

*Working Paper:*

# Impact, Influence, Leverage, and Learning (I2L2) Outcomes Framework

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## Introduction to the Framework

Community and systems change initiatives typically encompass a myriad of strategies, interventions and activities. The changes sought through these initiatives are intended to produce a sizeable and lasting impact in the lives of people and the communities in which they live. This kind of scalable and substantial effort often requires us to look at meaningful outcomes from a vantage point that goes beyond changes among individuals.

As foundations, nonprofits and other social impact organizations define specific impact outcomes, there are usually a range of positive changes that are hoped for and believed to be instrumental in achieving impact outcomes. These interim outcomes typically occur in tandem and, along with the ultimate impact outcomes, are important to name and to measure as evidence of progress towards impact.

The I2L2 framework names and identifies the range of outcomes associated with social impact, crisply defines them, and helps lay the groundwork for effective impact measurement. The framework guides organizations to be both intentional and accountable for advancing robust, durable impact.

The evolution of the I2L2 framework mirrors a development in the advocacy evaluation field in which evaluators, advocates and funders lifted up and agreed upon a number of interim outcomes that reflected important milestones on the way to policy wins. Where previously there was often a narrow focus on whether advocacy led to the adoption of good policies or the defeat of bad policies, a more sophisticated understanding of what constitutes progress in the field led to wider consensus about how components such as shifting norms, development of organizational capacity, and strengthened alliances were interconnected with and supportive of policy gains.

Similarly, the I2L2 framework highlights the importance of Influence, Leverage and Learning outcomes in service of achieving Impact outcomes. As with advocacy evaluation, an overly narrow focus on long-term, broad-scale impact outcomes within complex system-change efforts may overlook the significant contributions of important enabling factors that are relevant indicators of progress on the road toward the ultimate goal. The I2L2 framework explicitly puts these interim outcomes into the equation of change.

### What Do We Mean by Impact, Influence, Leverage and Learning?<sup>1</sup>

**Impact** is the type of outcome most commonly thought of. Impact relates to changes in the lives of individuals and among populations in a specific community, geographic area or ecosystem. Impact outcomes can be changes in attitudes, knowledge, behavior, skills, perceptions, beliefs, practices, relationships or conditions. Examples of outcomes can be changes in political

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<sup>1</sup> The concepts of Impact, Influence and Leverage were noted in the work of the Annie E. Casey Foundation during in the early 2000s. Casey adopted these concepts as a way to talk about the foundation's community change initiatives.



attitudes, changes in personal aspirations, improved parenting skills, decreased risky behaviors, improved health status, greater educational attainment, greater economic stability, and more.

**Influence** reflects a wide range of systems-level changes that may happen among or within organizations, institutions, networks, partnerships, policies, practices or community norms. These changes relate to organizational practices, degree of alignment across groups and organizations, public will, political will, public policies, business practices, and so on. Examples are adoption of new policies on health care, community goals are shared and prioritized among many groups and organizations, greater availability of community services in key neighborhoods, more efficient delivery of services, decreased community tolerance of violence, changes in philanthropic practices, changes in levels of corporate engagement in social impact, and more.

**Leverage** refers to changes in the commitment of resources. In some cases, leverage outcomes may relate to changes in the levels of funding to implement a policy or mandate. It may also mean allocation of non-monetary resources, such as staffing dedicated to a particular issue or service or in-kind resources. Examples are pooled funding to implement a partnership between private businesses and post-secondary institutions, aligned funding across many foundations to support nuclear security issues, contribution of staff time towards a particular cause, and more.

**Learning** is about field-building and advancing knowledge which, the framework posits, is a critical part of any endeavor seeking to advance social impact. While learning can inform the specifics of a particular initiative, learning can also be a way to cross-fertilize across initiatives. Learning helps lift up insights or knowledge, which can then be applied broadly to guide and shape decisions about the choice of practices, the combination of practices, the implementation of practices, and so on. Examples of learning outcomes can be greater knowledge about high quality instructional leadership or improved processes for sharing strategic lessons gained from a prevention of HIV transmission initiative to another maternal child health initiative.

## How Do Impact, Influence, Leverage, and Learning relate to each other?

Importantly, there is a hierarchy to the framework. Impact is at the heart of accountability; it is the “prize” that everyone keeps their eyes on. Influence, leverage and learning occur in service of impact. That said, it might at times be relevant to prioritize influence and leverage outcomes in order to hasten or deepen impact and learning. Influence and leverage may, at times, follow impact – for example, when circumstances (social, financial, community norms, political forces, etc.) are shifting and there is a desire to maintain hard-fought social gains.

## Why Is This Framework Relevant to Theory of Change and MLE?

The I2L2 framework is relevant to social change initiatives faced with articulating their theory of change and measuring and evaluating what are, essentially, complex change efforts. The framework helps to break through a common trap: focusing on individual changes as the sole success measures, and relegating system-level changes as mere process measures. The I2L2 framework provides a way to articulate how individual change is interconnected with and



inseparable from concrete and measurable changes in organizations, communities, policies and investments that affect the lives of individuals.

This framework is easily accessible and understandable to those involved in social impact endeavors--including those engaged with communications, collaboration and Collective Impact. It offers a way to describe and communicate about advancing social change in a way that accurately portrays the complexity of the work. Significantly, the framework maintains a level of simplicity that is attractive and understandable to non-evaluators; the framework speaks to a wide range of organizations.

## What are Strong Examples of I2L2?

The following tables provide numerous concrete examples of Impact, Influence, Leverage and Learning outcomes that can be applied in many different contexts.

