



What Barriers?

Insights from Solving Problems
through Cross-Sector Partnerships

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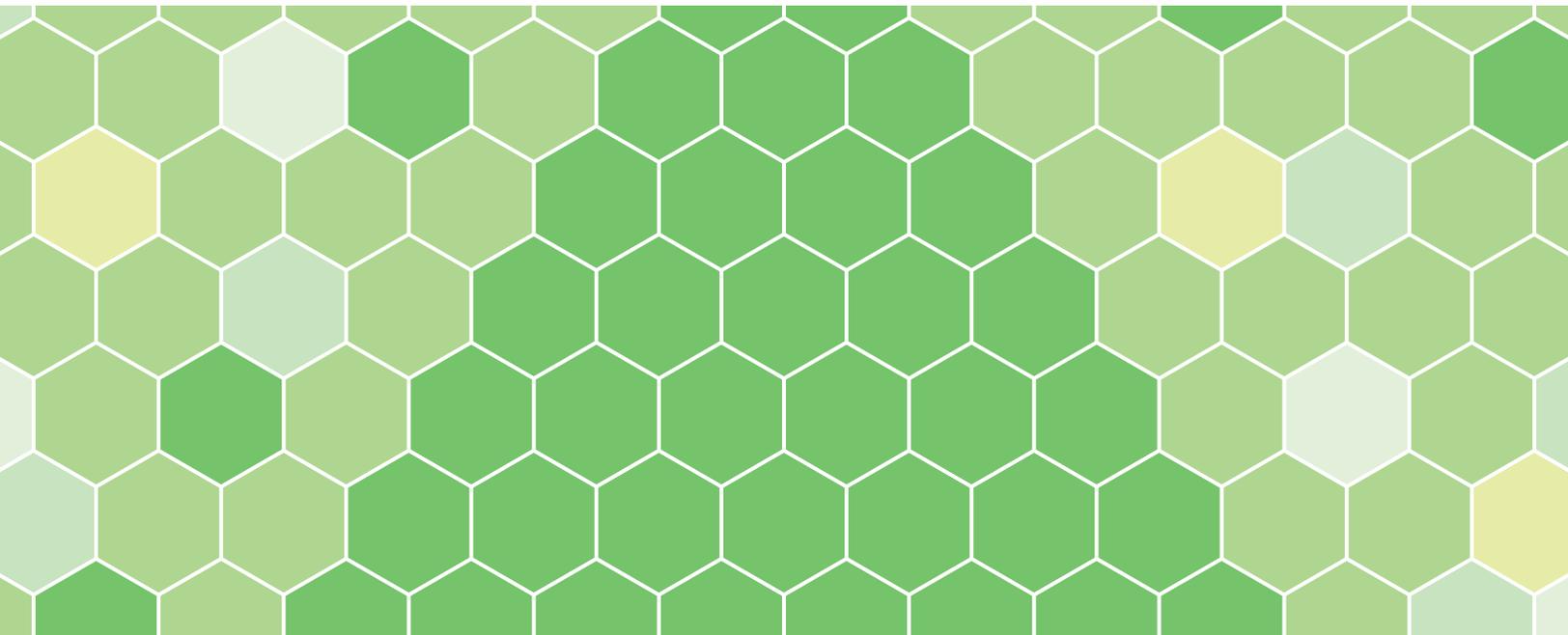


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Introduction

From the White House to the Harvard Business Review, state governments to local philanthropy, many institutions and individuals have expressed their belief in the power of cross-sector partnerships by funding and participating in them. As a result, these partnerships have multiplied in recent years. However, the collective understanding of how best to structure and do work through cross-sector partnerships to achieve results is limited.

While there have been a number of case studies about cross-sector partnerships working on specific issues and there is an emerging body of work on collective impact, an approach that has cross-sector partnerships at its core, there has not been extensive inquiry—drawing from work across issues—into the structure and behaviors of effective cross-sector partnerships.

At Living Cities, we believe in the power of cross-sector partnerships to address some of the toughest challenges our country faces today. We also believe there is a need for greater understanding of cross-sector partnerships so that practitioners, participants, and funders have a systematic way and shared language to reflect on whether their existing or planned partnerships are structured to achieve their intended goals. The work presented here is our early attempt to move towards that increased understanding.

Over the last two years, we have been learning from and with leaders about what it takes to set up and run a cross-sector partnership so that it can have measurable impact. Through our grants and research, site visits, and hours of interviews we learned so much that was useful, we knew we had to find a way to organize, define, and describe the ideas that were being mentioned time and again. These traits are grouped into three sections:

- 1 Building a strong foundation for a cross-sector partnership
- 2 Factors that influence a cross-sector partnership's success
- 3 Behaviors of high-impact cross-sector partnerships

We hope that this can be a useful tool for helping cross-sector partnership members and funders to have a systematic framework and shared language to reflect on if their partnership is structured to achieve its intended goals.

