, on billboards, and on the radio. The initiative had also come across an outside research study showing that children who have regular family dinners are at lower risk for substance use, so they included that message as well.

Leaders of the effort were paying close attention to the campaign to determine which messages had any impact. Through surveys and focus groups the initiative discovered that the family dinner message resonated strongly with local parents, in part because it built on momentum from the local food movement, the childhood anti-obesity movement, and even the poor economy that encouraged families to save money by

eating at home. Armed with this evidence, the initiative went further, capitalizing on national Family Day to get free materials and press coverage to promote the family dinner message. As a result, the percentage of youth having dinner with their families increased 11 percent and, for the first time since the effort was initiated seven years earlier, Franklin County saw significant improvements in key parental risk factors.[6]

The Franklin County example demonstrates how collective impact marries the power of intentionality with the unpredictability of emergence in a way that enables communities to identify and capitalize on impactful new solutions. In this case, the failure to make progress against an intended goal prompted both a new strategy (switching from parental train-the-trainer groups to a public awareness campaign) and a search outside the community for new evidence based practices (family dinners) that supported their goal of reducing parental risk factors. This clarity of vision also enabled the initiative to capitalize on unrelated and unanticipated trends in food, obesity, and the economy that emerged during the course of the work and amplified their message.

In both of these examples, the ongoing vigilance of multiple organizations with a shared intention, operating under the rules for interaction of the collective impact structure, empowered all stakeholders together—flexibly and quickly—to see and act on emerging opportunities. The intentions never changed, but the plans did. And in both cases, the resources and solutions that proved most helpful might have been overlooked as irrelevant had the stakeholders adhered to their original plans.

It may seem that these two examples were just "lucky" in coming upon the resources and solutions they needed. But we have seen many such collective impact efforts in which the consistent unfolding of unforeseen opportunities is precisely what drives social impact. This is the solution that collective impact offers.

COLLECTIVE LEARNING

The leaders of both the Memphis and Franklin County collective impact initiatives learned that they were not making progress on one dimension of their strategies. Of course, nonprofits and funders learn that they have unsuccessful strategies all the time. What was different in these cases is that the rules for interaction established by collective impact created a continuous feedback loop that led to the collective identification and adoption of new resources and solutions.

Continuous feedback depends on a vision of evaluation that is fundamentally different than the episodic evaluation that is the norm today in the nonprofit sector. Episodic evaluation is usually retrospective and intended to assess the impact of a discrete initiative. One alternative approach is known as "developmental evaluation,"[7] and it is particularly well suited to dealing with complexity and emergence.[8]

Developmental evaluation focuses on the relationships *between* people and organizations over time, and the problems or solutions that arise from those relationships. Rather than render definitive judgments of success or failure, the goal of developmental evaluation is to provide an on-going feedback loop for decision making by uncovering newly changing relationships and conditions that affect potential solutions and resources. This often requires reports on a weekly or biweekly basis compared to the more usual annual or semi-annual evaluation timeline.

The Vibrant Communities poverty reduction initiative in Canada has successfully employed developmental evaluation within their collective impact efforts to help identify emergent solutions and resources. Facilitated by the Tamarack Institute, which serves as a national backbone to this multi-community effort, Vibrant Communities began 11 years ago with a traditional approach to accounting for results based on developing a logic model and predetermined theory of change against which they would measure progress. They quickly discovered that very few groups could develop an authentic and robust theory of change in a reasonable period of time. Often the logic model became an empty exercise that did not fully reflect the complex interactions underlying change. Tamarack then shifted to a more flexible model that embodied the principles of developmental evaluation. They began to revise their goals and strategies continuously in response to an ongoing analysis of the changes in key indicators of progress, as well as changes in the broader environment, the systems of interaction, and the capacities of participants. Although it sounds complicated, such a process can be surprisingly straightforward. The Vibrant Communities initiative in Hamilton, Ontario, for example, developed a simple two-page weekly "outcomes diary" to track changes in impact on individuals, working relationships within the community, and system level policy changes.

Vibrant Communities' rapid feedback loops and openness to unanticipated changes that would have fallen outside a predetermined logic model enabled them to identify patterns as they emerged, pinpointing new sources of energy and opportunity that helped to generate quick wins and build greater momentum. This approach has provided critical insights—for individual communities and the initiative as a whole—into how interlocking strategies and systems combine to advance or impede progress against a problem as complex as poverty reduction.

We have earlier emphasized the importance of shared measurement systems in collective impact efforts, and they are indeed essential for marking milestones of progress over time. Because most shared measurement systems

focus primarily on tracking longitudinal quantitative indicators of success, however, the systems are not typically designed to capture emergent dynamics within the collective impact effort—dynamics which are multi-dimensional and change in real time. As a result, developmental evaluation can provide an important complement to the "what" of shared measurement systems by providing the critical "how" and "why."

In its Postsecondary Success (PSS) program area, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is also using developmental evaluation to better understand emergent opportunities in the context of complexity. While the PSS is not fully engaging in collective impact, its Communities Learning in Partnership (CLIP) is instilled with the same spirit and many of the requisite conditions for collective impact. The initiative engages diverse stakeholders, including the K–12 educational system, higher education, the business community, political, civic, and community leaders, and social service providers with the goal of increasing post-secondary completion rates among low-income young adults.

The general framework for change for the CLIP work provides guideposts, but is not overly prescriptive. In seeking to improve post-secondary completion rates among low-income youth, grantee communities have been asked to focus on four broad-based levers for change: developing partnerships, using data to inform their strategies, building commitment among stakeholders, and tackling policy and practice change. Yet it is entirely up to the communities, armed with deep knowledge about their local context, to make sense of these four levers and to identify and pursue emergent opportunities for themselves.

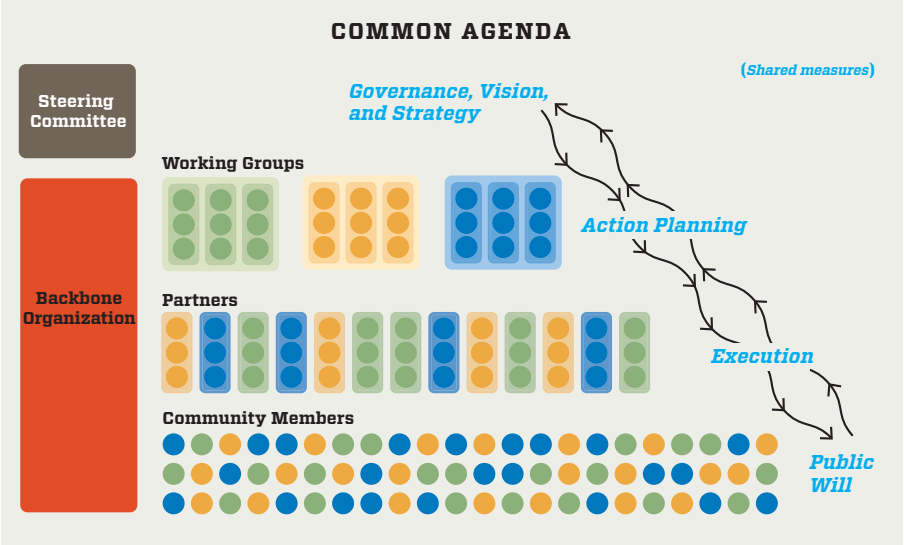
The Gates Foundation has retained the OMG Center to perform developmental evaluation to gain greater insight into emerging solutions and to understand what it takes for a community to coalesce around a postsecondary completion goal. This requires near-constant contact. The OMG evaluation team speaks with the technical assistance providers and the foundation program officer every two weeks and reviews documents and data from the grantee sites on a rolling basis. In most cases, OMG has ready access to document sharing websites that grantees have set up to support the partnership. OMG structures interviews to build off of previous conversations and produces a running narrative that documents in detail how the work is unfolding. OMG also connects directly with the grantees and their partners through interviews and site visits every three to four months.

Following every major data collection point, OMG shares a rapid feedback memo with the site, the technical assistants, and the foundation team containing their observations and questions for consideration. OMG shares new analysis and insights nearly every eight weeks, and pairs on-going assessments with a debriefing call or a reflection meeting. They also hold an annual meeting to review the program's theory of change, enabling the evaluation, foundation, and technical assistance partners to revise it as emergent opportunities are identified.

This developmental evaluation has allowed the Gates Foundation, OMG, and grantee communities to capture and synthesize an unprecedented level of nuance about how change happens in a particular community—who needs to drive the agenda, who needs to support it, how they can get on board, and what structures are needed to support the effort. The developmental evaluation has also helped unearth the habitual and cultural practices and beliefs that exert enormous influence on how important organizations and leaders—such as school districts, higher education institutions, and municipal leaders—operate. These informal systems could have been easily overlooked in a more traditional formative evaluation with a more structured framework of analysis.[9]

As vigilant as participating members of a collective impact initiative may be, efforts to identify improvements can be helped by a "second set of eyes" focused on identifying emergent patterns. In the case of CLIP, the added vision afforded through developmental evaluation resulted in significantly improved learning around opportunities and resources, leading to important changes in the actions of key stakeholders.

Cascading Levels of Collaboration



COLLECTIVE ACTION

Capturing learnings is one thing, acting on them is another. The traditional model of social change assumes that each organization learns its own lessons and finds its own solutions which are then diffused over time throughout the sector. In effective collective impact initiatives, however, learning happens nearly simultaneously among all relevant stakeholders and, as a result, many organizations develop and respond to new knowledge at the same time. This has two important consequences: first, new solutions are discovered that bridge the needs of multiple organizations or are only feasible when organizations work together, and second, all participating organizations adopt the new solution at the same time. We described the key to this coordinated response in our previous article, "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work," published in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* in January 2012, as "cascading levels of linked collaboration." This structure is currently being used in the majority of effective collective impact efforts we have researched. (See "Cascading Levels of Collaboration" to right.)

When supported by an effective backbone and shared measurement system, the cascading levels of collaboration creates a high degree of transparency among all organizations and levels involved in the work. As the illustration suggests, information flows both from the top down and from the bottom up. Vision and oversight are centralized through a steering committee, but also decentralized through multiple working groups that focus on different levers for change.

Our research indicates that these working groups are most successful when they constitute a representative sample of the stakeholders. This leads to emergent and anticipatory problem solving that is rigorous and disciplined and, at the same time, flexible and organic. Structuring efforts in this way also increases the odds that a collective impact initiative will find emergent solutions that simultaneously meet the needs of all relevant constituents, resulting in a much more effective feedback loop that enables different organizations to respond in a coordinated and immediate way to new information. Similar to the birds in a flock, *all* organizations are better able to learn what *each* organization learns, enabling a more aligned, immediate, and coordinated response.

Consider Tackling Youth Substance Abuse (TYSA), a teen substance abuse prevention initiative in Staten Island, New York. The overall goal of this collective impact effort, launched in May of 2011, is to decrease youth prescription drug and alcohol abuse in Staten Island, a community of nearly 500,000 people. The effort is coordinated through a steering committee and one-person backbone organization. There are four working groups: a social norms group focused on changing attitudes and behaviors of youth and parents, a retail and marketplace availability group focused on policies that limit inappropriate purchasing of prescription drugs and alcohol, a continuum of care group focused on developing and coordinating high quality approaches to screening-referral-treatment-and-recovery, and a policy and advocacy group focused on creating a policy platform regarding facets of teen substance abuse.

Stakeholders in the continuum of care working group include representatives from those who treat youth substance abuse disorders (such as hospitals, and mental health and substance abuse providers), those who work with youth who might have or be at significant risk of developing a substance abuse disorder (such as the New York City Department of Probation and drug treatment court), those who work on health protocols (such as the Department of Health) and those who provide counsel to youth (such as the YMCA and Department of Education substance abuse prevention counselors). A key finding emerging from this group's initial stages of work was that, among treatment providers on Staten Island, there was no consistent screening tool for substance abuse disorders. Further investigation yielded the fact that a number of organizations working with youth at significant risk of developing a substance abuse disorder, such as probation, did not use a screening tool at all. Remarkably, pediatricians were also among the population of providers who had no consistent protocol for substance abuse screening and referral.

This led the continuum of care workgroup to identify an evidence-based screening tool approved by the local and state health agencies that quickly assesses the severity of adolescent substance use and identifies the appropriate level of treatment. The workgroup felt that this tool, called the CRAFFT, if used on Staten Island more widely, would lead to more system wide early intervention and referrals for assessments and treatment services for youth with substance use disorders, as well as those at risk of developing disorders.

At the same time, the social norms group was looking for a way that coaches, parents, and other people who came in contact with youth outside of formalized systems could better assess substance abuse. Through the cascading collaborative structure, the backbone organization and steering committee had a window into the activity of all work groups, enabling each of them to understand the needs of the others. Although there was a universal need to improve screening and referral, the diverse populations required different approaches. Specifically, youth counselors in both work groups agreed that the CRAFFT tool was too technical for use by non-clinicians. As a result, TYSA is moving forward by having the continuum of care workgroup roll out the use of CRAFFT with all professionals, including probation officers, pediatricians,

adult and family doctors, school counselors, hospitals and emergency rooms, and child welfare providers.

Simultaneously, the social norms group is rolling out an evidence-based training program that educates coaches, parents, and other people who are in constant contact with youth in how to recognize the signs and symptoms of substance abuse and problem behavior, what questions to ask when having a conversation with youth about their drug or alcohol use, and arms them with the available resources to refer someone who they feel may be displaying such behaviors. The solution reached in this case was not one anticipated at the outset by TYSA steering committee members of the initiative. The rules for interaction, however, ensured that all participants were able to see each other's needs and act together, simultaneously agreeing on a pair of emergent solutions that serves the community far better than existing approaches implemented by any one organization or individual.

This process of collective seeing, learning, and doing is aptly described by noted author, Atul Gawande, in his book *The Checklist Manifesto*. Gawande investigated how the construction industry deals with complexity and uncertainty in building skyscrapers. He was amazed to find that the software they use does not itself provide the solution to unexpected problems that arise during construction. Instead, the software merely summons the right people together to collectively solve the problem. For example, if the problem involves electricity, the software notifies the electrician; if the problem is in plumbing, it notifies the plumber; and so on—each person needed to resolve the problem is brought together by the software, but the people themselves figure out the solution.

In his book, Gawande remarks on the irony that the solution does not come from the computer or a single person in authority: "In the face of the unknown—the always nagging uncertainty about whether, under complex circumstances, things will really be OK—the builders trusted in the power of communication. They didn't believe in the wisdom of the single individual, or even an experienced engineer. They believed in the wisdom of making sure that multiple pairs of eyes were on a problem, and then letting the watchers decide what to do."

Although the construction industry's approach has not been foolproof, its record of success in relying on emergent solutions has been astonishing: building failures in the United States amount to only 2 in 10 million. While complex social and environmental problems are very different than complex construction projects, Gawande's investigation illustrates the pragmatic power in relying on emergent solutions.

WHEN THE PROCESS BECOMES THE SOLUTION

We have found in both our research and consulting that those who hope to launch collective impact efforts often expect that the process *begins* by finding solutions that a collective set of actors can agree upon. They assume that developing a common agenda involves gaining broad agreement at the outset about which predetermined solutions to implement. In fact, developing a common agenda is not about creating solutions at all, but about achieving a common understanding of the problem, agreeing to joint goals to address the problem, and arriving at common indicators to which the collective set of involved actors will hold themselves accountable in making progress. It is the process that comes after the development of the common agenda in which solutions and resources are uncovered, agreed upon, and collectively taken up. Those solutions and resources are quite often not known in advance. They are typically emergent, arising over time through collective vigilance, learning, and action that result from careful structuring of the effort. If the structure-specific steps we have discussed here are thoughtfully implemented, we believe that there is a high likelihood that effective solutions will emerge, though the exact timing and nature cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty. This, of course, is a very uncomfortable state of being for many stakeholders.

And yet staying with this discomfort brings many rewards. The collective impact efforts we have researched are achieving positive and consistent progress on complex problems at scale, in most cases without the need to invent dramatically new practices or find vast new sources of funding. Instead we are seeing three types of emergent opportunities repeatedly capitalized on in collective impact efforts:

- A previously unnoticed evidence-based practice, movement, or resource from outside the community is identified and applied locally.
- Local individuals or organizations begin to work together differently than before and therefore find and adopt new solutions.
- A successful strategy that is already working locally, but is not systematically or broadly practiced, is identified and spread more widely.[10]

In each of these cases, collective vigilance, learning, and action most often uncovers existing solutions and resources that have not been previously employed. In a world where breakthrough innovations are uncommon and resources are scarce, the opportunity to achieve greater social progress at a large scale with the tools already available is well worth the discomfort of shifting from predetermined to emergent solutions.