**Table 1. IMPACT: Individual and Family Outcome Areas and Sample Outcome Statements**

Outcome Area	Sample Outcome Statements
Changes in attitudes, e.g. perceptions and beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased perception among pregnant women of the importance of antenatal care for maternal and infant health</li> <li>• Increased feeling of safety among community members.</li> <li>• Increased desire of parents to create personal savings plans.</li> <li>• Youth have increased belief that they will have a positive future.</li> </ul>
Changes in knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased knowledge among emerging leaders about different styles of leadership</li> <li>• Increased knowledge of parents and caregivers about child development milestones.</li> </ul>
Outcome Area	Sample Outcome Statements
Changes in awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness among community members about cultural traditions</li> <li>• Increased awareness of US laws regarding acceptable child discipline among immigrants and refugees in the US.</li> </ul>
Changes in behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbors more frequently turn to one another for assistance</li> <li>• Increased parent involvement in their child's education</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved hand washing practices among restaurant workers</li> <li>• Increased engagement in the electoral process among people residing in rural areas</li> </ul>
Changes in health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased blood pressure.</li> <li>• Improved birth weight</li> </ul>
Changes in family stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families can provide for the basic needs of their members</li> <li>• Families maintain a stable residence</li> </ul>
Changes in financial status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased family income</li> <li>• Increased family saving.</li> </ul>

**Table 2. IMPACT: Population Level Outcome Areas and Sample Outcome Statements**

Outcome Area	Sample Outcome Statements
Changes in health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in the incidence of asthma attacks</li> <li>• Reduction in the incidence of lead poisoning</li> <li>• Increased health of salmon population in the Puget Sound</li> </ul>
Changes in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater percentage of high school students graduates</li> <li>• Improved student scores on standardized tests</li> </ul>
Changes in social or environmental conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased community cohesion</li> <li>• Decreased level of violence in a region</li> <li>• Increased number of large mammals that move freely through wilderness corridors in Y2Y region</li> </ul>
Changes in economic conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased poverty</li> <li>• Decreased unemployment</li> </ul>
Changes in safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased number of victims of sexual assault</li> <li>• Decreased number of endangered marine species exposed to environmental threats in Monterrey Bay</li> </ul>



**Table 3. INFLUENCE: Outcome Areas and Sample Outcome Statements**

Broad Outcome Areas	Sample Outcome Statements
Changes in visibility of issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local media accurately cover the message(s) of the media campaign.</li> <li>• Media increase frequency of coverage of an issue.</li> <li>• Public or community raises issue to a higher level of priority.</li> </ul>
Changes in community norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community decreases tolerance for polluted streams</li> <li>• Community increases belief in its own power to create change.</li> </ul>
Changes in partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering organizations jointly implement actions toward agreed-upon goals</li> <li>• Partners improve group functioning</li> <li>• Formal partnerships improve articulation of roles and responsibilities within the group</li> <li>• Collaborators use a common framework</li> <li>• Collaborators share data with each other</li> <li>• Partners routinely use data to evaluate their efforts and refine strategies to achieve specific results.</li> </ul>
Change in public will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members are motivated to take action on an issue.</li> <li>• Community members increase their communication with policy makers about a specific issue.</li> </ul>
Change in political will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political leaders increase willingness to take action on issues.</li> <li>• Legislators co-sponsor bills that support community priorities.</li> </ul>



Broad Outcome Areas	Sample Outcome Statements
Change in policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific policy changes.</li> <li>• Increase in policy statements that support community goal.</li> <li>• Policymakers adopt common language in policies and regulations.</li> <li>• Policymakers draft and adopt legislation that reflects community priorities.</li> <li>• Policymakers fund legislation at a level that is sustainable</li> <li>• Administrative policies enforce legislation</li> </ul>
Change in regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific regulations change.</li> <li>• Increase in regulations that support a specific community goal.</li> </ul>
Changes in service practice(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service providers increase their linguistic competence.</li> <li>• Service providers change the hours of service delivery to better match the availability of consumers.</li> <li>• Service providers change the locations of service delivery to better match the location of consumers.</li> <li>• Service providers routinely elicit consumer feedback and otherwise evaluate their performance to improve effectiveness.</li> </ul>
Change in business practice(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key businesses (grocery store, drug store, bank) are newly available in community.</li> <li>• Businesses change practices (hours, advertising, product selection) to meet community preferences.</li> <li>• Businesses change recruiting practices to attract a more diverse pool of qualified applicants.</li> <li>• Increased percentage of businesses that meet standards for sustainable fishing.</li> </ul>



**Table 4. LEVERAGE: Outcome Areas and Sample Outcome Statements**

Outcome Areas	Sample Outcome Statements
Changes in public funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New public funds allocated toward community priorities.</li> <li>• Public funds redistributed toward community priorities.</li> <li>• New funding methods (pooled, matched, blended) increase monetary resources to support community priorities.</li> <li>• Public funding practices (RFP process, selection criteria) change to increase availability of funds for community priorities.</li> <li>• Public agencies provide detailed or loaned staff for work on a particular program or strategy.</li> </ul>
Changes in philanthropic practices and investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased funding available for community priorities.</li> <li>• New funding methods (pooled, matched, blended) increase monetary resources to support community priorities.</li> <li>• Foundation funding practices (RFP process, selection criteria) change to increase availability of funds for community priorities.</li> <li>• Foundations make new types of funding available (e.g., PRI).</li> <li>• Foundations previously uninvolved in community begin to provide funding for community programs, agencies and initiatives.</li> </ul>
Changes in resources available to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New physical resources (computer rooms, meeting rooms) are available to the community.</li> <li>• New transportation resources (buses, taxis) are available to the community.</li> <li>• New service resources (copying, printing, delivery) are available to the community.</li> </ul>
Changes in private investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments in commercial development increase.</li> <li>• Private investments in housing development increase</li> <li>• Increased level of social impact investment among investment community</li> </ul>



**Table 5. LEARNING: Outcome Areas and Sample Outcome Statements**

Outcome Areas	Sample Outcome Statements
Improved transfer of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved systems for capturing and sharing data</li> <li>• Improved access to organizational learning opportunities</li> </ul>
Improved strategic learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved application of lessons learned in strategy development</li> <li>• Increased cross-fertilization of insights and knowledge</li> <li>• Increased engagement in a community of practice to explore new solutions and solve problems</li> <li>• Increased “actionable knowledge,” i.e. knowledge that informs decisions and behaviors.</li> </ul>

