ENGAGE

How Funders Can Support and Leverage Networks for Social Impact

The Rockefeller Foundation
Monitor Institute
Deloitte.

ENGAGE

How Funders Can Support and Leverage Networks for Social Impact

When to use this print edition

ENGAGE is a tool that was designed to be used on the web. This print edition is a compilation of every page from the online tool, making it easy to print all or part of the content on paper for distribution in settings where a hard copy is preferable such as meetings or conferences. However, since the material was designed primarily for use on a browser (whether on a laptop, tablet, or smartphone), the best experience will be had in that format.

What else you can find online

The online version of ENGAGE, found at www.rockefellerfoundation.org/engage, contains a number of interactive features in addition to the text of this print edition:

- Contextual links between the "story sketches" and related sections
- A "reading list" of bookmarked pages
- Page-specific citation of sources
- Keyword search

contents

NOTE: These numbers are the pages of the PDF. You will see different page numbers from the website in the lower-right corner.

Story sketches

How to Use This Guide

This is a guide to strengthen the capacity of grant-makers to support and leverage networks in service of their social impact goals. The information in this guide is designed to help guide grantmaking action and offered in the service of decision-making. It is organized to guide you through a range of key questions to consider as you explore how engaging with a network might play a role in your work. (To learn about how it was produced, see About This Guide.)

WHAT IS THIS GUIDE?

A tool to help you…

- Think through the critical questions of *whether* and *when* to use a network to accelerate impact;
- Understand your role in supporting a network and how that may change over time;
- Answer the "upstream" questions around a network's conception, design, utility and resource requirements;
- Learn from real world stories of networks (their funders and leaders) who are using networks to solve a range of tough problems

This guide is structured around a series of questions that will help you navigate the process of deciding *whether* to engage with a network and *how* to do so. The material is organized in a sequence starting with the types of problems social impact networks are suited to address, what networks can help you do, to the very practical roles funders can play in support of networks.

WHAT QUESTIONS WILL THIS GUIDE ANSWER?

There are many ways to think about networks from a funder's perspective. This guide addresses the topic through answering the following questions, which you can find on any page by clicking the table of contents button in the upper-right-hand corner of the screen:

- Why are networks relevant to my work?
- Is my challenge a good fit for engaging with a network?
- What are the alternatives to a network?
- What network design would be the most useful?
- What can a network do?

SECTION 2: What could I do for a network?

- What type of network funder could I be?
- What forms of financial and backbone support do networks need?
- What support will I provide?
- Am I ready to work with a network—and is my organization ready?
- How do I exit a network?

SECTION 3: How do I get started?

- How do I gauge the potential for starting or joining a network?
- What technology and process tools can support a network?
- To review: Am I clear on my intention for getting involved in a network?

WHAT ISN'T THIS GUIDE?

- A how-to guide for network weavers and others who need to *run* a network
- The final word on funding networks for social impact, which remains a young and dynamic area of practice

HOW TO FIND YOUR WAY AROUND

- Each page has a left and right arrow at the top, to move forward or backwards in the order.
- If you'd like to jump to a particular page, or search by keyword, click the Index icon in the far upper-right corner.
- To print any page, just hit Control-P (or Command-P on a Mac). It will be automatically formatted for a printed page. If you'd prefer to read all of the material in printed form, or off-line, click the Download link at the bottom of the page.
- Any time you find something that you want to come back to, click the bookmark icon in the upper-left, which will add that page or section to your Reading List. You can find what you've saved by clicking on the Index icon in the far upper-right corner and clicking Reading List. From the Reading List you can click back to any page you've saved, email yourself a list of links, or download any page as a PDF.
- Whenever you click into a Story Sketch, the titles on the right are the sections that the story illustrates. Click on them to jump to that content.
- If you'd like to read more about a topic click the Sources link at the bottom of each page, and if you'd like to see all of the sources at once you can find them in the Full Bibliography.

We have seen first-hand the transformative outcomes that can be powered by a funder's effective engagement with a social impact network. It is our earnest hope that this guide will help you find and pursue the opportunities to do that in your grantmaking.

–Anna Muoio and Noah Rimland Flower, Monitor Institute

What could a network help me achieve?

Why are networks relevant to my work?

Networks are being used today by change agents across fields and sectors to create larger-scale solutions to social challenges than can be delivered by a single organization. That scale is accomplished by connecting independent actors in ways that are flexible, adaptable, resilient, scalable, and decentralized.

In our interviews, we heard grantmakers name a number of specific ways that networks for social impact accelerate and amplify the change they seek:

- Networks allow a grantmaker **to set broader ambitions**—and tackle a larger piece of a problem than could be addressed by supporting individual grantees.
- Networks **diversify a grantmaker's risk**, spreading bets across the work of many actors rather than relying on one organization.
- Networks **spur smart coordination**: they allow organizations to team up with others to tackle an issue of shared concern.
- Networks **build the resilience of problem solvers** in any ecosystem: they help create meaningful relationships so that when new challenges or opportunities arise, the collective can respond.
- Networks **enable innovation**, creating a venue where it is possible to bring many new and different voices to the table.

The word "network" has become a general-purpose term that has seen a huge rise in popularity with the spread of connective technology. It's a term at risk of being so overused that we become numb to what it means. There are many kinds of networks for many kinds of purposes. The networks that are relevant to grantmaking are ***social impact networks,*** **comprised of relatively autonomous actors, who are either pursuing individual goals within a shared system or working in concert to address complex social problems.** These actors can be drawn from the private, public or social sectors to create truly cross-sector collaboratives. (See the collection of Story Snapshots for examples of what they look like in practice.)

> A network is a collection of expertise that adds up to more than the sum of the parts, allowing a transfer of knowledge and materials that wouldn't happen otherwise.
>
> **GARY TOENNIESSEN, ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

These networks have been called many names over the years. Each term for them describes a particular approach that is useful in slightly different settings, although they are often applied loosely in practice. VISA founder Dee Hock famously coined the term *chaordic organizations* in 2000; Pete Plastrik, Madeleine Taylor, and John Cleveland recently offered the term *generative social-impact networks*; at the global scale, author Don Tapscott calls them *global solution networks*, while Steve Waddell writes about them as *global action networks*. Some terms refer to focused applications of the network form, such as *collective impact* and *social labs*. Other terms describe not the network itself but the type of leadership required to build networks: Jane Wei-Skillern uses the term *network mindset*; Peter Senge and his coauthors describe the skillset of a *system leader*; and, we at Monitor Institute have described both the art of creating *aligned action* and the mentality of *working wikily*. >(These are related but separate from forms such as movements, coalitions or associations.)

> "If we can design our grant portfolios to reflect natural living systems which are all very diverse, but very much connected and therefore resilient, then we're going to have better outcomes in the long run."
>
> **SARAH BELL, THE 11TH HOUR PROJECT**

Social impact networks are highly relevant to the work of grantmakers, who are particularly well-suited to play key roles in their formation and development. In network parlance, a grantmaker is a natural 'network hub,' forming ties with many people in an issue space as she gathers information, builds and rebuilds a point of view about how to achieve programmatic goals, and finds the best grantee partners.

What is new today is the increasing number of social impact networks that operate independently of grantmakers, developing a powerful enough life of their own that they can become grantees themselves. When actors find reason to pursue their individual goals within a shared system, or achieve sufficient alignment that they can work in concert to achieve shared goals, the structure that enables their collective effort becomes a crucial lever of change. Where grantmakers have traditionally supported organizations as the unit of analysis for driving social impact, today there are increasing opportunities to achieve impact by supporting networks that link organizations or people together into powerful problem solving collectives.

> Our trustees were saying, ‘I know our individual grants make a difference, but are we really making a difference at a community level or at a systems level?’
>
> **TRACY SAWICKI, TOWER FAMILY FOUNDATION**

Is my challenge a good fit for engaging with a social impact network?

Social challenges come in every shape and size, and there is never a straightforward plug-and-play process to find the most promising path forward, no matter if you are using a network or a different approach. Instead, you need to understand the nature of the problem before you in order to understand the best approach to take.

Networks are suited to solving a particular type of problem. There are certain qualities you can look for to determine whether a network is likely or unlikely to be a good fit. There is an entire body of knowledge around problem typologies—discussing the range of problems and the different characteristics that they exhibit. Some people call them Type I, II, III problems. Others refer to them as technical, complicated, complex and chaotic problems. Some call them "wicked or tame" problems. This matters because the *type* of problem you face will help determine the solution *approach* you adopt.

Below we've outlined characteristics of a challenge where a network could be particularly valuable and those situations where it may not be as powerful. Review this to gain a better understanding of the nature of the challenge you're facing and if a network may be an effective tool. Whatever your conclusions, hold them lightly, and return to double-check your thinking after you've learned more about the landscape and gauged the potential for starting or joining a network.

A LIKELY FIT

The problem you are trying to solve…

- Has no single root cause and is connected to (or a symptom of) other problems
- Is emergent and shifting, defying silver-bullet solutions
- Could not be solved by any single organization, and lacks a clear or widely-agreed definition among the actors who could address it
- Cuts across the domains in which the actors typically work (e.g., governmental jurisdiction, issue focus, or industry sector)

And any progress towards a solution will require…

- The involvement of many actors, especially if they are from different sectors
- More resources or capacity than any one actor could provide
- A portfolio of interventions that work on many levers of change to address deep rooted causes
- Working beyond the scope of any of the relevant actors—such as changing policies, structures, or other elements of the social system that surrounds them

AN UNLIKELY FIT

The problem you are trying to solve…

- Is well understood and involves a relatively simple solution
- Exists in an organization or system that is entirely under one leader's formal authority

And any progress towards a solution will require…

- Work that requires little information exchange or coordination among the relevant actors
- Hierarchical management and meaningful accountability to ensure that the relevant actors play their part
- Replication of a clearly-defined program or practice
- Execution by very few independent actors

> The bigger and more complex the challenge, the more I think it needs some sort of a network.
>
> **SHELLY LONDON, POSES FAMILY FOUNDATION**

> I don't believe we could have achieved our goals [of producing rice varieties with value to poor consumers] without creating a network. No single institution had the capacity to work all the way from discovery to application in the field.
>
> **GARY TOENNIESSEN, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

What are the alternatives to a network?

Engaging with social impact networks addressed in this guide can be done in many situations in many ways. They have distinctive strengths when used well. But they also have challenges that are inherent to their form.

In a network it is more challenging to establish decision rights, define membership and create accountability. It is also more challenging to establish a clear and attractive value exchange among the people involved and to motivate those people to invest a meaningful amount of time. As a result, there are also many situations where a network is simply not the right tool.

If you suspect that you might be able to make headway without forming a new network, or supporting an existing network, consider whether these alternatives might serve your purposes. But also consider whether it could be worth investing additional effort in understanding the nature of the issue and the landscape of actors involved–sometimes the opportunity to build a network is not immediately obvious and requires some initial discovery.

YOUR OPTIONS INCLUDE:

Support a single individual / organization

SUPPORT A PERSON OR AN EXISTING ORGANIZATION

Form a standard grantmaker/grantee relationship in which the grantmaker provides funding, capacity-building, and/or other forms of direct personal involvement to enable a single individual or organization to accomplish a particular goal.

CREATE AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION

Create a typical free-standing nonprofit, operating foundation, or corporation that has dedicated leadership and staff. Whether they are associations (as described below) or deliver a different type of service, sometimes the work that needs to be done requires the dedicated resources and executive vision that are the hallmarks of an effective stand-alone entity.

Gather a group

HOLD A SERIES OF MEETINGS

Host in-person or virtual gatherings focused on moving through an agenda (rather than doing collaborative group work).

ORGANIZE A CONFERENCE

Provide an event where a group can give and hear presentations, ask questions of speakers, and form new relationships as they see fit.

HOST ONE OR MORE CONVENINGS

Convenings are large-group working sessions, typically composed of up to 80 diverse stakeholders who represent a range of perspectives on a topic, often from different organizations. They are designed to draw on all participants to generate insight and action beyond what any single actor could achieve on his or her own, even when the participants are not part of a network. For more details, see GATHER: The Art and Science of Effective Convening, described in this brief video:

Support a different kind of partnership

(Many of the principles from this guide apply to this work as well.)

INFORMALLY CONNECT PAIRS OR TRIOS

Quite frequently there are opportunities for learning and collaboration among two or three organizations that have no need to expand to a larger group. These can happen on their own, they can be catalyzed by conversation at a convening, or they can form out of an introduction that you make intentionally. Two ways to encourage and sustain these collaborations are by offering small grants to start new collaborations or by providing a prize for collaborations that begin on their own.

SUPPORT AN ASSOCIATION

These groups are organized mainly to foster connections and provide their members with various services. In associations, members don't necessarily develop powerful, enduring relationships and collaborations and the association staff, not the members, do most of the work.

SUPPORT A COALITION OR ALLIANCE

These are campaign-specific temporary alignments of organizations formed to achieve a specific objective that usually disband as soon as the campaign is completed. While they are networks in the general sense of the term, their short lifespan means that it is less necessary to define their function and participants' roles as clearly as in the social impact networks discussed here.

SUPPORT A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

These partnerships are 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.

> "Collaboration is really messy and difficult. There are reasons why it's difficult for funders to work together and reasons why it's difficult for organizations to collaborative effectively. It's hard, and it takes a lot of persistence and a lot of flexibility. When you get a group of smart people in a room who have a lot of different ideas, you have to let go and trust that the work will go in the right direction."
>
> **JENNIFER BERMAN, ENERGY ACTION NETWORK OF VERMONT**

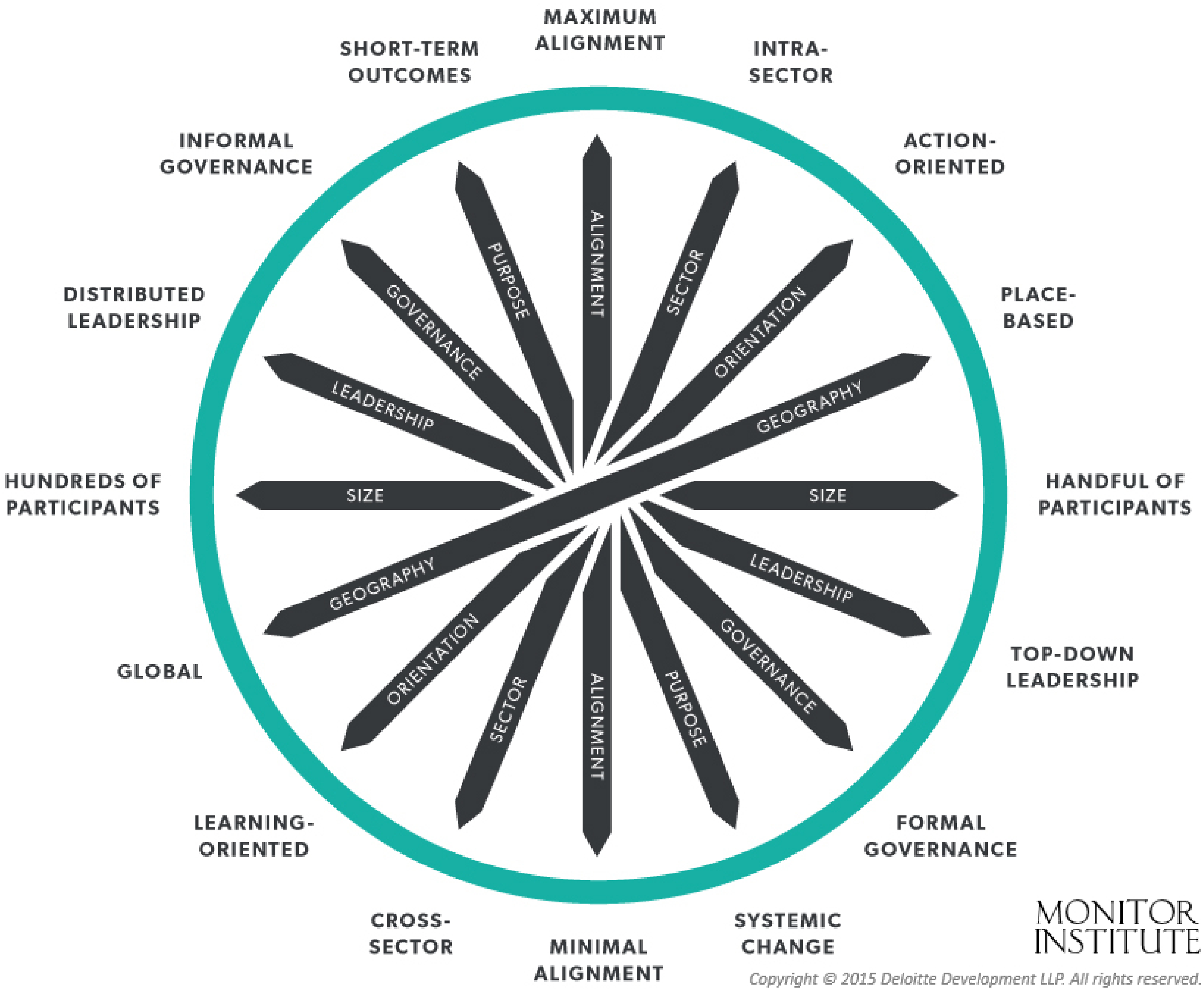
> "Ask yourself: do you truly believe in the power of a network? It's going to take time and resources and lots of frustration. You have to have reason to believe in the value of a network in order to be willing to go through all of that."
>
> **MICHELLE GILLIARD, VENTURE PHILANTHROPY PARTNERS**

What network design would be the most useful?

If you think that your problem is a likely fit for using a network, you are now ready to create an initial hypothesis about what the right size and shape of network might be. What design will be most effective for the problem you're trying to solve depends on *who* will be involved, and many other details. But understanding the range of design options is a good place to start.

Our research has found eight particularly common ways that networks can vary to suit different circumstances. At this early stage of your thinking you may be able to rule out certain configurations. For example, you might be certain that you are only interested in engaging with a network that is place-based, or one that has cross-sectoral representation.

You may not know yet whether it will better serve your goals to start a new network, help a network develop, or transform an existing network. Initial ideas here are helpful for moving your thinking forward, but you may want to revisit your ideas once you begin thinking in more detail about what that network could do, how it can evolve over time, what support and leadership it will need, and whether you and your organization are ready. Hold these ideas lightly: network design choices are best kept fluid, particularly as you begin reaching out to the field to gauge a network's real potential.



The extremes of each of these eight spectra are described in greater detail below:

1. SIZE

HUNDRED OF PARTICIPANTS:
There are hundreds of individuals who are active participants in the network.

HANDFUL OF PARTICIPANTS:
There are a small number of people who are active participants in the network.

2. LEADERSHIP

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP:
Many participants, if not all, make their own independent choices about what and how to contribute to the network.

TOP-DOWN LEADERSHIP:
Most or all of the participants' contributions to the network are made in accordance with the requests of a decision making body (executive committee, steering committee, etc).

3. GOVERNANCE

INFORMAL GOVERNANCE:
There are no explicitly-stated leadership roles within the network, or boundaries around the nature of different participants' contributions.

FORMAL GOVERNANCE:
Membership and leadership are explicitly defined and contained within specific bounds, often with multiple tiers of membership and official leadership positions.

4. PURPOSE

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES:
The participants' reason for connecting is to accomplish a goal in the near term, after which the participants might continue but will need to adopt a new purpose.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE:
The participants' reason for connecting is to address a systemic challenge, which typically requires sustained efforts over years or decades. Even if the participants change, the network continues to achieve the goal.

5. ALIGNMENT

MAXIMAL ALIGNMENT:
The participants are aiming to accomplish very similar overarching goals, giving them many good reasons to connect and collaborate.

MINIMAL ALIGNMENT:
The participants have many different overarching goals, giving them only one or a few good reasons to connect and collaborate.

6. SECTOR

INTRA-SECTOR:
The participants are highly homogeneous, working in the same sector, issue area, or industry, with similar organizational structures.

CROSS-SECTOR:
The participants are highly heterogeneous, working in a variety of sectors, issue areas, or industries, with a variety of organizational structures.

7. ORIENTATION

ACTION-ORIENTED:
Participants' motivation for taking part in the network is primarily to accomplish a goal, whether that is their own goal or a collective goal.

LEARNING-ORIENTED:
Participants' motivation for taking part in the network is primarily to access information that will be useful in their own independent work.

8. GEOGRAPHY

PLACE-BASED:
The participants are located in the same metropolitan area (at the extreme of the spectrum), in the same state (halfway to the center), or in the same region (in the center).

GLOBAL:
The participants are spread around the globe (at the extreme of the spectrum) or located in the same country (halfway to the center).

What can a network do?

Beyond the shape and size that results from their general *design*, every network serves one or more *functions* in helping its participants achieve a larger goal. Think of a network like a Swiss Army knife that can be reconfigured to meet the task at hand. We have found seven functions that networks can serve, drawing on recent findings and our own research.

Few networks serve all functions, but many serve more than one, and the degree of functionality required typically scales with the complexity of the challenge they are designed to address. Some networks only need to weave social ties or access new and diverse perspectives; but if you've got a bold goal—like reducing carbon emissions 80% by 2050 across 8 states—you'll probably need to build in more advanced functionality over time.

We've arranged the seven functions below in order from those that require the least alignment among the participants to those that require the most. Click on each one to learn more and to see examples of what that function looks like in practice.

(If you're interested in other ways of thinking about a network's functions, we recommend the frameworks from Global Solution Networks and the book *Connecting to Change the World*.)

1. Spur individual action

A network can provide the structure through which a large number of people can engage in an issue that would be challenging to do in a more formal hierarchy. It is particularly effective when the goal is to encourage individuals to take action and use whatever resources are at their disposal. This is especially true when the people in question need only a small amount of structure, encouragement, and support to get moving in the right direction. It can be powerful and cost-effective when executed through online coordination tools, which can be augmented with in-person convening. (This function is closely related to access new and diverse perspectives.) **A network that is successful in this work can be highly effective at sparking individuals' motivation to change their behavior or participate in collective action.**

2. Weave social ties

A network can provide a setting in which participants meet, get acquainted, learn about each other, and form their own connections. This can be valuable when certain people or organizations are isolated from one another and simply forming relationships would be a helpful part of the systemic intervention you want to advance. The potential for a network to serve this function exists when the group in question would not normally meet but could be convinced to see value in meeting one another. **A network that succeeds in this work can lay the foundation for many kinds of mutual assistance, enabling it to develop additional functions. One common next step is facilitating information exchange and peer learning; another is for participants to start other organizations or networks of their own.**

Related terms: This function is can be loosely considered a subset of what is described as a connectivity network.

> "A good network will beget other networks. And you should not see this as a bad thing."
>
> **KARL BROWN, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

3. Access new and diverse perspectives

A network can create a structure for engaging with a group who can provide a diverse range of ideas, information, and perspectives. Rather than soliciting this information one-on-one, convenings and online platforms can be used to provide a format where groups can provide input into a decision or offer points of view that may add needed dimension to a challenge. Networks deployed to serve this function alone are typically created on a temporary basis to serve a short-term purpose, but this function can also be served on an ongoing basis for work that needs to be conducted over the course of years. **Unlike standard polling or focus groups, a network that is successful in this regard can create meaningful dialogue, where the people providing input can have a real exchange with one another and with the people making the decision.**

> "Diversity is really important in supporting networks, especially if you're trying to build power. [In one network,] an important form of diversity was geography. Having groups involved that were state-focused brought a different perspective to the group's conversation. For example, we'd be talking about communications, a national group would say, "let's say this," and someone else would say, "Well, we can't actually say that in Missouri, but this is what we say." That diversity made all of the conversations richer."
>
> **SARAH BELL, THE 11TH HOUR PROJECT**

3. Access new and diverse perspectives

A network can create a structure for engaging with a group who can provide a diverse range of ideas, information, and perspectives. Rather than soliciting this information one-on-one, convenings and online platforms can be used to provide a format where groups can provide input into a decision or offer points of view that may add needed dimension to a challenge. Networks deployed to serve this function alone are typically created on a temporary basis to serve a short-term purpose, but this function can also be served on an ongoing basis for work that needs to be conducted over the course of years. **Unlike standard polling or focus groups, a network that is successful in this regard can create meaningful dialogue, where the people providing input can have a real exchange with one another and with the people making the decision.**

> "Diversity is really important in supporting networks, especially if you're trying to build power. [In one network,] an important form of diversity was geography. Having groups involved that were state-focused brought a different perspective to the group's conversation. For example, we'd be talking about communications, a national group would say, "let's say this," and someone else would say, "Well, we can't actually say that in Missouri, but this is what we say." That diversity made all of the conversations richer."
>
> **SARAH BELL, THE 11TH HOUR PROJECT**

4. Facilitate information exchange and peer learning

A network can create a setting where participants learn from each other, using structured and unstructured formats to help them identify common areas of practice and share information and advice about the best ways to achieve a given goal. This can be particularly valuable for a group of people who are doing similar work in different organizations or sectors, if they are relatively isolated in their work or are working on a new problem and need a community of peers to learn from. It can also be useful for combining complementary specialties, such as the people creating technology with researchers or others who have insight into its potential applications. **A network is often successful in this regard by building on an already-established ability to weave social ties, opening up opportunities to create shared understanding of an issue or design and prototype new solutions.**

Related terms: This function is closely related to what is described as a connectivity network or a knowledge network.

> "Even in bad systems, there are a number of good people and organizations. But they often don't know each other, thus there are few, if any, no mutual support systems. In addition, there are few rewards, and sometimes sanctions, for people who are both motivated and progressive in their thinking."
>
> **STEFAN NACHUK, ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

> "Networks are both for sharing the positive experiences and for sharing the mistakes so that others can avoid repeating them."
>
> **HELENA MONTEIRO, WORLDWIDE INITIATIVE FOR GRANTMAKER SUPPORT (WINGS)**

5. Create shared understanding in order to align action

A network can knit together disparate vantage points on a social system, build agreement about how it operates, and ultimately provide the container for coordinated strategic planning that aligns the participants' goals. The early-stage conversations can be challenging, requiring the group to iron out differences in definitions, ideas, and language. These conversations often yield new insight into the root causes of a problem, the common beliefs shared by the participants, and the ways that they could potentially align their work or collaborate on shared efforts. **When a network succeeds at building that agreement and strategic coordination, each participating organization's activities can begin to add up to a coherent large-scale effort, while still leaving each organization the freedom to execute its work independently.**

Related terms: This function is closely related to what is described as an alignment network, and is very similar to the definition of a collective impact network.

> "We saw all kinds of programs expanding their models because they realized they were just one piece of the puzzle and they had to think about partnership in a different way. Rather than require every organization [in our venture philanthropy portfolio] to figure out which partnerships they individually need, we thought it would be better to bring a collective together, creating the environment of trust and providing the space to figure it out amongst themselves."
>
> **– SHRUTI SEHRA, NEW PROFIT, INC.**

> “A network allows a broad range of people and organizations to find a shared framework from which to act. Members of a network are unlikely to agree on each and every philosophical point, but they can use their relationships and sense of shared purpose to coordinate actions capable of producing social change.”
>
> **– DOUGLAS EASTERLING, AUTHOR**

6. Design and prototype new solutions

A network can bring together combinations of talent that are uniquely suited to look for new solutions (rather than extend existing interventions), sketch designs, create prototypes, and test them with target audiences. This work builds on strong alignment within a group on its shared goals and highest-potential avenues for creating impact. It is particularly effective when the participants have the commitment and the capacity to engage in joint projects, which is often built through first establishing the functionality of weaving social ties and/or facilitating information exchange and peer learning. It is also at its most powerful when the members of the group come from sufficiently different backgrounds or disciplines that they will be able to see possibilities that might not otherwise emerge. **When a network succeeds at bringing together people who have complementary insights to work on a problem, it can provide the ideal environment for uncovering innovations that live in the adjacent possible.**

Related terms: This function is most closely related to the practice of social labs (described recently in three different sources). It is also related to what is described as a knowledge network, except that it can go beyond creating new ideas and to include prototyping & testing.

> “Highly successful collaboratives – the ones that generate synergistic, communitywide impacts – do more than align the activities of members. They also find smarter, more comprehensive ways of addressing the issues that are at the root of whatever problem they are working to solve.”
>
> **DOUGLAS EASTERLING, PROFESSOR AT THE WAKE FOREST SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

7. Launch a series of joint initiatives

A network can provide the standing infrastructure to make it relatively easy for participants to develop initiatives that advance mutually-held goals, assemble the staff capacity, and pursue them as a group. One common form for such initiatives is an advocacy campaign to increase pressure on governments, corporations, and other institutions to adopt a certain position or policy proposal. But it can be any joint effort that draws on the capacity, voice, relationships, and other assets resident within the group. Organizations often join in campaigns and gradually build closer direct relationships with one another, but launching each campaign still requires starting nearly from scratch. **When a network succeeds at serving this function, it can provide the standing infrastructure for taking collective action when an opportunity or challenge arises that concerns the people and organizations involved.**

> "Our members treasure the ability to form groups to work on specific platforms or issues that they are interested in, whether those groups are permanent or temporary."
>
> **– HELENA MONTEIRO, WORLDWIDE INITIATIVE FOR GRANTMAKER SUPPORT (WINGS)**

What could I do for a network?

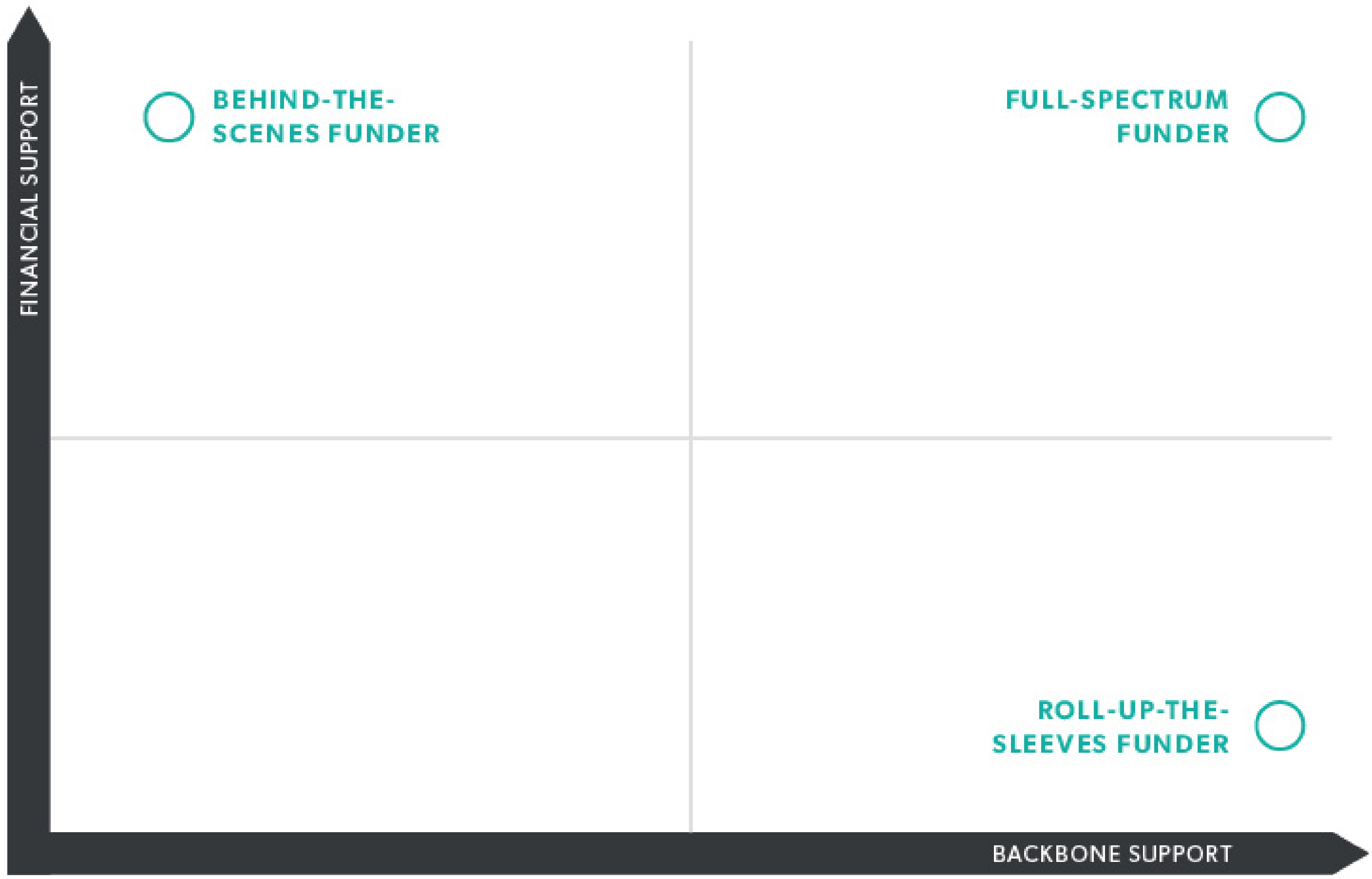
What type of network funder could I be?

