

**Scope, Scale, and Sustainability:
What It Takes to Create
Lasting Community Change**



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Preface

The Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) undertook the study presented here at the request of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Staff at the Casey Foundation expressed interest in exploring the history of comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) to better understand how these complex efforts can reach the scope, scale, and sustainability needed to achieve lasting community change. While there has been a fair amount of discussion in the field about what has not worked, there has been less analysis of the specific practices, approaches, and mechanisms that do lead to success. This report examines those success factors as they relate specifically to the ability of a comprehensive community initiative to achieve the scope and scale required to generate *community-level* outcomes and to sustain those positive impacts over time.

ASDC selected 11 comprehensive community initiatives for this study. Because the Casey Foundation was interested in looking beyond their own experience with CCIs, the study does not include any initiatives for which the Casey Foundation is the primary sponsor. ASDC conducted an extensive literature review of descriptive program information, evaluation reports, and cross-initiative research related to the CCIs chosen for inclusion in the study. ASDC also conducted telephone interviews with a current or former program director or foundation staff leader for the initiatives.

The comprehensive change initiatives included in the study are:

- Cleveland Community Building Initiative (CCBI)
- Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP)
- Health Improvement Initiative (HII)
- Homeless Families Program (HFP)
- Local Investment Commission (LINC)
- Neighborhood and Family Initiative (NFI)
- Neighborhood Improvement Initiative (NII)
- Neighborhood Partners Initiative (NPI)
- Neighborhood Preservation Initiative (NPI)
- The Atlanta Project (TAP)
- Urban Health Initiative (UHI)

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Table of Contents

Preface.....	i
Table of Contents	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	2
3. Factors that Influence Scope, Scale, and Sustainability	3
4. Scope	7
5. Scale.....	10
6. Sustainability	13
7. Conclusions	19
Bibliography.....	24

1. Introduction

Comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) are the most recent in a long series of efforts to address the complex, interrelated causes of poverty and related social ills that result in poor outcomes for children, families, and neighborhoods. This long history includes a wide range of strategies and programs, including the settlement house movement of the late 19th century, the fight against juvenile delinquency in the 1950s, the Ford Foundation's Grey Area initiative and the Johnson administration's Model Cities initiative in the 1960s, and the rise of community development corporations in the last three decades of the 20th century (Halpern, 1995). The label CCI itself refers to a diverse range of initiatives funded by public sector agencies and philanthropies, targeting multiple policy arenas, employing different strategies and organizational structures, and including varying collections of stakeholders. Nevertheless, the growing literature on CCIs has identified a number of common features that help to define the contours of this still-evolving program type (Kubisch, et al., 2002). These features include the use of:

- Comprehensive strategies and programs that seek to address multiple causes of social problems;
- Participatory and collaborative approaches to the planning and implementation of the initiative that involve diverse groups of stakeholders;
- Governance structures based at the neighborhood or community level

designed to support collaboration across sectors;

- Systemic approaches to reform that aim to influence how resources are distributed and used; and
- Technical assistance and other capacity-building supports to sustain the community's long-term ability to improve outcomes.

While individual CCIs have been the object of intense evaluation and analysis, comparatively less research has looked at the field as a whole. The purpose of this study is to examine a selection of CCIs for broader themes that characterize successful examples of how these initiatives have dealt with the challenges of achieving a comprehensive scope, taking programs and strategies to scale, and sustaining their work after the end of a demonstration period.

In this report, *scope* refers to the degree to which an initiative is multifaceted and uses holistic strategies to solve problems and create change. *Scale* refers to the degree to which an initiative creates change at the community level, rather than just the individual or family level. *Sustainability* refers to the degree to which strategies become part of the way the community functions and the availability of sufficient ongoing resources for positive changes to endure.

The report analyzes how well the selected CCIs achieved scope, scale, and sustainability, and the implications of this experience for the next generation of CCIs. The analysis is divided into five sections. The first section describes the factors found to influence the success of CCIs across the dimensions of scope, scale, and sustainability. The following sections examine each dimension

individually. Thus, the second section looks at examples of how CCIs successfully achieved scope by addressing the social problems affecting children, families, and neighborhoods in a multifaceted, holistic way. The third section turns to the question of scale, analyzing how successful initiatives grew pilot projects and neighborhood-level programs to achieve community-wide impact. The fourth section considers the issue of sustainability and the extent to which the CCIs institutionalized their work and built local capacity to continue to address ongoing community needs. The final section examines the implications of the findings and recommendations for future efforts.

To provide a more detailed look at the different approaches, strategies, and outcomes of each of the 11 CCIs included in the study, a separate set of profiles will be available at www.aecf.org and at www.capablecommunity.com.

2. Methodology

Eleven CCIs were selected based on how well they fit the general characteristics of a CCI in terms of integrating community development and human service strategies, working across sectors, fostering community engagement, and strengthening networks (Ramsey, 2001). In addition, the CCIs included here were, for the most part, sponsored by a major foundation; represented a long-term investment (at least six years); and were well-documented in terms of program and evaluation reports.

Since the primary research goal was to enable the Annie E. Casey Foundation to learn from the successful work of others, the CCIs studied here do not include Casey-sponsored initiatives. Another objective was to look beyond traditional community development-oriented initiatives; thus, the selected CCIs include two initiatives focused primarily on health care (Urban Health Initiative, Health Improvement Initiative) and two public-private partnerships (Homeless Families Program, Local Investment Commission). The Local Investment Commission is the only initiative included in the study that is not foundation-sponsored, although it did receive “start-up” staffing and logistical support from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

The research methodology included interviews with key staff who directly participated in the initiatives, analysis of interim and summative evaluation reports, and review of the secondary literature pertaining to the field in general. The goal of the research was to identify concrete examples of successful practices and strategies, from which to extrapolate more general principles about promising practices for the design and implementation of CCIs.

The CCIs examined in this report represent a wide range of goals, strategies, and organizational structures. From the outset, we anticipated that the performance of the CCIs across the dimensions of scope, scale, and sustainability would be mixed, but that each CCI would be an exemplar of success in at least one dimension. The threshold for success in community-level change is high, however, and a number of CCIs did not meet it. Because the

Initiatives in which the funding entity set a clear strategic direction for grantees, but gave them the flexibility to chart their own course for achieving initiative goals, were more successful than initiatives in which the funder played a more active, micro-managing role.

goal of this research is to uncover elements and mechanisms that contributed to success, the emphasis in this report is on empirically proven practices and strategies that achieved scope, scale, or sustainability as we have defined them.