¹ See Appendix A: Methodology

Background

There are many effective forms of cross-sector partnership. This paper is a framework for understanding a partnership's component traits and to support reflection on if the pieces fit together in a way that will enable the partnership to achieve its goals. We are not asserting that there is one right way to structure a partnership. Most partnerships possess—for legitimate reasons—a quirky set of traits. We believe it is important to be aware of traits in your cross-sector partnership's structure and behaviors that are quirky if you are trying to address complex problems.

GROUNDING CONCEPTS IN REAL LIFE EXAMPLES

Throughout this paper, we use examples to illustrate the traits from four cross-sector partnerships that we worked intensely with during the development of this work. Living Cities will also release a series of case

studies about these partnerships as told through the traits identified below. The chart below summarizes the cross-sector partnerships, their geographies and the focus of their work:

FEATURED CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIP	GEOGRAPHY	AREA OF FOCUS
Itasca Project	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN region	Economic competitiveness and quality of life
The Partnership for New Communities	Chicago, IL	Workforce & neighborhood development
Partners for a Competitive Workforce	Greater Cincinnati (OH-KY-IN tri-state)	Workforce development
The Washington Families Fund	Washington State	Family Homelessness



Building a Strong Foundation for a Cross-Sector Partnership

The term *cross-sector partnership* is often used to describe an array of activities involving representatives from multiple sectors. These activities range from events and one-time projects, to government-appointed commissions and ongoing programs, as well as alliances of stakeholders working in new ways to address complex social and economic challenges. These diverse activities have all been labeled with the term “cross-sector partnership” not because they share strategies or goals, but rather because of who is involved with them—representatives from two or more sectors—business, government, nonprofits, philanthropy, labor, and/or communities.

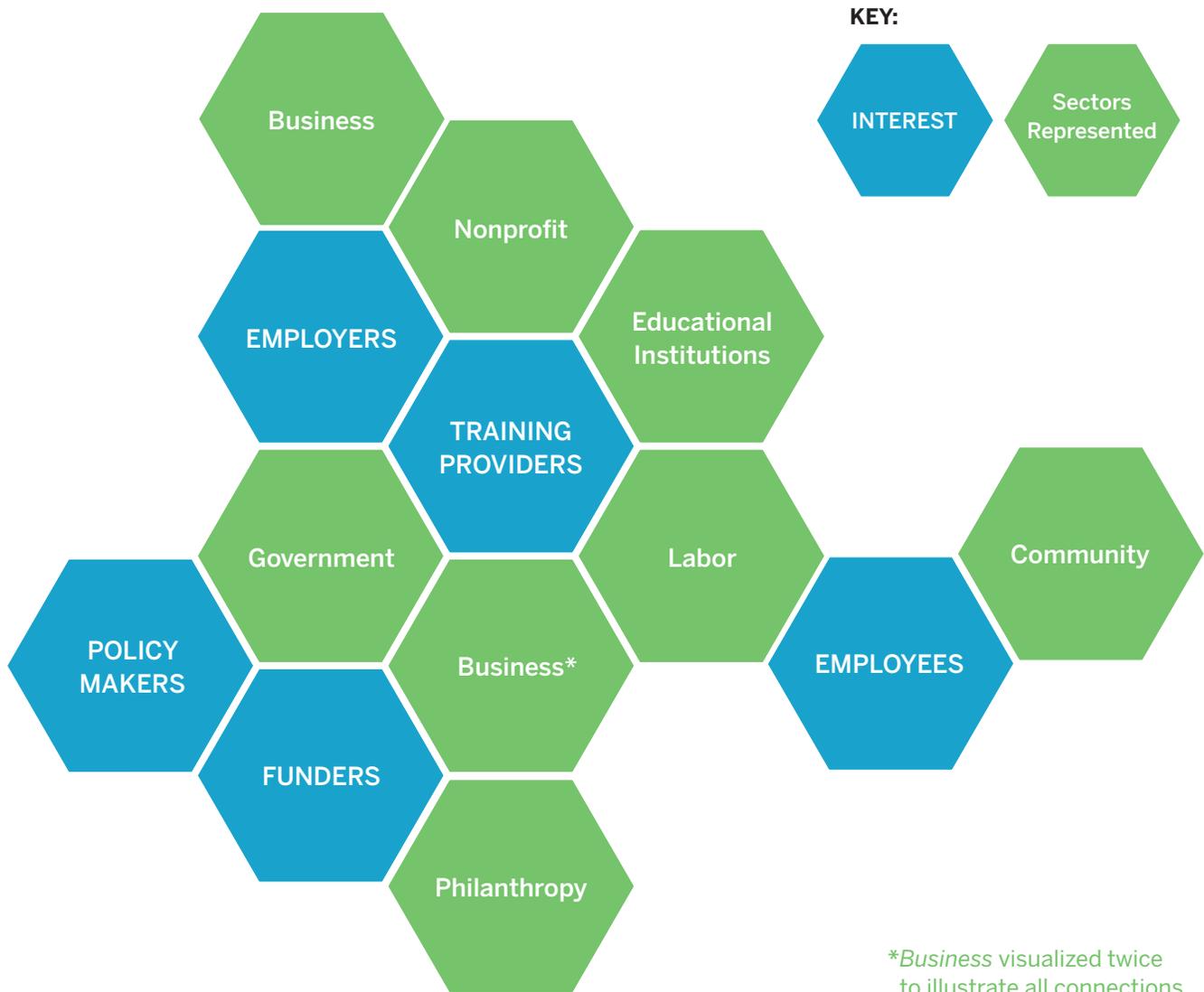
We think this view of cross-sector partnerships is problematic because it does not recognize the variability contained within each sector. For instance, by lumping business together it assumes homogeneity between the interests of organizations that range from small, local businesses and large international corporations. This simply is not true.