Effective collective impact efforts serve one other important function as well: providing a unified voice for policy change. Vibrant Communities reports that numerous changes in government policies related to housing, transporta-

tion, tax policy, child care, food security, and the like have resulted from the power of alignment across sectors that results from the disciplined, yet fluid structuring, of collective impact efforts. In our own experience working with the Juvenile Justice system for the State of New York, a twelve-month collective impact effort to establish an initial common agenda was able to produce clear policy recommendations that have since been signed into law. As our political system increasingly responds to isolated special interests, the power of collective impact to give political voice to the needs of a community is one of its most important dimensions.

SHIFTING MINDSETS

To be successful in collective impact efforts we must live with the paradox of combining *intentionality* (that comes with the development of a common agenda) and *emergence* (that unfolds through collective seeing, learning, and doing). For funders this shift requires a different model of strategic philanthropy in which grants support processes to determine common outcomes and rules for interaction that lead to the development of emergent solutions, rather than just funding the solutions themselves. This also requires funders to support evaluative processes, such as developmental evaluation, which prioritize open-ended inquiry into emergent activities, relationships, and solutions, rather than testing the attribution of predetermined solutions through retrospective evaluations.

Such a shift may seem implausible, yet some examples exist. We earlier mentioned that the Gates Foundation is using developmental evaluation to support an effort that provides broad latitude for grantee communities to identify emergent strategies. The Gates Foundation's Pacific Northwest Division has made a similar shift by supporting the infrastructure for collective impact education reform in nine south Seattle communities. And the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, a key initial champion of the Strive "cradle to career" collective impact education effort in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, is now supporting the development of shared community outcomes and backbone organizations in four additional program areas: workforce development, early childhood, community development, and economic development.

CURIOSITY IS WHAT WE NEED

At its core, collective impact is about creating and implementing coordinated strategy among aligned stakeholders. Many speak of strategy as a journey, whether referring to an organization, a career, or even raising a family. But we need to more fully confront what happens on the journey. Some days we will move quickly as planned, other days we may find our way forward unexpectedly blocked. We will meet new people and develop new ideas about our purpose, and even the coordinates of our destination. Going on a journey is a complex undertaking. Often, the best course of action is to make sure we are closely watching what's happening at each stage of the way. As Brazilian author Paulo Coelho remarked "When you are moving towards an objective, it is very important to pay attention to the road. It is the road that teaches us the best way to get there, and the road enriches us as we walk its length." [11]

Complexity theorists believe that what defines successful leaders in situations of great complexity is not the quality of decisiveness, but the quality of inquiry. As organizational behavior guru Margaret Wheatley puts it, "we live in a complex world, we often don't know what is going on, and we won't be able to understand its complexity unless we spend more time not knowing... Curiosity is what we need." [12] Collective impact success favors those who embrace the uncertainty of the journey, even as they remain clear eyed about their destination. If you embark on the path to collective impact, be intentional in your efforts and curious in your convictions. ◆

1 John Kania and Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011. Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer, "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, January 2012.

2 We first wrote about uncertain and unpredictable situations involving multiple stakeholders, in which there is no known answer for the problem at hand, in "Leading Boldly," by Ronald Heifetz, John Kania, and Mark Kramer in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2004. We referred to these situations as adaptive problems. Co-author Ronald Heifetz coined the term "adaptive problems" in his seminal body of work on "adaptive leadership." Complex problems and adaptive problems are essentially different terms describing similar conditions, sometimes also referred to as wicked problems, and all three terms have their foundation in complexity science and its twin discipline, chaos theory. Our own experience, and that of several leading practitioners, has shown that the principles of adaptive leadership are extremely useful in guiding the collective impact process.

3 Even in the world of business where business plans are taken for granted, leading strategists such as McGill University professor Henry Mintzberg, have conducted extensive research that demonstrates most corporate strategies are emergent. Companies begin with plans, to be sure, but learn their way into successful business models through trial and error, reshaping their strategies in response to changing conditions, and accumulated experience.

4 If you want to be re-inspired by this sight, go to You Tube and search for "Starlings at Ot Moor" in the UK.

5 From Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman, and Michael Patton, *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed*, Random House Canada, 2006.

6 The risk factor of Poor Family Management dropped by 19 percent and Parental Attitudes Favorable to Substance Use decreased 12 percent. See FSG blog by Kat Allen, co-chair, Communities That Care Coalition of Franklin County and the North Quabbin.

7 Developmental evaluation is a term coined by the organizational consultant and program evaluator Michael Quinn Patton in the early 1990s.

8 Hallie Preskill and Tanya Beer, *Evaluating Social Innovation*, Center for Evaluation Innovation.

9 Preskill and Beer, *Evaluating Social Innovation*.

10 The notion of capitalizing on emergent solutions that come from within has been compellingly depicted by authors Richard Pascale, Jerry Sternin, and Monique Sternin in their book, *The Power of Positive Deviance*, Harvard Business Review Press, 2010. The authors share provocative examples of "positive deviants" who live and work under the same constraints as everyone else, yet find a way to succeed against all odds. Because the solutions have been developed under existing constraints, they can be applied more broadly by others living and working in the same community without the need for incremental resources.

11 Quote appeared in Charles Foster,'s *The Sacred Journey*, Thomas Nelson, 2010. Taken from the character Petrus, Paulo Coelho's fictitious guide on the road to Santiago de Compostela, in Paulo Coelho's book, The Pilgrimage.

12 Margaret J. Wheatley, *Turning to One Another; Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002, pp. 38-42.

TRIZ: Stop Counterproductive Activities and Behaviors to Make Space for Innovation

Step 1

Make a list of all the things you can do to **make sure that you achieve the worst result imaginable** with a community engagement process in collective impact

- *Reflect individually (2 min)*
- *Share your list with a partner (3 min)*
- *Discuss as a table (5 min)*

After 10 minutes, proceed to step 2

Step 2

Go down this list, item by item, and ask, "**Is there anything that I am currently doing that resembles this item?"** Be brutally honest to make a second list of all your counterproductive activities

- *Reflect individually (2 min)*
- *Share your list with a **new partner** (3 min)*
- *Discuss as a table (5 min)*

After 10 minutes, proceed to step 3

Step 3

Go through the items on your second list and **decide what steps will help you stop what you know creates undesirable results**

- *Reflect individually (2 min)*
- *Share your list with a **new partner** (3 min)*
- *Discuss as a table (5 min)*

After 10 minutes, we will debrief as a group

Step 4

Using the flip chart provided, **draw a picture that best depicts your group's conversation**

- *Use the final minutes to draw your group's picture*
- *You will be asked to share your picture back with the full group when we return from our break*

Walk around to view other small groups' pictures, and then reconvene as a full group

Source: Facilitation approach adapted from Liberating Structures: "Making Space with TRIZ"

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Aligning Collective Impact Initiatives

Communities can suffer from too many initiatives, creating overlap, inefficiency, and frustration.

BY MERITA IRBY & PATRICK BOYLE

Northern Kentucky was a hotbed of collective impact initiatives long before anyone called them "collective impact." For decades, the region's government and civic leaders have tackled thorny social issues through partnerships to create a vision for the region's future and to implement plans to fulfill that vision. "We were doing collective impact," says the vice president of one such effort. "We just didn't have those words."

When it came to education initiatives, however, Northern Kentucky had too much of a good thing. Initiatives were created to foster collaboration among educators, among educators and businesses, and among educators, businesses, government, and civic organizations. Countless other organizations had a hand in education as part of their missions to help children and families. "You would sit in these meetings and hear lots of good ideas," recalls Patricia Nagelkirk, director of community impact for education at the United Way of Greater Cincinnati. "But there was no coordinator or game plan to carry them out."

As collective impact initiatives blossom around the country, Northern Kentucky provides a case study in handling a dilemma that can spring from that growth: When multiple initiatives develop overlapping missions, members, and audiences, how can you reduce competition and increase impact?

Today, Northern Kentucky's education initiatives are aligned through a backbone organization that aims to improve all youth supports, from birth to career. To achieve that goal, local leaders grappled with issues like: Which existing groups can deliver backbone supports? How is backbone support funded? What do the initiatives do about areas where their work overlaps? Do any existing initiatives need to fold? Finding the answers took two years and a lot of analysis, negotiation, and, as Northern Kentucky leaders note, some frank and "uncomfortable" conversations. (See "Keys to Successful Alignment" below.)

MOTIVATION TO ALIGN

The dilemma was born of abundance. Through the 1990s and early 2000s, several partnerships and initiatives were launched to improve educational services in Northern Kentucky (an area defined as anywhere from four to nine counties south of the Ohio border). The Council of Partners in Education sought to improve collaboration among secondary and post-secondary institutions. The Northern Kentucky Education Alliance, a venture of the Chamber of Commerce, worked to increase cooperation between schools and businesses. Vision 2015, which fostered cross-sector collaboration to improve economic and social conditions, had an Education Implementation Team. Some people were involved in all of these efforts and ran into each other at every meeting. "In any given week," recalls educator Polly Lusk Page, "you could go to three meetings and hear the same report three times."

The initiatives competed for resources and attention from the same audiences. Although they worked together to varying degrees, they had no overarching strategy, and efforts to collaborate were complicated by a challenge that's typical in rural and suburban areas: the presence of dozens of jurisdictions covering a large region.

Lusk Page recalls the frustration expressed by Vision 2015's leaders: "We have too much going on. We have a lot of duplication of effort, and the business community is saying, 'Too many people are coming to us with too many asks.' " Vision 2015 posited an idea: "What would it look like if we realigned?"

Finding the answer took two years of research and discussions. Because several organizations felt qualified to lead the new structure, these processes were facilitated primarily by neutral organizations.

Two processes somewhat overlapped. In 2008, Vision 2015 launched a series of discussions with education stakeholders about aligning their efforts under one umbrella. (Vision 2015 harbored no desire to be the umbrella; its agenda extended beyond education.) Then in 2009, the United Way of Greater Cincinnati (which covers Northern Kentucky) signed on with our national nonprofit organization, the Forum for Youth Investment, to facilitate the implementation of Ready by 21—a set of collective impact strategies to help communities get young people "ready for college, work, and life" by strengthening partnerships, developing shared goals, and measuring progress.

Kara Williams, Vision 2015's vice president of communication and strategic initia-

Keys to Successful Alignment

GUIDELINE	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Start with a focus on the outcomes you want to achieve	Focusing on outcomes galvanizes people around goals that are harder or more complex than those they've tried to tackle alone, and it prevents getting stuck on existing strategies that might not be best for those outcomes.
Draw a picture big enough so that existing efforts see how they can connect and why	A big picture reinforces the idea that complex challenges need interconnected solutions and prevents the "edifice complex," which assumes that solutions revolve around certain institutions, such as schools.
Identify where there is more efficiency and power in working together than alone	Analysis of synergies creates energy for leaders to take on issues that are too big to handle alone and to scale up solutions they didn't know they were pursuing separately. It also prevents development of agendas that are too big or piecemeal to make a difference.
Clarify the lines of communication and accountability	Clarification focuses committed partners on the routinization of their relationships and prevents "task force syndrome," in which partners sign on to recommendations without assuming responsibility to implement them.

tives, says that among the keys for success were "having the right people in the room" who could make decisions for their organizations, and having motivated leaders. "They felt the confusion, the pain" of unaligned work. "They felt that together they could be doing more than they were doing separately."

GIVE AND TAKE

The Council of Partners in Education emerged as a candidate for the backbone role because of its strong connections to school districts and education leaders. The Council set out to become "the overarching organization for the alignment of education initiatives" in the region; it renamed itself the Northern Kentucky Education Council (NKYEC).

But although everyone was grateful to Vision 2015 for launching the alignment project, enthusiasm for alignment was tempered by uncertainty over whether the NKYEC would intrude on ground staked out by others. "We were dealing with multiple organizations, and understandably, some leaders had turf issues," said Lusk Page, now executive director of the NKYEC. "Everyone was invested" in their community change work and "some didn't want to give up what they were doing."

They didn't have to. The NKYEC preferred to coordinate with existing initiatives rather than start new ones; it found ways for other organizations to align their work with its priorities. That alignment was eased by the NKYEC's creation of six "action teams," each focused on an objective (such as "college and career readiness" and "educator excellence") and composed of representatives from organizations that belong to the NKYEC. The teams allow the organizations to both sync with and influence the NKYEC, because the teams help to steer and implement its mission.

Some initiatives did disappear, but their work did not. Members of the Education Alliance (the Chamber of Commerce initiative) ran the action team on Business Involvement and Service Learning. That rendered the Alliance moot; it dissolved. So too did Vision 2015's Education Implementation Team, because the NKYEC crafted new bylaws to promote Vision 2015's educational goals. "We funneled all of those resources [for the education team] into the Council," Williams said. Integrating people and resources among organizations facilitated the alignment's success.

GETTING AMBITIOUS

Even while this process settled questions, the renovations continued. The Ready by 21 staff, working through the United Way, led an examination of the region's goals for young people, the available resources, and the steps needed to achieve the goals. That examination pushed stakeholders to expand their vision in two ways: to focus on specific youth outcomes and to extend beyond education.

One of Ready by 21's fundamental concepts is the "Insulated Education Pipeline," which says communities must ensure a full array of cradle-to-career supports beyond academics, in such areas as early childhood, health, safety, social connections, and job skills. "That pipeline," says Lusk Page, "helped people understand in a way that we never understood before that we can work on the academic pipeline all we want, but until we broaden our scope and think about these wrap-around supports that our families and youth need, this isn't going to work."

Building an insulated pipeline of supports meant creating and strengthening partnerships between education organizations and others that provide everything from after-school activities to job training. The umbrella question arose again: Could one group coordinate these stakeholders? The NKYEC united local education efforts, but the United Way was the lead partner in Ready by 21, which brought funding and technical assistance. The NKYEC and United Way had not worked together much, and their geographic coverage in Northern Kentucky did not exactly match.

"There were some very candid conversations in our initial meetings" about what organization should lead the broader work, Lusk Page recalls. The United Way grew convinced that the NKYEC was up to the task, but each party needed assurances about responsibilities and resources. Those were laid out in a 2010 memorandum of understanding between the United Way, NKYEC, and Vision 2015. They agreed, for the purpose of the broader work, to adopt the NKYEC's geographic footprint (6 counties, 37 municipalities, and 18 school districts), and that Vision 2015 would pay for a part-time staff member for the NKYEC to carry out the work.

Thus the NKYEC stretched further. Its desired outcomes now include not just academic achievement but the overall well-being of young people. It advocates birth-to-career supports, adding early childhood on the younger end, for example, and workforce development for older youths. And its bylaws mandate equal seats for education, business, and community leaders (such as nonprofit service providers) on its board of directors.

RESULTS

Leaders of the NKYEC effort are cautious about drawing connections just yet between the collective impact strategies and population-level outcomes. Nonetheless, Lusk Page says, "the needle's starting to move" on some indicators, such as reading levels, graduation rates, and measures of college and career readiness. More visible are the on-the-ground changes in the services and supports that young people receive, thanks largely to the work of the action teams.

- Education and business groups launched initiatives to prepare more high school students for college and careers, such as increasing enrollments in dual-credit courses, mapping local career readiness resources, and training teachers to integrate 21st-century skills development in their classrooms.
- More than 80 schools administered an enhanced version of the Gallup Student Poll, which measures hope, engagement, and well-being. Schools combine the findings with data about grades and attendance, using the results to steer students to school supports (such as life skills courses) and to increase after-school opportunities (such as leadership development programs).
- The NKYEC, the United Way, and the Strive Partnership launched a literacy campaign with more than 70 partners.

Realignment resolved the problem that leaders set out to solve: Northern Kentucky has moved from having "no coordinator or game plan" and disparate collective impact initiatives to embracing a highly coordinated system.

The leaders of these efforts feel that they are poised to accomplish changes that they could not have imagined before. The NKYEC, for example, is working with the Forum for Youth Investment and SAS (a business analytics software and services company) to pilot a diagnostic system to link efforts to impact. The system will gather and display data from multiple sources and show how resource allocation and community supports affect outcomes for children and youths. "For the first time, we will have the power to see our impact and make adjustments," says Lusk Page. "We'll really know if we are making a difference."

the forum FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

Danielle Evennou, Senior Policy Associate

Don't Stop Collaborating – Just Stop Creating New Collaboratives

Have you ever felt collaboration fatigue?

We understand. When an issue emerges involving children and youth, policy leaders often respond by creating a task force or collaboration to address it. The intention is good and the action is logical, because children and youth issues cannot usually be addressed by just one institution or government agency.

