

From competition to collaboration, what will it take?

Developing collective impact as a social innovation
in the UK

Master thesis for

Master of Arts in Social Innovation

Danube University Krems, Austria

Ms Tara Anderson

Primary Advisor: Msc, Remko Berkhout

Secondary Advisor: Mag.a Denisa Vesely

London, UK, August 2015



Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many people for advice, input and feedback on this thesis.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Remko Berkhout, for his encouragement, theoretical knowledge and practical insight. His ability to think outside existing frameworks, to challenge my arguments, and his reminders not to take myself too seriously, were greatly appreciated.

This thesis would not have been possible without the collective impact practitioners who gave their time to share their learning. Their willingness to contribute to the research embodies the values and philosophy of collective impact work.

Thank you to the team at the Finance Innovation Lab for welcoming me to their meetings and events and being so open in sharing their experiences. Particular thanks go to Jennifer Morgan for sharing her experience, and arranging interviews with other Finance Innovation Lab members. Thank you to Chris Hewett and Christine Berry for their time and insights.

Thank you to Louisa Mitchell of West London Zone, for her honest 'warts and all' reflections. Thank you to Matthew Pike for sharing his previous research and future collective impact plans.

I also owe thanks to my colleagues at London Early Years Foundation - Louise Cooper and Catherine Whitecourt - who gave their time to review earlier versions of the thesis. Their encouragement on Monday mornings after a weekend of reading and writing was gratefully received.

Finally I acknowledge the support of my partner, Andrew Curtis. Without his encouragement, I would not have enrolled in the Masters in the first place. His reminder to come back to the research question when I had headed off on a tangent, his critical reflections, and not forgetting the regular cups of coffee, added great value to the finished product.

Abstract

There is increasing recognition that cross-sector collaboration is crucial in addressing entrenched and systemic social challenges. In the UK, collaborative initiatives appear to have been eroded somewhat by the dominant neoliberal ideology that encourages individualism and competition and results in fragmented approaches to social change. Collective impact is emerging as a socially innovative practice around the world, offering an advanced form of structured collaboration with the potential to significantly increase impact in addressing systemic challenges. This thesis explores the conditions required to make collective impact work in the UK through an analysis of barriers and enablers. It will draw on a review of international collective impact literature and two London-based collective impact projects – The Finance Innovation Lab and West London Zone. It will be argued that the key to developing collective impact in the UK is a new generation of independent, third sector backbone organisations that are sufficiently funded, promoted and supported.

Keywords: backbone organisations, collective impact, social innovation, collaboration, systems change

Reflections and learning

This thesis began with two observations. Firstly, economic inequality in the UK is far beyond acceptable levels. Secondly, working with charities and social enterprises over the past ten years I have noticed a cognitive dissonance – while impact reports boasted positive results, the issues these organisations were tackling were not shifting on a wider level. Moving from Australia to the UK I was surprised to discover how fragmented the UK charity and social enterprise sector is, with a proliferation of small charities and social enterprises, many competing with each other but ultimately working towards the same goal. Despite their work to improve conditions for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and the hype of social innovation as the ‘next big thing’, entrenched social challenges such as economic inequality remain stubbornly in place. These observations led me to the practice of collective impact as a framework for combining resources for greater impact, and I formulated the research question: how can collective impact be used to reduce economic inequality in the UK?

During the course of the research it became evident that the scope of my ambition was greater than the scope of the thesis. I am aware that it is difficult (if not impossible) to prove causality between collective impact and a reduction in economic inequality, and so the research question was refined to look more specifically at the conditions required for collective impact to be practiced as a social innovation in the UK, using a reduction in economic inequality as a case in point.

I have a normative understanding of social innovation and believe that it should have the intent and effect of justice, empowerment and equality. I believe there is huge opportunity to address complex challenges and achieve systems change, such as a reduction in economic inequality, if resources are combined in more creative ways through collective impact. This thesis sets out to explore how that could be made possible in the UK context.

Contents

Chapter One - Introduction	7
Chapter Two - Methodology	11
Theory and process	11
Literature review.....	11
Case study analysis	12
Interviews	12
Observations	14
Limitations to the study	16
A note on economic inequality	17
Definitions of social innovation abound	18
Categorising social innovation definitions	19
The argument for a normative definition of social innovation	20
The march of neoliberalism	24
The UK's 'Big Society': the privatisation and austerity agenda	25
Implications of neoliberalism for collaborative styles of working	26
Why the approach is flawed: the proof is in economic inequality	27
Income inequality	28
Wealth inequality.....	29
Poverty.....	29
Chapter Five - collective impact as an alternative approach	31
The what and why of collaboration	31
Collective impact – an emerging approach	33
Collective impact as a social innovation	35
A brief look at the international collective impact landscape	36
Chapter Six – primary barriers and enablers of collective impact in the UK	40
Primary barriers	44
Existing services with established theories of change	44
Time required to build relationships.....	45
Ego and power dynamics	46
Inflexible understanding of perceived roles	48
The political and cultural climate in the UK.....	49
Lack of long-term and flexible funding	51
Primary enablers	52
Understand the ideology and values driving the system	52
Stand between the margins and the mainstream	53
Embrace contestation.....	55
Engage willing individuals	56
Use the context to create urgency for change.....	59
Rethink assumptions about ego and power dynamics	60
Lead by stepping back.....	61
Locate the backbone in the third sector	64
Follow a process instead of a tactical plan.....	65
Chapter Seven – next steps for collective impact in the UK	67
Food for thought: analysing the barriers and enablers	68
A case in point: reducing economic inequality	69
A backbone building agenda is the first step	70
What type of backbones are needed?	71

Where will the new backbones come from?	73
How will the backbones be funded?	74
How will impact be captured?	75
Where will the backbones sit?	76
Objections and counter-arguments	76
A recipe for action	77
Remaining questions for future research	80
Concluding remarks	82
References	84
Listings and tables	97
Abbreviations	98
Appendix One – collective impact reference articles	99
Appendix Three – international collective impact examples.....	108
Appendix Four – UK-based self-identified backbone organisations.....	111
Appendix Five – West London Zone theory of change.....	114

Chapter One - Introduction

Collaboration is becoming a key social innovation strategy across the world (Moore and Hartley 2008; Sorensen and Torfing 2011, cited in Hartley et al, 2013, p 826; Pike, 2014) supported by research demonstrating that multi-actor collaboration strengthens and improves all phases of the social innovation process (see Chapter Five). However in the UK collaborative approaches have been eroded by the rise of neoliberalism – an economic and political ideology based on ‘small government’, reduced public welfare, deregulation, privatisation and the replacement of the ‘common good’ with ‘individual responsibility’. This ideology has normalised competition and individualism as an approach to social change, where ‘heroic’ individuals and organisations jostle to invent independent solutions to major social problems, often working at odds with each other and exponentially increasing the perceived resources required to make meaningful progress. Research has shown that where companies are competing they will act to maximise their own profits, even when the end result is that they are worse off than if they had acted as a collective (Olson, 1971, p 9-10). When this competitive logic is applied to solving entrenched social challenges, such as economic inequality, the result is disastrous.

Competition fosters social innovation processes that are trapped within the narrow confines of a single organisation, which severely limits their impact. The UK is no exception – it has over 160,000 registered charities, a growing social enterprise and social innovation movement, an established welfare state and a range of private organisations that are increasing their focus on creating ‘social good’¹. Good intentions and hard work abounds. And yet entrenched social challenges such as economic inequality for example, remain static or are deteriorating² (see Chapter Four).

The complexity and longevity of social challenges such as economic inequality make it impossible for a single organisation or group of organisations to solve alone. There is a broad hunger for processes of real change and widespread belief that the strategies being used to solve our most difficult challenges are too superficial to get at the deeper sources of those

¹ For example, Unilever’s Project Sunlight campaign is a platform that helps unite and amplify the efforts of a growing community of people who believe it is possible to build a world where everyone lives well and lives sustainably. In the words of Unilever CEO Paul Polman: “we are finding out quite rapidly that to be successful long term we have to ask: what do we actually give to society to make it better? We’ve made it clear to the organisation that it’s our business model, starting from the top” (Wilcox, 2013). See <https://brightfuture.unilever.co.uk>.

² Economic inequality in the UK is at its highest level in three decades. Serious questions have been raised about the fairness of the income and wealth gap between the rich and the poor, or as Joseph Stiglitz suggests, the 1% and the other 99% (Stiglitz, 2015, pp 88-94). See Chapter Four for further analysis.

problems (Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015). New models are required to bring about change at a system-wide level, which will require re-learning of what it means to collaborate and how to go about it.

Collective impact emerged in response to the recognition that traditional models of social change weren't going far enough. It offers an advanced form of structured cross-sector collaboration with a systemic change intent that was first codified by two American social scientists, John Kania and Mark Kramer, in 2011. They name five essential criteria that distinguish collective impact from other forms of collaboration or partnership: a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and a backbone organisation that coordinates the project. The backbone organisation is arguably the most important element of collective impact - it provides the impetus and momentum that enable the other four conditions of collective impact.

Many organisations around the world have begun to use collective impact as an answer to the established need for greater cross-sector collaboration. While collective impact is an emerging field of practice, there are early indicators that collective impact has the potential to increase impact in addressing entrenched and complex challenges. It also has potential to counter neoliberal approaches to social change that keep the third sector disintegrated, competing for limited funds, and more and more incapable of generating social innovations capable of addressing challenges such as economic inequality.

Much of the current conversation and practice of collective impact appears to be located in the USA. As an entry point into research on collective impact in the UK, this thesis explores the conditions required for collective impact to be practiced as a social innovation in the UK, focussing on the barriers and enablers of collective impact in the UK context. Analysis of these barriers and enablers will be used to discuss what will support the growth of collective impact in the UK. It will draw on the experience of two London-based case studies - West London Zone (WLZ) and The Finance Innovation Lab (FIL) (see Chapter Six for an overview of these organisations), each of which offers practical insights to pave the way for similar initiatives in the UK.

The thesis will commence with a theoretical overview (Chapters Two to Five) before delving into the practical examples and recommendations (Chapters Six and Seven).

Chapter Two describes the research methodology applied and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Three will explore the field of social innovation, often promoted as the solution to entrenched social challenges such as economic inequality, and highlight the worrying trend of social innovation being co-opted by neoliberal interests.

Chapter Four will contextualise the discussion geographically, exploring how the rise of neoliberalism in the UK has shaped a culture of individualism and competition, which embeds a mindset of isolated impact led by 'heroic' individuals or organisations.

In Chapter Five the practice of collective impact will be explored, examining its emergence and highlighting its success to date in the USA as an example of its potential in other parts of the world.

Chapter Six will provide an analysis of the primary barriers and enablers of collective impact in the UK context using the experience of WIL and FIL, revealing six primary barriers and nine key enablers.

Chapter Seven draws on the barriers and enablers to explore the next steps for collective impact in the UK, focussing on the role of backbone organisations in facilitating effective collective impact. Reducing economic inequality will be discussed as an example of the type of systemic challenge suited to collective impact, and recommendations will be made for future practice and research.

By exploring the barriers and enablers of collective impact in the UK, it is hoped that this study will begin a discussion about how collective impact could be applied to address major social challenges in the UK, such as reducing economic inequality. Progress should not have to rest on the herculean efforts of lone social innovators – it will take collaborative systems change if we are to make significant progress. This thesis was written in a spirit of optimism with a belief that change is entirely possible. As Pike (2014, p 46) highlights, the challenge in the UK is less a

“poverty of resources” than a “poverty of ambition and imagination”. This thesis sits in that void and aims to make a contribution to understanding how a new approach might be made possible.

Chapter Two - Methodology

The research question to be tested is: what conditions will facilitate the practice of collective impact as a social innovation in the UK? Central to addressing the research question will be an analysis of the enablers and barriers of collective impact, using the research methods outlined in this chapter. Economic inequality will be referred to as an example of the type of systemic challenge that could be addressed through collective impact, emphasising the role and nature of backbone organisations in catalysing and sustaining collective impact.

Theory and process

Four complimentary research approaches were applied that allowed for a theoretical analysis that was grounded in practical application within the UK context:

- A literature review of the emerging theory of collective impact, locating the concept in theories of collaboration, systems change, collective action and social innovation.
- Case study analysis of two London-based backbone organisations (FIL and WLZ) via review of organisational reports and websites.
- Qualitative interviews with employees and partner organisations of FIL and WLZ.
- Attendance at and observation of events run by FIL and WLZ.

Each approach is described in more detail below.

Literature review

The literature review involved an analysis of the emerging theoretical basis for collective impact. A search on Google Scholar and the British Library collections on April 11th 2015 revealed only seven journal articles with 'collective impact' in the title (using the definition of

the term used in this thesis³), all from within the USA (listed in Appendix One). In addition to these articles, the theoretical basis for collective impact utilised in this study is limited to 18 articles published in the Stanford Social Innovation Review (listed in Appendix One). The Stanford Social Innovation Review was heavily referenced as it contains the majority of the writing on collective impact to date.

Collective impact will be discussed in relation to complementary schools of thought including systems change, collective action, collaboration and social innovation. The analysis will build on past coursework completed for the Master of Arts in Social Innovation that has since been published by the Centre for Social Innovation in Vienna and Pioneers Post (see Anderson et al, 2015; Anderson and Curtis; 2014).

Case study analysis

The case study analysis was completed by reviewing the websites and printed reports of WLZ and FIL. These included:

- Finance Innovation Lab (2012) *For People and Planet*, WWF and ICAEW, London, UK
- Sinha, Rachel and Millar, Charlotte (2015) *The Finance Innovation Lab: A Strategy for Systems Change*, Finance Innovation Lab, London, UK
- Finance Innovation Lab (2014) *The Finance Innovation Lab: Our Work*, ICAEW, London, UK
- Finance Innovation Lab (2015 C) <http://financeinnovationlab.org>
- West London Zone (2015) *Concluding Steering Group Meeting*, West London Zone, London, UK, <http://westlondonzone.org/about/blog/>
- West London Zone (2015) <http://westlondonzone.org>

Interviews

Interviews were used to provide qualitative data to support and complement the theoretical research. The method was essentially 'qualitative', as identified by Mackay (1993, pp 303-304):

³ The term 'collective impact' has been used to refer to other methodologies and processes that are similar but unrelated to the concept of collective impact as defined in the Stanford Social Innovation Review (Kania and Kramer, 2011).

“qualitative research sets out to investigate attitudes, values and beliefs without the use of structured survey techniques which are designed to use numbers. Qualitative research is deliberately designed to bypass the rational; to avoid the use of direct questions, especially those involving ‘why?’; to minimise any pressure on ... respondents to give answers which fit a particular survey instrument.”

Interviewees were invited to participate in the study via email, followed by a face-to-face meeting to explain the purpose of the research and the interview process. Interviews were conducted by phone or in person and lasted between one and two hours. Interviews were conducted between April and May 2015. All the interviews were recorded. The interview guide used (see Appendix Two) was designed to stimulate organic conversations as a helpful way to research complex phenomena. The interview guide was applied flexibly and openly. ‘How’ questions were predominantly used, accompanied by follow-up questions (both pre-planned and spontaneous) to deepen insight.

Interviewees were:

Jen Morgan – Co-Founder, FIL – May 7th 2015

Jen is one of the four Co-Founders of FIL and leads on new business development and championing the work of FIL to the outside world.

Chris Hewett – Fellow, FIL – 21st May 2015

Chris leads FIL’s policy work and chairs the Transforming Finance Network.

Christine Berry – Researcher, New Economics Foundation and Trustee, FIL – 15th May 2015

Christine is a Researcher at New Economics Foundation, one of FIL’s partner organisations. Christine represents the New Economics Foundation in the Transforming Finance Network led by FIL, and is a Trustee of FIL.

Louisa Mitchell - Director, WLZ – April 9th 2015

As Director of West London Zone Louisa manages operations and the development of their collective impact approach.

Matthew Pike – Managing Director, Matthew Pike and Associates – April 21st 2015

Matthew supports the West London Alliance (a partnership of seven local councils in West London). He is the author of Mass Collaboration, a discussion paper produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research examining how a collective impact approach could be used to transform the impact of public funding.

Observations

Events led by WLZ and FIL were attended and observed. Notes were taken to record key observations. The following events were attended:

FIL team meeting – 10:00am-12:30pm, May 7th 2015

This meeting was held at the offices of WWF-UK in London and was attended by:

- Jen Morgan, Founder, FIL (meeting Chair)
- Chris Hewett, Fellow, FIL
- Pauline Pinnock, Marketing Manager, FIL
- Anna Laycock, Strategist, FIL

FIL Transforming Finance Network meeting – 4:00pm-6:00pm, 21st May 2015

This meeting was held at the offices of New Economics Foundation in London. The purpose was discussion about what the new political landscape (following re-election of the UK Conservative Government) means for finance reform. The meeting was attended by:

- Chris Hewett, Fellow, FIL (meeting Chair)
- Christine Berry, Researcher, New Economics Foundation
- Fiona Travers-Smith, Campaigns Manager, Move Your Money
- Marloes Nicholls, Finance Programme Manger, Meteos
- Sophia Tickell, Partner, Meteos
- Jonathan Hoare, Head of Investor Networks, ShareAction UK
- Andrew Thompson, Grants Manager, Friends Provident Foundation

FIL Unfinished Business: Reform and Innovation in Finance – 6:30pm-9:00pm, 9th June 2015

This event was held at St Paul's Cathedral in London and was attended by approximately 200 representatives from both within and outside the finance sector. It included a panel discussion followed by networking drinks. The speakers were:

- Chris Hewett, Fellow, FIL (meeting Chair)
- George Graham, Head of Strategic Insight, Royal Bank of Scotland
- Tony Greenham, Head of Finance and Business, New Economics Foundation
- Julia Groves, Chair, UK Crowdfunding Association
- Patricia Jackson, Strategic Advisor Risk Governance and Regulation, EY
- James Vaccaro, Head of Corporate Strategy, Triodos Bank

WLZ Theory of Change Workshop – 12:00pm-2:00pm, March 13th 2015

This workshop was attended by 14 organisations⁴ delivering services to young people within the WLZ catchment area who agreed to take part in the Theory of Change work stream to help shape the WLZ collective impact approach. The purpose of the meeting was to draw out the ways in which existing organisations are currently working with children and families as a base from which to draw synergies and establish the collective impact project.

WLZ Concluding Steering Group Meeting – 9:00am-10:30am, May 21st 2015

This meeting provided a summary of the outcomes of the five work streams established to design various elements of the WLZ model. It was attended by 40 representatives from 35 organisations⁵ that had supported the initial design of the WLZ model.

⁴ The organisations were: London Early Years Foundation, Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre, Cathnor Park Children's Centre, One Westminster, White City Enterprise, Bridging the Gap, QPR Trust, Phoenix High School, Harrow Club, The Clement James Centre, Vital Regeneration, Westway Development Trust, Only Connect and BWB Impact.

⁵ The organisations were: Ark Swift Primary School, BBC Children in Need, BWB Impact, Creative Futures, Dalgarno Trust, Department for Education, Epic CIC, Funpact, Genesis Housing, Imperial College London, John Lyon's Charity, Kensington & Chelsea Foundation, Kensington & Chelsea Social Council, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, London Early Years Foundation, London Sports Trust, One Westminster, Only Connect, Paddington Development Trust, Phoenix High School, Place2Be, QPR Trust, Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre, Sam Lord Consultancy, The Clement James Centre, The Harrow Club, The Young Foundation, Vanessa Nursery and Cathnor Park Children's Centre, Vital Regeneration, Westminster Academy, Westminster City Council, Westway Development Trust, White City Enterprise and YouthNet.

Limitations to the study

There are several limitations to this research. Firstly, while there are many examples of collaboration in varying forms in the UK that have been practiced for decades, it would appear that projects adopting the very specific five elements of collective impact (shared goals, shared measures, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and a backbone organisation) are less apparent. For example, only four organisations listed on the Collective Impact Forum were identified as genuine backbone organisations in the UK (see Chapter Five for further analysis). This is not to say that there are not additional examples of collective impact in the UK - organisations that are either knowingly or unknowingly adopting a collective impact approach or using different language to describe their work - but that these are not yet widely promoted.

Secondly, empirical research was limited to two London-based organisations working in the field of collective impact – WLZ and FIL – to enable an in-depth exploration of the cases. Due to the time available and the limited length of the thesis, no research was conducted with organisations that were unfamiliar with collective impact or unsupportive of the approach. This allows for an initial exploration only and anticipates that further research will be required to fully explore the practice of collective impact in the UK.

Thirdly, as collective impact is an emerging concept, the theoretical background is limited in scope. The limited availability of articles from outside the USA, or sources other than the Stanford Social Innovation Review (see the literature review in Appendix One), limits the theoretical analysis of collective impact.

This thesis allows for an initial exploration of collective impact in the UK and obviously inhibits an exhaustive examination of all the issues that emerge as a result of this study. There is not scope for in-depth analysis of the opposing arguments to collective impact. As an entry point into research on the potential of collective impact it anticipates further questions and issues will emerge for future examination and discussion. The intention of the thesis is not to draw finite conclusions, but to begin to tease out the barriers and enablers to add to the debate about how to make collective impact work in the UK.

A note on economic inequality

Given that economic inequality will be discussed as an example of the type of systemic challenge that could be addressed using a collective impact approach, it is necessary to briefly define it here. When discussing inequality, we must ask, inequality of what among whom? (Atkinson, 2015, p 2). For the purposes of this study, 'economic inequality' will refer to economic inequality between the rich and the poor in the UK, rather than (for example) economic inequality between the old and the young or between genders. Focus will be placed on inequality of outcome rather than inequality of opportunity, as equality of opportunity is a means to an end for achieving equality of outcome (Atkinson, 2015, p 9-11). The analysis will refer to inequality in income (total income from all sources including benefits or savings) and inequality in wealth (total assets). It will also refer to poverty⁶ as a manifestation of economic inequality and an indicator of the difference in circumstances between those at the bottom of the income scale and those at the top.

The following three chapters provide the theoretical context for this research, covering a definition of social innovation, the political and cultural context in the UK and an overview of collective impact.

⁶ Poverty can be defined as the lack of sufficient resources to meet life's basic needs without serious struggle (absolute poverty) or lack of access to the social and psychological goods that are seen as 'normal' or 'average' in a society (relative poverty) (Grayling, 2013, p 6). Both absolute and relative poverty indicate a loss of human potential.

Chapter Three - collective impact and social innovation

In order to discuss collective impact as both a socially innovative practice and a driver of new social innovations, it is first necessary to define the concept of social innovation. This chapter will argue that the increasing popularity of social innovation has paradoxically emptied it of its innovative qualities. It will discuss how social innovation has been mainstreamed, diluted and repurposed. It will argue for a normative definition of social innovation which foregrounds justice, equality and empowerment as both intentions and effects of social innovation to ensure that social innovation remains a tool to disrupt the status quo for the benefit of the majority good.

Definitions of social innovation abound

Social innovation is a concept that is becoming increasingly popular around the world. Governments are encouraging it⁷, intermediaries are supporting it⁸, business is delivering it⁹ and there are awards to celebrate it¹⁰. However despite this interest, there is no agreed definition of social innovation in place: “we have to admit that social innovation currently is a term that everyone likes, but a precise and broadly accepted definition is still missing”¹¹ (Franz, Hochgerner and Howaldt, 2012, p 383).

