

# Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact

A pre-conference memo for

## CoExIST

Convening of Experts on Inter-organizational  
Collaboration in STEM,  
an NSF INCLUDES Conference

March 8–10, 2017



Award #DCL 1650510



**CoExIST**  
**Convening of Experts on Inter-organizational Collaboration in STEM**  
**An NSF INCLUDES Conference Memo:**

*Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact*

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## Introduction

This paper has been created to inform CoExIST, a Convening of Experts on Interorganizational collaboration in STEM. The convening will be held March 8–10, 2017, in Dallas, Texas—thank you in advance for joining us!

This working convening will bring together experts and practitioners in the area of collective impact and inter-organizational collaboration in broadening participation in STEM through the lens of intersectionality. The intention of this convening, hosted by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) and the National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP), is to inform the design of the support structures of the NSF INCLUDES Alliances and National Backbones. We are delighted to share this overview of collective impact as an approach to collaboration, and to provide a synthesis of the broad range of research and practice related to the role of the backbone in collective impact initiatives.

CoExIST's work will inform the NSF INCLUDES program, which is focused on broadening participation in STEM. NSF has identified collective impact as a potential collaborative approach to accelerate the progress that organizations make in achieving this outcome. Thus, this paper and conference primarily focus on collective impact as a form of collaboration because of NSF's focus on this frame in its INCLUDES program. We recognize that NSF and INCLUDES grantees can draw from many other forms of inter-organizational collaboration in their approaches. Appendix 1 describes several other forms of collaboration, which will be discussed during the CoExIST convening.

When thinking about broadening participation in STEM, we want to recognize the range of intersectionality as a critical lens for designing and implementing collective impact. Intersectionality promotes an understanding of human beings as shaped by the interaction of different social locations (e.g., race/ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religions). These interactions occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power. Through such processes, interdependent forms of privilege and oppression shaped by colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism, and patriarchy are created.<sup>1</sup> These factors, and more, are important lenses that should be applied to any inter-organizational collaboration model, including collective impact. Intersectionality is explicitly oriented toward transformation, building coalitions among different groups and striving for social justice. During CoExIST, we will explicitly apply the tenets of intersectionality throughout our conversations.

We included reflection questions throughout this document to help spark ideas that will be valuable for you to share during the conference. Thank you in advance for giving them some thought—we look forward to seeing you soon.

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<sup>1</sup> Hankivsky, O. (2014, April). *Intersectionality 101*. The Institute for Intersectionality Research & Policy. Retrieved from [https://www.sfu.ca/iirp/documents/resources/101\\_Final.pdf](https://www.sfu.ca/iirp/documents/resources/101_Final.pdf).

## I. Overview of Collective Impact

Collective impact has emerged as a powerful and innovative approach to solving social problems, and is a paradigm shift for how to create social change. Complex social problems are affected by large and interdependent systems that no single organization can change alone. With the collective impact approach, cross-sector leaders come together and organize all of the relevant groups in a community strategically to accomplish a population-wide outcome. Collective impact is defined specifically as, “The commitment of a group of cross-sector actors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem.”<sup>2</sup>

Collective impact initiatives are characterized by five core elements, which have been distilled from study of the experiences of successful cross-sector collaboratives to date. All five elements are consistently present—in forms adapted and customized for the local context—to effectively facilitate cross-sector collaboration and the resulting population-level impacts.

1. **Common agenda:** All participants share a vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.
2. **Shared measurement:** All participants agree on how to measure and report on progress, with a short list of common indicators identified to drive learning and improvement.
3. **Mutually reinforcing activities:** A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated, mutually reinforcing set of activities.
4. **Continuous communication:** All players engage in frequent, structured communication to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
5. **Backbone support:** An independent, dedicated staff provides support and key functions for the sustained operation of the collective impact initiative. (For more detail on the core functions of the backbone entity, see Section II below.)

No one element is more important than the others; rather, a collective impact effort needs all five to effectively drive long-term, population-level changes in a given topic or area of focus.

With all five elements in place, collective impact efforts can greatly accelerate the pace of change and drive deep and lasting social impact. For example, Project U-Turn in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, brought together hundreds of groups in a collective impact initiative that has steadily increased graduation rates. In New York state, a group of cross-sector leaders has catalyzed a juvenile justice collective impact effort that has resulted in a 45 percent drop in the number of incarcerated youth over the past 3 years, with no decrease in public safety. Finally, the Strive Partnership in Cincinnati, Ohio, has achieved such strong results improving academic and career success for young people (see box below) that a network of sites is replicating the Strive approach in dozens of communities throughout the country.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Kania and Mark Kramer, “Collective Impact,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.

<sup>3</sup> FSG Interview with New York State Office of Children and Families; Project U-Turn [website](http://projectuturn.net/) <http://projectuturn.net/>.

### Collective Impact in Practice:

#### The Strive Partnership Improves Academic Success in Cincinnati, Ohio

In 2006, a group of leaders from various sectors joined together with one goal in mind: to improve academic success in the urban core of Greater Cincinnati. More than 300 cross-sector representatives joined the Strive effort, including school district superintendents, early-childhood educators, nonprofit practitioners, business leaders, community and corporate funders, city officials, and university presidents.

These leaders did not intend to launch a new program, but rather a partnership to transform education. They agreed on a common set of goals, outcomes, and success indicators, including kindergarten readiness, fourth-grade reading and math scores, graduation rates, and college completion. The partnership recognized that aligning their work, setting goals together, and investing in a common vision would fundamentally change their current approach to the larger education system.

Today, Strive's collective impact approach is achieving results:

- With a poverty rate of 72 percent, 76 percent of fourth graders in Cincinnati are reading at the proficient level, compared to 55 percent in 2004.
- Eighth-grade math proficiency has improved 24 percentage points over the same period.
- High school graduation rates have increased by 14 percentage points since 2011.

Source: StriveTogether [website](#).

### *Principles of Practice for Collective Impact*

Over time, as collective impact initiatives have developed and matured, their experiences have informed a set of principles of practice that help to define *how* collective impact initiatives are implemented to effectively and successfully result in systems change. Although many of these principles are not unique to collective impact, the combination of the five elements and these practices contributes to meaningful population-level change.<sup>4</sup>

The principles of practice include the following:

- Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on **equity**
- Include **community members** in the collaborative
- Recruit and co-create with **cross-sector** partners
- Use data to continuously **learn, adapt, and improve**
- Cultivate leaders with unique **system leadership** skills
- Focus on program and **system strategies**
- Build a culture that fosters **relationships, trust, and respect** across participants

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<sup>4</sup> Sheri Brady and Jennifer Splansky Juster, "How Do You Successfully Put Collective Impact into Action?" Collective Impact Forum Blog. Accessed December 2016. <http://collectiveimpactforum.org/blogs/1301/collective-impact-principles-practice-putting-collective-impact-action>

- Customize for **local context**<sup>5</sup>

More detail on each principle of practice can be found on the FSG [blog](#).