## When is the I2L2 Outcomes Framework Relevant?

### 1. When the unit of analysis is at the “enterprise” or system level

In this document, enterprise refers to a large undertaking or body of work that is complex, requires significant effort and encompasses mission, strategy, operations and ultimate impact. Traditionally, evaluation efforts have focused on discrete programs i.e., evaluation focuses on determining effectiveness of a related set of services. However, there is increasing recognition of the limitations of this approach among those concerned with better understanding social value and impact has spurred new thinking about how evaluation can gauge the value and effectiveness of comprehensive community change efforts, complex systems change efforts, collaborations seeking Collective Impact, advocacy and policy change efforts, cross-cutting social impact efforts, and the like.

An essential feature of this shift in evaluation frame is an enterprise-level orientation: what constitutes evidence that progress is being made toward significant and lasting impact changes? Going beyond a focus on “counting,” or documenting changes in individual lives, the focus on enterprise considers the extent to which the environment, practices, policies, norms and funding contexts are moving in a direction that supports fundamental impact. When the enterprise is the unit of analysis, multiple parts of the endeavor and interactions within the full enterprise become relevant for measurement and evaluation – and influence, leverage, and learning assume a central position in the evaluation and analytical approach.

### 2. When social change is the end game

Many organizations that focus on social impact tend to focus on the changes that result from a particular program, advocacy effort, policy change effort or funding initiative. However, social



change goes beyond any specific program; it is a broad concept that includes beliefs and norms, institutional structures and practices, social structures, comprehensive policies, leadership, engagement, social interactions, power dynamics, and so on. Social change is also a long-term endeavor; any enterprise aimed at social change must consider the dynamic flow of progress and setbacks. Therefore, influence, leverage and learning are natural and essential companions to impact and social change.

### 3. When there is a willingness to be adaptive

Some evaluation efforts are performance-oriented, i.e. evaluation focuses on whether or not a certain target or goal was attained. This type of evaluation approach is an example of an accountability model that often rewards success and sanctions failures. In circumstances where evaluation is performance-focused, influence, leverage and learning outcomes would be irrelevant and distracting. Influence, leverage and learning only have meaning when there is an adaptive philosophy built into an organization's approach, and there is an authentic commitment to understanding what is required to achieve enabling conditions, testing and refining working hypotheses, and an openness to ongoing adaptations in tactics and strategy. In this type of orientation, one is held accountable for advancing the mission, not for the attaining a predefined set of performance targets, which may not maintain relevancy in the context of changing systemic or environmental conditions.

### 4. When qualitative data is respected

Many of the measurement and evaluation approaches that facilitate the best understanding of influence, leverage, and learning outcomes are qualitative. While some data can be quantified, such as the level of collaboration, the percent of policy proposals adopted, or the perception of empowerment, qualitative data often provide rich perspective and insights about influence and leverage that, in turn, foster learning. Therefore, the framework is most relevant when qualitative data are regarded with the same level of credibility as those data that are quantitative in nature.

### 5. When management structures can balance efficiency and effectiveness

Put simply, seeing many patients and making good diagnostics would both be valued in the management of clinical work. Increasingly, the structures that govern the work of so many organizations are deemphasizing the goal of why they exist in order to demonstrate lean processes and relatable achievements. Management structures associated with achieving social impact work best when they are comprehensive enough to include a rich array of outcomes—recognizing that no single outcome is sufficient to stand alone when the desired ends are about intractable and sticky social problems. An extreme example of when the I2L2 framework would not be relevant is the organization that opts to focus its measurement on how cheaply they are able to supply a certain number of bags of food to homeless individuals. While arguably important, the effort occurs without the link to understanding the root causes of poverty. In other words, the organization is focused narrowly on its own efficiency rather than on what it might take to improve systems and policies, and develop actionable knowledge that spurs changes in the populations which are subject to hunger.



## Key Insights Regarding the I2L2 Framework

### Systems-thinking is an essential aspect of the framework

Impact outcomes, often the bottom line for social change efforts, are embedded in the dynamic interactions between populations, systems and environment. It is important to recognize that advancing social change occurs in a context of complexity. The framework works well in the realm of complexity. Linear logical frameworks that imply simple causal relationships between actions and results (e.g. program logic models) are insufficient for describing social change, as they don't account well for systemic factors that may have bearing on desired impact. Systems theorists provide a wealth of models and tools that relate well with the I2L2 framework.

Ultimately, the I2L2 framework allows for greater definition and understanding about the systems and environments in which impact is sought, and helps to lift up: (1) where key changes may be most needed on the way to impact, (2) where there is the greatest opportunity to affect change and (3) how measurement and learning supports ongoing intentionality, accountability and progress towards desired impact.

### The framework promotes articulation of underlying beliefs and assumptions regarding how impact will be achieved, and may at times guide useful shifts in thinking.

A long-held common operating assumption within the child welfare system was that child safety is the primary driver of positive child outcomes. As such, standard practice was to take a child out of the home in order to ensure their safety. In the 1990s, a family reunification model implemented by Homebuilders took a different point of view by positing that the primary driver of positive child outcomes is family permanence. Once that shift occurred, it opened up more strategic options within the child welfare system and resulted in a range of practice changes. Interestingly, the shift in beliefs and practice changes aimed at rapid family reunification and maximizing permanence also resulted in reduced costs to the child welfare system.

By identifying what is in the way and what systemic changes are needed on the way to impact, the I2L2 framework helps clarify the operating paradigm and assumptions that guide an enterprise, and creates the space to adjust assumptions as needed. For example, when addressing homelessness, one view might be that it is important to engender greater personal connection to the issue, which will lead to greater public greater compassion, care and direct support for homeless individuals. Another view might be that because many people are only one paycheck away from homelessness, a more stable economic structure is needed. As interim categories of change are conceptualized, underlying assumptions emerge. Making these assumptions explicit can sometimes result in useful dialogue regarding the best, most relevant strategic approaches.



