Collective Impact: Opportunities and challenges for implementation

Jessica Smart (AIFS)
Kerry Graham (Collaboration for Impact)
Arlene Hand (Communicare)

Please note: The views expressed in this webinar are those of the presenters, and may not reflect those of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, or the Australian Government.
Overview

Jessica Smart
• Theory and evidence for collective impact

Kerry Graham
• National perspective on collective impact

Arlene Hand
• Case study of collective impact in Armadale, Western Australia
What is collective impact?

- A framework used to achieve population-level change on complex or “wicked” problems
- The term originated from Kania and Kramer in 2011
- Contrasted with “isolated impact”
- Collaboration between stakeholders on a defined issue
- Most frequently employed in a place-based setting
Five conditions of collective impact

1. **Common Agenda**: All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

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

3. **Shared Measurement System**: Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures that efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

4. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**: Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

5. **Backbone Function**: Creating and managing collective impact requires dedicated staff with specific skills to coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

Evidence for collective impact

• No conclusive, irrefutable, high quality evidence that collective impact is effective
• Collective impact is new and evolving
• Limited evaluation of Australian collective impact projects
• What we do know:
  – Collective impact generally fits with what we think will be effective when addressing complex problems
  – Place-based, collaborative initiatives in health have been effective
Community engagement

• One of the major initial criticisms of collective impact
• Now many collective impact resources on community engagement
• Community engagement is important
  – Community members are experts on local context and issues
  – Demographics of community professionals often different to people who change is intended to benefit
  – Transformational change
• A challenge, not just for collective impact but for the whole community sector
• Not always done well
• Requires a paradigm shift
• Community engagement most effective when it brings community members together with people who have power
Leadership and governance

- Two key opportunity-challenges
  - First opportunity-challenge: combining top-down and bottom-up leadership
    - Combining research evidence, data and community knowledge
    - Flexible but strong governance structures
  - Second opportunity-challenge: shift in leadership style
    - Leaders as facilitators
    - Importance of relationships and “soft skills”
    - Developing a productive culture
    - Importance of trust
Evaluation

• Evaluation is critical for collective impact
• Evaluation for continuous learning
  – Monitoring actions and interventions to see what is effective
  – Action research cycle, developmental evaluation
• Evaluation for impact
  – Have we contributed to population-level change?
  – Accountability to stakeholders, community, funders
  – Contribute to evidence base for collective impact
COLLABORATION FOR IMPACT
Who is CFI?

**Collaboration for Impact** is Australia’s leading organisation for enabling people to tackle big, tough problems and create large-scale change through collaboration.

*We believe in a society where everyone is able to thrive - where communities come together to solve their own challenges and seize opportunities.*

As a learning organisation we

- Build skills and capacity to address complex social problems
- Offer a range of face-to-face and online learning events and programs
- Develop capability to convene, design and lead collaborations
- Use data, facilitate learning, and measure progress & impact

---

**Our role is to develop people and collaborations to drive the kind of change that no one sector, organisation, program or person could achieve on their own.**
What are we seeing?
What are we seeing?

Intended impact

- Early childhood
- Young people
- Cradle to career
- Children, young people & families
- Indigenous advancement

Maturity of the field

- **45 + initiatives**
  - Building readiness and foundations
- **15 - 20 initiatives**
  - Developing shared agendas
- **8 – 10 initiatives**
  - Implementing for large scale impact
What are we seeing?
The lens we bring

Discovering what works for families

Australian Institute of Family Studies
Everyone is talking about community engagement…but

• Shifting from seeing engagement with communities as transactional activity to embedding a practice of ongoing engagement where communities are defining their opportunities and framing their problems and designing their own solutions.
Community engagement

What is required?

- Are often stuck in paralysis because they don’t know how to do it
- Most are still engaging community in one off, ad hoc ways as an activity not a practice

Why?

- Power? Retaining ‘expertise’ or reluctance to give up or handover power to communities?
- Assumption that community will make the wrong decisions?
Leadership and governance

- Government
- Service providers
- Citizens & those with lived experience
- Business
- Philanthropy
- Academia
Leadership and governance

- Government
- Citizens & those with lived experience
- Service providers
- Business
  - Philanthropy
  - Academia
Leadership and governance

Hypotheses

- We prefer to work with people like us
- We avoid feeling uncomfortable
- We don’t want to share power
- We don’t need to change – they do

Dominance of program & technical thinking

Premature agenda setting

Limited engagement with community / lived experience

Predictive, planned approaches that are risk averse

Low levels of learning and adaptation

Government

Citizens & those with lived experience

Business

Philanthropy

Academia

Service providers
Leadership and governance

- Government
- Citizens & those with lived experience
- Service providers
- Business
- Philanthropy
- Academia
What is our theory of change for driving behaviour change in the other parts of the system?
"I think you should be more explicit here in step 2"
• Primary purpose is strategic learning – to get data and insights quickly back to the collaborators
• The collaborators and innovators need to be able to adapt the interventions based on changes in the context and learning.
• Very few evaluators in Australia who work this way
Community Dimensions

Keeping children safe for a better future
Community Dimensions Project

How can we improve outcomes for children pre-birth – 12 years?