### *Structure for a Collective Impact Initiative*

Collective impact is structured to foster shared leadership and create multiple avenues for engagement across stakeholders in a given system. At the highest level, the Steering Committee is composed of cross-sector leaders, decision-makers, and community members who provide strategic direction, champion the effort, and align their own organization's work to the common agenda. The backbone provides dedicated staff to support the collective impact initiative. (Section II provides more detail on the backbone and its role.) Working groups of cross-sector partners are formed around specific elements of the common agenda. Working group members typically represent affected populations, entities that implement related services and solutions, government agencies, and other relevant partners, who together design, align, and implement a related set of strategies.

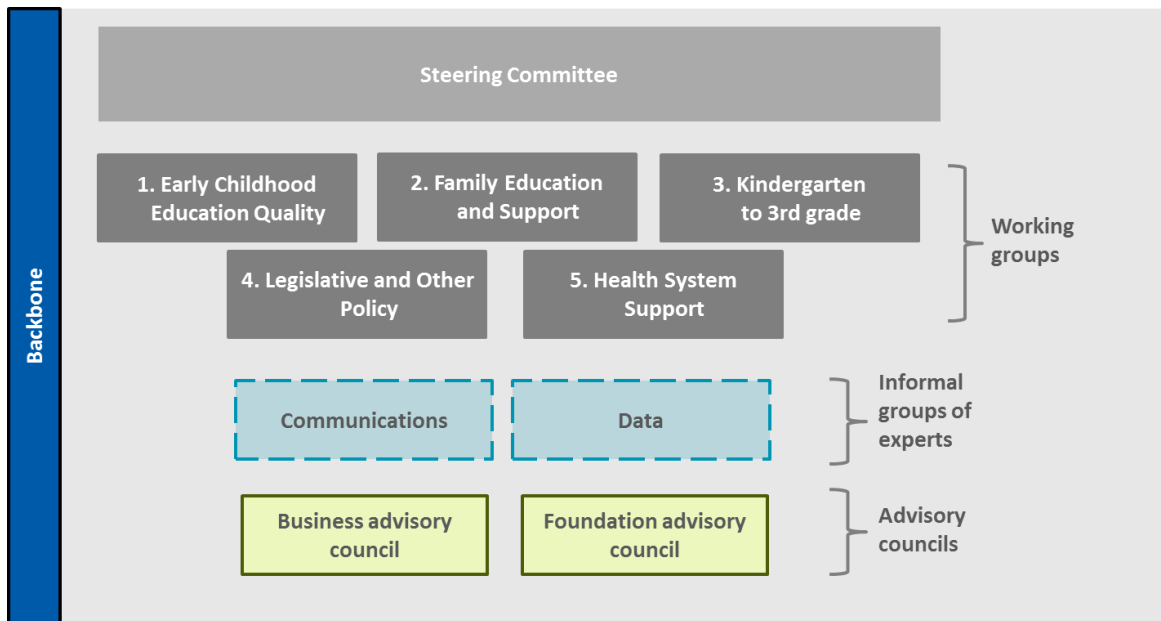
The collective impact structure has formal members but seeks to work with other stakeholders and community representatives beyond its members. For example, the number of formal members is limited to keep the logistics manageable, but certain strategies may require working groups to seek additional partners from community organizations, other stakeholders, or affected populations. These partners can play a critical role in implementing strategies and providing input to the initiative. For example, as a member of a working group on workforce development, a local private-sector employer might form a coalition of other employers who are willing to adopt a certain practice or goal in alignment with the working group's strategies and the common agenda. This engagement with additional stakeholders is helpful for cultivating engagement and shared ownership of outcomes across the community.

As collective impact initiatives evolve, so will the structure of the initiative. Specifically, the focus and composition of working groups often evolve as work progresses, context changes, successes are achieved, and challenges are encountered.

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<sup>5</sup> Brady and Juster, 2016.

Figure 1: Example Structure of Collective Impact Effort—Early Matters in Houston, Texas<sup>6</sup>



## II. The Backbone Support

The NSF INCLUDES program has provided funding to support regional or local collective impact efforts to improve access to STEM education and career pathways and make the field more inclusive to underserved populations. For each of these collective impact efforts, a backbone support infrastructure must be created to foster the cross-sector communication, alignment, and collaboration required to achieve population-level systems change in STEM education and career pathways. Backbones are specific to the site and the population that the collective impact effort hopes to impact.

This section provides more detail on the purpose and function of the backbone; the structure, staffing, and budget of the backbone; the process to select a backbone at each site; leadership; and the backbone’s focus on equity.

### *The Backbone’s Purpose and Functions*

*“The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails. The backbone organization requires a dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly.”<sup>7</sup>*

As described in Kania and Kramer’s 2011 article “Collective Impact,” the backbone is the support infrastructure for a collective impact initiative. To succeed in playing this support role, backbones need

<sup>6</sup> FSG interviews and analysis with Early Matters.

<sup>7</sup> Kania and Kramer, 2011.

to have dedicated capacity; that is, staff will not be effective if they try to add the role of the backbone on top of existing responsibilities. In some cases, select staff may be part-time or certain roles may be shared across multiple people, but in sum the backbone requires capacity that is solely dedicated to the collective impact effort.

Through study of effective collective impact efforts, FSG has identified six essential functions for backbone support:<sup>8</sup>

1. **Guiding vision and strategy:** The backbone team works together with the Steering Committee to provide data, prioritize opportunities for action, and adapt to changing context and systems in the overall vision and strategy of the effort. It is critical that the backbone prioritize equity in its efforts to guide the vision and strategy, thereby ensuring that Steering Committee and working group members keep equity at the center of their strategies and actions.
2. **Supporting aligned activities:** The backbone facilitates dialogue between partners, provides direct support for Steering Committee and Working Group meetings as needed, and generally helps to coordinate the actions across the effort.
3. **Establishing shared measurement practices:** The backbone manages data collection among partners and supports the use of data for learning and evaluation of the effort.
4. **Cultivating community engagement and ownership:** The backbone cultivates broad relationships throughout the community, in coordination with the Steering Committee and Working Group members, seeking to build an inclusive effort that authentically engages and fosters ownership within the community over the long term.
5. **Advancing policy:** As the collective impact effort matures, the backbone often plays a role supporting a policy agenda that impacts large systems and institutions in support of the effort's overall goal.
6. **Mobilizing resources:** The backbone plays a key role in developing resources for the initiative's sustainability, including fundraising for the backbone itself as well as recruiting volunteers and other non-monetary support for the initiative. Backbone staff can also coordinate or support the fundraising efforts of members of the collective impact initiative.