In our research and experience we have seen three common "types" of network funders. The more traditional type is the ***behind-the-scenes funder***, who engages primarily on a financial level with minimal backbone support. The ***roll-up-the-sleeves funder*** puts in considerable time and effort but is not a substantial source of financing. The third common type is the ***full-spectrum funder*** who combines the two, often assuming key roles through investing both their own effort and substantial funding.

What these three types reflect is how different funder-network relationships vary across two particularly critical variables: how much *financial support* the funder provides, and how much non-financial *backbone support* the funder provides. Financial support is typically provided as grants; backbone support often takes the form of time spent providing expertise and leadership, but can also include making important introductions and other thoughtful ways of participating through personal rather than monetary contribution.

How much financial and backbone support you provide will typically change over the lifetime of your engagement with a network, and as a result, what type of network funder you are will phase in and out of these three positions from one year to the next.

A helpful way to use these types is to consider them at the outset: ask yourself which type of relationship you expect to have with a network, and picture how it might unfold over time. Then, using the following section, explore the specific financial roles you might play by providing grants and backbone roles you might play by providing your personal involvement.



Behind-the-Scenes Funder

The Behind-the-Scenes Funder provides significant financial support to the network but is not a substantial participant in its work. This will probably feel the most natural, since it is the closest to the standard funding-oriented relationship between a grantmaker and a grantee. It can be the right choice in any situation when you have confidence that the network is capable of doing its work independently. That might be because there is a consultant in place who you trust to lead it effectively, the network already has its own strong leadership, you can't commit your own time but can commit funding, or because you believe that the network will be better served by others stepping up to provide backbone support.

Roll-Up-the-Sleeves Funder

The Roll-Up-the-Sleeves Funder provides some degree of financial support but provides most of her support in the same manner as the rest of the members, both by participating and by finding helpful ways to provide backbone support. This could mean you assume roles such as helping to attract additional funding, convening the network, making introductions, engaging public will, helping guide vision and strategy, or managing the network's finances. This is often the right choice when you have a great deal of personal enthusiasm for the work or expertise to offer, but are constrained financially to be a Full-Spectrum Funder. Perhaps you don't yet have a strong case to make for more funding, the network is already large and well-developed, or other funders are already providing mainstay financial support.

Full-Spectrum Funder

The Full-Spectrum Funder provides a high-capacity support structure and provides substantial support by playing several of the backbone roles described in the next section. The most common reason to play this role is when you are starting a new network or you are leading an existing network through a transformation to take it in a new direction. You may act as this type of funder because you have the capacity and skills to contribute. Or you may find yourself stepping up in order to meet needs that would otherwise go unmet. The Full-Spectrum Funder often plays major roles in both financial and non-financial support such as in convening, weaving, and guiding the network and typically takes responsibility for making sure that all necessary activities in the network get done, even if those activities are led by another network member or a third party. Being a Full-Spectrum Funder can be highly effective and deeply satisfying. However, watch out that you don't over-direct the network, accidentally creating the belief among other participants that it is primarily "your" initiative and thereby sapping their desire to contribute.

> The role we play depends on the quality of leadership and how it's organized in the space we move into. I have one initiative that I only have to check in on 2-3 times per year. They keep trying to pull me into a more strategic partnership. But I trust them, they're making progress, and I get informed of the gaps so I can fund them accordingly. It's really hands-off.
>
> **IVAN THOMPSON, GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION**

HOW DO I ANTICIPATE WHAT TYPE OF FUNDER I HAVE THE ABILITY TO BECOME?

You need to reckon with the upper limit of how much you can afford to provide of your funding, time, relationships, facilities, and other resources, and over what timeframe. We spoke with several funders where the foundation began funding a network, saw it develop in a very promising direction, and decided to re-allocate most of its portfolio and human capital to provide the network with the necessary support. But not every grantmaker has the ability to provide that type of single-minded commitment. What level of support makes sense for you typically depends on a number of factors:

- **Your capacity:** How much time and creative energy do you have to commit to the network—now and over the duration of time you expect to be involved?
- **The relative priority of this grant:** How high would this investment rank if you had to force-rank your grants from most to least important?
- **The strength of the network's leadership:** Does the network already have a well-developed ability to keep itself moving forward and is it developing in a positive direction? If so, would the network be better off building its own sense of independence at a healthy distance? If not, is it likely to continue needing heavy engagement from you or can you picture it developing stronger leadership in the near future?
- **Your organization's readiness to work with networks:** Does your organization understand the value of supporting a network, the mindset required to work with them effectively (as described in this section), and the need to stay flexible in responding to its needs?

> So little is known at the start [of a network], I think doing a work plan is a little backwards. I think you have to get into it and discover what the work is before you can make a plan.
>
> **STEFAN NACHUK, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

> Our involvement and commitment varies. It depends on how the network fits into the bigger picture of what we're trying to accomplish and how mature the network is.
>
> **BRINDA GANGULY, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

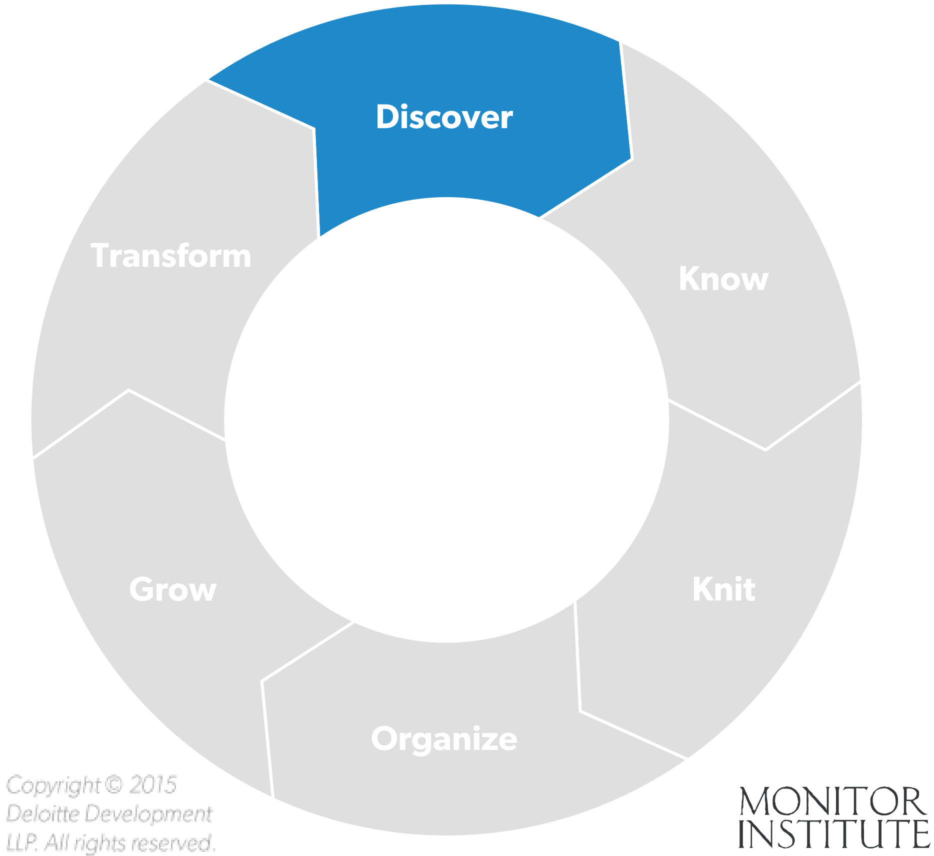
What forms of financial and backbone support do networks need?

Networks need not only various forms of ***financial support*** from a funder (via grants) but also the ***backbone support*** that comes from contributing time, effort, expertise, connections, physical space, and other non-monetary resources. Which forms of support a network needs depends primarily on its ***stage of development***. Even an approximate anticipation of what a network will need can make it far less intimidating to engage.

The easiest way to anticipate what support a network will need is to use the wheel diagram below to estimate its ***developmental stage***. With that stage in mind, you can consider which of the common supporting roles might be necessary for a given network. Thinking in terms of these stages can also be helpful in providing the network with strategic guidance: it can help you stay focused on what your network needs *now* while keeping an eye toward what might be coming next.

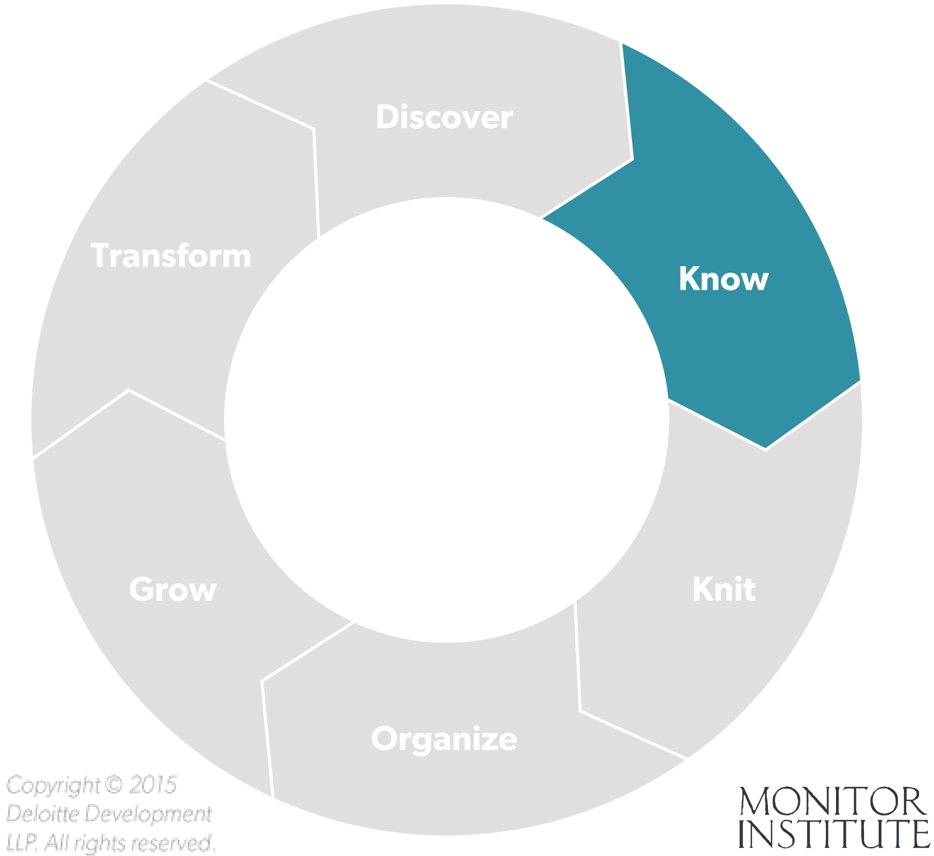
(These six developmental stages were developed by Monitor Institute out of its work with the Network of Network Funders, a two-year community of practice that hosted some of the first dialogue among grantmakers about the most effective ways to engage with networks.)

Below, we describe 11 different forms of ***financial support***, corresponding to many common grants given to networks, and 15 forms of non-financial ***backbone support*** that a network might need. Even if the network is still just a concept in your mind, ask yourself which you expect will be important for the network to form, and think ahead to the later developmental stages to anticipate what it might need in order to progress.



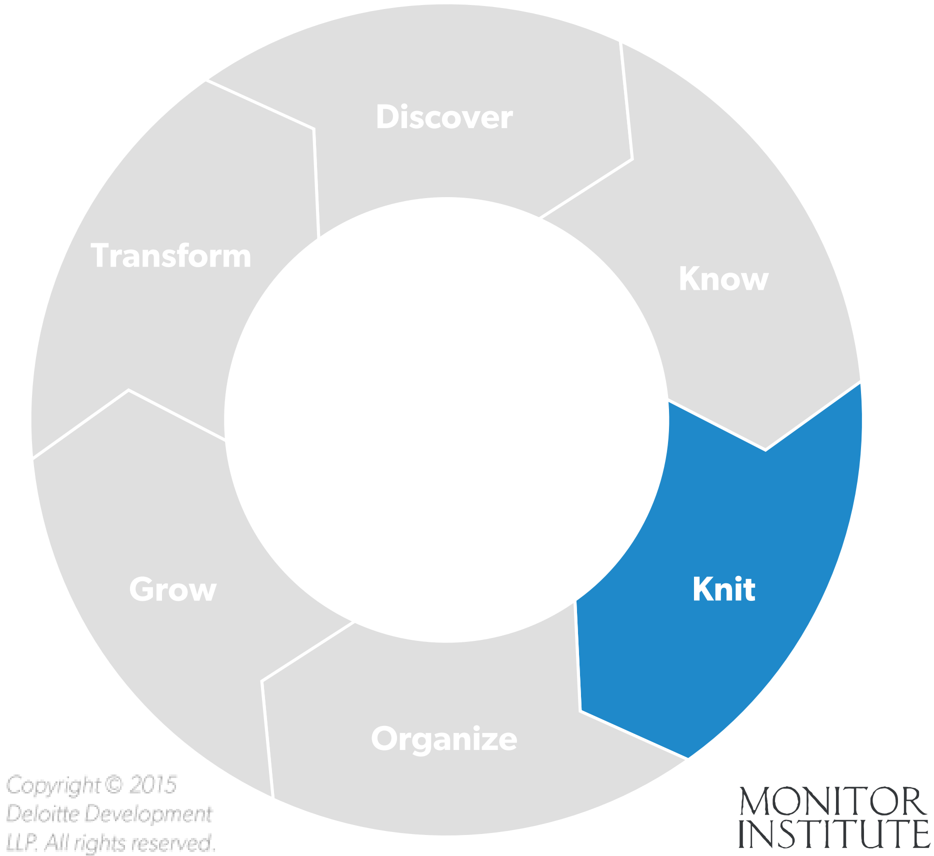
DEVELOPMENT STAGE: DISCOVER

A network has to start somewhere. The work in the Discover phase is about identifying a group of actors (usually a small group at this point) who share the sense that existing solutions aren't sufficient, uncovering the web of relationships between them and sharpening this emerging group's understanding of the problem. People working in the same space can often have wildly divergent views of the issue. Understanding how to bound or reframe the challenge, how it has developed over time, what solutions have been tried and by whom is the understanding gained in this phase.



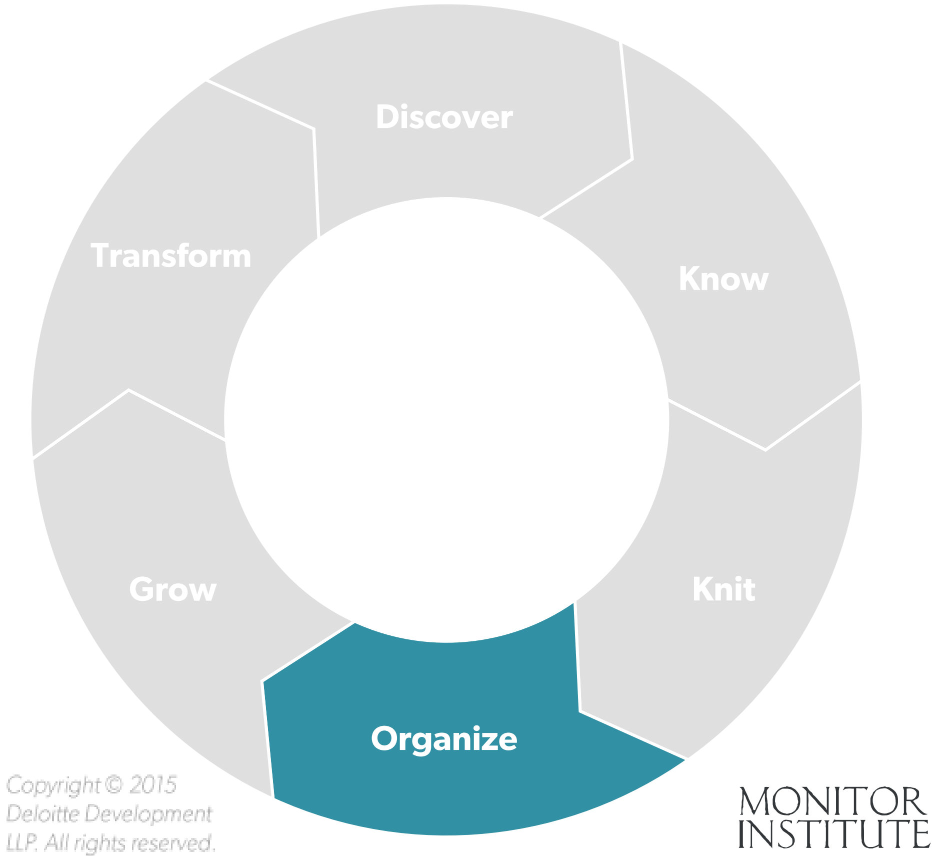
DEVELOPMENT STAGE: KNOW

The Know phase is marked by a deeper understanding of the issue and essential stakeholders needed at the table. The group starts to see itself as a group (ideally) and begins to build a shared narrative to bind them to a larger story of change they want to see in the world. The group identifies levers to create both direct and systemic impact which allows participants to mobilize around these levers and see how their actions can align and coordinate. An initial model of the value exchange for collective work starts to surface.



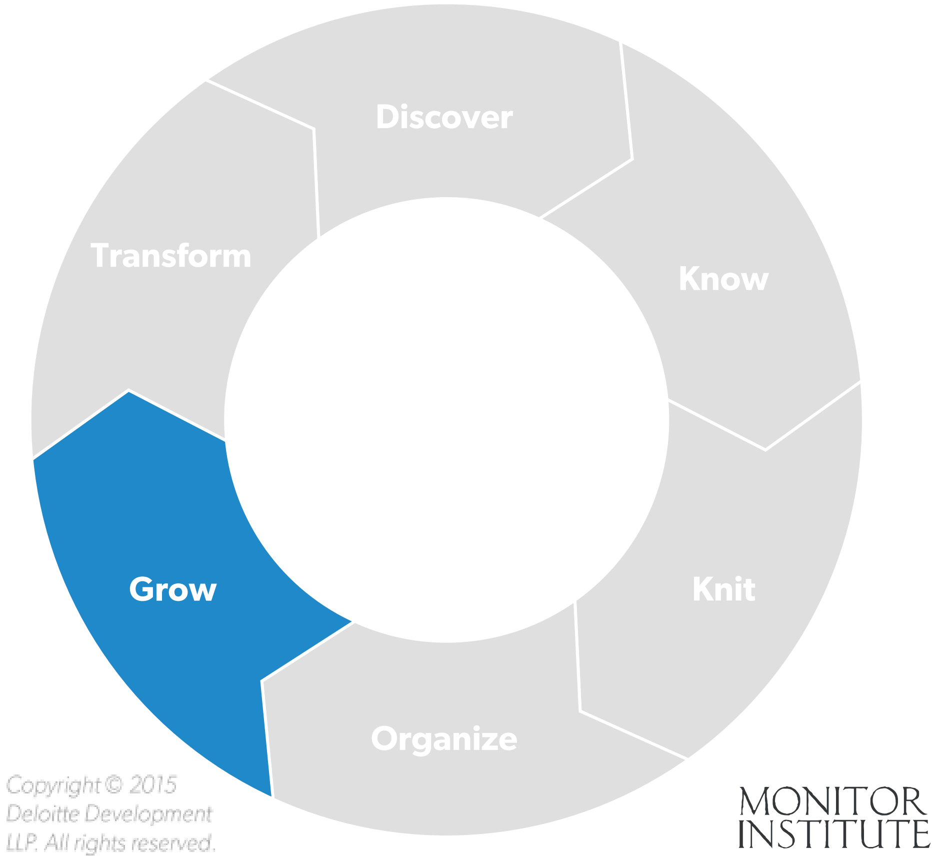
DEVELOPMENT STAGE: KNIT

Where the Discover and Know phase are about sensing and understanding, the Knit phase is about moving into action. Plans crystallize around what to focus on, who will do what and where and how to stay coordinated around a shared strategy while allowing individual agendas to flourish that increase the network's overall impact. Key in this phase is that participants find the intersection where the goals of their individual organizations align with the collective intent. At this point networks start to knit action together and pilot activities. Identifying and nurturing emergent network stewards and leaders is critical here, and throughout all the stages.



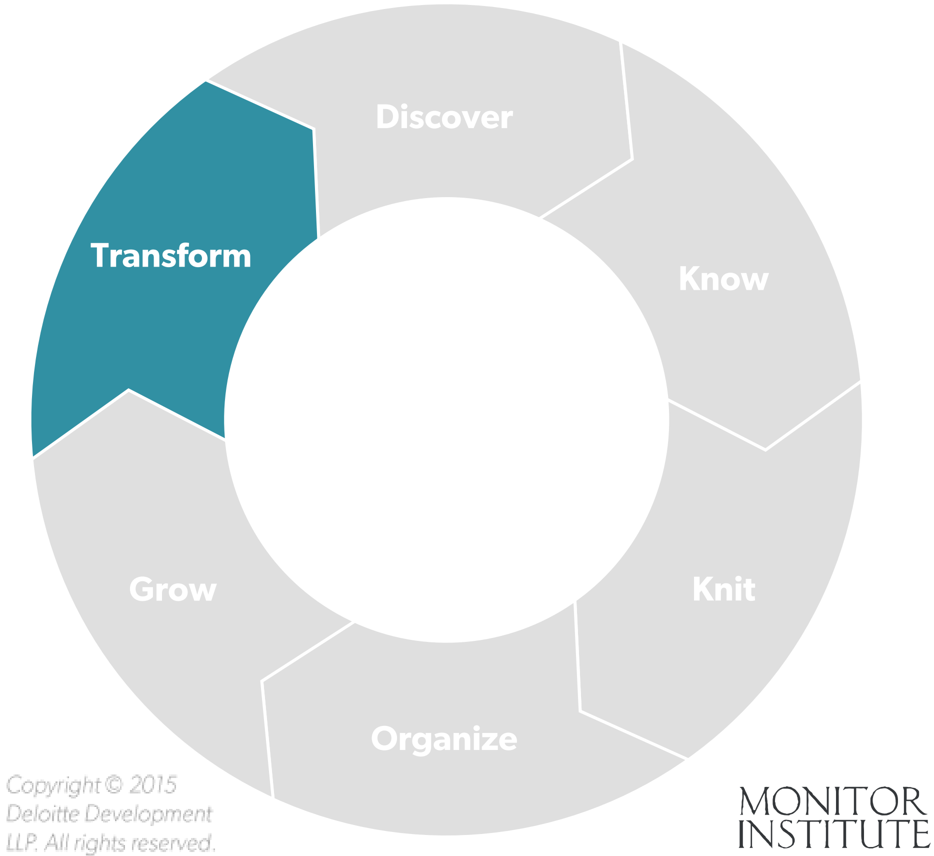
DEVELOPMENT STAGE: ORGANIZE

The Organize phase is about, well, getting organized: putting in place the plans and frameworks that will enable the group to coordinate their efforts and adapt as needed. Individual and collective roles and responsibilities are identified. Strategic agendas are fine-tuned. Plans for implementation are created. Protocols and systems for ongoing information sharing and dialogue are explored. Flexible and transparent network governance issues are developed—with the basic tenet for a network being less is more and not defaulting to organization think when putting structures in place.



DEVELOPMENT STAGE: GROW

Growing the network is about bringing on new members, if needed, as well as growing deeper trust and connectivity with existing participants. The work becomes more distributed throughout the network. And the strategy evolves as the group learns from efforts and activities it has launched.



DEVELOPMENT STAGE: TRANSFORM

At a certain point, a network may have run its course, achieved its goal or sees a need to evolve in different ways. In the Transform the network's core value exchange and definition of the issue can be re-examined. Continually scanning for opportunities to connect to complimentary efforts and networks to grow the movement is key here.

Funding research to understand the issue and potential for collective action

In order to know what piece of an issue should be worked on, and by whom, it's important to understand the issue itself and the actors working on the issue. Two approaches are common:

- Deep research into an umbrella issue of shared concern to all of the potential participants (such as regional energy usage or youth services in a metro area), identifying pieces of the problem that have high potential for making progress, or
- Looking for common ground at the intersection of a variety of issues of concern to the potential participants—an approach that can be helpful when there is desire to work together but the participants are heavily siloed and the right umbrella issue is not immediately clear.

Either way, the goal of this work is to show the stakeholders and relationships involved, name and compare different perspectives on the problem, and find the critical leverage points creating change. This can take the form of a formal mapping exercise such as social network analysis, an emergent learning map, or systems mapping, or be done through more informal conversation and analysis. Costs can come in the form of time (typically consultant fees), tools (e.g., systems mapping or visualization software), and materials (e.g., books, reports, data sets).

> "At the same time that we were coming up with this domain strategy, we said to ourselves, let's go explore it. We had a 'slow hunch' that there was something to this combination of things that would get us to a pretty big idea."
>
> **SHRUTI SEHRA, NEW PROFIT**

Funding member participation

The early enthusiasm for creating a network often overlooks the harsh reality that everyone involved already has a full-time job. Participation can only be sustained if it is integrated into each person's responsibilities *and* if they have the financial support necessary to compensate for their time and travel expenses.

That financial support is one of the most commonplace needs for a network, and is correspondingly one of the most common ways for a funder to engage. The most visible costs frequently center on supporting attendance at convenings: travel to and from and hotels. The invisible costs are that of the participants' time, which is often volunteered at the start but becomes difficult to sustain without at least partial compensation, especially for cash- or capacity-strapped organizations. It's important to be aware that the participants may not want to acknowledge their need for financial help, even if it is a real concern that is sapping their ability to participate. Providing that support is not only a practical benefit, but also demonstrates how much you value their participation. Just be careful if you need to make choices about who to support and who not to, since the lack of support can be just as powerful a message in the opposite direction.

Funding facilitation and technical consulting

Facilitation plays a critical role for networks at every stage of their development, and as a result, consultant fees to hire facilitators are a common component of a network's cost. Consultants frequently play the role of convening designer, process facilitator, logistical coordinator, and the network coordinator. A consultant in this role is ideally chosen at the start and remains with the group. But consultants can also be brought in to provide technical depth that supports a network's specific activities. That can include topical research, training, strategy development, measurement design and data collection, political advocacy, communications, leadership development / coaching, and other specialized projects. Towards the end of a funding cycle, it can include fundraising strategy. A funder is not only well-positioned to pay for consultants but also to help a network decide when a backbone role must be played by a consultant rather than a participant.

Funding convening and relationship building

Gathering the group in person is critical to both forming and sustaining a network, and the financial support for those gatherings can be provided together or separate from non-financial support. Not only are ideas are shared and developed through convenings; but it's also how trust and relationships are formed. Convening costs can include facilities (room rental and associated fees), food, speaker fees, meeting materials (e.g., printing, flip charts, and markers), and can include travel and lodging. And don't forget to budget for fun—that's where the real relationships are born. For more details on the purposes that convenings can serve, see *GATHER: The Art & Science of Effective Convening*.

> "There's got to be some kind of honest broker who says, for the next period of time, I'm going to hold this discussion together. We're going to try and link all these different stakeholders, and we're going to continue asking who's isn't at this table that should be?"
>
> **JEFF WALKER, THE GENEROSITY NETWORK**

Funding staff (full or part time)

While allocating funds to support staff can happen in a network's early stages, there may not be enough work to justify a full-time position until the common ground is clear and there is a substantial amount of work underway. These staff members typically support networks by playing some combination of the non-financial roles listed here, the most common being the network coordinator and weaving the network.

Many of a network's roles can and should be performed by the participants, but dedicated support is frequently critical to enable a network to progress when its participants' "day jobs" don't allow them to commit a great deal of time. The choice to hire a staff person can happen at once, develop organically out of what begins as a consulting relationship, or as support for a participant's time who is playing a strong leadership role. Either way, having staff can greatly accelerate a network's progress, by bringing considerable focus and attention to moving forward its shared goals.

> "Hiring and deploying skilled network officers may be one of the most valuable things a foundation can do to cultivate collective impact."
>
> **DOUG EASTERLING, WRITING IN *BUILDING CAPACITY FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT***

Funding leadership development

Funding can be used to provide training and development opportunities for network leadership (i.e., anyone playing a backbone support role) by covering the costs of coaching fees, training facilitators and/or materials, and/or leadership conferences. This can be provided together or separate from the non-financial role of directly coaching the network leadership yourself. Leadership development could be focused on a specific role or on adaptive leadership and the network mindset more generally, and it can be delivered to individuals or teams. Many of the process tools for working with a network can be used both for accomplishing a goal and for helping teams develop the most effective mindset.

> "Funders can help networks get the training they need for critical roles, including executive director, data analysts, and continuous improvement facilitators."
>
> **JEFF EDMONDSON, WRITING IN *THE ROLE OF INVESTORS: LESSONS LEARNED ON CRITICAL ROOTS THAT DRIVE QUALITY COLLECTIVE IMPACT***

Funding measurement and learning

Choosing to fund a network's measurement and learning most often means supporting additional capacity. Technical expertise is needed for helping the group choose appropriate metrics, the capacity to collect that information, and the skill to facilitate learning-focused dialogue within the group. This funding need can expand significantly if the network adopts more involved metrics that require collecting substantial data from the participants.

Funding technology

In their earliest stages, networks often need only the most basic off-the-shelf technology tools for coordinating, sharing information, and communicating. Many such tools are either free or very inexpensive to use at the scale of a group numbering in the tens. (See this section for a list of common tools.) But technology can become a significant cost if and when a network needs to build its own website, create a custom information-sharing platform, or run a shared measurement system. Funding can be useful for purchasing software licenses, contracting to build or customize technology, or training in how to use it.

Funding communications

External communications can become more important later in a network's life, if its work includes building public will and galvanizing broader support. Communications costs can come in the form of staff or communications consultants who develop and manage the network's branding and messaging, and content distribution (whether print or virtual). Funding for technology can be important to pair with this support if this communication work will require the network to create or redesign its website.

Funding innovative or priority projects

When the participants get to the point of undertaking joint projects, it can be helpful to have funding readily available to support their work. Having even partial funding available encourages the participants to take collaboration seriously and makes it possible for the participants to commit much greater time and effort to the work. Funding can be for innovative efforts or for supporting any high priority projects the network thinks will advance their agenda. It can be provided individually by one or more funders or pooled by multiple funders into a new fund. And whatever form it is provided in, the choice of how to spend it can be kept in the hands of the funder(s), turned over to a committee of the participants, or turned over to a committee of both funders and other participants. (In many cases this includes the network coordinator and/or the steering committee.) However it is structured, the funding should be set up to provide a strong incentive for the network's participants to jump into collaborative work with two feet.

Funding general operations

Building a network is an inherently emergent and exploratory process. Targeted funding on a project-by-project basis is often the most practical in a network's early days, before there's a specific place to put its funding. At that point, funding often goes to the participants directly. But once a network takes clearer form, its participants are laying plans for how to work together, and a home has been established for the network's funds, the door is open for providing grants that are **unrestricted** and even **long term.** Unrestricted dollars allow networks to experiment, adapt to changing circumstances, and explore new opportunities—and can provide far greater assurance and stability. Committing to long-term funding can also convey a strong vote of confidence in the network's long-term prospects to other funders and participants.

Not ready to commit for the long haul quite yet? That doesn't mean you can't get there over time. It's common for funders to start by making single-year grants and graduate to successively longer-term commitments if and when it becomes clear that there will continue to be a compelling need for the network to continue.

Catalyzing the network

To come into being, every network first needs someone to focus attention on an issue and bring people together to explore it. This person gingerly brokers relationships, uses convening power to bring people to the table before it's clear where the effort will go, and guides the group through exploration of the issue and the potential to tackle it collectively—or finds someone who can.

To play or not to play: Funders often have the influence, knowledge, and connections necessary to focus attention on an issue and bring potential allies together. And it doesn't hurt that funders can also bring financial resources to bear in this early stage. But this role can be played by someone else, whether or not they are a grantee. One common reason not to play this role is if there are politics within the community in question that make it important for the conversation to be started by someone other than you (or your institution). If that is the case, consider "leading from behind" by lending your support to that person or organization that you would like to see at the helm.