⁷ Western governments are now looking to partner with social enterprises, social innovators and social entrepreneurs in response to shrinking budgets and increasingly complex societal challenges (see for example The Economist, 2010). There is now an Office for Social Innovation in the US, the UK Government recently appointed an Advisor to the Prime Minister on Social Innovation and the European Commission has already made significant investments in both research and practical projects that aim to support and enable social innovation.

⁸ NESTA (a UK social innovation intermediary) and The Young Foundation (a UK foundation delivering social innovation projects, research and funding) are increasing their profile. NESTA has 51,200 followers on Twitter and The Young Foundation has 25,000. The Social Innovation Exchange, a venture of The Young Foundation, is the world’s primary network for social innovation. It connects, inspires and supports individuals and organisations – including small third sector organisations and global firms, public agencies and academics – committed to promoting social innovation.

⁹ For example, Hitachi - a multi-million dollar organisation that produces technology products - is now claiming to be a global leader in social innovation, and is using social innovation in a global advertising campaign called ‘it’s our future’ to raise brand awareness.

¹⁰ The European Commission has launched The European Social Innovation Competition to find the best social innovation solutions to help people move towards work or create new types of work. The Asia Social Innovation Award was created as the first step to enhance creativity and stimulate the development of social entrepreneurship in Asia. The Social Venture Network in the USA has launched an Innovation Awards Program to honour and promote the next generation of leaders who are leveraging the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. The Innovation Mindset Challenge organised by Columbia University, Leroy and Clarkson, The Rockefeller Foundation and the Young Foundation awards prizes for storytelling about how an individual has used an innovative mindset, as defined in their ‘Project Innovation Toolkit’. Social innovation awards are now also offered by the likes of the international Drone User Group, Teach for America, Dell, The SAB Foundation in South Africa, The Bank of Austria and Catholic Charities USA.

¹¹ The multitude and variety of definitions and theories of social innovation is confirmed by numerous additional academics. For example – “there is lack of a universally accepted definition of social innovation and ambiguity surrounds the term” (de Bruin 2012, p 373); “there is no single, exhaustive, or accepted definition of social innovation; “social innovation is a term that is used prolifically and, increasingly, with no

Confusion provides the opportunity for the term to be applied openly and flexibly, resulting in it being co-opted to further vested interests. The recent success of the notion and its mainstreaming in policy discourse has “paradoxically emptied it of its innovative dimension, exposing it to the concrete danger of becoming hollow - or, worse, instrumental - rhetoric” (Martinelli, 2012, p 171). Governments and corporations are beginning to replace ‘social change’ with ‘for the good of society’ in such broad terms that any product or activity can be included and the radical edge of social innovation is muted. The end result is the mainstreaming of what was once a radical new approach to generating projects that were committed to challenging the status quo and those in power - especially when their actions and policies lead to disadvantage, oppression or were clearly not in the interest of the majority in society. Social innovation in the hands and mouths of those committed to neoliberal agendas runs the risk of ‘humanising’ discourses and approaches (such as competition, individualism and private sector principles like New Public Management¹²) that deepen inequality and break down collective structures (see Anderson and Curtis, 2014 for full articulation of this argument).

Given the lack of a clear definition of social innovation and the dilution of the term by those in power, it is more urgent than ever to articulate what social innovation is and what it is not. If anything can qualify, then the term becomes vacuous, or worse, submerged within the language of ‘good capitalism’. Rather than broadening the definition, it should be distinctive and identify the intention, effect and outcomes of a social innovation within the context of social justice. In arguing for a normative definition of social innovation that allows the concept to retain its disruptive qualities, I will draw on previous collaborative research (Anderson et al, 2015) completed in response to this challenge.

Categorising social innovation definitions

The apparent fact that nobody is quite sure what social innovation means has not inhibited numerous definitions being put forward. To help understand current approaches to defining

particular meaning attached to it” (Harrison, 2012, p 73); and “despite the growing popularity of the topic, there is still widespread uncertainty regarding what social innovations are, how they come into being, and what can be expected of them” (Hochgerner, 2012, p 91).

¹² As described by Gruening (2001, p 2), New Public Management has its origins in ‘public choice theory’ and managerialism, emerging in the UK in the early 1980s under Margaret Thatcher. It encourages the public sector to adopt private sector principles such as performance measurement, privatisation, user charges, budget cuts, strategic planning and competition.

social innovation our research proposed several different (yet overlapping) ways to categorise in broad terms current definitions of social innovation (Anderson et al, 2015, pp 4-10):

- The first category is ‘purpose’. This category includes definitions which are: *legitimising*, designed to attract funding or support from those in power; *theoretical*, designed for academic purposes alone; *action-reflection*, designed to be refined as more knowledge is acquired; and, *narrow*, designed to capture what social innovation is not.
- The second category is ‘focus’. These definitions are segmented into: those that focus on the *noun* ‘innovation’ with an innovation systems framework; those that focus on the *adjective* ‘social’ within the social sciences; and, those that use both the *noun and adjective* ‘social innovation’ which are focused on addressing social challenges through practice.
- The final category is ‘nature’. These definitions include: *broad definitions* which expand the notion to include a range of activity across a range of sectors; and, *distinctive definitions* which focus more sharply on innovations that address social needs and focus on social justice outcomes.

My colleagues and I argued for an action-reflection approach to defining social innovation that is grounded in the ‘social’ - society and its organisation - leading to a distinctive definition of social innovation focused on social justice.

The argument for a normative definition of social innovation

We approach the definition of social innovation using critical theory¹³, specifically critical social theory¹⁴, arguing that society and its organisation requires ongoing reform in favour of those

¹³ Critical theory has its historical foundations in the Frankfurt School and is generally recognized in its first phase through the work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, and its second phase through the works of Jürgen Habermas. In simple terms critical theory attempts to interpret the world (why are things the way they are and whose interest does it serve?) for a purpose. That purpose is emancipatory. It is value-laden rather than relativistic – it seeks to transform society on the principles of justice, fairness, the righting of wrongs and the meeting of needs – rather than simply understanding society as an end in itself.

¹⁴ Critical social theory as a form of self-reflective knowledge involves analysis of the social dimension in order to expose systems of domination or entrapment in systems of dependence with a declared emancipatory interest.

who are disadvantaged. This approach takes us inevitably into the realm of ethics and values, acknowledging that there are distinct values that provide for emancipation (such as justice and fairness), as opposed to distinct values that provide for oppression. Analysis of current definitions of social innovation reveals a resistance to normative statements¹⁵ - especially within the central European approaches - with many scholars contesting this approach¹⁶. By comparison we note that distinct values are explicit in definitions of other sectors such as social marketing, democracy, governance and social entrepreneurship (Anderson et al, 2015, pp 12-23).

While there are many innovations that have 'social effects' or are 'social in their ends and means', we argue that does not *ipso facto* qualify them to be *social* innovations, given the intention of the innovation may have been quite oblivious to the social effect the innovation generates.

Our analysis concluded that several factors need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the crucial ingredients for a definition of social innovation:

- Social innovations are practices that take place in the realm of the social - society and its organisation.
- There are no value-neutral definitions of social innovation.
- Values and ethics matter in defining social innovation.
- Intentions, effects and outcomes that have integrity in the realm of social innovation will have an emancipatory commitment - they will seek to change/transform society for the majority good.
- Broad-based relativistic definitions of social innovation are open to misappropriation and can legitimate activities that are bad for society.

¹⁵ Postmodern theorising, or theorising in the era of 'second modernity' (Harrison, 2012, p 74) has overwhelmingly rejected anything 'normative', calling into question categories of 'good' and meta-narratives that traditionally have been the source of values (Eagleton, 2003, p 15).

¹⁶ For example Howaldt and Swarz state: "we believe that attempting to provide a distinct definition of social innovation normatively is problematic" (Howaldt and Swarz 2010, p 26) concluding "the commonly found normative link between social innovation and socially esteemed values overlooks the fact that different purposes and interests can indeed be pursued with a social innovation depending on the related utility and prevailing rationale". This is supported by Hochgerner: "when analysing the outcomes of social innovations it is of the utmost importance not to get caught in the trap of normative prejudice [on the basis that] what may appear 'social' (beneficial) to one group, at a given time, in a certain social strata or region, may prove irrelevant or even detrimental to others" (Hochgerner, 2012, p 100).

Utilising this work the proposed working definition¹⁷ of social innovation that will be used for the purposes of this thesis is as follows:

Co-created solutions to social challenges that have the intent and effect of equality, justice and/or empowerment.

This definition suggests that for an activity to qualify as a social innovation, it must meet four criteria:

- It must include a process of collaboration.
- It must address a social challenge¹⁸.
- The intent must be to create equality, justice and/or empowerment¹⁹.
- The effect or end result must be equality, justice and/or empowerment²⁰.

We arrived at this distinctive and value-laden definition of social innovation from the perspective of our roles as practitioners of social innovation working with vulnerable groups in the UK, Australia and Mexico. Our definition excludes the possibility of appropriation by groups not committed to the 'good' of society²¹. It risks being normative by declaring it will not accept that we do not know what a good society looks like, alternatively identifying a good society as one based on justice and equality.

Our definition supports the '4i' process of social innovation²² (Hochgerner, 2012, p 95) where until a social innovation has some form of effect, it is merely an idea (or a 'social invention'). The definition proposed goes one step further by explicitly stating that this effect must be

¹⁷ We assume that this will continue to be an evolving definition that will be refined and remodelled through future reflection and practice.

¹⁸ The reference to 'social challenges' refers to the 'grand challenges' currently faced by the global community. These include challenges ranging from climate change to ageing societies, financialisation, poverty, social exclusion, migration and social conflicts (Hochgerner, 2012, p 91). These challenges can manifest themselves on a global scale, or on a smaller scale within local communities.

¹⁹ We have not sought to complicate these terms, and have taken them at their most basic meaning as defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English:

Justice: just behaviour or treatment; a concern for justice, peace and genuine respect for people; the quality of being fair and reasonable;

Empowerment: to make someone stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights; and

Equality: the state of being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities.

²⁰ We acknowledge that the intention of justice, equality and/or empowerment will not always result in a neat and perfect effect of justice, equality or empowerment for all, as unexpected side-effects can and will occur. Change-makers must always bear the risk of negative or unexpected consequences. The achievement of equality, justice and empowerment will not be a positive outcome for those who promote inequality, act unjustly or seek to enslave others in society. Freedom from oppression will not please those who oppress.

²¹ We use the term for the 'good' of society to refer to what is good for the majority – the majority good.

²² Hochgerner (2012, p 95) has argued that all social innovations move through a '4i' process consisting of an idea, an intervention, implementation and finally impact. A social innovation cannot be considered as such until it has reached the final stage - impact.

'good' for society as defined by three criteria - justice, empowerment and equality.

Before discussing collective impact in detail in Chapter Five, Chapter Four will contextualise the thesis in the political and cultural climate of the UK. This discussion will highlight the underlying neoliberal discourse and Big Society agenda that dominate not only UK politics but UK culture more broadly. Inequality rates will be referenced as the primary indicator that this discourse in practice requires fundamental change. The following chapters will then consider collective impact as an alternative social innovation that has potential to tackle entrenched and systemic social challenges.

Chapter Four - the UK context: neoliberalism, Big Society and rising inequality

All social innovations, collective impact included, are embedded within specific social, cultural and political contexts. This chapter examines the political and cultural climate in the UK. It focuses on the strength of the neoliberal discourse and Big Society agenda as part of the 'dictatorship of no alternatives'. Neoliberalism is a focus in this chapter for two reasons. Firstly because the underpinning ideology of neoliberalism has important implications for the collaborative styles of working that are required for collective impact. Secondly because the rise of neoliberalism has been linked to increasing economic inequality (demonstrated by economists such as Thomas Picketty (Picketty, 2014) and Joseph Stiglitz (Stiglitz, 2015), which provides the evidence that neoliberal capitalism is critically flawed and urgent systemic reform is needed.

The march of neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is an economic and political ideology - a "set of ideas about how to organise markets, states, enterprises and populations which shape government policies" (Bockman, 2011, p 4). Neoliberalism emerged as a dominant paradigm in the UK in the 1980s, following the election of Margaret Thatcher as the British Prime Minister in 1979²³. It is founded on the principles of neo-classical economics first introduced in the 1870s (Bockman, 2011, p 19). The basic tenants of this approach are promotion of free market practices, 'small government', reduction of public spending for social services, deregulation, privatisation and the replacement of the 'common good' with 'individual responsibility' (Stiglitz, cited in Bockamn, 2011, p 4). Neoliberalism manifests itself as a concrete set of public policies expressed in what has been identified as the 'D-L-P Formula': (1) deregulation (of the economy); (2) liberalisation (of trade

²³ By the mid 1990s neoliberalism had spread throughout the world with the election of right-wing government in the US in 1981 led by Ronald Regan, and centre-left governments led by Bob Hawke in Australia (elected in 1984), Bill Clinton in the USA (elected in 1992) and Tony Blair in the UK (elected in 1997).

and industry); and (3) privatisation (of state-owned enterprises) (Roy and Steger, 2010, p 14). It extends market and private sector principles into the public and third sector²⁴.

Neoliberal capitalism now dominates UK politics and culture²⁵, and will remain entrenched given the recent re-election of the Conservative Party in the 2015 UK election. The growth of neoliberalism in the UK has “ideology in the driving seat, though (this is) vigorously denied” (Hall, 2011). Neoliberalism has become so culturally embedded and accepted in Western democracies that it informs the very fabric of modern day culture as a ‘taken-for-granted’ discourse (evident in the New Public Management framework, for example).

The UK Big Society: the privatisation and austerity agenda

Since the 1980s and more so following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), UK government funding for public services is being reduced. The delivery of public services is being privatised and outsourced with austerity touted as the salvation from the ‘excesses’ of the pre-GFC era. The ‘balanced budget’ doctrine has been used as an ‘austerity measure’ to severely prune back the welfare state, resulting in public spending cuts over the last three decades that are the deepest and widest in generations. A more recent expression of the neoliberal sentiment is ‘Big Society’, a project which can be traced back to Tony Blair's Third Way²⁶, Gordon Brown via the White Paper *Communities in Control: real people, real power* and David Cameron’s first term as UK Prime Minister. ‘Big Society’ integrates free market ideology with a theory of social solidarity based on voluntarism (Walker and Corbett, 2013), placing emphasis on civil society, the third sector and social enterprise to step in where the state has failed or withdrawn (Scott, 2011).

Big Society is “an ideology which pretends it is not one” that triumphs in “articulating and updating the neoliberal sentiment” (Scott, 2011). While the Conservative UK Government has promoted Big Society as a breakthrough approach to addressing emerging social issues

²⁴ Evident for example in the presumption that the third sector and public sector should mimic the structure, culture and management of the market-based private sector in order to become more innovative (Hartley et al, 2013, p 822), which has played out in the introduction of the New Public Management framework.

²⁵ It should be noted however that Scottish politicians are diverging from the policies of neoliberalism.

²⁶ The Third Way was a new political ideology adopted by Tony Blair in the UK and Bill Clinton in the USA in 1998. It was a centrist position, rejecting the neoliberal belief that everything should be left to the market, while simultaneously suggesting that state intervention in the economy was outdated (Mellbye, 2003).

effectively and cooperatively²⁷, in practice it would appear to be a perpetuation of business as usual. Big Society could be seen as a mechanism for the neoliberal political economy to co-opt social innovation as the solution to their budget challenges, thereby mainstreaming social innovation as a ‘socially’ acceptable way for conservative governments to cut public services and save money (Anderson and Curtis, 2015). The practice of neoliberalism and Big Society has been packaged and presented by those in power as the only option - a “dictatorship of no alternatives”²⁸ where “our interests and ideals are always nailed to the cross of the institutions and practises that represent them” (Unger, 2013, p 1).

Implications of neoliberalism for collaborative styles of working

A central element of neoliberal discourse and practice is market-based competition as the key to developing more efficient goods and services that lead to growth and innovation²⁹ (Pike, 2014, p 9). It is an accepted assumption that competition is good for consumers, shareholders and the state³⁰. This has direct implications for the practice of collective impact.

Research has shown that where companies are competing, they will act contrary to their interests as a collective, and while the net result is that all are worse off than they would have been had they acted in the interests of the collective, each company will have maximized its own profits (Olson, 1971, p 9-10). When this competitive logic is applied to solving social challenges, the result is disastrous. Concerns have been raised that the exposure to market forces will reorient the cultural values of charities and social enterprises away from public benefit towards competition (Doherty et al, 2014, p 10). This will encourage further

²⁷ In his speech outlining his vision for a Big Society, David Cameron said the government urgently needed to “open up public services to new providers like charities, social enterprises and private companies so we get more innovation, diversity and responsiveness to public need” and to “create communities with oomph” (The Economist, 2010).

²⁸ This dictatorship of no alternatives has five conditions: the replacement of mass production with continuous innovation; the disconnection of finance from the real economy whereby the finance sector serves itself rather than society; standardised and low-quality public services delivered by the state, with the only alternative being privatisation by profit-driven firms; the absence of social solidarity; and, flawed and impotent democracy which leaves the basic structure of society unchallenged and largely unchanged, and makes change depend upon crisis (Unger, 2013, p 1-2).

²⁹ This is founded on the beliefs that: competition will incentivise innovation because failure to innovate tends to eliminate firms from the market (Sorensen, 2012, cited in Hartley et al, 2013, p 823); competition will prompt public, private and third sector providers to ‘do more with less’ and thereby become more innovative in their form, content and delivery of services (ibid); and, the market model will force organisations in all sectors to compete for customers so they will become more demand-driven, spurring user-led innovation (Jaeger, 2013 cited in Hartley et al, 2013 p 823).

³⁰ These assumptions are encapsulated in the view of the President of the European Commission, who identified competition as a key driver in the Europe 2020 strategy: “the EU needs well functioning markets where competition and consumer access stimulate productivity, growth and innovation” (Caulier-Grice et al, 2010 p 6).

fragmentation of an already fragmented third sector. Of the 164,097 registered charities in the UK, 75% have an annual income of less than £100,000, with 41% generating less than £10,000 per year (Charity Commission, 2014).

The competitive principles at the heart of neoliberalism tend to foster social innovation processes that are trapped within the narrow confines of a single organisation and are thus limited in their application to an individual organisation's beneficiary group. Efforts to tackle economic inequality become fragmented through a focus on the performance and growth of individual organisations rather than on developing a core idea that creates social value (NESTA, 2008, p 4). The competitive market-based approach "discourages service providers from sharing knowledge and engaging in inter-organisational learning, both of which, along with trust, are central to developing innovative solutions to joint problems" (Hartley, et al, 2013 p 824).

Why the approach is flawed: the proof is in economic inequality

Neoliberal ideology not only hinders the type of collaborative working required for effective collective impact, it increases economic inequality (which in turn hinders collaboration by creating greater societal divides (Sennett, 2012)). Neoliberalism is based on the assumption that wealth will 'trickle down' to the poor (Chang, 2014, p 318), however it has become obvious that the 'trickle down theory' is fundamentally flawed. Economists such as Thomas Picketty (Picketty, 2014) and Joseph Stiglitz (Stiglitz, 2015) have demonstrated that neoliberal capitalism by its very nature opens the gap between poor and rich into an ever-widening chasm of inequity. Since the 1980s, economic inequality in the UK dramatically increased - one of the most marked increases in the world during that period (Chang, 2014, p 332, 325). This "inequality turn" (Atkinson, 2015 p 3) can be attributed to deregulation and tax cuts for the rich under neoliberal ideology (Chang, 2014, p 332, 325). Today the UK is the fourth most unequal of the 30 OECD countries in the Luxembourg Income Study data set, and the most unequal of the European countries (The Equality Trust, 2015).

The issue of economic inequality has gained increased attention in recent years, through movements such as Occupy, popular figures such as Russel Brand, third sector advocacy such as Oxfam's 2015 'Even it Up' campaign, or the analysis of high-profile academics such as Joseph Stiglitz or Thomas Picketty. The Pew Research Centre's 2014 Global Attitudes Report revealed that in Europe and the United States inequality is now considered the greatest danger to the world (Atkinson, 2015, p 1) and reducing inequality is now one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (alongside eradicating poverty).

Income inequality

The UK became a much more equal nation during the post-war years. The share of income going to the top 10% of the population fell over the 40 years between World War Two and 1979, from 34.6% in 1938 to 21% in 1979, while the share going to the bottom 10% rose slightly (Lansley and Mack, 2015). However there was a sharp rise in income inequality during the 1980s, as the incomes of those in work pulled away from the rest of the population, with high earners seeing the fastest growth (Belfield et al, 2014).

According to the Gini coefficient³¹, income inequality rose considerably over the 1980s, reaching a peak in 1990 (The Equality Trust, 2015). While income inequality has remained relatively stable over the last 20 years³² (The Equality Trust, 2015), it remains stubbornly well above its level in the 1970s (Atkinson, 2015, p 21). In 2011/12 the poorest fifth of society had only 8% of the total income, whereas the top fifth had 41% (The Equality Trust, 2015). In December 2014 income inequality increased again, with the income of the poorest fifth down by 3.3%, and that of the richest fifth up by 1.6% (Office for National Statistics, 2014).

Currently individuals in the median income bracket have almost double the household income of those at the 10th percentile, and those in the 90th percentile have just over double those at the median. The differences are most stark amongst the highest income earners - individuals in

³¹ The Gini Coefficient is named after early 20th century Italian statistician, Corrado Gini. It compares a country's real life income distribution with a situation of total equality. The Gini Coefficient can be anywhere between 0 and 1, however no country has a Gini Coefficient below 0.2 or above 0.75. The most equal societies, which are mainly in Europe and have advanced welfare states, have a Gini between 0.2 and 0.3. Roughly speaking, a Gini of 0.35 is the dividing line between relatively equal countries and ones that are not (Chang, 2014, p 327-332).

³² After falling slightly over the early to mid-1990s, inequality rose again from 1997, reaching a new peak Gini of 0.362 in 2000-01, and despite falling for three years from 2000-01, inequality rose again from 2005-2010, then fell slightly in 2010 (The Equality Trust, 2015).

the 98th percentile earn twice as much as those in the 90th percentile, and individuals in the 99th percentile earn three times as much (Belfield et al, 2014).

Wealth inequality

During the 1990s, the trends in income inequality began to translate into wealth inequalities, compounded by a growing gap in housing wealth. While the UK enjoyed stable income-to-wealth ratios for the first 70 years of the last century and an evening out of the distribution of money across the population for most of that period, that ended in the 1980s (Davies, 2014). The UK was the only G7 country to record rising wealth inequality between 2000 and 2014 (Davies et al, 2014). Wealth inequality has risen four times faster in the seven years after the GFC compared with the seven years before - the rich in the UK are becoming richer faster (Davies et al, 2014). In 2012, the richest 10% of households held 44% of all wealth and the poorest 50% held just 9.5% (The Equality Trust, 2015).

Poverty

The level of poverty in the UK (as measured by the proportion falling below 60% of median income) also increased dramatically with the introduction of neoliberalism, doubling between 1977 and 1990 (Lansley and Mack, 2015). While the poverty rate was reduced from 22% to 16% between 1992 and 2011, the current rate is still 3% higher than in 1965 when the Child Poverty Action Group³³ was founded and the poverty rate was considered “profoundly shocking” (Atkinson, 2015, p 24). Significantly, more than half the people experiencing poverty in the UK today live in working households (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, p 5).