Backbone entities most often support all of these functions to some degree, although a backbone's priorities tend to **shift over time**. For instance, often as backbones are launched, they focus on guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, and establishing shared measurement systems. As they mature and develop, backbones may expand their focus to include functions such as mobilizing resources and advancing policy.<sup>9</sup> For instance, the Roadmap Project in South King County, Washington, is focused on doubling the number of students on track to graduate from postsecondary education and closing the achievement gap for students in grades K-12. As its work matured, the Project assembled a Community Network and Advocacy Council to focus on policy efforts. Because of this strategic focus, the Project successfully changed institutional policies at local community colleges, state policy for kindergarten standards, and city funding for education. For example, the Project helped ensure approval

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<sup>8</sup> Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer, "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Shiloh Turner, Kathy Merchant, John Kania, and Ellen Martin, "Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact" *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (article adapted from the original four-part blog post), 2012.



of Seattle’s 2011 Families and Education Levy that resulted in the commitment of \$230 million over 7 years to improve educational outcomes from cradle to career.<sup>10</sup>

Successful backbones also employ **key approaches** to enable their work: building relationships among initiative members, creating focus and urgency around the initiative’s central issue or goal, framing issues to present both opportunities and challenges, and using evaluation as a tool for learning and marking progress. Backbones must ensure coordination and accountability among members to foster and preserve the trust needed to achieve large-scale, collective change. Susan Dawson, Director of the E3 Alliance in Austin, Texas, underscored the importance of relationships and data in her work: “We do it [influence] by having the right people at the table *and* having the best data.”<sup>11</sup>

Despite their important role in collective impact, backbones must often remain “behind the scenes” to **promote collective ownership** among the initiative’s members and partners. By supporting the work of members, highlighting their successes, and authentically attributing or sharing credit with partners, backbones foster shared leadership. Cheryl Moder of the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative explained, “The more successful you are, more people want to be a part of the effort, and the more you need to bend over backwards to give credit to your partners. It’s very easy to make mistakes regarding partner recognition.”<sup>12</sup>

When considering the role and functions of the backbone, it can be helpful to examine what the backbone does *not* do.

- The backbone **does not set the group’s agenda**. Rather, it collates the input from different members to collectively build and maintain focus around the common agenda as defined by the Steering Committee with input from the community.
- The backbone **does not drive or independently determine the solutions**. Rather, it supports the Steering Committee and working group members as they align the activities within their respective organizations with the common agenda.
- The backbone requires funding to operate but **does not receive all of the funding** for the initiative. Funding must necessarily also be directed toward implementation of services, innovation, advocacy, or other types of activities that the partners advance, in service of the collective effort’s goal.
- The backbone is **not self-appointed**. The Steering Committee, often in consultation with other key community stakeholders, selects the backbone.

### **Structure of a Backbone Entity**

There is no one way to structure the backbone. The structure and staffing for the backbone depend on the context, the needs, and the resources available. The Steering Committee and key partners for the collective impact effort should together determine the best structure, site, and staff for the backbone. Hanleybrown and colleagues confirm this flexible approach to backbone design: “Each structure has

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<sup>10</sup> FSG interviews with Seattle Roadmap Project.

<sup>11</sup> FSG interview with Susan Dawson, Director of E3 Alliance.

<sup>12</sup> David Phillips, “Lessons Learned from Our Conversations with Experienced Backbone Leaders,” *Collective Impact Forum*. Published August 2016. Accessed [online](http://collectiveimpactforum.org/blogs/1021/lessons-learned-our-conversations-experienced-backbone-leaders?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Read%20now&utm_campaign=CIFDigestYearInReview2016) December 2016.

[http://collectiveimpactforum.org/blogs/1021/lessons-learned-our-conversations-experienced-backbone-leaders?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=Read%20now&utm\\_campaign=CIFDigestYearInReview2016](http://collectiveimpactforum.org/blogs/1021/lessons-learned-our-conversations-experienced-backbone-leaders?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Read%20now&utm_campaign=CIFDigestYearInReview2016)

pros and cons, and the best structure will be situation-specific, depending on the issue and geography, the ability to secure funding, the highly important perceived neutrality of the organization, and the ability to mobilize stakeholders.”<sup>13</sup>

When structuring the backbone, the Steering Committee and its key partners must consider several interrelated questions:

- Does it make sense to select an **existing organization** to house the backbone or create a **new organization**?
- If it makes sense to select an existing organization, should the **selection process** be open or closed?
- How much **capacity** does the backbone need? How many **full-time employees**?
- Who will the **staff report to**?
- Is the organizational home also where the **staff is located**? Or does it make sense to split the fiscal agent from the physical location?
- Who will **fund the backbone** infrastructure (e.g., salaries, benefits, operating expenses) in the short term? In the long term?







### *Type of Organization*

Many different types of organizations can play the backbone role or house the backbone staff. Funders (i.e., private foundations, community foundations, United Way), nonprofit organizations, government agencies, universities, or a combination of these can be effective choices. The chart below outlines the pros and cons of different types of organizations serving in the backbone role.

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<sup>13</sup> Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer, 2012.

Figure 2: Pros and Cons of Different Types of Organizations as the Backbone<sup>14</sup>

