



REIMAGINING SOCIAL CHANGE

# Readiness Assessment and Community Engagement in Collective Impact

PREPARED FOR SHEATUFIM / HAMIGRASH | SEPT 21, 2016

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# Successfully launching a Collective Impact initiative has a number of prerequisites



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# Let's agree to working definitions of some community engagement terminology and concepts

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- **Community** – a group of people that share a common geography, interest, activity, sense of identity, pursuit or other aspect that constitutes a social sense of cohesion.
- **Stakeholder** – an individual with influence over or interest in a social issue or event. This interest is often due to a perceived potential impact of the issue on something that the individual values.
- **Broad-based community engagement** – Efforts to reach a large and varied set of stakeholders within a community, including the general public rather than a targeted group of experts, leaders, or special interest groups
- **Targeted engagement** – effort to engage a particular group, often one that is under-represented or otherwise not engaging in an initiative without such a specialized effort.

# Here are some reasons why it is important to engage the community in collective impact efforts

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## 1 Understand pressing systemic community challenges

- Understanding the issues
- Clarify questions that arise about the challenge

## 2 Co-create solutions

- Spark innovative problem-solving rooted in “lived experience” of the community
- Identify and spread unique solutions that exist within the community

## 3 Verify the direction

- Get feedback on specific strategies and indicators from selected communities, particularly those who will be the end users of new programs or activities

## 4 Expand the reach of strategies

- Expand the reach of adoption of initiative strategies
- Evoke and sustain the will to take aligned action

## 5 Build community capacity to lead and sustain change

- Train stakeholders in skills of effective collaboration and strategy execution
- Share resources and learning across the community to help scale best practices

# Community engagement efforts vary along a spectrum from informing to true power sharing

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Co-Lead
<b>Objective</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, or solutions	To gather feedback from targeted stakeholders on the project's goals, processes, shared metrics, or strategies for change	To work directly with stakeholders continuously to ensure that concerns are consistently understood and considered	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and priorities	To place final decision making in the hands of stakeholders so that they drive decisions and implementation of the work
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email newsletters</li> <li>Send press releases announcing progress milestones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask for input on initiative strategies</li> <li>Invite to small group or individual presentations about initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite to join Working Groups or an advisory body for the initiative</li> <li>Partner in policy advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint to a leadership role on a Working Group to help shape strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite to join the Steering Committee and/or similar body with decision making power in the initiative</li> </ul>

***Collaboratives should decide the appropriate level of engagement with community based on their initiative's community engagement goals***

# Collective impact initiatives often face three kinds of challenges to community engagement efforts

Understanding Who to Engage and How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Who</b> in the community is <b>particularly important to engage</b>?</li><li>• How can we <b>co-create solutions with stakeholders impacted by the target issue</b> as part of the Collective Impact process?</li><li>• How do we <b>meaningfully engage new stakeholders</b> in and on-going initiative?</li></ul>
Balancing Efficiency and Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we <b>balance speed of work</b> with <b>level of engagement</b> of stakeholders?</li><li>• When are the <b>right times to invest in broad based community engagement</b> and buy-in?</li><li>• How can we ensure that community engagement is productive for the initiative? How do we measure its success?</li></ul>
Overcoming Obstructive Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we get <b>historically isolated or combative sectors speaking</b> to each other?</li><li>• How do we <b>overcome well entrenched, but misguided (inconsistent with data) community perceptions</b> that hinder adaptive change?</li></ul>

# Example: Leaders in Kent County, MI engaged the community to understand disparities in education

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## Community Context

- Kent County government leaders decided to **improve cradle to career education results** through collective impact
- While overall education outcomes were strong, the **racial disparities were significant**
- The Steering Committee drafted a Common Agenda, but given past unsuccessful collaborations they wanted to **engage the public early to build trust**

## Engagement Approach

**Hosted a community forum:** Initiative leaders worked hard to make sure the right people were present at the Forum and that it was structured so that attendees could speak openly about education and disparity

- Attendance: 200 participants
- Sectors included: Non-profits, government, schools, business, community members
- Representation: Across race, gender, and geography

## Outcomes of Engagement

- “This Forum was the first time that I’ve heard **leadership come forward and frankly acknowledge the equity issues in education**. It was refreshing.”
- “**We learned that words matter-** we had to find clear ways to describe the goals so that the community could get behind them.”
- The meeting validated the need to engage the community early on **to (re)build trust with those who had been burned past coalitions.**

# In your own CI initiative, consider if you engaging all sectors and how you address power dynamics

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Nonprofit / Service Providers	Philanthropy	Business	Government	Community Members	Other

# Discussion on community engagement

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- Is any person or organization **missing** from this list?
- How could we authentically engage with this missing voice? Do we have the right talent within our team? Should we consider cultural brokers?
- Have we disaggregated the data to really understand the nuances of the problem we are trying to solve? What about bias in our data sources?
- Have we examined contextual factors such as history, power dynamics, etc. to

**“The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener.”**

- Bill O'Brien, CEO of Hanover Insurance, quoted by Otto Scharmer, Senior Lecturer at MIT

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