3. Factors that Influence Scope, Scale, and Sustainability

For a CCI to achieve scope, scale, or sustainability, certain factors cut across all three dimensions. These factors shape a CCI's ability to develop and sustain a clear vision, execute well, and adapt and problem-solve effectively.

A single broker and keeper of the vision

Successful CCIs in this study had a single individual, intermediary organization, or governance body responsible for keeping the initiative on track and making sure the capacity was there to take on the goals of the initiative. Most importantly, the intermediary had a clear vision in alignment with that of the sponsoring entity for what success would look like and maintained that vision throughout guiding, supporting, and challenging the local sites. The intermediary kept the sites focused on the mission, ensured alignment and fit, and facilitated

entrepreneurial responses to both challenges and opportunities. Successful initiatives also had an effective broker able to connect sites to the right expertise and resources, bring the right people to the table, and trouble-shoot to overcome barriers and resistance. These brokers were instrumental in building trust within and among sites, as well as between sites and sponsoring entities, through fidelity to the mission and vision, delivering results, maintaining high expectations, and insisting on high performance. This "honest broker" was sometimes an individual (e.g., the executive director of the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program), an intermediary organization (e.g., the national program office for the Urban Health Initiative), or the governance entity (e.g., the Local Investment Commission). Initiatives with a single individual or institution that served as an advocate and broker for the community, as well as tending to the needs and expectations of the funder, were most successful in equalizing power and building true partnerships.

Clear, well-defined roles and responsibilities

Foundations or other sponsoring entities must establish a clear framework and set of expectations to accompany their investment, while also allowing for local autonomy. Initiatives in which the funding entity set a clear strategic direction for grantees, but gave them the

flexibility to chart their own course for achieving initiative goals, were more successful than initiatives in which the funder played a more active, micro-managing role. In the latter case, the intermediary was usually “hand-tied” and unable to serve as an effective broker or coach. Without clear and distinct roles and responsibilities, these initiatives floundered in the process, with endless shifts in direction and lack of trust.

Confusion about roles and lines of accountability has derailed a number of CCIs. Even when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined upfront, this issue must be revisited periodically throughout the initiative to ensure that definitions remain clear and continue to best serve the needs of the initiative. For example, reflections published by the Community Foundation of Silicon Valley (CFSV), which served as a managing partner in the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, noted that “many of the stumbling points in the initiative” stemmed from lack of clarity and unspoken assumptions about roles and responsibilities (Community Foundation of Silicon Valley, 2005). One particular sticking point often relates to how decisions are made. As implementation of an initiative progresses, pressure and tensions can lead parties to either overstep or relinquish their agreed-upon responsibilities. Creating regular opportunities to discuss and negotiate roles and responsibilities, therefore, improves both operational clarity and accountability.

Alignment and fit

The CCIs examined in this report that achieved scope, scale, and sustainability did so by pursuing a variety of strategies and very different approaches to generating community change. Two features, however, were consistent across the successful CCIs: strategic alignment of strategies and goals and the right combination of partners, funding, and supporting capacities. Selection of sites, lead organizations, partners, and strategies are critical decisions that need to be carefully and systematically considered. Initiatives that achieved greatest success did not invite everyone to the table; rather they selected only partners with the capacity, interest, and positioning to take on the work. As one program director put it, “you have to be hard-nosed in choosing partners.” Designers of successful initiatives realized that collaboration for its own sake is counterproductive and insisted that collaboration have an explicit and strategic purpose. Even more critical, when alignment and fit change, with leadership turnover or when a partner ceases to perform, for example, the participation of partners who have fallen out of alignment must be terminated.

Likewise, successful initiatives were careful to align their programs and strategies with desired goals and operational scale. For instance, the Local Investment Commission organized its comprehensive neighborhood services around local schools that were neighborhood anchors. The Atlanta Project created a similar structure, but because of the way school boundaries were drawn, the schools were not natural neighborhood centers; this severely

Initiatives that achieved greatest success did not invite everyone to the table; rather they selected only partners with the capacity, interest, and positioning to take on the work.

undermined the effectiveness of TAP's engagement and service delivery strategy. As another example, the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program positioned local community development corporations (CDCs) to tackle neighborhood issues more holistically by expanding their programmatic range, while maintaining alignment with their core missions. This allowed the CDCs to take on new activities and build additional capacity in a way that made sense in terms of their existing expertise, a strategy that worked well given the CCRP's target geography and desired outcomes.

Meaningful community engagement

Another characteristic of successful initiatives is meaningful community engagement in establishing community change priorities and planning how best to achieve established goals. The key, according to one program director, is to "have residents make decisions that matter." Initiatives that created momentum around a vision for change were more successful in achieving scope, scale, and sustainability than those that tried to mobilize the community around a particular program or set of activities. Keeping the desired results front and center was instrumental in building and maintaining community involvement and commitment. Ongoing meaningful engagement of citizens and other key institutions was crucial to sustaining momentum. For example, the neighborhood-generated quality-of-life plans in the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program became the road map that each lead organization

followed. The community's agreed-upon results became the collective vision to drive the agenda, components of which continue to be realized today. The Local Investment Commission (LINC) provides what is perhaps the most formal example of equalizing power for residents. LINC's citizen's commission, which includes a spectrum of citizens, business and community leaders, and individuals receiving public services, is responsible for developing strategies to improve outcomes for children and families. Citizen volunteers have the authority to create the commission's agenda and decision-making power over how funds are distributed to achieve results. LINC also engages hundreds of community residents to assist with local implementation by serving on committees as well as providing services such as tutoring, monitoring playgrounds, and mentoring. As part of its mission, LINC deliberately builds resident capacity to participate in a meaningful way through an ongoing education process that helps residents understand how government operates, how to access public agencies, and how to secure resources for the community.