The UK is the world’s sixth largest economy, and yet official statistics show that after housing costs, 14.6 million people (23.2%) are living in absolute poverty in the UK, an increase of 600,000 individuals since 2010-11 (Belfield et al, 2014). While relative poverty has fallen, this is only because the poverty line fell in line with average incomes, so in absolute terms, the poor have become worse off in recent years (Belfield et al, 2014).

³³ The Child Poverty Action group is a charity dedicated to eradicating child poverty in the UK through campaigning, publications and training. See <http://www.cpag.org.uk>

After diagnosis comes action. What is evident is that ordinary people have not benefited from the hype of social innovation, Big Society or any 'trickle down' of wealth. When "escapism is the order of the day" and we are "taught to sing in our chains" (Unger, 2006, p 4) the key challenge for the social innovation movement becomes resistance and subversion of the 'dictatorship of no alternatives' through disruption of dominant power structures and development of models that provide an alternative. New forms of localism and collaboration appear to be emerging as potential alternatives to the competitive market framework. Among them is collective impact, to which we will now turn.

Chapter Five - collective impact as an alternative approach

Tackling entrenched social challenges, such as economic inequality in the UK, requires a fundamental shift in the way we view and respond to the challenge. Change will never be achieved through the isolated efforts of individual actors within the narrative of ‘competition’. Collaboration that cuts across institutional and organisational boundaries is increasingly being viewed as a fundamental mechanism for the development of social innovations (Sørensen and Torfing, 2013 p 2). Yet collaboration alone is not sufficient. This chapter will explore the more structured approach of collective impact as a potential way forward.

The what and why of collaboration

As Mulgan notes, “social innovation as a field seems inseparable from its underlying ethic, which is one of collaboration, acting with rather than to or for; a belief in rough equality; a cultural commitment to the idea of equality of communication . . . and perhaps an implicit idea that through collaboration we can discover our full humanity” (Mulgan, 2012, p 211). The concept of social innovation (using the definition offered in Chapter Three) places co-creation at the forefront, necessitating a focus on collaborative approaches as a fundamental requirement of effective social innovation. This is based on the idea that “the more broadly power is spread, the greater the capacity for good to prevail and (the greater) ... the possibility of cumulative growth of knowledge and insight” (Mulgan, 2012, p 33). If mobilised and connected the multitude of small-scale social innovations already in place become “down payments on larger transformative possibilities”, changing the background structure piece by piece (Unger, 2015, p 4).

People and organisations have collaborated for decades, and collaboration is a term that’s ‘in vogue’ (Di Domenico, 2011, p 3) and is gaining momentum³⁴. Brown and Mandell (2007) define collaboration by comparing it to cooperation and coordination. While cooperation involves sharing ideas where each party benefits (Sennett, 2012) and coordination involves avoiding

³⁴ For example the UN advocates for a “renewed global partnership” focus involving the third sector, the business sector and philanthropists to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals in the post-2015 development agenda, including eradicating poverty and reducing inequality (United Nations, 2014).

overlaps in delivery of services, collaboration involves a long-term partnership where multiple actors find solutions to common problems. Others have highlighted that collaboration involves the sharing of materials, ideas and social relations (Roberts and Bradley, 1991) and that it is fundamentally about interactions and exchanges between people, groups, organisations and institutions (Di Domenico, 2011, p 3). The collaborative process generates “collaborative advantage” where organisations seek achievement of goals that none could achieve on their own (Vangen, 2011, p 7) and there is a large body of research showing that multi-actor collaboration strengthens and improves all phases of the social innovation process³⁵.

It should be noted that collaboration is often wrongly associated with the creation of unanimous consent, an assumption not supported in practice (Straus 2002, cited in Hartley et al, 2013, p 826). The productive role of difference and conflict in creative processes must be accommodated. For example Gray defines collaboration as “the process through which two or more actors engage in a constructive management of differences in order to define common problems and develop joint solutions based on provisional agreements that may coexist with disagreement and dissent” (Gray 1989, cited in Hartley et al, 2013, p 826). This is supported by Sørensen and Torfing who argue that “total consensus is detrimental to innovation because conflicts, dissent and grievances tend to drive innovation and because total consensus is often achieved by getting everybody to agree on the least common denominator, which is a method that favours incremental adjustments rather than more discontinuous changes and disruptive innovations” (2013 p 5). This view is supported by Straus (2002, p 55) who argues that “the power of collaborative action comes from inclusion not exclusion” which includes involving stakeholders who disagree³⁶.

Emerging calls for collaborative approaches across sectors use a variety of terms including ‘collaborative governance’ (Osborne, 2010, cited in Hartley et al, 2013), ‘strategic alliances’ (Tidd and Bessant 2009, cited in Hartley et al, 2013), ‘open innovation’ (Chesbrough 2003, cited in Hartley et al, 2013), networked governance, distributed public governance, integrated governance, joined-up governance, holistic governance, new public governance, whole of

³⁵ This is based on theories of network governance that emphasise the role of collaborative networks in finding innovative solutions to complex problems (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004, Powell et al 1996, cited in Hartley et al, 2013, p 825) and theories of learning that conceptualise step-change as occurring through inter-organisational interaction and collaborative processes (Engestrom 2008, Lave and Wenger 1991, cited in Hartley et al, 2013, p 825). For example national surveys and case studies from within the UK show that local authorities with greater collaboration within and across organisations and in peer networks are more innovative than those without (Downe et al 2004, Newman et al 2001, cited in Hartley et al 2013, p 825).

³⁶ See for example dialectal theory – the collision of two opposites which allows both negated positions to be preserved (thesis, antithesis, synthesis).

government (Levesque, 2013 p 32), joined-up solutions, collective intelligence (see www.nesta.org.uk/project/collective-intelligence) and more recently, the solidarity economy and new co-operativism (see www.fairshares.coop). As a result a “new class of navigators of the system” - for example ‘brokers’, ‘intermediaries’ and ‘advisers’ – is emerging (Pike, 2014, p 30). There is also increasing attention being paid to ‘collaborative consumption’ at an individual level through the ‘sharing economy’ (Stephany, 2015).

As with social innovation, it would appear that the hype about collaboration precedes the substance. While new approaches to collaboration are laudable, they can tend to add still more cost and complexity and fail to address why the system works in such a complicated and dysfunctional way in the first place. Or, these efforts continue to exist within a framework of competition and low trust, for example, charities tendering for government contracts as consortiums. While there have been effective and sustained efforts at collaborative partnerships in the UK, for the most part these efforts have remained on the margins, often deeply antithetical to the normal ways of doing business. While there is an accepted understanding that collaboration is needed, and new initiatives, acronyms and structures have emerged, there has been much less deep embedding of new, co-productive ways of working (Pike, 2014, p 12). Traditional forms of collaboration alone will not go far enough if we want to achieve a step-change. New ways of structuring collaboration are needed to bring about change at a system-wide level, which will require re-learning of what it means to collaborate and how to go about it. One such model is collective impact.

Collective impact — an emerging approach

Unlike the concept of collaboration, ‘collective impact’ is a relatively new approach, emerging in 2011 in the USA. It is essentially an advanced form of collaboration, defined as: “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (Kania and Kramer 2011). Collective impact is different from networks, partnerships and collaboration (which have existed within the non-profit sector for years). The concept emerged in response to widespread recognition of the fact that traditional approaches to solving complex social challenges weren’t working, and that “the systems in place to meet the scale and complexity of today’s human need were built for another time and another economy” (Gallagher, 2014, p 31). The system itself required change, an impossible

task for any single organisation or project. Collective impact upends conventional wisdom about the manner in which social progress is achieved, and many organisations around the world have begun to use collective impact as an answer to the established need for greater cross-sector collaboration.

Two social scientists, John Kania and Mark Kramer, first codified collective impact as an approach to coordinating large-scale social change programmes with a systemic change intent. They name five essential criteria that distinguish collective impact from other forms of collaboration (Kania and Kramer, 2011):

1. Common agenda: all participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
2. Shared measurement: collecting data and sharing results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
3. Mutually reinforcing activities: participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
4. Continuous communication: consistent and open communication is needed across many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives and create common motivation.
5. Backbone support: creating and maintaining collective impact requires a separate organisation(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organisations and agencies.

Collective impact is focused on systems change, where “various partners constantly weigh the impact of their decisions on both their own institutions and the broader ecosystem that works to improve their cause” (Edmondson and Hecht, 2014 p 6). The collective impact approach acknowledges that large scale social problems are complex, and there is no one single solution, and even if there was, there is no one organisation or individual that could compel all actors involved to adopt it. The approach also acknowledges that issues are intertwined. Education, paid work and health for example, are all essential for wellbeing, “remove any one building block, and the other two topple” (Stewart and Norris, 2013).

As Kania and Kramer (2013) explain:

“the solutions we have come to expect [from charities] often involve discrete programs that address a social problem through a carefully worked out theory of change, relying on incremental resources from funders, and ideally supported by an evaluation that attributes to the program the impact achieved. Once proven, these solutions can scale up by spreading to other organisations ... Collective impact is not merely a new process that supports the same social sector solutions but an entirely different model of social progress. The power of collective impact lies in the heightened vigilance that comes from multiple organisations looking for resources and innovations through the same lens, the rapid learning that comes from continuous feedback loops, and the immediacy of action that comes from a unified and simultaneous response among all participants.”

Part of the power of collective impact is generated by transcending traditional sector structures (most commonly segmented as the public, private and third sector³⁷). It brings together those who are best placed as a result of their roles in society to make an impact and makes solving social challenges a shared responsibility, as opposed to the more traditional approach where government is seen as responsible, the third sector fills the gaps they miss, and the private sector is responsible for nothing. Rather than seeing the problem through the lens of a particular organisational agenda or as one organisation’s responsibility, collective impact “sharpens a community’s collective vision” and this combined with intentionality “causes previously invisible solutions and resources to emerge” (Kania and Kramer, 2013).

Collective impact as a social innovation

Social innovation transcends sectors, and focuses instead on understanding and fostering the strategies, tactics and theories of change that provide lasting social impact (Caulier-Grice et al, 2010, p 16). Framed by the normative definition of social innovation proposed in Chapter Three, collective impact can both catalyse social innovations and be classed as a social innovation in itself. By bringing together actors and resources to work in new ways, it is

³⁷ For the purposes of this thesis the third sector is understood as all groups which are neither public nor private, and act not to enrich owners or executives but to deliver ‘social good’. For example, the UK government defines the third sector as comprising of “non-governmental organisations that are values-driven and which principally invest their surpluses to further social, environmental and cultural objectives” (UK Cabinet Office, 2007 p 6). These include charities (also called ‘non-profit organisations’), grassroots voluntary and community organisations, cooperatives and mutuals, and social enterprises.

possible that the practice of collective impact will result in the creation of new social innovations. As a social innovation in itself, at a conceptual level it is the structured combination of the five elements of collective impact that separate collective impact from traditional forms of collaboration (Schmitz, 2014) and make it socially innovative. Collective impact by its very design involves co-creation – one of the requirements of the definition proposed. The proposed definition requires an intent and effect of justice, empowerment and/or equality, which implicitly includes addressing the root causes of social challenges. When collective impact is applied to reducing economic inequality in particular, which is part of a broader theory of justice (Atkinson, 2015, p 13), there is direct alignment with the intention in the proposed definition. Whether collective impact can achieve the effect of justice, empowerment and/or inequality will require further empirical testing.

A brief look at the international collective impact landscape

While the first journal article on collective impact (Kania and Kramer, 2011) was published in 2011, there are many collective impact projects that pre-date the original article and embody the five conditions of collective impact³⁸. Northern Kentucky (for example) was “a hotbed of collective impact initiatives long before anyone called them ‘collective impact’” (Boyle and Irby, 2014). However it was the original 2011 article that created a framework and language for collective impact that has led to hundreds of new collaborations using the principles of collective impact around the globe (Kania et al, 2014), in particular within the USA and Canada. In the USA alone there are over 500 examples of collective impact projects across whole cities or states, each tackling a major social challenge (Pike, 2014, p 3 - see Appendix Three for a list of the American and Canadian collective impact projects mentioned in the core collective impact literature).

The Australian Centre for Social Impact funded a study tour to the USA in 2012 to learn more about collective impact, and has since made further investment into developing collective impact expertise, including Australia’s first collective impact conference in 2014, with a second

³⁸ US examples of collective impact that pre-date the Winter 2011 ‘Collective Impact’ article include, but are not limited to, the Strive Partnership, the Elizabeth River Project, Shape Up Somerville, Living Cities’ Integration Initiative, Communities that Care, Ready by 21, Vibrant Communities, GAIN, Georgia CORE and the network of 1,200 United Ways across the USA (Stewart and Norris, 2013).

scheduled for 2015³⁹. As a result, numerous examples of collective impact are beginning to emerge in the Australian context (see Appendix Three for Australian examples of collective impact identified on the Collective Impact Australia website and the Collaboration for Impact Australia website).

Collective impact projects are beginning to generate impressive results. For example:

- The establishment of the Georgia CORE oncology research network led to a 70% increase in clinical cancer trials between 2009 and 2012 (Paris, Burke and Schnell, 2013).
- The Salt Lake City United Way *Promise Partnerships* initiative tackling poverty and high school drop out rates resulted in a 30% reduction in youth crime over three years, 51% more households receiving government-funded financial assistance, and a reduction in children being referred to special education to the value of \$1.4million in services (Stewart and Norris, 2013).
- Within two years of the establishment of the Appreciative Enquiry Summit, their reform plan was adopted by the governor, passed into legislation, and rolled out in communities across the state. Three years into the reforms, New York has 45% fewer youths in the custody of the state juvenile justice system (Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015).
- The United Way of Greater Milwaukee cross-sector partnership formed to tackle teenage pregnancies, including training for teachers and a public education campaign, resulted in a 30% decrease in teenage pregnancies (Bridgespan Group, 2012 B).
- The City of Memphis' plan to tackle the USA's second worst violent crime rate resulted in a 27% reduction in violent crime in one year, and within four years the murder rate was the lowest it had been for 30 years (Pike, 2014).
- The Strive Partnership resulted in a 10% increase in graduation rates in Cincinnati since 2003 and a 16% increase in college enrolment rate in Covington since 2004 (Bridgespan Group, 2012 A).
- As of 2013 the Vibrant Communities project in Canada had improved the lives of 203,000 Canadians through increases in income and access to food, shelter and transportation (FSG, 2013).

³⁹ See <http://www.csi.edu.au/events/collaboration-impact-conference/>

Collective impact frameworks have influenced public policy in the USA, with the practice written into grants from the Centre for Disease Control, the White House Social Innovation Fund, and a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (Kania et al, 2014). In Canada the Vibrant Communities project has led to a change in 53 policies and systems to better support poverty reduction efforts (FSG, 2013).

In the UK context there appears to be limited discussion or practice of collective impact. There is evidence of collaboration and partnerships across sectors in the UK⁴⁰, however these partnerships do not appear to embody the five principles of collective impact. While there was a “flurry of interest in the UK” (Taylor, 2015) following the publication of the first collective impact article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, practical examples are not widely apparent. This in turn can raise the question: “is it that a combination of centralisation, austerity and short termism makes collective impact projects [in the UK] just much harder to design and implement?” (Taylor, 2015).

To identify collective impact projects in the UK, a search was conducted for backbone organisations⁴¹ based in the UK on the Collective Impact Forum directory⁴² on March 28th 2015. Backbone organisations were identified as the focus for the search as the presence of a backbone organisation is *the* enabler of the four other conditions of collective impact (Kania and Kramer, 2011). The backbone organisations identified were separated into two categories – those that appeared to be ‘genuine’ backbone organisations, and those that did not. An organisation was categorised as a ‘genuine’ backbone organisation if there was evidence on their website that their activities involved the five principles of collective impact. The search for backbone organisations working in ‘economic development’ in the UK returned only one result, which did not appear to be a genuine backbone organisation. A second search for backbone organisations operating in any field in the UK revealed only four organisations that appear to be genuine backbone organisations, and 13 organisations that do not appear to be genuine backbone organisations (see Appendix Four for the full search results).

⁴⁰ See for example Stoke on Trent Council’s ‘Rebalance Me’ programme that takes a systems approach to integrate support from a range of previously disparate agencies. See http://redditch.whub.org.uk/cms/pdf/003_Designing_Citizen_Shaped_Services_-_The_Rebalance_Me_Approach_17_10_2013.pdf

⁴¹ The backbone is the organisation that coordinates the work of all the other organisations involved in a collective impact project.

⁴² The Collective Impact Forum is a global forum and network designed to connect and support organisations and individuals that self-identify as working in the field of collective impact. Any individual is able to register on the forum and name their organisation as operating in one of five pre-set categories: a partner organisation, a consultant, a backbone organisation, a funder of initiatives or other. See www.collectiveimpactforum.org

As discussed in Chapter Two, this is not to say that there are not other examples of collaborations using the five principles of collective impact in the UK that are not identified on the Collective Impact Forum or are in place but not using the language of collective impact. For example, FIL - one of the two case studies central to this research - is not listed on the Collective Impact Forum. The apparent lack of collective impact projects in the UK requires further analysis that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Having explored the theory of collective impact, the next step is to examine the practice. The following chapters will draw on two London-based backbone organisations that are practicing collective impact to analyse the barriers and enablers of collective impact in the UK context. The analysis of barriers and enablers in Chapter Six will be used to discuss the next steps for collective impact in the UK in Chapter Seven, focussing on the role of backbone organisations as the key to initiating and sustaining collective impact projects.

Chapter Six – primary barriers and enablers of collective impact in the UK

While collective impact may appear to be an obvious or simple solution, in practice it is far from straightforward. This chapter draws on the experience of West London Zone (WLZ) and The Finance Innovation Lab (FIL) (see Box One and Box Two below) – and collective impact literature, to highlight key barriers and enablers of collective impact in the UK context. The analysis of barriers and enablers offers a starting point for exploring how collective impact could be more widely implemented in the UK. The extent to which collective impact can be practiced as a social innovation in the UK will depend on activating the enablers and removing the barriers and the facilitation of backbone organisations, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Box One: case study one - West London Zone

“Every child lands in adulthood safe, happy and healthy.”

West London Zone (WLZ) is a partnership of organisations working together to support children and young people across three square miles of West London (South Brent, North Hammersmith, North Kensington and North Westminster), an area high in social capital and investment but with some of the highest rates of crime, lack of work, youth unemployment and child poverty in England (West London Zone, 2015 A).

WLZ’s goal is for each child in its catchment area to “land in adulthood safe, happy and healthy” regardless of their background. They seek to achieve this by wrapping local services around individual children and young people, strengthening the community through social sector-led partnerships and lobbying for systems change (West London Zone, 2015 B).

The original trigger for WLZ was the experience of the CEO of criminal justice charity Only Connect, Danny Kruger, who realised their work was helping individuals escape from a system that wasn’t working, but the real need was preventative and cooperative working. In 2011 Kruger visited Harlem Children’s Zone* in the USA, and returned to London to apply the collective impact model.

WLZ deliberately adopted a collective impact approach from the outset. Currently 69 organisations have been involved spanning the public, private and third sector including: voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations working in West London, local charitable foundations, third sector network organisations, local government, schools, and resident associations. As the backbone organisation, WLZ coordinates the approaches of West London’s third sector and public sector to create a cradle to career pipeline of support, delivered around early years centres, schools, and youth centres, aligned to a shared goal and leveraging shared funding.

After two years of building relationships and a six month steering group process to shape the structure of the project, WLZ is selecting ‘delivery partners’ that will provide direct services to children, and ‘network partners’ that will support the work and leverage local community assets.

*Harlem Children’s Zone is a collective impact project in Central Harlem, USA, working to break the generational cycle of poverty. The project provides individualised support for over 12,000 children and young people from birth to college graduation through education, social services, family support, health, and community-building programs. The project has been operating since the 1990s and the college acceptance rate for young people in their programmes is 92%. See <http://hcz.org>

Box Two: case study two — The Finance Innovation Lab

“Empowering positive disruptors in the financial system.”

The Finance Innovation Lab (FIL) was founded in 2009 by WWF-UK and the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales (ICAEW). It seeks to “change the financial system so it serves people and planet” (Millar and Sinha, 2015).

FIL began with a goal rather than a strategy, and developed their current model through action learning. It commenced with a focus on workshops and events, from large 150 person ‘assemblies’ to smaller workshops to develop innovation ideas. After two years the team had built a community of writers, thinkers and entrepreneurs, both on and offline, who wanted to change the financial system and gain a deeper understanding of how to achieve impact (Sinha and Millar, 2015, p 12-14). By 2012 FIL had identified three ‘leverage points’ for systems change with three distinct audiences (Sinha and Millar, 2015 p 18-19):

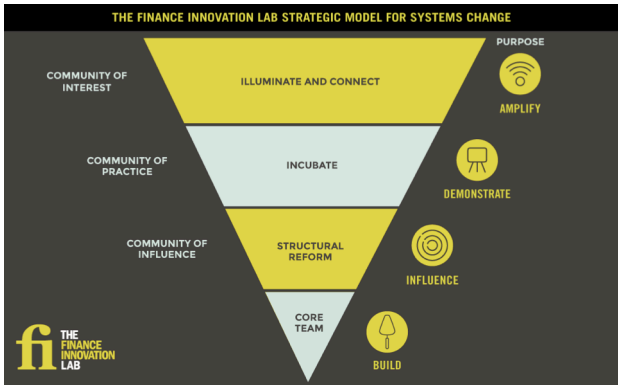
- “Create” - developing new business models, targeting entrepreneurs.
- “Evolve” - developing innovation in mainstream finance, targeting intrapreneurs in the finance sector.
- “Advocate” - developing leadership in civil society, targeting civil society leaders.

As a result FIL launched Campaign Lab, a leadership programme for ‘economic justice campaigners’ including an incubator for social entrepreneurs.

While the Founders of FIL did not deliberately adopt a collective impact approach at the outset of the project, today the organisation is using four of the five principles of collective impact and developing the fifth (shared impact measurement). FIL articulates its strategy as “empowering positive disruptors in the financial system” by “connecting people who are changing the financial system, developing them as leaders and helping them scale their work” (Sinha and Millar, 2015, p 1). Their model is to bring together a multitude of initiatives to increase their collective power and impact, based on four interconnected goals (Sinha and Millar, 2015, p 42-43):

- Amplify: connecting individuals who don’t normally meet through large-scale events.
- Demonstrate: incubate promising ideas that could change the system.
- Influence: convening networks of influential people to deliver policy and regulatory change.
- Build: building the core FIL team.

FIL model for systems change (Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 C):



Summary of primary barriers and enablers

The following list of barriers and enablers is by no means exhaustive. Research yielded many. This analysis focuses on the barriers and enablers that were most pertinent in the UK context. It does not include any of the five conditions of collective impact (a backbone organisation, shared goals, mutually reinforcing activities, shared measurement and continuous communication). The five conditions were taken as given and essential enablers, in addition to the enablers outlined below. The barriers and enablers identified are both contextual and practical – some relate to pre-existing conditions which cannot be immediately changed, and others relate to the implementation of collective impact.

Table 1: primary barriers and enablers of collective impact

Primary barriers	Primary enablers
Existing services with established theories of change	Understand the ideology and values driving the system
Time required to build relationships	Stand between the margins and the mainstream
Ego and power dynamics	Embrace contestation
Inflexible understanding of perceived roles	Engage willing individuals
The political and cultural climate in the UK	Use the context to create urgency for change
Lack of long-term and flexible funding	Rethink assumptions about ego and power dynamics
	Lead by ‘stepping back’
	Locate the backbone in the third sector
	Follow a process instead of a tactical plan

Each of these primary barriers and enablers will be explored in more detail in the following sections.