## The term “influence” can be misunderstood or have negative connotations

To some, the term “influence” may conjure up notions of people being pressured, or rules changes that come about at the behest of those with power, privilege, or wealth. Therefore, some shy away from the term because it suggests insider workings, manipulation of thought or production, privileged access to power brokers. The I2L2 framework uses the term influence in a positive and active way – those who desire social change need to be able to have influence in order to realize robust impact. For those in the business of impact, influence is likely to be an essential component of realizing end goals.

## This framework offers a fresh way to conceptualize and talk about success

The I2L2 framework recognizes that impact-oriented investments are likely to have multiple components and be implemented via multiple grants. The framework also recognizes that value is often determined qualitatively, and not always by the volume of outputs. As the various components of an overall investment are implemented, there may be synergistic effects created from what may appear to be a relatively small effort or output of a single organization. The I2L2 framework offers a way to focus on what are most meaningful changes, as well as on the accumulation of effort across an entire initiative, and assess progress at the enterprise level, instead of viewing each singular grant or component as having been a stand-alone “win” or a “loss.”

For example in the Casey Jobs Initiative, an eight-year, six-city effort to connect inner-city adults to family-supporting jobs and improve urban labor markets, the city of Milwaukee hit every volume-jobs target. In contrast, the city of New Orleans did not hit their targets. However, New Orleans was able to place an African American woman in a mechanic ‘union’ job, an unprecedented placement. Although it was only one job placement, this reflected a significant “win,” as it led to longer-term changes in job opportunities for African American women. The I2L2 framework helps lift up the value of this type of change.

To step back from the emphasis on quantity over quality, using stoplight colors can be an effective approach to conceptualizing progress. If the intent is to deliver knowledge, influence, and relationships, showing progress with green, yellow, and red rather than numbers can be a way to step back from the normalized understanding of learning - which often emphasizes quantity over quality of work. In the case of the Casey Jobs Initiative, the stoplight color for New Orleans might have been green, because they were making strides in disrupting the status quo and creating the enabling conditions for economy self-sufficiency among people previously left out of good-paying jobs.



## Learning is an integral part of the social change process and drives real-life decisions about strategies and actions.

The framework posits that when the focus is social impact and social change, measurement and learning go hand-in-hand. Unless one is diligent about identifying those systemic changes that are needed in order to advance impact, and unless one commits to integrating learning about progress and using learning to inform adaptations and refinements, the chances of successfully advancing social impact decrease.

Learning involves reflection on evaluative data, as well as on other types of information and experiences. The framework promotes purposeful and intentional reflection that can produce focused insights that will, ultimately, inform how to implement strategies and actions so that impact can best be achieved. When learning is activated, the question of how an organization can best advance its mission becomes a focus, rather than the success of individual grants or interventions.

At different points in the life cycle of a social change initiative, learning might focus on the insights that best support tactics, program development and improvement, or strategic decisions. For example, the early part of a social change initiative is typically a discovery phase where learning is much more likely to inform tactics and programs. Later in an initiative, learning is more likely to generate insights that inform strategic decisions. Regardless of when the learning occurs, it is only as good as its application.

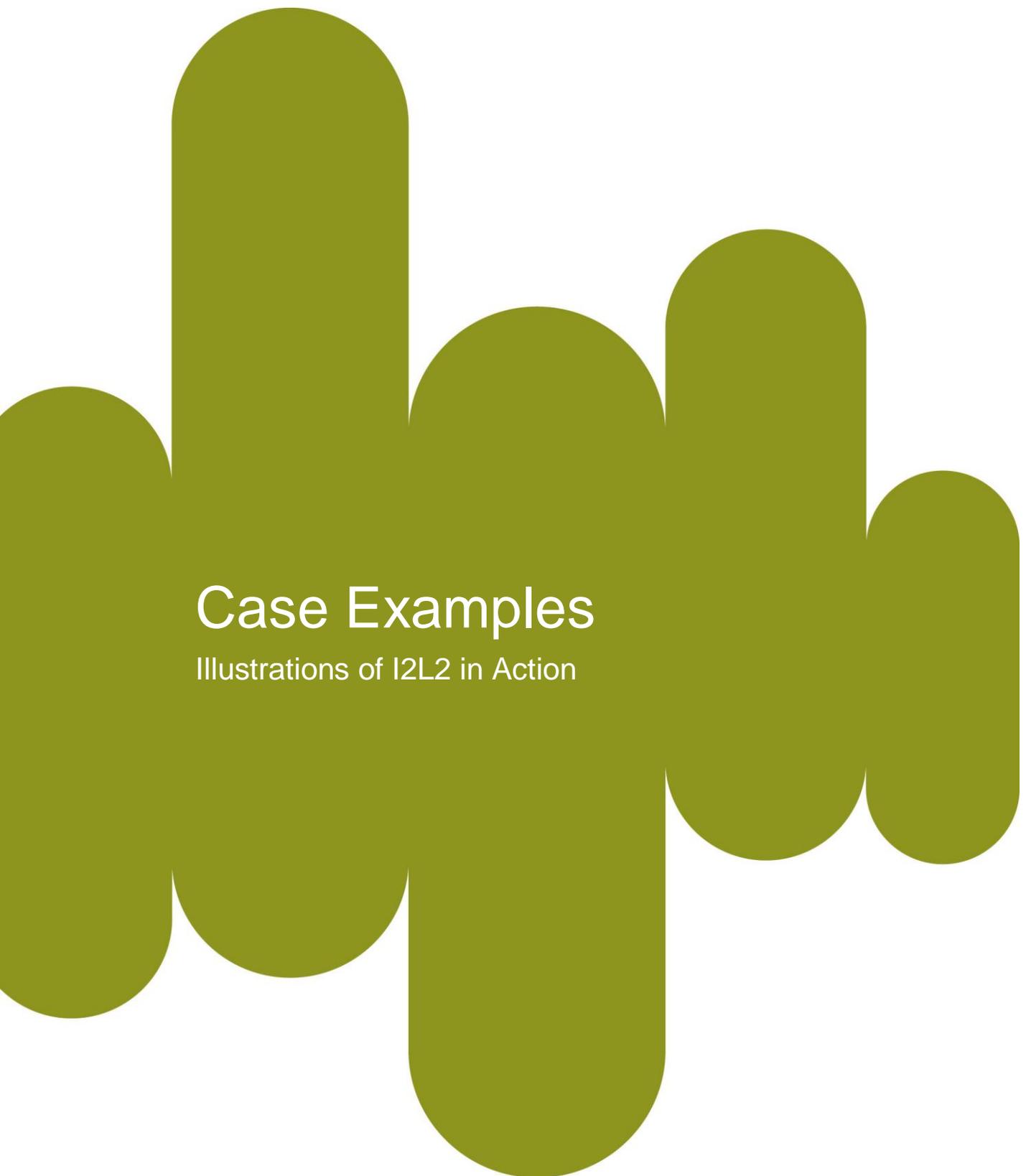
It is likely that organizations will need to consciously and intentionally build skills to better incorporate learning as a way of doing business. To some extent, building in learning will involve becoming comfortable with acknowledging when things did not go well. Having power-neutral processes and a safe learning culture – e.g. a culture where learning is integrated with accountability - creates the opportunity for honest reflection and, ideally, allows organizations to move forward without repeating the same mistakes over and over. This type of learning is essential when the work is multi-faceted, complex and long-term. Lessons learned are often applicable to multiple organizations or partnerships, and it is often valuable to share insights with the field.