But let's admit it: In some places, the explosion of task forces, partnerships and councils has gone too far. Many states and communities now sport a multitude of collaboratives working on overlapping youth issues, from bullying to pregnancy to dropouts. It's no wonder that at the Forum for Youth Investment, we often hear this lament from state and local policy makers:

"I used to have to attend meetings with 17 different departments; now I have to participate in 17 different coalitions."

Having too many uncoordinated collaborations isn't just burdensome to the stakeholders who go to all those meetings; it's inefficient and ineffective. We routinely find multiple collaboratives duplicating each other's efforts and not sharing each other's work. Sometimes, they even work on the same issues in isolation from each other.

For example: In one state, we identified several collaboratives addressing childhood obesity – separately. One intergovernmental collaborative worked within public agencies to identify all the funds that could be used to address obesity, then built its own advisory group of local stakeholders. Meanwhile, the education sector held a series of public discussions on child nutrition and physical activity. Yet another group, led by the public health sector, was looking at how to address obesity through public health programs.

This paper builds on one of the 14 standards established in Ready by 21®: "Aligned Coalitions, Networks and Intermediaries." Ready by 21 is a set of innovative strategies developed by the Forum for Youth Investment that helps states and communities improve the odds that all children and youth will be ready for college, work and life. Ready by 21 offers a range of tools to help communities align the work of collaboratives.

To learn more, visit www.readyby21.org.

The Forum has identified seven ways to help reduce the inefficiency and burden of having disconnected collaboratives:

1 Use existing collaboratives

Movements to create new collaboratives and task forces – including legislation that requires it – often don't take into account that the issue at hand can be addressed by one or more existing groups. So before launching a new collaborative, look around. If appropriate collaborations exist, legislation and policies should be written to assign the tasks to those groups. If you are aware of existing entities that might be able to do the job, alert policy makers.

For example: The 2007 Head Start Act[i] mandates the creation of an Early Childhood Advisory Council in each state but allows a governor to designate an existing entity to meet that requirement. Several states have done so. Georgia created a new subcommittee in an existing collaborative (the Georgia's Children's Cabinet) to address early childhood issues; that saved time and money.

Another example: The Reengaging Americans in Serious Education by Uniting Programs Act[ii] (H.R. 3982/S. 1608, known as RAISE UP and introduced in the 111th Congress), would give grants to local partnerships that help disadvantaged young people graduate from high school, attain a postsecondary credential and earn a family-supporting wage. Existing partnerships would be eligible for this grant. The policy simply requires all collaboratives that serve as "eligible entities" to have representation from specific groups and institutions, such as the local head of government, leader of the local education agency, and young people in disadvantaged situations.

2 Identify and publicize existing collaboratives

New collaboratives are often created because not enough people know about existing efforts. That's why stakeholders in child and youth policy and practice should designate someone to map out the array of collaboratives and share the findings. This process works at the federal, state and community levels.

For example: In Texas, the Council on Children and Families worked with the Taskforce for Children with Special Needs to put together a graphic that displays all the state collaboratives that work on kids' issues. (See Figure 1, "The Landscape of Children & Youth State Interagency Committees.")

This kind of landscape can guide decision-making. Now, if an issue arises around children's health care, state policy makers can identify and reach out to collaboratives already working on such issues. Of course you may want to map out the private/nonprofit sector efforts as well.

3 Compare collaboratives side-by-side

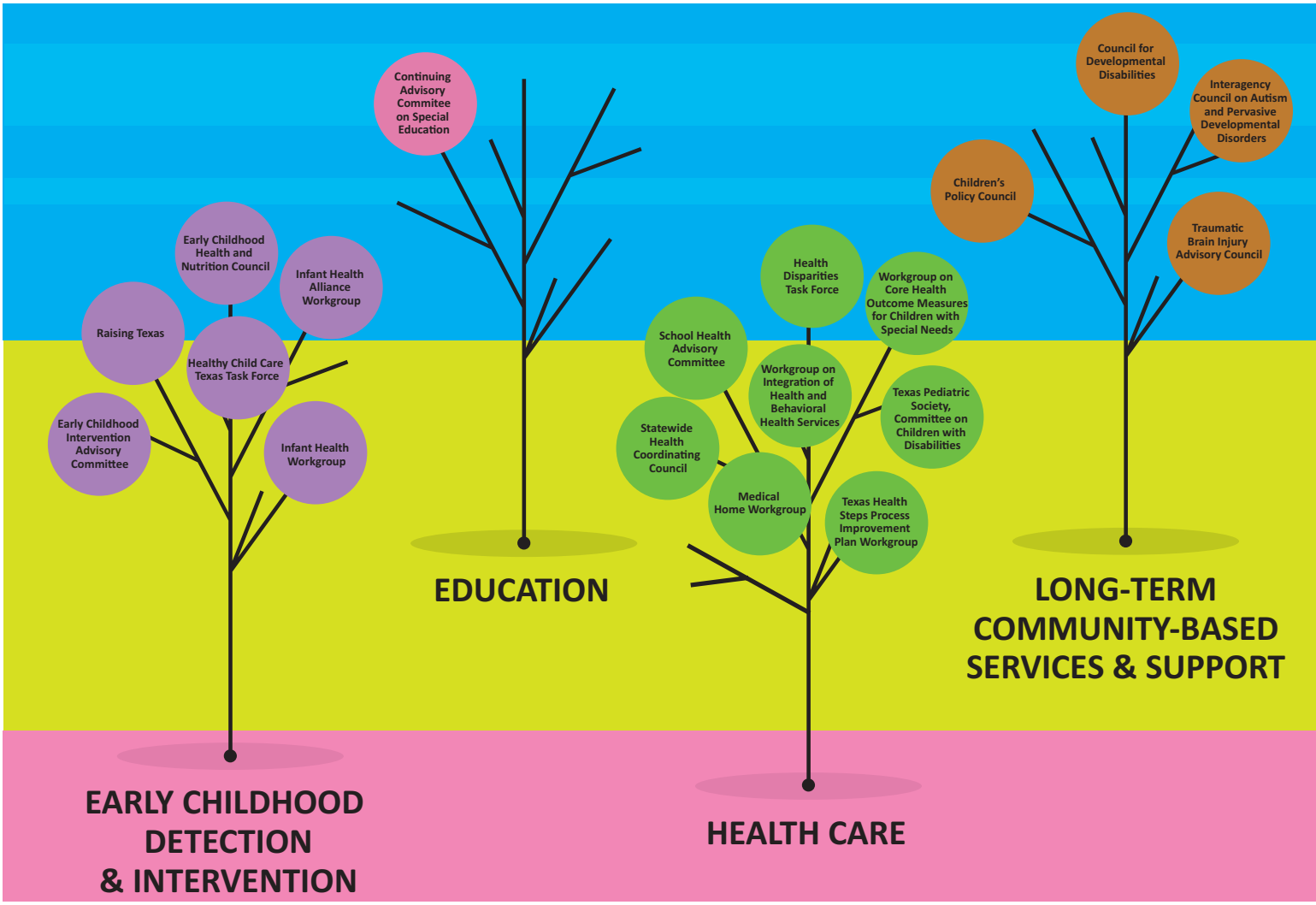
Once the collaboratives have been identified, create a "crosswalk" to compare them all. This helps everyone understand where they are the same, where they differ and how they might work together.

For example: The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet created a matrix, or crosswalk[iii], that compares its strategic plan to those of various state commissions, councils, and task forces[iv]. This document allows leaders to identify areas of overlap, and areas that can be made more efficient by having the entities work together on shared strategies.

A crosswalk also enables the state to identify gaps in services, which helps it prioritize the collaboratives' work based on unfulfilled needs.

THE LANDSCAPE OF CHILDREN & YOUTH STATE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEES

Figure 1: Created by the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Media for the Texas Council on Children and Families



4 Connect related efforts

Building upon such a matrix or crosswalk, states and communities can make sure that collaborations that are working on similar issues are connected – and that if a new collaboration is created, it is connected to related groups.

For example: The Keeping Maine's Children Connected initiative, led by the Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet, was the go-to place for engaging schools in tracking and supporting " youth in transition" between school and other institutions. When the Maine Shared Youth Vision partnership was developed to address school dropout rates and related issues, it coordinated its work with that of Keeping Maine's Children Connected. This way, Shared Youth Vision was not starting from scratch and the valuable work of Keeping Maine's Children Connected was not lost.

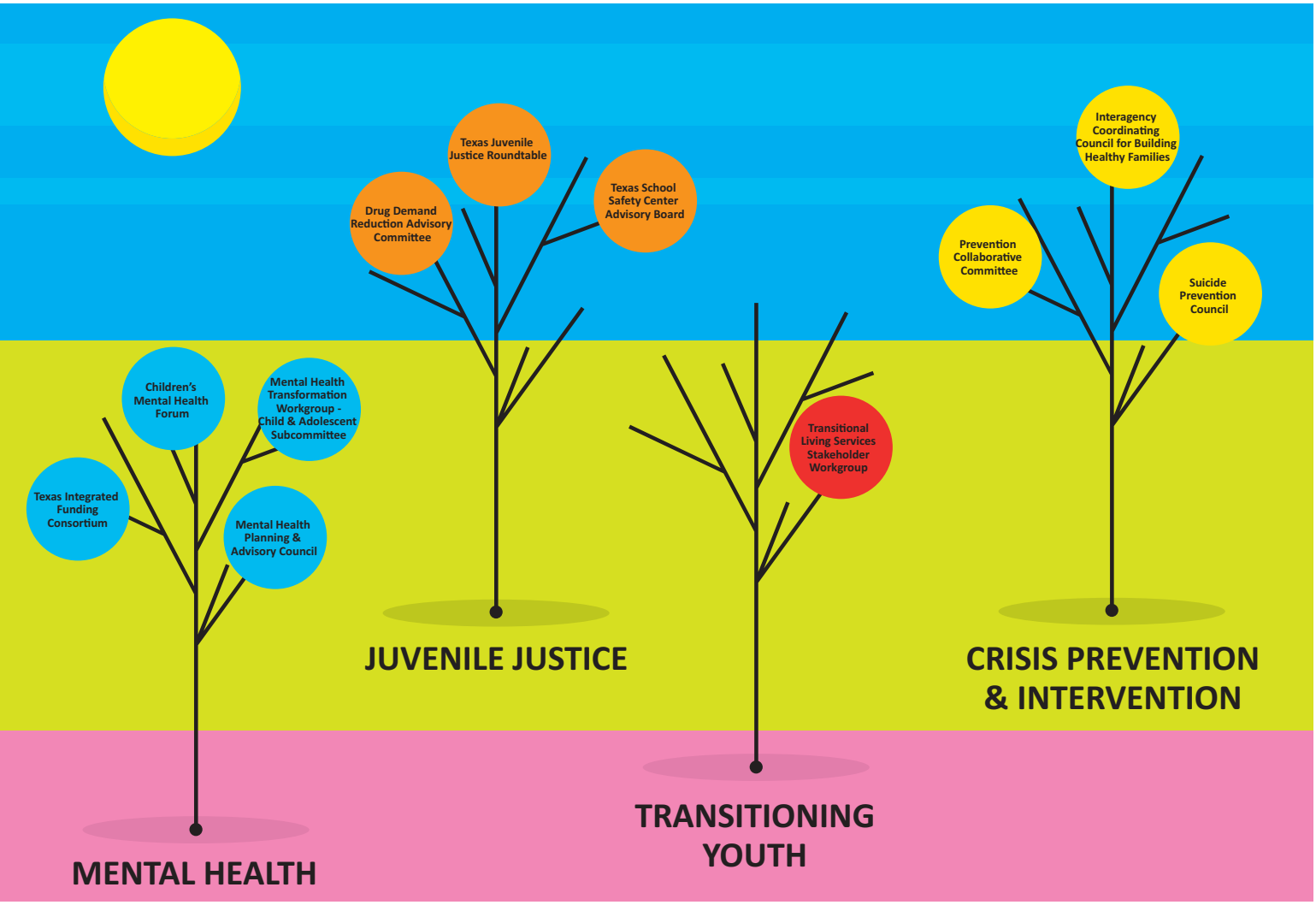
5 Develop common language and complementary goals

After identifying the various collaboratives, councils and task forces, strive to develop common language and complementary goals among them. Whether working across sectors (such as health, education and labor) or across levels of government (such as county and state), sharing a set of language and goals to describe child and youth policy issues can help the different groups unite to improve child and youth outcomes overall. This doesn't mean the groups focus on all of the goals, but they know where their own goals fit within the larger set of community goals for children and youth.

For example: In New York, a group of state agencies worked with county coordinating bodies to align their goals and priorities so that funding streams could more easily be used for what kids in each county needed the most.

Are collaboratives with broad mandates as effective as collaboratives with narrow mandates?

In 2006, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) conducted a study to determine whether collaboratives that focused on fewer issues were more effective in improving child-well being outcomes than were collaboratives that worked toward a broader set of outcomes. The study found "the number of issues that were a focus of a CDM [community decision making] entity's work did not appear to impact their ability to be successful." CSSP identified successful collaboratives that were addressing as many as 50 indicators.[v]



6 Look to broad coordinating bodies

So far, these steps presume that there is at least one existing collaborative that is willing and able to take on this new charge of coordinating the coordinating bodies. In many states, Children's Cabinets fill this need.

Typically, Children's Cabinets are made up of the heads of state agencies that focus on children, youth and family issues. The cabinets meet on a regular basis to coordinate services, agree on a common set of outcomes, and develop and implement plans to help young people. Because Children's Cabinets can streamline and integrate government programs that serve kids, they can improve efficiency, save money and create better outcomes.

If a state does not have a Children's Cabinet and seems unlikely to create one, you can form an umbrella group that assembles all of the child and youth related collaboratives in a community or state. Yes, this adds yet another group – but it can be low-maintenance. The idea is to create a way for the collaboratives to be aware of the goals, ideas and resources of the other groups, so they can share strengths as well as identify gaps and overlaps in services.

7 Consolidate existing collaboratives

If duplicative or overlapping collaboratives exist, try to eliminate or combine some. Given the tightness of government budgets, it's wise to consolidate redundant efforts in order to use limited public resources for children in the most efficient and effective way possible.

For example: Local policy makers suggested this when New York State implemented an initiative to better align state planning requirements with local needs. In the final report for the project, key players in youth policy and services talked about the "burden of belonging to a large number of collaborative efforts" and sought "any way possible to consolidate these efforts." The report, issued by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, reiterated that these local collaboratives were "established to eliminate duplicative activities and inefficiencies in service provision."[vi]

To address this problem, each county could identify all of the collaboratives working on child and youth issues, then compare the goals of each collaborative side-by-side (see suggestion #3) to determine what entities can be combined or aligned.

The Payoff

By aligning the work of child and youth collaboratives, you will create more effective and efficient services and supports for kids and families. Aligning all the collaboratives and initiatives that address children's issues can also generate new funding opportunities.

Pat Landrum, former Executive Director of the Healthy Community Consortium, and facilitator of the Petaluma Youth Network in Petaluma, Calif., reports that the consortium's work to align the collaboratives and initiatives in that city put it in a good position to apply for new funds. Subsequently, the Healthy Community Consortium was awarded $52,000 to continue its work to improve the social atmosphere of Petaluma's schools, and was awarded a Federal Drug Free Communities grant of $650,000 over five years.

For more information about technical assistance to align the work of collaboratives in your state or community, contact Danielle Evennou, Senior Policy Associate, Forum for Youth Investment, at danielle@forumfyi.org.

Endnotes

[i] Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. H.R. 1429. http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-1429

[ii] Reengaging Americans in Serious Education by Uniting Programs Act (RAISE UP). H.R. 3982. http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-111hr3982ih/pdf/BILLS-111hr3982ih.pdf

[iii] (March 2008). Florida Commissions, Councils and Task Forces Overview of Report Recommendations for Children and Youth Services. Tallahassee, FL: Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet.

[iv] The crosswalk brought together work of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet along with the following efforts:

- Department of Juvenile Justice Blueprint Commission
- Florida Child Abuse Death Review 2007
- Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: January 2009 through June 2010
- Task Force on Child Protection 2007
- Five Year State Plan (2010-2015) for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect
- Inclusion Now Strategic Action Plan 2007
- Challenges & Opportunities: An Analysis of the Current Florida System of Service for Persons with Disabilities & Future Directions for System Change
- Florida Policy Matters – Early Childhood Systems Analysis

[v] (2006). Working Together to Improve Results: Reviewing the Effectiveness of Community Decision-Making Entities. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, p 22. http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/working_together_to_improve_results-final.pdf

[vi] Greene, R. & McCormick, L, (May 2005). Integrating the Human Service System: Final Evaluation of the New York State Integrated County Planning Initiative. Albany, NY: New York State Office of Children and Family Services. http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/reports/2005%20Integrating%20County%20Planning%20Initiative.pdf

Broader Partnerships
Bigger Goals
Better Data
Bolder Actions

FORM: DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE THE CHANGE HORSEPOWER IT NEEDS?