Primary barriers

Existing services with established theories of change

“The problem was, there were lots of support services in place ... and there were good charitable projects ... but they were sub-scale, not meeting the demand and they were disconnected and poor in terms of impact”

— Louisa Mitchell, Director West London Zone, 2015

In contrast to the USA where collective impact first emerged, the UK has a well-established welfare state (Mitchell, 2015), and a large third sector. This creates three challenges. Firstly, there is a less obvious ‘gap’ to fill and so the ‘need’ for a new approach is less apparent. Secondly, it is likely that existing institutions will assume the appropriate solutions are already in place, or that effective collaboration is already apparent, hence a new ‘backbone’ is not required (Pike, 2015). A challenge WLZ faced was that the services already in place were not necessarily meeting community needs as effectively as they could, which wasn’t always recognised by the existing providers in the area (Mitchell, 2015). Thirdly, there are a higher number of individual people with sunk interests and a personal stake in maintaining the existing system in its current form. They are “invested in their community change work and don’t want to give up what they are doing” (Boyle and Irby, 2014; Caulier-Grice et al, 2010, p 23). FIL experienced “huge pushback” from those invested in the status quo towards people in their community who challenged ‘business as usual’ (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 28). These three challenges can lead to an inability amongst those running existing services to identify how those services and resources could or should be combined in new ways.

WLZ found in their ‘theory of change’ work-stream⁴³ that each organisation had a unique approach and understanding of how change was achieved. Using ‘live’ examples of the experience of children in the catchment area, WLZ enabled the participants in the work-stream to develop an agreed map of a child’s journey to adulthood through key ‘gateways’, an understanding of what it meant for a child to be ‘flourishing’ at age four, eleven, eighteen and

⁴³ WLZ established five work-streams comprised of agencies working with children and young people in their catchment area. Over six months, these work-streams met to provide input to shape the operational design of the WLZ project before the project’s launch.

twenty-five, and a common theory of change for both a child and the community (see Appendix Five).

Time required to build relationships

“It is brutally time consuming ... I spend my life in meetings”

— Louisa Mitchell, Director West London Zone, 2015

Transforming systems is ultimately about transforming relationships among people who shape those systems (Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015), hence relationships become the means and the ends (SiG, 2014). Collective impact work is a deeply human and a relational process that requires a significant amount of time and patience (Hanleybrown, Kania and Splansky Juster, 2014; Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012). The disparity between time required and patience available is one reason why collective impact is so elusive (Thompson, 2014). Both WLZ and FIL emphasise the importance of taking the time to forge the deep relationships needed for collaboration (Morgan, 2015; Mitchell, 2015; West London Zone, 2015 C; Sinha and Millar, 2015, p 40). WLZ spent two years building relationships before beginning the process of inviting people to participate in the initial project steering groups. Similarly it took FIL two years to build a community large enough to begin to catalyse change.

There are no shortcuts to systems change. Collective impact is a marathon, not a sprint, where “change happens at the speed of trust” (Covey, cited in Hanleybrown, Kania and Splansky Juster, 2014). It requires several years to build trusting relationships between partners, and full consolidation that generates sustained action and impact can take a decade or more (Mitchell, 2015; Thompson, 2014; Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012; Pike, 2014 p 35; Kania and Kramer, 2011). The long-term nature of collective impact work is counter-cultural to a society where time is becoming more of a precious commodity. “Who is willing to work ‘several years’ to develop the trusted relationships and capacity required to achieve collective impact?” (Thompson, 2014). “Sometimes we have to go slow to go fast, and if we don’t go slowly in this work, we can very quickly come to solutions that don’t engage people” (Barnes et al, 2014). It requires “clearing away the burdens of past wounds and providing connections between people who thought they could never possibly work together” (Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012).

A danger with collective impact is that it can be seen as a ‘one size fits all’ approach where the correct pieces can be put together in the correct order and the process of change will follow a linear path (Barnes et al, 2014). However collective impact is first and foremost about people, who exist in particular communities and have particular worldviews. Without acknowledging this and taking the time to engage people ‘where they are’ (physically, mentally and emotionally) the process becomes redundant. Building effective relationships requires a relentless and disciplined approach to stakeholder engagement.

FIL places strong emphasis on building transformative relationships rather than transactional relationships (Morgan, 2015). Their events are specifically designed to create space for people to understand each other and their different worldviews and truths (Morgan, 2015), by asking questions that draw out and legitimise people’s experience and personal stories as much as their intellectual insights (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 40). For example opening meetings with each attendee sharing their present state of mind using metaphors such as “if you were an animal today, what animal would you be and why?” (FIL, 2015 B), or by opening and closing their events with personal reflections from the audience⁴⁴ and deliberately building time and space for event attendees to connect with each other (FIL, 2015 D).

Ego and power dynamics

“[Initially] some people were suspicious about what it was going to mean in terms of power sharing” — Christine Berry, Trustee Finance Innovation Lab, 2015

All systems are bound by complex, unequal power relationships and entrenched interests (Di Domenico et al, 2011; Ryan, 2014). Generally, the status quo has been built over a long period of time by the actions of many and the system has become resistant to change (Ryan, 2014).

A common barrier cited in the American collective impact literature is “the desire of individual organisations to seek and take credit for their work” (Hanleybrown, Kania and Splansky Juster, 2014, p 3-5) and to “fall back on old models of power, authority, and perceived expertise”

⁴⁴ FIL’s event Unfinished Business: Reform and Innovation in Finance (FIL, 2015 D) commenced by asking each member of the audience to write on a post-it what they believed to be the biggest challenge facing the finance sector. These ideas were shared as the opening comments of the event, before an introduction by the Chair or any speakers. The final words of the event were a personal reflection and summary of the discussion from a member of the audience, rather than the Chair or a panel member.

which “can get in the way of the kind of change that we are all fighting for” (Barnes et al, 2014)⁴⁵. Both FIL and WLZ echo this view, noting that people who lead charities often have strong personalities, are accustomed to being in a leadership rather than a partnership role and have been shaped by the system to prove they and their organisation holds the expert knowledge (Morgan, 2015; Mitchell, 2015). For example Mitchell of WLZ described how the CEO of a third sector organisation was unwilling to attend a WLZ meeting that was chaired by the CEO of an organisation that competes for funding. Similarly, when approaching one potential partner as a “backbone organisation” Mitchell of WLZ was asked whether that suggests that every other organisation is “spineless”. FIL also report that one of the more common challenges with collaboration centered on disagreements regarding who was in charge (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 17).

The view that ego and power hinders collective impact is supported by collective action theory (Olson, 1971, p 2). This theory suggests that individuals within groups will not voluntarily act to further group interests unless they are offered an individual incentive to achieve the group objectives. This logic holds true even when there is unanimous agreement in a group about the common good and the methods for achieving it. According to this theory, in an environment of competition, an organisation working in the interests of a large group of organisations in a particular sector (such as a backbone organisation) would get no support from the rational, self-interested individuals within that sector. While logic would suggest that where there are shared goals efforts should be combined, the human desire for personal gain creates a significant barrier. Despite this, caution should be exercised when making assumptions about the role of ego and power dynamics in collective impact (see ‘rethink assumptions about ego and power dynamics’ below).

⁴⁵ This is exacerbated by the current structure of the third sector funding environment where organisations are required to demonstrate individual impact in order to secure additional funding.

Inflexible understanding of perceived roles

“A good start for the first step of the journey [is] the awakening bit”

— Jennifer Morgan, Founder Finance Innovation Lab, 2015

Collective impact is a ‘mindset’ as much as an approach, and requires a reformation of the perceived roles of all actors in the system – something which is notoriously difficult to change. Collective impact work can be highly countercultural (Hanleybrown, Kania & Splansky Juster, 2014) and requires “changing cultures rooted in dated ideas and siloed strategies” (Gallagher, 2014, p 31).

WLZ found it complex to engage with many organisations in their catchment area, and had to be creative, adaptable and flexible about how to engage each one because of their established processes, structures and perceived roles (Mitchell, 2015). Corporates were challenging to engage as all communication had to pass through the Corporate Social Responsibility team, health workers were difficult to reach (taking up to a month to respond to emails) as their time was focussed elsewhere, and charities and schools had minimal contact (despite both parties wanting to work together) as schools’ resources were limited. In addition both WLZ and FIL cite the perceived role of funding bodies as a key barrier (see ‘lack of long-term and flexible funding’ below) (Mitchell, 2015; Morgan, 2015).

Assumptions, norms and values lead people to become locked into habits that are as much psychological as practical (Caulier-Grice et al, 2010, p 23). Collective impact requires all organisations in the ecosystem to shift to thinking of their work as part of a larger system, recognising that all interventions are necessary but not enough on their own (Hanleybrown, Kania & Splansky Juster, 2014). As Hartley et al explain:

“The public sector will need to redefine their role as convenors in dialogue with a plethora of actors. Public managers will have to relinquish technocratic perceptions that only they have the professional expertise to make sound decisions and become ‘meta-governors’ that orchestrate collaborative efforts. Private firms and voluntary organisations will have to reframe their role from that of competitors and advocates for particular interests to partners working to address larger social challenges. Citizens will have to shift from clients or customers to co-producers. Funding bodies have to shift

from funding individual organisation to funding efforts to solve social challenges with social impact metrics to match” (Hartley et al, 2013, p 827).

The political and cultural climate in the UK

“The general culture of neoliberalism around competition and individualism is not helpful or conducive to the type of work we are doing”

— Christine Berry, Trustee Finance Innovation Lab, 2015

As discussed in Chapter Four, the pervasive undercurrent of neoliberal ideologies in the UK and the increasing marketisation of services has created a culture of competition and individualism that opposes the values and practices required for effective collective impact (Berry, 2015; Pike, 2015). As discussed by Verhaeghe (2014), “30 years of neoliberalism, free-market forces and privatisation have taken their toll, as relentless pressure to achieve has become normative ... solidarity becomes an expensive luxury and makes way for temporary alliances, the main preoccupation always being to extract more profit from the situation than your competition”.

Individualism

FIL has noticed that a focus on individualism, combined with the British class system⁴⁶ and a British culture that tends to be more ‘closed’ than the USA, opposes the culture of sharing and expressing feelings and needs that is required to support collaboration (Morgan, 2015). Neoliberalism prioritises individualism over increased social cohesion and collective ideals such as social justice or equality (Smith, 2014, p 28). The cultural script reinforces sole actors not only working in isolation to each other, but working against each other by competing for the same resources. As argued by Verhaeghe, “a changed economy reflects changed ethics and brings about changed identity” and neoliberalism “would have us believe that success depends on individual effort and talents” (Verhaeghe, 2014). An emerging discourse in the social enterprise and social innovation sector for example is that of the ‘heroic social entrepreneur’ or the ‘social innovation superhero’ (Doherty et al, 2014, p 15; Berkhout and Stremmelaar, 2015).

⁴⁶ While multiculturalism and a changing economy are gradually eroding the British class system, many features of the system still remain.

Competition

The concept and practice of competition as central to free market ideology has now permeated all areas of life and sectors in the UK. Competition exists as a result of an attempt by the people and organisations in the market to do as well for themselves as they can (Telsers, 1988, p xiii), focussing on “the self-interested pursuit of mutually exclusive gains, with resultant winners and losers” (Khozein et al, 2013). Within the third sector in particular, cuts to public funding under the banner of austerity, combined with the nature of philanthropic grants (awarded to individual organisations for demonstration of discrete impact) reproduces a climate of competition (Pike, 2015; Hanleybrown, Kania and Splansky Juster, 2014). This is an issue that both FIL and WLZ are aware of, commenting that it has led to charities becoming territorial and focussed on taking credit for individual impact in order to secure future funding (Berry, 2015; Morgan, 2015; Mitchell, 2015). FIL notes that “the more people are scrabbling around to keep their own organisations funded, the less inclined they are to collaborate” (Berry, 2015), a dynamic that is largely left unchallenged (Morgan, 2015).

The combination of competition and individualism has led to a focus on short-term results, which opposes the long-term approach required for effective collective impact (see ‘time required to build relationships’ above). In the public sector, emphasis is often on the results required within the next three to four years to ensure re-election. In the private sector, there can be a tendency to focus on short-term financial returns for shareholders. In the third sector the focus is on proving results to funding bodies, generally within one year. All sectors tend to be “over-ambitious in the short-term, but under-ambitious in the long-term” (Pike, 2015).

Lack of long-term and flexible funding

Collect impact requires “sufficiently flexible, patient and adventurous funding”

— Matthew Pike, Consultant, 2014

Access to diversified funding for collective impact work is one of the most commonly cited barriers in both the UK case studies and the American literature. Both FIL and WLZ express frustration with the parochial attitudes of funding bodies that are committed to a ‘donor/recipient’ mentality (Morgan, 2015; Mitchell; 2015), a view which is strongly reflected in the American experience (Thompson, 2014; Kania and Kramer, 2011; Paris, Burke and Schnell, 2013; Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012). It is far easier and more compelling to fund a single grant application that can demonstrate tangible results than to engage in the complex and slow work of mobilising an entire field to deliver sustained change in an open-ended process. If not for funding through WWF-UK in FIL’s case and one significant individual philanthropist in WLZ’s case, neither project would have been possible as the funding wasn’t otherwise available (Morgan, 2015; Mitchell, 2015).

While there are some examples of grant-makers working as ‘partners’ in collective impact projects in the USA (Bartczak, 2014)⁴⁷, there is little evidence of this in the UK. UK-based organisation, Collaborate, recently released a paper (Kippin, 2015) analysing the funding ecology for social innovation in the UK, arguing that a new body of creative thinking about funding models, supported by brokerage and facilitation, is required. This requires collective impact practitioners to encourage funders to see their role “less as guardians of self-identified change ... and more as partners within a well-functioning ecosystem of support for others” (Kippin, 2015, p 4), providing funding that is both long-term (two-three years) and flexible (can be used to cover operating costs and adapt to new requirements) (Bartczak, 2014).

⁴⁷ For example, the Babcock Foundation, who fund collective impact initiative CAN, specifically sought to enable collective impact by filling the gaps left by other funders, rather than sticking to their own funding criteria. They identified a gap of multi-year general operating support to individual organisations that were part of the network as well as to the network as a whole, and provided funding that enabled network coordination functions, capacity building, and operational expenses such as meeting and travel costs. In addition, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, which funds the Learning Network collective impact project, deliberately did not dictate funding frameworks, but brought community members together and left them to decide the best solution, then accepted and supported the plan and provided the necessary funding (Bartczak, 2014).

Primary enablers

Understand the ideology and values driving the system

“If we want to transform the system ... it is essential to fundamentally reprioritise the values that underpin the institutions that give life to the system because anything less is tinkering around the edges” - Finance Innovation Lab event invitation, 2015 A

Delivering systems change requires an understanding of the values, culture and ideologies that both underpin the system and enable collaborative ways of working. “Collective impact efforts must be as rigorous about culture as they are about data and strategy if they wish to achieve enduring change” (Schmitz, 2014).

Ideologies

Uncovering the ideologies that underpin a system can be achieved by asking two questions: why are things the way they are, and whose interest does that serve? Or for example, “who gains and who loses” from economic and policy decisions (Atkinson, 2015, p 5). This is a core part of FIL’s model, evident in their expectation that their partners will “take a step back and ask the big questions about the financial system” (Sinha and Millar, 2015, p 12). FIL explicitly works to “reframe the values of the financial system from ‘self- serving’ to ‘serving the whole’”⁴⁸ (Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 A). This is based on systems change theory, acknowledging that “mindsets are particularly important” and “narratives are instrumental in making the current social contract explicit and inspiring re-orientation” (SiG, 2014).

⁴⁸ For example, the Finance Innovation Lab networking event held on April 23rd 2015 was titled ‘How do we cultivate values that empower a financial system that is more democratic, responsible and fair?’ and brought together a range of their partner organisations to discuss:

- What are the dominant values that frame the current financial system, that drive behaviour that repeatedly results in sanctions?
- How are these values perpetuated even in the face of continued public protest?
- ‘How’ do we actually change the values?
- How can we do this at scale to transform the financial system?

(Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 A).

Values and culture

Values are present in every context and manifest in personal, organisational and societal behaviours. Collaboration (and collective impact) requires a “heart-set as well as a mind-set” to be properly implemented (Straus, 2002, p xvi). There is research to suggest that pro-social values (such as self-transcendence and openness to change values) are associated with a higher propensity to collaborate (Maio et al, 2009; Schwartz, 2005, cited in Stephan, Huysentruyt & Van Looy, 2012 p 10-11), with more perspective taking and integrative, consensus seeking behaviour in negotiations (e.g. Bersma and De Dreu, 1999; Grant and Berry, 2011; Schwartz, 2005, cited in Stephan, Huysentruyt & Van Looy, 2012 p 10-11). The process of collaboration is governed by “normative obligations” (Di Domenico et al, 2011, p 102) and these norms and expectations can be used as a crucial tool in building and sustaining collective impact. As Putnam (1993, p 181) explains, the social contract needed to sustain collaboration in a community is not legal but moral, where the sanction for violating is not penal, but exclusion from the network of solidarity and cooperation.

All interviewees highlight the importance of values in collective impact work, including empathy, generosity, solidarity (Berry, 2015), thinking beyond oneself and one's own organisation (Morgan, 2015; Berry, 2015), co-creation and empowerment (Mitchell, 2015; Morgan, 2015), creativity, self-responsibility (Morgan, 2015), transparency, humility and respect (Mitchell, 2015), placing focus on the behaviours that support those values (Pike, 2015; Morgan, 2015).

Stand between the margins and the mainstream

“To be inside and outside a position at the same time — to occupy a territory while loitering skeptically on the boundary — is often where the most intensely creative ideas stem from. It is a resourceful place to be, if not always a painless one”

— Terry Eagleton 2003, p 40

All systems gravitate to protect their own interests as “servants to themselves” (Ryan, 2014). FIL recognises that generating systems change requires pressure simultaneously from both the

outside and the inside of a system while engaging people from varied power positions (Ryan, 2014; Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 10). FIL operates both within and outside the current system simultaneously, engaging people within the incumbent system and people outside it who are ready for change, spreading tentacles across all sectors of society. FIL sought early partners that were “credible within the current system, but open-minded enough to really question the assumptions on which it was based” (Sinha and Millar, 2015, p 8). FIL believes that “to positively disrupt you build an alternative market that will create the new status quo” (Morgan, 2015), based on systems change theory developed by the Berkana Institute that suggests “both the old system and the seeds of the new system exist at the same time” (Sinha and Millar, 2015, p 26), creating a “credible threat” for the current system (Hewett, 2015).

To achieve this FIL uses ‘transition theory’ to prioritise three strategies that catalyse systems change from both within and outside the finance system (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 28-29). The first strategy is the ‘landscape’ level, which is about the terrain the game is played on (for example the neoliberal economy). At this level FIL’s focus is on “changing the climate of ideas” and “illuminating alternatives” through their events. The second strategy is the ‘regime’ level, which focuses on power dynamics and the structures and institutions that shape the status quo. At this level FIL works to develop the leadership and strategies of campaigners outside the system, and support people within the finance system to innovate in their organisations. The final strategy is the ‘niches of innovation’ level, which is about prototyping new financial models. At this level FIL’s focus is incubating innovations and helping them scale.

The role of backbone organisations is not only to coordinate the work of numerous organisations, but to transform the system that those organisations operate within (Pike, 2015). There is a fine line between achieving the traction required to engage the current system and maintaining enough distance from the current system so as not to unwittingly endorse the status quo. A key tension and question for FIL is at what point the alternative finance sector becomes the mainstream, and how to differentiate between innovations that are genuinely changing the logic of the system and innovations that are co-opted by the system and end up reproducing the problems inherent in the existing system (Berry, 2015).

Embrace contestation

“There will be people in this room who do not get on, and we are completely up for disagreement and tension - we give everyone permission to be annoyed in public”

— Danny Kruger, CEO West London Zone, 2015 C

While the literature on collaboration can tend to focus on creating structures that enable all participants to ‘get on’, a crucial enabler of effective collective impact (and social innovation more broadly) is embracing the conflict generated by different perspectives.

Conflict and contestation are both natural and essential in collective impact work in order to move beyond the incremental innovations driven by unanimous consent and create more disruptive change (Ryan, 2014; Kippin, 2015, p 10; Sørensen and Torfing, 2013 p 5). Often the best ideas will be generated through the clash of alternative experiences and points of view⁴⁹. The absence of conflict does not necessarily mean collaboration is working well, but that the conflict is happening outside the room, which is why backbones must engage actors who see the world differently and may have been traditional competitors, and facilitate the airing of conflict and difference (Schmitz, 2014; Bartczak, 2014; Barnes et al, 2014; Ryan 2014). This requires negotiation and frank and uncomfortable conversations (Boyle and Irby, 2014). FIL experienced the challenge of bringing people together who “speak different organisational languages” within their core team made up of people from the third sector (WWF-UK) and people from the private sector (ICAEW) (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 9).

⁴⁹ For example, one of the keys to success for the Sustainable Food Lab - a network of more than 70 of the world’s largest food companies and global and local third sector organisations – was business and third sector partners taking time to understand one another better as people and as professionals. Over time the cognitive dissonance between them became less, and the power of their differing views grew. “We do see the world very differently, and that is our greatest strength,” said a corporate participant about a year into the process (Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015).

Engage willing individuals

“Collective will is crucial” (Danny Kruger, CEO West London Zone, 2015 C) so “go where the energy is” (Charlotte Millar and Rachel Sinha, Founders Finance Innovation Lab, 2015, p 58)

Collective impact as a ‘mindset’ or ‘value-set’ is a personal preference or style. Backbones should seek out and engage people from across the system who are open to a collaborative style of working. These individuals might not always be CEOs, and it may mean that not every organisation in the system is included. This does not mean however that collective impact will be inhibited.

Invite unusual suspects, recognising that not everyone is required

During question time at the FIL Reform and Innovation in Finance event where 200 people are gathered, rather than taking questions at random, questions are requested from people who have never been to a FIL event before or who have never asked a question at a FIL event before. This is “because there are certain people who are missing from this debate” (Finance Innovation Lab, 2015, D). This strategy was carefully planned at FIL’s team meeting, thinking through how they could break the traditional power dynamics of ‘speaker/audience’ because “that’s half the problem with the banking system” (Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 B). This is an example of FIL’s deliberate strategy to identify people from grassroots communities or marginalised groups and enable their voices to be heard.

While many individuals are comfortable working with others who share common views and values, collaboration amongst the ‘usual suspects’ who have developed the same worldviews can stifle the development of new and bold ideas required for systemic change that arise from seeing the system from a different point of view (Hartley et al, 2013, p 826; Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015; Edmondson and Hecht, 2014). Collaboration amongst ‘unusual bedfellows’ brings pressure to bear on the status quo from multiple angles (Ryan, 2014). Engaging the ‘boat rockers’ in generating new insights from unexpected sources is a crucial element of the social innovation process (Kippin, 2015, p 8).

Backbones should invite individuals from all levels within the system (both ‘grasstops’ and ‘grassroots’) and not simply reinforce traditional power divides or embedded inequality (Rospert, 2014; Barnes et al, 2014; Hanleybrown, Kania and Splansky Juster, 2014). This must include representation from the community itself - local people who have unique and personal experience of the issue being addressed including individuals, families, networks and social service organisations that may not be initially represented on steering committees or working groups (Barnes et al, 2014; Stewart and Norris, 2013; Schmitz, 2014). Collective impact should ignore existing sector boundaries and bring people together in new ways.