We offer a different way to think about the membership of cross-sector partnerships which we have named the *interest-based frame*. Instead of thinking about them as alliances of organizations which require representation from different sectors, they should be thought of as alliances of organizations which together have a role in solving a problem and achieving a shared goal.

“Instead of thinking about them as alliances of organizations which require representation from different sectors, they should be thought of as alliances of organizations which together have a role in solving a problem and achieving a shared goal.”

What would an example of the interest-based approach to cross-sector partnerships look like? In this example, the cross-sector partnership is made up of members working toward the goal that 90 percent of their region’s labor force will be gainfully employed in 10 years.

**INTEREST-BASED FRAME OF A CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP
WITH A GOAL OF 90% LABOR FORCE EMPLOYMENT**



Even as a starting point, the interest-based frame highlights that virtually all sectors have multiple interests when it comes to solving complex social and economic challenges. The interest-based approach reveals that instead of identifying one government representative to participate in a partnership, it may require multiple representatives in government who are involved with and can speak to different parts of the work-- policymaking, training and funding in the example above. In addition, this approach helps members of partnerships

understand their roles, bring their expertise to the table, while preventing individuals from feeling like they have to represent the viewpoint of an entire sector.

We propose that the interest-based frame may be more effective for ensuring that a partnership has the “right” institutions and individuals around the table to achieve its intended outcome. We also think it can be a tool for beginning to think about functions which need to be addressed to achieve different and better outcomes.

Foundational Traits of Cross-Sector Partnerships

Now that we've introduced the interest-based frame, we want to share the six traits that we are finding to be particularly useful for thinking about how to structure (or re-structure) a cross-sector partnership to achieve its intended goals. A summary table of the Foundational Traits of Cross-Sector Partnerships can be found in Appendix B.

TRAIT 1:

Results

Trait 1 describes the results a cross-sector partnership sets out to achieve. Cross-sector partnerships exhibit two types within this trait. The first type is **general** which is when the intended result is described in general terms. These types of results provide a description of what the cross-sector partnership is trying to achieve (e.g. economic opportunity, sustainability, health) which makes them helpful in communicating the aims of a partnership, but not for measuring progress or ensuring accountability. The second type of result is **specific** which states a specific outcome or set of outcomes to be achieved. This type of result communicates what success will look like for the partnership (e.g. 90% of the labor force will be employed), and can serve as a foundation for organizing data collection, measuring progress and ensuring accountability.

In the first phase of its work, The Washington Families Fund was working toward a **general** result of serving homeless families better. But, as the work has evolved from program delivery to systems change, it has named a **specific** result: to “end family homelessness in the state of Washington, with an interim goal of reducing it by 50% by the year 2020.”

TRAIT 2:

Charge

The charge is the work a cross-sector partnership has been “hired” to do. There are three types of charge which a partnership can have. The first is a **thinking** charge, which is a partnership that recommends solutions to a problem, but does not have responsibility for implementing those solutions. The second is a **doing** charge, which is when a partnership implements an agreed upon program or strategy, developed within or outside of the partnership. The third type of charge is **thinking & doing**, which is when a cross-sector partnership works to develop a course of action through learning and experimentation.

In Chicago, The Partnership for New Communities had a **thinking and doing** charge because it sought to develop a course of action through learning and experimentation. From the outset of the Partnership, the goal was clear: to support the successful implementation of the Plan for Transformation. As noted in the Partnership’s own report, “When the Partnership began, its strategy was not pre-determined. Indeed, part of the attraction for people being asked to get directly involved was that they could join in the strategy development themselves.”² Once it decided its course of action would focus on workforce and local economic development, it used its grants to figure out which approaches—some existing, some new—would lead to their intended results. The report went on to say, “For those getting Partnership support, it meant a focus on results, as well as a chance to experiment and then learn. They were told, in effect, ‘Do what it takes, and tell us what happens.’ Rather than promoting some ‘model’ that all programs are expected to pursue, The Partnership’s approach asked what works best, for whom, and under what conditions.”³

TRAIT 3:

Authority

A cross-sector partnership’s authority is its “right to do work”—either the powers it has been granted by another body or assigned to itself. This trait has two types. An **authorized** cross-sector partnership’s “right to do work” is granted or delegated by an authoritative body. As a result, the work that can be carried out by the partnership is limited by the authoritative body’s parameters. Alternatively, an **empowered** cross-sector partnership’s “right to do work” is self-actualized, thus the work that is carried out is only constrained by the limits the partnership sets upon itself.