After more than a decade of work with state and local leaders committed to improving population-level outcomes, the Forum for Youth Investment created a short list of the basics that are found behind every successful effort. Whether they are starting a planning process or making mid-course corrections, leadership groups that pay attention to these fundamentals go farther faster. The chart below introduces you to the standards we believe every community and state should hold themselves to if they are serious about getting the highest return on their investments. Take the quiz. Talk to your colleagues and partners. Do you have all the horsepower you need to improve the odds for children and youth?

	INSTRUCTIONS: Using the columns on the right, please rate each of the below categories/change components from 1 to 5 on how important you feel it is and how well it is currently being done in your community?	HOW IMPORTANT? 1 (lo) – 5 (hi)	HOW WELL BEING DONE? 1 (lo) – 5 (hi)
BROADER PARTNERSHIPS	**Build an Overarching Leadership Council** – Has any entity taken on the task of "adding it up" – figuring out how to bring the pieces together and keep the work coordinated? Does that organization have the capacity, motivation and authority to align resources? Is there a strong backbone support organization undergirding the effort?		
	Align and strengthen coalitions, commissions and intermediaries – Are the current coalitions and coordinating bodies concerned with related issues intentionally linked? Are there ongoing mechanisms for mapping, aligning and coordinating their efforts? As new initiatives are started, are they brought to a common table?		
	Engage key stakeholders – Is there a broad base of stakeholders – public, private and nonprofit – who have the capacity, motivation and resources to affect change? Are stakeholders from all systems and settings connected and committed? Are all levels of leadership involved, from top-level to frontline, from policymakers to families and young people?		
BIGGER GOALS	**Establish a balanced set of goals and indicators for your target populations**- that reflect what we know about how people develop and thrive. Do the goals span all relevant age groups? Do they address key outcome areas (e.g., cognitive, health, social, civic) and the needs of special populations? Do they focus on reducing problems and promoting preparation and leadership?		
	Define supports that the full community must provide – to achieve goals. Are there supports (e.g., supportive relationships, safe environments, challenging experiences) that are widely seen as essential? Are all systems, settings and programs asked to speak to these community goals in their plans?		
	Create a big picture, goal oriented action plan – Do you have an action plan that establishes strategies to reach your goals? That establishes stakeholder commitments? And ongoing accountability mechanisms?		
	Define common terms and communicate core messages – Are your population-level goals linked to core messages which are marketable to the public and to key stakeholders? Are your goals connected to planning/decision-making frameworks and used for reporting progress?		
BETTER DATA	**Collect complete data about population-level outcomes, community context and leadership capacity** – Is data collected across a range of outcomes and a range of ages? Does it reflect what the community wants to promote as well as what it wants to prevent? Do you collect data on what supports are being offered and what actions leaders are taking? Are data gaps identified and addressed and agendas developed to improve data collection?		
	Align and connect data for decision-making – Can you provide data on goals across programs and systems? Are the various sources for data and information aligned and linked horizontally (across systems and settings) as well as vertically (individual to aggregate)?		
	Use the best information about what works– Are improvements in everything, from programmatic supports to community engagement, informed by the best of what is known about promising and proven practices? Is there a focus on continuous improvement?		
BOLDER ACTIONS	**Improve systems and settings** – Are significant efforts underway to improve alignment and coordination of services within the various systems and settings? Are efforts underway that improve the quality of these services, supports and opportunities?		
	Align policies and resources – Are there efforts to review and improve policies? Are policies aligned so that they are more consistent and effective? Are resources assessed and reassigned to maximize the return on investment? Are clear sustainability plans in place and activated?		
	Increase Demand – Is there strong demand for change from young people, families, providers, business leaders, funders, advocates and policy makers? Are there ways to assess public and political will? Is there an effective communications strategy in place?		
	Engage youth, families and community members in solutions– Are young people, families and community members involved in meaningful ways? Are they involved in decision making? Trained in policy and data analysis? Are there mechanisms for them to collectively identify and represent the perspectives of their peers?		

READY BY 21
COMMUNITY CATALYSTS™

Three-Gear Capacity Survey

Harnessing a Community's Leadership Horsepower

Which of these challenges feels more daunting: Orchestrating change throughout a business, or orchestrating change throughout a community or state?

Conquering the first challenge is difficult; conquering the second is virtually heroic. Because in communities and states, the relationships between key players working on behalf of youth are not always clear and their interests are not always aligned. Advocates pursue different priorities; programs report to multiple funders; coalitions share overlapping goals; families present different needs. The result: Dozens of plans that spring from different visions and compete for resources.

To achieve significant, long-lasting change for youth, communities need all their stakeholders to:

- Affirm common goals and objectives.
- Determine how well they meet those goals and objectives.
- Connect the dots between leadership capacity, program performance and youth well-being.

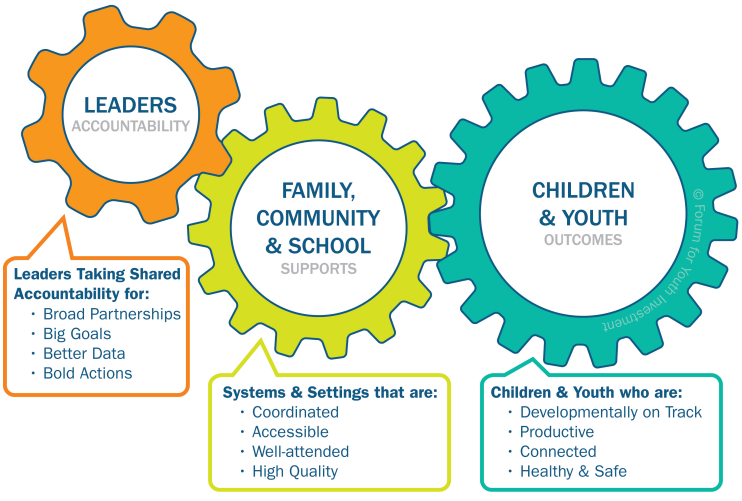
Leaders can bring these stakeholders together to increase their collective impact. The **Three-Gear Capacity Survey** creates new data and facilitates community conversations to get leaders moving toward shared goals.

What is the Three-Gear Capacity Survey?

The Three-Gear Capacity Survey package provides tools and technical assistance to gather data, analyze results and frame conversations that aim for solutions. The process starts with a survey that assesses a community's readiness to achieve collective impact across the "Three Gears" that drive change: leaders, community supports and youth. Leaders will:

- Rate the importance, for their community, of each objective under the Three Gears.
- Rate their community's readiness to achieve each objective.
- Review the "capacity" profile that the Forum creates from the survey, showing how well leaders believe they are meeting their most important objectives for preparing young people.

This process gives leaders an unprecedented set of data to balance the youth outcome statistics – about academic performance, risky behaviors, etc.– that dominate public debate. Leaders then work with the Forum to launch conversations about the fundamental changes they need to make in order to achieve long-term impact.



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How Does the Survey Work?

Offering community leaders data on all Three Gears shifts the conversation from "Why aren't our kids doing well?" to "How can leaders work together better to improve the odds for our kids?" The profiles, coupled with facilitated community conversations, drive demand for action.

Step 1: *Identify a lead organization or community coalition.* This is usually a partnership, coalition or group of stakeholders that has the capacity to negotiate, plan, convene and communicate.

Step 2: Commit to assessing capacity and engaging stakeholders. Identify and create a list of key stakeholders that who will be invited to participate in the survey, and to build interest in the project and public demand for the findings.

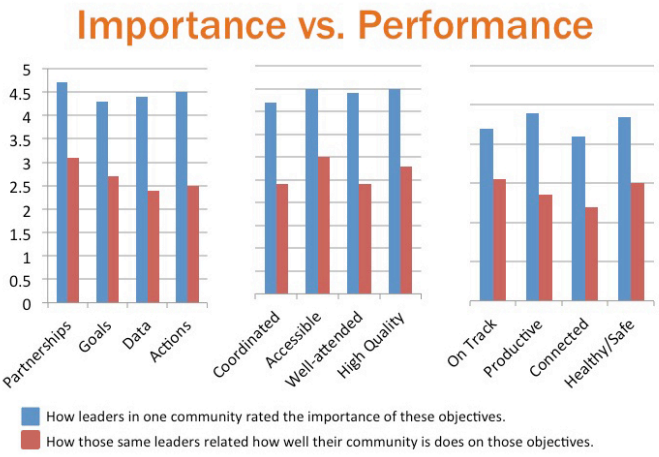
Step 3: Collect data. Survey participation is by invitation. The survey is typically administered for two weeks and can be completed in less than 30 minutes. The Forum manages survey administration and leads data analysis and reporting.

Step 4: Generate readiness profiles. The Forum analyzes the survey data and develops capacity profiles for the objectives under each of the Three Gears. It works with the lead organization to analyze the findings and recommend areas of focus.

Step 5: Host community conversations. The lead organization schedules one or more community conversations to discuss the findings, generate a mandate for action and define next steps. The Forum provides tools and personal support (through coaching sessions, webinars, etc.) to help design meetings, develop presentation materials and facilitate discussion.

Moving into Action

5: Prioritize and act. The new data give community leaders a baseline to galvanize a vision. Now they can build the infrastructure for action, create action plans and priorities, compile better data continuously to drive decision making, and establish ways to document efforts and monitor progress.



For example: In Georgetown Divide area of California, leaders used a capacity survey to help bring together a wide range of organizations to improve services for youth. As a result of thecommunity conversations, more than 100 people – representing schools, service providers, churches, businesses, parents and youth – went to work on specific tasks to develop and carry out improvement plans. Those include boosting youths' workforce skills, implementing positive youth development principles in afterschool programs and increasing training to promote research-based practices.

Rob Schamberg, then superintendent of the local Black Oak Mine United School District, noted that "broadening our thinking about who the stakeholders are made us realize we have all the horsepower we need."

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Aligning a Community's Moving Trains

Imagine...

In your community, all the groups working on youth issues coordinate their efforts.

Most places have a fragmented and overlapping array of well-intentioned coalitions, networks, partnerships and task forces – each aimed at shaping polices and securing resources for specific youth issues or demographic groups. These are your moving trains: they leave different stations for different places along different routes, serving both distinct and shared customers – with no common schedule, no station masters and no railroad system.

To change the way your community does business for children and youth, its leaders need to know:

What does each partnership focus on?
Who are the members?
What are they trying to achieve?

You can strengthen your community's capacity to improve youth services and supports by aligning the efforts of these groups along a shared set of goals. Mapping Moving Trains helps you pull these moving trains together by collecting and organizing new information and using that information to launch community conversations that enable you to build the railroad.

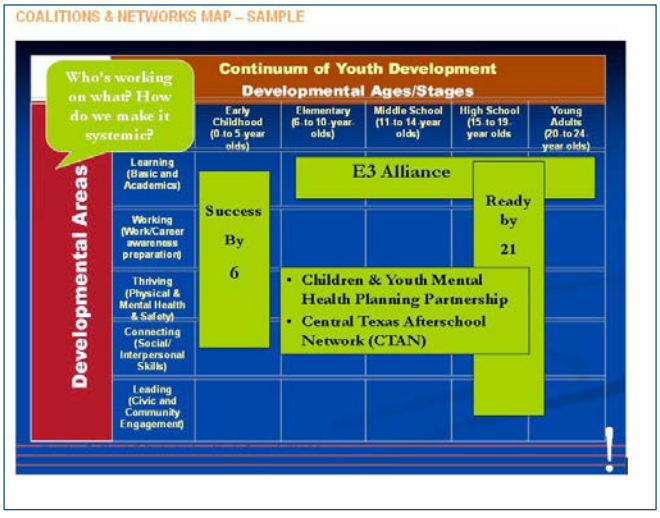
What is Mapping Moving Trains?

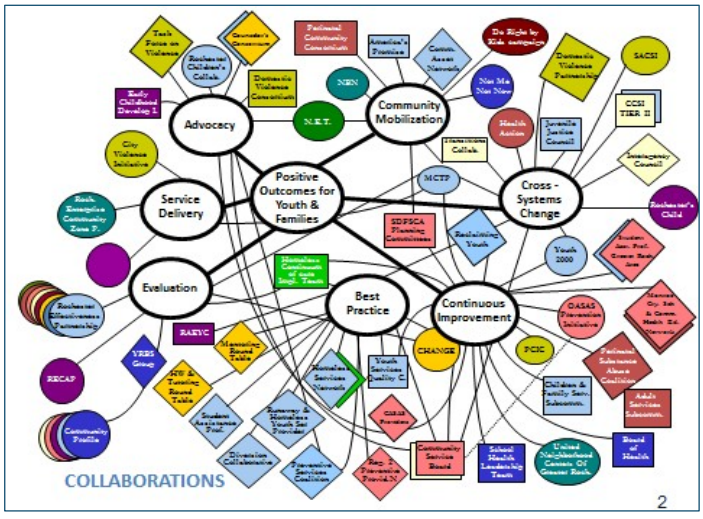
The Mapping Moving Trains suite of training and tools enables communities to:

- Identify and describe their moving trains in detail.
- Map the relationships among the groups.
- Find gaps and overlaps in areas of focus.
- Align and coordinate their efforts.

The chart on the bottom right shows the connections among groups that work on youth and family issues in one city.

The chart on the left shows how a city used the Mapping Moving Trains Survey to create a clear picture of groups that work on youth and family issues. The names of organizations are in green boxes, while the columns and rows show the areas they cover and the gaps.





How Does Mapping Moving Trains Work?

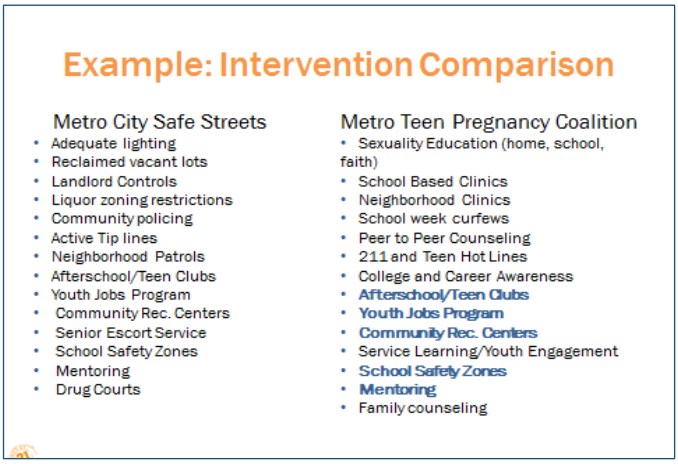
The Forum provides the tools for data collection and compiles the data, then delivers the technical assistance to turn that data into a catalyst for change. Our services include data analysis and visualizations, consultations about collaboration and facilitation of community conversations that lead to strategic improvement.

Step 1: Identify the moving trains. These are the coalitions, networks, task forces and partnerships that coordinate, advocate for, fund or improve services and opportunities for children and youth. You can start big, with a systematic scan across all age groups and issues, or start small, with a focus on entities focused on one group (such as school-aged youth).

Step 2: Decide how much detail to collect in the first round. This can be basic information about each group's primary goals, strategies and types of members or details on specific members, capacities, resources and success metrics.

Step 3: Collect and analyze data. The Forum conducts online surveys based on your choices in Step 2.

Step 4: Create preliminary charts and maps. The Forum creates customized visual resources for your core team to review. This includes a series of dashboards showing the alignment of goals and intervention strategies.



Step 5: Report findings and recommendations. The Forum produces a report and next step recommendations for you to share with the participating groups.

Step 6: Hold community conversations. These conversations are designed to generate action on specific findings from the survey process. The Forum helps you design meetings, develop presentation materials and facilitate discussions.

This chart above compares two partnerships according to the interventions in which each is involved. The blue text shows areas of overlap – areas ripe for better coordination, streamlining and sharing of resources.

How Does Mapping Moving Drive Change?

Step 7: Initiate change. The path from fragmentation to a coherent management structure that includes all major "moving trains" requires commitment and can take more than a year.