Leadership and staff capacity

Commitment to the cause is not enough to achieve results. CCIs must be cognizant of the specific knowledge, skills, and relationships the initiative's leadership and staff need to be successful. CCIs require leadership capacity to promote the initiative and bring the right people and resources to the table, management capacity to keep the operation on track, and staff capacity

to implement effectively. Not having the right people in leadership positions is particularly problematic, as the sponsors of the Urban Health Initiative quickly discovered. Although staff at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) knew that UHI leaders would require a skill set different from that needed in more traditional community initiatives (they even budgeted salaries to attract highly experienced, policy-oriented local program directors), they initially deferred to the sites in their leadership selection. A number of sites chose program directors with experience in service delivery, but relatively little background in public policy, politics, or systems change issues. Lack of systems knowledge and skills made it difficult for these program directors to conceptualize and strategize for scale (Jellinek, 2004b). RWJF eventually made adherence to established leadership criteria a prerequisite for the five sites selected to move forward with implementation, which ensured program directors capable of building relationships with high-level city officials and galvanizing institutional support for the initiative. Another example from UHI illustrates the importance of funding staff capacity. Because a major goal of the initiative was to change how public resources are allocated, RWJF funded staff positions with the primary responsibility of developing new financing strategies.

Capacity to turn data into information that is used

One key theme that emerges regarding the collection and use of data is the importance of building an audience. Raw numbers alone rarely speak for themselves. The initiatives that most

successfully used data to impact policy did so by positioning an organization to provide data to decision-makers and participate in data-driven policy discussion as a core function of its operations. For example, The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF), as part of its Health Improvement Initiative, funded the creation of the California Center for Health Improvement. Located in the state capitol of Sacramento, this organization works to directly influence the state legislature by providing non-partisan data on population health. Similarly, as part of the Urban Health Initiative, Philadelphia Safe and Sound produces a children's budget and report card that feeds data directly to key decision-making tables in local government.

Both of these initiatives cultivated an audience for the data they collect. In California, routine local and state opinion polls provide policymakers with evidence of broad public support for specific health programs and broader reform efforts. CCHI disseminates poll results, along with its independent policy analysis, to policymakers and the public, establishing itself as a credible voice on population health and health policy. As part of the UHI, all five sites developed campaign strategies to build networks of support across the political spectrum that could help translate data into policies and strategies. For instance, using geographic information systems developed as part of Philadelphia's Safe and Sound program, city officials decided where to locate 11 new Beacon programs based on a mapping of social indicators and resource data (VanderWood, 2003). In addition, Philadelphia's report card on children's health and safety indicators has led to

CCI strategies are more likely to effectively address social problems when community residents are tapped for knowledge about root causes and barriers to change.

new city programs to address emerging issues. UHI sites have been successful in positioning stakeholders to feed data directly into the policy arena because they provide a “neutral table at which holders of data are comfortable sharing information” and because they work to standardize data collection and provide tools and products that meet the information needs of policymakers.

4. Scope

By definition, CCIs attempt to address social problems in a comprehensive (i.e., multi-faceted) manner. They strive to generate solutions that create synergies among programs and across policy arenas to respond more holistically to the problems facing children and families. For each CCI, what “comprehensive” means or what scope is appropriate depends on conditions in the targeted communities; the priorities of the sponsoring funders; the desired results; and the existing capacities of the individuals, organizations, and communities involved. Achieving the appropriate scope to generate significant results, particularly at the community level, has been a challenge for comprehensive community initiatives. Those CCIs that have successfully addressed the needs of low-income children and families tend to build incrementally toward broad goals--or to tackle comprehensively more narrow

goals--using the approaches described below.

Integrated strategies that “connect the dots”

Achieving the scope that makes a difference is usually a case of strategically integrating potentially synergistic programs and activities. Intentionally “connecting the dots” between various efforts capable of addressing the root causes of a problem is more likely to create a lasting solution than simply doing a lot of different things and hoping they add up. The ability of a CCI to create measurable change often hinges on this distinction. Successful initiatives engage in a careful analysis of the problem by exploring root causes and identifying all the pieces of the solution required to overcome the problem; initiatives that fall short tend to latch on to one aspect of the solution, or an eclectic mix of aspects, improving some symptoms but rarely addressing root causes.

For instance, when the Local Investment Commission set out to design a welfare-to-work initiative (before federal welfare reform legislation was enacted), it sought to both “create better choices and opportunities for those on welfare and better supports and assistance for those who hire them” (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1998). The problem LINC intended to address involved not only a lack of employment opportunities for welfare recipients, but also economic disincentives in the welfare system that discouraged recipients from obtaining

work. LINC tackled the problem using a three-pronged approach: 1) mobilizing the business community, 2) improving the employability of welfare recipients, and 3) changing welfare rules to support program innovation. Specific activities included creating a centralized process to create new jobs for welfare recipients in the corporate sector; “cashing out” welfare benefits to generate funds for employers to supplement hourly wages in newly created jobs, thereby creating a livable wage; allowing former welfare recipients to continue to receive health insurance through Medicaid, as well as child care assistance, while employed; creating neighborhood job centers to provide job training and placement services; shifting the focus of the Department of Social Services to providing supportive case management services to help individuals attain and sustain employment; and, finally, developing new performance-based contracts with local providers of employment training, which created incentives for increasing job retention rates. In the first three years of this initiative, more than 3,000 jobs were filled, with a retention rate of 73% (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1998). LINC’s integration of employment programs and services, business incentives, and welfare system changes successfully moved individuals from welfare to work, in a way that improved the quality of life for former welfare recipients and their families.

An underlying factor in this success was the role that welfare recipients themselves played in identifying system barriers and service gaps. CCI strategies are more likely to effectively address social problems when community residents are tapped for knowledge about

root causes and barriers to change. Successful CCIs allow for meaningful resident input on priorities and strategies, as opposed to “selling” residents on a preconceived strategy.

Planning and evaluation

An effective “theory of change” or collaborative planning process at the start of an initiative convenes stakeholders to collectively identify the concrete assumptions that inform both the overarching strategic approach and the specific programs or other efforts to be pursued. In the Cleveland Community Building Initiative, for example, the theory-of-change process forced participants to surface hypotheses about the connections among different social problems targeted by the effort. After examining how issues were interconnected, stakeholders could then design responses with sufficient scope to address the full range of factors contributing to poor outcomes.

In the Health Improvement Initiative, an iterative evaluation process provided regular opportunities to make mid-course corrections as strategies and programs were implemented. Every six months directors from the nine health partnerships came together, without TCWF staff, to engage in an open and honest discussion of what was going on in each site. These regular, facilitated retreats created a safe space for honest reflection and constructive criticism, as well as a learning community environment in which to share promising practices and develop responses to challenges and opportunities.

Very few CCIs consider the issue of scale explicitly, and even fewer think about scale upfront.