## Conclusion

This working paper provides an overview of the Impact, Influence, Leverage and Learning framework and offers a glimpse into how we have been applying and using the framework in our work. We view the I2L2 framework's categories as providing a useful way to advance measurement of social change efforts and ensure that those measurement efforts are relevant and productive.



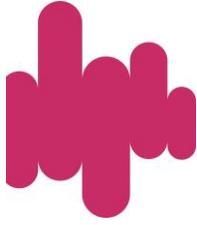




# Case Examples

Illustrations of I2L2 in Action





## Scope Health: Development of a Theory of Change

This case example is a good illustration the I2L2 framework being utilized during the development of a Theory of Change. Helping guide the thinking of the board members, this framework expanded the team's ability to conceptualize the community changes which would impact the lives of the individuals they sought to help. I2L2 increased the accountability of SCOPE's practices and provided a learning framework, through which outcomes like increased collaboration among health-workers and religious leaders became legitimized as ends in and of themselves.

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Achieving change in the sphere of global development is no small feat, but rising to the challenge was exactly what SCOPE (*Strengthening Care Opportunities through Partnership in Ethiopia*) set out to do from the beginning. SCOPE's mission is to improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia through a partnership between the medical and faith communities: University of Washington's Department of Global Health, the University of Gondar, Ethiopia, the University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington, and the North Gondar Diocese of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC).

Through the collaborative engagement of medicine, faith and community partnerships, SCOPE has achieved notable results in a few short years. By embedding their work in the cultural context of the EOC, SCOPE leverages the strength of already existing relationships between people and their priests. "It's a different dynamic than the one we are used to in the United States," says Nancy Andrews, one of SCOPE's co- directors. "Families are much closer with their priests than they are with their doctors," she adds. Considering that a majority of people in Gondar identify as Orthodox and priests far outnumber medical doctors, this makes pregnant women more likely to confide in their religious leaders- resulting in a powerful window of opportunity for change. SCOPE taps into this dynamic by funding global health fellows to build bridges between the medical and religious communities. Their goal is to partner with local faith leaders for outreach, education and training around the importance of antenatal care and HIV/AIDS testing.

SCOPE began as "a series of serendipitous connections," as Nancy puts it. During a regular worship service at University Presbyterian Church an internationally renowned speaker challenged the congregation to do something in response to the global HIV/AIDS crisis, and so Nancy responded. She soon met Dr. King Holmes (Chair of the Department of Global Health at the University of Washington) through a mutual acquaintance and their work began. While it may seem a similar serendipity brought ORS Impact's Paula Rowland on to SCOPE's board of directors, her background in Global Health and experience in outcome-based planning was what culminated in this Senior Associate's critical involvement in developing a [Theory of Change](#) for SCOPE.

Shortly after joining their board, Paula observed that some of the questions SCOPE was wrestling with could be clarified through work in which she specialized. She teamed up with Jane Reisman, founder and President of ORS Impact, to facilitate the creation of an outcome map that articulated their Theory of Change. By outlining the set of linkages among strategies, outcomes and goals an organization sets, a Theory of Change is useful in uncovering underlying beliefs in how an organization affects change. This tool not only guides strategic direction, but can also be used to direct measurement and communication for fund development.

The process began with Paula doing thorough background reading to fully understand the organization's mission, activities and accomplishments. "We are respectful of the work that's been done," she emphasizes, "...we don't assume that strong processes haven't been put into place.

By compiling existing information from SCOPE's grant proposals, newsletters, and board meeting minutes into a set of strategies, outcomes and goals, Paula and Jane facilitated the group in creating "so-that chains". The participants were asked to create a map linking sticky notes which showed various components of SCOPE's work. This process, which generally includes multiple interactive workshops, allowed the organization to tell the story of how they believed the components worked together to achieve change. Used as an iterative technique, it let SCOPE "...reflect on what they've been doing, where they want to go, and was helpful in discerning whether they were on the right path," Paula states.