FIL has found that “collaboration does not mean everybody is always included ... only when people share the same purpose and have complimentary values can they create mutual benefit” (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 36). FIL’s initial approach was to bring all facets of the financial system into the same room, expecting some form of collaboration to emerge, which resulted in nothing more than a ‘talking shop’. FIL quickly realised that to accelerate change they needed to ‘segment the market’ and target “willing and open change agents” (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 44) in order to cultivate different perspectives and deliberately bring together, for example, bankers and artists who wouldn’t normally connect. Importantly, and in contrast to the American literature, this does not always mean inviting those in formal positions of power. FIL has learnt that “seniority could often increase people’s immunity to change [because] they get locked into organisational expectations, behaviours and strategies that are at odds with systems change”, hence FIL focuses its efforts on “rising leaders” (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 49).

FIL now focuses on the quality of their partnerships rather than the quantity (Morgan, 2015) and attracting the “people who care” who are “awake to the idea that the status quo is not working” with ideas that they believe could change the financial system (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 12 & 44). This includes both ‘allies’ who share the goal of changing the finance system, and ‘targets’ who are in strategically important parts of the financial system and are not yet on board but are open to FIL’s ideas (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 52). One of the strengths of this cross-sector model is that it connects organisations like the New Economics Foundation - focussed on producing state of the art research on alternative economic models - with the radical innovators who can put those ideas to work. Similarly WLZ brings the public and third sector together through ‘Link Workers’. These employees broker relationships between local

children's centres, schools, health centres (the public sector) and local clubs and non-profit organisations (the third sector), as well as playing a mentoring role with individual families. WLZ will utilise existing public sector assets in the form of 'anchor organisations' to bring local groups together.

Engage individuals rather than organisations

Both FIL and WLZ believe that "collective will is crucial" (West London Zone, 2015 C) and "whoever comes are the right people" (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 47). Both use a self-selection model to engage those who have a similar mindset and ethos and align with the values and goals set by the backbone (Morgan, 2015; Mitchell, 2015; Hewett, 2015). The end result is that participants are committed to implementation (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 49) and are "people who are, not by accident, naturally collaborative and not territorial" (Berry, 2015). For FIL working with individuals rather than organisations is a crucial part of their model, recognising that systems change because individuals within the system change⁵⁰. This requires understanding the needs, motivations and individual visions of partners (Bartczak, 2014). Discussion at FIL's team meeting focused on "equal value exchange" between FIL and partner organisations, seeking partners that they can offer value to as well as partners who can offer value to FIL to "build positive long-term relationships" (Morgan, 2015; Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 B). FIL also has a unique focus on personal development, strengthening participants' purpose, values, empathy and self-awareness (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 50).

⁵⁰ For example, Pike (2015) notes the "brave exceptions" to the organisations that hold an entrenched competitive mindset are "mostly down to individual people". For cultural change to take hold, members of a community must experience the power of collaborative efforts so they begin to expect it as the norm (Straus, 2002, p 201). "Change happens only when everyday people believe the issue is really important and are willing to change their own behaviour. Not because someone tells them to, but because they want to. They see it as a priority for themselves, their communities, and their lives" (Barnes et al, 2014).

Use the context to create urgency for change

“From a progressive left standpoint, what has just happened [re-election of the Conservative UK government] is a catastrophic fail ... we have a massive fight ahead of us” — Christine Berry, Trustee, Finance Innovation Lab, 2015

A crucial enabler of collective impact is widespread discontent and disillusionment with the status quo where organisations feel the confusion and pain of unaligned work, coupled with shared hopes and aspirations for change (Boyle and Irby, 2014; Ryan, 2014; Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012; Stewart and Norris, 2013). In the UK there is a “period of inflection” at present (Kippin, 2015, p 4) and FIL has used this to create fertile ground for those frustrated with the status quo to join together to shift the system and allow “ideas based on values previously marginalised by the dominant system” to gain traction (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 27). The re-election of the Conservative government, the continuing welfare cuts and the continued rate of economic inequality are evidence that change is needed, and this can be used to generate energy around a shared vision for change. The members of the FIL Transforming Finance Network have clearly united around a sense of shared frustration that has generated energy. The meeting ended with the comment, “these are exiting times” (Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 B).

Broad agreement that change is needed has been a crucial enabler for both WLZ and FIL. The foundations for FIL were laid just prior to the Global Financial Crisis. As Morgan describes, “you could feel it in the air ... the knowledge and understanding that it was the calm before the storm”, and it was “abundantly clear there was widespread dissatisfaction and unease with the status quo” (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 6). Hewett of FIL says “it felt like there was a piece missing” and the current finance system was a “common enemy” (Hewett, 2015). Similarly Mitchell of WLZ (2015) explains:

“what we’re talking about is very disruptive, but the time is such that both the statutory sector and the social sector and some enlightened funders see that the current system doesn’t work. We haven’t addressed inequality, money from the statutory sector is disappearing, and charities don’t use what they get effectively or get enough. It has all come together.”

Rethink assumptions about ego and power dynamics

“The goodwill is enormous. So many people want to look differently at this and bend the rules and make things happen”

— Louisa Mitchell, Director West London Zone, 2015

While power dynamics driven by individual ego can be a barrier in collective impact, the assumption that ego and power will impact negatively on collective impact efforts may be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Conversely, the energy amongst the participants in FIL and WLZ around a shared goal they are passionate about appears to have the potential to nullify the effect of individual ego or credit-seeking behaviour.

On the one hand there is a clear assumption from WLZ and FIL that the individual egos of charity sector leaders will hamper collective impact work (Mitchell, 2015; Morgan, 2015). Yet on the other hand, while there are examples of power dynamics disrupting collective impact efforts (as described above in ‘ego and power dynamics’), they appear to be the exception rather than the rule. While one CEO invited to participate in a WLZ steering group stated that “there are probably only six people in the social sector in this entire borough who can rise above themselves and do what you need them to do”, all 30 organisations invited to participate in the initial steering group process joined (Mitchell, 2015). While this level of participation could be attributed to the fact that no one wants to “miss out on what might be the next big thing” (Mitchell, 2015), it would suggest that power dynamics should be referenced with care. This is not to say that power dynamics are not relevant, but that assumptions could ‘fuel the fire’ of the ‘power and ego’ rhetoric we have come to accept as usual through underlying neoliberal discourse.

The will, interest and enthusiasm in both the WLZ and FIL projects amongst participants is clearly evident in stakeholder meetings (West London Zone, 2015 C; Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 B; Finance Innovation Lab 2015 D). The participants observed and interviewed were engaged, motivated, open and willingly giving their time. FIL’s Transforming Finance network has helped mitigate potential tensions through the process of organisations getting to know each other and realising they each have a different and unique contribution to make (Hewett, 2015). It was clear in the Transforming Finance Network meeting that members saw the value

in aligning work and sharing resources, such as mapping their lobbying and PR activities to strengthen their collective ‘voice’ (Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 B). It would appear that the shared goal and shared vision for change generated the energy capable of enabling collective impact participants to begin to look beyond their individual agendas. As one audience member in the WLZ Concluding Steering Group Meeting asked (after some suggested it may be hard to engage parents and other institutions), “why wouldn’t they want what’s best for children – it is obvious isn’t it?” (West London Zone, 2015 C).

It is this alignment of intention around a shared goal that captures the heart and imagination of participants that facilitates group action⁵¹ (Kania and Kramer, 2011; Morgan, 2015; Latham, 2011, p 10; FSG et al, 2015) and shifts the focus to “what’s best for us, not what’s best for me” (Stewart and Norris, 2013). Morgan (2015) reports that FIL’s focus on the higher goal of creating a new market has nullified feelings of competition between organisations that have bought into the higher goal. Conversely Morgan attributes the unwillingness of the corporate banking sector to engage with FIL to their role as competitors working on ‘lower order’ change (at the product level) and therefore lacking in a shared goal.

Lead by stepping back

“What kills any initiative like (collective impact) is any kind of leadership that comes with an idea of ownership” — Christine Berry, Trustee Finance Innovation Lab, 2015

An influential champion or group of champions that can command the respect of a critical mass of CEO-level actors is often promoted as the most crucial element of effective collective impact (Pike, 2014, p 36; Hanleybrown et al, 2012; Berry, 2015; Morgan, 2015; Straus, 2002, p 199). However while a charismatic leader is important for launching an initiative, it will take other types of leadership to build and sustain collective impact (Schmitz, 2014). Leading a backbone organisation requires what Hamilton, Kania and Senge (2015) refer to as a ‘systems leader’ with particular emphasis on ‘leading from behind’. A systems leader has the following traits:

⁵¹ For example, the Appreciative Enquiry Summit in the USA brought together groups that had never worked together before (and one happened to be suing another) but through collectively imagining that the rates of recidivism in New York state have become the lowest in the nation, they were able to agree on goals they could work on together (Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015).

- They hear, acknowledge and enquire into alternative views. They build relationships based on deep listening, create space to engage people in questions and foster reflection that creates a different energy amongst participants. Their ability to see reality through the eyes of different people encourages others to be more open.
- They nurture commitment to the collective. By re-contextualising organisational self-interest and showing that success depends on the wellbeing of the larger system, they nurture commitment to the health of the whole.
- They foster positive relationships. They are intuitive, understand emotions and can sense others' needs, building strong relationships and cultivating connections (Morgan, 2015). They build trust as an ongoing process (Schmitz, 2014).
- They sustain creative tension. They maintain the gap between vision and reality, which generates energy. They are creative and "can see that putting two and two together equals ten" (Morgan, 2015).
- They "keep hold of the big picture" (Hewett, 2015). They see the larger system, not only what's visible from their vantage point, and they understand how the pieces of the system fit together (Morgan, 2015).
- They create the space for change, rather than following a set plan. They are so convinced that something can be done that they do not wait for a fully developed plan. They "follow the energy", they are comfortable 'not knowing', and can manage the emergent nature of change (Morgan, 2015). They have a particular style of facilitation, acting as a "creative and credible host with clear outcomes" (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 20).
- They are solutions-focused. They shift the collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future. They ask obvious questions and embody an openness and commitment to their own ongoing learning and growth that eventually infuse larger change efforts. They are resilient and persistent when they reach a dead end (Morgan, 2015).

- They practice leadership and personal reflection. They engage in deep experience and reflective learning (Morgan, 2015; Pike, 2015). They recognise that they have “met the enemy and he is us” (Senge, 2013). They understand they are part of the system they seek to change, and reorient their awareness and thinking internally as well as externally.
- They ‘lead from behind’. This characteristic appears to be of particular importance in the UK context. WLZ have adopted a combination of “humility and strength” (Mitchell, 2015) where the backbone mobilises stakeholders but is willing to allow them to develop the solution themselves and own the project’s success (Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012; Berry, 2015). This type of leadership is about “stepping back” (Pike, 2014, p 40) as a “conductor behind the scenes” (FSG et al, 2015) and playing the role of “facilitative leader” in a system of partnership where bringing people together to engage in dialogue is most important (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 12; Straus, 2002, p 9 & 188).
- They manage their ego. Collaborative leaders must be ‘conveners’, ‘mediators’ and ‘catalysts’ (Hartley et al, 2013 p 826). Berry (2015) notes that “FIL wouldn’t have happened without someone who was charismatic and inspiring enough, but also lacking in ego and empathetic and collaborative enough to bring people with them”. This subtle shift in strategic focus is about creating the conditions for change which will eventually allow it to be self-sustaining, rather than attempting to ‘make change happen’ - not controlling the process but allowing participants to shape the conversation and outcomes and honoring their ideas when they do (Barnes et al, 2014; Bartczak, 2014; Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015). For example WLZ’s goal is to “nurture the network” as “humble people with a vision” who act as the connective tissue between what they categorise as their ‘network partners’ and ‘delivery partners’ (Mitchell, 2015; West London Zone, 2015 B).

Locate the backbone in the third sector

“All this [collective impact] will be possible because WLZ is located in the social sector”

— Maud Weber-Brown, West London Zone Community Engagement Consultant, 2015 C

All collective impact practitioners interviewed agreed that the sectoral location of the backbone organisation will have an effect on the style and content of the collective impact project (Pike, 2015; Mitchell, 2015; Morgan, 2015; Berry, 2015; Hewett, 2015). There is (unsurprising) agreement amongst those working in the third sector that that the most appropriate home for the backbone organisation is in the third sector (Gallagher, 2014, p 31; Morgan, 2015; West London Zone, 2015 C). The reasons most commonly cited for this are that the third sector is values-driven, not subject to the mindset of bureaucracy (a challenge faced by public services), not motivated by profit (a challenge faced by the private sector) and is closer to citizens, whose needs it seeks to address (Bason, 2010; Chew and Lyon, 2012, p 3).

Leaders within each sector will approach and frame collective impact from within their own rationality. While the public sector and third sector share a similar concern for the ‘majority good’ (Morgan, 2015), West London Zone directly attribute their success to date to their location in the third sector, which they believe allows for “a huge degree of flexibility and creativity that doesn’t exist in the public sector” (West London Zone, 2015 C). American experience supports this view, suggesting that public sector backbone organisations can be more bureaucratic (opposing the adaptive nature of collective impact) and co-opt the project to meet their own needs (FSG et al, 2015). Similarly there is general caution against private sector leadership of collective impact, as it allows corporations to “steer projects towards profitable endeavours ... as a corporation’s ultimate responsibility lies with its shareholders, not in social justice” (Boyce, 2013; Morgan, 2015). This is not to say that other sectors wouldn’t be best placed to lead a particular element of the project, for example a private organisation leading performance measurement (Pike, 2015), or using public sector schools and children’s centres to coordinate operational delivery of services as per the WLZ model (Mitchell, 2015).

Follow a process instead of a tactical plan

“We set out with a strong purpose of changing the financial system but with a big strategic gap in knowing how we might actually do it”

— Rachel Sinha and Charlotte Millar, Founders Finance Innovation Lab, 2015, p 3

Collective impact work is organic. It is impossible to know what the project will look like at the beginning, or into the future as it continues to evolve. The emphasis is on the goal rather than the method, and the structure and relationships that enable shared and continuous learning rather than a pre-set solution.

Collective impact work is often described as “messy” (Mitchel, 2015; Morgan, 2015; Kania and Kramer, 2011; Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 31). In contrast to the traditional project-based approach of social innovation, collective impact work is iterative and emergent⁵². FIL’s experience shows that collective impact work is about creating a framework for participants to come together around a shared goal, without a clear understanding of the method or activities to be implemented, which is simultaneously ambitious and ambiguous (Millar and Sinha, 2015 p 6). “The conscious acts of creating space, of engaging people in genuine questions, and of convening around a clear intention with no hidden agenda, creates a very different type of energy from that which arises from seeking to get people committed to your plan” (Hamilton, Kania and Senge, 2015). As Berry (2015) reports, FIL’s work commenced in a very generative and organic way, bringing together a range of people without a set agenda to see where the conversation led, which allowed participants to take ownership of the project without feeling ‘pushed’ in a particular direction.

The process requires collective impact practitioners to sit with uncertainty and the paradox of a clear intention with unclear strategies. In the early stages FIL found that people opted-out because they expected answers and solutions, an assumption that is “diametrically opposed” to collective impact (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 13). It is the adaptive process and constant cycles of

⁵² As Kania and Kramer (2013) explain “emergence” is a term taken from the field of complexity science and used to describe events that are unpredictable, which seem to result from the interactions between elements, and which no one organisation or individual can control. For example the process of evolution where there is no ultimate ‘solution’ beyond the process of continual adaptation within an ever-changing environment. Predetermined solutions on the other hand work best when technical expertise is required, the consequences of actions are predictable, the material factors are known in advance, and a central authority is in a position to ensure that all necessary actions are taken by the appropriate parties, for example administering medicine to a patient.

action learning within a strategic action framework⁵³ that facilitate radical experimentation and uncover previously unnoticed resources and solutions. It requires curiosity and enquiry rather than decisiveness (Kania and Karmer, 2013) and as FIL found, always “starting before you are ready” (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 37).

The experience of WLZ demonstrates one of the paradoxes of collective impact - to achieve big systems change you need to “chunk things down” - the bigger the change the more important it is to micro-improve step by step (Pike, 2015). WLZ focuses on the situation and story of an individual child and then locates that story within a process, linked to their wider purpose. In this way they are making systems change more tangible through incremental steps that progressively can lead to something deeper. WLZ began the implementation of their work at a small scale to ensure they ‘got it right’ before scaling up.

This analysis of barriers and enablers in the UK provides a starting point to explore how collective impact could be more widely implemented in the UK. The extent to which it can depends on possibilities for activating enablers and removing barriers – the focus of discussion in the next chapter.

⁵³ Strategic action frameworks are not static. They are working hypotheses of how the group believes it can achieve its goals, hypotheses that are constantly tested through a process of trial and error and updated to reflect new learnings, endless changes in the local context, and the arrival of new actors with new insights and priorities (The Tamarack Institute, 2011, p 137).

Chapter Seven - next steps for collective impact in the UK

It is the FIL Reform and Innovation in Finance event, and 200 people are gathered in St Paul's Cathedral in London. After listening to suggestions for reforming the finance system from the panel of experts, from crowd-funding to local banking, one audience member asks — “why does it have to be one solution over the other, why don't we map the entire system and connect all the ideas into a larger tapestry? Why the polarity between the big systems and smaller institutions — can't they exist together?” (Finance Innovation Lab, 2015 D).

The first chapters of this thesis provided a theoretical overview of social innovation, the impact of neoliberalism in the UK and a description of collective impact. Chapter Three argued that social innovation has been co-opted and diluted and that a new normative definition, focussing on justice, empowerment and equality is required to ensure its disruptive potential. Chapter Four explored the effects of neoliberalism in the UK, in particular the corrosion of collaborative styles of working, with rising economic inequality highlighted as the primary indicator that the system requires reform. Chapter Five argued that collaboration will not go far enough as an approach to addressing entrenched social challenges, and that collective impact as an advanced form of collaboration is a socially innovative practice that has the potential to catalyse systemic change in the UK.

The theory was then grounded in practice, exploring collective impact in the UK through the FIL and WLZ case studies and drawing on the experience of US-based collective impact practitioners in the collective impact literature. This chapter will discuss the next steps for collective impact in the UK, drawing on the barriers and enablers identified. It will touch on economic inequality as an example of the type of challenge that could be addressed through collective impact. It will be argued that the key to developing collective impact in the UK is a new generation of third sector backbone organisations that are sufficiently funded, promoted and supported. It will be proposed that two forms of backbone organisations are required – those that seek to coordinate actors in the system at a local level for individual outcomes, and those that seek to transform the system at an institutional and ideological level - and that both

are equally important. This chapter will provide food for thought and a recipe for action, concluding with recommendations for future research and practice.

Food for thought: analysing the barriers and enablers

The research revealed six primary barriers to collective impact in the UK:

1. Existing services with established theories of change
2. Time required to build relationships
3. Ego and power dynamics
4. Inflexible understanding of perceived roles
5. The political and cultural climate in the UK
6. Lack of long-term and flexible funding

The first four barriers relate to mindsets, worldviews and relationships with and between existing actors in the system - the trickiest and arguably most important aspects of systems change. It is these elements of collective impact that are enabled by a strong backbone organisation with the time available to undertake the work. Barrier five can also be ameliorated by a backbone organisation when problems with existing systems are used to activate the enabler of urgency for change. Barrier six can be addressed through new funding models, which will be discussed in this chapter.

The primary enablers of collective impact were identified as:

1. Understand the ideology and values driving the system
2. Stand between the margins and the mainstream
3. Embrace contestation
4. Engage willing individuals
5. Use the context to create urgency for change
6. Rethink assumptions about ego and power dynamics
7. Lead by 'stepping back'
8. Locate the backbone in the third sector
9. Follow a process instead of a tactical plan

Similarly, all nine enablers of collective impact either relate directly to the role of a backbone organisation, or can be activated by a backbone organisation. Enablers 1-7 in particular speak directly to the backbone organisation's role in facilitation, leadership and promoting understanding of the wider system. This would suggest that a new generation of backbone organisations is the key to effective collective impact that can address entrenched social challenges.

A case in point: reducing economic inequality

Economic inequality has been highlighted as the primary reason that the current neoliberal system requires reform, and will be used as an example to discuss the role of backbone organisations in facilitating collective impact. Economic inequality is not inevitable (Chang, 2014 p 341; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, p 2). It reflects social and economic choices made by organisations, individuals and governments, and as such is a "moral matter" (Grayling, 2013, p 7) embedded in our social and economic structures (Atkinson, 2015, p 3). The causes are multiple and interlinked and are firmly embedded within the existing political economy⁵⁴ (see for example Atkinson, 2015 and Stiglitz, 2015 for more in-depth analysis).

The collective impact approach lends itself to this type of complex challenge as it is adaptive, it links and optimises strategies across sectors, and it is designed to generate systems change⁵⁵ (FSG et al, 2015). Economic inequality requires "more radical proposals that require us to rethink fundamental aspects of our modern society and to cast off political ideas that have dominated recent decades" (Atkinson, 2015, p 4). A seismic shift needs to occur from treating

⁵⁴ For example, Atkinson (2015) suggests five areas that impact on economic inequality: progressive taxation and the welfare state; technological change and its distributional implications; the labour market and employment; the capital market and the sharing of wealth; and, investment in education and skills. Similarly, in their "comprehensive approach to tackling poverty", the Joseph Rowntree Foundation suggests the following areas must be addressed simultaneously: the nature of jobs at the bottom end of the labour market (number of jobs, pay and flexibility of working conditions); the cost of essential goods and services requiring review of the markets that provide them and their regulators; the opportunities people are given to reach their potential for example at school or work, involving employers and the education system; the role of private organisations such as community groups and housing associations in people's lives; and the way the state responds through taxes, benefits and policies (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, p 3, 5, 24).

⁵⁵ The rise of the New Public Management framework (part of the neoliberal framework), offers an example of actors joining together to instigate a shift in in 'business as usual'. Wood (cited in Levesque, 2013 p 27) identifies the formation of coalitions bringing together accounting firms, financial intermediaries, management consultants and business schools - essentially a "coalition of professional and corporate interest" supported by a new class of "top public managers" in the public sector with a background in neo-classical economics rather than social sciences or humanities. Particular segments of society were supportive of reforms that would see a democratisation of public services based on involvement of users, with some citizen groups calling for decentralisation of public services. The reform movement was also supported by large international institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, the United Nations (Department of Economics and Social Affairs) and the OECD (United Nations, cited in Levesque, 2013 p 27).

the symptoms to fundamentally tackling the causes⁵⁶ (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, p 2, 26). While the issues that contribute to economic inequality (such as housing, education and employment to name a few) are not fragmented at an individual level, the organisations addressing them are (Schmitz, 2014). Achieving a significant reduction in economic inequality requires an interlinked approach across all sectors of society, acknowledging underlying narratives and power structures. This is the type of challenge that collective impact is designed to address⁵⁷. There is widespread consensus that partnerships will be key to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (of which one is reducing inequality and one is eradicating poverty) and organisations around the world are beginning to develop collective impact projects to commence this work (FSG et al, 2015). So how does this work in practice?

A backbone building agenda is the first step

Shifting from isolated impact to collective impact will not happen organically, and is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration or public-private partnerships - it requires a systemic approach coordinated by backbone organisations (Kania and Kramer, 2011; Berry, 2015; FSG et al, 2015). Backbone organisations serve six essential functions, implemented in the following order (Kania, Martin, Merchant and Turner, 2012):

1. Providing overall strategic direction, guiding vision and strategy.
2. Facilitating dialogue between partners to support aligned activities.
3. Establishing shared measurement practices, managing data collection and analysis and sharing results to support action learning.
4. Handling communications and building public will.
5. Coordinating community outreach and advancing policy.
6. Mobilising funding.