For those CCIs using an incremental process to build scope (e.g., by adding program elements over time), an iterative evaluation process allows for regular assessment of whether the program or strategy has successfully achieved scope by 1) targeting the full range of factors contributing to poor outcomes, and 2) engaging a wide enough range of stakeholders.

Flexible funding to respond to changing community context

Comprehensive community initiatives arose largely out of the limitations of attempting to solve social problems through narrowly defined, categorically funded services. Given the nature of foundation grant-making, however, a project-based, categorical approach is sometimes replicated within CCIs. By contrast, flexible funding allows a CCI to allocate resources to add critical staff capacity, acquire technical expertise, or take advantage of emerging opportunities. The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program credits flexible funding and authority to make spending decisions as key to its ability to be entrepreneurial and to quickly apply resources when and where needed; CCRP received funding from a collaborative group of 21 entities, with most of the money remaining flexible, although some foundations only supported specific programmatic activities.

Alignment of institutional self-interests and CCI goals

All CCIs must address the tension between the need for multiple agencies

and organizations to work together and the reality that they will often do so only to the extent to which collaboration is in each of their own direct interest. Successful CCIs identify and articulate very clear alignments of interest or garner enough resources to create alignment. In the Homeless Families Program, for instance, the \$30 million in housing vouchers provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development created an incentive for human service organizations and housing providers to explore their “natural” connection and collaborate on providing more effective services to homeless families.

Even the best *theoretical* reasons for agencies and organizations to develop comprehensive, collaborative responses to complex social problems will not drive action *in practice* unless the core interests of the stakeholders are aligned with and served by the new program or strategy. This is particularly true when the stakeholder is a politician or policymaker. Promoting evidence-based, well-designed solutions to pressing problems may raise visibility and interest, but may be insufficient to galvanize the commitment of city hall. Timing is also critical: does the mayor see an advantage to addressing the issue *at this time*? Is the solution one that is politically advantageous? What is the political payoff for the mayor or other city officials to work to address the needs of this particular constituency? How compelling is the case that the work will serve the city’s broader interests? Achieving alignment of interests along these lines is part hard work, part serendipity, as seen in the

case of the Urban Health Initiative, where two sites experienced a quantum leap in success following the election of a new mayor whose agenda dovetailed with the work of UHI. The UHI program in Detroit, initially known as “The Youth Connection,” became so integral to achieving the mayor’s priority of increasing youth enrollment in after-school programs that it was renamed “Mayor’s Time.”

Competent management and the right staff leadership

CCIs employ a variety of governance and management structures, ranging from formal local governance partnerships, to loose informal networks, to single lead organizations. For the CCIs examined, no particular governance structure was associated with improved outcomes. Good management and capable staff leadership, however, played a clear role in enabling the level of coordination and collaboration required to nurture comprehensive programs and strategies. Successful CCIs typically had a strong executive widely accepted by participating stakeholders and one to two dedicated staff positions per site. Capable executives generally had extensive place-based experience in the case of geographically-focused initiatives (e.g., deep pre-existing networks of relationships and an intimate knowledge of local social and political issues) or extensive policy experience and political contacts (e.g., RWJF hired a former mayor to lead the Urban Health Initiative’s national program office). These leaders focused on building relationships with new allies and negotiating to leverage additional resources, thereby facilitating the

achievement of scope while serving as the glue to hold the initiative together.

5. Scale

Scale is perhaps the most difficult dimension for a CCI to realize. Scale requires a CCI to achieve impacts beyond positive results for small groups of individuals and families, and “move the needle” on a social problem or condition for the community as a whole. Much of the disappointment in the limited success of comprehensive community initiatives emanates from their inability to go to scale; a CCI may achieve important positive outcomes for a number of individuals and families, but the number of community residents reached is often insufficient to achieve *community-level change*.

The experience of CCIs shows that most energy and effort is focused on the issues of scope (how best to deliver a set of integrated or comprehensive services or strategies that will achieve positive results for children and families) and sustainability (how to keep those programs going). Very few CCIs consider the issue of scale explicitly, and even fewer think about scale upfront. This results in the creation of “community change” strategies that prove difficult to scale up, or are, in fact, insufficient to generate change at the community level. Initiatives most successful in achieving broad community-level change are designed for scale, with an explicit focus on community change results and a framework for implementation that is feasible for achieving those results, as

described in the approaches discussed below.

Clear articulation and measurement of desired community change results

Both the Urban Health Initiative and the Health Improvement Initiative identified explicitly the “needle” they wished to move at the community level. UHI set out to “improve the health and safety of enough children to make a measurable difference in the child health statistics for the city as a whole” (Metz, 2005). Each UHI site collected statistics relevant to its unique conditions and needs (the number of youth homicides in Philadelphia, for example), and these specific statistics became the benchmarks by which success was measured. Similarly, the focus on improving “population health” in HII included social, economic, and cultural determinants of health, with each health partnership identifying specific indicators of health in its planning process. While the Local Investment Commission does not have a single desired outcome, its overarching objective is to strengthen neighborhood capacity and provide decentralized services in 28 Kansas City neighborhoods; LINC selects strategies designed to operate at this scale. For instance, when establishing a before- and after- school program, LINC created both a funding strategy and service delivery strategy that enabled the program to operate in nearly every elementary school in Kansas City.

A byproduct of the relative lack of emphasis on scale is that CCIs often do not track community-level outcomes or assess the threshold needed to make a measurable, community-wide difference

in a problem. For instance, in the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative’s Mayfair site, approximately 1,000 children were enrolled in a health insurance program. While this result is impressive, and undoubtedly needed, it is unclear what, if any, changes in health status occurred. Nor is it clear to what extent this achievement addressed the unmet need in the community. All too often, CCI programmatic activities are “scaled up” in very modest terms, rather than scaling up to make a true difference community-wide. The evaluation of the Ford Foundation’s Neighborhood and Family Initiative, for example, found that despite ambitious aspirations, most sites engaged in a “broad range of small, discrete, time-limited projects, the impact of which was limited (though important) to those individuals directly involved” (Chaskin, 2000).