> "The most powerful role for funders to play in addressing adaptive problems is to focus attention on the issue and help to create a process that mobilizes the organizations involved to find a solution themselves."
>
> **JOHN KANIA, WRITING IN *COLLECTIVE IMPACT***

> "When you work for a major funder like Gates, simply being there has psychological effect on people."
>
> **DAVE FERRARO, THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION**

Attracting funding

Funding is important even in the early days of network formation. Participants frequently support fundraising by using any relationships they have with grantmakers and helping with grant applications.

To play or not to play: Funders can play a powerful role in attracting additional funding to a network, since putting money into a network signals their support to the broader funding community. Especially in the early, exploratory stages of a network when there are funding needs but there is not yet a track record, the clout of a funder who is willing to be an advocate can be a powerful source of legitimacy. (This is quite similar to the process of recruiting co-funders at the very start.) And in later stages, a funder who has been supporting the network for some time is in a very good position to convince other funders that the network's work has a bright future.

> "How significant was it to have money at the table? It was huge. Early on, the real value added was that funders were coming to the table too."
>
> **KATE GORDON QUOTED IN *TRANSFORMER: HOW TO BUILD A NETWORK TO CHANGE A SYSTEM***

> "While we could only provide modest funding to the Joint Learning Network directly, we were also able to play the crucial role of leveraging other funders."
>
> **CAROLYN BANCROFT, FORMERLY AT THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

Convening the network

Convenings require funding, of course, but they also require other forms of time investments: designing how the group will use the time together, facilitating discussion and activity, supporting logistics, and synthesizing the convening outputs and next steps. These roles *can* all be played by a single person, though they are often spread across a small team. Details of what it takes to carry out that work can be found in *GATHER: The Art and Science of Effective Convening*.

To play or not to play: Given their influence, funders can be particularly good at bringing people together, simply by extending the invitation or attaching their name to the event. Funders can also make great convening designers if they are skilled facilitators and are already familiar with the group and the content. The key variable is time: if you are able to spend a significant amount of your own bandwidth on a particularly critical convening, you may want to do it yourself, but be wary of giving the work short shrift if you can't give it the attention it demands. If you can't spend the time, this is a role that can easily be played by another participant, a consultant, or a grantee.

> "When our [network's] work was just getting started, it was all about relationship building. It was all about building trust – which meant getting to know each other better, and on a personal level. Before [the social entrepreneurs] entered the room they were seen as competitors, particularly when it came to raising money."
>
> **ELEANOR RUTLAND, VENTURE PHILANTHROPY PARTNERS**

Guiding vision and strategy

From forming the collective value proposition (the value members get from working with a network that they wouldn't get alone), to establishing the vision for change, to developing the strategy to get there, networks need a person or a team who can support and shepherd the high-level thinking that defines what the group is out to do and how they plan to do it. This often includes the network weaver and the convening facilitator, and may be aided by consultants. The thinking needs to begin with a process to define common ground that holds the group together, work that often begins in the Knit stage of development, which may take some time if the group begins with very different ideas. As the common ground comes into focus, making it clear what the group sees as its collective mission, this person or team can then step into defining the strategy in more detail.

To play or not to play: Because of their unique perch, funders tend to be able to take more of a field-level view than most organizations, which can be of great value in developing strategy at the cross-organizational scale of a network. But a little bit of funder input goes a long way: There is often deference to a funder's views and yet it is critical that the network members achieve real alignment with one another. As a funder, you can be most helpful by contributing more information than opinion, something that becomes natural as you learn to adopt a network mindset.

> "Funders need to allow networks themselves to set the agenda and strategy for their collective work, not impose their own goals on the process."
>
> **DOUG EASTERLING, WRITING IN *GETTING TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT***

> "Funders, whether they initiate the collaborative approach themselves or fund existing networks, can challenge Collective Impact networks to think bigger than they had originally anticipated."
>
> **CATHY MANN, WRITING IN THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT**

Weaving the network

The "network weaver" is a kind of matchmaker, working to increase the number and strength of relationships between participants in the network by helping people find connection and common ground with one another, gradually building up trust and an overall sense of community. This role often also includes bringing new participants into the network when the opportunity arises and making sure all the right voices are at the table.

To play or not to play: Given their breadth and depth of relationships, funders can be particularly well-suited to the network weaver role. In many ways, this is a natural extension of the role that many program officers already play, acting as a neutral intermediary to connect individuals and organizations across the fields they work in. The important balance to strike is between seeing the potential for participation while not forcing it, since the request of a funder carries enough weight that it can keep someone at the table for far longer than they see the value in participating.

Serving as the network coordinator

This is the person who "holds the whole," acting as the hub that participants reach out to ask questions, share concerns, and report progress. He or she has a finger on the pulse of all of the network's activities, and is typically at least involved in strategic discussions, if not an active contributor.

To play or not to play: Whether it makes sense for a funder to play this role is highly dependent on the network's stage of development. In the early stages (Discover, Know, and Knit), this role will typically overlap with that of weaving the network, since it will be focused primarily on building members' relationships with one another and building their comfort with the collective approach. In those stages, this is likely a role that a funder is well-positioned to play. In later stages (Organize, Grow, and Transform), this role will likely require a greater focus on managing and monitoring the network's various projects in order to ensure that different groups are learning from one another and working in concert. At that point, it demands significant time investment, and depending on the amount of collective activity the network is undertaking, this may even become a full- or part-time staff position.

Promoting measurement and learning

A network needs a person who can promote the culture and practices that make it possible to track progress: sharing real-time lessons, offering feedback, setting milestones, and working against a timeline to achieve them. This expertise is particularly valuable in a network since measurement looks different in a network setting than in an organization. In the early stages of a network's development, measurement is typically limited to tracking process outcomes; harder metrics may be appropriate if the network moves into the later stages, typically Organize or Grow. (See this section for more detail on what tools are available.) Playing this role well includes encouraging network members to share failures as much as best practices and reinforcing the sense that the network provides a safe space for that level of openness.

To play or not to play: Unless funders are deeply embedded in the network's work, practitioners will have a better perspective on what kinds of outcomes are both meaningful and feasible for them to collect. And, a funder's opinion about what to measure will often carry undue weight. However, a funder *is* well positioned to show general support for the value of measurement and learning, such as by encouraging participants to openly share their reflections and lessons learned with one another.

> "Investors can provide the social cover necessary for practitioners to focus on continuous improvement. This means they can encourage, enable, and even reward partners for modeling a willingness to share what is working, what is not working and, most importantly, what real-time knowledge obtained along the way is being applied to improve work on the ground."
>
> ***THE ROLE OF INVESTORS***

Managing collaborative projects

As the network evolves, participants may decide to take on collaborative projects together, often forming ongoing working groups to pursue different facets of the problem in parallel. Each project team and working group will need someone to provide project management. The degree of coordination that the project manager plays can vary widely from detailed work planning and task management to loose coordination, depending on the task at hand.

To play or not to play: Funders don't typically have a strong reason to play this role, particularly since it can involve a high degree of hands-on, time-intensive coordination. But since working groups are often formed around topic areas, a funder might find that his or her topical expertise puts them in a good position to lead a given group.

Engaging in advocacy

Policy advocacy is a common focus of networks, particularly those created to pursue a series of short-term initiatives. This work usually begins with coordinating messaging across participants, so that their independent efforts all support the same outcomes. When there's strong enough alignment—or if there is a particularly opportune political situation—a network can advocate with one voice. Any participant can contribute to this process by helping develop or promote the shared messaging.

To play or not to play: A funder is often well-positioned to do all of the above. In many cases a funder has significant depth on the policy issues in question and can provide helpful information, perspective, and guidance on the policy landscape. In many cases, the funder's role tends to be more financial than non-financial, taking the form of funding communications consultants, policy consultants, or network participants who are experienced at advocacy. (Note that this work must be done within the legal guidelines that bound lobbying by private foundations, which are summarized by Council on Foundations and Independent Sector.)

Managing external communications

If there is capacity within the network to do its communications work internally, it can save money that would otherwise go to consultants. This can be the perfect contribution for a participant whose organization has communications as its core competency, as is the case with many advocacy nonprofits.

To play or not to play: Funders sometimes lend their communications capacity to a network, which can be a very helpful way of supplementing funding with in-kind support. But it is rare that a funder would take on the work of a network's communications directly.

Engaging the broader community and building public will

At some point in the network's life, after the participants have a clear sense of their common ground, it will become important to start spreading that story in order to build awareness and garner support more broadly. Participants can support these efforts with a range of activities, from conducting targeted conversations with key stakeholders to helping organize and publicize major events. The amount of support needed to engage the external community is likely to start small and grow over time as the network becomes more focused and organized.

Note: This work is often closely tied to communications and can also be related to political advocacy.

To play or not to play: In order to effectively galvanize support, this role should be led by someone with broad-reaching influence and/or relationships to key stakeholders. Funders are sometimes but not always in that position. If they are, it is often helpful for them to use their social capital to help.

Managing the network's finances

If and when a network grows to the scale that it forms a central management team and has a budget independent of its participants, an important role is to create and monitor that budget. This person's role is to make sure that the network:

- Has enough funding to cover its costs, and can project its needs in enough time to raise funds.
- Is spending its money on the things it agreed to and on the timelines it agreed to, particularly in the case of restricted funding.

To play or not to play: Most important here is that the network feels that it has the independence to flex and adapt over time, which may not be the case if you place yourself in control of every spending decision. Still, if it happens that you are currently playing many of the other non-financial roles (such as catalyzing, convening, weaving the network, and serving as the central point of contact), you may end up playing this role by default, simply because you are the person with the most involvement and insight into the network's activities.

Governing the network

As it becomes more organized and execution-oriented, a network may need some degree of formal governance to make important choices. This often takes the form of a small body of key network stakeholders, such as a steering committee or board of directors. A little governance goes a long way, particularly in the early stages. While it is common for some participants to push for formal decision-making structures early, it is counterproductive to put them in place before the group has established its common ground and shared activities. And once formal structure is adopted, it is crucial to the network's health that the people playing this role are willing to use their decision rights in service of the group and reflecting its input rather than only being guided by their own point of view.

To play or not to play: Serving on a steering committee or board tends to be a good way for funders to engage in a network while giving it enough distance to build its independence. A common pattern is for network funders to play a major role in engineering the network in its early stages and then step back into a less active role (such as a steering committee position) once the network is into the Organize or Grow stages of development.

Coaching network leadership

Coaching is not always necessary, but it can be critical at certain moments for helping a network's leaders learn to navigate difficult choices or learn to adopt the most productive mindset. Coaching can take the shape of formal training or informal advice. It can be focused on supporting an individual or in building the skill of groups to work together with a network mindset.

To play or not to play: Funders can make good network coaches based on their experience coaching grantees, and this becomes especially true if they have prior experience with networks. Like all relations between funders and networks, this is another area in which you need to be aware of the power dynamics at play and take care that your coaching is supportive rather than directive. Coaching can also be provided through a consultant.

> "Every organization [we invest in] is expanding up and down and sideways. There's no way this is sustainable; everyone is stepping on each other's toes. Why? Because partnerships are so darn hard."
>
> **SHRUTI SEHRA, NEW PROFIT INC.**

Participating in the network

This is the foundational "role" in a network: showing up. At all stages, networks need participants who believe in the power of aligned action and are committed to the identity and purpose that the group shares. Participation begins with understanding the common ground, building relationships with other network members, attending and engaging in relevant network gatherings, and providing some input to the network's ideas and activities.

To play or not to play: The default answer for a funder should be "yes," given that you most likely bring a high level of relevant knowledge, skill, and influence to the table. In the early stages of a network, it is often unavoidable for a funder to participate.

> "With most grants, the Foundation provides funding, but is not involved with making decisions that shape the the day to day planning and implementation. With the Reimagine Learning network we are much more involved, and hopefully we're looked at not just as a funder, but as thought partners with ideas and experiences that that add value as well."
>
> **TRACY SAWICKI, TOWER FAMILY FOUNDATION**

What forms of support will I provide?

How much support and leadership a network will need is almost never crystal clear at the outset. Few network funders we spoke with had a structured approach to anticipating the financial and non-financial resources they expected to commit to a network. The typical approach was simply to secure what funding could be found, provide as much non-financial help as the network appeared to need at a given time, and continue to respond to the network's needs as they arose. But even if you cannot make precise long-term plans, what you can do is anticipate the roles you expect the network will need you to play and what level of support you can afford to offer.

This table summarizes the same set of financial and backbone support roles shown on the previous page, with each dot showing when that role is typically important through the six stages of network development. Once you have had the chance to review the roles that you think might be important in the network you have in mind, it can be a useful exercise to work through the two right-hand columns and ask yourself:

- Will I play this role?
- Will others play this role?

To download or print out a high-resolution version of the table, click on the image.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT:	DISCOVER	KNOW	KNIT	ORGANIZE	GROW	TRANSITION	I'LL PLAY THIS ROLE	OTHERS WILL PLAY THIS ROLE
Funding research on the issue and potential for collective action	●	●						
Funding member participation		●	●	●	●			
Funding facilitation and technical consulting			●	●	●			
Funding convening and relationship building			●	●	●			
Funding staff (full and part time)			●	●	●			
Funding leadership development			●	●	●			
Funding measurement and learning				●	●			
Funding technology				●	●			
Funding communications				●	●	●		
Funding innovative or priority projects				●	●			
Funding general operations	●	●	●	●	●	●		

BACKBONE SUPPORT:	DISCOVER	KNOW	KNIT	ORGANIZE	GROW	TRANSITION	I'LL PLAY THIS ROLE	OTHERS WILL PLAY THIS ROLE
Catalyzing the network	●							
Attracting funding	●	●	●			●		
Convening the network		●	●	●	●			
Guiding vision and strategy		●	●	●				
Weaving the network		●	●	●	●			
Serving as the network coordinator		●	●	●	●			
Supporting measurement and learning				●	●			
Managing collaborative projects				●	●			
Engaging in advocacy				●	●			
Managing external communications				●	●			
Engaging the broader community and building public will				●	●			
Managing the network's finances				●	●	●		
Governing the network				●	●	●		
Coaching network leadership								
Participating in the network	●	●	●	●	●	●		

SOUND LIKE TOO MUCH TO TAKE ON?

If it's not feasible for you to spend the time or money you think a network would require, there are always alternative options. But in most cases, some creative re-evaluation of your assumptions can help you find a set of roles to play that matches what you can provide. Could some of the roles you picture yourself playing be played by participants in the network, or by other funders who you could recruit? If you don't see other possibilities there, try going back to first principles: look for different ways that the network could be designed, and consider whether there are different things that it could do.

Am I ready to work with a network – and is my organization ready?

One source of a network's power comes from participants *relating as peers*, not from a certain position in an organizational hierarchy. This means that when a funder engages with a network, she too should do so as a peer. The four principles below are good guardrails for keeping your relationship with a network healthy and productive.

Even if you follow all of the "rules" for network engagement, some elements might not feel natural at first. It is important to understand your own comfort level with adopting a network mindset—and particularly your organization's willingness to support you in it.

> "Imagine giving someone a manual on how to hit a baseball. Shoulders square, feet in this position, eyes up. You can know every rule, and there will still be some people who can hit a fastball the first time and some people who can't."
>
> **STEFAN NACHUK, FORMERLY OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

PRINCIPLE 1: Focus on the common ground

Your organization and any particular program you serve has its own specific goals, and engaging with a network doesn't mean you have to stop looking at the world through that lens. But what it does require is finding exactly where your goals for addressing the larger problem intersect with those of the other participants, and focusing on the work that will advance that intersection. It helps to think of the work you do with the network as being bounded to whatever common ground it is that you share with the group. This helps to guard against seeing more value in a certain direction when it serves your organization's broader goals but not those of the network.

> "Everybody has to get really good at understanding they don't have all the answers. It needs to be, 'Here's the problem, here's what we bring to it, and where we add the most value. Here is where there are gaps that others can fill better than we can."
>
> **JANE WEI-SKILLERN, CENTER FOR NONPROFIT AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP, HAAS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY**

> "It is challenging and even unnatural for organizations with distinct missions to come together and develop a shared agenda, especially one that involves systems change."
>
> ***GETTING TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT***

PRINCIPLE 2: Build a community first

Networks are essentially new communities that come together for a particular purpose, sometimes only for a short time. Building community lays the groundwork for doing work together, but it cannot be hurried. This is a tension that often tests a funder's patience when an answer is in view but the group has yet to cohere. Networks are built out of a web of strong relationships among people who come to trust each other as individuals and gain confidence in the group. The analytical effort of seeking the right answer—researching solutions, canvassing the landscape of actors, forecasting trends—makes it easy to forget the importance of carefully building that trust and confidence. That work is done through forging one-on-one relationships, brokering introductions, and investing time and effort into thoughtful group process that draws on the participants' strengths and contributes to the sense of a meaningful community.

> "The energy of a network comes from problem-solving and learning together. The people involved are so much more empowered when you do that and are able to leverage those activities to create a shared understanding of the core dynamics at play."
>
> **JEFF MOHR, THE OMIDYAR GROUP**

> “To create real networks, you have to believe that the center of an operation does not have a monopoly on truth. You need to trust the people, trust the process.”
>
> **JANE WEI-SKILLERN, WRITING IN *THE NETWORKED NONPROFIT***

PRINCIPLE 3: Expect to experiment

Every network is a startup, and as any aspiring entrepreneur will tell you, a startup has to be comfortable with taking risks and in seeing failure as an important part of the path to finding what works. The substantial difference is that where a startup iterates on the design of a product or service that meets the needs of a certain set of consumers, networks iterate on the common ground for working together that meets the needs of a certain set of participants and beneficiaries. But the mindset is the same: like a startup, a network is a temporary container for experimenting your way towards an answer, where the participants are betting their time and resources in hopes of achieving together what they would not be able to do on their own.

> “I would suggest [to a Board] that the usual structure of grantmaking actually contributes to an unproductive use of resources. I would argue that if we really want to make change, then what we need to do is create a container where people can be transparent, talk things through, collaborate, and course correct.”
>
> **JENNIE CURTIS, GARFIELD FOUNDATION**

PRINCIPLE 4: Contribute to a collaborative spirit and mitigate power dynamics

Networks are sustained by a spirit of giving and collaboration among participants as they coalesce around shared goals. This is easier said than done when everyone involved arrives with a different set of organizational priorities, amount and type of resources to provide, time to commit, and ideas about what progress would look like. Navigating these differences is critical to maintaining the “potlatch” attitude that fuels further participation. As a participant, you can help to set the tone by the way you interact. Look for ways to be giving with your time and resources, to the extent that you can: find opportunities to co-create together, avoid competition for influence, ask for input from all participants, invest your time, and avoid asking for visible credit.

As a funder, it is particularly important to sustain this spirit by acknowledging and actively mitigating power dynamics between yourself and other participants. This is crucial, because there is inherent tension between the peer-to-peer nature of relationships in a network and the reality that a network's ability to do its work can rise or fall on the funder's good will. If not addressed, the default attitude is often that "he who pays the piper calls the tune." Yet overcoming that tension is not as difficult as it might sound. The very attempt to create an egalitarian environment inside a network already diminishes the view of a funder as having a privileged position, and there are a number of behaviors that can further avoid creating counter-productive interactions within the group:

- Be fully transparent and encourage others to do the same – about your immediate and underlying reasons for participating, your perspectives on the issue, the role you intend to play, and what resources you might be able to contribute.
- If you have funding relationships with any of the participants, maintain a clear distinction between network funding and funding for other purposes, so that their participation in the network is entirely on the basis of sharing common ground with the collective work.
- Prioritize equity in every aspect of the conversation by not favoring certain participants, allowing anyone to dominate, or setting up participants to compete against each other.
- In group dialogue and in exercising leadership, follow StriveTogether's rule of thumb: "Be at the table, but sit at the back." Your goal should be to cultivate the network's ability to lead itself. It's important for the group to know what you think, but a little bit of a funder's perspective goes a long ways.

> "Funders… must be fully engaged stakeholders as co-learners in how to address the complex challenge so they can adjust their funding streams appropriately."
>
> **STEVE WADDELL, WRITING IN *STATE OF THE FIELD***

> "Giving money [to a network] will not work if you seek direct credit. I think of this as 'library philanthropy': the person that needs his name on the library he funded is not well-suited for a network approach to change."
>
> **KIMBERLY DASHER TRIPP, STRATEGY FOR SCALE**

How do I exit a network?

Whether it's because of an internal change, the network's evolution, or simply the funding timeline, it is common for funders to reach a point when they need to exit a network. Some seasoned network funders believe it's important to have an exit strategy in mind from the beginning of engaging with a network, on the basis that it helps focus the network's efforts and provides ample warning for the funder's eventual departure. But many we spoke with argued that planning that far ahead was neither necessary nor productive, because networks are capable of such dramatic transformation.

Our research and experience indicates that just as in every other way that you engage with a network, openness and honesty are an asset in planning your exit. If you are up-front and continually communicate about what financial and backbone support you have at your disposal, what hard limits you face, and what factors will shape your choice of how long to stay, the participants will have all the information they need to plan.

We have also seen that exiting a network need not be a sudden event, and often is not. While financial support can often only be provided for a defined period of time, grantmakers are often able to continue providing a measure of backbone support. Grantmakers can continue drawing on the relationships they've built, their knowledge of the surrounding context, and the perspective they've developed about the network's future direction, and are able to use those assets to advise the network with a relatively lightweight investment of their time.

IN FAVOR OF DETERMINING YOUR EXIT STRATEGY UPFRONT

> "A perennial question of all the work that we do is how to get out. The problem is, maybe it's just something about human nature: it's hard to think about how you're going to get out as you're getting in."
>
> **CHARLANNE BURKE, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

> "The fact that we will never be a permanent funder in a place has always been a useful tool to help us focus and help our partners focus and think beyond reliance on one funder. Having this exit deadline has helped us and the network figure out how to be more efficient before we leave."
>
> **MEAGHAN CALCARI CAMPBELL, GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION**

IN FAVOR OF DETERMINING YOUR EXIT STRATEGY AS YOU GO ALONG

> "You have to have flexibility about the back end, without losing sight of timeline and goals, and be willing to consider rethinking them based on the particular network you create."
>
> **DAVE FERRERO, THE BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION**

> "We will have to see what comes from these next couple of years [of this San Joaquin Valley leadership network]. We're open to what we might learn and open to continuing to support the network as it evolves."
>
> **AMY DOMINGUEZ-ARMS, THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION**

How do I get started?

How do I gauge the potential for starting or joining a network?

Whether you're thinking of starting a new network or supporting one that exists, you'll need to gauge how much potential there is for it to succeed. Some funders set the bar high, supporting networks only if they are already strong enough to develop without a funder's help. Others are more willing to invest in providing the incubation necessary to catalyze latent potential. Wherever you choose to set your bar, here are four steps for evaluating how much potential exists for a new network to start or an existing one to grow.

Step 1: Scan your landscape

Find as much existing activity as possible that you could build on or tie together. Learn as much as you can about the current state of play: what long-term aspirations are held by whom, what work is underway, who holds different kinds of expertise, what planning is already in place, what planning should be in place, and identify any collaborations that are already in motion. Think laterally: take a broad view, look across sectors to account for the many different people and organizations that might be working on the topic but be off of your usual radar. Look deep, reaching beyond the "usual suspects" who are the best-credentialed or the best-known, in search of the people who have the deepest expertise or are doing the most substantive work. A good network of trusted advisors can be great asset in doing this work.

Step 2: Look for people who are itching for change

Look for people who have a reason to care about the type of change you have in mind. Find those who genuinely share your same level of commitment. If you're evaluating a network that already exists, probe to see whether the people involved have the same intentions and commitment as you do. If you're lucky, you'll even find a group that's already started working together and just needs a boost to enable continued collaboration. Look for those who may the same passion but aren't yet connected with each other. Some of the most powerful networks have been created out of situations where the actors were quite far from collaborating with each other at the start, but were brought together in a way that uncovered the adjacent possible.

Step 3: Outline a mutually attractive value proposition

No matter what the benefit of working together, every person at the table has to have a reason to be there that advances their personal or organizational priorities. What's more, they need to see that they'll get at least as much as they have to give. Even if they find the prospect of working together extremely appealing, that won't be enough if they don't have a strong reason to keep the project high on their priority list. Find out how to look at this collaborative effort through the eyes of each participant, and look for ways that the value exchange can be a net positive for each one.

> The researchers [involved in producing new rice varieties] really did get excited about the idea that their discovery might be taken by the Foundation's network and wind up benefiting millions of poor people in developing countries. There was a real sense of wanting to contribute, because it was a goal that everybody felt good about.
>
> **GARY TOENNIESSEN, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

> A foundation's perch and the wide lens it can apply to an issue can provide insights, but it's important to remember that many of its nonprofit partners and grantees are rightly focused on their narrow missions and don't have the time or capacity to take a step back to examine strategies or data beyond their current scope.
>
> **JENNIFER PEREIRA, WRITING IN COLLABORATION AND FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP**

Step 4: Scout for potential co-funders

Look hard for fellow funders who share your outlook and level of motivation to address the issue at hand. Co-funding might sound counter-intuitive; it is not standard practice in grantmaking. Also, you may encounter the commonplace bias to start something new rather than support an existing or shared effort.

THE MERITS OF CO-FUNDING

- Greater resources (financial and otherwise) for kickstarting the work
- Greater stability in the case of changing priorities at your institution
- Greater insight & creativity to shape the network and help it find its footing
- Brands the effort as a collaboration, making it more attractive for other funders to join in the future

THE MERITS OF SOLO FUNDING

- Greater autonomy in shaping the network to fit your vision
- Stronger tie between your funding and any success that the network achieves

If you do find potential co-funders, be sure to look beneath the surface at what could bring them to the table and put effort into negotiating the terms of their engagement. It can help to bring them in early, so that the idea isn't viewed as something you own. Power dynamics can come into play, since comparatively larger funders may see less incentive to work as part of a group, or may want their influence to reflect their funding clout. Find out their vision for the initiative, how this work would fit into their broader strategy, and how they imagine measuring success. This will give you the information you need to acknowledge and accommodate their varying needs from the start. Most importantly, look for signs that not only the individual but also their organization are ready for the different demands of network funding.

> The downside [of funding a network alone] is not only financial, but that you have nobody else speaking truth to you. Foundation people don't get a lot of critical feedback from outsiders, but other donors can hold foundations accountable, to some extent.
>
> **STEFAN NACHUK, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION**

What tools can help me support and lead a network?

As you get started, it may be helpful to know what tools are available to support network building. Remember: it isn't the tools that matter so much as the craftsman, so don't expect any of these tools to take the place of human knowledge and relationships. But tools can help build knowledge and relationships by making it easier for participants to understand the problem they're tackling or to collaborate across long distances. Consider whether or not your network has a need for any of the following tools (and if that requires bringing in outside support / facilitation).

Technology Tools

Exploring what technology might be useful in working with a network can open what feels like a Pandora's box. So many tools now exist for communication, collaboration, coordination, and content management that the choices can be overwhelming. At the time of this guide's release, the most up to date list for social-sector collaboration is Harnessing Collaborative Technologies, published in fall of 2013 by Monitor Institute and the Foundation Center. It offers an interactive tool and an accompanying report for identifying the right technology to use for the collaborative work you want to accomplish. The tool and report were written for funders looking to collaborate with other funders, but it is equally relevant to the collaboration that happens in social impact networks.But before you familiarize yourself with the range of tools, ground yourself in the needs you're trying to serve and the specific comfort levels and preferences that the participants have with regard to different technologies.

Bearing that in mind, the following sections of Harnessing Collaborative Technologies are particularly relevant to social impact networks:

- Collaboration diagnostics

  These tools help partners assess the health of their current collaboratives.

- Communications and Meetings

  These tools cover the gamut of online communication technologies—chat, conference calls, video calls, webinars, virtual meeting spaces, and blogs.

- Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces

  These tools combine many basic tools (file sharing, calendar sharing, member profiles, communications, wikis, etc.) into more multifaceted, all-in-one solutions.

- Content Management Systems

  These tools help web developers to build feature-rich websites that enable user editing.

- Data Gathering

  These tools make it easy to collect data, solicit feedback, or ask a question to a large group of people.

- Data Organizing

  These tools allow people to curate and share with others their reading lists, bookmarked webpages, mind maps, and other schemes for organizing information.

- File Sharing and Collaborative Writing

  These tools make it easy for many people to share and edit documents.

- Innovation Management

  These tools support group brainstorming and innovation.

- Joint Decision Making

  These tools allow many people to easily weigh in on group decisions.

- Project Management

  These tools help manage collaborative projects and keep group members informed about roles, responsibilities, and timelines.

- Scheduling and Calendar Sharing

  These tools make it easier to schedule meetings with many participants and to keep groups informed about events of shared interest.

- Social Networking and Online Community

  These tools connect people to others with whom they have something in common.

> Good design begins with the user… You can't lead with tools. Tools are just a means for solving a problem, so you have to back into them by starting with people and their real needs.
>
> **CYNTHIA GIBSON, WRITING IN *FUNDER COLLABORATIVES: WHY AND HOW FUNDERS WORK TOGETHER***

Process Tools

Whether it's to get to know one another, the problem, or the possible solutions, there are an incredibly wide range of exercises and methods available to help a network do the work it needs to do as a group. They range from brief, small-scale ways to engage with the group in a meeting to much more intensive, broader-reaching processes that can take a lot of time and deep engagement. (If you're interested in learning more, see the list of sources at the bottom of the page for additional reading on the range of group process tools available.) Choosing the right tool for the right moment, and leading the group through the experience, is central to the roles of weaving the network and convening the network. That is an art beyond the scope of this material, but we can get you started with just a few common exercises that we have seen to be particularly useful.

Convening

In-person convenings are a powerful tool for strengthening a network and accomplishing work together. They can be used by whomever is playing the role of convening the network at any stage in a network's life to help participants form connections, generate alignment, and/or push forward on the production of joint efforts. For more details on the practice of designing convenings, see the guidebook GATHER: The Art and Science of Effective Convening.

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

This is the process of capturing and charting the relationships between people or organizations within a network. It is typically used in networks when it is important to form new relationships between certain people or groups, and to track progress against those goals over time. A survey is sent out to the participants in the network to gather data on the relationships they share with one another, and the relationships they would like to have, and SNA tools are used to graph that information. (This is particularly useful in networks that serve the function of weaving social ties and/or facilitating information exchange and peer learning.) Two tools that are very well adapted to this type of SNA are Kumu and NodeXL. For a basic introduction to using SNA in a network, see this overview.

Stakeholder Mapping

This refers to method of cataloguing the people involved in your challenge, categorizing them according to their ability to influence the social system that surrounds that challenge, and determining how to engage with them. Because it is context-specific, this is often done informally, such as by simply plotting stakeholders against dimensions that matter to your network. (For example, you might plot stakeholders on a matrix according to strength of interest and ability to influence your goal.) This work can be particularly helpful in informing questions of who should be involved and who the network should seek to influence, which tend to arise in networks that serve the function of coordinating goals and strategies and/or pursuing a series of short-term joint initiatives.

System Mapping

Also known as systems diagramming, system mapping has many uses but is particularly useful in a network setting to represent a set of beliefs about what causes what to create a social challenge. Its visualization methods can be used to chart someone's answers to a question like, "what is it exactly that causes infant mortality?" This can be very useful in networks that serve the functions of facilitating information exchange and peer learning, creating shared understanding of an issue, and/or coordinating goals and strategies. System maps can represent different points of view about the causes and consequences of a problem, making it clear where a group agrees and where it does not. And, once a group finds agreement, it can crystallize that set of ideas in a way that anchors future conversation and makes it easier to communicate them to new participants. Most importantly, it can make it possible to survey the causes and consequences of a problem all in one place, enabling the group to see new possibilities for influencing a complex challenge. This video offers a basic introduction, as does this series of posts.

Learning Journeys

These are custom-designed field trips that educate a group of people about something relevant to their decision-making process. These tend to be particularly valuable in situations where taking the group to see a place and meet people will help them understand something through in-person experience that would be hard to understand in the abstract, something that is often helpful for networks that aim to facilitate information exchange and peer learning.