Types of Backbones	Description	Examples	Pros	Cons
<b>Funder-Based</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One funder initiates CI strategy as planner, financier, and convener</li> </ul>	 United Way of Salt Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to secure start-up funding and recurring resources</li> <li>Ability to bring others to the table and leverage other funders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May lack broad buy-in if CI effort seen as driven by one funder</li> <li>Potential perceived lack of neutrality</li> </ul>
<b>New Nonprofit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New entity is created, often by private funding, to serve as backbone</li> </ul>	 COMMUNITY CENTER for EDUCATION RESULTS Seattle, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived neutrality as facilitator and convener</li> <li>Potential lack of baggage</li> <li>Clarity of focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of sustainable funding stream and potential questions about funding priorities</li> <li>Potential competition with local nonprofits</li> </ul>
<b>Existing Nonprofit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established nonprofit takes the lead in coordinating CI strategy</li> </ul>	 Rio Grande Valley, Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Credibility, clear ownership, and strong understanding of issue</li> <li>Existing infrastructure in place if properly resourced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential “baggage” and lack of perceived neutrality</li> <li>Lack of attention to the CI initiative if poorly funded</li> </ul>
<b>Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government entity, either at local or state level, drives CI effort</li> </ul>	 Somerville, MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public sector “seal of approval”</li> <li>Existing infrastructure in place if properly resourced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bureaucracy may slow progress</li> <li>Public funding may not be dependable</li> </ul>
<b>Shared Across Multiple Organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numerous organizations take ownership of CI wins</li> </ul>	 Los Angeles, CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower resource requirements if shared across multiple organizations</li> <li>Broad buy-in, expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of clear accountability with multiple voices at the table</li> <li>Coordination challenges, leading to potential inefficiencies</li> </ul>
<b>Backbone of backbones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior-level committee with ultimate decision-making power</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad buy-in from senior leaders across public, private, and nonprofit sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of clear accountability with multiple voices</li> </ul>

Source: FSG Interviews and Analysis

### Staffing and Budget

Structuring of staff positions for the backbone is flexible process and depends on the local context and resources. For many backbones, especially in the early stage of development, the staff is lean. Capacity can be added over time in accordance with the progression of the initiative and its resources. For example, StriveTogether, a national network of collective impact initiatives to support cradle-to-career education and workforce efforts, has simplified the initial staffing requirements for a backbone to three roles: director, facilitator, and data manager.<sup>15</sup> Based on this three-person structure, Figure 3 shows the six functions of the backbone, as well as sample roles and activities for each backbone staff member.

<sup>14</sup> Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Kania and Kramer, 2011.

Figure 3: Sample Functions, Activities, and Roles for Backbone Staff<sup>16</sup>

<b>Guide vision and strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a common understanding of the problem</li> <li>• Serve as a thought leader / standard bearer for the initiative</li> <li>• Ensure common agenda is updated as needed as strategy unfolds</li> </ul>	} <b>Director</b>
<b>Advance policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for an aligned policy agenda</li> <li>• Stay on top of policy developments that impact the effort</li> </ul>	
<b>Mobilize resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilize and align public and private resources to support initiative's goals (and the backbone itself)</li> </ul>	} <b>Facilitator</b>
<b>Build community engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sense of urgency and articulate a call to action</li> <li>• Support community member engagement activities</li> <li>• Produce and manage communications (e.g., news releases, reports)</li> </ul>	
<b>Support aligned activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and facilitate partners' continuous communication and collaboration (e.g., run task force meetings)</li> <li>• Recruit and convene partners and key external stakeholders</li> <li>• Seek out opportunities for alignment with other efforts</li> <li>• Ensure task forces are being data driven</li> </ul>	
<b>Establish shared measurement practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect, analyze, interpret, and report data</li> <li>• Catalyze or develop shared measurement systems</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance for building partners' data capacity</li> </ul>	} <b>Data Manager</b>

Source: FSG and Greater Cincinnati Foundation

As backbones grow and develop, additional staff may be needed. Additions should be dictated by the particular needs of each collective impact initiative and might include a second facilitator, a person with community engagement expertise, a fundraiser, or a person with external communications skills.

Initial annual budgets for backbone operations typically range from \$400,000 to \$600,000 for the first few years. The most significant expense is staff salaries, followed by additional costs for data management systems, communications, community engagement, and office/administration needs. If partners can offer in-kind contributions (e.g., office space or shared IT systems), this annual budget may be reduced. As the backbone matures and the initiative expands, additional costs such as third-party evaluation support and additional staff may be added. Although budgets vary depending on available resources and staffing needs, more established and sufficiently resourced backbones tend to operate on annual budgets in the \$500,000-\$750,000 range.<sup>17</sup>

### **Backbone Leadership**

The leadership displayed by the backbone staff (and particularly the director at the helm) is critical to the success of any collective impact initiative. As Hanleybrown and colleagues indicated in their 2012 article, "Backbone organizations must maintain a delicate balance between the strong leadership

<sup>16</sup> Turner, Merchant, Kania, and Martin, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> FSG interviews and analysis.

needed to keep all parties together and the invisible ‘behind the scenes’ role that lets the other stakeholders own the initiative’s success.”<sup>18</sup>

Backbones function best when they use a systems-oriented and adaptive approach to leadership. According to Senge, Hamilton, and Kania (2015), three core capabilities distinguish system leaders:

- They see the greater system, even those aspects or elements that are less visible from the leader’s particular vantage point, and they help other people understand the **greater system** and the complexity of which they are a part;
- They foster a reflective and generative **type of dialogue** that leads to greater clarity, understanding of difference, and innovation; and
- They shift collective focus from reactive problem-solving to **co-creation of the future**.<sup>19</sup>

Kania and Kramer (2011) have described this leadership orientation in different terms: “In the best of circumstances, these backbone organizations embody the principles of adaptive leadership: the ability to focus people’s attention and create a sense of urgency, the skill to apply pressure to stakeholders without overwhelming them, the competence to frame issues in a way that presents opportunities as well as difficulties, and the strength to mediate conflict among stakeholders.”<sup>20</sup> Ross Meyer, the former backbone leader of Partners for a Competitive Workforce, remarked, “I think backbone leaders require a diverse skill set. The most important skills are listening, facilitating, developing relationships and trust with individuals and partners, being able to communicate a compelling vision...and the ability to execute toward that vision.”<sup>21</sup>

Leadership must be collaborative and relationship-oriented in a collective impact effort, which often requires leaders who are both politic and humble. Successful backbone leaders have also been described as visionary, charismatic and influential communicators, results-oriented, and focused but adaptable.<sup>22</sup> Liz Weaver, Vice President of the Tamarack Institute, has worked closely with many backbone leaders and was herself a backbone leader of the Hamilton Roundtable in Ontario, Canada. She reflected that leaders need to focus not only on relationship-building but also on inclusive conversations. She said, “You have to go slow to go fast...Too often we only talk to the people that we know...Until you bring those people in that you don’t know, you’re going to have the same conversation that you’ve had all the time.”<sup>23</sup>

As the work develops, successful backbone leaders continue to place importance on navigating the interpersonal dynamics of partnership and collaboration. For example, Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend of Project U-Turn includes key stakeholders before reports are released: “We vet the data with leaders in the system [before releasing important reports]. Of all the things we do to advance partnerships and align to the common goal, vetting reports with system leaders prior to publication is the most powerful approach we have.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer, 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Senge, Hamilton, and Kania, “The Dawn of Systems Leadership,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Kania and Kramer, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> FSG interview with Ross Meyer, Partners for a Competitive Workforce.