Alignment of geography, strategies, funding, and goals

Community-level changes occur when sufficient resources are available to fully implement appropriate strategies to achieve desired outcomes in a target area. For instance, Urban Health Initiative sites could not achieve the goal of improving the health and safety of children citywide by incrementally improving programs; they needed a different set of strategies to operate at a different scale of impact. The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program achieved significant change in the South Bronx through an intensive, multifaceted set of physical development, social service, and capacity-building activities concentrated in a limited, well-defined geographical area. On the other hand, the Neighborhood Improvement

Initiative site in San Jose dramatically changed the physical environment of the Mayfair neighborhood through its extensive set of activities, but was unable to achieve “poverty reduction” because its programmatic activities were insufficient to meet needs at the neighborhood level. Many comprehensive community initiatives have attempted to address extensive and chronic unemployment; most have found this problem particularly difficult to tackle at the neighborhood level, realizing that a citywide or regional strategy would be more effective.

Creating the capacity for scale

The concept of community-level change is daunting. Understanding what it takes to make change at the community level often requires a fundamental paradigm shift among those charged with designing and implementing community change initiatives. The first step is to understand what scale means and what it takes to get there. The experience of the Urban Health Initiative is illuminating. UHI is one of the few CCIs that have made working at scale a central tenet of their initiative. Although the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation specified that the goal for each UHI site was to make a measurable difference in health and safety statistics *citywide*, the shift in thinking this required was not automatic; sites underwent a fairly extensive and frustrating education process before grasping the concept of scale and what it would take to go to scale. The breakthrough moment came as the initiative was beginning its implementation phase, and a national program office staff member created the “denominator exercise.” This exercise forced sites to calculate the number of

children or families they would need to reach to make a measurable difference in citywide statistics. The process was painful but revealing, creating a crucial turning point for the initiative when several sites realized they did not have the right staff capacities, relationships, or strategies to go to scale. Following this difficult work, sites were better positioned to develop an investment strategy that identified available resources and a plan of action for accessing these resources. It became clear in some sites that different leadership was required, as leaders with knowledge of existing systems and contacts at the right level would be critical to success (Metz, 2005).

Use of data to drive the initiative and influence policy change

Initiatives that go to scale, particularly beyond a single neighborhood, incorporate the development and use of data as a driving force to build grassroots community support, inform the general public, influence policymakers, design and modify strategies, and track and communicate results. For example, “[b]y highlighting where the needs are, where the dollars go, and making this information widely available, Philadelphia’s Report Card and Children’s Budget help add community pressure to bring the two – needs and dollars – into better alignment” (VanderWood, 2003). Data capacity not only supports public relations and communications, but also is central to the ability of an initiative to achieve desired results. The Health Improvement Initiative, therefore, framed data integration as a core systems change activity. Building the capacity of communities to organize and share data

across agencies and with the public also has been a focus for the Local Investment Commission and Urban Health Initiative. Examples of capacities built include integrated data systems for tracking clients (along with common intake and referral forms); community resource repositories that provide information about the availability of child care and after-school programs, job opportunities, and social service programs; and data warehouses that collect and organize data from multiple agencies to identify service gaps and trends and assist with cross-agency planning.

Linkages between the community and higher levels of civic organization, including city, state, and federal government

Even neighborhood-level change requires relationships and partnerships with entities beyond the neighborhood to strategically leverage initiative dollars, redirect public funding, and access needed expertise and skills. The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program was particularly successful in leveraging its resources to access additional funding. CCRP's funding strategy emphasized the use of "first-in" money to reduce the risk to investors as well as to strategically acquire the technical assistance needed to apply for funding through state and federal programs. This strategy allowed CCRP to leverage the \$9.4 million invested by the funding collaborative and to generate an additional \$44 million to support its activities (Spilka & Burns, 1998). In its parks and green space efforts, CCRP leveraged nearly \$100 for every \$1 invested (Spilka & Burns, 1998). Other initiatives, such as Pew's

Neighborhood Preservation Initiative and the Hewlett Foundation's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, were also intentional about building relationships, particularly between individual neighborhoods and city hall, as well as between neighborhoods and businesses and other community organizations. For example, the Hewlett Foundation, which saw the high level of engagement by the city of San Jose as instrumental to the success of its Mayfair site, dropped its West Oakland site in part due to an inability to garner interest and commitment from the Oakland mayor. CCRP, the Local Investment Commission, Health Improvement Initiative, and Urban Health Initiative all used creative strategies to tap into significant sources of state and federal funding. In most cases, the creativity paid off as a result of the individual and institutional relationships intentionally built and strengthened through the work of the initiatives.

6. Sustainability

Foundation-sponsored CCIs inevitably face the reality of the loss of core funding at the end of a demonstration period. Lessons from the early history of CCIs encourage foundations to set clear expectations for the duration of funding and to be more open about their intended involvement post-demonstration. Despite the frequent admonishment to CCIs to think about sustainability early, two barriers undermine good intentions. The first is a lack of clarity or agreement on *what* to sustain; thus, the expectations for what should be sustained (e.g., a particular set

A key factor in facilitating community ownership and sustaining an initiative over time is a community's sense of self-efficacy.

of programs, a specific partnership or collaborative process, the community's problem-solving capacity) need to be clear and mutually agreed upon. The second barrier to sustainability is a misalignment between how programs and supporting capacities are structured and funded initially and their long-term funding needs. Attention often focuses on how to find funding to sustain programmatic activities, with less attention paid to the processes and structures that support community organizing and planning (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2003). Pursuing categorical approaches to funding discrete programs at the expense of the supporting infrastructure only exacerbates pressure on thinly staffed organizations, often resulting in a reluctant scaling back of activities that the community has worked so hard to put in place.

For positive community-level changes to endure, CCIs need to approach sustainability with a focus beyond the quest for alternative sources of funding; sustainability also is a function of the degree to which an initiative has been integrated into the way the community does business, as well as the degree to which the community has expanded its capacity to engage in ongoing change. In looking at how well the CCIs studied here achieved sustainability, the analysis focuses on three elements:

1) *Institutionalization*: the extent to which the structures, relationships,

and activities of the initiative were embedded in the community;

- 2) *Financing*: how the initiative continued to fund itself after the end of a demonstration period; and
- 3) *Capacity*: the degree to which the initiative was able to bring to the community the skills and knowledge needed to continue to support innovative approaches to addressing complex social problems.

While several CCIs reviewed for this study successfully implemented programs, practices, and strategies to support lasting community change, a number of CCIs realized a far more limited degree of sustainability; given the relatively recent end of many CCI demonstration periods, however, it is perhaps too early to make definitive conclusions about sustainability, particularly with regard to the longevity of positive changes in community-level outcomes. Though the ability to extrapolate long-term lessons is limited, some practices and strategies are promising, as discussed below.