Greater Cincinnati’s Partners for a Competitive Workforce came together because the community foundation and an economic development agency both recognized that they needed to address growing qualified worker shortages in their region. Partners was not delegated the right to do this work by any authority, but instead built their effort and portfolio of work in a manner that was self-actualized. Their authority type is **empowered**.

² Brown, Prudence and Dewar, Tom. *Collaboration, Leadership and Political Will: Learning from a Civic Intermediary that Works*, October 2011. (Accessed: 8/23/2013). Pages 18-19.

³ Brown, Prudence and Dewar, Tom. *Collaboration, Leadership and Political Will: Learning from a Civic Intermediary that Works*, October 2011. (Accessed: 8/23/2013). Page 20.

TRAIT 4:

Representatives

This trait describes the stature and power of individuals within their own organization/community who are serving as representatives to the cross-sector partnership. There are three types within this trait. The **designee** is an individual who represents the organization or community, but does not have decision-making or implementation powers within their organization or community. The **doer** is an individual who could be responsible for implementing changes to behaviors and strategies in their organization or community, but lacks the formal authority to mandate them. Finally, the **decision-maker** is an individual who has the authority or influence in their organization or community to require that it change its behaviors and strategies.

Greater Cincinnati's Partners for a Competitive Workforce has a governance structure called The Partners Council whose membership consists almost exclusively of **decision-makers**. These CEOs, Executive Directors and heads of organizations are representative of key stakeholder groups and are responsible for guiding strategy and reviewing progress of Partners' work. In addition to the Partners Council, Partners for a Competitive Workforce has three teams-- Employers First Regional Workforce Network, Career Pathways Partnership, and Work Readiness Collaborative—made up of **doers** who are focused on developing and implementing the activities that will advance the overall strategy.

TRAIT 5:

Level of Intervention

The level of intervention is a cross-sector partnership's action strategy. There are two types within this trait. The first type, **project/program delivery**, describes a partnership that creates and/or delivers an analysis, activity or set of activities to achieve a specific aim. The second type, **systems change**, describes a partnership, which aims to intervene and reorient the set of behaviors, interactions, projects and programs in an existing system (or systems) in order to achieve its goal(s).

The Washington Families Fund has had two phases in the development of its level of intervention. The first was **project/program** delivery, which focused on funding efforts across the state of Washington to reduce family homelessness. However, with their goal of eliminating family homelessness entirely from the state, they recognized their project/program delivery strategy could not achieve population-level results on its own. While the programmatic work continues, Building Changes, the nonprofit that houses the Fund, is now also working with local governments, nonprofits, and philanthropy on a **systems change** initiative designed to reorient all the systems that touch homeless families so that they contribute to their goal of ending family homelessness.

TRAIT 6:

Time frame

The time frame is the period of time during which the work of the cross-sector partnership is designed to take place. There are two types within this trait. The first is **time-bound**, which describes a partnership that is formed for a limited period of time. The second is **open** which describes a partnership that is formed without an explicit time frame.

The Partnership for New Communities was formed in order to support the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation. From the beginning, this cross-sector partnership was established as a **time-bound** effort. However, the length of time was unknown and tied to the Plan for Transformation's trajectory.

Factors that Influence a Cross-Sector Partnership's Success

In this section, our focus turns from traits that are core to the cross-sector partnership, to the five factors that can accelerate or limit a cross-sector partnership's success. A summary table of the Factors Influencing Success of Cross-Sector Partnerships can be found in Appendix C.

FACTOR 1:

Formation Catalyst

The Formation Catalyst is the reason or opportunity for creating the cross-sector partnership and there are three types. The first type is **leadership interest** when a cross-sector partnership forms because leaders recognize an opportunity, or seek to address a problem out of perceived obligation or enlightened self-interest. The second type is a **key opportunity** when policies, practices, innovations or new or redirected funding streams require or drive the formation of a cross-sector partnership. The third formation catalyst type is **crisis**, when an emergency event or increased awareness of a persistent problem galvanizes cross-sector players to come together to address the problem.

For instance, the Twin Cities' Itasca Project was formed by a small set of leaders who posited that business executives should get more involved in issues of regional importance. They then conducted interviews with 70-80 CEOs, and determined that there was interest in a cross-sector partnership, how the partnership should work, and what it should do. It's an example of a partnership that formed out of **Leadership Interest**. A summary table of the Factors Influencing Success of Cross-Sector Partnerships can be found in Appendix C.