For example: Leaders in Metropolitan Atlanta mapped the region's Moving Trains, then used that map to explore how the region's many coalitions and networks could be linked to produce a more child-centered effort. The result: a robust, organized network that includes more partnerships with clear lines of collaboration; partnership clusters built around issues such as school readiness, youth obesity and teen pregnancy; and an expanded leadership council composed of local and state organizations spanning all issues and levels – government, business, education, nonprofits and philanthropy.

"The alignment helped us establish shared outcomes to achieve," says Jean Walker, vice president of the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta. "Now we're selecting priority areas and implementing key strategies – together."

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Ready Communities

Mapping the Landscape of Programs for Young People

Imagine…

In your community, young people get all the supports they need to succeed.

Research shows that most young people don't. Although communities have plenty of services and supports targeted at specific causes and populations, those efforts are usually fragmented and uncoordinated. Leaders need to know not just about schools, but about afterschool sites, libraries, sports leagues and faith-based programs:

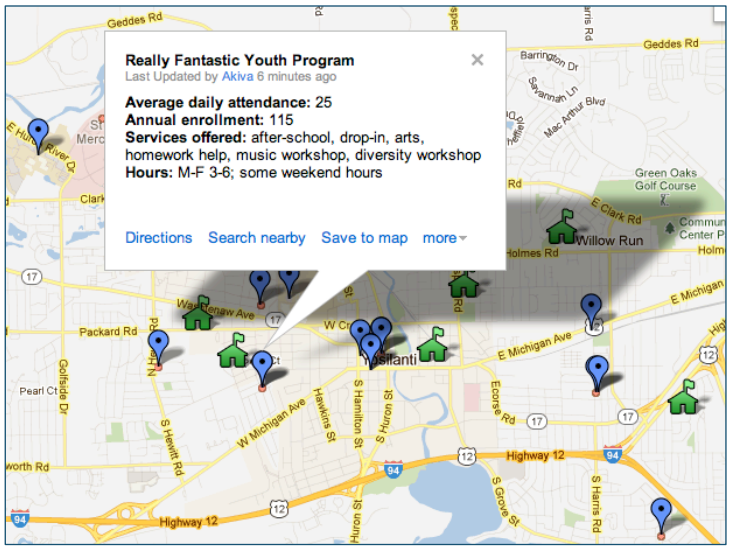
What do these places offer?
Who can use them?
Do they connect with schools?

That means taking stock of all the places where youth engagement and learning happens, and using that new data to make informed changes. Ready Communities provides powerful mapping technology and facilitation tools to make that happen.

What is Ready Communities?

The Ready Communities suite of tools gives education and out-of-school time leaders unprecedented information about their local youth development resources. The package targets three areas:

- Settings for youth: What programs and settings are available outside of school? What are the features of those settings? What types of services do they offer (e.g., sports, pregnancy prevention)?
- Access: Which settings are geared toward specific youth (such as by age groups, gender or neighborhood)? Do factors such as transportation affect participation?
- The youth-serving network: How do programs and organizations that have spaces for youth communicate with each other and with schools to coordinate expectations and delivery of supports?



The Ready Communities survey pinpoints schools and other resources for youth, and allows users to easily get information about specific sites.

Ready Communities gives you a clear picture of the places where youth spend their time. It produces in-depth data presentations that are both compelling and easy to use. That data drives a series of community conversations about resources for youth – leading to targeted and effective action to improve your community's youth-serving spaces.

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How Does Ready Communities Work?

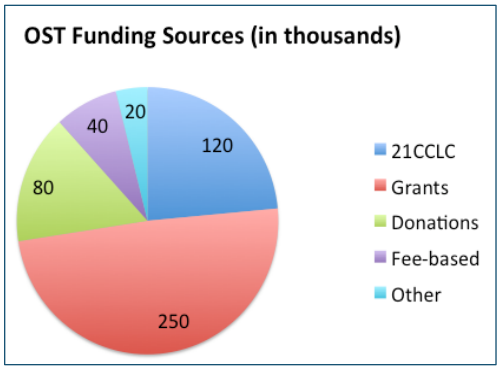
The Forum provides the tools for data collection and compiles the data, then delivers the technical assistance to turn that data into a catalyst for change. Our services include data analysis and visualizations, consultations about collaboration, and facilitation of community conversations that lead to strategic improvement.

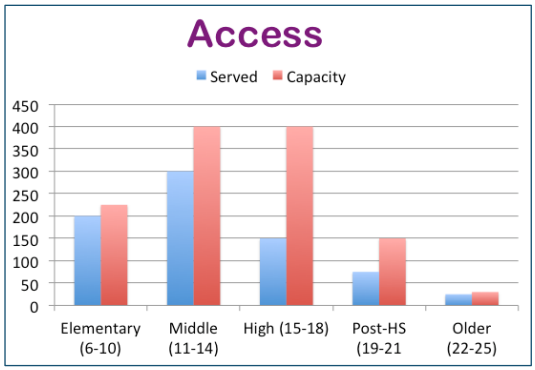
Step 1: Define what to study. The Forum provides tools and resources to help you make choices about what to include in your report and customized map. You consider geographic boundaries, audiences, etc., and identify goals and which organizations to survey.

Step 2: *Collect and analyze data*. The data collection begins with information about settings where young people spend their time. The Forum produces a series of visuals to tell the story of the services, supports and opportunities for youth in your community. Relevant survey data is also entered into an online mapping system, along with other information that you select (such as the location of bus stops).

Step 3: Hold community conversations. These conversations are designed to generate action on specific findings from the survey process. The Forum helps you design meetings, develop presentation materials and facilitate discussions.

More than maps: Ready Communities data is used to produce communitywide analyses. For example: funding sources for all of a community's OST programs (left), and the capacity of OST programs to serve youth in specific age groups compared with the actual numbers that they serve (right).





How Does Ready Communities Drive Change?

Step 4: Make changes based on areas of concern. The Ready Communities process empowers leaders to act with more intention about the experiences they want to make available for children and youth; provides ways to engage providers, funders and community members in those planning discussions; and establishes links between schools and communities to coordinate their actions.

You might tackle specific community issues, such as a lack of high-quality programs in a particular neighborhood or increasing workforce development services across the community.

> **For example:** In Austin, Texas, leaders used landscape mapping to create a state-of-the-art online tool to map and track youth services.
>
> "Austin had all of these different groups working on different things. We had no real way to organize even basic information," says Suzanne Hershey, founder of the Austin Ready by 21 Coalition. "Now we're building consensus around outcomes and indicators that are focused on youth." Find out how in this Austin case study.

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Data-driven and evidence-based practices present new opportunities for public and social sector leaders to increase impact while reducing inefficiency. But in adopting such approaches, leaders must avoid the temptation to act in a top-down manner. Instead, they should design and implement programs in ways that engage community members directly in the work of social change.

Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever)

BY MELODY BARNES & PAUL SCHMITZ
Illustration by YANN KEBBI

In October 2010, three men—Chris Christie, governor of New Jersey; Cory Booker, who was then mayor of Newark, N.J.; and Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook—appeared together on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* to announce an ambitious reform plan for Newark Public Schools. On the show, Zuckerberg pledged a $100 million matching grant to support the goal of making Newark a model for how to turn around a failing school system. This announcement was the first time that most Newark residents heard about the initiative. And that wasn't an accident. Christie and Booker had adopted a top-down approach because they thought that the messy work of forging a consensus among local stakeholders might undermine the reform effort.[1] They created an ambitious timeline, installed a board of philanthropists from outside Newark to oversee the initiative, and hired a leader from outside Newark to serve as the city's superintendent of schools.

The story of school reform in Newark has become a widely cited object lesson in how not to undertake a social change project. Even in the highly charged realm of education reform, the Newark initiative stands out for the high level of tension that it created. Instead of generating excitement among Newark residents about an opportunity to improve results for their kids, the reform plan that emerged from the 2010 announcement sparked a massive public outcry. At public meetings, community members protested vigorously against the plan. In 2014, 77 local ministers pleaded with the governor to drop the initiative because of the toxic environment it had created. Ras Baraka, who succeeded Booker as mayor of Newark, made opposition to the reform plan a central part of his election campaign. The money that Zuckerberg and others contributed to support the reform plan is now gone, and the initiative faces an uncertain future.

"When Booker and Christie decided to do this without the community, that was their biggest mistake," says Howard Fuller, former superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools and a prominent school reform leader. Instead of unifying Newark residents behind a shared goal, the Booker-Christie initiative polarized the city.

Zuckerberg, for his part, seems to have learned a lesson. In May 2014, he and his wife, Priscilla Chan, announced a $120 million commitment to support schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. In

doing so, they emphasized their intention to "[listen] to the needs of local educators and community leaders so that we understand the needs of students that others miss."[2]

Another project launched in Newark in 2010—the Strong Healthy Communities Initiative (SHCI)—has had a much less contentious path. Both Booker and Baraka have championed it. Sponsored by Living Cities (a consortium of 22 large foundations and financial institutions that funds urban revitalization projects), SHCI operates with a clear theory of change: To achieve better educational outcomes for children, policymakers and community leaders must address the environmental conditions that help or hinder learning.

If kids are hungry, sick, tired, or under stress, their ability to learn will suffer. According to an impressive array of research, such conditions lie at the forefront of parents' and kids' minds, and they strongly affect kids' chances of success in school. Inspired by this research, SHCI leaders have taken steps to eliminate blighted housing conditions, to build health centers in schools, and to increase access to high-quality food for low-income families.

SHCI began as an effort led by philanthropists and city leaders, but since then it has shifted its orientation to engage a broader cross-section of community stakeholders. Over time, those in charge of the initiative have built partnerships with leaders from communities and organizations throughout Newark. "We avoid a top-down approach as much as possible," says Monique Baptiste-Good, director of SHCI. "We start with community and then engage established leaders. When we started, a critical decision was to operate like a campaign and not institutionalize as an organization. We fall to the background and push our partners' capacity forward. Change happens at the pace people can adapt."

Challenges related to housing and health may seem to be less controversial than school reform, but these issues generate considerable heat as well. (Consider, for example, the controversy that surrounds efforts by the Obama administration to change nutrition standards for children.) In any event, the crucial lesson here is one that spans a wide range of issue areas: *How* policymakers and other social change leaders pursue initiatives will determine whether those efforts succeed. If they approach such efforts in a top-down manner, they are likely to meet with failure. (We define a top-down approach as one in which elected officials, philanthropists, and leaders of other large institutions launch and implement programs and services without the full engagement of community leaders and intended beneficiaries.)

This lesson has become more acutely relevant in recent years. Disparities in education, health, economic opportunity, and access to justice continue to increase, and the resources available to confront those challenges have not kept pace with expanding needs. As a consequence, leaders in the public and nonprofit sectors are looking for better ways to invest those resources. At the same time, the increasing use of data-driven practices raises the hope that leaders can make progress on this front. These practices include, most notably, evidence-based programs in which there is a proven correlation between a given intervention and a specific impact. But they also include collective impact initiatives and other efforts that employ data to design and evaluate solutions. (In this article, we will use the term "data-driven" to refer to the full range of such practices.)

MELODY BARNES is a senior fellow at Results for America and chair of the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions. Previously, she was the director of the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Barack Obama.

PAUL SCHMITZ is CEO of Leading Inside Out, a consulting firm that enables inclusive and collaborative leadership. He is also an advisor to Results for America and a senior advisor to the Collective Impact Forum.

Disclosure: Results for America, where Melody Barnes is a senior fellow and where Paul Schmitz serves as an advisor, sponsored the research for this paper. Paul Schmitz is a faculty member of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute. He also serves on the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County board of directors and on the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families steering committee.

In rolling out programs that draw on such research, however, leaders must not neglect other vitally important aspects of social change. As the recent efforts in Newark demonstrate, data-driven solutions will be feasible and sustainable only if leaders create and implement those solutions with the active participation of people in the communities that they target.

THE PROMISE OF DATA

Under the sponsorship of an organization called Results for America, we recently undertook a research project that focused on how leaders can and should pursue data-driven social change efforts. For the project, we interviewed roughly 30 city administrators, philanthropists, nonprofit leaders, researchers, and community builders from across the United States. We began this research with a simple premise: Social change leaders now have an unprecedented ability to draw on data-driven insight about which programs actually lead to better results.

Leaders today know that babies born to mothers enrolled in certain home visiting programs have healthier birth outcomes. (The Nurse-Family Partnership, which matches first-time mothers with registered nurses, is a prime example of this type of intervention.[3]) They know that students in certain reading programs reach higher literacy levels. (Reading Partners, for instance, has shown impressive results with a program that provides one-on-one reading instruction to struggling elementary school students.[4]) They know that criminal offenders who enter job-training and support programs when they leave prison are less likely to re-offend and more likely to succeed in gaining employment. (The Center for Employment Opportunities has achieved such outcomes by offering life-skills education, short-term paid transitional employment, full-time job placement, and post-placement services.[5])

Results for America, which launched in 2012, seeks to enable governments at all levels to apply data-driven approaches to issues related to education, health, and economic opportunity. In 2014, the organization published a book called *Moneyball for Government.* (The title is a nod to *Moneyball*, a book by Michael Lewis that details how the Oakland A's baseball club used data analytics to build championship teams despite having a limited budget for player salaries.) The book features contributions by a wide range of policymakers and thought leaders (including Melody Barnes, a co-author of this article). The editors of *Moneyball for Government*, Jim Nussle and Peter Orszag, outline three principles that public officials should follow as they pursue social change:

- "Build evidence about the practices, policies, and programs that will achieve the most effective and efficient results so that policymakers can make better decisions.

- "Invest limited taxpayer dollars in practices, policies, and programs that use data, evidence, and evaluation to demonstrate they work.
- "Direct funds away from practices, policies, and programs that consistently fail to achieve measurable outcomes."[6]

These concepts sound simple. Indeed, they have the ring of common sense. Yet they do not correspond to the current norms of practice in the public and nonprofit sectors. According to one estimate, less than 1 percent of federal nondefense discretionary spending goes toward programs that are backed by evidence.[7] In a 2014 report, Lisbeth Schorr and Frank Farrow note that the influence of evidence on decision-making—"especially when compared to the influence of ideology, politics, history, and even anecdotes"—has been weak among policymakers and social service providers.[8] (Schorr is a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and Farrow is director of the center.)

That needs to change. There is both an economic and a moral imperative for adopting data-driven approaches. Given persistently limited budgets, public and nonprofit leaders must direct funds to programs and initiatives that use data to show that they are achieving impact. Even if unlimited funds were available, moreover, leaders would have a responsibility to design programs that will deliver the best results for beneficiaries.

THE NEED FOR "PATIENT URGENCY"

The inclination to move fast in creating and implementing data-driven programs and practices is understandable. After all, the problems that communities face today are serious and immediate. People's lives are at stake. If there is evidence that a particular intervention can (for example) help more children get a healthy start in life—or help them read at grade level, or help them develop marketable skills—then setting that intervention in motion is pressingly urgent.

But acting too quickly in this arena entails a significant risk. All too easily, the urge to initiate programs expeditiously translates into a preference for top-down forms of management. Leaders, not unreasonably, are apt to assume that bottom-up methods will only slow the implementation of programs that have a record of delivering positive results.

A former director of data and analytics for a US city offers a cautionary tale that illustrates this idea. "We thought if we got better results for people, they would demand more of it," she explains. "Our mayor communicated in a paternal way: 'I know better than you what you need. I will make things better for you. Trust me.' The problem is that they *didn't* trust us. Relationships matter. Not enough was done to ask people what they wanted, to honor what they see and experience. Many of our initiatives died—not because they didn't work but because they didn't have community support."

To win such support, policymakers and other leaders must treat community members as active partners. "Doing *to us*, not *with us*, is a recipe for failure," says Fuller, who has deep experience in building community-led coalitions. "If we engage communities, then we have a solution and we have the leadership necessary to demand that solution and hold people accountable for it." Engaging a community is not an activity that leaders can check off on a list. It's a continuous process that aims to generate the support necessary for long-term change. The goal is to encourage intended beneficiaries not just to participate in a social change initiative but also to champion it.

"This work takes patient urgency," Fuller argues. "If you aren't patient, you only get illusory change. Lasting change is not possible without community. You may be gone in 5 or 10 years, but the community will still be there. You need a sense of urgency to push the process forward and maintain momentum." The tension between urgency and patience is a productive tension. Navigating that tension allows leaders and community members to achieve the right level of engagement.

The core finding of our research is that impatient, top-down efforts—including efforts that involve implementing data-driven initiatives—will not produce lasting results. To achieve positive and enduring change, public and nonprofit leaders must create community engagement strategies that are as robust as the data-driven solutions they hope to pursue.

