Evaluating Collective Impact: Assessing Your Progress, Effectiveness, and Impact

June 2014
Today’s Agenda

- **Welcome**
  Jennifer Juster, Collective Impact Forum

- **Context for the Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact**
  Hallie Preskill, FSG

- **Overview of Evaluating Collective Impact**
  Marcie Parkhurst, FSG

- **Learning from the Road Map Project**
  Mary Jean Ryan, Community Center for Education Results
  Christopher Mazzeo, Education Northwest
  - **Road Map Project Q&A** *(Moderated by Hallie Preskill, FSG)*

- **Learning from the Infant Mortality Initiative**
  Kathleen Holmes, Missouri Foundation for Health
  Jewlya Lynn, Spark Policy Institute
  - **Infant Mortality Initiative Q&A** *(Moderated by Hallie Preskill, FSG)*

- **General Q&A** *(Moderated by Hallie Preskill, FSG)*

- **Collective Impact Forum Information and Close**
  Jennifer Juster, Collective Impact Forum

#collectiveimpact
#evaluation
Why did we write the guide?

Demand has grown for an effective approach to evaluating collective impact that meets various parties’ needs

Who is the guide for?

Collective impact practitioners, funders, evaluators, and other supporters
Collective Impact Is an Effective Approach to Addressing COMPLEX Problems

The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

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.

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures that efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

Creating and managing collective impact requires dedicated staff with specific skills to coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
## Evaluating Collective Impact Requires a Mindset Shift for Many Funders and Practitioners

### Typical Focus of Program Evaluation

- Assessing the impact of a **specific intervention**
- Evaluating effects and impact according to a **predetermined set of outcomes**
- Using logic models that imply cause and effect, and **linear relationships**
- Providing findings **at the end** of the evaluation

### Evaluating CI as a Complex Intervention

- Assessing **multiple parts of the system**, including its components and connections
- Evaluating intended and unintended outcomes as they **emerge over time**
- Evaluating **non-linear and non-directional relationships** between the intervention and its outcomes
- Embedding **feedback** and **learning** through the evaluation
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.*
Evaluating a Collective Impact Effort Involves Looking at Four Aspects of the Work

1. The initiative’s context
   - Community culture and history
   - Demographic and socio-economic conditions
   - Political context
   - Economic factors

2. The CI initiative itself
   - The five core elements of collective impact
   - The initiative’s capacity
   - The initiative’s learning culture

3. The systems targeted by the initiative
   - Individuals’ behavior
   - Funding flows
   - Cultural norms
   - Policies

4. The initiative’s impact
   - Population-level outcomes
   - The initiative’s (or community’s) capacity for problem-solving

For example...
Collective Impact Theory of Change

1. **Social-Political-Economic Context**

2. **CI Design and Implementation**
   - **CI Process Outcomes and Indicators**
     - Common Agenda
     - Shared Measurement
     - Continuous Communication
     - Mutually Reinforcing Activities
     - Backbone Infrastructure
   - **CI Capacity**
   - **CI Learning Culture**

3. **Intermediate Outcomes**
   - **Outcomes and Indicators**
     - Behavioral Changes (professional practices, individual behavior)
     - Systems Changes (funding flows, cultural norms, public policy)

4. **Impact**
   - Outcomes and Indicators
   - CI Goals

Key:
- Orange circle: Potential evaluation focus
- Orange line: Continuous learning
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
Collective Impact Partners Should First Identify the Key Learning Questions They Seek to Answer

Sample Learning Questions

Context

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

CI Design & Implementation

2. 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?

Intermediate Outcomes

3. Changes in Systems
   • To what extent / in what ways are flows of philanthropic/ public funding shifting to support the goals of the CI initiative?
   • To what extent / in what ways are social and cultural norms evolving in ways that support the goals of the CI initiative?

Impact

4. • 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?
### Example: Outcomes and Indicators

**Backbone Infrastructure**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Outcomes</th>
<th>Sample Indicators</th>
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| The backbone infrastructure (BBI) effectively guides the CI initiative’s vision and strategy | • BBI builds and maintains hope and motivation to achieve the initiative’s goals  
• BBI celebrates and disseminates achievements of CI partners internally and externally  
• Partners look to the BBI and SC for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership |

| The backbone infrastructure ensures alignment of existing activities, and pursuit of new opportunities, toward the initiative’s goal | • BBI provides project management support, including monitoring progress toward goals and connecting partners to discuss opportunities, challenges, gaps, and overlaps  
• BBI convenes partners and key external stakeholders to ensure alignment of activities and pursue new opportunities |
Key Takeaways

1. Embed evaluation in the initiative’s DNA
2. Set reasonable expectations
3. Be thoughtful about your evaluation partners
The Road Map Project is a collective impact initiative aimed at getting dramatic improvement in student achievement – cradle through college/career in South Seattle and South King County.
The Road Map Project

How Do We Reach the Goal? Collective Action at Work

Alignment + Parent & Community Engagement + Power of Data + Stronger Systems = 2020 Goal
How is the Road Map Project being implemented on the ground?

• Role of various partners and regional organizations
• Plans and actions of key workgroups
• Supports provided by the backbone organization

In what ways does the Project use its core strategies (alignment, engagement, data) to catalyze systems change in the region?