Action Research

Action research is the term for working with a group to look for ways to improve how they do their work. It typically involves developing questions, observing work processes in action, reflecting on what was seen, and searching for improvements to implement. This is particularly helpful in networks that serve the function of facilitating information exchange and peer learning, since those networks are often focused on sharing and improving best practices, and it can provide input into the work of designing and prototyping new solutions.

Scenario Planning

Scenarios are stories about how driving forces in the environment surrounding an actor or a group of actors can shape the future of their operating environment. It can be a powerful exercise for questioning deeply-ingrained assumptions about what the future will hold, as well as for imagining how it can be shaped in a particular direction. Scenarios can help network participants see their surrounding context in a new light, which is particularly helpful for networks aiming to create shared understanding of an issue or coordinate goals and strategies. For detailed guidance on the use of scenarios for social change, see Monitor Institute's What If? The Art of Scenario Thinking for Nonprofits and Adam Kahane's Transformative Scenario Planning.

Evaluation Tools

Evaluating networks is different from evaluating organizations, in that it can rarely involve measurement of more than process outcomes, particularly for networks that have not developed beyond the Knit stage. Even if a network develops an organization-like degree of formal structure, top-down leadership, and clear strategic planning, it is often impossible to draw clear distinctions between the beneficiary outcomes that can fairly be attributed to the network itself as opposed to its participants. Even more importantly, process outcomes can be quite effective at celebrating participants' contribution, helping to build their motivation, whereas the level of effort required to quantify beneficiary outcomes can easily go beyond what participants are willing to contribute. If you are playing the backbone role of supporting measurement and learning, the there are two types of tools that you can use:

- You can measure the network's connectivity, in terms of the relationships among its participants and any formal structure it has adopted. (Social network analysis is a common tool here, described above.)
- You can measure the network's network health, in terms of its access to resources, its infrastructure, and its value proposition to participants. (This scorecard provides one example of the specific questions to ask.)

For more details on how to go about evaluating a network, two useful resources are The State of Network Evaluation – A Guide (2014) and Network Evaluation: Cultivating Healthy Networks for Social Change (2011).

> Traditional outcome measures of success, established in advance of action, must be subordinated [in a network setting] to much more flexible assessment strategies. This in turn emphasizes the need for multiple strategies, and the importance of active learning processes to support the change.
>
> **STEVE WADDELL, WRITING IN THE STATE OF THE FIELD**

> Especially in the first few years, it is critical to set measures of success that motivate the behaviors that strengthen trust and encourage generous exchange and collaboration, including expectations for timing of measurable outcomes.
>
> **BETH TENER, WRITING IN FUNDERS' ROLE IN CATALYZING COLLABORATION IN NETWORKS (OR UNDERMINING IT)**

Checklist: Am I clear on my intention for getting involved in a network?

There is no simple algorithm for deciding if engaging with a social impact network is the right move for you to make. Rather, there are a set of basic questions to help you in that decision making process.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT A NETWORK CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE?

1. Can you tell if the challenge you're trying to solve is a good fit for using a network?

The problem you are trying to solve…

- Has no single root cause and is connected to (or a symptom of) other problems
- Is emergent and shifting, defying silver-bullet solutions
- Could not be solved by any single organization, and lacks a clear or widely-agreed definition among the actors who could address it
- Cuts across the domains in which the actors typically work (e.g., governmental jurisdiction, issue focus, or industry sector)

And any progress towards a solution will require…

- The involvement of many actors, especially if they are from different sectors
- More resources or capacity than any one actor could provide
- A portfolio of interventions that work on many levers of change to address deep rooted causes
- Working beyond the scope of any of the relevant actors—such as changing policies, structures, or other elements of the social system that surrounds them

Review the section >>

2. Can you picture what network design would be most useful?

Review the section >>

3. Do you have a clear understanding of what a network could help you accomplish–and have you identified the specific functions that you need this network to perform?

Do you need a network to…

- Spur individual action
- Weave social ties
- Access new and diverse perspectives
- Facilitate information exchange and peer learning
- Create shared understanding in order to align action
- Design and prototype new solutions
- Launch a series of joint initiatives

Review the section >>

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR A NETWORK?

4. Can you tell what general "type" of funding relationship you see yourself having with this network?

Are you the…

- Personally-Engaged Funder
- Roll-Up-the-Sleeves Funder
- Full-Spectrum Funder

Review the section >>

5. Do you know the network's current stage of development?

Review the section >>

6. Do you know what forms of support you will provide?

	DISCOVER	KNOW	KNIT	ORGANIZE	GROW	TRANSITION	I'LL PLAY THIS ROLE	OTHERS WILL PLAY THIS ROLE
FINANCIAL SUPPORT:								
Funding research on the issue and potential for collective action	●	●						
Funding member participation		●	●	●	●			
Funding facilitation and technical consulting			●	●	●			
Funding convening and relationship building			●	●	●			
Funding staff (full and part time)			●	●	●			
Funding leadership development			●	●	●			
Funding measurement and learning				●	●			

Funding technology				●	●			
Funding communications				●	●	●		
Funding innovative or priority projects				●	●			
Funding general operations	●	●	●	●	●	●		

BACKBONE SUPPORT:

Catalyzing the network	●							
Attracting funding	●	●	●			●		
Convening the network		●	●	●	●			
Guiding vision and strategy		●	●	●				
Weaving the network		●	●	●	●			
Serving as the network coordinator		●	●	●	●			
Supporting measurement and learning				●	●			
Managing collaborative projects				●	●			
Engaging in advocacy				●	●			
Managing external communications				●	●			
Engaging the broader community and building public will				●	●			
Managing the network's finances				●	●	●		
Governing the network				●	●	●		
Coaching network leadership								
Participating in the network	●	●	●	●	●	●		

Review the section >>

7. Are you and your organization both ready to adopt the mindset you need to do this work?

Can you…

- Find the common ground where your goals and the network's goals intersect
- Be patient with the process and time required to support a community that can then work together to create impact
- Experiment and take risks with new ideas that spring from the collective
- Contribute as a collaborator and mitigate power dynamics

Review the section >>

8. Have you considered alternative forms of organizing to be sure that a network is the right approach?

Instead of a network, could you…

- Support a single individual / organization
- Create a new organization
- Gather a group
- Support a different kind of partnership

Review the section >>

ARE YOU READY TO GET STARTED?

9. Do you know how to gauge the potential for starting or joining a network?

Review the section >>

10. Do you know what tools you can use to support and lead a network?

Review the section >>

Story sketches

Story Sketches

There are many examples today of funders who are skillfully engaging with networks to produce social impact at a scale far beyond what can be accomplished by a single organization. These "story sketches" highlight a few of the bright spots in the field, focusing on the details of how each network's funder made the choice to engage and what roles they've decided to play.

The Rockefeller Foundation: Smoothing the path to universal health coverage

THE JOINT LEARNING NETWORK FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Many nations now share the goal of providing universal health coverage (UHC), but as the saying goes, the devil is in the details. Each system for providing UHC is a custom-fit creation of laws, regulations, market mechanisms, and government oversight at multiple levels. In 2009 a group of global health funders held a meeting in Geneva with healthcare system leaders from four low and middle income countries, academics, and technical experts to discuss ways to advance towards universal health coverage, and what emerged was the potential for a network as the solution.

This story sketch explores how The Rockefeller Foundation engaged with the group to form a network focused on two goals: finding new ways to identify common technical problems in the move towards UHC, and creating commonly-applicable solutions that could be customized in each member country.

SEEING THAT THE TIME WAS RIGHT

At the 2009 meeting, presenters from Ghana, India, Thailand, and Vietnam shared a set of implementation challenges which were quite similar. When asked if they had ever worked together, they said no, not beyond ad-hoc interaction at existing international gatherings. Stefan Nachuk, formerly an Associate Director at Rockefeller Foundation, was at the meeting and spoke with the participants afterwards about their plans. He learned that there were no resources in place to connect these system-builders with either advice from their peers or technical assistance from experts, and recognized that the timing for a new network was just right. "While there were other networks addressing UHC, the kind of work this group had in mind was a completely blank space," he reflected. "When you find a problem and a group of people who want to work together, independent of your own organization, that is a special opportunity."

Carolyn Bancroft, another former Rockefeller program officer who worked with Nachuk, noted how helpful it was to see health system leaders from different countries with common concerns even at this early stage: "They had shared objectives around certain key technical areas. We saw the possibility for contributing in a way that could not only give direct benefit to these countries but also help many other low or middle income countries with the same questions."

LAUNCHING A NETWORK

To address this need, in 2010 The Rockefeller Foundation launched the Joint Learning Network for Universal Health Coverage, incorporating health system leaders from seven countries: Ghana, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia.

The network was launched with the engagement of Nachuk, Bancroft, and other colleagues from the Foundation, as well as their technical partners Research for Development, PATH, ACCESS Health, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. With that backbone support, what started as casual conversation quickly blossomed into a vibrant community of practice that facilitates information exchange and peer learning through webinars, email dialogue, and multi-day in-person workshops to do intensive work and build personal . As the participants spent more time together, comparing notes on the options available for accelerating progress towards universal health coverage, what quickly became clear was that the greatest common ground existed between the senior leaders of health systems. It was these people who worked directly with technical issues which are often significant stumbling blocks to rolling out a new UHC system like information technology, quality, expanding coverage, improving primary care, and provider payment reform. The design and implementation challenges in these areas were similar across many countries, making it a productive dialogue among the participants to air questions and ask for help. At the network's first meeting in 2011, topics cropped up quickly for discussion, two tracks formed immediately around expanding coverage and provider payment, and in 2012 a third track formed on the topic of quality.

CRAFTING A LIGHTWEIGHT ROLE

Nachuk and his two colleagues at The Rockefeller Foundation were excited to see the new network take form, and they created a relatively light-touch role for themselves as the funder and strategic design partner. Not only were they constrained in the amount of time they could dedicate to the work, they also saw how crucial it was to channel the participants' creativity and let them design an experience that directly served their needs. This was especially important because of how rare it is for international communities of practice to be led by the participants rather than the donors. Nachuk wanted to help foster learning within the group using the principles of knowledge co-production, and decided to do that in two ways. First, he provided ample funding for coordination, stepping out of the role of and asking the technical partners to facilitate the group's convenings. And, he set aside money to support any additional forms of small-group among the participants beyond the network's full-group convenings.

This approach reflected Nachuk's view that working in networks is inherently fluid. "So little is known at the start [of a network] that doing a work plan is a little backwards," he said. "You have to get into it and discover what the work is before you can make a plan." The flexible funding for collaboration has been useful on multiple occasions, such as one instance when administrators from Ghana and Kenya were both working on the issue of electronic claims and wanted to spend in-person time comparing notes in order to inform their respective work on building a nationwide claims-processing system.

SHIFTING FROM PEER LEARNING TO COLLABORATION

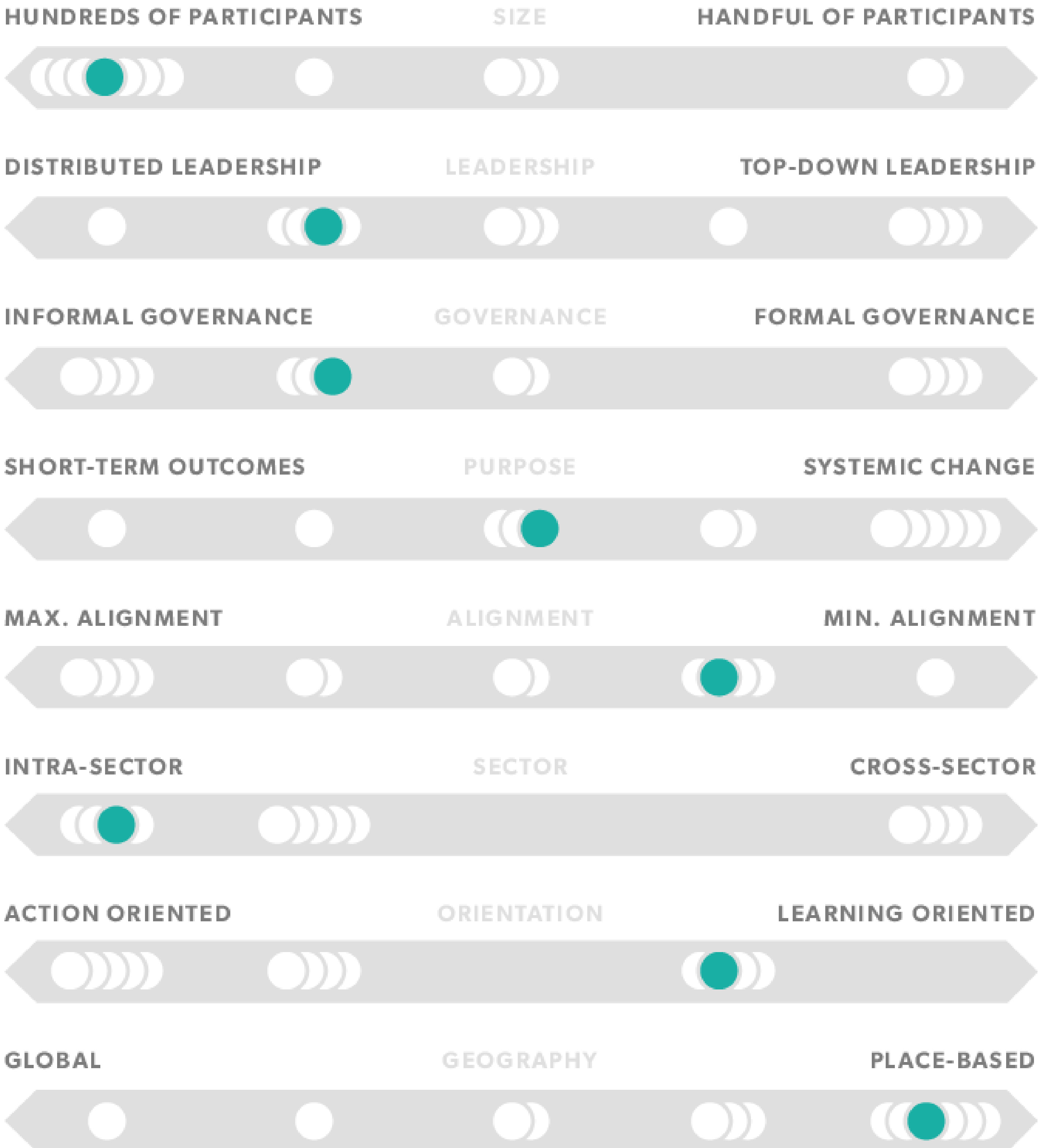
Now, participants are exploring more hands-on forms of collaboration that go beyond peer learning. The network has now launched a five-country collaborative that is developing ways to monitor and assess the impacts of provider payment reforms. In 2014, participants co-authored a manual for undertaking facility costing studies in low- and middle-income settings, where data availability is usually far from perfect.

The network is now expanding and gaining recognition. In early 2015, 13 new countries joined as members, bringing the total to 22. Also in 2015, the World Bank's Global Health Practice leadership identified the JLN as its core platform for cross-learning, identifying country demands, and disseminating analytical products, and has taken a stronger role in helping coordinate the network and raise additional funds to manage it.

Most importantly, the participants have found being a part of this network directly beneficial to their work. When Rockefeller asked an independent evaluator to survey the network's 230 participants, the result was that fully 93% reported that their knowledge and skills have improved as a result of the network, and 80% had already put that knowledge to use, particularly in their own strategic planning and in convincing others within their countries to pursue specific reforms.

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of the design of the Joint Learning Network (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: Monitor Institute interviews with Stefan Nachuk and Carolyn Bancroft while they were on staff at The Rockefeller Foundation (fall 2014), Evolution of the Joint Learning Network (June 30th 2013), Joint Learning Update (June 2013), How to Better Share Knowledge Between Countries Moving Toward UHC (May 5th 2014), and the Joint Learning Network website.

The Rockefeller Foundation: Building a backbone to accelerate impact investing

THE GLOBAL IMPACT INVESTING NETWORK

Impact investing is now a growing industry, but in 2007 it was a collection of disparate financial innovations that went by many different names and had no comprehensive supportive infrastructure. This story sketch describes how The Rockefeller Foundation organized the world's first network of impact investors and then launched the Global Impact Investing Network as a lasting backbone to grow the movement.

SEEING THE POTENTIAL FOR AN INDUSTRY

A network can be a powerful way to give a new idea traction as it moves to gain widespread support. That was exactly the situation with the concept of impact investing. By 2007, a variety of financial innovators had developed approaches to socially-conscious investment and were paving the way for new avenues to direct capital for social good. For instance, Jacqueline Novogratz started the nonprofit Acumen Fund to invest in social enterprises in East Africa and South Asia. Muhammad Yunus had established the Grameen Bank to lend to lower-income women in Bangladesh. Willy Foote founded the nonprofit Root Capital to lend to farmer cooperatives throughout Latin America and Africa. These and many other organizations offered a wide range of avenues for satisfying the growing demand for investment that sought some combination of financial and social outcomes. And as is typical for a field in its formative stage, there was a range of terms to describe this activity, each with its own meaning and nuance: socially responsible investing, blended value, mission-driven investing, and so on. And while there was a great deal of effort to develop various niche models, there was no infrastructure that would enable the market to grow as a whole.

This fragmentation struck Antony Bugg-Levine when he joined The Rockefeller Foundation in 2007 and was asked by the Foundation's President, Judith Rodin, to evaluate its impact investing portfolio. In the book Impact Investing, he and his co-author Jed Emerson describe what they saw at the time: the need to set the rules and create a worldwide playing field, which would necessitate transformation across capital markets, performance measurement, and public policy. It was clear that no individual, however charismatic, would be able to create these transformations alone. As they wrote, "It will be an especially tricky transition since it requires a focus on the "we" of sustained social change, not just the "me" of social entrepreneurship… A single-minded focus on individuals obscures the crucial role collaboration and coordination need to play in impact investing's next phase. Impact investing will take off when its pioneers and newcomers collaborate effectively, building the infrastructure that will enable the next wave of talent and capital to join the field… In [this] emerging phase, the impact investing industry suffers from fragmentation with an increasingly crowded field of subscale players unable to rise above the noise."

ASSEMBLING A NETWORK

What Bugg-Levine saw in this situation were many of the elements that make it a natural choice to build a network. Investment had tremendous potential to provide capital for social problem-solving, but that potential wouldn't be realized unless the many disconnected innovators began to act like they were building the same field. Bugg-Levine made the case that The Rockefeller Foundation should launch an initiative with the goal of accelerating this change in behavior, and the Board of Directors agreed. "We believed that people needed to interact in unusual constellations," he reflected in a recent interview. "Institutional investors needed to be in closer contact with philanthropists, and that philanthropists needed to be in closer contact with entrepreneurs, and we believed that cross-fertilization would create action. We wanted people to come together who hadn't seen themselves as part of the same movement. The goal was to create a 'rhetorical umbrella' under which many people could huddle."

The first step of this new initiative was to test the attractiveness of this idea with a sampling of the various actors working in the market, which Bugg-Levine did by holding a convening in the summer of 2007 at the Foundation's retreat center in Bellagio. "We asked, do you think there would be utility in your silos working together?" he recalls. By posing that question, he focused the group's attention on what lies at the core of a network's viability: whether there is common ground for the network to work together. At this early stage, it was important for the funder to be able to judge when to ask that question, and how best to show a group the potential for collective work. Bugg-Levine used this convening to ask the question, and fortunately the answer was yes. The participants were able to identify initial categories of work that they wanted to pursue together, created informal working groups, settled on a name (the Rockefeller Impact Investing Collaborative) that was the first use of "impact investing" to describe the market, and agreed to continue their work at another convening in nine months' time. With that first fuzzy definition of the common ground in place, the work of the network began. Working with Monitor Institute, Bugg-Levine followed through with a second convening in 2008 that gathered an expanded group of 40 participants, representing a wider swath of the marketplace.

It was at this second convening that both The Rockefeller Foundation and the participants were able to see a clear path forward for this nascent industry to solve social and environmental challenges with greater efficiency. The group aligned around the overarching goal of moving beyond uncoordinated innovation to a focus on market-building and expressed considerable enthusiasm for advancing its work through four formal working groups, each of which took on a separate topic:

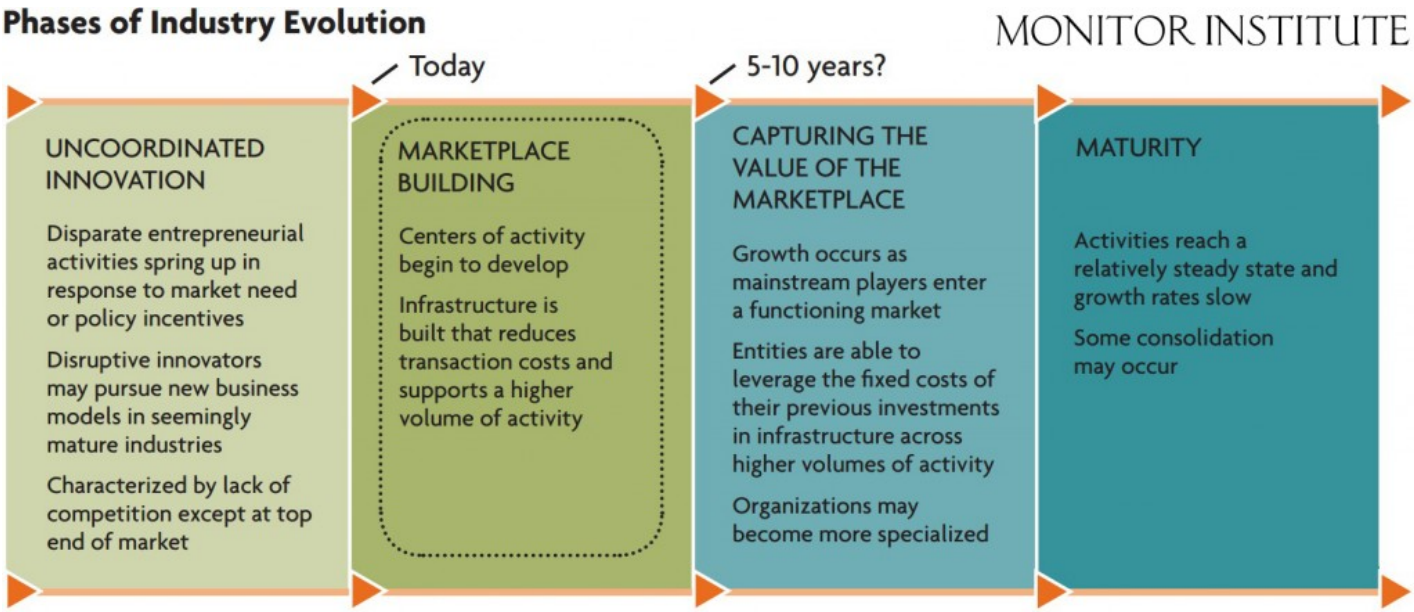
creating of a global network of leading impact investors, developing a standardized framework for assessing social and environmental impact, starting an impact investing bank, and developing a working group of investors focused on sustainable agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa.

SCALING UP AND CREATING A BACKBONE

Part of the art of engaging with a network is in spotting when it is at an inflection point, and judging the best next step from the perspective of the group rather than your own goals. As Bugg-Levine reflected, "When a foundation calls you to a meeting, you'll show up whether you think it is a good investment of your time or not. As a program officer, it's very easy to convince yourself that you've identified a network with a lot of interest. You have to ask, how do I know if this network is necessary?" Yet he felt confident at this point that the network was ready for growth. One strong indicator for him was the energy of the 2008 convening, and another was the constant demand for him and his small team to play the role of network weaver, making introductions and spreading information, which had grown into an intensive task.

The first step that The Rockefeller Foundation took in scaling the network was to develop a clear vision for the field that reflected the views of the network's current participants. This was important in order to accomplish several goals: anchoring the dialogue in the existing history and research, capturing the insights of the 2008 convening, reflecting back the conversation to help cement the understanding and motivation of the 40 people involved. He was able to do that by providing lead funding for Monitor Institute to create *Investing for Social and Environmental Impact: A Design for Catalyzing an Emerging Industry*. That research began in 2008, informed the dialogue and framed key questions at the 2008 convening, used the convening's conversations to refine the thinking, and was released in January 2009. This enabled the Foundation and the report's other funders—the Annie E. Casey Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and JPMorgan Chase Foundation—to spread the word about the importance of building a market in the words of the market's own leaders.

One of the frameworks that emerged in that report was a succinct description of the developmental path that is typical for any new market as it becomes established. Markets typically undergo a period of *uncoordinated innovation* before they enter a phase of *marketplace building*, which in turn sets the stage for achieving the initial vision—*capturing the value of the marketplace* and finally *maturity.* Understanding that process was a helpful realization for both the funders and the network's participants, and it can be equally helpful for the actors involved in other early-stage markets where networks are forming. That process is described in more detail in this visual:



The second step that The Rockefeller Foundation took to scale up the network was to establish a new nonprofit that could house the network's backbone functions. It simply wasn't sustainable for Bugg-Levine and his team to continue weaving the network and playing a variety of other backbone roles themselves, particularly as the report attracted attention to the network's vision. In his words, "The longer we held on to [the network], the more likely we were to stunt its growth." Starting a stand-alone organization wasn't seen as the ideal solution, but none of the participants were well-positioned to play backbone roles themselves, since there were meaningful financial outcomes at stake and each would have their own conflicts of interest.

In taking both of these steps, The Rockefeller Foundation faced important choices about the use of its brand. Scaling up meant that this initiative had to transition from an effort led by the Foundation to an effort led and owned by its participants, and supported by a larger group of funders. That logic justified the Foundation playing a behind-the-scenes role, making its involvement as invisible as possible and elevating the role of the network's participants. But there was also a powerful attraction to the prospect of using the Foundation's name as a way to attract attention to the effort and lend it credibility. In the case of the report, the Foundation opted to be the lead funder, recruit several other foundations as fellow supporters, and have the document branded by Monitor Institute. In the case of the nonprofit, the Foundation also chose not to use the Rockefeller name, branding it the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN). The GIIN launched in 2009, nearly a year after the 2008 convening, with the goal of advancing the same four workstreams that the convening participants agreed to pursue.

SHIFTING INTO A NEW SET OF ROLES

The heart of a funder's decision to engage with a network is the choice of what backbone roles to play, and with the founding of the GIIN, the Rockefeller Foundation both launched the network into a new phase and began playing a different set of roles. Since the GIIN had its own leadership and staff, Bugg-Levine and his team could step out of their position as the principal network-weavers, with Bugg-Levine becoming a member of the new organization's Board of Directors. The Foundation's principal investment in the network became not its staff time but its grant dollars, which at first were provided on one-year cycles while the organization established itself.

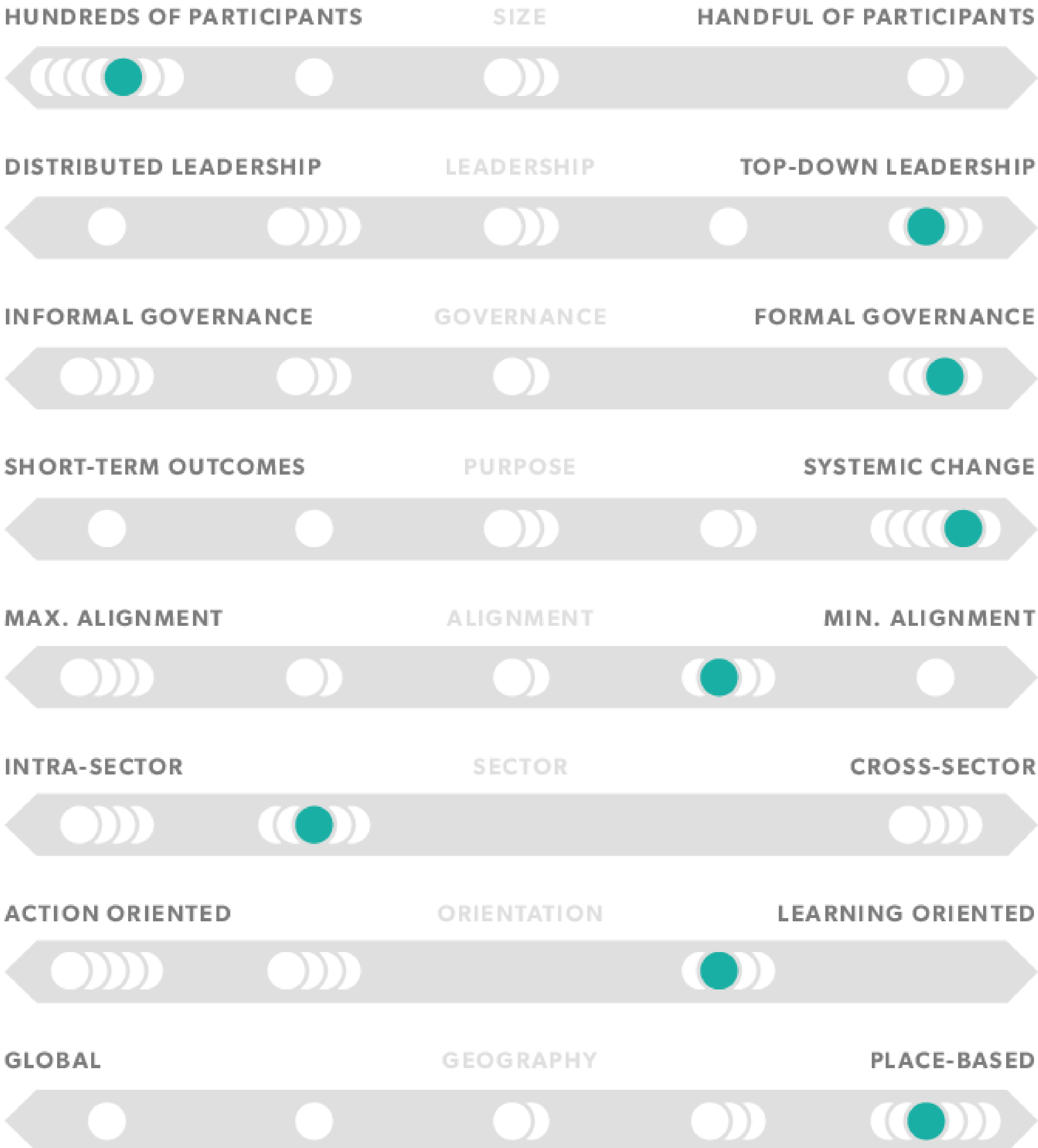
Over time, the Foundation has also found other ways to build its relationship with the young entity. Program officers have contracted with GIIN staff to make use of their topical expertise, the Foundation has begun requiring the investees of its Program Related Investments program to file reports using metrics that comply with the GIIN's IRIS standard, and the Foundation has made use of the GIIN's Investor's Council to build relationships with like-minded investors.

The past four years have seen yet another shift in the Foundation's role, as it has wound down its involvement but continued to use its resources and brand to support the network. The impact investing initiative was originally scheduled to end in 2011, but when Bugg-Levine left the Foundation that year to lead the Nonprofit Finance Fund, the Foundation chose to extend the initiative and its core-support grant funding for the GIIN by another two years. At the same time, the Foundation's President Judith Rodin joined Bugg-Levine on the GIIN's Board. These moves provided material support, personal engagement, and also reinforced the GIIN's public credibility. As of 2013, the Foundation formally closed its impact investing initiative, but Rodin continued serving on the Board, and the Foundation allowed the GIIN to use its existing core support funding over a longer period of time.

Looking back, Bugg-Levine believes that timing and persistence were key to the Foundation's successful cultivation of the network. "We hit a nerve at the right point, and were tireless in pursuing it," he said. "It has been incredibly rewarding to promote this idea. I remember how excited we were when an obscure blogger first used the term "impact investing," and now look how far we've come, with President Obama and the Pope having discussed it in the same week."

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of the design of the Global Impact Investing Network (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: The Global Impact Investing Network website, a Monitor Institute interview with Antony Bugg-Levine (former Managing Director at The Rockefeller Foundation) in November 2014, a Monitor Institute interview with Brinda Ganguly (Associate Director of Impact Investing at The Rockefeller Foundation) in October 2014, the 2011 book Impact Investing: Transforming How We Make Money

While Making a Difference by Antony Bugg-Levine and Jed Emerson (Kindle locations 2703-2743), and the 2009 Monitor Institute report Investing for Social and Environmental Impact: A Design for Catalyzing an Emerging Industry.