Rich Harwood, president of the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, makes this point in a post on his website: "Understanding and strengthening a community's civic culture is as important to collective efforts as using data, metrics and measuring outcomes. ... A weak civic culture undermines the best intentions and the most rigorous of analyses and plans. For change to happen, trust and community ownership must form, people need to engage with one another, and we need to create the right underlying conditions and capabilities for change to take root and spread."[9]

FACTORS OF ENGAGEMENT

We have identified six factors that are essential to building community support for data-driven solutions. These factors are complementary. Social change initiatives that incorporate each factor will tend to have a greater chance of success.

Organizing for ownership | In many cases, efforts to engage affected communities take place after leaders have designed and launched data-driven initiatives. But engagement should begin earlier so that community members will have an incentive to support the initiative.

One of the biggest mistakes that social change leaders make is failing to differentiate between mobilizing and organizing. Mobilizing is about recruiting people to support a vision, cause, or program. In this model, a leader or an organization is the subject that makes decisions, and community members are the passive object of those decisions. Organizing, on the other hand, is about cultivating leaders, identifying their interests, and enabling them to lead change. Here, community members are the subject of the work: They collaborate on making decisions. At its best, community engagement involves working with a variety of leaders—those at the grass tops and those at the grass roots—to ensure that an effort has the support necessary for long-term success.

The International Association for Public Participation has developed a spectrum that encompasses various forms of engagement.[10] (See "The Spectrum of Community Engagement" on page 36.) At one end of the spectrum is *informing*, which might take the form of a mailing or a town-hall meeting in which professional leaders describe a new change effort (and perhaps ask for feedback about it). At the other end of the spectrum is *empowerment*, which supports true self-determination for participants. One organization that practices empowerment is the Family Independence Initiative (FII) in Oakland, Calif. Instead of focusing on delivery of social services, FII invests in supporting the capacity and ingenuity of poor

families. (Through an extensive data-collection process at six pilot sites, FII has demonstrated that participating families can achieve significant economic and social mobility.)

The further an initiative moves toward the empowerment end of the spectrum, the more community members will feel a sense of ownership over it, and the more inclined they will be to advocate for it. Of course, it's not always possible to operate at the level of full empowerment. But initiative leaders need to be clear about where they are in the spectrum, and they need to deliver the level of engagement they promise.

John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann, co-directors of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University and authors of the classic community-building guide *Building Communities From the Inside Out*, argue that too often "experts" undermine the natural leadership and the sense of connectedness that exist in communities as assets for solving problems. At a recent international conference of community builders, McKnight and Kretzmann suggested that when providers work with communities they should ask these questions: "What can community members do best for themselves and each other? What can community members do best if they receive some support from organizations? What can organizations do best for communities that people can't do for themselves?"

It's important, in other words, to view community members as producers of outcomes, not just as recipients of outcomes. Professional leaders must recognize and respect the assets that community members can bring to an initiative. If the goal is to help children to read at grade level or to help mothers to have healthy birth outcomes, then leaders should consider the roles that family members, friends, and neighbors can play in that effort. A mother who watches kids from her neighborhood after school is a kind of youth worker. The elder who checks in on a young mother is a kind of community health worker. Supporting these community members—not just for their voice but also for their ability to produce results—is crucial to the pursuit of lasting change.

Engaging grassroots leaders requires intention and attention. "If we commit to engaging community members, we have to set them up for success. We have to orient them to our world and engage in theirs," says Angela Frusciante, knowledge development officer at the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. "We need to work with leaders to make meaning out of the data about their communities: Where do they see their own stories in the data? How do they interpret what they see? Remember, data is information about people's lives."

Allowing for complexity | Leaders must adapt to the complex system of influences that bear on the success of any data-driven solution. Patrick McCarthy, president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, made this point forcefully at a 2014 forum: "An inhospitable system will trump a good program—every time, all the time."[11] Instead of trying to "plug and play" a solution, leaders should consider the cultural context in which people will implement that solution. They should develop a deep connection to the communities they serve and a deep understanding of the many constituencies that can affect the success of their efforts.

One pitfall of data-driven social change work is that it sometimes provides little scope for complexity—for the way that multiple factors are intertwined in peoples' lives. Evidence-based approaches can "[privilege] single-level programmatic interventions," Schorr and Farrow note. "These [programs] are most likely to pass the 'what works?' test within the controlled conditions of the experimental evaluation. Reliance on this hierarchy also risks neglecting or discouraging interventions that cannot be understood through this methodology and sidelining complex, multi-level systemic solutions that may be very effective but require evidence-gathering methods that rank lower in the evidence hierarchy."[12] Those who implement data-driven practices, therefore, need to treat them not as miracle cures but as important elements within a larger ecosystem.

The need to reckon with complexity is one reason that the collective impact model has gained popularity in many communities.[13] In a collective impact initiative, organizations and community members work together at a systemic level to achieve a complex community-wide goal. They work to connect each intervention to other programs, organizations, and systems (including family and neighborhood systems) that influence the lives of beneficiaries. It's not likely that a single intervention, pursued in isolation, will create lasting change. Delivering an evidence-based reading program for children in elementary school may have a positive impact on literacy outcomes, for example, but the long-term sustainability of that intervention will depend on the health, safety, home environment, and economic well-being of those children.

Working with local institutions | Often the pursuit of a data-driven strategy involves shifting funds away from work that isn't demonstrating success. Taking that step is sometimes necessary, but when leaders shift funds, they must be careful not to harm the community they aim to help. Such harm can occur, for example, when they underfund programs with deep community connections, when they eliminate vital services for which there is no good alternative, or when they import programs from outside the community that destabilize existing providers.

The Spectrum of Community Engagement

INCREASING IMPACT ON DECISION-MAKING

INFORMING	CONSULTING	INVOLVING	COLLABORATING	EMPOWERING
Providing balanced and objective information about new programs or services, and about the reasons for choosing them. Providing updates during implementation.	Inviting feedback on alternatives, analyses, and decisions related to new programs or services. Letting people know how their feedback has influenced program decisions.	Working with community members to ensure that their aspirations and concerns are considered at every stage of planning and decision-making. Letting people know how their involvement has influenced program decisions.	Enabling community members to participate in every aspect of planning and decision-making for new programs or services.	Giving community members sole decision-making authority over new programs or services, and allowing professionals to serve only in consultative and supportive roles.

Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, developed by the International Association for Public Participation.

Note: Engagement activities can include community surveys, neighborhood outreach projects, partnerships with grassroots organizations, public meetings, and efforts to select community representatives

A decision to shift funds can also generate otherwise avoidable resistance from natural allies. An official from a local foundation recounts an episode that happened in her city: "Our mayor got excited about a college access program that he visited in another city and raised money to bring it here. The existing college access programs had trouble raising money once the mayor was competing with them to raise funds, and they started going out of business. The new initiative never gained community support." According to this official, the mayor's actions were ultimately counterproductive. "There is now less happening for the people served," she says.

In some cases, moreover, local organizations have built up social capital that creates an enabling environment for data-driven interventions to succeed. A community center that has fostered active participation among parents, for example, might be an important asset for a data-driven effort to improve third-grade reading scores

For these reasons, it's often better to encourage existing grantees to adopt data-driven practices than to defund those groups. Carol Emig, president of Child Trends, a nonprofit research organization that focuses on issues related to children and families, argues for this approach: "Instead of telling a city or foundation official that they have to defund their current grantees because they are not evidence-based, funders can tell long-standing grantees that future funding will be tied at least in part to retooling existing programs and services so that they have more of the elements of successful programs."[14] The mayor who brought an outside college access program to his city, for example, might have had more success if he had worked with local providers to implement a variation of the program.

Collaborating with local groups takes effort. Funders must start by assessing whether a grantee has a solid grounding in the community, experience in the relevant issue area, and a willingness to alter its practice. Nicole Angresano, vice president of community impact at the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County, explains how her organization works with grantees to improve performance: "We assess the state of the organization's relationships." Her group looks in particular at the level of trust that grantees have earned within their community. "If that [trust] is high, we'll build capacity and partner with them to improve results," she says.

Applying an equity lens | Jim Collins, in his management strategy book *Good to Great*, argues that effective leaders "*first* [get] the right people on the bus … and the right people in the right seats—and *then* they [figure] out where to drive it."[15] Too often, social change efforts don't engage the right mix of people. When leaders seek to bring data-driven solutions to low-income communities and communities of color, they must take care to apply an equity lens to this work. Members of those communities not only should be "at the table"; they should hold leadership positions as well.

Many groups apply an equity lens to their initiatives downstream: They analyze disaggregated data to identify disparities, and then they adopt strategies to reduce those disparities. That's important, but it's even more important to apply an equity lens upstream—in the places where people make critical decisions about an initiative. The ranks of board members, staff members, advisors, and partners must include members of the beneficiary community. "Some leaders just want black and brown people to carry signs," says Fuller. "They don't want them to actually lead, to have a voice, to have self-determination."

It's not enough to bring a diverse set of leaders together. Creating a culture in which those leaders can collaborate effectively is also necessary. Applying an equity lens involves working to build trust among participants and working to ensure that all of them can engage fully in an initiative. Achieving equitable participation, moreover, requires a commitment to hearing all voices, valuing all perspectives, and taking swift action to correct disparities of representation. And although this process cannot eliminate power dynamics, leaders should strive to mitigate the effects of power differences.

Leaders should also apply an equity lens to the selection of organizations that will receive funding to implement data-driven work. One way to do so is to establish a continuum of eligibility that allows groups—those that are ready to implement data-driven practices as well as those that will require capacity-building support to reach that level—to apply for funding at different stages of an initiative. That approach can enable the inclusion of small organizations that are led by people of color or by other under-represented members of a community.

Building momentum | The work of engaging communities, as we noted earlier, requires a sense of *patient urgency*. According to people we interviewed for our project, it often takes one to two years to complete the core planning and relationship building that are necessary to launch an initiative that features substantial community engagement. That is all the more true when the initiative incorporates data-driven approaches.

For this reason, achieving significant results within a typical two-to-three-year foundation grant cycle can be challenging. Similarly, it can be difficult to pursue lasting change within a time frame that suits the needs of public sector leaders. Government agencies usually operate in one-year budget cycles, and elected officials want to see results within a four-year election cycle. So when public agencies take the lead on an initiative, it's incumbent on philanthropic funders and other partners to create external pressure that will lend staying power to the initiative.

Another solution to this problem is to build momentum up front by achieving quick wins—early examples of demonstrated progress. Quick wins will encourage grantmakers to invest in an initiative and will help meet the political needs of public officials. In addition, quick wins will keep resistance from building. If an initiative hasn't shown any results for two to three years, the forces of the status quo will reassert themselves, and opponents will eagerly claim that the initiative is failing.

Early wins will also help a community build a narrative of success that can replace existing narratives that dwell on the apparent intractability of social problems. Likewise, quick wins will enable community members to see that their engagement matters. As a result, they will be more likely to embrace ambitious goals for social change. "You have to give folks who are ready to run work that will keep them energized, and [you have to] give others time to absorb change and build trust in the process," Baptiste-Good says. "It takes patience and relationships to make it work."

Managing constituencies through change | Leaders who shift to a new data-driven framework need to manage how various constituencies react to that change. A good way to start is by distinguishing between technical challenges and adaptive challenges. In *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and

Marty Linsky explain that distinction: "Technical problems ... can be resolved through the application of authoritative expertise and through the organization's current structures, procedures, and ways of doing things. Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties."[16] For leaders, it's tempting to focus on straightforward technical challenges (such as developing criteria for funding a data-driven intervention) and to neglect pressing adaptive challenges (such as dealing with changes in relationships and behaviors that staff members, partners, and service recipients will experience with the rollout of that intervention).

Multiple constituencies will feel the effects of a shift in strategy. There are existing partners, who will need to change their ways of operating and who may lose funding. There are potential new providers, who must gear up to help implement the new strategy. There are intended beneficiaries, who may need to alter or discontinue their relationships with trusted service providers. There are grant officers, who may need to jettison grantee relationships that they have cultivated over many years. And so on. To build community engagement around adoption of a new framework, leaders must prepare all of these constituencies for the adaptive changes they will have to make.

Communication is paramount, and it should begin early in the change process. In particular, leaders should take these steps:

- Signal changes early so that stakeholders can prepare for them.
- Focus less on expressing excitement about new practices than on showing empathy for the concerns of each constituency. ("Seek first to understand—and then to be understood" is a good rule to follow.)
- Disclose how and why decisions were made, and who made them.
- Acknowledge that there will be trade-offs and losses, and explain that they are a necessary consequence of adopting a strategy that promises to improve results.
- Clearly describe the transition process for people and groups that are willing and able to move toward the new framework.

Above all, leaders must focus on managing expectations for each constituency each step of the way.

Resources for Community Engagement

Social change leaders can tap into a global network of organizations that provide insight and guidance on how to engage communities in data-driven programs.

THE ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
A global network of people who work to build local assets that will enable residents to solve community problems.
www.abcdinstitute.org

BLUEPRINTS FOR HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
A registry (funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation) of evidence-based programs that promote the health and well-being of young people.
www.blueprintsprograms.com

THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM
An online resource center and learning network for people around the world who are implementing collective impact efforts.
www.collectiveimpactforum.org

THE HARWOOD INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC INNOVATION
An organization that teaches and inspires leaders to change how people work together in communities.
www.theharwoodinstitute.org

THE INTERACTION INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
An organization that provides training, facilitation, and network building to communities, organizations, and movements.
www.interactioninstitute.org

LIVING CITIES
An organization that works with leaders in multiple sectors to develop urban practices that will improve the economic well-being of low-income people.
www.livingcities.org

MOVEMENT STRATEGY CENTER
An intermediary that works with local and national groups to respond to community needs, advance policy solutions, and build leadership.
www.movementbuilding.movementstrategy.org

POLICYLINK
A research and advocacy group that works with local residents and organizations to advance economic and social equity.
www.policylink.org

RESULTS FOR AMERICA
A research and advocacy group that works to shift public resources toward evidence-based, results-driven solutions.
www.results4america.org

TAMARACK INSTITUTE
An organization that provides tools and training that help people to collaborate and to achieve collective impact on complex community issues.
www.tamarackcommunity.ca

MODELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is not easy work, but it is important work. Here are two initiatives in which social change leaders are pursuing a community engagement strategy as part of their effort to implement data-driven solutions.

A youth program in Providence | In 2012, the Annie E. Casey Foundation launched an initiative in partnership with the Providence Children and Youth Cabinet (CYC), an organization that was then part of the mayor's office in Providence, R.I. Working within the foundation's Evidence2Success framework, the CYC surveyed more than 5,000 young people in the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades about the root causes of personal and academic success—factors such as social and emotional skills, relationships, and family support. The CYC then convened community leaders and residents from two neighborhoods to discuss the survey data and to create a set of shared priorities. A diverse group of city, state, and neighborhood leaders helped oversee that process.

These shared priorities—which cover outcomes related to truancy and absenteeism, delinquent behavior, and emotional well-being—became the central point of focus for the initiative. Implementation teams, which included both residents and social service providers, established improvement goals for each priority. The teams then used Blueprints for Healthy Development, an online resource maintained by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, to select six evidence-based programs that are designed to advance those goals. In addition, CYC leaders conferred with residents about resources and forms of assistance that the community will need to ensure the success of these programs. Implementation of three of the six identified programs

is now under way, and the CYC will measure progress toward the improvement goals in future surveys.

From the start, CYC leaders worked to improve the power dynamics among stakeholders by communicating transparently about their decision-making process. "We tailored information to different groups to empower them," says Rebecca Boxx, director of the CYC. "We engaged everyone in a shared framework that was new to all. For community residents, we said, 'This data is you, your lives. You own that.' There was tremendous power in helping residents own their role." In effect, Boxx adds, the initiative has involved "flipping expertise"—in other words, placing community members "on equal footing" with public officials, social service providers, and the like. (To ensure that the CYC would remain an independent voice for local communities—one whose future would not depend on election results—CYC leaders eventually moved the group outside the mayor's office.)

CYC leaders spent about 18 months engaging with community members and another 18 months implementing the initial set of three evidence-based programs. "It will take three to four years to start seeing community-level results," says Jessie Wattrous, a senior associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. "There is a win for [city officials] in saying, 'We are listening to our community and spending our dollars on programs that have been proven to work.' You also have community leaders and residents speaking out about it." The foundation recently launched Evidence2Success partnerships in Alabama and Utah that build on the lessons of the Providence initiative to pursue evidence-based programs in those states.