Community ownership of the initiative from the start

It seems obvious that an initiative should be "owned" by those who are expected to sustain it (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2003). Often, however, communities view foundation-sponsored CCIs as foundation-owned and therefore see the funder as responsible for sustainability. Making it clear that the community owns and is responsible for sustaining an

initiative is partly a matter of establishing and communicating clear expectations from the beginning. Setting up a decision-making process and providing leadership and capacity-building supports also are critical to allow community ownership to take hold.

A key factor in facilitating community ownership and sustaining an initiative over time is a community's sense of self-efficacy. Initiatives that maintain momentum for positive change, build trust, and increase the level of civic engagement among residents are more likely to sustain not only existing programs, structures, and relationships, but also *community-level outcomes*; such initiatives leave communities with increased capacity to identify and solve problems, attract private and public investment, and organize and advocate for change. In fact, it is this sense of community self-efficacy that *residents* most want sustained and that *initiative sponsors* tend to consider least when thinking about sustainability.

Building and sustaining the capacity of institutions rather than programs

Most CCIs, either by design or by necessity, engage in institution building. When initiatives focus on building and sustaining the capacity of institutions to engage in the ongoing work of community change, rather than sustaining particular programs, it is more likely that the community will be left with the ongoing capacity for change. Creating new institutions that “fill the gaps” in terms of governance capacity or service delivery, especially in disenfranchised communities, is hard work and risky. Such work can pay off,

though, leaving a community with much-needed programs and a permanent vehicle for collective problem-solving. Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's Neighborhood Partnership Initiative left several community organizations with expanded capacity to serve residents and provide programs due to its emphasis on organizational capacity building. In particular, Harlem Children's Zone has become a national model for the efficient and effective delivery of youth development programs, at a scale that reaches nearly every child living in the 60-block area of Central Harlem (The Bridgespan Group, 2004).

Most CCIs avoid starting from scratch when it comes to institution building, and the challenges faced by the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative illustrate why. While the Hewlett Foundation did not intend to create new neighborhood intermediaries at the outset of the NII, the targeted neighborhoods either lacked the necessary institutional capacity or the existing organizations did not have the community's trust. The challenge of building basic institutional capacity while simultaneously engaging in a comprehensive community change process proved overwhelming for the initiative. Of the three NII sites, only the Mayfair Improvement Initiative (MII) became a successful “start-up,” due in large part to the attention and persistence shown by the Community Foundation of Silicon Valley, Hewlett's managing partner in San Jose. CFSV was instrumental in building the capacity of MII to raise funds and structure systems to prepare the grantee to stand on its own as an organization; the foundation engaged in a deliberate process of knowledge transfer and relationship

The ability to secure such long-term funding requires knowledge of the intricacies of public funding streams and how to access them.

building by providing MII with technical assistance on resource development and introducing MII to its own donor base and other corporate and business entities. To its credit, CFSV insisted that the focus on sustainability begin early, in year four of the initiative, rather than toward the end of year seven (the initiative's final year) as Hewlett had planned (Community Foundation Silicon Valley, 2005). Today, MII is going strong; it was chosen by the city of San Jose to lead the local planning process for the city's Strong Neighborhoods Initiative, which is modeled on MII's community-planning process. Typically, a less painful strategy is to select well-established lead organizations, facilitate their expansion into new programmatic areas, and strengthen their capacity as community "change agents" and capacity builders; CCIs in this study that succeeded in leaving behind stronger institutional capacity did so by paying as much attention to building "change agent" capacity as to building "service provider" capacity, if not more.

Building change agent capacity means helping the lead organization 1) develop stronger ties with the community, 2) build relationships across sectors and within the political arena, and 3) learn to effectively use data in strategy design and problem solving. The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program, Local Investment Commission, and other successful initiatives have an explicit community-organizing component that often requires an initiative-funded staff member to serve with the lead organization or neighborhood

collaborative to expressly forge meaningful connections with residents. As seen in the false start with Hewlett's Mayfair neighborhood, an institution *in* the community is not necessarily a *community* institution.

Building on existing capacity has significant merit, if there is alignment and fit with the initiative's goals. In testing the feasibility of expanding the role of established community development corporations as agents for community change, CCRP was successful largely because they selected strong organizations and adopted an incremental approach to change that allowed the CDCs to take on more breadth gradually. The CDCs also were careful to expand organically, taking on projects and programs that were natural extensions of their core missions. CCRP offered technical assistance to help the CDCs manage the organizational challenges that arose from this growth. The combination of organizational development assistance and pragmatic growth allowed the formerly housing-focused organizations to take on a range of community change activities in a sustainable fashion (four of the six original CDCs participating in CCRP remain formidable agents of change in the South Bronx).

Perhaps the most important benefit of institution building is the *adaptive* capacity that Harlem Children's Zone, Abyssinian Development Corporation (a partner in CCRP), Mayfair Improvement Initiative, and other community-based organizations have built, allowing them to be entrepreneurial and nimble in the face of changes in the political,

economic, demographic, and fiscal landscape. One initiative director summed it up by saying, “our success was due to being able to deal with—and take advantage of—surprises, accidents, and crises.”

Connections to the existing civic infrastructure, especially the public sector

Forging strong connections to the public sector is critical, particularly for CCIs designed to fill gaps in community governance and services. The Cleveland Community Building Initiative, The Atlanta Project, and Ford’s Neighborhood Partners Initiative struggled with sustainability in part because, as new creations, their governance structures lacked natural connections to their communities’ civic infrastructure, which, in turn, hindered their ability to garner long-term financial and institutional support. Lack of focus on building civic connections was a strategic design flaw, as acknowledged by participants in each of these initiatives.

The Local Investment Commission is perhaps the best example of a CCI that was able to create a new governance entity and successfully embed this entity within the existing systems and structures of the community. LINC arose from conversations between a prominent Kansas City businessman and the director of the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS), through which the idea emerged to create a local governance partnership to address a crisis in the local DSS office and improve services and outcomes for children and families. The resulting

commission of citizens, with the power to influence public sector spending, thus had close ties with state and local agencies from the start. The structure of LINC effectively balances the need to develop strong relationships with local politicians, business leaders, and service providers and the need to retain autonomy. LINC’s 36 citizen commissioners serve as individuals (not as corporate representatives, for example). The citizen board is supported by a professional cabinet consisting of elected officials, nonprofit service providers, and public agency staff, who provide advice and expertise to the commission but do not have voting power.