To help unpack the complex interactions between strategies, outcomes and goals, ORS Impact often employs various frameworks. One of these, which the company developed- I2L2- focuses on providing a wider aperture for understanding the kind of outcomes that are meaningful to community and systems change, where an organization can logically make a difference, and thus what to hold themselves accountable to. This framework was used to help SCOPE gain clarity around their current and future work.

For example, SCOPE employs three strategies to bring about systemic change: training priests and religious women, funding global health fellows, and developing partnerships to strengthen this work. While SCOPE works in the global health sphere, their mission is not to be direct providers of HIV/AIDS care, but rather to

**Influence** .....> the local health system,

**Leverage** .....> the power of partnerships between the medical and faith communities,

**Learn** .....> from the experience to be able to scale up the model to increase their influence; all on the way to the achieving the overall

**Impact** .....> of improving the lives of people in Ethiopia affected by HIV/AIDS.

The Impact, Influence, Leverage and Learning framework used in the creation of SCOPE's Theory of Change clarified standards of accountability to measure themselves against and simultaneously pushed for celebrating success, refocusing efforts and building momentum.

"We knew what we were doing, but we didn't know where we were going," says Nancy of this well-received process. "We are a diverse organization, but this outcome map got everyone on board to tell the same story."

To find out more about the amazing work done by SCOPE, visit their website at [scopehealth.org](https://scopehealth.org).



## The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Results Based Leadership Programs

This case example illustrates how the I2L2 framework was used at the front end of an initiative to identify a progression of outcomes that linked to both program and foundation level results. For organizations that focus on population level results, but contain a unit whose main purpose is to change leadership practices of nonprofit, philanthropic and public sector leaders, this framework is particularly helpful. Since changes in practices of such entities will eventually affect population results, the unit of change is relevant on a community systems level.

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation is devoted to developing a brighter future for millions of children at risk of poor educational, economic, social and health outcomes. Casey's work focuses on strengthening families, building stronger communities and ensuring access to opportunity, as children need all three to succeed. To advance its mission, Casey has over the past 20 years helped emerging leaders "develop the skills, the behaviors and the relationships necessary to lead organizations and public systems towards lasting improvements in child and family well-being."<sup>2</sup> Targeting diverse mid-level and top-level leaders in the non-profit and public sectors, Casey's leadership development initiatives embody key concepts of "results based" work, including:

- Defining, up front, a desired or expected change in conditions for a population or community (i.e. the desired **result**).
  - Examples of **results**: children are reading proficiently by the end of third grade, fewer youth face repeat encounters with the juvenile justice system
- Building certain core competencies in leaders that help them effectively advance desired results.
  - Examples of **core competencies**: Be data driven, bring attention to and act on disparities, master adaptive leadership, and collaborate with others.

Casey's approach, known as Results-Based Leadership, is being applied by the foundation's Leadership Development Unit across 9 programs and initiatives that engage emerging leaders from across multiple sectors.

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<sup>2</sup> From The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2012). "Leading for Results: Developing Talent to Drive Change."

In 2012, Casey made a renewed commitment to adopt a foundation-wide results-based framework. As part of this effort, each unit, portfolio and program is to identify annual performance measures that are tied to the Foundation's overall results.

To support the Foundation's performance measurement efforts, ORS Impact was engaged to consult with Casey's leadership development unit (LDU) regarding their articulation of outcomes and associated measures for the unit's programs and initiatives. The LDU team has identified program-level outcomes that align with overall foundation results; participants in Results-Based Leadership (RBL) programs will

- contribute to aligned actions around population-level results, and
- master RBL competencies and apply RBL practices in their own organizations/systems.

In addition, Casey's LDU also expects that participants' home organizations and/or systems will

- contribute to aligned action around population-level results, and
- integrate RBL practices that lead to a culture of results.

Finally, it is the LDU's hope that across the social sector, emerging talent will employ RBL skills, tools and practices as they contribute to improved population-level results for children and families.

As a first step towards identification of annual performance measures that would allow LDU programs and initiatives to describe progress towards program outcomes, ORS Impact consultants guided the LDU team to articulate a theory of change. This process helped the team clarify and understand the sequence and linkages among different types of change, and how certain changes established preconditions for other types of change.

The Impact, Influence, Leverage and Learning framework proved to be relevant, and thinking about different types of outcomes pushed the team to consider and clarify where it could comfortably define accountability. As part of the articulation of theory of change, the LDU team recognized the following types of changes as relevant to its work:

**Impact** .....> i.e. individual leaders from across sectors will experience an increase in their knowledge, skills and commitments regarding RBL core principles and the application of those principles,

**Influence** .....> i.e. the home organizations of those participating in RBL programs and initiatives will incorporate and utilize RBL principles as part of their structure and processes, and demonstrate strong alignment/robust collaboration with others that seek the same or similar results,

**Leverage** .....> i.e. the expertise and reputation of Casey's partners and the relationships between Casey and its partners will help to refine, enhance and expand the reach of Casey's Results-Based Leadership approach,

These changes, in turn, contribute to:

- Learning** .....> Casey's LDU will learn from experiences and data regarding how best to scale up the Results-Based Leadership Approach,
- Influence** .....> more organizations across sectors integrate RBL principles and apply RBL, and
- Impact** .....> more communities realize improvements in population-level results for children and families

Consideration of the Impact, Influence, Leverage and Learning framework allowed the LDU to identify annual performance measures that accurately reflect its core work, and how that work is expected to progress and expand over time.



## Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, a site of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

This case example illustrates how the I2L2 framework can be applied to an existing program. In an initiative which already has programs and infrastructure in place, the I2L2 framework can guide further thinking and strategic direction, ensuring the prioritization of learning is aligned as an overlay to an existing Theory of Change.

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Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF), created in 1916, promotes philanthropy and stewards over 650 funds to help meet current and future community needs. HCF also provides private foundation services for a number of independent foundations. The Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation, with whom the HCF works, has a particular interest in supporting foster youth, and has been giving out college scholarships for many years. Several years ago the Geist Foundation found that foster youth weren't taking full advantage of this support; even though the Foundation's college scholarships were fairly accessible and renewable, youth weren't reapplying. Faced with this perplexing issue, the trustees of the foundation posed the question: "Why?"

