Moving the Needle on Community Change through Collective Impact: Education, Health, Housing and Poverty

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From Isolated Impact to Collective Impact

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

Collective Impact
• Funders understand that social problems – and their solutions – arise from multiple interacting factors
• Cross-sector alignment with government, nonprofit, philanthropic and corporate sectors as partners
• Organizations actively coordinating their actions and sharing lessons learned
• All working toward the same goal and measuring the same things
Collective Impact – Framing Questions

- Do we aim to effect —**needle**— change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
- Do we believe that a **long-term investment** (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
- Do we believe that **cross-sector engagement** is essential for community-wide change?
- Are we committed to using **measurable data** to set the agenda and improve over time?
- Are we committed to having **community members as partners and producers** of impact?

**Collective Impact Efforts Tend to Transpire Over Four Key Phases**

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<th>Components for Success</th>
<th>Phase I Generate Ideas and Dialogue</th>
<th>Phase II Initiate Action</th>
<th>Phase III Organize for Impact</th>
<th>Phase IV Sustain Action and Impact</th>
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<td><strong>Governance and Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Convene community stakeholders</td>
<td>Identify champions and form cross-sector group</td>
<td>Create infrastructure (backbone and processes)</td>
<td>Facilitate and refine</td>
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<td><strong>Strategic Planning</strong></td>
<td>Hold dialogue about issue, community context, and available resources</td>
<td>Map the landscape and use data to make case</td>
<td>Create common agenda (common goals and strategy)</td>
<td>Support implementation (alignment to goal and strategies)</td>
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<td><strong>Community Involvement</strong></td>
<td>Facilitate community outreach specific to goal</td>
<td>Facilitate community outreach</td>
<td>Engage community and build public will</td>
<td>Continue engagement and conduct advocacy</td>
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<td><strong>Evaluation And Improvement</strong></td>
<td>Determine if there is consensus/urgency to move forward</td>
<td>Analyze baseline data to ID key issues and gaps</td>
<td>Establish shared metrics (indicators, measurement, and approach)</td>
<td>Collect, track, and report progress (process to learn and improve)</td>
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Preconditions for Collective Impact

- Influential Champion(s)
- Urgency of issue
- Adequate Resources

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<th>The Five Conditions of Collective Impact</th>
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<td><strong>Shared Measurement</strong></td>
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Common Agenda

• Define the challenge to be addressed.
• Acknowledge that a collective impact approach is required.
• Establish clear and shared goal(s) for change.
• Identify principles to guide joint work together.

Communication in Tillamook County, Oregon

According to the Health Department summary, Tillamook county "found that forming partnerships and working together toward a desired result can bring about astounding results. ... Their turn-around was an evolutionary process, with new partners bringing contributions forward at different times."

No Shared Agenda
Reduce Teenagers Giving Birth
Reduce Teenagers Getting Pregnant
Common Agenda

What makes the difference between a good movie and a bad movie?

“Getting everyone involved to make the same movie!”

- Francis Ford Coppola

Shared Measurement

• Identify key measures that capture critical outcomes.

• Establish systems for gathering and analyzing measures.

• Create opportunities for “making-sense” of changes in indicators.
Collaboration in Cincinnati

Educational Achievement

**STRIVE in Cincinnati**

- Over three hundred educational organizations, human service groups, government agencies and philanthropies and private businesses.
- Shared agreement on 15 key milestones and 72 measures along a student road-map of success.
- A strong back-bone organization supporting a variety of “networks” supporting each key milestone.
- Measureable progress in most key indicators in recent years.
Strive Partnership

Goals:
Working together along the educational continuum to drive better results in education so that every child...
• Is prepared for school
• Is supported inside and outside of school
• Succeeds academically
• Enrolls in some form of postsecondary education
• Graduates and enters a career

Results: 10% increase in graduation rates in Cincinnati since 2003; 16% increase in college enrollment rate in Covington, KY since 2004

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

• Agreement on key outcomes.

• Orchestration and specialization.

• Complementary – sometimes “joined up” - strategies to achieve outcomes.
What are the elements of Vibrant Communities?

Key Numbers in Vibrant Communities

- 439,435 poverty reducing benefits to 202,931 households in Canada
- 256 poverty reducing initiatives completed or in progress by local Trail Builders
- $22.8 million invested in local Trail Builder activity
- 2,278 organizations partnering in Trail Builder communities
- 1,539 individuals playing substantial roles including 840 people who are living in poverty
- 53 substantive government policy changes
Continuous Communication

• Create formal and informal measures for keeping people informed

• Communication is open and reflect a diversity of styles

• Difficult issues are surfaced, discussed and addressed

Cooperation in Karelia, Finland

Heart Disease

Common Agenda: reduce heart disease.

Focus on measuring & reducing a variety of key risk factors (e.g. high fat food diet, smoking, etc.)

Emphasis on mutually reinforcing strategies with multisectoral actors (e.g. changing farming practices, media profile, trade policy around production and consumption of dairy products).

Backbone support provided by regional health authority.

Close collaboration with a range of organizations has been an essential element of success.

In and Out Communication

Backbone Organization(s)

- Guide vision & strategy
- Support aligned activities
- Established shared measurements
- Build public will
- Advance policy
- Mobilize funding

- Like a manager at a construction site who attends to the whole building while carpenters, plumbers and electricians come and go, the support staff keep the collaborative process moving along, even as the participants may change.

Community Visions, Community Solutions: Grantmaking for Comprehensive Impact
Lessons Learned about Backbones

1. Their value is unmistakeable.
2. Backbones shares strengths in *guiding vision and strategy* and *supporting aligned activities*.
3. Backbone organizations shift focus over time.
4. Backbone organizations’ partners need ongoing assistance with data.
5. External communications, *building public will*, and *advancing policy* are common backbone challenges.

Source: Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact Initiatives

Things to Consider in Collective Impact

- Patient capital
- Persistence for longer term systems change
- Align funders across sectors to common agenda
- Legitimize the work of the collaborative table
- No playbook, support and advance the skills and capacity of collaborative partners