<sup>22</sup> FSG interviews and analysis.

<sup>23</sup> FSG interview with Liz Weaver, Tamarack Institute.

<sup>24</sup> Phillips, 2016.

Another backbone leader, Susan Dawson from E3 Alliance, added that to fulfill the three roles of a systems leader, “[The backbone needs] to speak multiple languages, because you have to understand that often the languages of the different sectors are semantically very different. We need to relate and connect with all of them.”<sup>25</sup> To generate deep dialogue and co-create future solutions, the backbone leader must be able to speak fluently with all partners across the system, which may require communication that can reach across and build bridges among different sectors or partners. Importantly, different organizations within a given category—funders for example—may focus on different perspectives, interests, or language. Gabriel Guillaume at LiveWell Colorado captured this sentiment when he commented, “Knowing how to speak to different types of funders is really important. Some funders want to hear the ‘collective’ side of collective impact, such as how partnerships are forming. But others want to hear the ‘impact’ side, such as what are you accomplishing and your return on investment.”<sup>26</sup>

### ***Selection of Backbone Support***

The process for selecting the backbone support requires careful consideration and design for the local context. Backbone supports are neither self-selected nor predetermined, which could diminish the trust, transparency, and credibility of the backbone as a fair and honest broker among the effort’s partners. Rather, the Steering Committee develops a process through which committee members and key stakeholders provide input and select the structure, staffing, and partner to provide local backbone support to the collective impact initiative.

Depending on the local context, initiatives may choose an open, semi-open, or closed selection process. The benefits of the open selection process include its transparency, ability to build the initiative’s credibility among stakeholders, and openness to a wide breadth of organizations with different skill sets (including those beyond the most prominent or well-resourced organizations, which may not always be the best choice to promote inclusion and equity in the initiative). The cons of an open process include its typically longer time frame and potentially contentious Steering Committee discussions regarding selection.

Communities that place a premium on inclusion often choose to design an open and transparent selection process to further foster trust. An open process can be particularly helpful for building trust in communities where a certain population or group may feel historically marginalized. However, a more closed selection process can make sense in certain cases. For instance, in communities with more limited resources, there may only be one organization that has the size and capacity to house the backbone staff. In such a context, that one organization is the obvious choice and an open selection process is therefore unnecessary.

### ***Equity as a Focus for the Backbone***

Given the nature of the backbone’s support for the collective impact effort, one of the backbone’s critical roles is to reinforce the effort’s focus on equity<sup>27</sup> and inclusion. The backbone staff must begin its commitment to equity and inclusion by examining its own internal practices, structures, and staff—

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<sup>25</sup> FSG interview with Susan Dawson, E3 Alliance.

<sup>26</sup> Phillips, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> According to PolicyLink’s “[Equity Manifesto](#),” equity is defined as “Just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.”

paying great attention to equity and intersectionality. The backbone’s authenticity and credibility in the community related to issues of equity depend on this “equity mirror” to examine its internal operations.<sup>28</sup>

Backbone staff should reflect the community’s diversity. Factors such as economic class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, and lived experience may be important to consider when selecting staff to serve as the backbone for the collective impact effort. As Junious Williams and Sarah Marxer (2014) wrote, “To ensure that a deep commitment to racial, economic, and other forms of equity is built into an initiative, backbone organizations need to have credibility with the communities most affected by inequities, staffing that reflects the diversity of those communities; the skills and resources to engage communities and develop leadership and power within them, and the humility to follow that leadership as it emerges.”<sup>29</sup>

This ability to represent the community is critical for many of the backbone’s core functions—including guiding the vision and strategy and building community engagement and ownership. The backbone must ensure that the Steering Committee and working groups design their strategies with a focus on the most vulnerable or most in need. To support the Steering Committee and working groups in designing and targeting strategies with attention to equity and intersectionality, the backbone can help present quantitative and qualitative data that reveal disparities and achievement gaps. The backbone can also bring in diverse voices and lived experiences as input to the collective impact effort, helping members to understand the various and overlapping identities that impact equity and the need for targeted services, solutions, and innovations.

The backbone will also be the key actor gathering community input, developing broad engagement and ownership, and guiding the Steering Committee and working groups in their community engagement. As such, the backbone staff must have the cultural competency to work with leaders across the structures and roles of the effort, from leading business representatives to government actors to individuals with lived experience in a certain issue or system.

Given its important role ensuring an equity focus in the collective impact initiative, the backbone should consider several important equity-focused questions:

- How do we effectively **integrate community voice into institution-heavy collective impact** efforts?
- How do we **authentically and meaningfully involve communities who have historically been excluded** from decision-making processes?
- How do we **engage stakeholders in sensitive conversations about race, class, and culture** without driving away those who need to sit at the problem-solving table?

Each collective impact effort will undoubtedly face its own specific questions, challenges and opportunities as it addresses equity. Across collective impact efforts, approaching equity and community engagement with an asset-based mindset will best position the backbone to work productively with diverse members of the community.

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<sup>28</sup> Paul Schmitz, “[The Culture of Collective Impact](#),” Collective Impact Forum blog, October 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Junious Williams and Sarah Marxer, “[Bringing an Equity Lens to Collective Impact](#),” Collective Impact Forum Blog, September 2014. Accessed online December 2016.

## Reflection Questions

- The examples provided are primarily based on place-based collective impact work. How might a collective impact initiative look different when not focused on a single geography (i.e., city or county)?
- Although all six functions of the backbone are important, on which functions might NSF want to focus capacity building during the early phase of the INCLUDES project? How might NSF assess the needs of different backbones along these capacities?
- How can NSF INCLUDES support alliances to collaboratively identify who should play the backbone role, rather than the role defaulting to the grant recipient?
- In what ways can NSF INCLUDES support leadership development for the alliance backbones, and other leaders in the alliance collaboratives?
- How can NSF INCLUDES support and encourage alliances to build equity into the design of the backbone teams and the composition of alliances?
- How can NSF INCLUDES support and encourage alliances to authentically engage members of community in their collaborative work?

## III. National Hub (i.e., National Backbone)

In addition to the local backbones that support the collective impact initiatives at each site, NSF INCLUDES will also establish a national hub that provides support to the cohort of collective impact efforts (i.e., Alliances). The national hub is distinct from the local backbone that supports each collective impact site. While each local backbone support coordinates its site's cross-sector stakeholders to align and pursue coordinated strategies and actions to achieve their shared goal, the national hub is a network of all the sites. The national hub coordinates across the network of NSF INCLUDES sites to help them be most effective through sharing data and best practices and other important functions. The national hub can provide value to individual sites by creating a national learning community and participating in national dialogues to promote the work of the sites.