FACTOR 2:

Structure

Structure reflects the arrangement of and relations between stakeholders in the cross-sector partnership. Cross-sector partnerships can have a formal structure or an informal structure. A **formal** structure reflects an arrangement of and relations between stakeholders that have established procedures, roles and commitments, which are codified through operating documents, memoranda of understanding, contracts, or other documentation. An **informal** structure reflects an arrangement of and relations between stakeholders that possess fluid procedures, roles and commitments.

The Washington Families Fund is an example of a cross-sector partnership with a **formal** structure. In its first phase, focused on program delivery, the formal relationships were tied to governance and financial relationships. But, as their work expanded to include systems-level interventions they developed different approaches to formalizing organizational commitments. As Alice Shobe, Executive Director of Building Changes, the home of the Washington Families Fund, describes it, “We took our systems work to the next level by formally asking the State of Washington, counties, cities, housing authorities, and private philanthropies to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). We asked them to join in this new vision to end family homelessness and commit to a target of reducing it by 50%. We used the MOU process to signify the public handshake.”⁴

⁴ Author’s Interview with Alice Shobe, 2/6/12

FACTOR 3:

Financial Resources

Financial Resources describes how the achievement of the cross-sector partnership’s goal is supported financially. There are seven types within this trait, and most partnerships will be more than one type. The first type is **none**, which describes a cross-sector partnership whose work is not financially supported. The second type is **in-kind**, which reflects a partnership that is funded through in-kind donations. A partnership with a **dues** type has members that contribute money to participate in the partnership. And one with **fees** receives its financial resources from stakeholders who pay fees for the products or services the cross-sector partnership provides. The fifth financial resources type is **sponsorship** which is when stakeholders—who may or may not participate in the cross-sector partnership’s work—fund particular components of that work. The sixth type is **grants** which is when private and public grants support the work of the partnership. Finally, the seventh type **redirected/aligned** is the type that reflects when existing public funding streams within stakeholder organizations are redirected or aligned to support the work of the partnership.

In the Twin Cities, The Itasca Project has financial resources, which are a combination of **in-kind** support from McKinsey & Company in the form of *pro bono* teams it offers to staff particular projects and task forces, and **dues** paid by private sector members.

FACTOR 4:

Positioning

Positioning describes how the cross-sector partnership is positioned in relation to other individuals, organizations and partnerships working on the same issues and/or in the same geography.

The first type is the **opposer**. An opposer partnership may or may not be recognized in its area of work and/or geography, and does not possess the track record, relationships or membership to ensure that its own agenda can become reality. As such, it positions itself to oppose the work of individuals, organizations and partnerships with which it does not agree. This stance makes it so that outside stakeholders often do not work with this partnership, or if they do it is to prevent opposition to their own agendas.

The second type is the **supporter**. A supporter partnership is recognized as a “player” in its area of work and/or geography, but does not possess the track record, relationships or membership to ensure that its agenda will become reality. Other individuals, organizations and partnerships will work with this partnership because supporters are positioned in a way that adds value and legitimacy, but does not guarantee results.

The third type of partnership positioning type is a **leader**, which describes a partnership that is recognized as the expert, authority or chief influencer in its area of work and/or geography based on its track record, relationships and/or membership. This type of partnership is positioned in such a way that other individuals, organizations and partnerships believe they need this partnership’s blessing or support to get work done.

Partners for a Competitive Workforce is recognized as the **leader** in the Greater Cincinnati region on workforce development. This is evidenced by the active participation of leaders in key workforce-related institutions in the Partnership including public and philanthropic agencies, which have aligned their funding streams with the priorities of Partners.

FACTOR 5:

Lifespan

In social change work, organizations and partnerships sometimes persist past the point of being useful. The lifespan factor is defined as what happens to the cross-sector partnership when it accomplishes or abdicates its goal and it has three possibilities. The first is **sunset**, which is when a cross-sector partnership ends either because it achieved its mission, it has reached its time boundary, or it has ceased to be relevant. The second is **institutionalization**, which is when the cross-sector partnership continues and its role relating to an issue or in a geography becomes the norm. The final type is **reboot**, which is when the cross-sector partnership winds down or builds upon its existing work, and starts a new or expanded agenda.

The Partnership for New Communities is an example of a partnership whose lifespan type is **sunset**. After ten years of working alongside the Chicago Housing Authority on the implementation of the Plan for Transformation, the PNC closed on May 31, 2012, having completed their mission of helping to position to the City and the Housing Authority so that they could ensure the Plan's success.

Behaviors of High-Impact Cross-Sector Partnerships

In the previous two sections, we focused on traits and factors that have varying types depending on the goal a cross-sector partnership is trying to achieve. In this section, we focus our attention on two behaviors that we have observed to be necessary for all cross-sector partnerships, no matter their goal.