Strategic connections to the political arena

Though many CCIs continue to struggle with how to manage relationships in the political arena, forging relationships with elected officials and formal governance bodies in the public sector can improve both the effectiveness and durability of community change initiatives. The Health Improvement Initiative took one approach to building such relationships by creating the California Center for Health Improvement. The CCHI helps sustain the work started in the original nine HII sites by providing politically neutral research data on population health issues to state and local government agencies and the state legislature, thereby cultivating awareness and knowledge of a diverse constituency. This translates into support both for the direct funding of programs and for a “population health paradigm” that encourages policymakers to view and address community health issues in a more comprehensive manner.

Creating locally sustainable strategies means thinking about long-term funding upfront and being realistic about the capacity of a community to generate the ongoing resources needed to maintain the work.

The CCHI provides one of only a few examples of how to successfully institutionalize a new organization with a role in both state and local systems reform efforts.

The Urban Health Initiative's campaign strategy exemplifies another approach to building relationships with governance bodies. In both Philadelphia and Detroit, the site "change agents" actively courted candidates for mayor and other elected positions, not in a typically partisan manner, but through holding community forums for candidates to explain their proposed policies on issues affecting children and families. These forums not only helped to shape the broader political agenda by creating a specific space for such discussions to occur, but provided an opportunity to educate future elected officials while offering each a ready-made platform with built-in grassroots support. Sites also created mechanisms that added value to the work of government as a whole, such as the creation of data warehouses widely useful to public agencies, and so positioned themselves as reliable partners able to produce return on investment of institutional support. The preliminary results of the campaign approach show the potential benefits to sustainability of positioning CCI stakeholders to regularly convene community discussions that help establish improved outcomes for children and families as a permanent part

of the political agenda regardless of which candidate is in office.

Long-term sustainable funding

Developing and maintaining access to funding streams and other sources of financial support are, of course, central to sustainability. CCIs have successfully secured long-term funding in various ways, most effectively by tapping into long-term sources of funding from the beginning. For instance, the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program leveraged its private foundation funding to secure public dollars from the city as well as from federal agencies, setting new programs and activities on a stable funding base from the beginning. The Local Investment Commission identified an untapped source of matching federal funds, which they capitalized on for the benefit of local provider organizations as well as their own operations; this "free money" generates the core of LINC's ongoing institutional operating budget. The ability to secure such long-term funding requires knowledge of the intricacies of public funding streams and how to access them. For instance, when LINC pulled together multiple sources of state and federal money to create a before- and after- school program, they had to understand the various eligibility requirements and application processes for funds; in fact, they leveraged an existing relationship with the key state agency to negotiate a streamlined

application process to access the funding in a cost-effective way. Similarly, CCRP often provided specific technical assistance or brought in specialized expertise to help community development corporations apply for public funding.

The Urban Health Initiative also focused on building deep knowledge of funding streams to capitalize on opportunities to pool, restructure, or otherwise capture significant public funding. UHI sites experienced significant success in securing new sources of financial support to sustain their work. For instance, the Maryland Opportunity Compacts developed by Safe and Sound in Baltimore created a mechanism through which savings produced by system enhancements could be reinvested elsewhere in the community. In Detroit, the Mayor's Time initiative partnered with local government to pool state and local dollars to secure larger matches from federal entitlement programs. UHI sites were able to tap into funding streams in these creative ways due to a dedicated staff position at each site with the responsibility for researching and developing new financing options. In addition, a national-level funding consultant was engaged to provide ongoing support to all sites.

Pew's Neighborhood Preservation Initiative and Hewlett's Neighborhood Improvement Initiative both partnered with local community foundations, in part to access local sources of private funding. In the case of the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative, community foundations in each of the nine cities were required to match 50% of the yearly grant. This co-investment

strategy encouraged local buy-in and created a stake in the sustainability of local efforts. At the end of the demonstration period, the sites had an existing base of local financial support; even though they were unable to fully replace the funding that Pew had provided, all of the local agencies and their NPI-initiated programs were still in operation several years after the end of the initiative

7. Conclusions

In summarizing the ability of these CCIs to achieve and sustain community-level change, it is interesting to note that not a single CCI was successful going against the grain, that is, pursuing an objective in a manner that did not fit the community's history, capacity, and readiness for change. Similarly, while the work of a CCI is complex, it is far less difficult when the initiative is structured with careful alignment among desired outcomes, strategies, and resources (money and people). For foundations and other sponsors of comprehensive community change initiatives, the findings reported here have several key implications.

Plan, operate, and evaluate based on a systems- and community- change framework.

CCIs today have a better understanding of the need to focus on policy change and systems reform to achieve community-level outcomes. For the most part, though, CCIs remain woefully ill-equipped to engage in systems change; comprehensive community initiatives need operational models and strategies to achieve systems change,

and capable staff and institutions to operate in the political sphere. Changing the way business is done requires knowing how the system works: What are the sub-systems and how do they interact? Who are the key decision makers? What are the embedded

Improvement, each health partnership in the HII received policy-related technical assistance; however, most of the initiative's systems change activities ultimately focused on service integration. Nevertheless, the local partnerships understood the options for

Foundations need to make sure they are ready to embark on a community change process before engaging communities.

incentives and reinforcements that keep the system operating as it does? What are the regulations and operating procedures that govern existing practices? The ability to manipulate rules, redirect funding, facilitate process reengineering, create new policy, and encourage cross-agency collaboration requires an intricate knowledge of agency politics, legislation, regulations, and bureaucratic procedures.

Comprehensive community initiatives that seek to engage in systems change need knowledgeable, dedicated staff with systems expertise. They also need leaders and intermediaries who have or can build relationships at the right level to be taken seriously by those in power. *Systems knowledge* uncovers opportunities to streamline, integrate, restructure, and redirect; *relationships* give life to those opportunities.

Unless CCI sponsors pay close attention to what systems change really involves, this goal is likely to remain amorphous and impossible to attain. For its Health Improvement Initiative, The California Wellness Foundation operationally defined four elements of systems change: service integration, policy development, finance/budget reform, and data integration. Through the California Center for Health

systems change, and the foundation was able to track the changes that did occur. This approach made the idea of systems change a concrete, feasible concept for the health partnerships, and although they largely focused on "sub-systems," they achieved tangible successes. The sites did not become bogged down in struggling with how to tackle "the system."