In designing and launching the NSF INCLUDES national hub, several important characteristics should be considered to best serve the sites' purposes.

- First, the network's approach to leadership and decision-making is important to establish. For example, will the decision-making be distributed to all or a representative group of sites, or will the network have a more centralized, top-down leadership? The choice for the national hub will likely depend on the vision of the funder and the degree to which sites feel they need participation and buy-in.
- Second, the national hub must select its formal governance system—that is, who will have ultimate oversight of the activities that the network prioritizes and who will evaluate its performance? Will this be the role of NSF INCLUDES, or will it involve other stakeholders including the local sites themselves?
- Third, the national hub must choose the orientation for its work supporting the sites—for example, the work of the hub could focus on *learning* across sites and/or it could focus on *actions* such as providing technical assistance to sites or advocating for policy change.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation, "[ENGAGE: How Funders Can Support and Leverage Networks for Social Impact.](#)" Accessed December 2016.



The StriveTogether network is one example of a national network of collective impact sites. StriveTogether developed out of the success of the Strive Partnership in Cincinnati, Ohio, and now consists of a national network of 64 community partnerships in 32 states. Each site works locally to improve cradle-to-career education success for all children by bringing together cross-sector partners around a common vision. As the network hub, StriveTogether plays several key roles. First, it defines success for the model by selecting a core set of academic outcomes on which each site reports. StriveTogether also outlines a Theory of Action with guiding principles, developmental gateways, and quality benchmarks to guide the development of sites' efforts. It organizes communities of practice that account for different sites' needs and levels of maturity, and it provides capacity-building services in the form of strategic assistance, training, and tools that help sites maintain fidelity of the Strive model. StriveTogether also communicates the network's impact to external stakeholders to strengthen support for the work.<sup>31</sup>

Based on the example of StriveTogether and other similar networks, as well as the specific needs of the NSF INCLUDES sites, the national hub for the NSF INCLUDES will need to prioritize the support and resources it provides. The NSF INCLUDES hub might provide some or all of the following services and supports to the cohort of collective impact sites:

- **Sharing data and best practices:** The hub could collect data and best practices from the respective sites, help package and share the lessons learned, and facilitate cross-site interactions that promote the exchange of experiences and best practices.
- **Facilitating connections among members:** The hub could facilitate a learning community among sites, focused on specific elements of the collective impact approach, strategies for promoting inclusion in STEM, and/or other relevant topics.
- **Leveraging funding:** The national hub could help sites to leverage local and national funding, leverage their participation in a national network to bring additional credibility, and even directly provide sub-grants to sites from pooled funding.
- **Monitoring progress/evaluation:** The hub could itself collect data on shared metrics across the sites or commission a third party to do this. These data could be rolled up so that sites can understand their progress in aggregate and lessons learned.
- **Advocating for national policy change:** To the extent that it becomes relevant, local or state practices or policies that have proven effective at the site level could be disseminated or enabled through policy, and be advocated for by the hub at the national level.
- **Providing technical assistance:** The hub could offer select coaching or technical assistance in areas of common interest to sites, such as collective impact, data collection and management, or communications. The hub could provide this itself, or commission/sub-contract such support for the sites.
- **Recruiting new sites:** As the NSF INCLUDES program matures and expands, the hub could conduct outreach to new sites and recruit them to join the network.

In conjunction with establishing its initial priorities, the national hub will also need to hire dedicated staff. Based on the examples of other national networks such as the Aspen Institute Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund or StriveTogether, NSF INCLUDES might consider launching its staff with initial roles and capacity focused in three areas. Note that the suggested staffing below will require reliance on third

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<sup>31</sup> StriveTogether, [Cradle-to-Career Roadmap to Success](#); [Theory of Action](#); [Network Member Benefits](#); and [Network Results](#). Accessed online December 2016.

party partners to be the primary technical assistance (TA) providers and evaluators, and this team could expand over time as the role of the national hub evolves:

Priority Area of Focus—Potential Starting Point for NSF National Backbone	Initial Full-time Employees
1. Building and managing a learning community that includes all sites	1-1.5 FTE
2. Management of evaluation and continuous learning across sites (most evaluation work conducted by third party)	1 FTE
3. Technical assistance for sites on how to implement a collective impact approach (most TA conducted by third party)	1 FTE

### *Networked Improvement Communities*

Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) offer another potential model for the NSF INCLUDES national hub. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, under the leadership of Tony Bryk, has adapted the idea of a NIC to serve the field of education.<sup>32</sup> Together with “improvement science,”<sup>33</sup> Carnegie advances NICs as a model to facilitate problems of practice in the social sector, especially education. In this context, a NIC is defined by Carnegie to be, “highly structured, intentionally formed collaborations among educational professionals, researchers, and designers that aim to address a high leverage practical problem.”<sup>34</sup> Specifically, NICs are defined by four key features:

1. Focused on a **well specified aim**
2. Guided by a **deep understanding of the problem**, the system that produces it, and a theory of improvement relevant to it
3. Disciplined by the rigor of **improvement science**, to understand how to make a program work reliably across contexts
4. Coordinated to accelerate the **development, testing, and refinement of interventions**, their rapid diffusion out into the field, and their effective integration into varied educational contexts.

For NICs, the executive function or supporting infrastructure of the network is designed in two distinct phases: an initiation team and a more long-term hub. According to Russell and colleagues (2016), the role of the network initiation team is, “articulating the problem to be solved, analyzing the system that produces undesirable outcomes, and developing an aim statement, an initial working theory of practice improvement and associated measures that guide the collective work among diverse, and often widely distributed, participants. The network initiation team also plays a role in securing necessary resources, recruiting initial members, and engaging expertise relevant to the problem.”<sup>35</sup> This role is usually played by a lead entity, which can be many different types of organizations or actors.

<sup>32</sup> Networked Improvement Communities were first pioneered by Doug Englebart.

<sup>33</sup> The Carnegie Foundation defines improvement science as an approach to learning and improving outcomes across different contexts and systems. For more details on the six core principles of improvement science according to the Carnegie Foundation, visit their [website](#).

<sup>34</sup> Jennifer Lin Russell et al. “A Framework for the Initiation of Networked Improvement Communities,” Teachers College Record, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Lin Russell et al., 2016.