The Rockefeller Foundation: Bridging disciplines to launch a new field in biology

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION'S MOLECULAR BIOLOGY INITIATIVE

Funders have been engaging with networks long before today's connective technologies made it easier to maintain relationships at a distance. In the 1930s, a program officer at The Rockefeller Foundation named Warren Weaver led an initiative to apply the tools of physics and chemistry to the many unanswered questions of biology. This story sketch describes how Weaver's intensive relationship-building among researchers and targeted use of funding was successful in launching the new field of molecular biology.

SEEING THE POTENTIAL FOR CROSS-POLLINATION

The potential for starting a new network often comes from seeing opportunities in the *adjacent possible*—combining insights from different areas of exploration and fields. The Rockefeller Foundation was able to tap into the adjacent fields of physics and chemistry to support the evolution of the new field of molecular biology. By the early 1930s, the Foundation had spent over a decade building infrastructure in both physics and chemistry, through grants to universities and research institutes and by supporting fellowship programs. In 1932, shortly after establishing a new Division of Natural Sciences, the Foundation brought in a mathematician named Warren Weaver as a program officer. Weaver was keenly aware of the Foundation's earlier work in the physical sciences, and the significant technological advances that had propelled progress in that arena. He believed the Foundation could promote similar advances in biology. He advocated to begin an initiative on the topic, which he first called *vital essences* and then *experimental biology*, asking: "Why do we seem to know so much more about atoms than we do about men?" He believed that a new hybrid science that took advantage of the latest tools could challenge what was then a widespread belief: that the mechanisms of life were simply beyond the scope of scientific analysis.

'WEAVING' A NEW NETWORK FROM SCRATCH

Weaver's proposal to begin this initiative was accepted in 1933, and from the beginning he approached the work as an exercise in intensive relationship-building and information-sharing, work that today is termed *network weaving*. (His name and the term are a happy coincidence.)

Working with a team of three full-time program officers, Weaver set about the task of identifying researchers in physics and chemistry whose work had the potential for advancing biology and persuading them that it was in biology that they could break the most new ground. In this way, he focused on understanding the key players throughout the landscape of disparate fields and brought them to the proverbial "table" in order to see possibilities in shared action. The nature of the problem he was trying to solve was that the three fields were pursued in almost entirely separate academic silos, so while there were some researchers in physics and chemistry who were doing interdisciplinary work in biology, there were very few and they were not connected through any existing groups. He had to convince potential candidates, person by person, that there was incredible potential for applying the technologies developed for working at microscopic scale in physics and chemistry to unlock the mysteries of how biological systems work. Beyond the strength of his convictions, the only resources that he and his team could draw on was the institutional credibility that the Foundation had built through its support of physics and chemistry, and the relationships with the American and European scientific communities that it had gained through that work.

Weaver knew he had to build momentum from the bottom up among the scientists who were in a position to do this work. Working with only telephones and telegraphs, before the advent of airplanes and high-speed rail, he and his team spent its first three years building personal relationships with scientists across America and 17 European countries. This was a significant undertaking of bridging divides and sparking coordination. His team made a total of 531 in-person visits in that time to see scientists at 312 laboratories and give targeted grants to support specific projects. Those visits not only built ties with the scientists but also gave him and his team the opportunity to fill notebook after notebook with ideas and observations, drawing connections across disparate research to track progress at the level of the field. This combination of granular knowledge and a field-level view gave Weaver the ability to accelerate each scientist's work both by providing new insights and by providing funding where it was needed most.

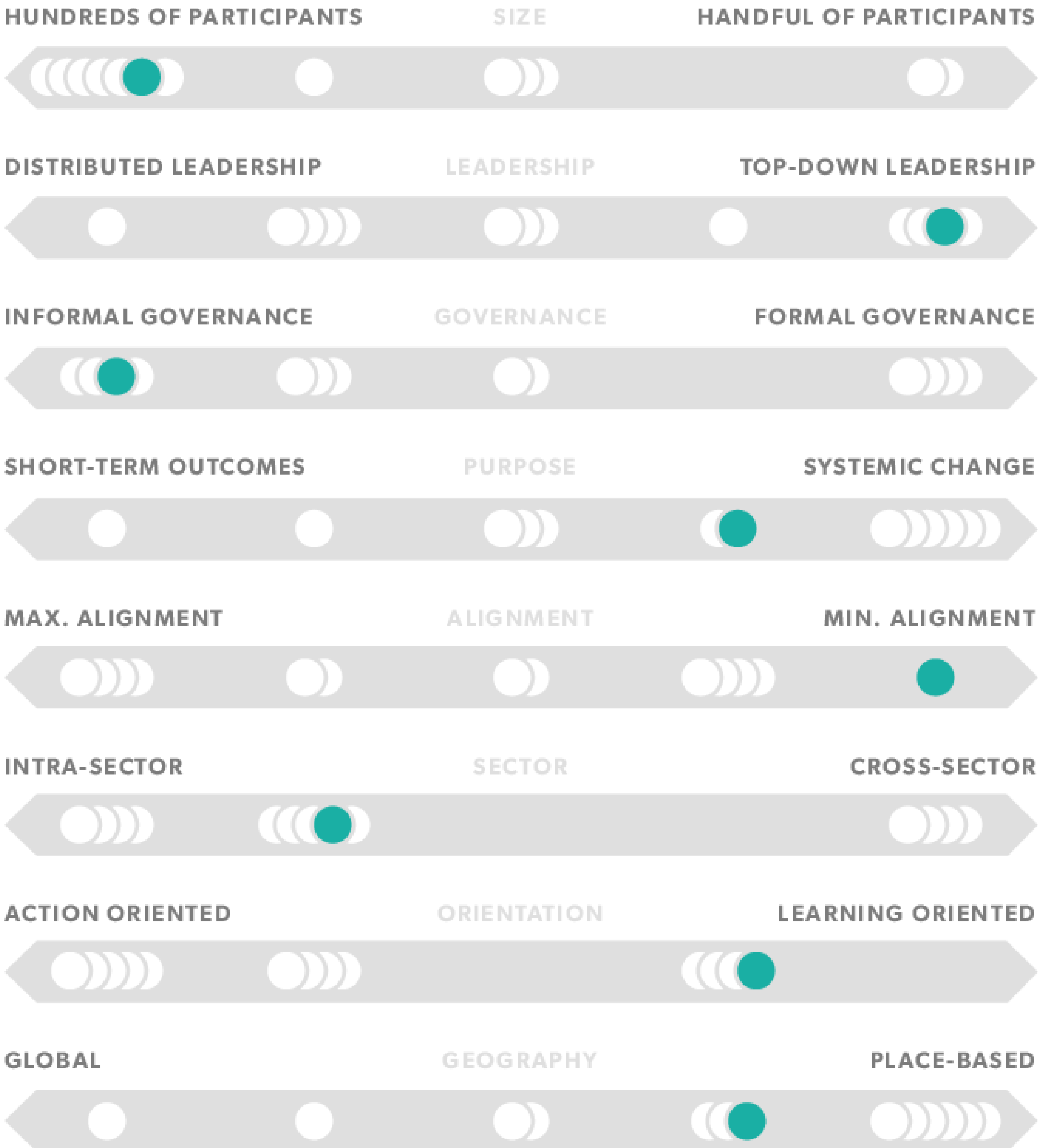
STEPPING BACK WHEN THE NEW FIELD HAD EMERGED

The benefit of having a clear goal at the start of building a network—in this case, establishing a new scientific field that could become self-sustaining—is that it enables clear decision-making about when your engagement can end. Although the details of how he went about his network-weaving remain buried in his many papers that now reside at the Rockefeller Archive Center, what we do know is that By the 1950s, the rapid pace of progress had attracted significant funding from both government and industry, at which point Weaver himself advocated for the Foundation to wind down its support. The initiative finally closed after 18 years in 1951.

Weaver's deep involvement in forming this community of researchers set the stage for molecular biology to become a central focus of the scientific establishment in the late twentieth century, paving the way for further foundational breakthroughs including the structure of DNA, genetic engineering, and the mapping of the human genome.

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of the design of the molecular biology initiative's network (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: This is an adaptation of the history of Molecular Biology as described on the Rockefeller centennial site. Additional details are drawn from the biography of Warren Weaver on the Rockefeller centennial site, an unpublished internal presentation on The Rockefeller Foundation's history of *involvement in networks from September 2014, and an interview in October 2014 with Jack Meyers, Pat Rosenfield, and Barbara Shubinsky from the Rockefeller Archive Center.*

StriveTogether: Taking a place-based network to national scale

STRIVETOGETHER AND THE CRADLE TO CAREER NETWORK

Sometimes one successful network can act as the springboard for another. StrivePartnership in Cincinnati first gained national recognition for building a "collective impact" network that knit together a single cradle-to-career pipeline out of the many service providers who work with students to improve their achievement. When the success of StrivePartnership sparked interest from other cities in taking a similar approach, Living Cities supported pilots to test what it would look like to replicate the model. The success of those pilots led KnowledgeWorks, one of StrivePartnership's founding supporters, to create the Cradle to Career Network and form a new subsidiary organization, StriveTogether, as its national hub. This story sketch examines how Living Cities and KnowledgeWorks came to see the importance of helping StrivePartnership take this next step and what role StriveTogether could play in supporting and expanding the new network.

SEEING THE NEED FOR A NEXT STEP

Just like an organization's opportunities for impact often broaden once it exits its startup phase, networks often unlock new ways to achieve systemic impact once they hit their stride. The key is for supporters of the effort to see the early indicators of that opening—and find meaningful ways to engage in catalyzing them to the next stage. StrivePartnership was originally founded in 2006 by community leaders in Cincinnati and northern Kentucky to bring together the many piecemeal approaches to increasing student achievement. This approach addressed the ongoing challenge of a service landscape that was "program rich and system poor." Within five years, 40 of the 53 educational outcomes tracked by the network had shown improvement. For example, kindergarten readiness increased 9%, high school graduation rose 11%, and college enrollment increased 10%. These gains were achieved through a cross-sectoral network of partners that addressed turf issues among the community's educational service providers and encouraged funders to support strategies with the strongest track record. StrivePartnership's success, and the network structure that made it possible, gained wide awareness in 2011 when it was used as the central case study of the article *Collective Impact*.

Many education-focused funders and nonprofits around the country had been tracking StrivePartnership's efforts for years, considering whether a similar approach might be viable in their own communities. Substantial interest in StrivePartnership's model began in its third year; when the outcome indicators began to move, so increased the number of inquiries about how the StrivePartnership approach could be adopted elsewhere. Seeing this as an opportunity, Living Cities provided StrivePartnership with funding to pilot a replication of its model in a few communities where there were enthusiastic champions.

LAUNCHING A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

Even though StrivePartnership itself was a well-established network, the nature of the next phase of its development was far from clear. Judy Peppler helped to start one of the early-stage pilots in Portland, Oregon. Now the President and CEO of KnowledgeWorks, she recalls the intensive effort that it took to launch these efforts on the part of Jeff Edmondson, then the Managing Director of StrivePartnership. "Jeff was running all over the country, consulting with these communities and simultaneously building out the toolkit for them to apply. His initial toolkit branched out into tools for communities that were first exploring the StrivePartnership model, those networks that were emerging, and those that were sustaining the effort. As more communities were actually making it work, he and his team continued to evolve the approach."

The pilots' launch showed Edmondson that it was possible to replicate the StrivePartnership model, and there was strong potential for spreading it to many more communities, but that each of those communities was going to need meaningful support in order to be successful. This caught the attention of the leadership of KnowledgeWorks, where Edmondson had been a program officer and one of the founding supporters of StrivePartnership before he took the helm as its Managing Director. KnowledgeWorks had previously functioned as a grantmaking foundation, but its trustees were looking for ways that it could evolve into a revenue-generating social enterprise. In 2011, Edmondson started a new subsidiary of KnowledgeWorks, called StriveTogether, where he began building a codified toolkit to use in helping expand the nascent network of networks that were adopting the StrivePartnership model.

ESTABLISHING A ROLE AS THE HUB

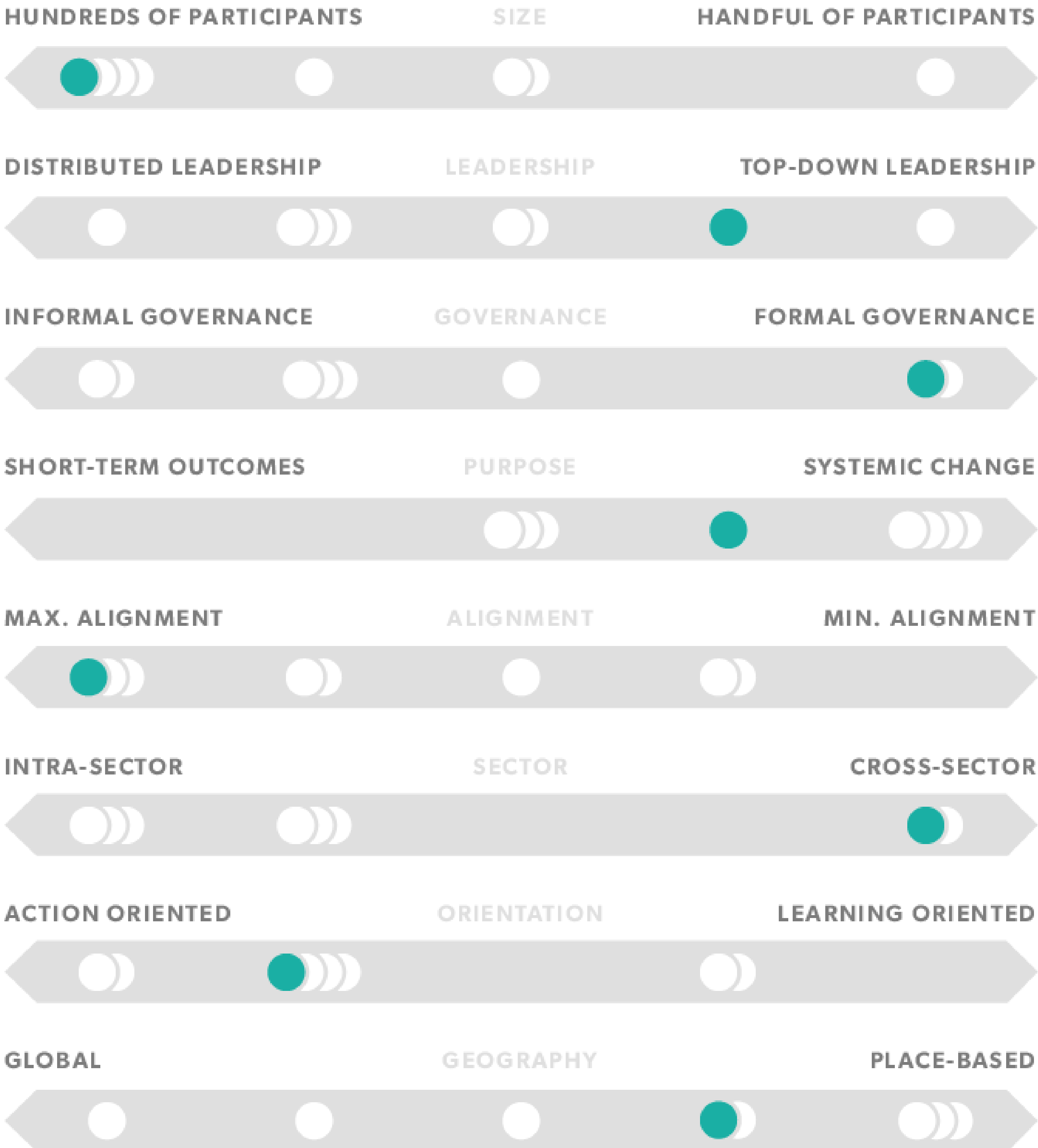
Over the past four years, StriveTogether has carved out a role for itself as the hub at the center of the group of StrivePartnership-based networks, now called the Cradle to Career Network. Unlike many funders, StriveTogether is not a participant in the network itself, but serves as the network's governing body and in-house consultancy. Earning roughly $5 million in revenues in 2014, 30%

from fees and 70% from grants, it has a staff of 25 whose time is principally spent on facilitating knowledge-sharing in three ways: convening the member networks for peer learning, improving the StriveTogether toolkit, and using that toolkit in assisting member networks directly.

As a result of this focused effort on generalizing the StrivePartnership model and using its observations to develop a clear replication framework, StriveTogether can now offer clear guidance for communities to use in adapting its model to the context-specific aspects of their environment. It has a standard Theory of Action describing what it takes for a StriveTogether partnership to be successful, gateways for a community to clear as it moves from Exploring to Emerging and finally to Sustaining, a suite of resources for communities at each level, and peer learning opportunities for those communities to help each other on their journey. Peppler sees structure and attention to detail at the heart of its value: "We're trying build collective impact networks in a disciplined, rigorous, high-quality way that is bigger than just agreeing that 'we'll work on this together.'"

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of StriveTogether's design (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: Monitor Institute interview with KnowledgeWorks CEO Judy Peppler in fall 2014, The StriveTogether Story, and Collective Impact (Stanford Social Innovation Review, winter 2011).

The Rockefeller Foundation: A long-term bet on scientific breakthrough

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION'S INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR RICE BIOTECHNOLOGY

Like most organizations, scientific research teams are effective at pursuing their independent goals, but struggle to collaborate across disciplines, and are often disconnected from the on-the-ground challenges that their work could help to address. In the late 1970s, program officers at The Rockefeller Foundation (the "Foundation") saw both of these barriers standing in the way of progress towards what they believed was a tremendous opportunity: using the new technologies of genomics and genetic engineering to help the world's lowest-income consumers by creating a variety of rice that was dramatically more resilient and nutritious.

The Foundation had over thirty years of experience in agricultural science, having supported traditional cross-breeding research to produce improved staple crops since the 1940s, working in partnership with Ford Foundation and others to spur the "Green Revolution." The Foundation's program officers saw the potential for biotechnology to make even greater strides, but they also saw that the work had to happen across a disparate collection of research teams that were scattered across many different countries, institutions, and scientific fields. This story sketch explores how the Foundation chose to make an audacious long-term bet in the early 1980s, committing to spend 15 years providing those teams with the connectivity they needed to give the Global South a better kind of rice.

SEEING THE NEED FOR A NETWORK

The need for a network of some form became clear to The Rockefeller Foundation's program officers when they investigated what it would take to create new forms of rice. Initially, they saw reason for great optimism when the new genetic engineering technique of recombinant DNA emerged in the late 1970s. They could picture an ongoing chain from discovery to application, such that when a potentially-valuable way of changing the genome of a microbe was discovered at Stanford or Harvard, that researcher would share the knowledge and the DNA material with a plant researcher at UC Davis, Cornell, or Michigan State. That researcher would spend several years figuring out how to make a similar change to a rice plant, then share that knowledge and the new rice plants with an international rice research institute to use in a breeding program. Finally, just as in the Green Revolution, the most successful variant from the breeding program would be passed on to organizations that worked directly with farmers, putting the improved seeds into production.

But by the early 1980s, this vision began to falter, because research into the genetic engineering of tropical crops was still not occurring. Investigating why, the program officers saw that while each of the institutions involved were well-resourced and high-functioning at their respective tasks, a host of barriers remained. These teams had no direct incentive to work on this particular project, since both researchers and universities were primarily rewarded for publishing and patenting new genetic breakthroughs and selling those patents to agribusiness. They lacked any easy means of exchanging the crucial biological material, which required careful handling and the navigation of a thicket of international regulations that had sprung up around the international transport of genetically modified organisms. Most importantly, they lacked any way to maintain focus on the years-long process of translating basic science into viable new rice varietals and carrying feedback up the chain when potentially-promising avenues turned out to be dead ends.

Gary Toenniessen, one of the Foundation's grantmakers, recalled seeing that there was no way to solve these problems without getting directly involved: "There was no single institution you could give a grant to and say, please create new biotechnology and use it to produce rice varieties. That was simply not the job they were hired to do."

No single grantee could do the job, but Toenniessen and his fellow program officers believed that the Foundation was uniquely well-positioned to provide the necessary connective tissue itself. They could help knit together these institutions through funding to support collaboration. They also could play a central role without needing credit where there was, in his words, "only so much credit to go around." The Foundation had built up both external networks and internal expertise in the area of agricultural research, and as the program officers tapped those networks, they were able to assemble a strong set of advisors, recruiting scientists who were leading researchers and also had a field-level view informed by work in administrative positions.

What particularly inspired Toenniessen and his colleagues was to hear from scientists that they found the goal itself inspiring. He knew the Foundation wasn't in a position to demand anything of these institutions, but what it could do was pave the path for scientists to shape their work in a way that would benefit millions of low-income people rather than boosting the profits of global agribusiness. He knew the desire to contribute to that vision was widespread—it was up to the Foundation to create the right structure for tapping it.

MAKING THE CASE FOR A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Toenniessen and his fellow program officers sat down to map out what a network would need to look like to achieve the goals they had laid out. They quickly realized three things: it would need some funding and considerable staff time to keep people connected; it would need a pool of dedicated grant funding available to support related research work; and it couldn't be done in any less than 15 years. They knew 15 years was a big ask to put in front of the trustees, but there was no shorter period that would do the job. There were three major stages, each of which would take five years:

1. *Creating rice biotechnology.* The first five years would involve identifying grantees and supporting them to do basic research into the genomics and genetic engineering of rice.
2. *Building research capacity.* The second five years would involve building the capacity among scientists, primarily in Asia, to apply the new discoveries to breeding new rice varieties.
3. *Producing rice varieties.* The final five years would tap the newly-built capacity to accomplish the production of the newly-engineered rice varieties.

The program officers shared this plan with the trustees in late 1984 and won their approval to run the program for ten to 15 years. Looking back, Toenniessen is very glad that the Foundation was able to take such a long view: "Many donors look for short-term payoffs, where you can invest in something that's at a tipping point and be in and out in five years with just as much impact as if you invested for the longer term. But I believe foundations can often be more effective working over the long term, particularly if capacity building is required."

THREE DIFFERENT STAGES, THREE DIFFERENT FUNDER ROLES

It's common for a funder's engagement with a network to evolve over time, but typically that evolution is difficult to anticipate. But in this case, Toenniessen and his fellow program officers were able to anticipate at least the outlines of two distinct roles that they would need to play as they transitioned through the stages.

- **Stage 1: Recruiting basic researchers and assessing their progress.** To kick off the network, Toenniessen and his team began by courting the leading laboratories doing work on plant molecular biology to work on rice itself and a collection of related traits, encouraging them with both research funding and the vision of contributing to a larger goal. As that work got underway, he turned to monitoring the progress of that research, which he did with the help of an advisory committee of those researchers' peers.
- **Stages 2 & 3: Placing rice-focused plant researchers at basic research labs.** In the ten years that followed, the network moved into its second and third phases of work, and Toenniessen and his team shifted their role to transferring this new knowledge to institutions in countries that were heavy consumers and producers of rice. A central component of this work was simply moving the right staff between the right institutions. The Foundation provided fellowships to researchers from Asian countries including India, China, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Some were for advanced degrees but the most effective fellowships enabled young scientists already trained in biotechnology to spend three months a year at one of the research institutions in the United States, Europe, Japan, or Australia that was funded to work on rice. Each fellowship was spent with the goal of learning about the latest discoveries, practicing at the most advanced facilities, and developing new ideas through interaction with the community of researchers. Even though the basic research institutions wouldn't typically have accepted these scientists if they had applied independently, the institutions saw the value of contributing to the larger goal, and continued accepting some of these fellowships for as long as twelve years.

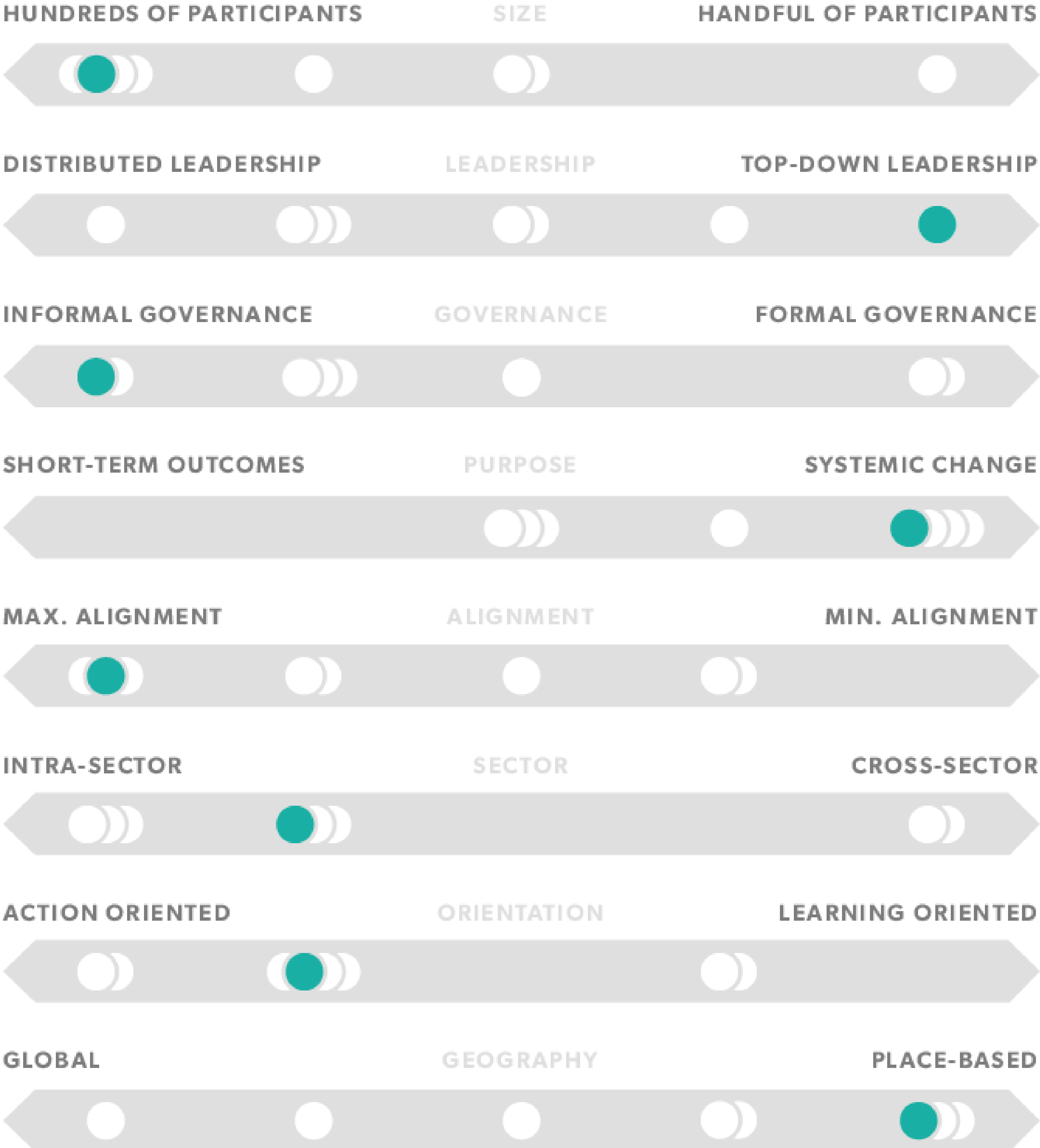
Toenniessen and his team mediated each of these placements, working with national research institutions in Asian nations to interview candidates for the fellowship and match them up with the appropriate research institutions. He and his team also built relationships within the network by running a newsletter, holding global convenings, and encouraging institutions in the network that wanted to collaborate to apply for funding. Sometimes they would even go further, spotting potential collaborations and playing matchmaker by asking if working together might be worthwhile.

This ambitious program ran for a total of 17 years, two years longer than planned, channeling a total of $105 million by The Rockefeller Foundation. Nearly all of that funding was used to support research, with $4.6 million used for the network's meetings, administration, and other backbone functions, an average of $270,000 a year.

The research it supported in its first stage laid the scientific basis for "rice biotechnology" as we know it today: it created the first DNA molecular marker map of rice, unraveled age-old riddles of host-plant resistance, and made discoveries that revealed rice's pivotal position in the evolution of cereal grains, giving it its place as the model cereal species in genomic research that it holds today. Perhaps the best-known outcome of the network was the creation of "golden rice" in 2000, a variety that is fortified with a precursor to vitamin A, addressing a dietary deficiency that is estimated to kill hundreds of thousands of children under the age of five each year. The Foundation concluded its support for the network that year, having trained over 400 scientists and built many long-term collaborative relationships, ties that continued in the following years and have likely contributed to advances we continue to see today in creating crops for the developing world.

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of the rice biotechnology network's design (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: The Rockefeller Foundation's International Program on Rice Biotechnology (2001) and a Monitor Institute interview with Gary Toenniessen (fall 2014).

Reimagine Learning: Bridging silos and creating a new vision for learning

THE REIMAGINE LEARNING NETWORK

On the path to social change there often comes a point when those in the trenches of a particular issue–whether funder or practitioner—ask a different kind of question about scale. It's a shift away from "How can I scale this organization or program?" to a more challenging question: "How can I scale impact?" Asking this question allows the aperture to broaden, raising the possibility of working through collaborative networks to drive broader impact than is possible working alone.

That is just the kind of question a group of funders started to ask several years ago that led to the eventual formation of Reimagine Learning, now a network of over 100 social entrepreneurs, funders, policy makers, researchers, and academics to create learning environments that unleash the talents and creativity of all students. This story sketch focuses on how that group of funders realized the opportunity for Reimagine Learning and arrived at the point where they were ready to engage: how they reframed the problem, laid the groundwork for a co-creative partnership, and dedicated the capacity necessary to making the collective work a success.

THE POWER OF A COLLECTIVE REFRAME

Like most efforts, Reimagine Learning started with a conversation. In 2012, Vanessa Kirsch, head of New Profit, a Boston-based venture philanthropy fund, and some of the trustees of the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, discussed their views on how students with learning and attention issues remain at the margins of the mainstream education reform movement, even as schools make big improvements in other ways. They were talking about students with dyslexia, ADHD, dyscalculia and other brain-based difficulties that make learning challenging and that can also lead to social and emotional challenges—students who are very unlikely to get the support they need in an "average" classroom environment.

Meanwhile, another reality perplexing New Profit was their observation that many social entrepreneurs in the field of learning differences and in the field of social and emotional learning had been ambitiously broadening the scope of their program models, working up and down the value chain to take on more of their chosen issue. They were doing good work individually, but many of these social change leaders were looking for ways to broaden their impact even further through partnership. There was a growing hunch that helping bridge these fields, both with important innovations and perspectives on how kids learn, would be critical.

Supporting partnerships between like-minded organizations is one thing. Building bridges between separate fields is another. And to support this effort through a funder collaborative, requiring another level of collaboration, posed yet another set of challenges. As Shruti Sehra, partner at New Profit and lead of the Reimagine Learning network, put it: "We saw all kinds of programs expanding their models because they realized they were just one piece of the puzzle. And leaders would wonder, 'How much do we keep expanding?' But yet, when we would get them in the same room together, inevitably they would talk about how they could do more together than they could on their own. So we started to ask ourselves, 'What would it look like if we approached social change from a network perspective?' What would it take for social entrepreneurs? What would it take for funders?"

The importance of this intuition in bridging siloed fields was shared by other funders who were starting to engage with New Profit around this idea. Stacy Parker-Fisher, Director of the Learning Differences Program at Oak Foundation, recalled: "We wanted to reframe the problem, to change the conversation from one about special education and learning disabilities to a conversation about how many kids are not being successful in school simply because of how they learn. If we had only focused on kids with learning disabilities, we would have been missing so many students." Tracy Sawicki, executive director of the Tower Foundation, remembers thinking along similar lines. "There weren't a lot of people working together in these two fields. There was a spirit among the funders that we might be able to figure this out on a larger scale if we came together."

THE HARD WORK OF AGREEING TO WORK TOGETHER

As the idea of a new network took form, the four co-funders worked to find productive ways of working together themselves. While funders at Oak, Poses and Tower had already been working together to arrive at a shared vision around the biggest needs and opportunities in the field, as Parker-Fisher from Oak Foundation remembers: "It took quite a while for the funders to realize that we didn't all need to do everything the same. After all, we represent different families. Then we started thinking of it as a Venn diagram, and looked for that space of crossover where we can support the field by leveraging what's unique to each funder's capabilities or vision."

