

# Think Collective Impact

When communities, sectors or organisations are trying to address a complex challenge, Collective Impact has been shown around the world to make complex collaborations work more effectively.

## What is Collective Impact?

Collective impact is a way of bringing together a network of community members, organisations, government agencies and others to address complex environmental and social challenges. These can be place-based or thematic collaborations.

Collective impact is an energising approach which is supported by the five 'conditions', outlined below, with equity practices incorporated throughout.

The five conditions are a framework or guide and should be customized for the local context and the particular challenge you are seeking to address.

## The 5 conditions of Collective Impact



### It all starts by defining a **Common Agenda**

This means coming together to collectively define the challenge and to create a shared vision of how to solve it.



### It establishes **shared measurement**

This means all parties find a shared way to define progress toward success and shared accountability for achieving it. It also allows for equitable access to continuous learning.



### It fosters **mutually reinforcing activities**

That means working together, not separately towards the same general aim. Integrating the different activities of many participants will maximise the effectiveness of the whole!



### It encourages **continuous communication**

This builds trust, strengthens relationships, enhances learning and keeps the participants on track.



### And it has a strong **backbone**

This means having an appropriately resourced team dedicated to aligning and coordinating the work of the group.

## The shared measurement challenge

There are now well over 60 Collective Impact initiatives up and running in Australia. The approach is not only well defined but also producing results in specific locations. Australia is contributing to global learning on power sharing, the importance of local leadership, the need for a sense of urgency to catalyse activity, and the role of funders in Collective Impact.

Added to this, Australia has a strong track record around ensuring the voice of community/beneficiary stakeholders is central to Collective Impact development.

One of the remaining challenges is ensuring genuine shared impact measurement. Anyone who has attempted to develop and implement an impact measurement approach within **one** organisation knows how complicated this can be.

Within Collective Impact the challenges are accentuated – there has to be agreement on measurement across multiple organisations, funders have to agree to measure the same things as organisations and communities on the ground, and often shared measurement has to speak to practical changes in individual's lives as well as addressing institutional, systemic or structural barriers reinforcing inequity. Added to this, the shared measurement approach has to develop insights that allow all parties involved in the Collective Impact initiative to reflect, learn and improve what they are doing.

Think Impact has been wrestling with these challenges for the best part of a decade. One of our current projects is the development of a shared impact measurement approach for 'functional zero homelessness' in Melbourne. It is an exciting initiative to be involved with as the key organisations work to identify the most effective things to measure and reflect on learning from the measurement approach.

If you would like to know more about how Think Impact can support your Collective Impact Shared Measurement approach please get in touch at [hello@thinkimpact.com.au](mailto:hello@thinkimpact.com.au)