BEHAVIOR 1:

Trust Building & Maintenance

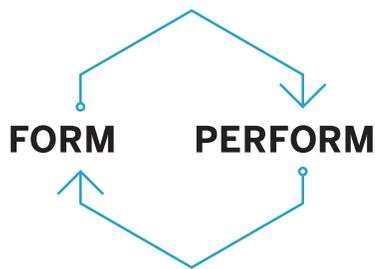
Trust is an important and underestimated ingredient to making a cross-sector partnership work. If members of a cross-sector partnership do not believe in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of their partners as well as the partnership itself, it is very difficult to achieve the partnership's intended goals.

We've adapted Tuckman's Group Development Model⁷ to the dynamics of cross-sector partnership because it articulates the stages that a partnership and its members need to go through in order to build and maintain trust, and succeed in their work:

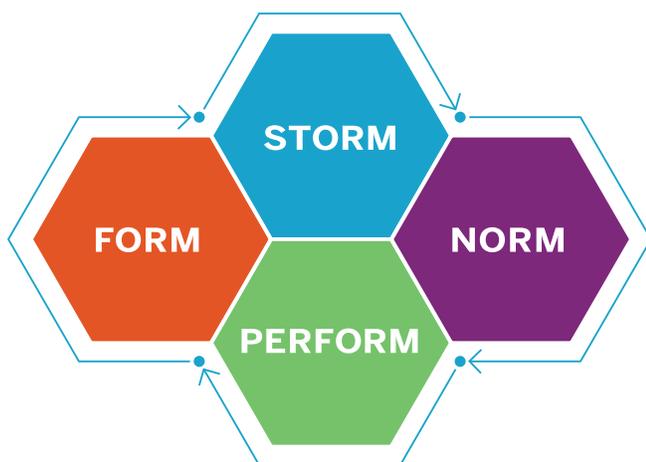
- **Form**—Forming is the stage when partners first come together. It has been described as the 'honeymoon' period for a partnership because it is when partners are excited about the newness and potential of the effort.
- **Storm**—Storming is when partnership members stop being polite and start getting real. This might involve airing fundamental differences of opinion and approach among partners, struggling to figure out objectives, roles, and leadership in the partnership and also feeling threatened by working with partners who you don't know, don't trust or view as competitors.
- **Norm**—Norming is the stage when roles and partner conflicts are sorted out and the partnership's focus turns towards the work. Objectives and rules of engagement get clearer; a sense of partnership identity forms, and conflict moves from among partners to between the partners as a group and the problems they are trying to solve (ie us vs. us to us vs. them).
- **Perform**—Performing is when the partnership reaches a steady state where it can do the work it needs to do to achieve its intended goals.

⁷ Tuckman, Bruce (1965). "Developmental sequence in small groups." *Psychological Bulletin* 63 (6): 384–99.

We have observed that many cross-sector partnerships engage in only some of the behaviors in this cycle. A common trust-building and maintenance cycle in cross-sector partnerships looks something like this:



Skipping the storm and norm stages may seem to be a faster way to get to doing the work, but it has a tendency to come back to haunt a partnership. More than one interviewee cited how not addressing issues among the partners ended up tanking a partnership's performance and sent them back to the forming stage. They learned from this first experience and committed to addressing conflict and building trust before attempting to implement the work.



So what does the trust building and maintenance cycle look like in a cross sector partnership? Before any of the traits and factors discussed in this paper were developed, Ross Meyer, the former Executive Director of Partners for a Competitive Workforce described his cross-sector partnership's trust-building and maintenance experience in the following way:

It's taken a couple of years to get to the point where we are now. In our evolution, we honestly started doing stuff in the beginning and tried to fast track the trust-building process. [It didn't work] and then we had to step back and go through the process.

It takes a lot of time to develop the deep relationships to even move the work forward. But, if you don't do it, it's just a superficial table. It just takes years of working together, being open, constant communications, on a daily basis, literally. And a lot of hard conversations. It takes people believing that there is something better that we can do by coming together. It takes people being persistent.

If there is a secret sauce, I'd say it's all about trust and relationship building in this work. It takes time and years to develop that level of trust, and you need to have really open communications and transparency and consistent working together. That's been the most important and difficult thing to achieve. But, I think that's what's going to make it work in the end.

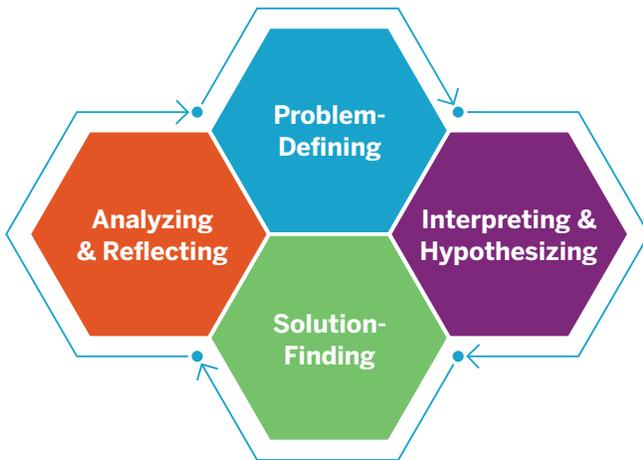
Based on what we have observed in the field, Living Cities hypothesizes that effective cross-sector partnerships engage with all the stages in the trust building & maintenance cycle.