The group agreed that establishing a collaboration built on co-creation was the goal. They also realized that this would be quite different from typical co-funding relationships. Shelly London, President of the Poses Family Foundation, was one of several voices who pushed for a set of formal agreements that would spell out exactly what co-creation would require, ensuring that the group was strategically aligned on how they were going to drive impact. "It was vital for us to have the difficult conversations up front. You have to talk about what it means to co-create, how you're going to work together, and how you're going to achieve the best results. Investing this time early on made things go more smoothly when the real work began."

Forging those agreements was difficult. The collaborative work hadn't yet begun; while each participant believed they understood how they could contribute to the collective effort, they hadn't yet articulated their views in detail, so it wasn't yet possible to know precisely where their visions differed. While it took substantial conversation, the agreements came out as London had hoped, giving the funders clear voting rights and laying out the principles that would guide their co-creative work. With the agreements signed, the funders collectively agreed to spend $30 million together over the coming five years in support of the network, including funds to support the social entrepreneurs, network facilitation and policy experts.

Not all networks involve such a detailed up-front negotiation, but this would represent a very significant investment for some of the funders involved. One particularly striking example: The Tower Foundation switched from giving many smaller grants, in the range of $125,000 each, to making a single multi-year investment of $10 million to help launch the Reimagine Learning network.

SEEING THE ROI ON TIME INVESTED

As is often the case with the founding participants of a network, the funders found this collaborative effort somewhat more time-consuming than they had expected, but also saw it to have undeniable power. Ashley Sandvi, Vice President of Strategy and Operations at The Poses Family Foundation, was one participant who found the time commitment to be even higher than she'd expected. "What might not be self-evident to many funders is how much time it really takes to incubate complex collaborations. Quite frankly, I knew it was going to be a big key for organizations to work together, but I didn't know it would take all of the partners rolling up their sleeves at every step of the way," she shares.

Oak Foundation also had to adjust its expectations. Oak initially saw the network as a well-staffed group that it could trust to re-invest its funds in a way that would move the field forward while allowing its staff to turn its attention to other initiatives, but the actual time investment required turned out to be an average of one full day a week of Parker-Fisher's time. She recalls having to assess the value of this investment with her team: "When we moved into this collaborative role, I didn't expect it to be a significant part of my work. As it emerged to become a significant time commitment, we did a step-back to ask what part of this work was critical. But participation has been a huge accelerant for our ability to form important connections and make good grants."

This investment of time also allowed the group to address its disagreements primarily through consensus-building rather than the formal voting process. Sehra, whose time investment has been close to three-quarters of her own time with the support of a partner, a half-time manager and a full-time analyst, concurs that the output was greatly improved as a result. "There's no question that it is incredibly time-consuming to have co-creators at the table, not to mention co-voters. But when we engage them, we engage them authentically. And I know the content we've landed on is far, far better than if we had done this alone."

WHAT THE COLLABORATIVE WORK HAS ACHIEVED

With the ground rules in place, the funders were ready to engage and the new network's collaborative work could begin. To help facilitate the process and craft the network's strategy, Monitor Institute joined to help the participants understand where they agreed and where they did not, allowing New Profit to step into more of a participant role. Through meetings, research, interviews, and a lot of deep listening to one another, the group gained a broader sense of the context in which the network operated and the future the network could collectively influence. This dialogue built mutual understanding of what the participants believed, whom they served, what problem they solved, and how they had made a difference, all of which enabled them to draft a shared vision for how to change the education system in ways that would produce far stronger results than continuing to work alone.

Fast-forward to today, and those who participate in Reimagine Learning are now united by three core beliefs:

- There is no such thing as an average learner. Sharing the same classroom does not mean sharing the same mind.
- The best learning environments equally value and cultivate cognitive, social, and emotional skills and understand that together they drive academic performance, well-being, and life success.
- It is critical that students have a say in their own learning journey: what they learn, how and where they learn it.

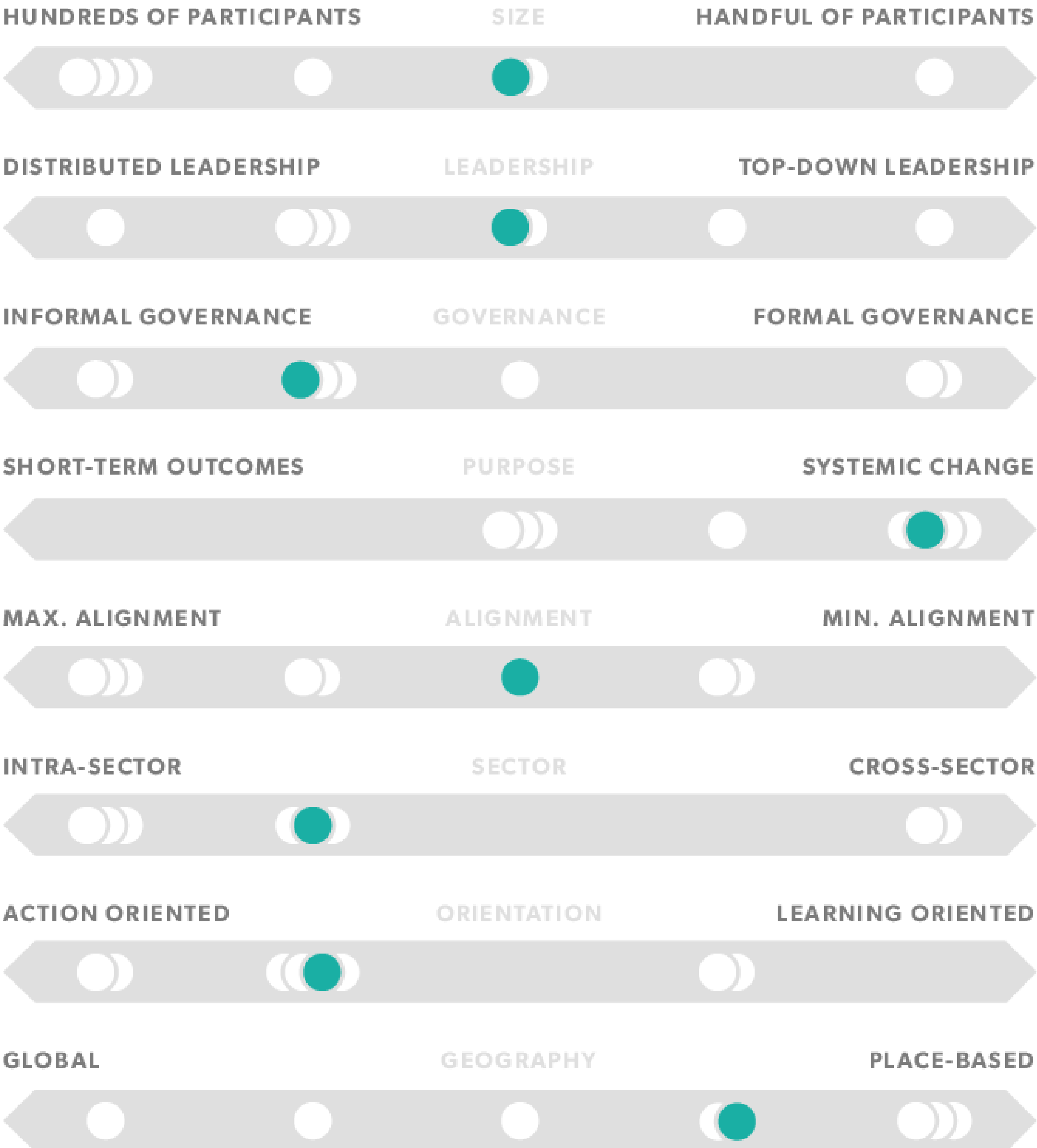
The network's participants include innovative entrepreneurial organizations like ANet, Eye to Eye, New Classrooms Innovation Partners, New Teacher Center, Peace First, and Turnaround for Children, and they are now starting to collaborate on projects that put their ideas into action:

- New Teacher Center and the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning are distilling research findings to equip teachers with instructional resources.
- Together, 15 non-profit organizations that care deeply about helping kids with learning and attention issues (many of which are members of Reimagine Learning) came together to launch Understood.org, a free and comprehensive resource for parents.
- City Year will open a new school, Compass Academy, which will build on its insights from working with at-risk students for over two decades.
- MIT Media Lab will expand its work to create technologies that support students who learn in different ways and help them take charge of their own education.
- With New Profit's policy arm, America Forward, the network is also focused on pushing for policy changes to remove barriers and create incentives that support new types of teaching and learning environments.

The network is now in a strong position to continue building its influence over the coming three years. The funders' co-creative partnership has stayed resilient to date, and when the five-year mark arrives in 2017 they will formally re-evaluate their roles.

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of Reimagine Learning's design (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: Monitor Institute interviews in fall 2014 with Shruti Sehra at New Profit, Tracy Sawicki at the Tower Family Foundation, Shelly London and Ashley Sandvi at the Poses Family Foundation, and Stacy Parker-Fisher at the Oak Foundation; personal knowledge of Monitor Institute network facilitators

Anna Muoio and Dana O'Donovan; and, 3 Steps to Collaboration That Tackle Society's Toughest Challenges (March 11th 2013).

RE-AMP: Networking climate advocates across eight states to cut carbon emissions

THE RE-AMP NETWORK

A significant challenge that a network can take on is shifting a fragmented group of organizations into a more coordinated effort that becomes greater than the sum of its parts. For over a decade, that has been the goal of the RE-AMP network's effort to coordinate the organizations fighting to cut carbon emissions across the Midwest. Since its founding in 2004, it has expanded to link the efforts of over 165 nonprofits and funders working across eight states, and can boast both significant policy wins and a strong infrastructure for driving the work forward.

Not only does RE-AMP have an impressive track record, but there is much to learn from how it evolved, from one modestly endowed foundation gathering a founding group of twelve nonprofits and seven funders into a powerful network for social impact. This story sketch explores how the sustained efforts of one funder successfully coordinated intent and aligned action across a diverse group of actors throughout an ecosystem, seeding a network that grew across a region.

SEEING COUNTERPRODUCTIVE DIVISIONS

The work that led to RE-AMP began when the Garfield Foundation staff began working with their trustees to re-evaluate their grantmaking around environmental sustainability. They were troubled to see two kinds of fragmentation that appeared counterproductive for the field. First, a host of nonprofits working toward the same overall goal but with solutions that didn't complement each other. And second, a host of funders working on the same issue but who supported very different approaches.

They realized that one way to address this fragmentation was to engage leaders in direct and thoughtful dialogue focused on both the nature of the problems they were each trying to address and to align perspectives on what solutions might be effective. The reason for this tactic was to help leaders see the bigger picture they operated in and how the actions of each contributed (or inhibited) a more informed collective goal. "We initially started with, how can we get our grantees to have deeper conversations? And work together in a way that is informed by systems thinking?" said Jennie

Curtis, Executive Director of the Garfield Foundation. The foundation decided to re-organize their grantmaking to test two big ideas: (a) that large-scale, highly complex problems are best approached through systems thinking and (b) that alignment between and among nonprofits and foundations is necessary for significant change to take place. With its ability to invest around $1 million in such an effort in addition to grant dollars, supporting a better dialogue looked like a more promising way to contribute than funding programs alone.

LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITY

The Garfield Foundation's grantmakers took a deliberate, and decidedly unique, approach to finding the right opportunity to deploy the kind of systems-thinking dialogue they had in mind. They were intent on finding both a region and a sustainability-related issue where current efforts were coming up short and there was hunger for new solutions.

Reforming electricity generation in the Midwest surfaced as the ideal opportunity because they realized that while there was some collaboration among the relevant actors, their efforts lacked a robust common agenda. Furthermore, other key components were in place: a committed regional funder cohort and the appetite for having a systems-thinking dialogue that would engage both the funders and advocates. As one member of the founding group recalls: "We were sick of losing on this issue. We thought that if we had a better game plan, then we might win more." The opportunity was also particularly attractive to Garfield since seven other funders had agreed to participate. Curtis recalls putting careful thought into the invitation: "We didn't ask them to come to the table committing money. We said: please share your wisdom, be open to the possibility that you might learn something that will inform your grant making, and if that's the case, be willing to allocate or align dollars. We weren't asking for much more than their time and their experience."

FINDING LEVERAGE IN THE SYSTEM

Having gathered seven funders and twelve nonprofits from six states as participants, the Garfield Foundation kicked off the dialogue in 2003, committing $2.5 million over the following five years. The first year consisted of several in-person, consultant-facilitated dialogues that helped the group take a step back and crystallize exactly what opportunities existed to construct a clean energy economy in the Midwest. By bringing together insight into the causes and effects at play throughout the relevant systems from a diverse set of participants, those conversations were able to produce a detailed map showing how to approach a single audacious question: How could you secure an 80% drop in greenhouse gas emissions from the electric sector by 2030 across these six Midwestern states?

While the time invested to generate this shared understanding might have been hard for some to understand initially, by the end of the first year the group had agreed on a set of four interventions that needed to happen in parallel to drive systemic impact: prevent the building of new coal-fired power plants, shut down existing plants, make renewable power a viable alternative and increase energy efficiency.

Careful to maintain its role as the supporter of the process rather than the driver of the outcome, Garfield asked the group what they wanted to do next. The scope of the work required was daunting, but for those twenty participants, the path forward was promising, and every one of them agreed that business as usual was not an option. As the discussion progressed, it became clear that simply working independently wouldn't be enough to make progress, particularly given the interdependent nature of the four interventions. The participants formed working groups around each of these four "leverage points," the funders committed an additional $2 million to kickstart the work to retire coal plants, and with that the RE-AMP network emerged.

DEFINING THE FUNDERS' ROLE AND LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

With the emergence of the network, the Garfield Foundation saw the opportunity to create a structure that would model a shift from the typical relationships between funders and grantees. Garfield asked the participants: how could strategy for the network incorporate insights from both advocates and funders, rather than the funders alone? Having funders engage as equal partners, Garfield believed, was far more likely to produce the systemic impact that both the funders and the advocates were aiming for. What the group arrived at was a system where foundations could join the Funder Working Group, run for four dedicated foundation elected seats on the thirteen-person steering committee, and also had the option to join one or more of the four working groups focused on the systemic leverage points.

With many ways to contribute, Garfield and the rest of the funders each had to decide how much engagement they could provide. Garfield allocated roughly a quarter of Curtis' time to the work, augmenting her involvement with the full-time efforts of a consultant, Rick Reed, who acted as a coordinator and network weaver, as well as additional short-term consultants to provide technical and process assistance. Curtis candidly acknowledges that it was difficult to anticipate what level of effort would be required, but now feels that this arrangement served the network well. Other funders made their own choices; four joined the steering committee, all joined the Funder Working Group, and some joined one or more of the four leverage-point working groups as well.

BUILDING THE COLLABORATIVE

RE-AMP's initial structure of coordinated working groups has proven resilient over the eleven years of work that followed. Early on, it established an online "commons" to aid information-sharing, a network-wide coordinated messaging strategy and media outreach center, a steering committee to guide vision and strategy, and it helped members strategically align efforts to successfully defeat the construction of many new coal plants. (For more details on how the network was built, see the Monitor Institute case study from 2010, and Madeleine Taylor's recent description of RE-AMP's financial growth.)

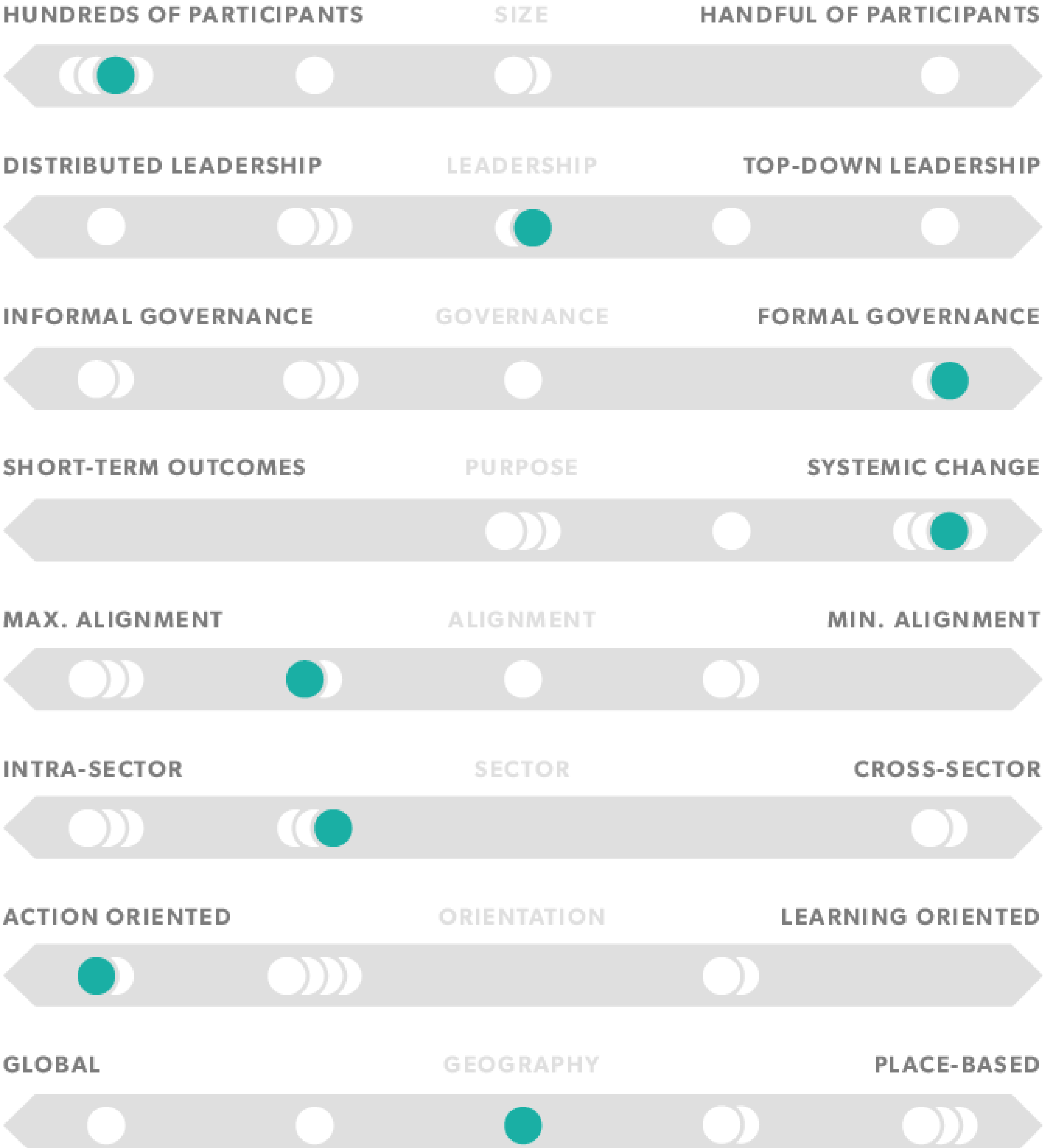
Today the network is now comprised of over 165 participating organizations. Funders continue to hold a minority of seats on the steering committee, each participates in the Funder Working Group, and some contribute to a pooled fund (allocated by the members of the steering committee and contributing funders) that reached $2.5 million in 2014. While each working group is still led by a RE-AMP member who has been elected by peers, those leaders now have part-time support based in their organizations. Backbone support is also provided by four full-time staff who are housed together in a newly centralized office (a CEO, network coordinator, community manager, knowledge manager, and administrative assistant) as well as two Organizing Hub co-directors at member organizations and a half-time youth caucus coordinator. With this structure, RE-AMP has developed a hybrid decentralized and centralized staffing which has successfully spread philanthropic dollars across the region.

The network's participants can point to a wide range of recent accomplishments: their work has contributed to the closing of many more highly-polluting coal plants, passing new mandates for energy disclosure in the metro areas of Chicago and Minneapolis, and contributing regional data on carbon pollution reduction potential to the Environmental Protection Agency as it developed its ambitious new greenhouse gas regulations.

It is now clear that the funders' engagement as equals with other participants has been a crucial enabler of the network's ability to strategically align action against these goals. "RE-AMP is breaking down the stereotypical division of grantees asking for money and funders deciding what makes sense," said Keith Reopelle, senior policy director at Clean Wisconsin. "That makes it easier for foundations because they have more information, and it has made it easier for the environmental community to know what is going to be funded." When it comes to fighting climate change in the Midwest, the network provides funders and nonprofits alike with clear options for both contributing to the work and leading it.

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of RE-AMP's design (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: Transformer: How to Build a Network to Change a System (2010), Monitor Institute interview with Jennie Curtis (2014), the RE-AMP website (2014), and Investing in Networks Grows Impact (2015).

Pioneers in Justice: Enabling social justice leaders to transform their organizations

THE LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION'S PIONEERS IN JUSTICE NETWORK

Engaging with a network is an entrepreneurial project, and the formation of the Pioneers in Justice network shows how. Levi Strauss Foundation set its sights on "moving the dial" through a more systemic approach to its social justice grantmaking. With this aspiration in mind, it encountered a nascent peer-learning network of social justice leaders who needed just the kind of support that the foundation was positioned to provide. This story sketch recounts how the foundation was able to make good on that combination of intention and timing, finding a role to play in providing both financial and backbone support that enabled these leaders to guide their organizations in powerful new directions.

SPOTTING A DESIRE FOR CONNECTION

A key skill in engaging with networks is the practice of tracking shifts in your field and the ability to spot the early signals of an opportunity for forming new connections. The seeds of the Pioneers in Justice (PIJ) were sown by one funder who was alert in exactly that way and recognized an important shift in the landscape of social justice work in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Bay Area is home to many leading social justice nonprofits that have been around for decades, and in the late 2000s five of these legacy organizations were undergoing a significant transition. While their traditional ways of operating were still effective, the digital age had ushered in new tools and approaches that many had not yet fully embraced—and weren't sure how to embrace. Recognizing that they needed to update their methods, the boards of these nonprofits had hired new executive directors—all of them "Generation Xers"—whom they hoped could lead their organizations into the twenty-first century.

These five leaders came from a range of personal and professional backgrounds, with different ethnicities and leadership styles. But they also had a lot in common: all of them wanted to help their nonprofits adapt to a rapidly changing world; they were devoted to making a difference; and they all had a similar mandate. They were charged with evaluating the state of their field, formulating a vision for their organization's future, and then executing on it—in short, helping to transform the nonprofits they had inherited.

Tim Silard, president of the San Francisco-based Rosenberg Foundation and a prominent figure in Bay Area social justice, had noticed the wave of new hiring and quickly recognized it as a critical inflection point for local advocacy groups—a "changing of the guard." So he invited these five new leaders to lunch to get to know them better.

"The idea was not to have any formal agenda, but to create a sounding board, a place where they could kick ideas around with their peers," Silard says. At that first lunch, the group talked about relationship building and staff and board issues. At the end, Silard asked if they wanted to continue meeting: he offered to be present, or just foot the bill for lunch. Either way, he sensed that it was important for these young leaders facing daunting challenges to have the time and space to talk together and learn from one another.

BROADENING THE LENS TO AIM FOR SYSTEMIC IMPACT

Many skilled program officers have developed Silard's matchmaker instincts, but often their foundation's structure and goals aren't oriented towards supporting the next steps required to take a nascent network forward. But in this case, at the same time Silard was organizing the lunches, a shift in thinking was underway at the Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF). For decades, the foundation had operated like many traditional grantmakers, with most of its impact coming from grants given to nonprofits. But many of the foundation's leaders were looking at the nature of today's social challenges and wanted to test new approaches that might amplify LSF's impact and reach. "We didn't want to just give money," says Bob Haas, president of LSF since 1990 and the great-great-grandnephew of Levi Strauss. "We wanted to do something that would move the dial."

The foundation decided to search for new ways to drive systemic change, starting with the grantmaking in its own hometown. The goal it set was to find a way to use all the tools at its disposal to help local social justice organizations advance and accelerate their work. It described its new approach in a whitepaper in the following terms: "Social justice philanthropy encourages a foundation to use all the leadership tools at its disposal—that is, acting as convener, organizer, relationship broker, constituency builder, listener, policy promoter, and knowledge disseminator. It creates a platform for a more honest exchange between foundations and practitioners and aligns with what many consider 'high-touch' and 'strategic' grantmaking."

LSF saw this definition of 'social justice philanthropy' as being at the vanguard of philanthropy: a greater focus on root causes, systems-level change, community empowerment, boundary crossing, and the use of multiple tools and tactics. The foundation's leaders hoped that this concept would not only guide their own success but also mark a path for other grantmakers. "Our founder was a pioneer, and we like to think of ourselves as pioneers at the foundation," says Bob Haas. "We're willing to step out and take risks on behalf of what we believe is the right thing to do."

DISCOVERING THE NEED FOR A NETWORK

It can be quite challenging for a foundation to find an intervention that lives up to such ambitious aspirations, since the opportunities to achieve systems-level change aren't always available (or at least visible) when program officers go out on the hunt. But LSF lucked into a perfect opportunity with the group that Silard had begun to foster. It was in the fall of 2009 that Merle Lawrence, senior manager at LSF, and CJ Callen, a consultant to LSF, were busy interviewing "key informants" in the social justice sector, gathering information about how the foundation might retool its strategy to effect greater change in the field. Among the leaders they interviewed were former LSF grantee Lateefah Simon and the new executive director of the ACLU of Northern California, Abdi Soltani, who told them of the lunches that Silard had recently started.

Lawrence and Callen interviewed the pair in September, floating the nascent idea of an LSF-funded program that would convene a network of young social justice leaders and help build their capabilities to use social media and collaborative action to advance their missions and movements. Soltani's reaction? "I already have a network, a 'crew' of people under 40: Lateefah, Titi, Vin, Arcelia, and me," he told them. Astutely, Lawrence sensed an opportunity and asked what this cohort needed to amplify its work. Over the course of that initial conversation, the main themes of a new program emerged—one that would both match the needs of these new executive directors and engage LSF in cutting-edge work.

The young leaders' wish list resembled that of many legacy nonprofits across the country. They requested "time and space" to figure out how they wanted to lead and how they might collaborate with one another. They also wanted to find ways to empower their constituents to speak for themselves while broadening and diversifying their aging membership base. Lastly, these leaders wanted to address what Simon called the "crisis of translating social justice work" into social media in order to influence public perception.

In November 2009, after several interim committee meetings and lots of iteration on the idea, Lawrence and LSF executive director Daniel Lee presented their initial vision to the full LSF board. They recommended that the foundation support a group of young leaders looking to shape the next wave of social justice work for bedrock civil rights organizations. "We wanted to help equip them and their organizations with the technical skills to use social media to full effect," says Jennifer Haas, LSF trustee. "We also wanted to help them harness the power of collaboration and their people-to-people networks as a way to maximize their impact."

While no one was clear yet exactly what the program would look like, which specific individuals should be in it, or how it might evolve as the leaders and LSF learned along the way, the LSF board recognized the plan as a significant opportunity for the foundation to shift into deeper grantee engagement. And funding a broad platform that focused on leadership development and coalition building was just the sort of high-risk, high-reward strategy that the LSF board had in mind. (Crucially, the LSF board wasn't concerned about building on work that Silard had started. The board members could see that there was still ample opportunity for them to take it further.)

Between the spring and fall of 2010, LSF refined its definition of who should be in the program, deciding to focus exclusively on San Francisco-based organizations and ultimately on the leaders who were already part of the nascent cohort that Tim Silard had convened. LSF senior manager Merle Lawrence, who retired in 2013, attended one of Silard's lunches and laid out the program to four of the five young executive directors to gauge their reaction and gather their input. The program aimed to spark change on several different levels, by strengthening their leadership, helping their organizations transform, and giving them the time and space—and the funding—to experiment with new ways of spreading their reach and building social movements.

Recognizing that this kind of change would take time and commitment, the board initially approved the initiative to run for three years and agreed that the LSF staff should be highly involved and hands-on. In fact, LSF explicitly did not want to run the program like a traditional grantmaker. Instead, it wanted the relationship between itself and the program's grantees to be a partnership. LSF would not dictate the terms and conditions, but rather commit to working with the cohort to structure the emergent initiative as it evolved.

In November 2010, the LSF board met the five Pioneers in Justice for the first time, learning more about their backgrounds, their stories, and their passion for driving change in their organizations and in the world. Based on what they heard, the board unanimously approved to extend the initiative to five years in order to give the cohort more time to bring about the kinds of transformation they wanted.

PROVIDING A CONTAINER AND PLAYING THE "RIGHT" FUNDER ROLE

What allowed LSF to take full advantage of this opportunity was the way it chose to engage, carving out a very different role for itself with the Pioneers than it typically played with grantees. It was clear to LSF from the beginning that this was not the kind of grantmaking that would have a tangible list of deliverables with fixed timelines. Nor would PIJ easily lend itself to traditional impact assessment. Rather, it would be emergent and filled with experimentation.

From the start, LSF envisioned the program as one that would be co-created with the Pioneers, starting from a place of empathy and inquiry. "This work is animated by really basic questions: What do you all need? What would you like to try?" explains Linda Wood, senior director at the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and an advisor to the LSF staff as they developed the PIJ network. She also notes how distinct this approach is for most funders: "It takes a really humble funder to help leaders and their organizations learn what they need to learn through experiments and through one another."

Whenever the Pioneers and LSF describe the unpredictable journey of this work, they regularly use the words "messy" and "risky." In August 2010, when PIJ officially kicked off, each of the five organizations and leaders were at different points in their journey toward social justice 2.0. They knew that some would get further than others, faster, and failures could and would occur. But throughout the process, the Pioneers have been honest about their challenges and frustrations and embraced their setbacks, allowing all of them to learn valuable lessons as a result.

Despite the innovative and experimental nature of PIJ as a startup network, LSF knew it had to create some sort of handrails or "container" for the work to happen. They deliberately designed the program around several building blocks, without overly prescribing how each one would evolve:

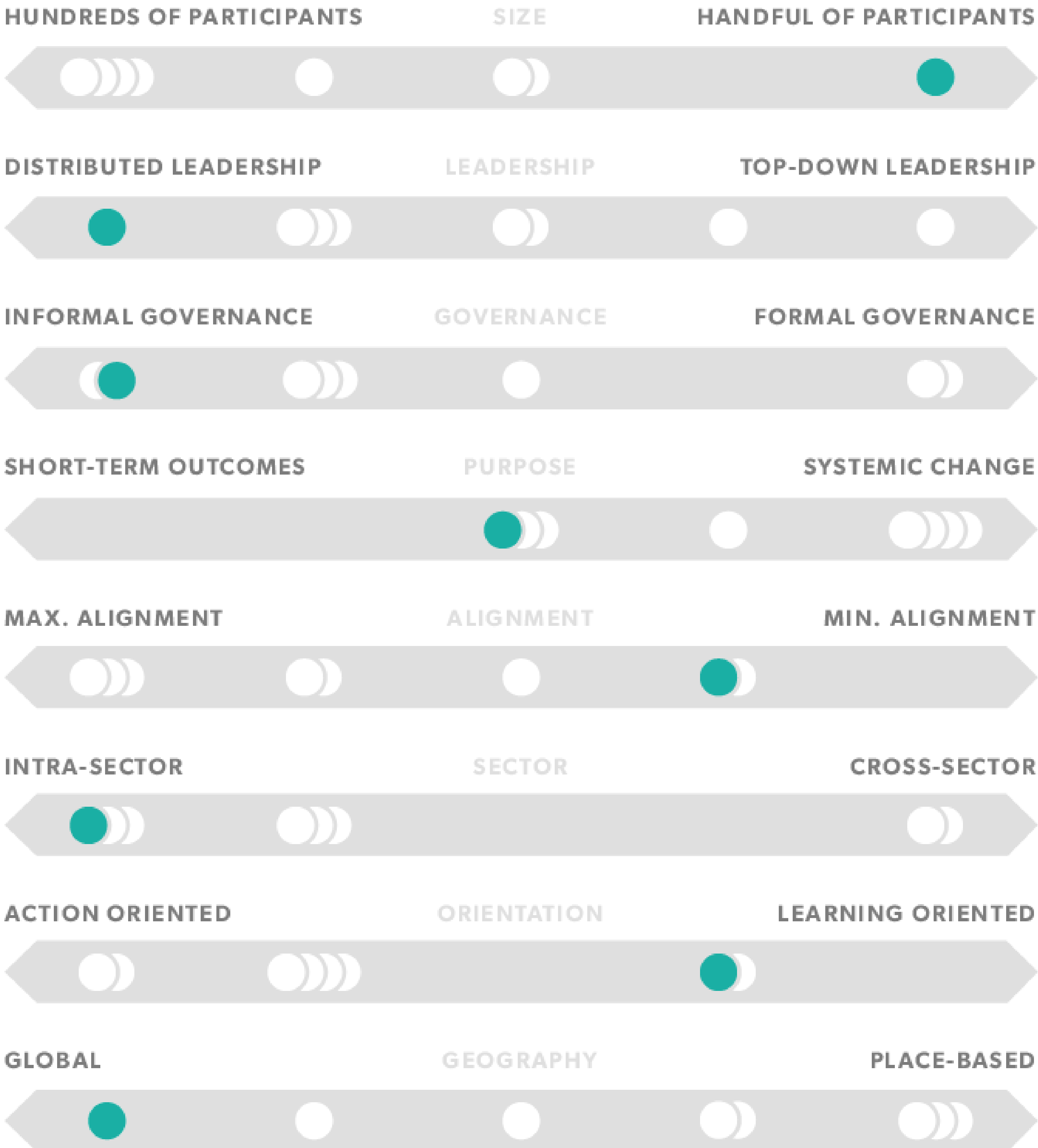
- Bimonthly, half-day forums dedicated to peer-to-peer learning, case studies, and training. These were opportunities for the Pioneers to share their experiences, learn together, and support one another. LSF was both the organizer and a participant in these sessions, often bringing in leading experts on networks, social media, and more to help the Pioneers move from theory to action.
- Capacity building grants to help the Pioneers create the requisite technology infrastructure, strategies, and communications skills needed to integrate social media more deeply into their organizations. LSF's technical partner, ZeroDivide, provided social media training for both the Pioneers and their staff, helping them build a sustainable, integrated social media practice within their organizations.
- Collaboration grants to support project-based work and "experimental" collaborations that reached across sector, field, issue, and constituency, using networks of both trusted and "unlikely" allies to drive change.