⁵⁶ The provision of food banks is an example of addressing the symptoms of economic inequality rather than the causes. While the service temporarily addresses the immediate need of providing food, it can also create a new dependency and further embed the system that created the problem in the first place.

⁵⁷ For example United Way's collective impact work in the USA has shown that success comes from tackling the many interconnected issues in relation to a societal challenge. For example tackling high school drop out rates in the Greater Toledo area required a focus on not only education, but on hunger, homelessness and health. Their approach was to establish schools as community hubs where public, private and third sector agencies came together to provide students and families with resources, referrals and services, enabling all parts of the system to change (Stewart and Norris, 2013 p 75).

What type of backbones are needed?

Achieving the required depth

The research conducted for this thesis revealed two forms of backbone organisations (as outlined below in table 2), both of which will be required to address the root causes of systemic challenges such as economic inequality:

- Those that ‘coordinate’ and focus on changing individual circumstances in local areas (these generally follow the American model of collective impact).
- Those that ‘transform’ and specifically focus on changing institutions and ideologies at a national level.

Table 2: backbone organisation types

	Level of change	Geographic scope	Method	Scope of change
Coordinate Backbone	Individuals	Local community	Align existing services around individuals	Improvement in service delivery
	Institutions	City/regional	New business models, training business leaders	Shift in institutional structures
Transform Backbone	Society, government, culture	National	Campaigning and advocacy	Radical systems change in meta narratives and culture

WLZ is an example of the ‘coordinate’ backbone type. It focuses on bringing together existing services in a specific local area to reduce inefficiencies in the system and enhance outcomes for individual people who receive those services. On the other hand FIL is an example of a ‘transformative’ backbone. Its focus is systemic, designed to shift the values and ideologies that underpin the neoliberal system. It is less focussed on direct or immediate outcomes for individuals in a local area, instead focussing on institutional structures, business models and narratives at a national level. This type of focus is not nearly so evident in the American model of collective impact, which is arguably more concentrated on aligning resources with improvement rather than transformation in mind.

Each of these approaches is equally important. On one hand, a systemic approach is required to disrupt the dominant structures and discourses that have created economic inequality (and other social challenges) in the first place. On the other hand an individual focus is required for two main reasons. Firstly there are stark differences in the culture and situation of local communities across the UK, and these nuances must be taken into account. Secondly, the effects of complex challenges such as economic inequality and poverty can have profound impact at an individual level – for example strain on relationships or health issues like depression - (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, p 20) which must be addressed on an individual basis as each individuals' situation will be unique. This is where a multi-layer backbone structure is beneficial, linking local, regional and national strategies (FSG et al, 2015), or what Kania and Kramer (2013) refer to as “cascading levels of linked collaboration”.

Achieving the required breadth

In addition to the varying levels of ‘depth’ required, there are also varying levels of ‘breadth’. A challenge such as economic inequality requires interventions led by backbone organisations across multiple issues. In the case of economic inequality these include but are not limited to: housing, health, education, taxes and benefits, employment and the structure of commercial markets and the finance sector.

In determining the breadth of the collective impact project, backbones should consider where the need is greatest (highest level of impact) and where the opportunity is best (where funding is available and actors in the system are open to collaboration) (FSG et al, 2015). One sector cannot develop without impacting or being impacted by another, hence the broader the partnership, the greater the level of impact (FSG et al, 2015). If focussing on one area in particular (housing for example), collective impact projects should understand and involve relevant actors in other sectors where required. For example, WLZ is focussed on the education system, as well as everything outside the system that contributes to academic attainment such as the health sector or the housing sector (Mitchell, 2015). Where there are multiple collective impact projects in place, collaboration between the projects will be required to enhance results⁵⁸.

⁵⁸ For example, The Greater Cincinnati Foundation created a community of practice amongst a cohort of backbone organisations operating in the Greater Cincinnati area. The goal was for the organisations to learn from each other, continuously improve their practice, and encourage greater collaboration across overlapping initiatives regardless of sector or issue. Less than six months into the development of the community

Where will the new backbones come from?

There are a range of ‘intermediary’ organisations in place in the UK, including third sector membership organisations or peak bodies such as Social Enterprise UK; ‘hubs’ and co-working spaces like the Impact HUB; or public sector ‘community anchor organisations’⁵⁹. While these organisations may appear to be well placed to act as a backbone, their embeddedness within the existing system means they may run the risk of unwittingly reinforcing the system as it is today. In addition, it is unlikely that these types of organisations have the skills to manage the dialogue and facilitate the relationships between very different actors – for example bankers and campaigners for finance reform in the case of FIL.

For example, Impact HUB’s theory of change argues that co-locating and connecting social entrepreneurs working on individual projects will lead to greater collaboration and impact. Yet this model emphasises building and scaling projects that produce isolated impact. The social change projects are implemented by self-proclaimed ‘change agents’ who have the resources to afford the membership fees, perpetuating the discourse of the lone ‘heroic social entrepreneur’ (Berkhout and Stremmelaar, 2015). This model does not appear to take into account the underlying structures of power, or facilitate a deep process of collaboration with shared goals and measures. In a similar vein, Social Enterprise UK – the peak membership body for social enterprises – is funded primarily through the government and the membership fees of mutuals and ‘spin-outs’. These mutuals and spin-outs are part of the Conservative Government’s Big Society agenda. By supporting mutuals and spin-outs, Social Enterprise UK is inadvertently facilitating the government’s austerity and privatisation agenda and the continuation of neoliberal politics which have led to rising economic inequality.

This calls for a new generation of independent backbone organisations that are designed from the outset to drive collective impact (similar to WLZ and FIL, both of which differ to traditional intermediaries). Both WLZ and FIL were new initiatives and were not part of the existing system, which enabled them to create ‘new rules’. New independent backbones will ensure the

of practice, results were evident. Vision 2015, Agenda 360, Partners for a Competitive Workforce, and the Strive Partnership are working together on a labour market study called ‘2020 Job Outlook’. These four backbone organisations will share resources - leadership, connections, and funding - to develop a dataset that can drive the region’s collective vision and goals on job training and educational attainment (Kania, Martin, Merchant and Turner, 2012).

⁵⁹ ‘Community anchor organisations’ have existed in the UK for several hundred years and there are several hundred in operation around the country (Pike, 2015). They are similar to backbone organisations in that they act as ‘connective tissue’ in a local community, integrating mixed community services.

agenda of reducing economic inequality (or whichever social challenge is being addressed) will remain firmly at the forefront, rather than being retrofitted to an existing organisation operating with the baggage of entrenched interests. One caveat is that these organisations (or the individuals within them) must be well-networked in order to bring together the range of organisations required to meet challenges as complex as reducing economic inequality. Third sector organisations with the goal of reducing economic inequality at their core who are already engaging in collaborative work at some level – such as Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Child Poverty Action Group, London Coalition Against Poverty or Make Poverty History to name just a few – could be a starting point. Another starting point could be the ‘social labs’ that are becoming ever more popular around the world as well as in the UK⁶⁰ (Kieboom, Sigaloff and Exel, 2015). FIL offers an example of a ‘lab’ approach.

How will the backbones be funded?

Access to long-term and flexible funding - what Pike refers to as “flexible, patient and adventurous” money⁶¹ - is a key barrier of collective impact in the UK. However as Atkinson (2015, p 308) and Pike (2014, p 11) highlight, the fiscal crisis is paralysing a more creative view of combined resources in the UK’s unprecedented levels of wealth - above all from pension funds and insurance policies that UK citizens pay into. The issue is, Pike argues, “less about the availability of money as such than it is about aligning personal, institutional and national interests so that the combined funds we do have can be used” (Pike, 2014, p 11). If we are willing to creatively use the wealth that exists in the UK today, there are plenty of opportunities (Atkinson, 2015, p 308).

Collaborate’s recent report on the social innovation funding ecology (Kippin, 2015) advocates for a more collaborative approach where funding is provided to coalitions, with less prescription about process or outcome in order to address complex and entrenched problems that require a systems approach. It is these types of new funding models that are required to

⁶⁰ A social lab (sometimes also called a social innovation lab or a public sector innovation lab) is a concept derived from experimental labs in universities and technology companies. A social lab is designed to facilitate cross-sector collaboration in solving social challenges. They are run by a multidisciplinary team consisting of citizens, employees from local institutions, government officials and policymakers that come together to develop new solutions to community challenges (Kieboom, Sigaloff and Exel, 2015, p 7-8). Social labs are run from within the community - homes or community gathering spaces - and place emphasis on empowering the local community to solve its own challenges. Nesta recently hosted a LabWorks seminar in London bringing together practitioners working in social labs across the world, and has created a worldwide searchable map of public sector labs - see <http://www.nesta.org.uk/blog/world-labs>

⁶¹ See Pike’s ‘seven rules of thumb’ for effective funding (Pike, 2014, p 12-17).

support and incentivise collective impact projects, and these new funding models are not as impossible as they may seem. For example, independent consultancy Matthew Pike and Associates is developing a new collective impact investment fund, aiming to create culture change by incentivising the behaviour required to deliver collective impact⁶². Another new model in development is WLZ's collective impact bond, designed to support collaborative work within their collective impact partner cohort⁶³.

How will impact be captured?

One of the ways collective impact differs from other forms of collaboration is capturing shared data and using it in a rigorous and systematic way to shape practice and retain focus on the wider system rather than any one organisation (Boyce, 2013; Ryan, 2014; Pike, 2015; Pike, 2014 p 3). As measurement tools are developed, it will be important to consider who is designing the tool and for what purpose, to ensure the tools align to the goals of collective impact and are independent of existing interests.

Both FIL and WLZ acknowledge that measurement is one of the hardest parts of the process (Morgan, 2015; Mitchell, 2015) and are in the process of building new measurement systems that are fit for the purpose of measuring collective impact. FIL are creating a new learning and evaluation framework to measure change in complex systems (for example change in relationships and power dynamics and how these link to wider systems change). WLZ are building a data measurement system capturing a range of indicators for individual children that will be accessible by all partners. This is part of a new open platform that will be freely available to those practising collective impact. Another similar platform is being built for organisations working with children and young people, and over time it will be adapted for different types of work (see www.resultsmark.org).

⁶² As Pike (2015) explains, the collective impact investment fund utilises the social impact bond model and offers flexible and cheap capital to invest in a portfolio of collaborative interventions that can scale over time to generate systems change. The fund will commence in 10 local areas in London and will be funded through a blend of commercial capital (via high street banks) and a levy on public service contracts. Public sector agencies that buy outcomes will fund 40% of the cost of capital. The fund will be used as a catalyst for collective impact work - collaboration will be built into funding contracts as a requirement. The goal of the fund will be to absorb the risk of collaboration on a long-term basis.

⁶³ The development of the collective impact bond is currently in the design and feasibility phase using funding from the Cabinet Office. The goal is to extend the 'payment by results' model to philanthropy as well as government. The bond will be used to fund WLZ projects and will require: service delivery by multiple providers; multiple data-driven outcomes; multiple buyers including corporates and philanthropists; a locality based model using areas defined by need rather than municipal boundaries; and, engaging private investors (West London Zone, 2015).

Where will the backbones sit?

One final consideration to be managed for the future success of collective impact, as captured in the analysis of enablers of collective impact, is for the backbone to carefully manage its position between the mainstream and the margins. It is clear that for economic inequality to be reduced, for example, the entire system and meta-narratives that support the system must be challenged and changed. Backbones can either reproduce the existing system, which will deepen neoliberalism and economic inequality, or actively attempt to shift it. A particularly difficult enabler for the backbone organisation to put in place is retaining a position that is both inside and outside the current system simultaneously.

This requires new forms of backbone organisations that mix things up in new ways so as not to reproduce the status quo. American research would suggest that backbones should be those organisations that have established reputations within the existing system. This is a risk as it can perpetuate and embed discourses and practices that increase inequality. While both WLZ and FIL's collective impact projects were born from within existing institutions, they were formed as new organisations. FIL epitomises this approach, deliberately asking questions about concepts which are a normalised part of society to "change the climate of ideas" that have "stabilised around the status quo" (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 28-29).

Objections and counter-arguments

As discussed in Chapter Two, it was outside the scope of the research to interview people who were unfamiliar with collective or unsupportive of the methodology. The research methodology used for this thesis did not yield any significant objections or counter-arguments to the collective impact approach. While there is limited opposing argument for discussion, some opposing views are very briefly discussed here.

One barrier identified is the time required to engage in collective impact. This is why a backbone building agenda is recommended as the first step, ensuring dedicated resources are available to facilitate collective impact work. Another barrier was lack of access to funding, which can be addressed through the new funding models described. Some people may

question whether collective impact is worthwhile given it will be incredibly difficult to prove causality. This ‘just do it’ perspective is common in the social enterprise sector, however the fact that major societal challenges are not shifting provides the evidence that a more systemic view is required, and this is where new measurement systems can assist.

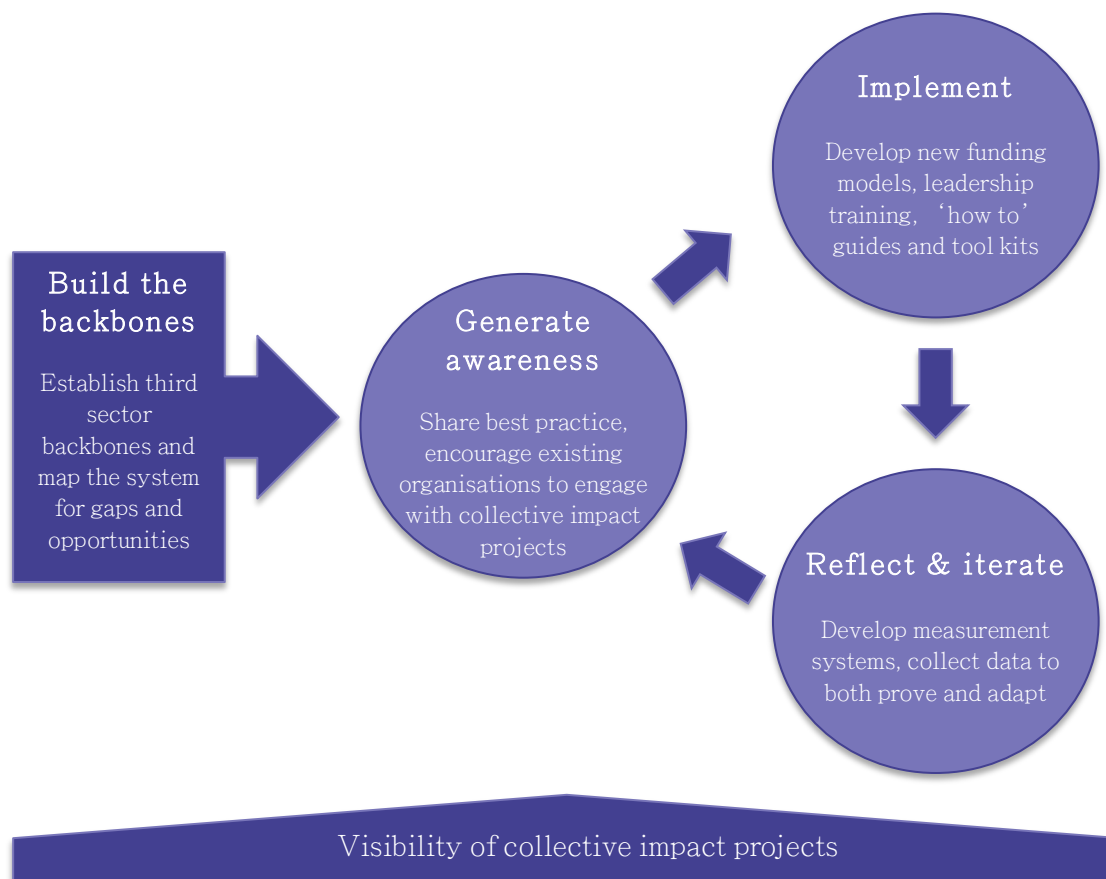
Perhaps the most significant objection to collective impact is the view that ‘intermediary organisations’ or backbones are unnecessary overheads that distract resources from the organisations delivering change on the ground. This is a short-sighted perspective. The importance of an independent backbone organisation cannot be underestimated and has been validated by research⁶⁴, particularly when bridging large power differentials and translating ideas between sectors (Pike, 2015; Stephan, Huysentruyt and Van Looy, 2012; Kania, Martin, Merchant and Turner, 2012). The backbone organisation enables the other four conditions of collective impact (shared goals, shared measures, mutually reinforcing activities and continuous communication) (FSG et al, 2015). The expectation that collective impact can occur without a backbone organisation is one of the most frequent reasons why collective impact fails (Kania and Kramer, 2013; Kania and Kramer, 2011; Kania, Martin, Merchant and Turner, 2012; Thompson, 2014).

A recipe for action

The messy process of aligning and enhancing the work of the people and organisations tackling complex challenges such as reducing economic inequality requires a new cohort of backbone organisations. For collective impact to be introduced as a social innovation in the UK, the following ‘recipe for action’ is proposed. It will rely on a continuous cycle of awareness, implementation and learning, as represented in Figure 1 below. It will commence with the development of new backbone organisations, and will be underpinned by greater visibility of collective impact projects across the country.

⁶⁴ This was confirmed by research in the USA into the value and role of backbone organisations conducted by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, looking at the work of six backbone organisations in the region that were beyond the start-up phase. The research concluded that the value of a backbone is unmistakable - “if not for the backbone organisations’ contributions, stakeholders believe that ... individual organisations could not do the work of collective impact” (Kania, Martin, Merchant and Turner, 2012).

Figure 1: a collective impact ‘recipe for action’



Ten recommendations across each stage of this lifecycle are listed below.

Build the backbones

1. Encourage formation of a limited number of new backbones⁶⁵ that are independent of the current system as much as possible. In doing so, these backbones should not be put on a pedestal as 'heroes' or 'leaders', but as facilitators that enhance and highlight the work of other organisations.
2. Map the system for gaps and opportunities. Determine which projects are already in place (it is highly unlikely that there will be no existing programmes) and what these offer. This will highlight where the gaps and opportunities lie, in services, narratives, values and ideologies. This is particularly important in the UK context where there is a long history of third and public sector initiatives already in place.

⁶⁵ The suggestion to encourage the formation of new backbone organisations comes with the caveat that only a limited number will be needed. A proliferation of backbones that may end up duplicating efforts will only cause further complication.

Generate awareness

3. Build the urgency for change. Rising dissatisfaction with neoliberal politics in the UK (evident in the support for the Scottish National Party's opposing policies in the 2015 UK election) offers an opportunity to build the story about the need for change. This includes both raising awareness of the issue of economic inequality, and making the neoliberal counter-narrative explicit rather than implicit.
4. Build awareness of the collective impact methodology amongst all sectors – public, private and third⁶⁶. This could be achieved through forums or conferences and will rely on sharing practical examples (both from within the UK and internationally). The goal in building awareness should be to encourage existing organisations and projects to seek and engage with collective impact work in their field.
5. Promote understanding of systems thinking. FIL's 'Strategy for Systems Change' (Millar and Sinha, 2015) offers an example of a tool that could be used to educate others. Just as FIL describes itself as an actor in a wider ecology of change efforts in finance (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 45), all backbone organisations should be critically aware of the system within which they exist, and what role they play within that system.

Implement

6. Shift understanding and practice of leadership. Training for backbone leaders in 'systems leadership' is a useful starting point. This new style of leadership should be recognised and celebrated in practice, as working in new ways is more often punished than supported (Pike, 2015). This includes cultivating the intrinsic values required for collective impact work to enable culture change.

⁶⁶ A word of caution in promoting collective impact is to maintain a rigorous emphasis on the five conditions of collective impact. If/when collective impact becomes more widely utilised in the UK, it is likely there will be organisations seeking to use the term to secure funding or publicity, which runs the risk of diluting the term and its transformative potential in practice (as discussed in relation to the social innovation movement).

7. Build new funding models. The two new funding models in development by WLZ and Matthew Pike and Associates offer positive examples of using the wealth within the 1% to fund projects that will support the 99%.
8. Develop 'how do' guides and tool kits⁶⁷.

Reflect and iterate

9. Create new measurement systems to map existing assets and capture results. Data should be used in multiple ways: to determine needs, to facilitate action-reflection learning and to provide the evidence that collective impact works (or doesn't work, and where adjustments in the approach are needed). Data and learning should be made visible through the 'generate awareness' phase of the collective impact lifecycle.

Visibility of collective impact projects

10. Build collective impact networks/maps. Networks of collective impact projects and maps outlining geographical reach will help to avoid double-up of collective impact projects and facilitate action learning. The Collective Impact Forum is an example.

Remaining questions for future research

This thesis offers a starting point into the field of collective impact in the UK and has only touched the surface of the key issues. There are many areas of further research and questions that remain, including for example:

⁶⁷ There are many tools already available, for example:

- The 'how to guide' developed by Collaboration for Impact: <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/the-how-to-guide/>
- The resources collated on the Collective Impact Forum: <http://collectiveimpactforum.org/resources>
- Resources developed by FSG (FIL us using FSG's approach to measurement to design their measurement system): <https://www.fsg.org/approach-areas/collective-impact>
- Simple tools such as the 'change cards' developed by Policy Lab UK which pose hypothetical 'what ifs' (such as 'how would it be done in China' or 'what might it look like in 2014') to encourage different ways of thinking. See <http://www.slideshare.net/Openpolicymaking/policy-lab-change-cards-otherworlds?ref=https://twitter.com/i/cards/tfw/v1/619457636463939585?cardname=player&earned=true>

- What conceptual and/or empirical evidence exists that opposes collective impact?
- What is the right balance between engaging the 'coalition of the willing' and involving individuals who oppose the collective impact project?
- How in practice can a backbone organisation sit between the margins and the mainstream, creating the critical mass required to drive change yet not perpetuate established narratives, practices and values?
- If individual values play an important role in people's choice to engage in collective impact work, how can these values be promoted and developed?
- What is the perspective of organisations and individuals who have not heard of collective impact and are not yet engaged in collective impact work? Does this differ across sectors?
- What measurement systems are required to effectively capture the outcomes and impact of collective impact projects?
- What is the appropriate size and scale of a collective impact project (in either the 'coordinate' or the 'transform' backbone type)?
- What is the best approach for coordinating multiple collective impact projects in the same region or addressing interrelated issues?

The emergent and iterative nature of collective impact work means that it does not come with predetermined solutions. There will be more work required as various strategies are tested to understand the impact of different interventions and approaches. It is hoped that sharing learning throughout this process and celebrating success will support the growth of the collective impact movement across the UK and over time begin to deliver systemic change such as a reduction in economic inequality.

Concluding remarks

“If we all come together, that is what success looks like”

— participant at the FIL Reform and Innovation in Finance event

While there is broad acknowledgement that greater collaboration is needed to tackle complex challenges such as economic inequality, collaboration as we have seen it to date is not enough. Collective impact is one alternative approach. It is not a panacea, it is not an end in itself, and is not without its complexities and challenges. What is unique about collective impact is that it provides a clearly structured approach to collaboration. It acknowledges the strengths of existing programmes and the assets of the community and builds on them. It facilitates the scope of action required from people and organisations across all sectors in society, simultaneously, at both a local and system-wide level. Most importantly, it acknowledges that a backbone organisation is required to integrate this wide, cross-sector scope of action.

