Collective Impact Model

The complexity of the problems we need to solve in our society—whether social, economic or environmental—require new ways of working. They cannot be solved by standalone organisations or initiatives.

The collective impact model, initially developed by FSG, a US not for profit consulting firm, outlines a process that has demonstrated success across multiple projects focused on social, environmental and economic returns. The collective impact model provides a more collaborative and effective approach to addressing complex problems.

The model requires partners from the community, government and private sector to come together and systemically align their goals and efforts around clearly defined goals. Five key factors are required for a successful collective impact model:

1. **Common Agenda**
   - Participants have a shared vision for change including common understanding of problem and joint approach to solving it.

2. **Shared Measurement**
   - Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants.

3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
   - Participant activity must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

4. **Continuous Communication**
   - Consistent and open communication across all participants to ensure trust, shared objectives and common motivation.

5. **Backbone Support Organisation**
   - A separate organisation with staff to be backbone of entire initiative and co-ordinate all participants efforts.

Key to this process is understanding that developing a common agenda is not about creating a solution, but instead developing a common understanding of the problem, finding the goals to address the problem, and knowing the joint indicators that the different players will be held accountable to and measured against. The solution emerges through the development of this common agenda.

Collective impact is more than a model; it is a new way of doing business when dealing with complex issues. It re-engages participants to innovate together to find solutions to complex problems and continuously evaluate and learn over time. Collective impact is not a silver bullet but rather a sustained process that merges intentionality (a common agenda) with emergence (that unfolds through collective seeing, learning and doing).

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