BEHAVIOR 2:

Problem-Solving

Problem-solving is the process which a cross-sector partnership uses to address a complex problem. We propose that problem-solving is a cycle with four stages and that all stages of the cycle are necessary to address complex social and economic problems:

Stage	Definition	Activities
Problem-Defining	<i>Observing events and patterns to gain greater insight into the source and nature of challenges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using diverse knowledge– including lived experience, local data, as well as national and international data to understand and clearly define the problem.• Reconciling when data and lived experiences are in conflict.• Naming the problem the partnership is trying to address.
Interpreting & Hypothesizing	<i>Interpreting what has been observed, and then developing hypotheses about what needs to change in order to yield different results.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporating new ideas into thinking, and letting go of out-of-date or discredited ideas.• Hypothesizing about how the world is working and what is causing the problem.• Developing a plausible understanding of the world in which to test solutions.
Solution-Finding	<i>Identifying, and testing solutions to a recognized problem.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognizing the need to paint a vision for the future.• Identifying lots of potential solutions.• Developing projects, programs, and policies to test possible solutions in the realms of policy, practice and funding streams.
Analyzing & Reflecting	<i>Determining if the solutions are effective, and learning from them to gain a better understanding of the problem and the solutions that are needed to achieve the partnership's intended result</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflecting on the impact of tested solutions by comparing what was expected to what actually occurred.• Identifying what must be learned about the world to improve them future solutions and outcomes.• Generating new hypotheses.• Restarting the cycle!



While in an ideal world all cross-sector partnerships would engage fully in all four stages, the reality is that most partnerships are predisposed to focusing on some stages of the cycle more than others.

In the case of The Itasca Project, former Director Allison Barmann describes the first stage, problem-defining, as follows, “This is one of the key things that the Task Forces always do, start with the facts, we always invest up front to get the common fact base.”⁶

For the stage of the cycle that focuses on interpreting what has been observed, and then developing hypotheses about what needs to change in order to yield different results, Barmann notes that the Itasca Project’s unique partnership with McKinsey & Company often comes into play. “Oftentimes we use the McKinsey team [for interpreting and hypothesizing]. Whenever we have a McKinsey team supporting a task force, I feel really great about the cycle. But, we don’t always and then that’s more challenging and I sometimes feel like we can’t be as rigorous.”⁷

Solution-finding in the Itasca Project takes on two different forms. The task force will develop and recommend solutions to other organizations to test, or Itasca itself will incubate a solution and then spin it off. Often, though the Project will maintain a connection with this work, even if it is being carried out in other organizations.

When it comes to analyzing & reflecting, the process of determining if the solutions are effective, and learning from them to gain a better understanding of the problem and the solutions that are needed to achieve results, the Itasca Project employs a couple of processes which Barmann described as follows:

*We do a little bit of [analyzing and reflecting] at the task force level. I like to sit down with the task force chairs and do that. And, we have the Working Team, which is the group that meets every Friday morning. I think they are the ones that drive this in a big way because it sometimes takes some time to do this analyzing and reflecting. We keep the task forces that we want on our agenda as time goes on. [In those meetings, we talk about] how the Task Forces are doing, what their impact has been. And ask are there connections that still need to be made? Are there barriers that need to be removed? I think having the structure of the ongoing Working Team really enables that.*⁸

⁶ Author’s Interview with Allison Barmann on 11/16/11

⁷ Author’s Interview with Allison Barmann on 8/2/12

⁸ Author’s Interview with Allison Barmann on 8/2/12

What's Next?

Our hope is that this work is just the beginning of the conversation, and the learning that needs to happen to advance cross-sector partnerships to address the toughest challenges our world and its people face today.

At Living Cities, we have three goals in sharing this work. The first is that we want **to ground theory in practice that will enable cross-sector partnerships to achieve measurable impact**. This paper is our attempt at connecting the theory to the specific structures and behaviors that we have observed and learned about in partnerships. We recognize many of these ideas are not new, and a significant number of partnerships have utilized some or all of these traits in structuring their own work. But, this paper is our attempt at organizing and clearly defining these ideas in a way that can be applicable and portable across partnerships and issue areas and geographies.

In conjunction with this paper, Living Cities is releasing a series of case studies that we hope will make these concepts come alive by using it to tell the stories of the four cross-sector partnerships featured in this paper—including successes, failures, and reflections.

The second goal is **to spur greater openness and learning about what has worked and equally importantly, what has not**. This paper, and all the work that we do at Living Cities is in service of learning how to make change that will lead to meaningful, population-level impact for low-income people.