What systems changes are occurring within and across organizations and the region as a result of Road Map?
The Road Map Project

Key Findings

Alignment
• Partners are beginning to align their policies, practices and funding decisions with Road Map goals and indicators

Engagement
• Knowledge and buy-in for the Road Map goal is very high
• There is “more work to be done” to ensure all stakeholders are meaningfully engaged

Data
• There has been tremendous success in building data capacity and adopting common metrics across organizations in the region

Stronger Systems
• There has been a substantial increase in collaboration both within and across sectors
### Evaluation Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong, broad support for 2020 Goal</th>
<th>2020 Goal stays front and center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous communication: Improve communication and engagement options</td>
<td>Better Connections: new newsletter, RMP 101 events, strategic communication plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common agenda: Increase focus on equity and inclusion</td>
<td>Reporting framework changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared measurement system: provide more detail and actionable data</td>
<td>District Briefings with new data</td>
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</tbody>
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### Future evaluation efforts will focus on scale and sustainability
✓ Be prepared to adapt...and then adapt again

✓ Formative evaluation requires significant capacity-building work with the backbone organization to be of greatest use

✓ Shared measurements systems need to be complemented with more fine grained data collection efforts to promote continuous improvement

✓ Be mindful of what audience(s) the evaluation is for
The Road Map Project

Q&A

Mary Jean Ryan
Community Center for Education Results

Christopher Mazzeo
Education Northwest

Hallie Preskill
FSG
Every year in the state of Missouri, approximately 600 babies do not live to see their first birthday.

Initiated by the Missouri Foundation for Health in 2013 with two sites:

**St. Louis:**
One organization serving as the backbone in a community with many other collective impact initiatives.

**Bootheel:**
Two organizations coming together in a new partnership to share the role of a backbone in a community with little prior experience with collective impact.

Supported by developmental evaluation from the beginning
The Infant Mortality Initiative
Overview of the Developmental Evaluation Process

1. Recognizing that DE looks different
   - Supports innovation and ongoing development of new approaches
   - A great fit for collective impact in its early years, when the level of uncertainty is high

2. Coaching for the Foundation
   - Twice monthly coaching calls
   - Building understanding of the DE approach
   - Developing specific learning skills

3. Training and support for the Grantees
   - Building understanding of the DE approach
   - Working together to understand what about their work is simple, complicated and complex

4. Generating evaluation questions ongoing with the grantees
   - Exploring the types of questions DE can help answer
   - Developing evaluation questions together
   - Helping to answer the questions through data collection
Learning Questions in St. Louis:

• How can outside influences be harnessed to develop the strategy in new ways?

• What is a process and structure for engaging stakeholders, including how to best stage the engagement and how to motivate participation?

Learning Questions in the Bootheel:

• What does the problem of infant mortality look like from the perspective of different stakeholders in our region, including within the two different grantee organizations?

• How can the two backbones work together, leveraging separate strengths and taking on distinct, yet complimentary, roles?
Views of Collaboration Options

- **One organization takes primary leadership role.**
- **Key decisions made together including decisions related to hiring staff, financial issues, and organizational roles.** Each organization contributes and leads in specific ways not duplicated by the other organization.
- **Most or all organizational decisions are made together.**

Any model will need up front agreements on funding, roles, responsibilities, etc. as well as honest, open communications; and a willingness to take risks. Will also need to address trust and turf issues and differences in views of how to work with clients.
The Infant Mortality Initiative
Reflections on Evaluating the Initiative

Bootheel Learning
✓ Understanding strengths and areas for growth in the relationships between the two backbone organizations

St. Louis Learning
✓ Understanding messaging and engagement strategies that will resonate with stakeholders

Foundation Learning
✓ Understanding when and how to use developmental evaluation in the context of collective impact and beyond
Learning about Developmental Evaluation

- There is a learning curve!
- The flexibility of developmental evaluation is critically important early in a collective impact initiative

Coaching Model

- Coaching helps build capacity, but sometimes the embedded, on the ground evaluator is needed
- Coaching calls with the Foundation have value at multiple levels

Future Plans

- Local embedded evaluators supported with coaching and training
Full Q&A

Christopher Mazzeo
Education Northwest

Kathleen Holmes
Missouri Foundation for Health

Jewlya Lynn
Spark Policy Institute

Jennifer Juster
Collective Impact Forum

Hallie Preskill
FSG

Marcie Parkhurst
FSG
Goals: Create the Knowledge, Networks and Tools That Accelerate the Adoption and Increase the Rigor of Collective Impact

Activities

- Develop a **field-wide digital forum** to create, curate, and disseminate effective knowledge, tools and practices that support collective impact

- Support **communities of practice, convenings** and other events across the country that enable practitioners and funders of collective impact to **increase their effectiveness**
  - The first two communities of practice are for **funders** of collective impact, and collective impact **backbone organizations**

Partners

FSG

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
Forum for Community Solutions

Co-Catalysts

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

the forum FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT
go
tamarack

United Way
Welcome to the COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM

This is the place for those practicing collective impact to find the tools, resources, and advice they need. It's a network of individuals coming together to share experience and knowledge to accelerate the effectiveness and adoption of collective impact.

Featured Resources

Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact
Practical guidance for planning and implementing evaluations of collective impact initiatives

Events

Catalyzing Large Scale Change: The Funder's Role in Collective Impact
This event, designed specifically for grantmakers, will provide opportunities for deep learning and peer-exchange on...
THANK YOU!

• Thank you for being part of the conversation today

• For additional guidance on this topic, see resources on the Collective Impact Forum website (collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/evaluating-collective-impact-webinar), and take a look at FSG’s Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact on the Forum.

Goals of the Guide

1. Illustrate the general process by which CI initiatives address complex problems

2. Explore the ways in which evaluation and learning support CI success

3. Answer common questions about planning for and implementing evaluation activities