In the first two and a half years of the five-year program, LSF invested close to $2.9 million in 44 grants, including $1.72 million for capacity building and $580,000 for supporting three collaborative projects. LSF is a modestly resourced foundation, with an annual budget ranging from $7 million to $8 million; support for PIJ represented 18 percent of its giving and 80 percent of Lawrence's time, in addition to the contributions of two other staffers.

The program was a significant investment for the foundation, but its staff and leadership understood what was required to match the complexity and ambitions of the program. As Lee reflects, "The investment we've made in this program has been substantial—both in terms of financial support and the leveraging of our other resources, such as space, staff time, and partnerships. But our learning has been equally significant. We have learned a tremendous amount about how to invest in and support leadership networks as a tool for transformative social change. This kind of work is messy. It involves embracing both complexity and emergence, and it doesn't lend itself to linear logic models, anticipated outcomes, or overly narrow metrics. But when it works —as we believe this program is beginning to demonstrate—it holds enormous potential for increasing our social impact on multiple levels of the larger systems we seek to transform."

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of the Pioneers in Justice network's design (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



This story sketch is constructed from excerpts of Pioneers in Justice: Building Networks and Movements for Social Change by Heather McLeod Grant, the comprehensive case study published by Levi Strauss Foundation in 2014.

Energy Action Network: Finding the path to renewable energy in Vermont

THE ENERGY ACTION NETWORK OF VERMONT

In the fall of 2011, the State of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan featured a bold new goal: moving the state to 90% reliance on renewable energy by 2050. To many Americans scanning the headlines that announcement may have sounded like a logical extension of the state's reputation for progressive politics; but the advocates involved in securing the victory knew that it was not only hard-won, but reflected a radical transformation of the dialogue on energy policy at the state level. This story sketch details how that transformation was enabled a new social impact network, the Energy Action Network of Vermont, catalyzed and developed through three years of hands-on engagement by a small local family foundation.

SEEING FRAGMENTATION

The work began in 2009 when the issue of fragmentation had become deeply frustrating to Jennifer Berman and her trustees. Berman was Executive Director of the Maverick Lloyd Foundation, a family foundation in Vermont that gave just under $300,000 in grants each year across a variety of program areas that included energy and the environment. She and her trustees had been noticing a consistent trend in the grant applications they received from nonprofits working on climate and energy issues: in spite of significant overlap in their missions, there was virtually no coordination.

"We were frustrated by the range of groups who were proposing similar kinds of work without a lot of collaboration," Berman said in an interview with Monitor Institute. "We wanted to figure how to have a greater impact, even without having a lot of money, so we started looking for ways to support more collaboration and alignment within the field. We were keenly aware of the many previous processes around climate and energy that had happened in Vermont, but we also saw that they had all been oriented towards putting out a report. Nothing had brought together a strategically-chosen group of folks to think about where the state needed to go, mapped out how to get there, and created the capacity for that group to do work over time."

Berman and her trustees went hunting for models of collaboration that could find consensus amidst such diverse opinions, and discovered RE-AMP, a network of over 160 organizations across nine Midwestern states that was also working on state-level policy reform to fight climate change. RE-AMP had formed out of a very intentional use of systems thinking to build shared understanding within a fractious group and find the most effective paths forward, and then had created a highly decentralized structure for coordinating collaboration against those goals. The more that Berman and her trustees learned about the RE-AMP approach, the more convinced they were that it might work in Vermont.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

Berman and her trustees initially centered on an ambitious goal: switching the state of Vermont to 100% reliance on renewable energy by 2030. She had developed a firm conviction that starting with systems thinking was the right way to cut in on a problem of this scale, not only to find the best solutions but also to create more productive relationships among the many actors involved. “Systems are made up of people who have beliefs about what is possible and until we change those beliefs, we can’t change systems,” she reflected. “We needed a process that would help people understand why people with different perspectives were making the choices they were.”

Working with a team from Growing Edge Partners and *Ecosynomics* author Jim Ritchie-Dunham, her team began an extensive set of interviews with 40 of the key actors involved in the production, distribution, and regulation of energy in Vermont. Each conversation began with a simple but powerful question: What stood in the way of the state achieving 100% reliance on renewables? The interviews surfaced each person’s detailed perspective on the complex web of causes and effects that defined the state’s energy system. Out of each interview, they created a map of the system as that person saw it.

These interviews showed that the issue of fragmentation extended far beyond the nonprofits who were applying to the Maverick Lloyd Foundation: every single person had a different interpretation of the nature of the problem and what a solution could look like. But there was also reason for hope: many of the interviewees said they would be excited to find a way to collaborate. Combined with an extensive review of previous energy studies, these interviews also enabled Berman and her team to piece together the first-ever map of the state’s energy system that integrated perspectives from all of its key actors.

BUILDING ALIGNMENT

Berman’s next task was to see whether there was potential for this fractious group to work together. She invited all of the interviewees to a convening where they were asked to share their stories, compare their views to that of the integrated map, and look for ways that the system could be shifted to achieve such an ambitious goal.

It took several days of discussion, but in spite of including representatives from manufacturers, utilities, fuel oil dealers, government agencies, environmental and energy advocates, and large corporations, the group was able to find clear consensus on two points. First, full reliance on renewables was too ambitious but 80% by 2030 was both achievable and agreeable for everyone involved. Second, the way to get there was to put simultaneous pressure on four “leverage points” that represented the greatest opportunities for change: public engagement, regulatory reform, technological innovation, and capital mobilization.

Building that common understanding was helped a great deal by establishing an atmosphere of trust and respect. The quality of the integrated map also helped. As one participant said, “I’ve been doing this work for twenty years, and I’ve never been able to articulate what I do and care about in such a succinct and articulate way.” In that environment, the diversity in the room became an asset. Berman recalled one discussion of whether it was possible to reach the goal: “The woman who ran the electric utility said, ‘Well yes, it’s totally possible in electricity. And here’s how.’ She proceeded to run through the scenario, and then said, ‘But I really can’t understand how we could get there in the heating sector.’ And the heating person said, ‘Well it’s more difficult but here’s the how we could do it, some of the tradeoffs and some other things we have to think about. But I can’t see how we can do it in the transportation sector.’ And it went on like that around the table. It was an incredible moment.”

Arriving at this point of realization kicked the group into gear: working groups formed around each of the leverage points, other experts were recruited to join the effort, and in 2010 the Energy Action Network of Vermont launched with over 70 leaders involved.

CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM

Berman knew from the stories she had heard about RE-AMP and other networks that the greatest challenge lay not in sparking the energy for collaboration but in sustaining it. She and her team made an intentional choice about their role: as they had done in the opening convening, they would focus their energy on maintaining a productive dialogue and allow the group to govern itself as much as possible.

Looking back, Jim Ritchie-Dunham felt that this played a valuable role in sustaining the group’s momentum through the issues that later emerged around exercising control, giving credit, and measuring impact. “Many of the participants in the stakeholder group told us that it was the sincerity of the invitation that had brought them to the process, and the quality of leadership throughout a series of gatherings that kept them engaged and committed," he wrote in *Ecosynomics*. "It was significant that the leadership team was open to redefinition of the goal. That established the principle of honoring all perspectives and set the stage for the emergence of strong alignment."

The result of this careful use of influence was a continued growth of new relationships across what had previously been battle lines. Berman recalls one moment between a private sector leader and an environmental advocate. "These two traditionally had been at odds at the state house. They didn't agree on anything," she said. "But in one of our meetings, [the private sector leader] stood up and directly quoted the advocate. You could see a different kind of conversation happening: people could disagree yet still see how much they could agree on."

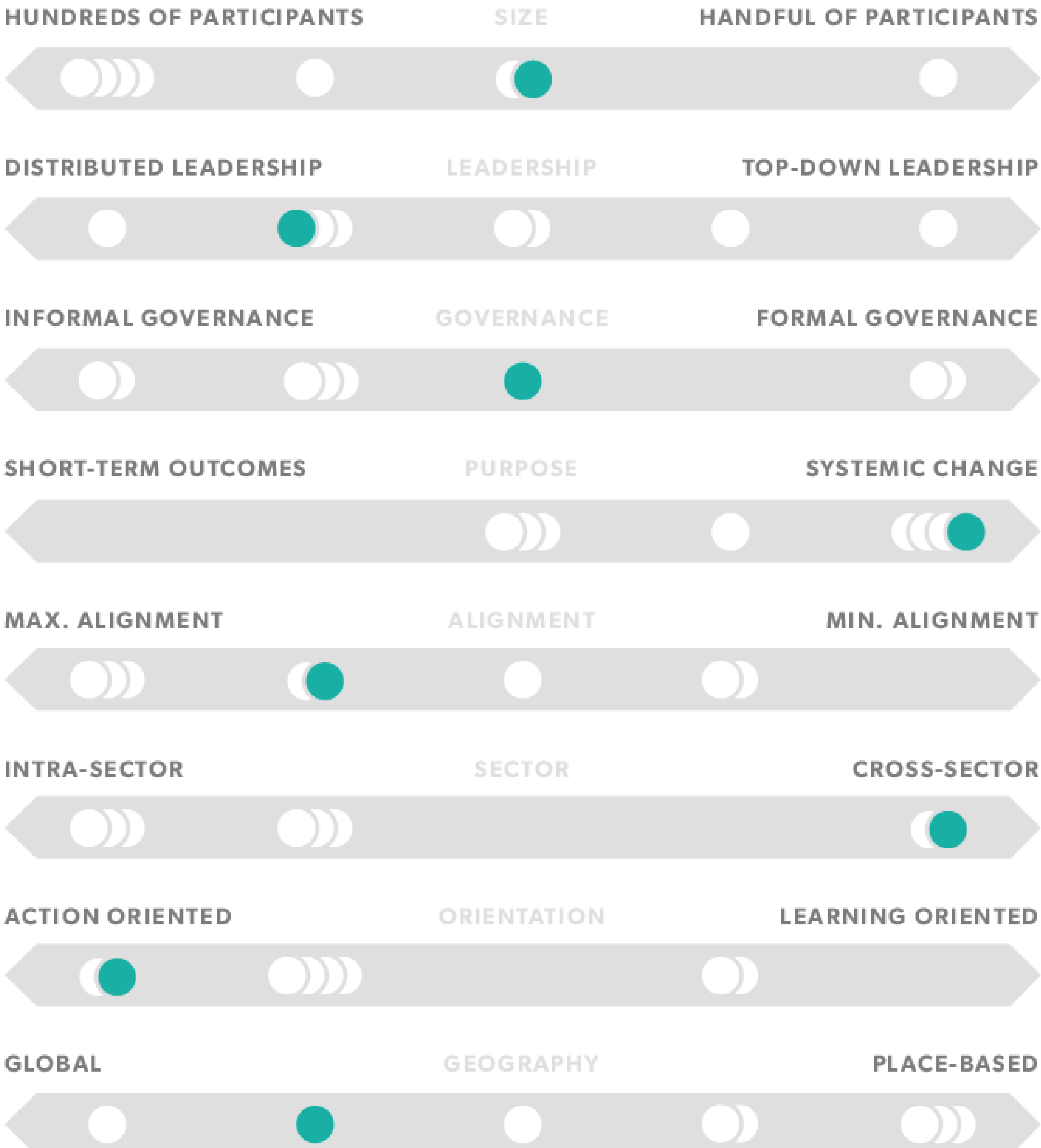
It still took some convincing to attract other funders. Prior to the network launch, many were unsure why yet another group process was going to succeed where earlier efforts had failed. "It was hard to explain to people why they should invest in what was perceived as 'yet another process' when we couldn't tell them for certain what the outcome was going to be," Berman reflected. "Some of the funders were skeptical. They didn't know if this was going to be different than any of the other prior efforts and weren't sure it was worth the risk of advocating to their boards or EDs to get involved." But as the network took form and began to show results, a number of other foundations became interested. Today it boasts the support of not only Maverick Lloyd Foundation but also Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Canaday Family Charitable Trust, John Merck Fund, Sustainable Futures Fund, and High Meadows Fund.

Out of all this careful, sustained engagement came the major policy win in 2011. When the State of Vermont revised its energy plan for the first time in over a decade, the plan centered on a slightly revised version of EAN's goal (90% by 2050), and the network's four "leverage points" were described as key areas of focus. EAN has now aligned its goal with the state's goal and to get there, the network continues its work through a backbone structure that provides coordination, funding support, meeting facilitation, and shared metrics.

Berman looks at the network's work with pride. "For me, this is the best of philanthropy," she said. "It's not about power, it's not about individual ego, it's not about proving that one particular theory of change is the right one. It's about bringing people together to imagine what's possible, change hearts and minds, and transform systems, so that we can create a different future. The fact that we were able to do that in Vermont is very gratifying."

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of Energy Action Network's design (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: A Monitor Institute interview with Jennifer Berman (fall 2014), an unpublished draft case study of the Energy Action Network of Vermont provided by Jennifer Berman (fall 2014), Case Study of the Energy Action Network of Vermont *by Beth Tener (January 2014), the website and 2012 annual report for the Energy Action Network of Vermont, and the book* Ecosynomics *by Jim Ritchie-Dunham (April 2014).*

The Rockefeller Foundation: Containing pandemics by sharing information

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION'S DISEASE SURVEILLANCE NETWORKS INITIATIVE

When grantmakers realize how collaboration can address a social challenge in one location, they can find themselves compelled to explore how the network model can be replicated in other areas. That is what happened when grantmakers at The Rockefeller Foundation (the "Foundation") began investigating the problem of pandemics in the late 1990s, concerned that the rise in globalization was increasing the threat of pandemics to the world's poorest populations. How you stop the spread of pandemics is a confounding problem, especially for national governments. Diseases have no respect for political boundaries, national treaties or organizational silos, hitching rides through the legal (and illegal) traffic of people, livestock, and wildlife that is constantly moving across borders. This story sketch illustrates how the Foundation responded by supporting the formation of one of the world's first regional disease surveillance networks and then using what they learned to launch and support similar networks in other regions around the world.

HEARING CONCERNS AND STARTING A DIALOGUE

The first step in finding opportunities to engage with a network is to track and understand the challenges in the system you are hoping to improve. Grantmakers at The Rockefeller Foundation recognized a potential to act when health officials in a number of Southeast Asian nations separately shared their deep concern about the risk of a pandemic emerging in a neighboring country that wouldn't be visible until it had already spread across the border. Early detection is crucial to meeting the threat of a new disease while it remains in an area that is small enough that it can still be contained. Representatives from the health ministries from these nations saw the need to build not only national capacity for disease detection, but also a means for lateral information-sharing across countries, yet there was little support in place for either one.

This idea took form in February of 1999 when the Foundation invited representatives from the ministries of health of the six Mekong Basin countries to a consultative meeting with the World Health Organization: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and the southern province of China. The topic: what mechanisms could strengthen disease surveillance across the sub-region?

The group decided to take action in three areas: improving disease outbreak investigation and response, developing human capacity in field epidemiology, and establishing the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Network.

BUILDING TRUST AND SPARKING COLLABORATION

The key question for the grantmakers at this early stage of the network was what type of relationships and activities within the group would best accomplish its goal. They realized that the most important missing piece was trust, and that while trust can't be created, it can be given a chance to grow. Charlanne Burke, now a Senior Program Associate at The Rockefeller Foundation, was part of the team involved in the formation of the network and remembers how important it was that this trust was formed through personal ties at the staff level rather than by working through formal Ministerial channels. "They certainly weren't working in secret, but it was not a formal government network," she recalls. "That gave them the latitude to work in the cracks and share information without going through formal protocols. The result was to add a new flexibility and informality into the system."

Between helping build each nation's disease surveillance capacity and fostering the formation of the new network, the Foundation's program officers played a fairly hands-on role in the beginning. "There was a lot of one-on-one with the principle investigators, lots of advising, and lots of troubleshooting," Burke reflects.

A principal goal of this hands-on approach was to make use of the non-governmental nature of the network to forge enough personal trust among the participants that they felt comfortable sharing important information. That trust was forged through face-to-face activities, such as tabletop simulation exercises and joint investigations undertaken together by network members. This combination of network-weaving and capacity-building produced a collaboration strong enough that the six countries were able to agree on common reporting standards and integrate the disease-related work of many of their local, regional, and national health officials. This smarter coordination and deeper connection enabled joint investigation and response to a dengue fever outbreak between Laos and Thailand in 2005, a typhoid and malaria outbreak between Laos and Vietnam in 2006, and an avian flu outbreak between Laos and Thailand in 2007.

SPREADING THE MODEL AND STEPPING BACK

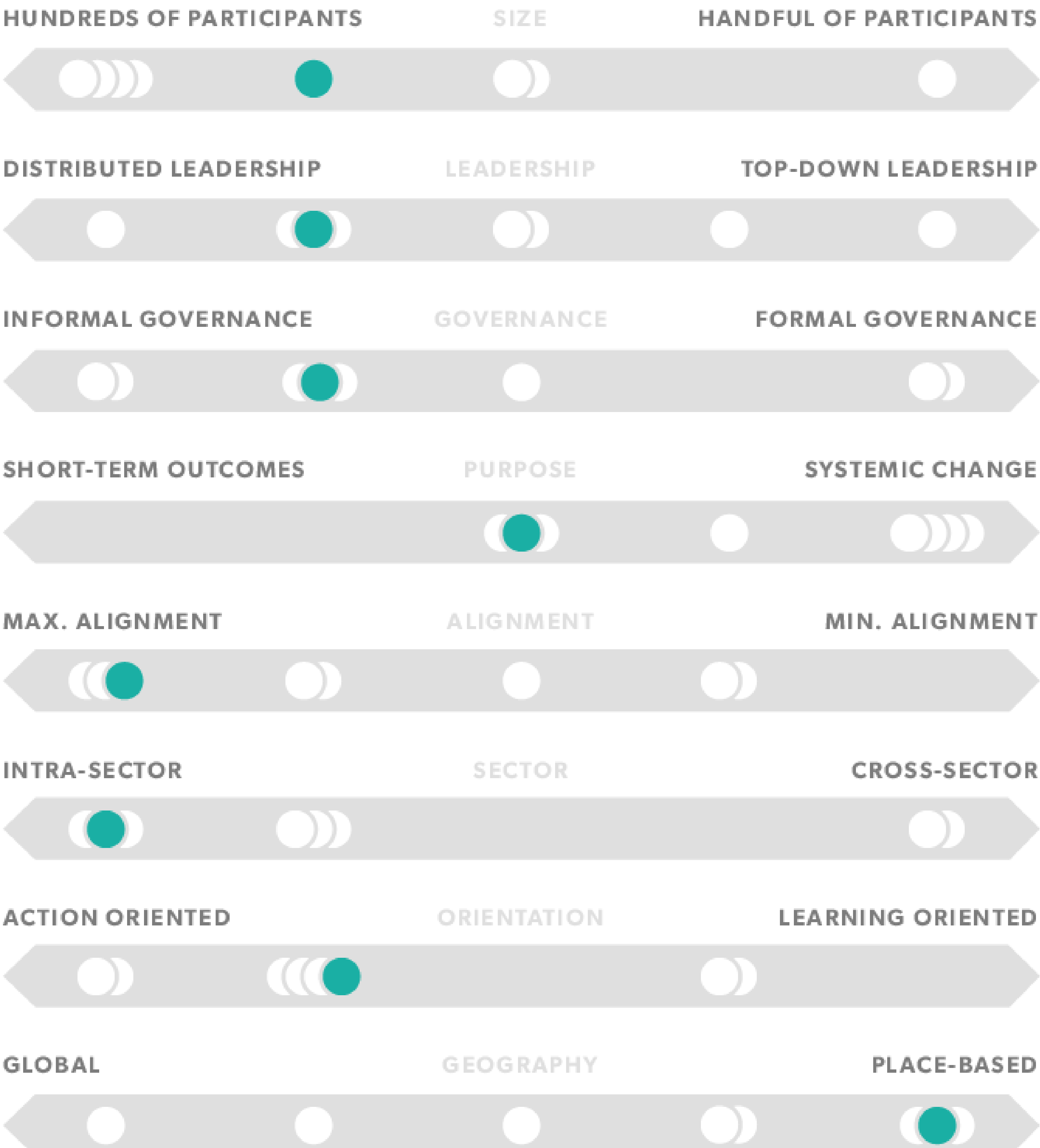
When a network is successful, it can inspire other groups to want to collaborate in similar ways, giving grantmakers an opportunity to support the replication of an emerging new model. As the Mekong Basin network began to show promise, it spurred both The Rockefeller Foundation and others to build similarly-structured networks in other regions that had a high risk of producing new pandemics. In the early 2000s the Foundation's grantmakers began collaborating with the World Health Organization and East African health officials to support the creation of the East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network. In 2008, the UK government, the Wellcome Trust, and African human and animal health experts established a similar model in southern Africa which became the Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance. Similar networks emerged in Southeastern Europe and the Middle East.

When many networks emerge around the same issue, a funder's field-level view can be useful in exploring whether a network of networks would be valuable. As officers at the Nuclear Threat Initiative saw the spread of these regional networks, they began to wonder if a network of networks could allow even greater information exchange and peer learning between regions. The Foundation organized a convening at its Bellagio center to pose the question of whether that level of connectivity would be valuable. As a result of that dialogue four funders came together – The Peter G. Peterson Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Skoll Global Threats Fund and the Nuclear Threat Initiative – to form a new peer learning network in 2009. That network, Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance (CORDS), now uses just two permanent staff and three consultants to facilitate communication and information exchange among six regional networks.

Exiting network funding is rarely easy, but after making over $20 million of philanthropic investments in disease surveillance over 14 years, the Foundation concluded its Disease Surveillance Networks initiative in 2012. To ease the transition, its grantmakers gave the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Network guidance on fundraising and a final grant to re-form the informal network into a formal entity that could seek its own funding, the MBDS Foundation. But its ties to the work are far from cut. Grantmakers, including Burke and her colleagues in Bangkok and Nairobi, continue to serve on regional networks' boards and provide advice. And as of the time of this writing, the Foundation continues to support CORDS, such as through its recent funding to support CORDS members in sharing expertise with their West African counterparts in responding to the recent devastation caused by Ebola and developing a West African Disease Surveillance Network. In this way, the Foundation is continuing to build connectivity within the new infrastructure of regional disease surveillance that it seeded over the past two decades.

BY COMPARISON: THE NETWORK'S DESIGN

In the section *What network design would be most useful?* we introduce a simple framework for comparing the 'design' of a network — eight basic variables that define its shape and size. See below for our estimation of the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Network's design (in teal) versus that of the other networks we profile (in white):



Sources: The Rockefeller Foundation Initiative: Disease Surveillance Networks (2013); an interview with Charlanne Burke, Senior Program Associate at The Rockefeller Foundation (fall 2014); and, the websites of the MBDS Foundation, CORDS, and the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

About this guide

About This Guide

ENGAGE: How Funders Can Support and Leverage Networks for Social Impact was developed by The Rockefeller Foundation and Monitor Institute to accelerate the spread of social impact networks. It exists to guide any foundation grantmaker who is considering whether to engage with a network and what that engagement might involve. (See this page for more on how to use this guide and what it contains.)

HOW THIS GUIDE WAS CREATED

This guide was written by **Anna Muoio**, **Noah Rimland Flower** and **Kaitlin Terry** at Monitor Institute, a part of Deloitte Consulting LLC, with input from **Faizal Karmali** and his colleagues at The Rockefeller Foundation. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions.

We created this guide by speaking with 44 leaders and practitioners in the field (listed below) who are using networks to create change; digging into the deep pool of writing on the topic; and mining the significant experience in working with networks that is resident in both Monitor Institute and The Rockefeller Foundation. The result is an aggregation and synthesis of some of the leading thinking in both the theory and practice of engaging with networks as a grantmaker.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the interviewees and contributors who volunteered their time and thoughtful reflection to enrich these ideas and provide living examples of the practices we describe. Our appreciation also goes to our colleagues Dana O'Donovan, Tony Siesfeld, Brian Hathaway, Megan Schumann, and the many others at Deloitte whose efforts helped usher this material from concept through to fruition.

The ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

For more than 100 years, **The Rockefeller Foundation's** mission has been to promote the well-being of humanity throughout the world. Today, The Rockefeller Foundation pursues this mission through dual goals: advancing inclusive economies that expand opportunities for more broadly shared prosperity, and building resilience by helping people, communities and institutions prepare for, withstand, and emerge stronger from acute shocks and chronic stresses. To achieve these goals, The Rockefeller Foundation works at the intersection of four focus areas – advance health, revalue ecosystems, secure livelihoods, and transform cities – to address the root causes of emerging challenges and create systemic change. Together with partners and grantees, The Rockefeller Foundation strives to catalyze and scale transformative innovations, create unlikely partnerships that span sectors, and take risks others cannot – or will not.

MONITOR INSTITUTE

Monitor Institute is a social change consultancy that works with innovative leaders to surface and spread best practices in public problem solving and to pioneer *next practices* — breakthrough approaches for addressing social and environmental challenges. Monitor Institute marries a deep grounding in strategy, networks, social innovation, and human systems with the fundamentals of professional advisory services — effective project management, skilled facilitation and well-timed intervention. As a for-profit/for-benefit hybrid, Monitor Institute pursues social impact while operating as a fully-integrated part of the Social Impact practice of Deloitte Consulting LLP, a subsidiary of Deloitte LLP. The Social Impact practice helps clients in the public, private, and social sectors become a catalytic force to meet our greatest societal challenges.

INTERVIEWEES AND CONTRIBUTORS

- **Patti Anklam,** Net Work
- **Amy Rodriguez Arms,** The James C. Irvine Foundation
- **Carolyn Bancroft,** The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Lori Bartczak,** Grantmakers for Effective Organizations
- **Sarah Bell,** The 11th Hour Project
- **Jennifer Berman,** formerly at Energy Action Network of Vermont
- **Karl Brown,** The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Antony Bugg-Levine,** Nonprofit Finance Fund
- **Charlanne Burke,** The Rockefeller Foundation

- **Meaghan Calcari Campbell,** Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- **Carol Thompson Cole,** Venture Philanthropy Partners
- **Jennie Curtis,** Garfield Foundation
- **Dave Ferrero,** The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation
- **Rachel Flynn,** Omidyar Network
- **Brinda Ganguly,** The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Michelle Gilliard,** Venture Philanthropy Partners
- **John Kaye,** Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- **Eugene Kim,** FasterThan20
- **Shelly London,** Poses Family Foundation
- **Robert Marten,** The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Heather McLeod Grant,** McLeod-Grant Advisors
- **Jack Meyers,** The Rockefeller Archive Center
- **Jeff Mohr,** Omidyar family office
- **Helena Monteiro,** Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support
- **Stefan Nachuk,** formerly at The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Stacy Parker-Fisher,** Oak Foundation
- **Judy Peppler,** KnowledgeWorks
- **Pete Plastrik,** NetworkAction
- **Jim Ritchie-Dunham,** Vibrancy
- **Pat Rosenfield,** The Rockefeller Archive Center
- **Eleanor Rutland,** Venture Philanthropy Partners
- **Ashley Sandvi,** Poses Family Foundation
- **Tracy Sawicki,** Tower Family Foundation
- **Diana Scearce,** The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- **Shruti Sehra,** New Profit Inc.
- **Barb Shubinsky,** The Rockefeller Archive Center
- **Beth Tener,** New Directions Collaborative
- **Ivan Thompson,** Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

- **Gary Toenniessen,** The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Kimberly Dasher Tripp,** Strategy for Scale
- **Steve Waddell,** NetworkingAction
- **Jeff Walker,** The Generosity Network
- **Jane Wei-Skillern,** Center for Nonprofit and Public Leadership, Haas School of Business, University of California Berkeley
- **Odin Zackman,** Dig In

VISUAL DESIGN CREDITS

Our thanks to Briteweb for the website design, and to TruScribe for creating the whiteboard-animation video.

IMAGERY CREDITS

Each image used in this site is either licensed for commercial use under Creative Commons or purchased from Stocksy.com.

COPYRIGHT TERMS

Please refer to the terms of use for The Rockefeller Foundation website.

Sources

All Sources

Many of the insights in this guide are drawn from the current literature on the use of networks for social impact. Each of the sources listed below is cited in at least one place in the guide. To see the sources that are specific to a page, scroll down to the footer of that page and click “Sources.” This list includes only written sources; for a list of the interviewees and other direct contributors, see About This Guide.

ALLEN ET. AL.

Achieving Collective Impact for Opportunity Youth. Article by Lili Allen, Monique Miles, and Adria Steinberg in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 20-22.

ACHIEVING COLLECTIVE IMPACT FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

This article provides strategies for using network approaches to improve outcomes for low-income young people. Examples include using data, braided funding, and private investment.

ALTHOFF

Developing Large Systems Change Leadership. Webinar with Klaus Althoff, Senior Programme Manager at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. Delivered May 28th 2014.

DEVELOPING LARGE SYSTEMS CHANGE LEADERSHIP

This webinar identified four "critical competency domains" leaders need to solve complex problems on a global scale, explains the skills in detail, and outlines a five-step "leadership journey" to develop the skills.

AUSPOS

Complexity and Community Change: Managing Adaptively to Improve Effectiveness. Report by Patricia Auspos and Mark Cabaj at The Aspen Institute, September 2014. Pages 6-83.

COMPLEXITY AND COMMUNITY CHANGE

This report provides a deep history of academic thinking on complexity, along with implications and strategies for managers in complex environments.

BARBER, FLORIDA, AND TAPSCOTT

A 'Global Parliament of Mayors' Governance Network. Report by Benjamin Barber, Richard Florida, and Don Tapscott. Published by Global Solutions Network, August 5th 2014. Pages 6-22.

A 'GLOBAL PARLIAMENT OF MAYORS' GOVERNANCE NETWORK

This report argues that the world's great social challenges have outgrown the structures designed to tackle them, and proposes a global network of mayors to take coordinated actions against the challenges that cities are uniquely positioned to address.

BARTCZAK

The Role of Grantmakers in Collective Impact. Article by Lori Bartczak in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 8-10.

THE ROLE OF GRANTMAKERS IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article provides strategies for potential funders of collective impact efforts, which may require a different approach than traditional investments. The author argues that funders should fund the "costs of collaboration," enabling the critical relationship-building that give social impact networks their power.

BLISS

How Social Innovation Labs Contribute to Transformative Change. Post by Amira Bliss on The Rockefeller Foundation blog, October 1st 2014.

HOW SOCIAL INNOVATION LABS CONTRIBUTE TO TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

Building on *How Social Innovation Labs Design and Scale Impact*, this post shares what The Rockefeller Foundation has learned about the value and uses of social innovation labs in its investigation into this new form of social impact network.

