

Collective Impact

About Collective Impact

“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.” www.fsg.org

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.

Phases of Collective Impact

Collective Impact Efforts Tend to Transpire Over Four Key Phases

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



KEY ELEMENTS OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. In order to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large-scale, organizations — including those in government, civil society, and the business sector — need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal.

3 Pre-Conditions to Collective Impact

There are 3 pre-conditions to collective impact that are critical to long term success. These are: having influential champions of the issue; a sense of urgency around the issue and adequate resources of all types to make progress on the issue.

5 Questions to Ponder when Considering Collective Impact

1. Do we aim to affect “needle moving” change? This is a change in the community of +/- 10% or more.
2. Do we believe that long-term investment by several stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
3. Do we believe that cross-sector engagement is essential for community-wide change?
4. Are we committed to using measureable data to set the agenda and to using it to improve over time?
5. Are we committed to having community members as partners and producers of impact?

RESOURCES

Collective Impact, FSG Partners: www.fsg.org

Backbone Organizations:

<http://tamarackcci.ca/blogs/sylvia-cheuy/champions-change-leading-backbone-organization-collective-impact>

Collective Impact Readiness Tool:

<http://vibrantcanada.ca/content/collective-impact-readiness-assessment-tool>

Common Agenda & Community Change:

<http://tamarackcci.ca/blogs/liz-weaver/moving-transactions-transformation-common-agenda-and-community-change>

9 Leadership Principles for Backbone Leaders

1. View the system through a lens of complexity
2. Let the vision be “good enough” rather than trying to plan every little detail.
3. Live with balance between data and intuition, planning and acting, safety and risk.
4. Be comfortable with uncovering paradox and tensions.
5. Don’t wait to be “sure” before proceeding with actions
6. Create an environment of information, diversity and difference, connections and relationship.
7. Mix cooperation with competition – it’s not one or the other.
8. Understand that informal conversations, gossip and rumor contribute to mental models, actions and beliefs. Listen to these in making change
9. Allow complex systems to emerge out of the interaction of systems, ideas and resources.

5 Things to Consider when Building a Common Agenda

1. Who is driving the agenda? There is a need to work differently together to get to a common agenda – rather than one agenda to “win”.
2. How complex is the issue? By setting boundaries around what you will and will not do you will allow you to increase impact and more easily set an agenda.
3. How does the issue play out in your community? Examine data to inform the common agenda and drive impact.
4. Who is doing what already? Map current community efforts to solve the problem.
5. What is our next step? Get into conversation, explore the problem and talk about what transformation will look like.

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