In addition to systems knowledge and connections, CCIs need another capacity to engage in systems change: the ability to create, analyze, package, and disseminate information to influence policymakers and the public. The three initiatives that made a serious effort to engage in systems change (Urban Health Initiative, Health Improvement Initiative, Local Investment Commission) all relied on data aggregation and communications strategies to change the context of public debate, inform policymakers of the effects on their constituents of current problems and proposed strategies, and provide data tools of value to both the community and the public sector.

Choose focused and affordable strategies.

Across the CCIs studied here, a key factor in *achieving* community-level change was employing the right strategies to produce the desired outcomes. Developing the right strategies requires a thoughtful process for considering issues of timing and sequencing. CCIs that pursue too many goals simultaneously are likely to spread their capacity and resources too thin to accomplish meaningful change.

An important factor in *sustaining* positive changes is how *affordable* the strategies are to the community during and after foundation funding is available. Creating locally sustainable strategies means thinking about long-term funding upfront and being realistic about the capacity of a community to generate the ongoing resources needed to maintain the work. CCIs that achieved greater success in sustaining their work tended to 1) leverage their CCI-related funding to acquire additional private or public funding or 2) create long-term financing strategies from the beginning. On the other hand, CCIs that used most of their funding to create operational programs, intending to address sustainable funding for these programs at the end of the demonstration period, tended to find themselves scaling back programs significantly, for lack of sufficient resources. One promising approach to generating locally sustainable strategies is to channel community-generated resources into the programmatic implementation of CCI activities, while using national funding for capacity building.

Develop capacity for the strategic use of data.

A theory of change that clearly delineates desired outcomes and the operating framework to achieve these outcomes is important; however, CCIs also need to bridge the gap that often arises between desired outcomes and planned programs and strategies. The logic model arrows that link planned activities to outcomes and impact often represent a leap of faith; to confirm the true significance of these arrows requires a rigorous analysis of hard data, as in the “denominator exercise” described above. One can imagine, for example, the change in strategic thinking among staff in Philadelphia Safe and Sound when their goal shifted from “reducing youth homicide by increasing youth participation in after-school activities” to “reducing youth homicides by 50% by, among other things, increasing the number of kids in after-school activities by 96,000” (VanderWood, 2003). Parameters such as these provide specific benchmarks against which staff can evaluate alternative strategies. Employing demographic data, program participation and service data, and estimates of effectiveness through best practice information, the feasibility of bringing certain strategies to scale can be realistically assessed. The denominator exercise was a turning point for the Urban Health Initiative because it generated specific performance targets and exposed the limitations of planned strategies.

Though staff at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the UHI national program office asked sites to collect and use data throughout their planning process, prior to the

denominator exercise, the sites did not fully grasp why they were being asked to collect the data or how they should use the data for strategic planning (Jellinek, 2004b). In addition to providing resources for data acquisition, therefore, foundations must also invest in building the capacity of sites to *use* data and develop an education process that creates a genuine understanding of how a data-driven approach can help sites realize their goals.

Planning for change, conflicts, and risks.

Foundations need to make sure they are ready to embark on a community change process before they engage communities. This means that foundations should make sure that they are able to assess community readiness, have a system in place for developing readiness and the other long term community capacity, and have strategies for addressing the well documented conflicts and risks so that they can lead to opportunities for community and Foundation transformation. Funders generally fail to plan for these challenges. They find themselves having to react and “reinvent the wheel,” which leads to frustration, disillusionment, and significant delays in progress. Foundations are often accused of needless meddling in the implementation of a CCI. This behavior tends to occur when roles and responsibilities are not clearly demarcated. Foundations that cause frequent shifts in direction or change expectations and requirements can seriously undermine the potential of a CCI to be successful. Most foundations navigate a fine line between being prescriptive enough to ensure grantees stay true to the objectives of the

initiative and respecting local autonomy to make decisions based on knowing what is best in each community.

At times, however, a foundation should be more directive to avoid major problems down the road. Generally speaking, more direction is required when there is a need to avert or correct a disconnect or misalignment in the theory of change. For instance, in conceptualizing the Urban Health Initiative, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation staff knew that local site leaders needed to be high-caliber professionals with extensive experience in the policy arena. They even budgeted for program director positions at significantly higher levels than typical. But when it came time to hire local program directors, RWJF staff members deferred to the sites; several sites hired less experienced, service-oriented directors. Though apprehensive, the foundation went along with these hiring decisions. Despite commitment and good intentions, the lack of policy expertise and leadership skills among the inexperienced directors limited their ability to design and execute effective strategies, nearly derailing the initiative. In retrospect, RWJF staff realized that they should have been more directive in the critical area of staffing (Jellinek, 2004a).

The Hewlett Foundation faced a similar dilemma in its Neighborhood Improvement Initiative. Hewlett’s theory of change involved a resident-driven planning process for creating a “comprehensive, coordinated, multi-year strategy to address the problems that impair the quality of life” in its targeted neighborhoods (Brown & Fiester, 2007). Hewlett was frustrated, however, by the

plans that sites developed: essentially laundry lists of projects, not strategic plans to “connect fragmented efforts” to reduce poverty. Hewlett was reluctant to push back, concerned that this would be viewed as not honoring residents’ priorities. Ultimately, Hewlett did impose an explicit outcomes-based framework to sharpen the initiative’s focus, but the timing, well into the implementation phase, did not sit well with most of NII’s participants.

Change often involves conflict. With any concerted effort to create change in a community, friction, disagreement, and community conflicts are likely to emerge, especially if the initiative supports the empowerment of residents. Foundations must anticipate, acknowledge, and prepare for conflict, both among community stakeholders and between the community and the initiative sponsors; in particular, foundations must prepare for risks and conflicts that they traditionally avoid, but that are critical to encouraging community change. For example, foundations need to think through how they will respond when their executives and boards want to know about outcomes. Anticipating issues and putting in place systems and processes to address them will help prevent and mitigate potential conflicts. Principles for handling conflict should be carefully developed, including clearly defined limits around how grantees may utilize a foundation’s financial and other support.

To effectively manage change, foundations should be as clear, consistent, and *insistent* as possible, early in the process, regarding their expectations, the theory of change, and the underlying assumptions. Ensuring

clarity and agreement upfront, before becoming too vested in a particular community or set of partners, reduces the need for disruptive shifts and increases the likelihood of success. Foundations should make sure all the right pieces are on the board and that everyone knows the rules of the game; then they should let the communities play.

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