Community Dimensions name was inspired by the creative video game “Lego Dimensions” where multiple players work together to achieve a common goal: Where else do you get the chance to journey through unexpected worlds and team up with unlikely allies, use each other’s vehicles and gadgets to solve wicked problems in a way never before possible?
## Key Sign Posts for Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children in Care</th>
<th>Family/Domestic Violence</th>
<th>AEDC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Armadale District had highest number of children in care compared to other districts.</td>
<td>• Armadale District had highest number of DV reports in Perth Metro area.</td>
<td>• 1 in 4 (28%) in the target communities were developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more of the 5 AEDI developmental domains in 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continued to increase – 21% increase from 2012 – 2014.</td>
<td>• 59% increase in reports from 2014 to 2015</td>
<td>• Each of the LGA’s had more developmentally vulnerable children than Australia and Western Australia on at least 3 of the domains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 45% had been in care for 5 or more years.</td>
<td>• DV was the top issue identified in all reports to child protection in Armadale district quarter ending March 2017.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership and governance

2016
Communicare Communities for Children employed 0.6FTE Project Officer and established a collective of cross sector agencies to form a backbone leadership function.

February 2017
Current Governance Structure
## Leadership and governance

### Community Dimensions Engagement and Decision Making Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Impact</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Action Groups</th>
<th>CD team</th>
<th>Alignment Group Executive</th>
<th>Alignment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>• Minimum level of impact on set direction for Community Dimensions</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low level of risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Little risk of controversy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Small change or enhancement to service or activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>• Reasonable level of impact on set direction for Community Dimensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Medium level of complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Likely to raise interest, debate and varying views from the Alignment Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outcome is likely to reflect some change or reduction to a service or activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>• Potential for significant level of impact on set direction for Community Dimensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High level of interest is likely from Alignment Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More likely risk of controversy or conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High level of complexity in the issue being considered.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outcome will reflect change or loss of a service or activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D = Decision Making Authority

- Green = Members/Groups Engaged
Sustaining the Governance Structure

Community Dimensions operates on a shoe-string budget with a 0.6FTE worker allocated and the rest of the backbone drawn from our “popsicle” people.

‘Popsicle People’
Evaluation

What we have done:

1. Tracked our outputs – who we are engaging and if we are engaging the right people

   ![Pie chart showing engagement proportions]

   **FIGURE 1: TABLE OF 20 REPRESENTATION**

   - Government: 23%
   - Parents: 19%
   - Business/Industry: 15%
   - Not-For-Profit: 43%

2. Members experience within the collective
   
   “Great to get community – local people local ideas – with support and framework from ‘lead’ agency”
   
   “Excellent collaborative process which I think will lead to positive community outcomes”
   
   “Nice to have a child in the room to remind us why we are here”

3. Health of the Leadership Group
   
   - Leadership Group Survey 2016
   
   - Learning focus on meeting agenda
4. Developed and revised a logic model

**Program logic – Community Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem statement</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Outputs: Activities</th>
<th>Outputs: Participation</th>
<th>Short-term outcomes after each 'intervention'</th>
<th>Medium-term outcomes (0-2 years)</th>
<th>Long-term outcomes (2 years+ 5 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a range of complex social issues facing children and their families in the region. It is not clear how best to tackle these issues in a way that could secure significant and lasting positive change.</td>
<td>CFC funding, Qualified &amp; experienced staff, Active stakeholders from government, community sector, business, residents, Collective Impact Approach and guidance.</td>
<td>Draft, implement, and amend work plans.</td>
<td>MK type stakeholders engaged.</td>
<td>Increased understanding of Collective Impact.</td>
<td>Strategies emerging to tackle selected complex social issue.</td>
<td>Systems change addressed in selected complex social issue to reduce incidence / impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Draft, implement and amend evaluation plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased commitment and/or focus on selected complex issue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engage stakeholders in data collection and decision making.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants satisfied with ‘works’ delivered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data collection and reporting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assumptions:** Collective Impact approach can produce results on a ‘small’ budget, existing stakeholders are supportive and willing to share power.

**External Factors:** Changing demographics, other services and supports available in the area, other pressures on stakeholders’ time, government policy.

5. Looked to the FSG framework

6. Currently exploring how we might support an evaluation that sits alongside the project that both informs and measures our progress – action research & developmental evaluation.
Questions?

Continue the conversation started here today and access related resources on the CFCA website:
AIFS 2018 Conference
What matters most to families in the 21st Century?

SAVE THE DATE
25–27 July 2018
The Australian Institute of Family Studies 2018 Conference