As the NIC matures, the initiation team “leads the development of a central network hub that plays a key role in the distributed work of a NIC by providing ongoing coordination, knowledge management, and analytics.”<sup>36</sup> The network hub is critical to the overall success of the NIC in connecting broad, disperse communities for the purposes of learning and improving. As one author noted, “Few [organizations] are especially designed to provide the ‘connective tissue’ that is required to shift from the more typical one-to-one work to working in a coordinated and coherent way across a widely distributed network. It’s important to focus attention and resources on setting up the right communication and learning structures in place to prevent networks from stagnating at launch and staying small and ineffective.”<sup>37</sup>

An assessment by Carnegie of existing NICs identifies the main functions of the NIC hub as follows:

- **Build field consensus** on the importance of the problem and promising solutions
- **Catalyze network engagement**, bringing more leaders and champions to the movement
- **Develop the initial network structure and norms** for participation
- **Maintain a knowledge management system** and technology
- **Provide analytic capacity** to support sites and lead cross-institutional learning
- **Secure support** for network participants<sup>38</sup>

NICs offer a specific model for the national hub, designed to serve diffuse sites for the purpose of learning and sharing rapid iterations of what works, under what circumstances, and for whom. To the extent that the NSF national hub aims to be a learning community focused around very specific aims, the NIC literature and examples may serve as a roadmap.

### Reflection Questions

- Beyond what is outlined above, what other roles might the NSF INCLUDES national backbone play?
- Are any of the roles outlined above of a lesser priority for the NSF INCLUDES national backbone?
- In addition to those outlined in the potential staffing approach, what other roles might be needed to support the NSF INCLUDES national backbone?
- In what ways might learning from the Networked Improvement Communities model inform the NSF INCLUDES national backbone?

## V. Role of the Funder in Supporting the Backbone’s Sustainability

In addition to the performance of the backbone itself, the ecosystem of partners, funders, and community stakeholders can support the success of the backbone. Funders in particular can play a strong role in supporting the sustainability of the backbone’s critical infrastructure for a collective impact initiative.

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<sup>36</sup> Lin Russell et al., 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Anna Kwar, “[Integrating Collaboration, Learning Systems, and Empowerment to Accelerate Improvement in Education — The Promise of NICs](#),” Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning, May 2016.

<sup>38</sup> Anthony Bryk, Louis Gomez, and Alicia Grunow, “[Getting Ideas into Action: Building Networked Improvement Communities in Education](#),” *Carnegie Perspectives*, July 2011.

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation developed a strategic role supporting multiple collective impact initiatives, including the Strive effort described above. The Foundation’s experience supporting Strive and many other collective impact efforts in the Cincinnati area revealed several roles for funders as they seek to support the financial sustainability of the backbone.<sup>39</sup> First, and most straightforward, funders can support the backbone with unrestricted funding. In the experience of many collective impact efforts, raising funds to support the backbone can be more difficult than raising funds for the programs and services among partners, but the backbone infrastructure to support collective efforts is no less critical to achieving significant, systems-level change. Funders can also offer other supports for the backbone—including advice and technical assistance around evaluation and learning or the creation and support of a community of practice across backbones.

Funders can play a very important role beyond funding—as champion and advocate, helping collective impact efforts to engage local funders and other partners from the beginning. Often, one or more major funders may support the initial launch of the collective impact effort, and then help recruit to other supporters—preferably local institutions such as community foundations, local funders, or anchor institutions such as universities or hospitals. In different scenarios, funders may approach this critical champion role in different ways. For instance, the Aspen Institute’s Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF) serves as a mechanism to provide financial support to more than 20 local collective impact efforts to improve employment for young people who are not in school and not employed. In this case, OYIF developed a pooled funding mechanism that re-grants to the distinct local collective impact efforts but requires local matching funds in order to receive the grant. In this way, OYIF incentivizes each collective impact effort to pursue funding from local donors and helps to leverage that local funding as incentive for those donors.<sup>40</sup>

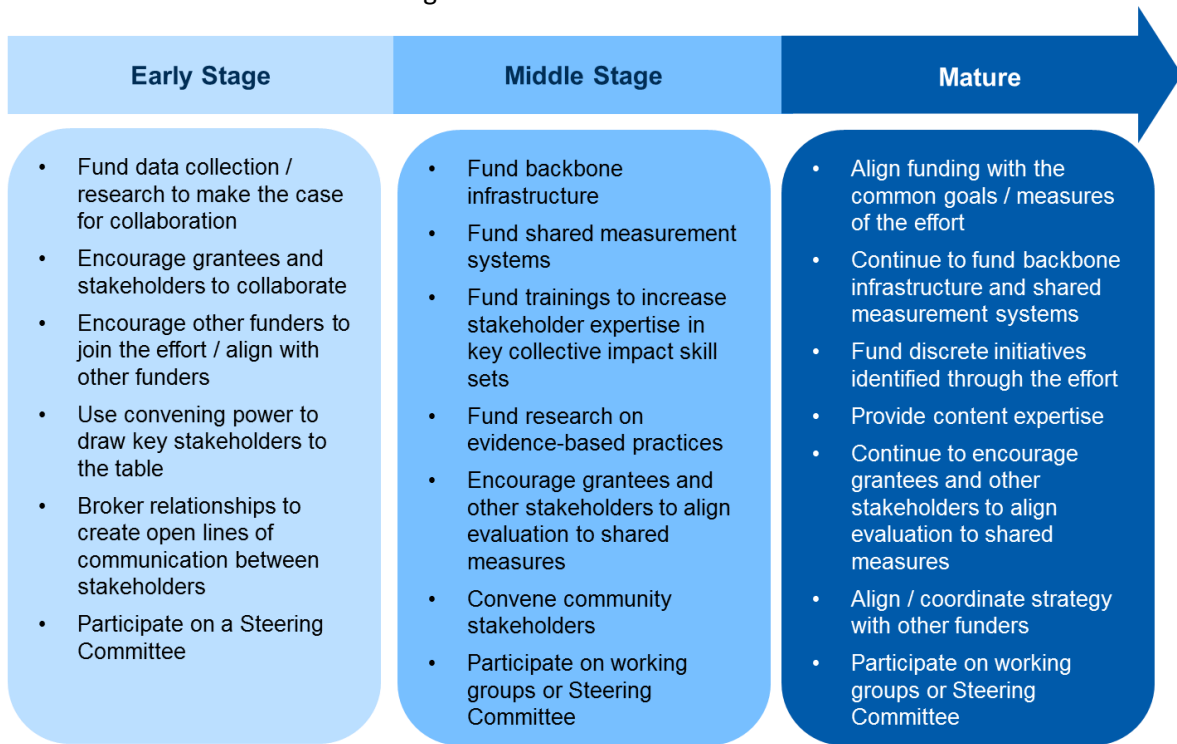
In the long-term, thinking beyond financial sustainability, funders can support the long-term success of the backbone by embracing a flexible and evolving function, supporting key capacities (e.g., data systems, communications) at the moment in the backbone’s maturity when they are needed. Figure 4 below summarizes how the role of funders can evolve as a collective impact initiative matures.

