

Outcomes Measurement – Collective Impact

Why focus on community outcomes?

Services are being encouraged to work more collaboratively with each other for a common agenda and in doing so to demonstrate the outcomes they are collaboratively achieving. How we do this work as a service provider is at times challenging and can be time consuming and resource intensive, so then why the focus?

Collective Impact has become what some might term the 'new fad' within the community sector, but is it really new? Or is it a smarter and more effective way for us to be working? This fact sheet will discuss the benefits of working within a collective (collaborative approach) with a strong outcomes focus.

What is Collective Impact?

Collective Impact is an approach to focus on community social problems based on the fact that not one organisation can solve what is happening at a community level. It is a group of likeminded organisations who come together to work for a common goal or community outcome. Kania and Kramer state that there needs to be the following Five Conditions for Collective Impact:

1. A common agenda
2. Shared measurement system
3. Mutually reinforcing activities
4. Continuous communication
5. A backbone support organisation

(Stanford Social Innovation Review 2011)

What do these conditions mean?

Condition 1: Common agenda

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.

Condition 2: Shared measurement system

Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level, including the use of web-based technology.

Condition 3: Mutually reinforcing activities

A diverse group of stakeholders working together, not requiring that all participants do the same thing, but encouraging each participant to undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels.

Condition 4: Continuous communication

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 parts.

Condition 5: Backbone support organisation:

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.

(Stanford Social Innovation Review 2011)

Why Collective Impact?

Collective Impact has many benefits:

- increased collaboration within and across sectors including government, non-government, philanthropists, business partners and other identified community partners;
- increased sector alignment and learning;
- strengthening of relationships and purpose towards a shared agenda; and
- coordinated action and shared lessons.

Important considerations:

- Just as communities are different so are the approaches used
- All of the conditions of Collective Impact are equally important in achieving the outcomes
- Collective impact is important work and like all important work is hard work and requires commitment
- The activities do not need to be the same activity, but contribute to the agreed agenda of the collective
- The backbone governance is very important and requires robust consideration

Where to learn more:

Epps, D. Achieving 'Collective Impact' with Results Based Accountability. RLG 2011.

<http://resultsleadership.org/>

Hanleybrown, F., Kania, J., and Kramer, M. '*Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work*', Stanford Social Innovation Review (2012).

Kania, J., and Kramer, M. '*Collective Impact*', Stanford Social Innovation Review (2011).

How can we find out more about how to do this work?

If you would like to find out more about how to do this work, our team at RLG Australia would be very happy to discuss this with you and assist you in this work, please contact us at

info@resultsleadership.org.au