A health program in Milwaukee | At one time, Milwaukee had the highest African-American infant mortality rate in the United States. To confront that problem, several partners—including the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, the mayor of that city, and the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health—launched the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF) in 2012.

As part of the initiative, LIHF leaders invited researchers from universities, nonprofit advocacy groups, and the City of Milwaukee Health Department to share evidence about the causes of infant mortality and ways to reduce it. Many LIHF participants initially believed that unsafe sleeping conditions were the leading cause of infant mortality. But data gathered by the city's Fetal Infant Mortality Review team showed that this factor accounted for only 15 percent of deaths and that more than 60 percent of deaths were the result of premature births. After researching evidence-based approaches to reducing the incidence of premature birth, LIHF participants agreed on a set of initiatives that focus on access to health services, fatherhood involvement, and other social determinants of health.

Previously, the City of Milwaukee and the United Way had partnered on an initiative that reduced teen pregnancy by 57 percent in seven years. (Milwaukee also once had the highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation.) Lessons from that initiative left these partners with a commitment to deep and inclusive community engagement. In the case of LIHF, those who oversaw the initiative began with a two-year planning process that involved convening more than 100 community leaders from all parts of the city.

In developing LIHF, leaders put special emphasis on achieving racial equity in the design and leadership composition of the initiative. At a launch meeting for LIHF, a group of more than 70 community leaders and residents spent an hour discussing racism and its impact on health among African-American women. Subsequent meetings have dealt explicitly with the role that racial equity must play in reaching LIHF goals. An African-American woman business leader cochairs the LIHF Steering Committee (the mayor of Milwaukee is the other cochair), and an African-American community activist serves as director of the initiative. To gain residents' input and support, LIHF leaders also hired six community organizers who live in targeted neighborhoods and placed two people from those neighborhoods on the steering committee.

ENGAGING WITH DATA

Data-driven practices and programs hold great promise as a means for making progress against seemingly intractable social problems. But ultimately they will work only when community members are able to engage in them as leaders and partners. Community engagement has two significant benefits: It can achieve real change in people's lives—especially in the lives of the most vulnerable members of a community—and it can instill a can-do spirit that extends across an entire community.

As policymakers, elected officials, philanthropists, and nonprofit leaders shift resources to data-driven programs, they must ensure that community engagement becomes a critical element in that shift. (See "Resources for Community Engagement" on page 38.) Without such engagement, even the best programs—even programs backed by the most robust data—will not yield positive results, let alone lasting change. ■

NOTES

1 Dale Russakoff, "Schooled," *The New Yorker*, May 19, 2014.

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3 For examples of research on the Nurse-Family Partnership, see "Trial Outcomes," Nurse-Family Partnership website, http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/Proven-Results/Published-research

4 For an example of research on Reading Partners, see Robin Tepper Jacob, Catherine Armstrong, and Jacklyn Willard, "Mobilizing Volunteer Tutors to Improve Student Literacy," MDRC website, March 2015, http://www.mdrc.org/publication/mobilizing-volunteer-tutors-improve-student-literacy

5 For examples of research on the Center for Employment Opportunities, see "Publications," Center for Employment Opportunities website, http://ceoworks.org/resources/publications

6 Jim Nussle and Peter Orszag, eds., *Moneyball for Government*, Disruption Books, 2014, p. 6.

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9 Rich Harwood, "Why I Love Data," Harwood Institute website, February 26, 2015, http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/2015/02/why-i-love-data

10 International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), "The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum," IAP2 website, https://www.iap2.org.au/resources/iap2s-public-participation-spectrum

11 Cited in Schorr and Farrow, "An Evidence Framework to Improve Results," p. 11.

12 Schorr and Farrow, "An Evidence Framework to Improve Results," p. 7.

13 John Kania and Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.

14 Quoted in Schorr and Farrow, "An Evidence Framework to Improve Results," p. 10.

15 Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, HarperBusiness, 2001, p. 13.

16 Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, Harvard Business Press, 2009, p. 19.

READY BY 21
COMMUNITY CATALYSTS™

Ready Communities

Mapping the Landscape of Programs for Young People

Imagine…

In your community, young people get all the supports they need to succeed.

Research shows that most young people don't. Although communities have plenty of services and supports targeted at specific causes and populations, those efforts are usually fragmented and uncoordinated. Leaders need to know not just about schools, but about afterschool sites, libraries, sports leagues and faith-based programs:

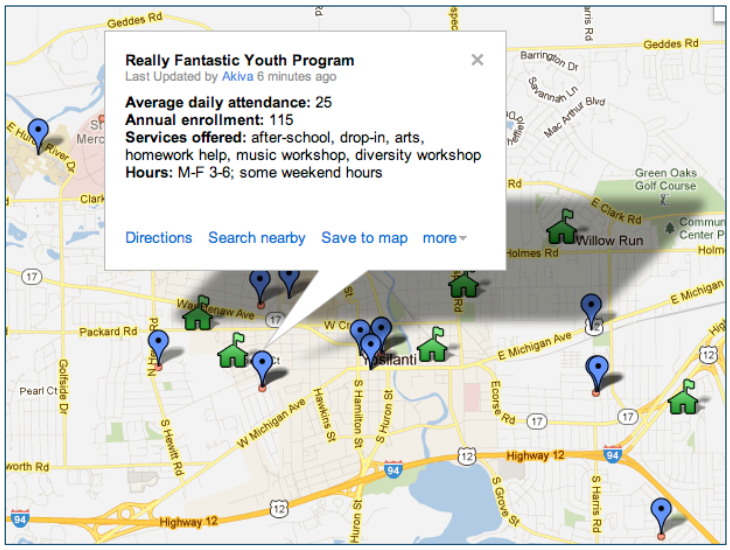
What do these places offer?
Who can use them?
Do they connect with schools?

That means taking stock of all the places where youth engagement and learning happens, and using that new data to make informed changes. Ready Communities provides powerful mapping technology and facilitation tools to make that happen.

What is Ready Communities?

The Ready Communities suite of tools gives education and out-of-school time leaders unprecedented information about their local youth development resources. The package targets three areas:

- Settings for youth: What programs and settings are available outside of school? What are the features of those settings? What types of services do they offer (e.g., sports, pregnancy prevention)?
- Access: Which settings are geared toward specific youth (such as by age groups, gender or neighborhood)? Do factors such as transportation affect participation?
- The youth-serving network: How do programs and organizations that have spaces for youth communicate with each other and with schools to coordinate expectations and delivery of supports?



The Ready Communities survey pinpoints schools and other resources for youth, and allows users to easily get information about specific sites.

Ready Communities gives you a clear picture of the places where youth spend their time. It produces in-depth data presentations that are both compelling and easy to use. That data drives a series of community conversations about resources for youth – leading to targeted and effective action to improve your community's youth-serving spaces.

READY BY 21
COMMUNITY CATALYSTS™

How Does Ready Communities Work?

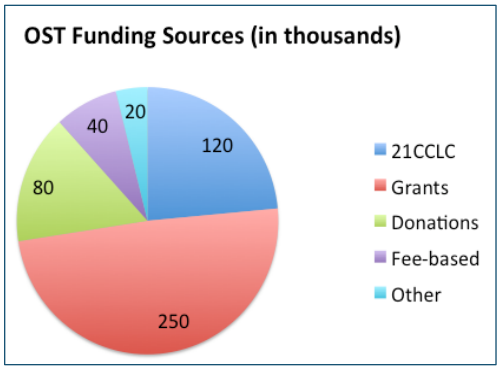
The Forum provides the tools for data collection and compiles the data, then delivers the technical assistance to turn that data into a catalyst for change. Our services include data analysis and visualizations, consultations about collaboration, and facilitation of community conversations that lead to strategic improvement.

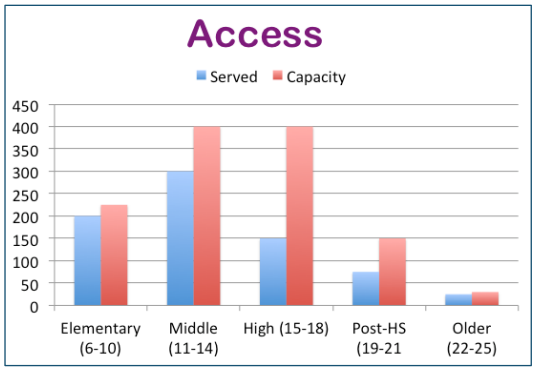
Step 1: Define what to study. The Forum provides tools and resources to help you make choices about what to include in your report and customized map. You consider geographic boundaries, audiences, etc., and identify goals and which organizations to survey.

Step 2: *Collect and analyze data*. The data collection begins with information about settings where young people spend their time. The Forum produces a series of visuals to tell the story of the services, supports and opportunities for youth in your community. Relevant survey data is also entered into an online mapping system, along with other information that you select (such as the location of bus stops).

Step 3: Hold community conversations. These conversations are designed to generate action on specific findings from the survey process. The Forum helps you design meetings, develop presentation materials and facilitate discussions.

More than maps: Ready Communities data is used to produce communitywide analyses. For example: funding sources for all of a community's OST programs (left), and the capacity of OST programs to serve youth in specific age groups compared with the actual numbers that they serve (right).





How Does Ready Communities Drive Change?

Step 4: Make changes based on areas of concern. The Ready Communities process empowers leaders to act with more intention about the experiences they want to make available for children and youth; provides ways to engage providers, funders and community members in those planning discussions; and establishes links between schools and communities to coordinate their actions.

You might tackle specific community issues, such as a lack of high-quality programs in a particular neighborhood or increasing workforce development services across the community.

> **For example:** In Austin, Texas, leaders used landscape mapping to create a state-of-the-art online tool to map and track youth services.
>
> "Austin had all of these different groups working on different things. We had no real way to organize even basic information," says Suzanne Hershey, founder of the Austin Ready by 21 Coalition. "Now we're building consensus around outcomes and indicators that are focused on youth." Find out how in this Austin case study.

Join the movement to get all young people Ready by 21. Let's talk about how your community can launch a Community Catalyst. Contact us at (202) 207-3333 or info@forumfyi.org.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TAKE STOCK OF?

There are multiple types of information that are needed to effectively translate goals into actions – the status of children and youth, programs, policies and public and political will. Look at the list below of ways to "take stock" for children and youth. Think about your capacity to fund/call for/participate in data collection projects that would create "taking stock" reports – whether it is for a single issue (e.g., youth employment) or the full set of issues identified.

		WAYS TO TAKE STOCK FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH	IMPORTANCE		AVAILABILITY		NOTES
			Low	Hi	Low	Hi	
YOUTH OUTCOMES	1	Demographics & Public Data – (e.g., Census Data, Administrative Data)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	2	Developmental Progress – (e.g., social, emotional, learning indicators, internal assets)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORTS & RESOURCES	3	External Assets & Supports – (e.g., 40 Assets, America's Promise Every Child, Every Promise Survey)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	4	Program Participation – (e.g., Program/System Participation Reports, Tracking Individuals Across Programs)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	5	Program Landscape – (e.g., Program and Offering Inventories)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	6	Program Quality – (e.g., Program Assessments)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	7	System/Organizational/Program Effectiveness– (e.g., Performance Measure Reports, Fidelity Reports)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	8	Professional Workforce Capacity – (e.g., Youth Work Workforce Survey, External Assessment Reports)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	9	Resources/Investments– (e.g., Fiscal Maps)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
LEADER COMMITMENTS	10	Leadership Actions – (e.g., Mapping Initiatives and Task Forces)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	11	Policy Priorities – (e.g., Policy Benchmarks, Cross Plan Analysis)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	12	Public & Family Demand – (e.g., Polling, Focus Groups, Key Informant Interviews, Surveys)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	13	Financing & Sustainability – (e.g., Children's Budgets, Sustainability Plans)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?
	14	Political Will – (e.g., Political Leadership Assessment)	☐ ☐ ☐		☐ ☐ ☐		How is this collected? Whom would I contact for more info?

Use the "NOTES" section above to identify or give more information on the following:

a) The Availability of Information - Reports like this one are created regularly on some topic related to children and youth.

b) System-specific Information - To discriminate which systems (e.g., child welfare, education, etc.) these rating apply to.

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Learning in Action: Evaluating Collective Impact

Successful collective impact initiatives embed evaluation in their DNA and use it to make better decisions about the future.

BY MARCIE PARKHURST & HALLIE PRESKILL

As leaders across the social sector adopt the collective impact approach to problem solving, an important question looms in many people's minds: Given how complex and unpredictable the work is, what is the best way to evaluate a collective impact initiative's progress and success?

Traditionally, evaluations of specific interventions have focused on their results to determine whether or not (and how) they have "worked." But collective impact initiatives involve *multiple* activities, programs, and initiatives, all of which operate in mutually reinforcing ways. Moreover, they aim to change highly complex systems. As a result, merely taking a snapshot of a given intervention's effectiveness at one point does not tell the whole story. To truly evaluate their effectiveness, collective impact leaders need to see the bigger picture—the initiative's many different parts and the ways they interact and evolve over time. For that, they need a new way to approach evaluation. We believe that effectively evaluating collective impact requires the following practices.

First, rather than attempting to isolate the effects and impact of a single intervention, collective impact partners should assess the progress and impact of the changemaking process as a whole. This process includes the initiative's context; the quality and effectiveness of the initiative's structure and operations; the ways in which systems that influence the targeted issue are changing; and the extent of progress toward the initiative's ultimate goal(s). To be sure, the relative emphasis of evaluation will shift as the collective impact initiative matures. For example, an initial evaluation might assess the strength of the initiative itself, and a subsequent evaluation might focus on the initiative's influence on targeted systems.

Second, rather than use performance measurement and evaluation to determine success or failure, collective impact partners should use the information they provide to make decisions about adapting and improving their initiative. To that end, collective impact partners should embed evaluation and learning into their initiative's DNA, rather than treating it as an annual (or quarterly) exercise.

Embracing this comprehensive, adaptive approach to evaluating collective impact requires leaders to do three things differently. As we explain in the sections that follow, they should "ask what," "ask why," and "ask often."

ASK WHAT

First, collective impact partners should assess the progress and effectiveness of the changemaking process *as a whole*. This exercise requires examining four levels of the initiative: the initiative's context, the initiative itself, the systems that the initiative targets, and the initiative's ultimate outcomes.

The initiative's context | Context refers to everything that influences an initiative's design, implementation, and effectiveness. It includes economic conditions, demographics, media focus, political will, funding availability, leadership, and culture, among other factors. Changes in context are inevitable and often are important in supporting or hindering an initiative's success. For example, just as Washington State's Road Map Project began to form in 2012, its leaders learned that they could apply for a federal Race to the Top district award. They successfully organized themselves and won a $40 million award. The influx of financial support significantly boosted the initiative's capacity and accelerated the implementation of its priority strategies.[1]

To see how changes in context can influence an initiative's outcomes, consider the

Assessing an Initiative's Design and Implementation

SAMPLE OUTCOMES	SAMPLE INDICATORS
The development of the common agenda has included a diverse set of voices and perspectives from multiple sectors	■ The initiative's steering committee (or other leadership structure) includes voices from all relevant sectors and constituencies. ■ Members of the target population help shape the common agenda. ■ Community members are aware of the collective impact initiative's goals and activities.
An effective backbone function has been identified or established	■ Backbone staff effectively manage complex relationships. ■ Backbone staff demonstrate commitment to the collective impact's vision. ■ Backbone staff are both neutral and inclusive.
Quality data on a set of meaningful common indicators is available to partners in a timely manner	■ Partners commit to collecting the data as defined in the data plan. ■ Partners have the capacity to collect and input quality data. ■ Partners know how to use the shared measurement system. ■ Partners contribute quality data on a common set of indicators in a timely and consistent manner.

example of the final evaluation for Shape Up Somerville. This Massachusetts-based collective impact initiative focused on reducing citywide rates of obesity and included an analysis of the city's changing demographics. As its leaders noted: "If a community becomes more racially diverse over time, as is the case in Somerville, obesity rates would be expected to rise."[2] Without taking into account local demographic changes, the initiative's collaborators couldn't fully understand the effectiveness of its efforts.