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<sup>39</sup>Turner, Merchant, Kania, and Martin, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> FSG interviews and analysis.

Figure 4: The Role of Funders



Source: Adapted from FSG's study of collective impact collaborations

### Reflection Questions

- Which of the funder roles is NSF well positioned to play?
- If any of these roles seem inappropriate for NSF, through what other ways can the alliances meet those needs?
- How should NSF think about its role evolving over time?

## VI. Conclusion

Local backbone support is critical infrastructure for successful collective impact efforts. Without a dedicated backbone performing core functions to support the cross-sector collaboration of diverse partners, collective impact will not succeed. Thus, careful consideration is necessary when designing and structuring the backbone, selecting backbone staff, and allocating the backbone's capacity across six core functions during each phase of a collective impact effort. Sustained funding for the backbone is also important to provide continuity, stability, and support needed for the effort's members and partners to achieve a shared goal.

At the national level, a network hub is critical to enhance cross-site learning and sharing of data and best practices. The network hub is distinct from the local backbone support at each collective impact site, and the hub will need to develop different capacities and structures to provide value to the network of sites. Whether modeled after other networks of collective impact sites or Networked Improvement Communities, this national network hub will enable sites to share their successes, their failures, and the lessons learned to accelerate learning and progress under the NSF INCLUDES initiative.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Types of Collaboration

There are many different types of collaborative efforts, and it can be useful to distinguish among them using common definitions. (The definitions below are drawn from FSG’s publications as well as Grantmakers for Effective Organizations.) While considering different types of collaboration, it is also important to note that the forms of collaboration below are not mutually exclusive and can be used in combination.

Type of Collaboration	Definition <sup>41</sup>	Example	Source of Definition
Funder Collaboratives	Groups of funders interested in supporting the same issue who pool their resources. This could mean aligning programs or administrative functions or adopting complementary strategies. Generally, participants do not adopt an overarching evidence-based plan of action or a shared measurement system, nor do they engage in differentiated activities beyond check writing or engage stakeholders from other sectors.	Home for Good	Kania & Kramer, 2011; Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO)
Public-Private Partnerships	Partnerships formed between government and private sector organizations to deliver specific services or benefits. They are often targeted narrowly, such as developing a particular drug to fight a single disease, and usually don’t engage the full set of stakeholders that affect the issue, such as the potential drug’s distribution system.	Cambridge Energy Alliance	Kania & Kramer, 2011; GEO
Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives	Voluntary activities by stakeholders from different sectors around a common theme. Typically, these initiatives lack any shared measurement of impact and the supporting infrastructure to forge any true alignment of efforts or accountability for results.		Kania & Kramer, 2011
Social Sector Networks	Groups of individuals or organizations fluidly connected through purposeful relationships, whether formal or informal. Collaboration is generally ad	Barr Fellows Program	Kania & Kramer, 2011; GEO

<sup>41</sup> Kania and Kramer, 2011; Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, “[What are the Different Ways to Collaborate?](#)” Published March 2014. Accessed online December 2016.

	hoc, and most often the emphasis is placed on information sharing and targeted short-term actions, rather than a sustained and structured initiative.		
Collective Impact Initiatives	Long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Their actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, and ongoing communication, and are staffed by an independent backbone support.	Shape Up Somerville	Kania & Kramer, 2011
Coalitions	Organizations whose members commit to an agreed-on purpose and shared decision making to influence an external institution or target, while each member organization maintains its own autonomy.	Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions	GEO
Movements	Collective action with a common frame and long-term vision for social change, characterized by grassroots mobilization that works to address a power imbalance.	Caring Across Generations	GEO
Strategic Alliances	Partnership among organizations working in pursuit of a common goal while maintaining organizational independence. This could mean aligning programs or administrative functions or adopting complementary strategies.	Arts + Response	GEO

## Appendix 2: Further Reading and Resources

Collective Impact Forum, "[Backbone Toolkit](#)," 2013.

FSG, "[Conversations with Collective Impact Backbone Leaders](#)," FSG Blog, August 2016.

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, "[What are the Different Ways to Collaborate?](#)" Published March 2014.

Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer, "[Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work](#)," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2012.

John Kania and Mark Kramer, "[Collective Impact](#)," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.

Hallie Preskill, Marcie Parkhurst, Jennifer Splansky Juster, "[Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact](#)," FSG Report, 2014.

Paul Schmitz, "[The Culture of Collective Impact](#)," Collective Impact Forum blog, October 2014.

Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, and John Kania, "[The Dawn of Systems Leadership](#)," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2015.

Shiloh Turner, Kathy Merchant, John Kania, and Ellen Martin, "[Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact](#)," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Summer 2012.

Junious Williams and Sarah Marxer, "[Bringing an Equity Lens to Collective Impact](#)," Collective Impact Forum Blog, September 2014.



## **About FSG**

FSG is a mission-driven consulting firm supporting leaders in creating large-scale, lasting social change. Through strategy, evaluation, and research we help many types of actors—individually and collectively—make progress against the world’s toughest problems.

Our teams work across all sectors by partnering with leading foundations, businesses, nonprofits, and governments in every region of the globe. We seek to reimagine social change by identifying ways to maximize the impact of existing resources, amplifying the work of others to help advance knowledge and practice, and inspiring change agents around the world to achieve greater impact.

As part of our nonprofit mission, FSG also directly supports learning communities, such as the Collective Impact Forum and the Shared Value Initiative, to provide the tools and relationships that change agents need to be successful. Learn more at [www.fsg.org](http://www.fsg.org)

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this paper: Jennifer Splansky Juster of FSG, Laura Tilghman of FSG, Jeff Cohen of FSG, and Sheri Brady of the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions.

We would also like to thank the representatives of the following organizations that came together to make the CoExIST Convening possible: National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity Educational Foundation, National Girls Collaborative Project, FSG, The Aspen Institute, The Collective Impact Forum, 100Kin10, MentorNet, Great Minds in STEM, American Society for Engineering Education, Science Museum of Minnesota, Changing Communities, National GEM Consortium and the Education Development Center.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. DCL 1650510

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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