Responding to the Geist Foundation's question, the staff at HCF began researching programs across the country in search of an alternative, effective way to engage youth in aiding their transitions out of the foster care system. HCF staff found that many programs worked on one or two components of foster youth's transitions from care, but not many looked at the whole picture. In this landscape, one program stood out: the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative - a national effort focused on improving outcomes for young people transitioning out of the foster care system. As HCF staff became more familiar with this program's priority outcomes and strategies, HCF put together an advisory board. They began working in partnership with the Department of Human Services of Hawai'i, multiple family court judges, several nonprofits and community leaders, as well as the youth themselves to conduct an environmental scan to learn more about the issue of foster care in the state. By bringing together these partners, HCF hoped to discern whether adopting a lens similar to the one Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative uses, fit the local context. In other words, "Does this make sense for Hawai'i?"

The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative identifies seven different outcome areas for improvement: education, permanence, employment, housing, physical and mental health, social capital and financial capability. Through five core strategies, national initiative works to bring together the people, systems and resources necessary to assist youth leaving the foster care system make successful transitions into adulthood. The core strategies include the following: 1) Youth Engagement 2) Partnerships and Resources 3) Research, Evaluation and Communication 4) Public Will and Policy and 5) Increased Opportunities.

Working with an Advisory group, HCF assessed whether Hawaii was positioned or “ripe” to adopt the Jim Casey approach and gauged the openness and commitment of key players to come to the table to implement the Initiative by adopting and pursuing all five strategies of the Jim Casey Initiative approach. It was decided that if tangible change was the goal, “...we were going to do it whole heartedly and use every strategy,” says Amy Luersen, Director of Philanthropic Services at HCF. Thus, the Hawai’i Youth Opportunities Initiative (HYOI) was born as a startup and became one the first co-investment sites of the Jim Casey Initiative. A partnership of four local funders<sup>1</sup> committed to three years of support, and HYOI began its operation.

Grants were made to a local nonprofit- Epic O’hana- which was well respected in the field of child welfare and had considerable expertise to operate the initiative.<sup>3</sup>

Five community partnership boards as well as five youth leadership boards- called the HI HOPES- were created across the state between 2010 and 2012. The community partnership boards typically include the chancellor of each local community college, representatives from Bank of Hawai’i, representatives from DHS, representatives of the family courts, and community leaders varying by locations. These boards represent the public will, and accomplish the task of connecting the youth voice to the community.

Being part of the leadership board provides a networking opportunity for youth to engage with influential members of the community, while collaboration of these diverse actors simultaneously creates a realistic perception of the needs within the community. Through such partnerships, leaders hear the stories, understand the issues, and are then able to facilitate concrete change for youth.

**In the short time this initiative has existed, it has already experienced considerable success.** For example, though Hawaii has good health insurance law which requires that employers provide part-time staff with insurance, many youth don’t have a job in-between college and thus aren’t eligible for such coverage. “By interacting with various local community leaders, the reality of the youth experience was illuminated,” says Amy Luersen, “While youth are enrolled when they turn 18, we are striving to ensure automatic reenrollment.” Nationally the Jim Casey Initiative was instrumental in including changes in the Affordable Care Act, which mandates that former foster children of the state are provided health care coverage up until 26 years of age.

Community partners in collaboration with the youth voice identified another area in need of attention, which resulted in a bill introduced in the 2013 state legislature. The bill aimed to extend voluntary care for foster youth beyond age 18, and was unanimously passed the first time through- a notable achievement. The opportunity for the youth to be present at every hearing and throughout the whole process provided them with the outlet to advocate for their personal well-being as well as for the well-being of younger people in care, translating into eager ownership of the policy and its success.

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<sup>3</sup> The four local funders include the following: The Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation, The Hawaii Community Foundation, The Atherton Family Foundation, and The McInerny Foundation.

An additional success which shows the shift in perception of community needs is demonstrated through the developed commitment of DHS to understanding the youth voice- they requested young people be present in all of the meetings during the design of the extended voluntary care program. The youth leadership board also developed a public service announcement to encourage participation in the program, put together the advocacy document (which is developed yearly to keep track of progress toward outcomes), and helped define what was feasible from the youth perspective. The program went into effect July 1, 2014.

Though the I2L2 framework was not used in the development of this initiative, it can be usefully applied to describe HYOI's existing mode of operation. By identifying and uplifting system change outcomes, I2L2 can help conceptualize further strategic direction toward the initiative's ultimate goal of aiding the transition of youth from the foster care system into adulthood.

- Influence** .....> Community partnership boards represent the public will and accomplish the task of connecting community leaders with the youth voice, which calls attention to the need for various policy change within the foster care system as well as providing access to potential community resources.
- Leverage** .....> success of the operation is owed to leveraging resources of three private and one community foundation as well as matching of resources, tools, and existing knowledge of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.. Connections to other community resources such as the community college system and workforce development are strengthen and access is improved through participation in the community Partnership boards.
- Learning** .....> Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative provides annual convenings of all the Jim Casey Co-Investment sites across the country. At the convening, new research is shared as well as peer learning around strategies from different sites. Each site conducts a bi-annual survey of young people to track youth outcomes. Each site has a self-evaluation team who review the data and use that information to identify areas of focus, to increase public awareness and to influence policies and practices. Tracking data (the number of people who go through training, number of dollars saved, matched dollars) helps assess whether the program is on track.
- Impact** .....> youth in foster care obtain financial capability training and a matched savings account, through the Bank of Hawai'i, that they can tap into for approved assets like tuition, first month's rent, and equipment for employment. Youth experience increase opportunities and, through participation in the youth leadership board, are better able to advocate for themselves in their community.