Collective impact practitioners in the USA believe the only option for achieving large-scale progress against complex problems, such as economic inequality, is for collective impact to become “the accepted way of doing business” (Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012) and that “there is no Plan B” (Edmondson and Hecht, 2014). There has been some acknowledgement that collective impact could and should be adopted in the UK (Gallagher, 2014; Taylor, 2014) and there is an increasing appetite for this type of “bold collaboration, redesigning how whole systems work for us from the ground up in towns and cities across the country” (Pike 2015; Pike, 2014, p 5).

What is abundantly clear is that to avoid sleepwalking into a future without change, a radically new approach is required. It has been argued that to disrupt the current neoliberal system and provide real benefits for the people on the wrong side of the economic inequality equation, the UK needs a new generation of independent, third sector backbone organisations that have collective impact in their DNA. These backbone organisations will need to lead collective impact projects that address the root causes of challenges such as economic inequality - either a single cause at a systems-wide level (for example, FIL’s focus on the finance sector), or multiple causes at a local and individual level (for example, WLZ’s focus on early intervention for young people across education, health and housing).

Collective impact work is complex and it is not easy. Some of the barriers identified are not easily shifted. Achieving systems change is a long-term process, and collective impact practitioners must accept that they might not see results in their lifetime (Millar and Sinha, 2015, p 28). But that should not stop us from starting now. Collective impact is a social innovation with the potential to achieve justice, greater equality and empowerment. To begin the process of embedding collective impact as a more common methodology in the UK, backbone organisations are key. Awareness of collective impact and systems thinking must be raised and new styles of leadership should be promoted. The formation of new backbone organisations supported by new funding models should be encouraged. The work of the organisations and people participating in collective impact should be tracked using new measurement systems, and their contribution to a goal larger than their individual work should be celebrated.

Collective impact is a deeply human process and is a 'mindset' as much as a methodology. As Morgan of FIL highlights, it requires a "perspective of abundance" – a belief in the possible (Morgan, 2015). This thesis was written from an optimistic perspective. Collectively the future is very much in our hands, if we choose to act together. That may appear idealistic, but perhaps a small dose of idealism is exactly what is required. A sense of shared frustration and aspiration was clearly evident in the collective impact meetings observed and attended. There is huge will and passion to shape an alternative future. As Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer (2012) conclude, "while collective impact remains a messy and fragile process [and] many attempts will no doubt fail ... even the attempt itself brings one important intangible benefit that is in short supply nowadays: hope. Those involved report a new sense of optimism [producing] remarkable changes in people's belief that the future can be different and better [and] this alone may be purpose enough to embrace collective impact".

References

All Hands Raised (2015) *Chapter 01*, All Hands Raised, accessed May 9th 2015,
<http://allhandsraised.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Chapter01.pdf>

Anderson, Tara and Curtis, Andrew (2014) "Is Social Innovation Simply Dressed-Up Neoliberalism?" in *Pioneers Post*, accessed May 25th 2015,
<http://www.pioneerspost.com/news-views/20141202/social-innovation-simply-dressed-neoliberalism>

Anderson, Tara, Curtis, Andrew and Wittig, Claudia (2015) *Definition and Theory in Social Innovation*, Vienna, Austria: Centre for Social Innovation, accessed June 13th 2015,
<https://www.zsi.at/en/object/publication/3641>

Atkinson, Anthony B (2015) *Inequality: What Can Be Done?* Cambridge, MA and London, UK: Harvard University Press

Barnes, Melody, Born, Paul, Harwood, Richard, Savner, Steve, Stewart, Stacey, & Zanghi, Martin (2014) "Roundtable on Community Engagement and Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Volume 12 issue 4, accessed May 9th 2015,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/roundtable_on_community_engagement_and_collective_impact

Bartczak, Lori (2014) "The Role of Grantmakers in Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Volume 12 issue 4, accessed May 9th 2015,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_role_of_grantmakers_in_collective_impact

Bason, Chr. (2010) "Organising for Innovation" in *Leading Public Sector Innovation. Co-creating for a better society*, Portland: Policy Press, 87-113

Berkhout, Remko and Stremmelaar, Josine (2015) "SIX Global Council Ideas for the Future: U Innovate Us" in *Social Innovation Exchange*, April 23rd 2015, accessed June 6th 2015, <http://www.socialinnovationexchange.org/categories/read/global-council-ideas-for-the-future-u-innovate-us>

Berry, Christine (2015) *Interview*, The Finance Innovation Lab, May 15th 2015, London, UK

Belfield, Chris, Cribb, Jonathan, Hood, Andrew and Joyce, Robert (2014) *Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2014*, London, UK: The Institute for Fiscal Studies

Bockman, Johanna (2011) *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neo-liberalism*, California: Stanford University Press

Boyce, B (2013) "Collective impact: Aligning organizational efforts for broader social change" in *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, volume 113, number 4, pages 495,496,497

Boyle, Patrick and Irby, Merita (2014) "Aligning Collective Impact Initiatives", in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Volume 12 issue 4, accessed May 9th 2015, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/aligning_collective_impact_initiatives

Bridgespan Group (2012 A) *Needle Moving Community Collaboratives: Case study: Cincinnati, Covington and Newport*, accessed May 16th 2015, <http://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/a01ac9cc-935e-4bdb-9401-fbb998512e44/Community-Collaboratives-CaseStudy-Cincinnati.aspx>

Bridgespan Group (2012 B) *Needle Moving Community Collaboratives: Case study: Milwaukee*, accessed May 16th 2015, <http://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/438a77c9-81c9-428d-ac9c-09084477b691/Community-Collaboratives-CaseStudy-Milwaukee.aspx>

Caulier-Grice, Julie, Kahn, Lauren, Mulgan, Geoff, Pulford, Louise and Vasconcelos, Diogo (2010) *Study on Social Innovation*, European Union and The Young Foundation

Charity Commission (2014) *Recent charity register statistics: Charity Commission*, London, UK: UK Government, accessed April 18th 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-register-statistics/recent-charity-register-statistics-charity-commission>

Chew, Celine and Lyon, Fergus (2012) *Innovation and Social Enterprise Activity in Third Sector Organisations*, London, UK: Third Sector Research Centre

Collaborate (2014) *The Collaborative Citizen*, 2nd Ed, London, UK: Collaborate

Davies, Jim, Lluberas, Rodrigo and Shorrocks, Anthony (2014) *Global Wealth Report*, Switzerland: Credit Suisse

de Bruin, A (2012) "Towards Advancing Understanding of Social Innovation" in Franz Hans-Werner, Hochgerner Josef, Howaldt Jürgen (Eds), *Challenge Social Innovation* (367-378), Berlin: Springer-Verlag

Di Domenico, MariaLaura (2011) "Learning From and Through Collaborations" in Di Domenico, MariaLaura, Vangen, Siv, Winchester, Nik, Boojihawon, Dev Kumar and Mordaunt, Jill (Eds) *Organisational Collaboration: Themes and Issues*, London and New York: Routledge

Di Domenico, MariaLaura, Tracey, Paul and Haugh Helen (2011) "The Dialectic of Social Exchange: Theorizing Corporate-Social Enterprise Collaboration" in Di Domenico, MariaLaura, Vangen, Siv, Winchester, Nik, Boojihawon, Dev Kumar and Mordaunt, Jill (Eds) *Organisational Collaboration: Themes and Issues*, London and New York: Routledge

Doherty, Bob, Haugh, Helen and Lyon, Fergus (2014) "Social Enterprises as Hybrid Organisations: a Review and Research Agenda" in *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol 16, 417-436, Oxford, UK and MA, USA: the British Academy of Management and John Wiley and Sons Ltd

Egelton, Terry (2003) *After Theory*, London, UK: Penguin Group

FSG, The Collective Impact Forum and The Partnering Initiative (2015) *Implementing the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Building the Backbones and Platforms for Partnering around the SDGs*, webinar, June 18th 2015, http://collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/implementing-post-2015-development-agenda-building-backbones-platforms-partnering-around?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20150617ciggwebinar&utm_source=ci

Edmondson, Jeff and Hecht, Ben (2014) "Defining Quality Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4, accessed April 11th 2015, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/defining_quality_collective_impact

The Economist (2010) "Let's Hear Those Ideas" in *The Economist*, August 12th 2010, New York, accessed April 11th 2015, <http://www.economist.com/node/16789766>

Eggers, B and Singh, S (2009) *The Public Innovators Playbook*, Washington DC: Harvard Kennedy School of Government

The Equality Trust (2015) *About Inequality: Scale and Trends*, accessed February 28th 2015, <http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/about-inequality/scale-and-trends>

Finance Innovation Lab (2012) *For People and Planet*, London, UK: WWF and ICAEW

Finance Innovation Lab (2014) *The Finance Innovation Lab: Our Work*, London, UK: ICAEW

Finance Innovation Lab (2015 A) *Event Invitation: How do we cultivate values that empower a financial system that is more democratic, responsible and fair?*, accessed April 18th 2015, <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-do-we-cultivate-values-that-empower-a-financial-system-that-is-more-democratic-responsible-and-tickets-16534254400>

Finance Innovation Lab (2015 B) *Team Meeting Observation*, May 7th 2015, London, UK

Finance Innovation Lab (2015 C) *Website*, accessed April 18th 2015, <http://financeinnovationlab.org>

Finance Innovation Lab (2015 D) *Unfinished Business: Reform and Innovation in Finance*, event observation, 6:30pm-9:00pm, 9th June 2015, St Paul's Cathedral, London UK

Franz Hans-Werner, Hochgerner Joseph, Howaldt, Jürgen (Eds) (2012) "Final Observations" in *Challenge Social Innovation* (1-16) Berlin: Springer-Verlag

FSG (2013) *Collective Impact Case Study: Vibrant Communities*, accessed February 28th 2015, http://www.fsg.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/PDF/CI_Case_Study_Vibrant_Communities.pdf

Gallagher, Brian A (2014) "Collective Impact" in *RSA Journal*, Issue 4 2014, London, UK: RSA

Grayling, AC (2013) "What is Poverty" in *Poverty in the UK: Can it Be Eradicated?* Derbyshire, Jonathan (Ed), Prospect Publishing, London, UK, accessed June 18th 2015, http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/jrf_web.pdf

Gruening, Gernod (2001) "Origin and theoretical basis of New Public Management" in *International Public Management Journal* 4, 1–25, Germany: Elsevier

Hall, Stuart (2011) "March of the Neoliberals" in *The Guardian*, September 12th 2011, accessed April 18th 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/sep/12/march-of-the-neoliberals>

Hamilton, Hal, Kania, John, and Senge, Peter (2015) "The Dawn of System Leadership" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Volume 13 issue 1, accessed April 11th 2015, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_dawn_of_system_leadership

Hanleybrown, Fay, Kania, John and Splansky Juster, Jennifer (2014) "Essential Mindset Shifts for Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4, accessed May 9th 2015, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/essential_mindset_shifts_for_collective_impact

Hanleybrown, Fay and Splansky Juster (2015) *Three Misconceptions Around Collective Impact*, FSG, June 9th 2015, accessed June 20th 2015, <http://www.fsg.org/blog/three-misconceptions-around-collective-impact>

Hanleybrown, Fay, Kania, John, & Kramer, Mark (2012) "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, January 26th 2012, accessed May 9th 2015,

http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work

Harrison, D (2012) "Social Innovation: What Is Coming Apart and What Is Being Rebuilt?" in Franz Hans-Werner, Hochgerner Josef, Howaldt Jürgen (Eds) *Challenge Social Innovation* (73-86), Berlin: Springer-Verlag

Hartley, Jean, Sørensen, Eva and Torfing, Jacob (2013) "Collaborative Innovation: A Viable Alternative to Market Competition and Organizational Entrepreneurship" in *Public Administration Review*, Volume 73, Issue 6, pages 821–830

Hartley, Jean (2005), "Innovation in governance and public service: Past and present" in *Public Money & Management*, 25(1): 27-34

Hewett, Chris (2015) *Interview*, The Finance Innovation Lab, May 21st 2015, London, UK

Hochgerner, J (2012) "New Combinations of Social Practices in the Knowledge Society" in Franz Hans Werner, Hochgerner Josef, Howaldt Jürgen (Eds) *Challenge Social Innovation* (87-104), Berlin: Springer-Verlag

Howaldt, J and Schwarz, M (2010) *Social Innovation: Concepts, research fields, and international trends*, IMA/ZLW & IfU, IMO International Monitoring (Vol 5)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014) *A UK Without Poverty*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, London, UK, http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/uk_without_poverty_summary.pdf, accessed June 18th 2015

Kania, John and Kramer, Mark (2011) "Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Volume 9 issue 1, accessed May 9th 2015,

http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Kania, John and Kramer, Mark (2013) "Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, January 21st 2013, accessed May 9th 2015,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/embracing_emergence_how_collective_impact_addresses_complexity

Kania, John, Martin, Ellen, Merchant, Kathy and Turner, Shiloh (2012) "Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 3" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, July 19th 2012, accessed May 9th 2015,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_3

Keast, R, Brown, K and Mandell, M (2007) "Getting the right mix; unpacking integration meanings and strategies" in *International Public Management Journal*, 10(1): 9-33

Khozein, Todd, Karlberg, Michael and Freeman, Carrie (2013) "From Competition to Collaboration: Toward a New Framework for Entrepreneurship" in *Creating Good Work: The World's Leading Social Entrepreneurs Show How to Build A Healthy Economy*, Schultz, Ron (Ed) United States: Palgrave Macmillian

Kieboom, M, Sigaloff, C and Exel, T (2015) *Lab Practice: Creating Spaces for Social Change*, Kennisland, Amsterdam, accessed July 4th 2015, https://www.kl.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Lab-Practice_publication_ENG.pdf

Kippin, Henry (2015) *Supporting Social Change: A New Funding Ecology*, London, UK: Collaborate, Big Lottery Fund and Calouste Gulbenkain Foundation

Lansley, Stewart and Mack, Joanna (2015) "A More Unequal Country?" in *Poverty and Social Exclusion website*, accessed March 7th 2015, <http://www.poverty.ac.uk/editorial/more-unequal-country>

Latham, Gary (2011) "Goal Setting: a Five Step Approach to Behaviour Change" in Di Domenico, MariaLaura, Vangen, Siv, Winchester, Nik, Boojihawon, Dev Kumar and Mordaunt, Jill (Eds) *Organisational Collaboration: Themes and Issues*, London and New York: Routledge

Levesque, Benoit (2013) "Social Innovation in Governance and Public Management Systems: Towards a New Paradigm?", in Frank Moulaert, Diana MacCallum, Abid Mehmood, Abdelillah Hamdouch (Eds) *The International Handbook on Social Innovation: Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*, Cheltenham UK and Northampton MA USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited

Mackay, Hugh (1993) "The Research Method" in *Reinventing Australia*, Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson

Martinelli, F (2012) "Social Innovation or Social Exclusion? Innovating Social Services in the Context of a Retrenching Welfare State" in Franz Hans-Werner, Hochgerner Josef, Howaldt Jürgen (Eds) *Challenge Social Innovation* (169-180), Berlin: Springer-Verlag

Mellbye, Anne (2003) "A Brief History of the Third Way" in *The Guardian*, February 10th 2003, accessed July 11th 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/feb/10/labour.uk1>

Millar, Charlotte and Sinha, Rachel (2015) *The Finance Innovation Lab: A Strategy for Systems Change*, Finance Innovation Lab, London, UK

Mitchell, Louisa (2015) *Interview*, West London Zone, April 9th 2015, London, UK

Morgan, Jennifer (2015) *Interview*, Finance Innovation Lab, May 7th 2015, London, UK

Mulgan, Geoff (2012) "Social Innovation Theories: Can Theory Catch Up with Practice?" in Franz Hans-Werner, Hochgerner Josef, Howaldt Jürgen (Eds.) *Challenge Social Innovation* (19-42), Berlin: Springer-Verlag

Nambisan, S (2008) *Transforming Government through Collaborative Innovation*, Washington DC: Harvard Kennedy School of Government

NESTA (2008) *Social Innovation: New approaches to transforming public services*, accessed May 9th 2015, http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/social_innovation.pdf

Office for National Statistics (2014) *Economic Well-being Q3 2014*, London, UK, accessed February 28th 2015, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_390003.pdf,

Olson, Mancur (1971) *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Good and the Theory of Groups*, USA: Harvard College

Paris, N.M, Burke, J.J and Schnell, F.M. (2013) "Shared Vision, Collective Impact, and Persistent Challenges: The First Decade of Georgia's Oncology Research Network" in *Journal of Oncology Practice*, volume 9 issue 6 pages 283-286

Picketty, Thomas (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Pike, Matthew (2014) *Mass collaboration: how we can transform the impact of public funding*, London, UK: Institute for Public Policy Research, accessed May 2nd 2015, http://www.ippr.org/assets/media/publications/pdf/mass-collaboration_July2014.pdf

Pike, Matthew (2015) *Interview*, West London Zone, April 21st 2015, London UK

Putnam, Robert (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Roberts, N.C, and Bradley, R.T. (1991) "Stakeholder collaboration and innovation" in *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 27(2): 209-227

Roberts, N. C. and King, P. J. (1996), *Transforming Public Policy: Dynamics of Policy Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Rospert, Carly (2014) *5 ways collective impact partnerships can advance equity*, Strive Together, accessed May 9th 2015, <http://www.strivetgether.org/blog/2014/12/5-ways-collective-impact-partnerships-can-advance-equity/>

Roy, Ravi and Manfred, Steger (2010) *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, accessed May 2nd 2015, <http://analepsis.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/neolibveryshort.pdf>

Ryan, Mary Jean (2014) "Power Dynamics in Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4, accessed May 18th 2015, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/power_dynamics_in_collective_impact

Schmitz, Paul (2014) "The Culture of Collective Impact" in *The Huffington Post*, 22nd October 2014, accessed June 19th 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-schmitz/the-culture-of-collective_b_6025536.html?ir=India

Scott, Matthew (2011) "Reflections on 'The Big Society'" in *Community Development Journal* 46 (1), Oxford Journals, pp 132–137, accessed May 25th 2015, <http://cdj.oxfordjournals.org/content/46/1/132.short>

Sennett, Richard (2012) *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*, USA: Yale University Press, and UK: Allen Lane

Senge, Peter (2013) "Real Collaboration Takes More than Meetings and PowerPoints" in *Networks for Business Sustainability Blog*, June 24th 2013, accessed July 4th 2015, <http://nbs.net/real-collaboration-takes-more-than-meetings-and-powerpoints/>

SiG (2014) *Systems Change Working Paper*, Unpublished Manuscript, Canada

Smith, Joseph (2014) *Social Innovation as Neoliberal Political Apparatus*, Unpublished Manuscript, London, UK: Goldsmiths University of London

Sørensen, Eva & Torfing, Jacob (2013) *Enhancing Social Innovation by Rethinking Collaboration, Leadership and Public Governance*, Denmark: Roskilde University

Stephan, U, Huysentruyt, M and Van Looy, B (2012) *Corporate Social Opportunity Recognition and the Value(s) of Social Entrepreneurs*, Unpublished Manuscript, UK: University of Sheffield

Stephany, Alex (2015) *The Business of Sharing*, London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Stewart, Stacey and Norris, Tyler (2013) "United Way, Healthy Communities, and Collective Impact" in *National Civic Review*, volume 102 issue 4 page 75

Stiglitz, Joseph (2015) *The Great Divide*, London, UK: Allan Lane Penguin

Straus, David (2002) *How to Make Collaboration Work: Powerful Ways to Build Consensus, Solve Problems and Make Decisions*, San Francisco CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc

Strive Together (2015) *Community Report*, Strive Together, accessed February 28th 2015, <http://www.strivetogether.org/results/community-reports>

The Tamarack Institute (2011) *Cities Reducing Poverty: How Vibrant Communities Are Creating Comprehensive Solutions to the Most Complex Problems of Our Times*, Canada: The Tamarack Institute

Taylor, Matthew (2014) "Can Collective Impact Work Here?" in *RSA Blog*, August 5th 2014, accessed May 23rd, 2015, <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/matthew-taylor-blog/2014/08/can-collective-impact-work-here/>

Telser, Lester (1988) *Theories of Competition*, New York, Amsterdam, London: North-Holland

Thompson, Chris (2014) "Rereading 'Collective Impact': Three Lessons" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, February 3rd 2014, accessed May 9th 2015, http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/rereading_collective_impact_three_lessons

Unger, Roberto (2013) *Social Frontiers Transcript*, NESTA, Glasgow Caledonian University London campus in Shoreditch, East London, 14th and 15th of November 2013, accessed May 9th 2015,

https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/professor_unger_social_frontiers_transcript.pdf

Unger, Roberto (2006) *What Should the Left Propose?* London and New York: Verso

Vangen, Siv (2011) "Managing Aims: Introduction" in Di Domenico, MariaLaura, Vangen, Siv, Winchester, Nik, Boojihawon, Dev Kumar and Mordaunt, Jill (Eds) *Organisational Collaboration: Themes and Issues*, London and New York: Routledge

UK Cabinet Office (2007) *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: final report*, HM Treasury, accessed June 27th 2015,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228900/7189.pdf

United Nations (2014) *The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, Summary of the Key Messages of the General Assembly, 9-10 April 2014, United Nations headquarters, New York, accessed June 19th 2015,
http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/68/pdf/sts/The_role_of_partnerships_Summary_of_Key_messages.pdf

Verhaeghe, Paul (2014) "Neoliberalism has Brought out the Worst in Us" in *The Guardian*, September 29th 2014, accessed February 28th 2015,

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/29/neoliberalism-economic-system-ethics-personality-psychopathicsthic>

Walker, Alan and Corbett, Steve (2013) "The 'Big Society', neoliberalism and the rediscovery of the 'social' in Britain" in *The Political Economy Blog*, March 8th 2013, Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute, accessed May 25th 2015, <http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/2013/03/08/big-society-neoliberalism-rediscovery-social-britain/>

West London Zone (2015 A) *West London Zone Website*, accessed February 14th 2015,
<http://westlondonzone.org>

West London Zone (2015 B) *Concluding Steering Group Meeting Presentation*, West London Zone, London, UK, accessed May 30th 2015,
<http://www.slideshare.net/westlondonzone/conclusion-of-the-west-london-zone-steering-group?ref=http://westlondonzone.org/about/blog/>

West London Zone (2015 C) *Concluding Steering Group Meeting Observation*, May 21st 2015, London, UK

Wilcox, David (2013) "How Three Quiet, Seismic Shifts Are Changing the Social Enterprise and Social Innovation Landscape" in *CSRWire TalkBack*, accessed May 18th 2015,
http://www.csrwire.com/blog/posts/867-how-three-quiet-seismic-shifts-are-changing-the-social-enterprise-and-social-innovation-landscape?utm_medium=Twitter&utm_campaign=CSR+and+sustainability+news

Listings and tables

Box One: case study one - West London Zone	Page 41
Box Two: case study two - The Finance Innovation Lab	Page 42
Table 1: primary barriers and enablers of collective impact	Page 43
Table 2: backbone organisation types	Page 71
Figure 1: a collective impact 'recipe for action'	Page 78

Abbreviations

FIL – Finance Innovation Lab

GFC – Global Financial Crisis

ICAEW – Chartered Accountants for England and Wales

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

UK – United Kingdom

USA – United States of America

WLZ – West London Zone

WWF-UK – World Wide Fund for Nature UK

Appendix One – collective impact reference articles

The seven journal articles containing ‘collective impact’ in the title found on Google Scholar and in the British Library collection on April 11th 2015 are:

Boyce, Brian (2013) “Collective impact: Aligning organizational efforts for broader social change” in *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, volume 113, number 4, pages 495,496,497

Kania, John and Kramer, Mark (2011) “Collective Impact” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 9 issue 1, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Hanleybrown, Fay, Kania, John and Kramer, Mark (2012) “Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, January 26th 2012, http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work

Kania, John and Kramer, Mark (2013) “Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, January 21st 2013, http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/embracing_emergence_how_collective_impact_addresses_complexity

Kania, John, Martin, Ellen, Merchant, Kathy and Turner, Shiloh (2012) “Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 1” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, July 17th 2012, http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_1

Paris, N.M, Burke, J.J and Schnell, F.M. (2013) “Shared Vision, Collective Impact, and Persistent Challenges: The First Decade of Georgia's Oncology Research Network” in *Journal of Oncology Practice*, volume 9 issue 6 pages 283-286

Stewart, Stacey and Norris, Tyler (2013) “United Way, Healthy Communities, and Collective Impact” in *National Civic Review*, volume 102 issue 4 page 75

The 18 additional articles on collective impact published in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, sourced on April 11th 2015, are:

Allen, Lili, Miles, Monique and Steinberg, Adria (2014) “Achieving Collective Impact for Opportunity Youth” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/achieving_collective_impact_for_opportunity_youth

Barnes, Melody, Born, Paul, Harwood, Richard, Savner, Steve, Stewart, Stacey and Zanghi, Martin (2014) “Roundtable on Community Dynamics in Collective Impact” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/roundtable_on_community_engagement_and_collective_impact

Bartczak, Lori (2014) “The Role of Grantmakers in Collective Impact” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Volume 12 issue 4
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_role_of_grantmakers_in_collective_impact

Bastianel, Thomas (2011) “Big Society or Collective Impact” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, May 23 2011,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/big_society_or_collective_impact

Boyle, Patrick and Irby, Merita (2014) “Aligning Collective Impact Initiatives” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/aligning_collective_impact_initiatives

Edmondson, Jeff and Hecht, Ben (2014) “Defining Quality Collective Impact” in *Stanford*

Social Innovation Review, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/defining_quality_collective_impact

Ferber, Thaddeus and White, Erin (2014) “Making Public Policy Collective Impact Friendly” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/making_public_policy_collective_impact_friendly

Hanisian, Kate and Turner, Shiloh (2015) “Turning Empathy into Action” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, March 31st 2015,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/turning_empathy_into_action

Hanleybrown, Fay, Kania, John and Splansky Juster, Jennifer (2014) “Essential Mindset Shifts for Collective Impact” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/essential_mindset_shifts_for_collective_impact

Hanleybrown, Fay, Kania, John, & Kramer, Mark (2012) “Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, January 26th 2012,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work

Hamilton, Hal, Kania, John and Senge, Peter (2015) “The Dawn of System Leadership” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Volume 13 issue 1,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_dawn_of_system_leadership

Kania, John, Martin, Ellen, Merchant, Kathy and Turner, Shiloh (2012) “Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 2” in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, July 18th 2012,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_2

Kania, John, Martin, Ellen, Merchant, Kathy and Turner, Shiloh (2012) "Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 3" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, July 19th 2012,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_3

Kania, John, Martin, Ellen, Merchant, Kathy and Turner, Shiloh (2012) "Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 4" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, July 20th 2012,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_4

Nee, Eric and Jolin, Michele (2012) "Roundtable on Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 10 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/roundtable_on_collective_impact

Parkhurst, Marcie and Preskill, Hallie (2014) "Learning in Action: Evaluating Collective Impact Initiatives" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/learning_in_action_evaluating_collective_impact

Ryan, Mary Jean (2014) "Power Dynamics in Collective Impact" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, volume 12 issue 4,
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/power_dynamics_in_collective_impact

Thompson, Chris (2014) "Rereading 'Collective Impact': Three Lessons" in *Stanford Social Innovation Review Blog*, February 3rd 2014,
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/rereading_collective_impact_three_lessons

Appendix Two - interview guide

Introduction

As part of my study for a Masters in Social Innovation at Danube University Krems, I am writing my thesis on using collective impact to address economic inequality in the UK. Collective impact is essentially an advanced form of collaboration where organisations from different sectors come together to address a complex issue, coordinated by a lead organisation (a 'backbone organisation'). The organisations develop a shared understanding of the issue, set shared goals and success criteria, each take responsibility for actions to achieve the shared goal, and measure their progress collectively. The idea is that combining and streamlining the skills and experience of multiple organisations involved in tackling a particular issue will be more effective than organisations working in isolation (or in competition). The concept was first introduced in the US in 2011, and while it is being adopted across the world, I haven't found many examples of collective impact in the UK. My broad area of exploration is the ways that the principles of collective impact are or can be implemented in the UK context, with a focus on addressing economic inequality.

Background

Tell me about your work – why was it setup and what are the goals?

- Were there particular environmental conditions that led to the development of FIL?

What do you understand by 'collaboration' and 'collective impact'?

Why did you choose to take a collaborative/partnership approach?

- What did you expect from it?

Collective impact criteria one: building a common agenda

Who do you work with across which sectors (public, private, third, civil, academic)?

How did you choose the other organisations you would work with (what criteria were used)?

- Did you consider people with lived experience, or smaller organisations? Why / why not?

What value have you seen in bringing together groups who wouldn't usually work together?

Are any of the partner organisations traditionally competitors, and if so has that had any effect on your work?

How did you get your partners on board?

- How did you overcome any challenges involved in attracting partners?

Are there any key actors missing from your work (those you approached and those you didn't) and if so, why are they missing?

Is there a shared vision amongst partners, and if so how did you build it?

- What is the shared vision?

Collective impact criteria two: common progress measures

How do you measure the progress or impact of your work?

- Is progress ever measured collectively with partners?

How did you decide what you would measure?

- Did you decide with other partners?

How did you develop your theory of change?

- How do you use it?

What do you see as indicators of success for collective impact more broadly?

Collective impact criteria three: plan of action with mutually reinforcing activities

How do you align the efforts of partner organisations?

- Are partners responsible for particular activities?

How are risks or successes shared amongst partners?

How is the project funded?

How has the agenda of the funding bodies influenced the project?

What were the difficulties (if any) in attracting funding?

Collective impact criteria four: open and continuous communication

How important is communication with/amongst partners?

How has the agenda/values/beliefs of partner organisations influenced your work so far?

What is the role of values in collective impact and systems change more broadly?

- Are there particular values that support collective work or systems change?

What are the barriers or enablers to collective impact that are unique to the UK?

Collective impact criteria five: backbone organisation

As the facilitating organisation, how did you build credibility amongst the partners?

- How important was building credibility to your ability to catalyse change with other organisations?

How important is leadership in your work?

What type of leadership is required to catalyse systems change?

How would the form/goals of your work change if it was led from within a different sector (eg public, private)?

- How would it change if it was led by an organisation outside the system? How would that organisation gain credibility?

Have there been any difficulties with sharing power or responsibilities amongst partners?

Results/learning

What results/impacts have you seen so far?

Is there any evidence to show a collective approach generates greater results?

How has your approach/goals changed since you started?

- Why were those changes made?

What have been your biggest learnings about collaborative work so far?

- What are the biggest challenges?
- What are the key success factors?

Are there times when collaboration is not the right approach?

What's the role of contestation in collaboration?

Would you recommend collective impact as an approach to others? Why / why not?

Generating systemic change to increase equality

What do you see as systemic change?

What might be some indicators that systemic change is being achieved?

For this research I'm focusing on economic inequality between the rich and poor as an indicator of systemic change – how do you see your work having a role in that space?

Collective impact is about collaboration across all sectors. How do you make sure that by working with established players (and perhaps taking funding from them) that you're not reinforcing/embedding a dysfunctional system?

How do you make space for radical/alternative thinking in your work?

Is there conflict between disrupting the current system and gaining the necessary traction/scale to create change?

Appendix Three – international collective impact examples

Given the concept of collective impact was first introduced in the USA, it is perhaps unsurprising that all the examples of collective impact discussed in the key literature are located in the USA and Canada. These include:

- **Strive Together** – a partnership of over 300 cross-sector representatives, including school district superintendents, early-childhood educators, non-profit practitioners, business leaders, community and corporate funders, city officials, and university presidents, supporting children and young people’s academic achievement from ‘cradle to career’ in Greater Cincinnati (see www.strivepartnership.org).
- **All Hands Raised** – a partnership between local business, government, non-profit organisations, the faith community, parents, students and community stakeholders to support the success of every child from ‘cradle to career’ in Portland and Multnomah County (see <http://allhandsraised.org>).
- **Success by Six** - a programme to improve school readiness led by United Way in more than 350 cities across the USA, involving school districts, the business community, local non-profit agencies, parents, community leaders and public agencies (see <http://sb6uwgc.org>).
- **Agenda 360** – improving economic opportunity through job creation in Cincinnati USA (see www.agenda360.org).
- **Partners for a Competitive Workforce** – a partnership of businesses, workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, labor, service providers and philanthropic funders led by United Way to meet employer demand for a skilled workforce in Ohio Kentucky (see www.competitiveworkforce.com).
- **Vision 2015** – bringing together community leaders and creative thinkers to address the regional priorities for Northern Kentucky (see www.vision2015.org).
- **Shape up Somerville** – bringing together all sectors and levels of the community including local government, businesses, schools, non-profits, healthcare, grass-roots organisations, and individuals to create policy change that promotes community-wide health and wellbeing in Somerville (see <http://www.somervillema.gov/departments/health/sus>).

- **The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)** - a global project (with offices in London) building alliances between government, business and the third sector to end malnutrition globally (see www.gainhealth.org).
- **LISC's Place Matters** - a partnership between local funders and neighborhood non-profits working collectively for the transformation of communities in greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky (see www.lisc.org/greater_cincinnati/place_matters/).
- **Communities that Care** – bringing together youth, parents, schools, community agencies and local governments to promote the health and wellbeing of young people in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region (see www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org).
- **Opportunity Chicago** – a collaborative of government agencies, foundations, nonprofit organisations and employers that helped over 5,000 public housing residents prepare for and find quality jobs in the Chicago, Illinois from 2006-2011 (see <http://cjc.net/opportunity-chicago/>).
- **Vibrant Communities** – a community of members from diverse sectors, working to see one million people move beyond poverty across Canada (see www.vibrantcommunities.ca).
- **Calgary Homeless Foundation** – a partnership of agencies, governments, businesses, donors, the faith community and citizens working to end homelessness in Calgary (see <http://calgaryhomeless.com>).
- **Memphis Fast Forward** – a partnership of business leaders and mayors to convene diverse stakeholders to create good jobs, a better-educated workforce, a safer community, a healthier citizenry and fiscally strong government in Memphis and Shelby County (see <http://memphisfastforward.com>).
- **The Health Collaborative** – a partnership of patients, providers, and payers to improve the quality of health care in Greater Cincinnati (see <http://the-collaborative.org>).
- **The Elizabeth River Project** - a community effort to restore the environmental health of The Elizabeth River in Norfolk (see www.elizabethriver.org).
- **Mars** – working with NGOs, local governments and direct competitors to improve the lives of impoverished cocoa farmers in Cote d'Ivoire by increasing farming crops, increasing income for the farmers and securing Mars' supply chain (see <http://www.fsg.org/tabid/192/ArticleId/467/Default.aspx?srpush=true>).

- **Central Appalachian Network (CAN)** – a network of six non-profit organisations supported by a backbone aiming to advance economic development strategies to increase the region’s resilience and sustainability (see www.cannetwork.org).
- **The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo** - a collective impact initiative that aims to ensure that every child in the county is ready for school, college, and career (see www.thelearningnetwork.org).
- **The Sustainable Food Lab** - a network of more than 70 of the world’s largest food companies and global and local NGOs (half NGOs, half companies) working together to make sustainable agriculture the mainstream system (see www.sustainablefood.org).
- **Georgia CORE** – a partnership of public and private organisations focussed on increasing collaboration to offer higher quality, better organised, and more cost-effective cancer care in Georgia (see www.georgiacore.org).
- **Promise Partnerships** – an initiative of United Way Salt Lake City bringing together local partners with the goal of ensuring that every child graduates from college, has a safe, clean neighbourhood and home, and has the opportunity to prosper (see www.uw.org/our-work/promise-partnerships/promise-partnerships.html).
- **Appreciative Inquiry Summit** - an initiative to bring together police, grassroots advocates, courts, probation officers, state agencies, private agencies, education institutions, health care providers, and philanthropy to reform the New York state juvenile justice system (no website available).

The examples of collective impact identified on the Collective Impact Australia website and the Collaboration for Impact Australia include:

- **Geelong Region Alliance (G21)** – an alliance of government, business and community organisations working to improve lives in Geelong, Victoria (see www.g21.com.au).
- **Desert Knowledge Australia** - a statutory corporation of the Northern Territory Government established to improve harmony, sustainability and wealth creation in deserts and arid lands (see www.desertknowledge.com.au).
- **Ten20** – a venture philanthropy organisation coordinating a ‘cradle to career’ response for young people at risk of neglect and abuse (see <http://ten20.com.au>).
- **Together SouthAustralia** – working for better outcomes around issues the community identifies as important in South Australia (see www.communitycentressa.asn.au/about-us/together-sa/together-sa)

Appendix Four – UK-based self-identified backbone organisations

The search for backbone organisations in the UK on the Collective Impact Forum directory separated backbone organisations into two categories - those that appeared to be ‘genuine’ backbone organisations, and those that did not. An organisation was categorised as a ‘genuine’ backbone organisation if there was evidence on their website that their activities involved the five principles of collective impact: creating a common understanding of the problem and a shared vision for solving it; shared measurements to track progress; coordination of mutually reinforcing activities of partner organisations; continuous communication amongst partner organisations; and, a backbone organisation that orchestrates the work of the group.

The search for backbone organisations working in ‘economic development’ in the UK returned one result: Open 2 Flow (see www.open2flow.co.uk), which does not appear to be a genuine backbone organisation. There were only two backbone organisations listed as working in economic development in the whole of Western Europe, neither of which appear to be genuine backbone organisations: Frank Bold (see <http://en.frankbold.org>) and the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (see www.enterprise-development.org). A second search for backbone organisations operating in any field in the UK revealed only four organisations that appear to be genuine backbone organisations, and 13 organisations that do not appear to be genuine backbone organisations.

Genuine backbone organisations were:

- **West London Zone** - a partnership of organisations and individuals working together to support children and young people in a discrete area of West London (see <http://westlondonzone.org>).
- **Generation Change** - bringing together the UK's leading providers of programmes that support young people to deliver social action, although there is limited evidence of the shared measurement component of collective impact (see www.generationchange.org.uk).
- **SafeLives** - working to end domestic violence by bringing together domestic violence professionals, police, children’s social services, health and other relevant agencies

through what they call 'Marac meetings' to plan how to address domestic violence on a case by case basis (see www.safelives.org.uk).

- **The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)** - a global project (with offices in London) building alliances between government, business and the third sector to end malnutrition globally (see www.gainhealth.org). This project has been referenced in the key literature in the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

Those organisations that self-identified as backbone organisations yet did not appear to be genuine backbone organisations, were:


- **The Progression Trust** - transforming education and training so children and young people progress. The Progression Trust appears to run several small-scale collaborations which verge on collective impact, however these projects do not appear to apply all five principles of collective impact. These projects include the Progression Whole Network (see www.theprogressiontrust.org/network/) and supporting collaboration between schools and youth clubs (see www.theprogressiontrust.org/news/practice-schools-and-youth-clubs-are-natural-collaborators/).
- **Media Legal Defence Initiative** - providing legal defense for journalists (see www.mediadefence.org).
- **Wave Trust** - addressing child abuse and neglect (see www.wavetrust.org)
- **Church Urban Trust** - linking Christian churches to address poverty (see www.cuf.org.uk).
- **Near Neighbours** - linking citizens in deprived communities to improve their local community (see www.cuf.org.uk/how-we-help/near-neighbours)
- **Global Dialogue** - promoting human rights and social change around the world by making grants and supporting grant makers (see <http://global-dialogue.eu>).
- **Only Connect** - a criminal justice charity, and the impetus behind West London Zone (see www.onlyconnect.london).
- **New Philanthropy Capital** - consulting to charities and funders to make their work more effective (see www.thinknpc.org).
- **ISEAL Alliance** - a membership organisation working to strengthen sustainability standards systems (see www.isealalliance.org).
- **TeachFirst** - training and placing quality teachers in disadvantaged schools (see www.teachfirst.org.uk).

- **Green Alliance** - an environmental policy think tank (see www.green-alliance.org.uk).
- **KPMG** - business consultants (see www.kpmg.com/uk/en/about/mapofofficesandlinks/london/pages/default.aspx)
- **UnLtd** - supporting individual social entrepreneurs (see <https://unltd.org.uk>).

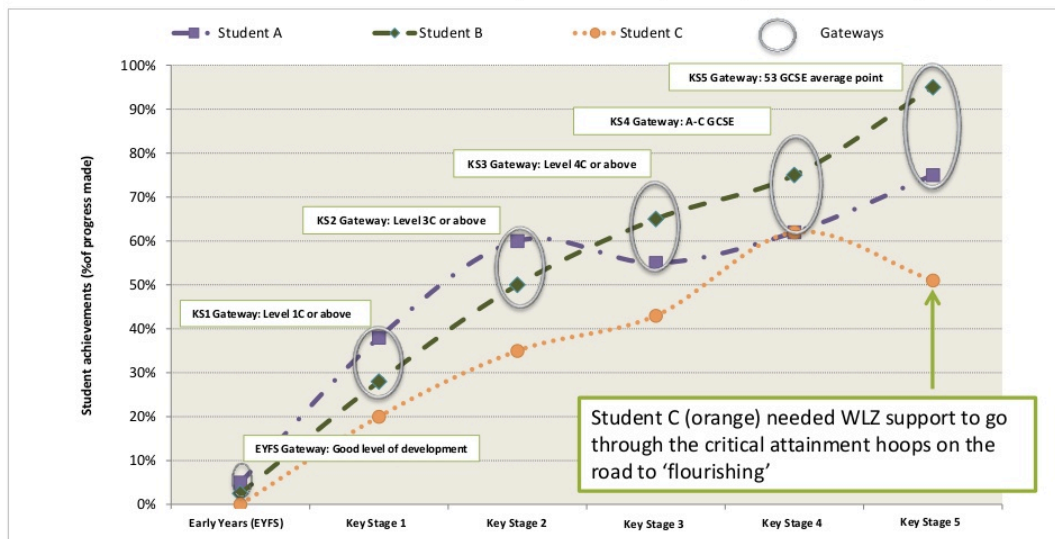
Appendix Five - West London Zone theory of change

The West London Zone Theory of Change Work-Stream developed the following agreed child's journey to adulthood, theory of change and gateways for a 'flourishing' child.

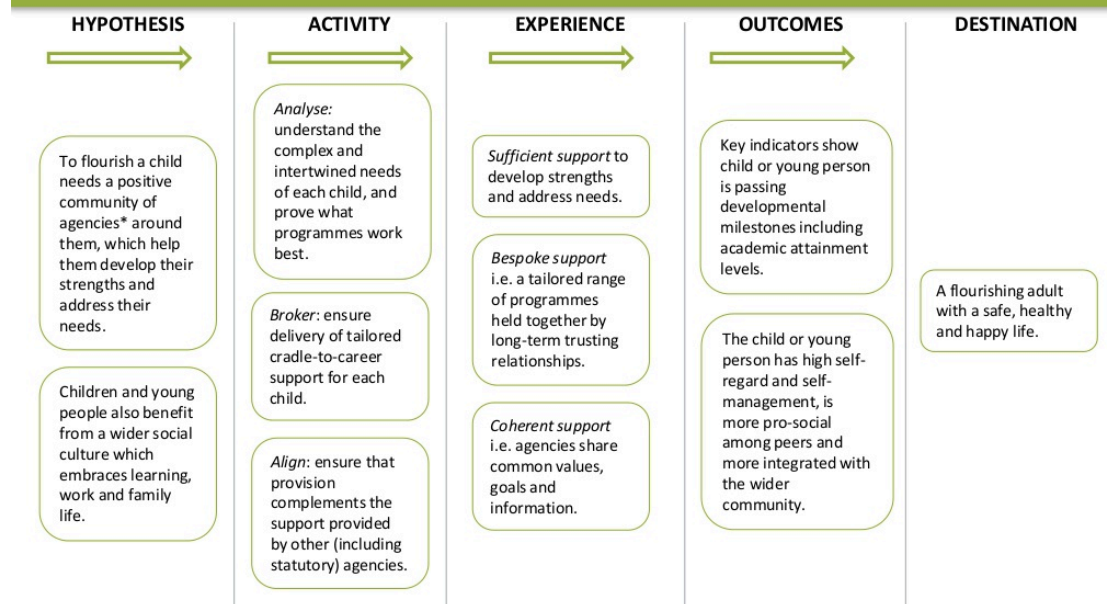
A child's journey to adulthood



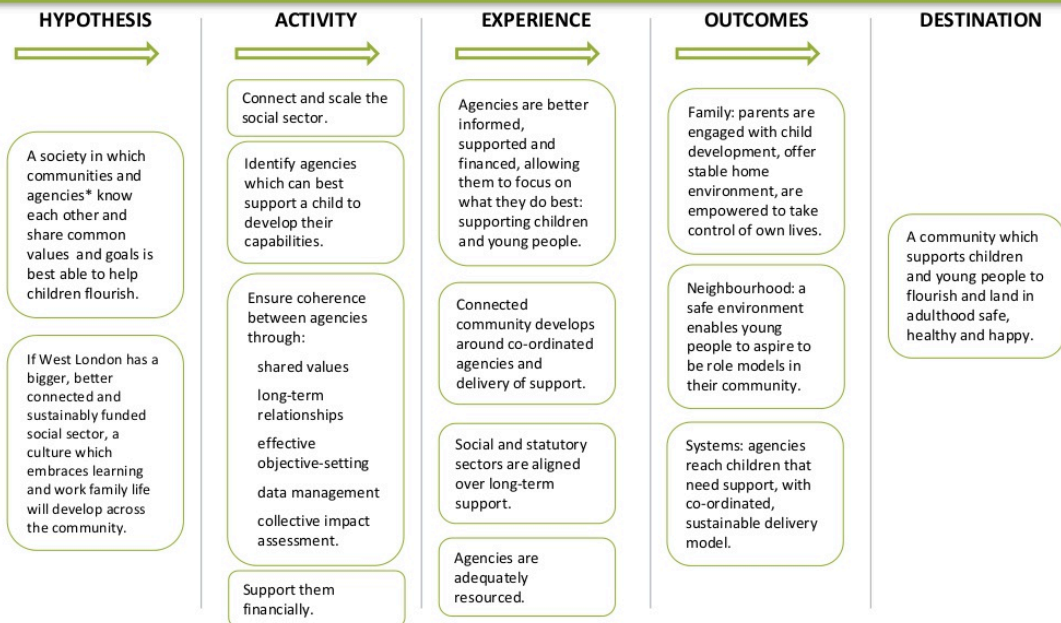
Three students who attended Hammersmith schools from 2007-2012, with expected attainment gateways



Theory of change: child/young person

Theory of change: community



A flourishing child