BUNKER AND ALBAN

The Handbook of Large Group Methods: Creating Systemic Change in Organizations and Communities. Book by Barbara Bunker and Benedict Alban, June 16th 2006.

THE HANDBOOK OF LARGE GROUP METHODS

This book offers a comprehensive guide to the many methods for facilitating interactive conversation in groups of hundreds or thousands, illustrated with in-depth case studies.

CABAJ

Evaluating Collective Impact: Five Simple Rules. Article by Mark Cabaj in *The Philanthropist*, Summer 2014. Pages 112-119.

EVALUATING COLLECTIVE IMPACT: FIVE SIMPLE RULES

This article contrasts traditional evaluation with the needs of collective impact, arguing that the process can be adapted to facilitate learning and capture unintended consequences. It also contains a brief case study with practical examples of how to adapt an evaluation approach for collective impact.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM

Advice for Collective Impact Funders. Videos by Collective Impact Forum, 2014.

ADVICE FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT FUNDERS (VIDEOS)

These brief videos contain advice from funders and grantees of organizations engaging in collective impact.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM

Roundtable on Community Engagement and Collective Impact. Article by Collective Impact Forum in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 12-14.

ROUNDTABLE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The Collective Impact Forum convened leaders across the spectrum of collective impact stakeholders for a roundtable discussion. This wide-ranging conversation includes discussion around the importance and challenge of robust community engagement.

EASTERLING

Achieving Synergy With Collaborative Problem Solving: The Value of System Analysis. Article by Douglas Easterling, Elizabeth Mayfield Arnold, and Jessica Jones in *The Foundation Review*, May 1st 2013. Pages 2-13.

ACHIEVING SYNERGY WITH COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

This article argues that to produce systems change outcomes, "collaboratives" must develop a high-leverage strategy, which requires a broad understanding of the system surrounding a problem, rather than a narrow or specific focus on one aspect of the problem. It also provides a case study of the Reclaiming Futures model in juvenile justice, which provides a schematic for building a network and achieving collective action to improve the juvenile justice system in a given community.

EASTERLING

Building the Capacity of Networks to Achieve Systems Change. Article by Douglas Easterling in *The Foundation Review*, August 3rd 2012. Pages 2-12.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF NETWORKS TO ACHIEVE SYSTEMS CHANGE

This article describes how the staff of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation work with networks. Rather than convening a new network around the foundation's interests, or funding an existing network as it might a typical grantee, this foundation's officers take a capacity-building approach and spend considerable time and effort becoming personally involved in networks to make them more effective.

EASTERLING

Getting to Collective Impact: How Funders Can Contribute Over the Life Course of the Work. Article by Douglas Easterling in *The Foundation Review*, January 1st 2013. Pages 2-16.

GETTING TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article casts a critical eye on the practices of funders who support "collective impact" networks, raising the concern that funders too often exert a degree of control that steers the network in a direction that primarily serves their own interests, compromising the other participants' motivation to contribute and the networks' ability to deliver more than a collection of individual grants.

EDMONDSON

Backbone Organization or Backbone Function? Blog post by Jeff Edmondson on StriveTogether.org, December 3rd, 2013.

BACKBONE ORGANIZATION OR BACKBONE FUNCTION?

This post by the founder of StrivePartnership and StriveTogether reframes the "backbone organization" commonly created in collective impact networks as the "backbone function," arguing that the human resources required to run a network need not sit in an independent organization if those resources can be found within the network's participants.

EDMONDSON

The Role of Investors: Lessons Learned on Critical Roots that Drive Quality Collective Impact. Blog post by Jeff Edmondson on StriveTogether.org, August 6th 2014.

THE ROLE OF INVESTORS

This post in the Collective Impact Forum argues that funders must embrace a different mindset when funding network solutions, and provides strategies to make the most of investments in collective impact.

EDMONDSON AND HECHT

Defining Quality Collective Impact. Article by Jeff Edmondson and Ben Hecht in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 6-7.

DEFINING QUALITY COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article provides four principles to help collective impact participants bring rigor to their efforts through continuous improvement. It also details a theory of action used to guide education-focused collective impact efforts at StriveTogether, from starting new partnerships to robust "proof points."

ENRIGHT ET. AL.

Investing in Change: Funding Collective Impact Efforts. Webinar with Kathleen Enright, Fay Hanleybrown, Emily Tow Jackson, and Ken Thompson, September 25th 2012. Hosted by FSG.

INVESTING IN CHANGE: FUNDING COLLECTIVE IMPACT EFFORTS

This set of slides from a panel discussion provides a broad overview of funder roles in collective impact: reasons and ways to engage, strategies for success, and case studies based on participants' work. It argues that funders must embrace a new, "adaptive" mindset across the organization to be successful.

ERTEL AND SOLOMON

Moments of Impact: How to Design Strategic Conversations that Accelerate Change. Book by Chris Ertel and Lisa Kay Solomon, February 2014.

MOMENTS OF IMPACT

This book describes how to craft "strategic conversations": group dialogue that is designed to combine the best ideas of people with different backgrounds and perspectives. Done right, a strategic conversation lifts participants above the fray of daily concerns and narrow self-interest, reconnecting them to their greater, collective purpose. Carefully-crafted strategic conversation is critical in forming and developing networks, starting from the very earliest stages.

FERBER AND WHITE

Making Public Policy Collective Impact Friendly. Article by Thaddeus Ferber and Erin White in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 22-23.

MAKING PUBLIC POLICY COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRIENDLY

This article addresses the challenges that network solutions can present to governmental organizations whose policies and grants often reflect more traditional approaches. It provides steps that government leaders can take to adopt a network mindset, along with early examples of social impact networks that are producing strong results through collaboration with the government.

FINE

Strengthening Collaborations to Build Social Movements: Ten Lessons from the Communities for Public Education Reform Fund (CPER). Report by Melinda Fine and Lauren Jacobs on theneodifference.org, Fall 2014.

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION TO BUILD SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

This report focuses on the financial and physical logistics of supporting a network. The authors present lessons for grantmakers with a particular emphasis on creating alliances with powerful stakeholders, even those whose interests are not directly tied to organizations' strategic goals.

FLOWER AND MUOIO

GATHER: The Art & Science of Effective Convening. Guidebook by Noah Rimland Flower and Anna Muoio, co-published by Monitor Institute and The Rockefeller Foundation, June 2014. Pages 8-60.

GATHER: THE ART & SCIENCE OF EFFECTIVE CONVENING

This guidebook can help any convening designer or social change leader create convenings that tap into a group's collective intelligence and make substantial progress on a shared challenge.

It provides simple frameworks for the questions that are often ignored: whether convening is the right tool to use to advance a strategic agenda, and how a convening can be used to achieve a specific purpose. It then helps readers understand how to customize the design to fit that purpose, laying out a clear series of steps for what is a naturally chaotic workflow. It then offers principles to use for each of the many tactical choices involved.

FSG

Champions for Change: Leading a Backbone Organization for Collective Impact. Materials from a workshop produced by FSG, March 6-8, 2013.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

This collection of workshop materials addresses a range of topics around how to lead a backbone organization on the "collective impact" model, where it is a freestanding organization that is separate from those of the network's participants. It addresses the roles of the backbone organization, how to lead amidst complexity, developing shared measures, community engagement, collaborative governance, and mobilizing resources.

FSG

Collective Impact Readiness Assessment Tool. Created by FSG.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT READINESS TOOL

This survey helps groups of organizations assess whether collective impact fits with their goals, whether useful pre-conditions exist, and what components of a collective-impact network are already present.

GIBSON AND MACKINNON

Funder Collaboratives: How and Why Funders Work Together. Report by Cynthia Gibson and Anne MacKinnon for GrantCraft.org, January 1st 2010. Pages 1-23.

FUNDER COLLABORATIVES: HOW AND WHY FUNDERS WORK TOGETHER

This report analyzes the trend of grantmakers working together to make grants. The authors offer strategies for resolving conflicts, enhancing impact, and assessing performance of collaborative grants.

HASSAN

The Social Labs Revolution: A New Approach to Solving our Most Complex Challenges. Book by Zaid Hassan, published February 2014 by Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

THE SOCIAL LABS REVOLUTION

This book describes the practice of "social labs," a new type of social impact network that brings together a diverse group to develop, prototype, test, and evolve new solutions over a defined period of time.

HOLLEY

An Introduction to Network Weaving. Book by June Holley. Published February 2012 on Network Weaver.

AN INTRODUCTION TO NETWORK WEAVING

This book describes the practices required to enable and lead a social impact network, focusing on the central role of the "network weaver" and providing extensive detail about the behaviors and mindset that distinguish working in a network from work in a typical organizational setting.

HOLMAN ET. AL

The Change Handbook: The Definitive Resource on Today's Best Methods for Engaging Whole Systems. Book by Peggy Holman, Tom Devane, and Steven Cady, January 4th 2007.

THE CHANGE HANDBOOK

This book offers an in-depth guide to the many methods for using a group to change large-scale social systems. It describes 61 tools for facilitating group process in service of a wide range of goals, including appreciative inquiry, community summits, dynamic planning, open space, scenario planning, and world café.

IRBY AND BOYLE

Aligning Collective Impact Initiatives. Article by Merita Irby and Patrick Boyle in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 15-16.

ALIGNING COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES

This article argues that overlapping collective impact efforts in a community degrade results and waste resources. It includes a brief case study of one organization that coordinated these efforts to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

JAROSEWICH ET. AL.

Measuring Dimensions of Network Functioning: The KnowHow2GO Network Survey. Article by Tania Jarosewich, Censeo Group, Nushina Mir, and Linda Simkin in *The Foundation Review*, 2013. Pages 14-18.

MEASURING DIMENSIONS OF NETWORK FUNCTIONING: THE KNOWHOW2GO NETWORK SURVEY

This article provides in-depth analysis of the dimensions of network approaches and key factors for success. The authors argue that one key to understanding a network's effectiveness is to assess whether the strategy increased capacity for participants and affected the results they were able to achieve.

JOHNSON

The genius of the tinkerer: the secret to innovation is combining odds and ends. Article by Steven Johnson in The Wall Street Journal, September 25th 2010.

THE GENIUS OF THE TINKERER

This article makes the argument at the core of Johnson's book Where Good Ideas Come From: that innovation comes much more often from combining different perspectives on a problem, by drawing on insights from different places and disciplines, than it does from a sudden flash of inspiration that occurs in a single isolated mind. His concept of exploring the "adjacent possible" for promising new ideas was one inspiration for the Reimagine Learning network.

KANER ET. AL.

Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making, 3rd Edition. Handbook by Sam Kaner with Lenny Lind, Catherine Toldi, Sarah Fisk, and Duane Berger, April 28th 2014.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE TO PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING

This handbook helps a facilitator support groups in doing their best thinking together. It offers a framework for designing any group interaction and a diverse suite of exercises for accomplishing different flavors of collaborative work.

KANIA

Don't Talk to Me About Driving Social Change. Blog post by John Kania on CollectiveImpactForum.org, November 24th 2014.

DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT DRIVING SOCIAL CHANGE

This blog post argues that systems change cannot be forced or "driven," but rather, leaders must create the conditions in which others can make progress. Kania, one of the co-authors of Collective Impact, explains why social change is best accomplished by enabling connectivity and collective action within a group rather than promoting a specific agenda.

KANIA AND KRAMER

Collective Impact. Article by John Kania and Mark Kramer in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011. Pages 38-41.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article first introduced the term "collective impact" to describe a particular type of social impact network, arguing for the value of these networks and illustrating how they function by telling the story of StrivePartnership and a number of other examples.

KANIA AND KRAMER

Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity. Article by John Kania and Mark Kramer in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, January 21 2013. Pages 1-15.

EMBRACING EMERGENCE: HOW COLLECTIVE IMPACT ADDRESSES COMPLEXITY

This article outlines key challenges to producing social change, and how collective-impact networks can overcome those. The authors argue that funders can help collaborative efforts tackle complex problems by enabling greater learning, both by influencing participants to collaborate and by adjusting traditional approaches to evaluation.

KANIA ET. AL.

Essential Mindset Shifts for Collective Impact. Article by John Kania, Fay Hanleybrown, and Jennifer Splansky Juster in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 2-5.

ESSENTIAL MINDSET SHIFTS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article details critical mindset shifts that participants in collective impact must take. The authors provide insight about who should be at the table, how they should work together, and how that work can adapt and evolve over time.

KANTER

How Networked Nonprofits Visualize Their Networks. Post by Beth Kanter on Beth's Blog, January 25th 2011.

HOW NETWORKED NONPROFITS VISUALIZE THEIR NETWORKS

This post provides a basic introduction to the use of social network mapping, both using low-tech pen-and-paper methods and software tools. (At the time of this guide's release, the two most commonly used software tools are NodeXL and Kumu.)

KASPER ET. AL.

Harnessing Collaborative Technologies: Helping Funders Work Together Better. Report and interactive tool by Gabriel Kasper, Kristi Kimball, Steven Lawrence, and Lisa Philp. Co-produced by Monitor Institute and The Foundation Center, November 2013.

HARNESSING COLLABORATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

This report and its accompanying interactive tool provides funders with a simple framework for making sense of more than 170 different online tools for sharing information and working together. A strong majority of these tools are applicable to funders' collaboration with fellow participants in a network.

KIMBALL AND KOPELL

Letting Go. Article by Kristi Kimball and Malka Kopell in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2011. Pages 38-41.

LETTING GO

This article argues that foundations have a strong tendency to micro-manage how social problems are solved, recommending that funders should instead strive to be "tight on goals and loose on means," a key component of the mindset that enables a funder to engage effectively with a network.

KIMBALL ET. AL.

Final Evaluation – Disease Surveillance Networks Initiative. Report by Ann Marie Kimball, Neil Abernathy, Sara Curran, and Mary Kay Gugerty. Published by The Rockefeller Foundation, February 2011.

FINAL EVALUATION – DISEASE SURVEILLANCE NETWORKS INITIATIVE

This report analyzes the early stages of a network designed to improve early detection of disease outbreaks in southeast Asia and Africa. It highlights the role funders can play, not only in providing resources in support, but also in lending credibility to a new initiative.

KLAUS

Collective Impact 3.0. Blog post by Tom Klaus on tamarackcci.ca, October 27th 2014.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT 3.0

This blog post explains the need to balance “content experts” with “context experts” in a network approach, while noting frustration that “collective impact” risks becoming a generic term for collaboration if not used more carefully.

KREBS

A Brief Introduction to Social Network Analysis. Website by Valdis Krebs.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

This website introduces the basic concepts of social network analysis, a common method of charting the relationships among participants in a network that can be useful in visually assessing patterns in those connections.

KUMAR

101 Design Methods: A Structured Approach for Driving Innovation in Your Organization. Book by Vijay Kumar, October 11th 2012.

101 DESIGN METHODS

This book breaks down the art of innovation and design into a practical science, provides a set of collaborative tools and methods for planning and defining any new offering or initiative. Its methods are particularly relevant for networks focused on designing and prototyping new solutions.

LIPMANOWICZ AND MCCANDLESS

The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures: Simple Rules to Unleash A Culture of Innovation. Book by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless, April 1st 2014.

THE SURPRISING POWER OF LIBERATING STRUCTURES

This book provides a hands-on toolkit for designing and facilitating interactions that will tap a group's full creativity. It offers both broad guidance on the principles of effective group process design and a set of 30 short workshop tools for structuring short exercises.

MALINKSY AND LUBELSKY

Network Evaluation: Cultivating Healthy Networks for Social Change. Report by Eli Malinsky and Chad Lubelsky on SocialInnovation.ca, July 2010.

NETWORK EVALUATION

This report argues that network evaluation is underdeveloped in theory and practice. The authors provide strategies and rationales for network evaluators to focus on the ecosystem, processes, and outcomes of a network, rather than taking a more traditional approach.

MANN

The Role of Philanthropy in Collective Impact. Article by Cathy Mann in *The Philanthropist*, Summer 2014. Pages 5-6.

THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article provides insight for funders about why and how funders should adjust their mindset to fund network approaches. The author argues that funders must be flexible, balance their role as funder and facilitator, and encourage participants to be candid about early failure.

MANVILLE

You Need a Community, Not a Network. Blog post by Brook Manville for the *Harvard Business Review*, September 15th 2014.

YOU NEED A COMMUNITY, NOT A NETWORK

This post argues that networks, which the author believes are better termed "communities," require long-term commitment and continuity of relationships to achieve any specific goal. Critical to their effectiveness, the author argues, is for participants to feel accountable for their own performance and to hold each other accountable.

MARSHALL

Addressing the Climate Crisis with Networks of the Willing and Committed. Article by Edward Marshall on Global Solution Networks, September 18th 2014. Pages 13-40.

ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CRISIS WITH NETWORKS OF THE WILLING AND COMMITTED

This article outlines how a global network could be built to combat climate change, arguing that current efforts have succeeded in bringing the issue to the center of public debate but have failed to produce meaningful action.

MCLEOD GRANT

Transformer: How to Build a Network to Change a System. Case study by Heather McLeod Grant at Monitor Institute, fall 2010.

TRANSFORMER: HOW TO BUILD A NETWORK TO CHANGE A SYSTEM

This case study describes the formation of the RE-AMP network, which connects over 165 nonprofits and funders in eight Midwestern states who share the goal of reducing the region's carbon emissions 80% by 2050. It provides a history of how the network developed and extracts six general principles of network design for other network-minded entrepreneurs to carry forward.

NEE AND JOLIN

Roundtable on Collective Impact. Article by Eric Nee and Michelle Jolin in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2012.

ROUNDTABLE ON COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article features a number of early collective impact practitioners discussing their experiences. Panelists provide advice on how networks can be helpful, as well as early resistance to their efforts and how similar forces can be overcome.

NETWORK IMPACT

The State of Network Evaluation. Guide published by Network Impact, July 2014. Pages 2-52.

THE STATE OF NETWORK EVALUATION

This guide provides a detailed examination of the evaluation of networks, including what makes them unique, what elements can be evaluated, and what challenges remain for the field.

ORTIZ

Data Visualizations by Moebio Labs. Created by Santiago Ortiz and Moebio Labs.

DATA VISUALIZATIONS BY MOEBIO LABS

This website contains examples of advanced data visualizations that might be adapted for use in network approaches, including an interactive global map of a donation network's resource flow that can display various time ranges and countries.

OWEN

Open Space Technology: A User's Guide. Book by Harrison Owen, April 1st 2008.

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

This book provides detailed guidance on the use of "open space," a group process tool for a group to co-creating the structure of an event based on the participants' preferences, which is particularly useful in a network setting for structuring part or all of an in-person convening. A shorter introduction to the concept can be found at openspaceworld.org.

PARKHURST AND PRESKILL

Learning In Action: Evaluating Collective Impact. Article by Marcie Parkhurst and Hallie Preskill in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014. Pages 17-19.

LEARNING IN ACTION: EVALUATING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Despite the challenge of evaluating non-traditional network approaches, evaluation remains a critical component and a key contributor to the continuous learning needed for success. This article provides ways to evaluate collective impact efforts at all stages of development through a variety of different techniques.

PEREIRA

Collaboration and Foundation Leadership: Challenges, Opportunities, and Impact. Article by Jennifer Pereira in *The Foundation Review*, 2013. Pages 15-24.

COLLABORATION AND FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP

This article argues that foundations are well-positioned to enable the growth and success of networks, given their leadership role and ability to convene. Foundations can also connect local network participants to national networks of resources.

PHILLIPS

Committing to Collective Impact: from Vision to Implementation. Article by David Phillips and Jennifer Splansky Juster in *Community Investments*, Spring 2014. Pages 4-7.

COMMITTING TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article focuses on the role of working groups within a collective impact initiative. The authors outline key factors for consideration including timing, identification of participants, and their role within the broader network.

PLASTRIK AND TAYLOR

Net Gains: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change. Book by Peter Plastrik and Madeleine Taylor on NetworkImpact.org, 2006.

NET GAINS

This book offered one of the first significant bodies of guidance on the art of weaving social impact networks. Core to the authors' argument is that funders who engage with networks must be willing to relinquish the level of control that they would typically demand of a grantee.

PLASTRIK, TAYLOR, AND CLEVELAND

Connecting to Change the World: Harnessing the Power of Networks for Social Impact. Book by Peter Plastrik, Madeleine Taylor, and John Cleveland. Published September 29, 2014 by Island Press.

CONNECTING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

This book describes the role of networks in solving social problems, including a chapter providing roles and lessons for "network engineers." The authors argue that networks are "managed chaos," which can be a source of vitality when approached with the proper mindset.

PRESKILL ET. AL.

Evaluating Complexity: Propositions for Improving Practice. Report by Hallie Preskill, Srik Gopal, Katelyn Mack, and Joelle Cook on FSG.org, November 2014.

EVALUATING COMPLEXITY

The authors outline nine characteristics of complex systems and nine related recommendations for evaluating networks. They emphasize the need for actors and systems that are sensitive not only to their own progress, but to the repercussions their efforts have upon broader sets of actors and systems. Taking such an expanded approach to evaluation is critical in working with a network.

RAYNOR ET. AL.

The Rockefeller Foundation Initiative Promoting Equitable and Sustainable Transportation: Federal Component. Report by Jared Raynor, Nadia, Gomes, Katherine Locke, and PeiYao Chen. Co-published by TCC Group and The Rockefeller Foundation, March 2012. Pages 10-57.

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION INITIATIVE PROMOTING EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION: FEDERAL COMPONENT

This report is an evaluation of The Rockefeller Foundation's Initiative to Promote Equitable and Sustainable Transportation, launched in 2008, for which a primary goal was to influence federal transportation policy. Its description of The Foundation's approach highlights the roles a funder can play in bringing public attention to an issue, connecting disparate stakeholders, and achieving policy reform.

REOTT

Stop managing grants. Start managing your network. Article by Kimberly Manno Reott in Alliance Magazine, September 2014.

STOP MANAGING GRANTS. START MANAGING YOUR NETWORK.

This article argues that program officers must stop thinking of their role as managing a set of grants and instead consider what it means to be a network manager, if they want to achieve today's ambitious goals of scaling solutions, building resilience, and catalyzing innovation.

RITCHIE-DUNHAM

Ecosynomics: The Science of Abundance. Book by Jim Ritchie-Dunham with Bettye Pruitt, April 2014. Chapter 12.

ECOSYNOMICS

This book describes how a group can create collective agreements to interact in a way that serves their collective goals. Chapter 12 describes the Energy Action Network of Vermont as a case study, and highlights the roles that a funder can play in a network. The author argues that a particularly productive role for a funder is to convene the participants and facilitate systems-level understanding of the issue at stake and the network's collective goals.

ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

Midterm Evaluation, Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network. Report by Rockefeller Foundation published by the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network, April 2011. Pages 19-78.

ASIAN CITIES CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE NETWORK EVALUATION

This report provides a glimpse into early successes and challenges of a network designed to build climate change resilience in Asia. Provides insight into the network structure that The Rockefeller Foundation used to build relationships across cities, describes the outcomes the network was able to achieve, and lessons for how funders and evaluators should engage with similar networks going forward.

ROSE

Community Knowledge – The Building Blocks of Collective Impact. Article by Lee Rose in *The Philanthropist*, Summer 2014. Pages 3-4.

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

This article argues that while shared measurement can be a challenge for collective impact networks, a major component of the value of creating such a network is in its ability to bring together the many pieces of knowledge that are resident in the community, creating a more complete view of the issue that makes it possible for a group of stakeholders to arrive at a shared vision.

RYAN

Power Dynamics in Collective Impact. Article by Mary Jean Ryan in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014.

POWER DYNAMICS IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This article describes how power shapes the relationships between funders and other participants in collective impact networks. The author provides strategies and insights for both balancing the relationship with grantees and enabling effective collaboration among grantees.

SCEARCE ET. AL.

Catalyzing Networks for Social Change: A Funder's Guide. Handbook by Diana Scearce and the 80 members of the Network of Network Funders, co-published by Monitor Institute and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, October 2011.

CATALYZING NETWORKS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

This handbook is one of the first resources focused on the role of a funder in catalyzing networks, and is the original source of the "wheel" describing a network's stages of development, as well as many of the functions that a network can serve. Its insights are principally drawn from the contributions of 80 funders who participated in a two-year community of practice called the Network of Network Funders.

SCEARCE ET. AL.

What If? The Art of Scenario Planning for Nonprofits. Book by Diana Scearce, Katherine Fulton, and the Global Business Network community. Published by the Global Business Network, July 2004. Available as a free download.

WHAT IF? THE ART OF SCENARIO PLANNING FOR NONPROFITS

This book provides step-by-step guidance for using scenario thinking in a nonprofit context to inform strategic planning and long-term visioning with a deep understanding of the many trends that are reshaping the environment around an organization or network.

SCHMITZ

The Culture of Collective Impact. Blog post by Paul Schmitz on huffingtonpost.com, October 22nd 2014.

THE CULTURE OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This post highlights the need for community trust and inclusion in a collective impact network, arguing that many of today's multi-stakeholder efforts will need to change their culture to fulfill their potential.

SENGE, HAMILTON, AND KANIA

The Dawn of System Leadership. Article by Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, and John Kania. Published in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, winter 2015.

THE DAWN OF SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

This article describes the style of leadership and psychological mindset best suited to engaging with a network. The authors argue that the deep changes necessary to accelerate progress against society's most intractable problems require a unique type of leader—the system leader, a person who catalyzes collective leadership.

SPANN

Mapping systems using reality as a change agent to grow social impact. Video by Scott Spann, October 24th 2011.

MAPPING SYSTEMS USING REALITY AS A CHANGE AGENT TO GROW SOCIAL IMPACT

This 23-minute video provides a basic introduction to the concept and use of systems mapping for understanding complex social problems, illustrated by the case studies of RE-AMP and other social impact networks.

SUMMERS AND HONOLD

Weaving an Impactful Network. Article by Anne Summers and Linda Honold in *The Foundation Review*, 2013. Pages 43-47.

WEAVING AN IMPACTFUL NETWORK

This article contends that while many nonprofits' theory of change is based on the idea that that individual organizations' outcomes can cause systems change, the truth is that systems change only happens through coordinated action designed to achieve a common goal.

TAPSCOTT

Global Solution Networks: A Literature Review. Article by Don Tapscott on gsnetworks.org, 2013. Pages 7-18.

GLOBAL SOLUTION NETWORKS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review establishes a taxonomy of NGO types and functions, including the "global solution network" concept that forms the basis of future work.

TAPSCOTT

Introducing: Global Solution Networks. Report by Don Tapscott, published by Global Solution Networks, 2013. Pages 5-47.

INTRODUCING: GLOBAL SOLUTION NETWORKS

This report introduces and explains the concept of a "global solution network," arguing that these networks are a better mechanism than national governments to address social problems of the scale and complexity seen today. It provides a taxonomy describing ten types of global solution networks and examples of each.

TAPSCOTT AND AMOUR

The Remarkable Internet Governance Network: Part I. (Continued in Part II). Report by Don Tapscott and Lynn St. Amour with Steve Caswell. Published by Global Solution Networks, March 24th 2014. Pages 11-24.

THE REMARKABLE INTERNET GOVERNANCE NETWORK

This report describes the governance of the Internet as a case study of a "governance network," one of the ten types of "global solution network" that Tapscott names in his taxonomy.

TENER

Collaborating from the Place of Common Ground. Post by Beth Tener on the New Directions Collaborative blog, January 8th 2014.

COLLABORATING FROM THE PLACE OF COMMON GROUND

This post briefly describes the formation, accomplishments, and lessons learned by the Energy Action Network of Vermont, a social impact network focused on transitioning the state of Vermont to clean energy.

TENER

Funders' Role in Catalyzing Collaboration in Networks (or Undermining It). Post by Beth Tener on the New Directions Collaborative blog, May 22nd 2013.

FUNDERS' ROLE IN CATALYZING COLLABORATION IN NETWORKS (OR UNDERMINING IT)

This post reviews the promise and perils of a funder's involvement in creating a social impact network. The author argues that funders should encourage network-designed solutions, create conditions for collaboration, support measurement, and play a leadership role in empowering network participants.

THOMPSON

Re-reading 'Collective Impact': Three Lessons. Blog post by Chris Thompson in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, February 3rd 2014.

RE-READING 'COLLECTIVE IMPACT'

This blog post reflects on lessons learned about how to build a network by the participants in the northeast Ohio funder collaborative Fund for Our Economic Future. The author focuses highlights two factors as particularly important: funders' commitment to build capacity over multiple years and members' openness to change.

TIESINGA

Labcraft: How Social Labs Cultivate Change Through Innovation and Collaboration. Book by Hendrik Tiesinga and eight co-authors, published July 28th 2014. Available as a free download.

LABCRAFT

This book was created by representatives from seven "social innovation labs" from around the world, sharing stories and observations about what it takes to create the enabling environment for a lab and navigate the unique dilemmas that emerge from this specific variety of social impact network.

TURNER ET. AL.

Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact. Four-part blog post series by Shiloh Turner, Kathy Merchant, John Kania, and Ellen Martin in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, July 17th-20th 2012.

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF BACKBONE ORGANIZATIONS IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This blog series focuses on the roles and value of a backbone function in "collective impact" networks. Many of the lessons it shares are drawn from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation's role in establishing StrivePartnership to provide cradle-to-career support for the metro area's youth.

WADDELL

Systems Mapping for Non-Profits. (Part 1 and Part 2.) Two-part blog bost series by Steve Waddell on *Beth's Blog*, October 30th 2009.

SYSTEMS MAPPING FOR NON-PROFITS

This two-part series of blog posts provides a basic introduction to the use of systems mapping in the context of social problem-solving, a process that can often be useful in social impact networks in discussing the nature of the issue at stake and what combination of solutions could be the most effective.

WADDELL

Addressing the world's critical issues as complex change challenges: the state-of-the-field. Report by Steve Waddell, July 30th 2014. Pages 5-9.

ADDRESSING THE WORLD'S CRITICAL ISSUES AS COMPLEX CHANGE CHALLENGES

This report argues that the practice of addressing complex systemic challenges shows considerable promise, but it needs to be developed as a field in its own right–the field of "complex change." On pages 5-9, the author describes the different types of social challenges and the most appropriate types methods for addressing each.

WEI-SKILLERN

The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund: Catalyzing Networks and Collaboration. Case study by Jane Wei-Skillern in *Harvard Business Review*, June 30th 2014. Pages 1-16.

THE WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN MEMORIAL FUND

This case study analyzes a Connecticut family foundation's entry into education reform, taking a network-driven approach that resulted in the creation of a statewide agency aligned with its vision. Includes interviews with foundation leadership and grantees.

WEI-SKILLERN AND MARCIANO

The Networked Nonprofit. Article by Jane Wei-Skillern and Sonia Marciano in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2008. Pages 40-43.

THE NETWORKED NONPROFIT

This article explains the benefits to a nonprofit organization of working with other organizations in a social impact network, and argues that for networks to succeed, funders give up control and trust the network to find its own path to success.

WEI-SKILLERN AND SILVER

Four Network Principles for Collaboration Success. Article by Jane Wei-Skillern and Nora Silver in *The Foundation Review*, 2013. Pages 122-128.

FOUR NETWORK PRINCIPLES FOR COLLABORATION SUCCESS

This article provides strategies for funders to make the most of their investment in networks. The authors describe a different set of leadership and collaboration capabilities that both funders and grantees must embody for a social impact network succeed.

WEI-SKILLERN, SILVER, AND HEITZ

Cracking the Network Code: *Four Principles for Grantmakers*. Report by Jane Wei-Skillern, Nora Silver, and Eric Heitz. Published by Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, June 26th 2013. Pages 5-23.

CRACKING THE NETWORK CODE

This report provides four core principles for funders to use in guiding their engagement with networks: (1) mission, not organization, (2) trust, not control, (3) humility, not brand, and (4) node, not hub, each of which is illustrated with case studies. Also provides a set of specific recommendations for putting these principles into practice.

WRIGHT

The Tactics of Collaboration. Blog post by Steve Wright in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, November 4th 2014.

THE TACTICS OF COLLABORATION

This post focuses on the challenges of acknowledging individual vulnerabilities, relinquishing control, and pursuing goals that may not come in the form of deliverable solutions, but rather progress on reaching those solutions. The author outlines a four-part journey that leaders must undertake to shift their mindset to succeed in collaboration.

The Rockefeller Foundation

Monitor Institute

Deloitte.