The initiative itself | For any collective impact initiative, changing the way organizations and individuals interact with each other and approach complex problem-solving is an important, if often implicit, goal. The real power of the collective impact approach lies in the process—the ability to unite diverse groups around a common purpose, encourage open discussion and ongoing communication, support coordination and alignment of activities, and promote learning and continuous improvement. For example, an evaluation of Vibrant Communities, a pan-Canadian anti-poverty initiative, found that the "multi-sectoral nature of Vibrant Communities helps government move on [policy] change because proposals are already vetted from multiple interests in the community."[3]

Similarly, Shape Up Somerville attributes its success largely to its "multi-level approaches to promote active living and healthy eating."[4] The initiative engaged public schools, city government leaders, academic researchers, civic organizations, community groups, businesses (including restaurants), and residents in an integrated approach to problem solving that facilitated systems-level change. Ultimately, the initiative succeeded in decreasing childhood obesity rates throughout the city of Somerville.[5]

Assessing the progress and effectiveness of the collective impact changemaking process as a whole requires an explicit focus on the initiative's design and implementation. (See "Assessing an Initiative's Design and Implementation" above.) Although collective impact leaders may question the value of evaluating process, we urge them to pay careful attention to the quality and strength of their initiative itself, especially in its early years. This is a time when critically important decisions are made and learning is invaluable.

The systems that the initiative targets | Most collective impact initiatives have hugely ambitious goals: Not only do they seek to tackle complex problems, but they also try to create large-scale change. Achieving this level of impact, in a way that's sustainable over time, requires collective impact initiatives to make significant changes in systems (by influencing cultural norms, public policies, and funding flows) as well as patterns of behavior (including changes in professional practice or changes in individual behavior). These systems-level changes create the conditions that allow collective impact initiatives to achieve their ultimate objectives. (See "Assessing Systems-Level Changes" below.) Shape Up Somerville, for example, attributes part of its success to a constellation of systems-level changes. These included increased funding for anti-obesity work; healthier menu offerings in public schools and at more than 40 local restaurants; new bicycle lanes and improvements to public park infrastructure; improved nutritional standards in schools and other public institutions; and improvements in physical education equipment, facilities, and activities in schools and after-school programs.

The initiative's ultimate outcomes | As the initiative matures, collective impact partners should keep a watchful eye on their ultimate goals. It is normal for initiatives to make slow or minimal progress toward their goals in the early years, but collective impact partners should expect to achieve meaningful, measurable change within three to four years. They should track this progress over time using the initiative's shared measurement system in addition to more robust evaluations.

ASK WHY

Collective impact partners should use the results of their evaluative activities to make smart decisions about adapting and improving the initiative. To make such decisions, funders must complement performance measurement activities (which focus on determining *what* is happening) with other types of evaluation aimed at understanding *how* and *why* change is happening.

Collective impact partners can employ three different approaches to evaluation at different points in an initiative's lifetime: developmental evaluation, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation. As "Three Approaches to Evaluation" (to right) outlines,

Assessing Systems-Level Changes

SAMPLE OUTCOMES	SAMPLE INDICATORS
The collective impact initiative is influencing changes in attitudes and beliefs toward the desired behavior change	■ Individuals view the issues and goals of the collective impact initiative with increased importance, relevance, and a sense of urgency. ■ Individuals express attitudes or beliefs that support the desired behavior change.
Philanthropic (or public) funding in the targeted issue area/system is increasingly aligned with the goals of the collective impact initiative	■ Overall funding for the targeted issue area or system has increased. ■ Existing resources are directed toward evidence-based strategies in the targeted issue area or system. ■ New resources are committed to evidence-based strategies in the targeted issue area or system. ■ Funding is increasingly designed to allow for program innovation and experimentation in the targeted issue area or system.

each approach can help answer different questions. (For more detail on the three approaches, see "Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact," available at www.fsg.org.)

These approaches to evaluation are not mutually exclusive. Collective impact partners can and should use a combination of approaches over time. For example, Vibrant Communities in Canada used developmental evaluation to explore changes in context and potential implications for the initiative, and simultaneously used formative evaluation to refine its existing efforts. Later, the initiative used summative evaluation to look back on its effectiveness and overall impact.

ASK OFTEN

In the context of collective impact, the purpose of performance measurement and evaluation is to support learning, and the goal is to enable continuous improvement. We suggest that collective impact partners follow these steps to effective evaluation:

Start early | Even before an initiative's shared measurement system becomes operational, collective impact partners can monitor a set of early performance indicators that focus on the quality of the initiative's design and implementation. They can also use elements of developmental evaluation to provide insight into the effectiveness of the initiative's early efforts. For example, an infant mortality initiative in rural Missouri uses developmental evaluation to better understand how contextual factors and cultural dynamics influence the development of the strategy. The partners are working with a team of evaluation coaches to ask such questions as "What does the problem of infant mortality look like from the perspective of different stakeholders in our region, and what are the implications for the design of our collective impact initiative?"[6]

Embed learning into the initiative's DNA | To make learning a regular, active, and applied process, collective impact partners should establish clear learning structures and processes. For example, they can create space for group reflection at the start of meetings or periodically survey participants to identify pressing issues. These processes encourage the partners to exchange information, ideas, and questions and are thus critical to the initiative's continuous improvement.

Allocate resources appropriately | Because learning is central to collective impact success, ongoing investment in performance measurement and evaluation is crucial. For many collective impact initiatives, ongoing measurement requires dedicating a part-time or full-time employee to organize, oversee, embed, and apply lessons learned across the initiative. For others, it means looking for external support in the form of a coach, technical assistance provider, or professional evaluator. The majority of collective impact initiatives will likely rely on a combination of internal and external evaluation resources at different times. Regardless of the composition of the evaluation team, we urge collective impact partners to plan carefully for the financial resources and personnel they will need to support a robust approach to performance measurement and evaluation. After all, as a recent report from Grantmakers for Effective Organizations put it, "When you look at evaluation as a means of learning for improvement, … investments in evaluation seem worthwhile because they can yield information needed for smarter and faster decisions about what works."[7]

CONCLUSION

Effective collective impact evaluation needs to be multi-faceted, flexible, and adaptive, but it does not need to be exhaustive or extremely expensive. Evaluation efforts come in all shapes and sizes—the scope and scale of any individual evaluation will depend on the time, capacity, and resources available. Moreover, the focus of evaluation (including questions, outcomes, and indicators) will change as the initiative matures. The most effective collective impact initiatives will be those that seamlessly integrate learning and evaluation into their work from the beginning, allow those processes to evolve alongside their initiative, and use them as a guide for the future.

This article is based on FSG's "Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact," available at www.fsg.org. We encourage interested readers to refer to the guide for additional information on how to focus, structure, and plan for collective impact evaluation.

NOTES

1 Roap Map Region Race to the Top. http://roadmapracetothetop.org/ Accessed June 16, 2014.

2 "A Decade of Shape Up Somerville: Assessing Child Obesity Measures 2002-2011." White paper, Somerville, Mass.: City of Somerville Health Department, 2013: vii, 1.

3 "Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement. Evaluating Vibrant Communities 2002–2010." White paper, Waterloo, Ontario: Tamarack, 2010: 58.

4 "A Decade of Shape Up Somerville." 2013: 6.

5 "A Decade of Shape Up Somerville." 2013: 7.

6 For more information on the Missouri Foundation for Health's work on infant mortality, see "About MFH's Work in Infant Mortality" http://www.mffh.org/content/741/infant-mortality.aspx.

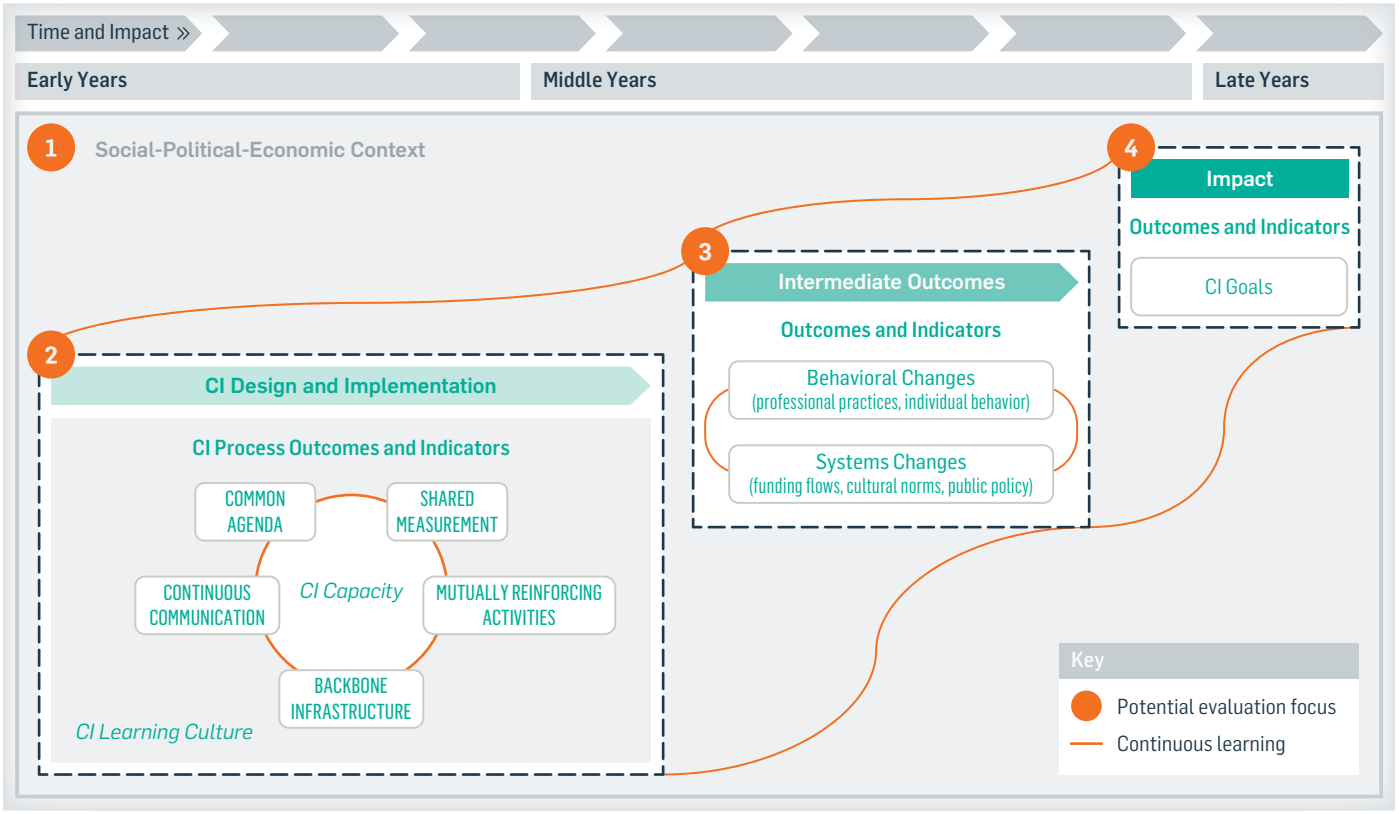
7 Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. n.d. Four Essentials for Evaluation. Washington, D.C.: Grantmakers for Effective Organizations.

Three Approaches to Evaluation

	DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION	FORMATIVE EVALUATION	SUMMATIVE EVALUATION
Stage of collective impact development	Collective impact initiative is exploring and in development.	Collective impact initiative is evolving and being refined.	Collective impact initiative is stable and well-established.
What's happening?	■ Collective impact partners are assembling the core elements of their initiative, developing action plans, and exploring different strategies and activities. ■ There is a degree of uncertainty about what will work and how. ■ New questions, challenges, and opportunities are emerging.	■ The initiative's core elements are in place and partners are implementing agreed upon strategies and activities. ■ Outcomes are becoming more predictable. ■ The initiative's context is increasingly well-known and understood.	■ The initiative's activities are well-established. ■ Implementers have significant experience and increasing certainty about "what works." ■ The initiative is ready for a determination of impact, merit, value, or significance.
Strategic question	What needs to happen?	How well is it working?	What difference did it make?
Sample evaluation questions	■ How are relationships developing among collective impact partners? ■ What seems to be working well and where is there early progress? ■ How should the collective impact initiative adapt in response to changing circumstances?	■ How can the initiative enhance what is working well and improve what is not? ■ What effects or changes are beginning to show up in targeted systems? ■ What factors are limiting progress and how can they be managed or addressed?	■ What difference(s) did the collective impact initiative make? ■ What about the collective impact process has been most effective, for whom, and why? ■ What ripple effects did the collective impact initiative have on other parts of the community or system?

Figure 1:

A Framework for Performance Measurement and Evaluation of Collective Impact Efforts

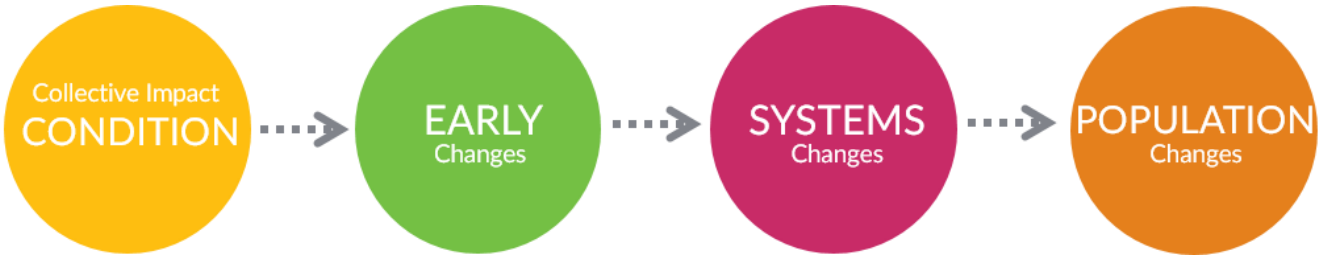


WHEN
COLLECTIVE IMPACT
A CROSS-SITE STUDY OF 25 COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES **HAS AN IMPACT**

Overview

Twenty-five collective impact sites participated in a just released study from ORS Impact and Spark Policy Institute "When Collective Impact has an Impact." The study was philanthropically funded by multiple foundations based in the U.S. and commissioned by the Collective Impact Forum to provide a balanced, independent assessment of whether and how collective impact is contributing to population- and systems-level outcomes. The full report is available for download at: bit.ly/collectiveimpactstudy.

Types of Changes Explored and Identified



Early changes include changes to the environment that lay the foundation for systems and policy changes, such as increased partnership quality, collaboration, and awareness of the issue.

Systems changes are changes to core institutions within the initiative's geographic area (ex. schools, human service systems, local government, private sector entities, and community organizations).

Population changes are changes in the target population of the initiative, which may be specific people within specific systems, geographic areas, or with specific needs.

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

For all 8 site visit sites, collective impact undoubtedly contributed to the desired population change.

Overall, 20 of the 25 sites showed evidence of population change.

Population change generally stemmed from changes in services, practices, and policies.

Barriers to population change include, establishing a Common Agenda, measuring impacts, and other internal/external challenges such as staffing, leadership, competing initiatives, and political constraints.

Implications

Collective impact is a long-term proposition; take the time to lay a strong foundation

Many of the study sites achieving population-level change have been around for more than a decade, and none for fewer than three years. There are specific steps initiatives can take up front to increase their likelihood of success over the long-term including:

- Recognizing it is worth the time upfront to clearly define the problem and target population.
- Not rushing to get the five conditions in place, but rather first investing thoughtfully in the two that are most foundational: backbone and common agenda.

Systems changes take many forms; be iterative and intentional

The study found many different routes to driving change:

- Informal partnerships and experiments that lead to formal systems changes across organizations;
- Formal changes within a single organization that lead to formal changes across organizations; and
- Changes within one system (e.g., education) that lead to changes in other systems (e.g., health).

Some of the changes that occur may or may not be directly tied to population-level change, and yet hold value for other reasons (e.g., building will to keep the work moving, creating greater visibility, establishing partnerships, etc.).

Equity is achieved through different routes; be aware, intentional, and adaptable

Stronger implementation of equity intent and actions seems to lead to some achievement of equitable systems and population changes, with stronger results among those with the strongest equity focus. Not surprisingly, those with no focus typically see no equity outcomes. There are a few exceptions among a few sites with narrowly defined populations that are considered "high risk," such as veteran and chronic homelessness. However, equity, as defined for this study, goes beyond simply achieving outcomes for particular groups. Equity implies other outcomes are equally as important, such as shifting the power dynamic and empowering communities to make decisions.

Collective impact initiatives take on different roles in driving change; be open to different routes to making a difference.

The collective impact approach made a difference in a diverse set of circumstances, sometimes as a driver of change, sometimes leveraging existing regulations and conditions and going further, and sometimes as a meaningful support to other critical efforts happening within communities.

A more explicit effort to identify the role that is the right fit, given the environment the initiative is implementing within could help strengthen its ability to leverage and contribute to early and systems changes needed to achieve population change. It could also ultimately establish the initiative as an important presence in the community, filling a critical and problematic gap, rather than risking replacement of otherwise effective structures and voices.