## Defining and Measuring Foundation Influence: Reach. Engage. Act.

This case example of the application of the I2L2 framework at a foundation level demonstrates how to accurately capture the kinds of changes sought, as well as the body of work that a foundation actually implements. It affirms that systems level outcomes- influence, leverage and learning- are as critical to prioritize as impact outcomes, and is a useful tool in showing how organizations are effectively en route to achieving envisioned impact.

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This case study describes one foundation's approach to defining and measuring influence.

Their mission is to reduce the gap in opportunity that exists between advantaged and disadvantaged communities. Through investments in direct services and grant making, the foundation aims to close this gap and achieve positive results for communities through multiple complementary strategies:

1. Development of dissemination of best practices;
2. Build capacity of organizations and practitioners to lead, implement, and improve effective practices;
3. Use of data to raise awareness, inform and improve strategy, contribute to decision-making, and strengthen accountability;
4. Policy research and advocacy;
5. Support and collaboration with public systems in order to improve practice and achieve results at scale for large numbers of people;
6. Collaborate and co-fund with other philanthropies and key partners to implement effective practices at greater scale;
7. Strategic communications to mobilize public will and hold systems and service providers accountable;
8. Place-based strategies to change the environments that surround and support large numbers of disadvantaged children; and
9. Mission-related investments to persuade markets to work better for low-income communities.

Though these strategies are comprehensive, they are likely not sufficient – even in combination - to directly affect population-level changes in the well-being of communities. In order to achieve results for large numbers of people, the foundation’s role vis-à-vis its strategies is to **influence** others to change and act in ways that result in and more and better services, resources, and opportunities for all; and principles that embed these same approaches in all practices, policies, and environments affecting low-income communities. The aims of the foundation are to realize greater awareness of problems and effective solutions, greater public will and motivation to act, amplification of the sense of urgency for poor families, and stronger accountability among funders, systems, and communities. It is through these influence outcomes that real and lasting change in communities will occur *at scale* and in ways that are *sustainable* beyond the foundation’s investment timeframe.

Resources are used to **influence** key actors and audiences in order to achieve impact. The foundation’s **influence** strategy is defined as the use of investments, relationships, reputation, experience, knowledge, grantee networks and data to achieve specific types of changes in practice, policy, financing, and conditions that contribute to intended results for communities. Examples of the kinds of outcomes directly resulting from their influence efforts are:

- Policymakers and system leaders implement and fund more effective community strengthening practices
- Practitioners and fields of practice take up effective community strengthening ideas, values, behaviors, and practices
- Communities and organizations advocate on behalf of poor communities and families and focus attention on issues of inequity and lack of opportunity
- Other philanthropies fund in areas that complement the foundation’s ideas and work
- Private sector markets act in ways that strengthen and support communities and provide equitable economic opportunity

Within the foundation, all staff have an active role in supporting, sustaining, and expanding the reach and effectiveness of the foundation’s influence and ensuring that the foundation is able to take advantage of opportunities to reach and engage key audiences and to influence their thoughts, behaviors, and actions.

### Measuring Progress & Results of Influence Work: Reach, Engage, Act

The foundation always begins with desired results for communities and then defines what is needed to achieve population-level impact, e.g., partners, tactics, policies, practices. They then define the unit of change, which could be particular actors, groups or organizations, or policies, and the expected timeframe for change, e.g. what will be early changes? What will be intermediate-term changes? Being explicit about its hypotheses and assumptions regarding what needs to change on the way to population impact allows the foundation to shape an effective influence strategy.

For the effective measurement of influence, it is necessary to define who or what we hope to influence, as well as what specific changes are hoped for. Several years ago, the foundation developed a framework for documenting their influence with national program and policy partners. Stages of influence were defined as *Reach*, *Engage*, and *Act*, a simple concept that had positive resonance and relevance to the foundation’s strategies. Staff and grantees were able to report activities as well as the changes that occurred because of their work. Some examples of outcomes resulting from their influence-oriented work with program and policy partners are described in the tables below, and are organized using the categories of *Reach*, *Engage*, *Act*.

**Table 1. Influence Efforts Related To Use of Data, Building Evidence, Adoption of Best Practices and Principles, Creating a Sense of Urgency**

<b>DESIRED IMPACT: Changes in well-being of children, families and communities</b>		
<b>INFLUENCE OUTCOMES</b>		
<b>REACH</b>	<b>ENGAGE</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target audiences identified</li> <li>• New relationships with target audiences established</li> <li>• Greater connections to and communications with target audiences</li> <li>• Increased access to credible, relevant data among target audiences</li> <li>• Greater awareness among target audiences</li> <li>• Increased knowledge among target audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among target audiences:</li> <li>• Changes in attitudes and beliefs</li> <li>• Changes in willingness, desire, and motivation</li> <li>• Changes in readiness, capacity, and skills</li> <li>• Changes in public and political will</li> <li>• Changes in partnerships and networks</li> <li>• Changes in system and community conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target audiences demonstrate:</li> <li>• Changes in actions and behaviors</li> <li>• Changed practice</li> <li>• Policy adoption and implementation</li> </ul>
		<b>LEVERAGE OUTCOMES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in commitment of funding and resources</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Influence Efforts Related to Enacting and Implementing Effective Public Policies that Address Poverty and Economic Supports for Children & Families**

<b>DESIRED IMPACT: Changes in well-being of children, families and communities</b>		
<b>INFLUENCE OUTCOMES</b>		
<b>REACH</b>	<b>ENGAGE</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among decision-makers and the public:</li> <li>• Increased access to data</li> <li>• Increase awareness of key problem issues</li> <li>• Increased knowledge of effective solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among the public and champions:</li> <li>• Strengthened state advocacy networks and partnerships to address specific policy priorities</li> <li>• Increased communications and advocacy capacity among partners and grantees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among decision makers:</li> <li>• Increased number of state legislatures considering and acting on policy priorities</li> <li>• Increased funding for policy solutions</li> </ul>