And Living Cities' CEO, Ben Hecht, wrote about previously learning and problem-solving are open processes, which is why we want to learn with others about cross-sector partnerships in general as well as in response to this paper. This paper is a “minimum viable product” and, these ideas are a work in progress. As such, we want your comments and insights to make it as valuable and useful as possible. Join the conversation at LivingCities.org or on Twitter by using the hashtag **#xsector**.

Our third goal is that **we want to “turn up the heat” on cross-sector partnerships, their members and funders**. With so many big challenges in the world today, and a limited amount of intellect, time, and money, funders and participants in partnerships need to be using these resources to achieve measurable impact. And, if a partnership is not going to be able to do that in its current state, we want to activate people to change the way those partnerships are working, even if it means being brave enough to say that a cross-sector partnership is not going to achieve its goals and should come to an end.

“With so many big challenges in the world today, and a limited amount of intellect, time, and money, funders and participants in partnerships need to be using these resources to achieve measurable impact. And, if a partnership is not going to be able to do that in its current state, we want to activate people to change the way those partnerships are working, even if it means being brave enough to say that a cross-sector partnership is not going to achieve its goals and should come to an end.”

Appendix A: Methodology

The methodology for developing this paper involved six stages of work.

- 1 The staff of Living Cities identified a set of examples of cross-sector partnerships working on different complex problems in distinctive geographies.
- 2 Living Cities staff interviewed key staff members at the identified partnerships, and reviewed primary sources to learn how each partnership came to exist, how it is structured and how it does its work.
- 3 Next, Living Cities synthesized the information from the interviews and primary sources as well as other insights and lessons gained through on-the-ground and funder experience with cross-sector partnerships and other written resources.
- 4 We then made our first attempt at identifying, naming and describing a set of traits we believed to be important for understanding the variation contained under the blanket term “cross-sector partnership.”
- 5 With draft in hand, we shared the ideas with approximately twenty funders and practitioners (including the interviewees from step two in the process), incorporating their ideas and feedback into updated drafts of the paper.

This working paper (as well as the associated case studies) is stage six of this work’s development. Part of the appeal of this approach is that it is an open system, which can be added to and altered over time. Our hope is that you will take these ideas out for a test drive by applying them to cross-sector partnerships you are familiar with. We also want to hear your feedback and insights on it so that we can continue to refine, expand and improve it.

Appendix B: Foundational Traits of Cross-Sector Partnerships

TRAIT	TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS
1. Results The result the cross-sector partnership sets out to achieve.	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended result is described in general terms • Provides a description of what the cross-sector partnership is trying to achieve • Helpful in communicating the aims of a partnership, but not for measuring progress or ensuring accountability
	Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States a specific outcome (or set of outcomes) to be achieved • Communicates what success will look like for the partnership • Specified results serve as a foundation for organizing data collection, measuring progress and ensuring accountability
2. Charge The work a cross-sector partnership has been “hired” to do.	Thinking	Recommends solutions to a problem, but isn't responsible for implementing solutions
	Doing	Implements an agreed upon program, strategy, or advocacy agenda developed within or outside of the partnership
	Thinking & Doing	Recognizes that existing solutions aren't sufficient, and works to develop a course of action through learning and experimentation
3. Authority The cross-sector partnership's “right to do work”—either the powers they've been granted or assigned to themselves.	Authorized (Real)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to do work granted or delegated by an authoritative body • Work that can be carried out is limited by the authoritative body's parameters
	Empowered (Apparent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to do work is self-actualized • Work that is carried out is only constrained by the limits the partnership sets upon itself

TRAIT	TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS
<p>4. Representatives</p> <p>The stature and power of the individuals within their own organizations/communities who are serving as representatives to the partnership.</p>	Designee	An individual who represents the organization or community, but does not have decision-making or implementation powers within their organization or community
	Doer	An individual who may be responsible for implementing changes to behaviors and strategies in their organization or community, but lacks the formal authority to mandate them
	Decision-maker	An individual who has the authority or influence in their organization or community to require that it change its behaviors and strategies
<p>5. Level of Intervention</p> <p>The cross-sector partnership's action strategy.</p>	Project/Program Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and/or delivers an analysis, activity (or activities) to achieve a specific aim • The success of the project/program is the end the partnership hopes to achieve
	Systems Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to intervene and reorient the set of behaviors, interactions, projects and programs in an existing system (or systems) in order to achieve its goals • This work often includes project/program delivery, but it is not an end in itself, rather a tool for identifying changes that need to occur at the systems level in policy, practice, or funding
<p>6. Time Frame</p> <p>Period of time during which the cross-sector partnership's work is designed to take place.</p>	Time-Bound	A partnership that is formed for a limited period of time
	Open	A partnership that is formed without an explicit time frame

Appendix C: Factors Influencing Success of Cross-Sector Partnerships

FACTOR	TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS
1. Formation Catalyst The reason or opportunity for creating the cross-sector partnership.	Leadership Interest	When leaders recognize an opportunity, or seek to address a problem out of perceived obligation or altruistic self-interest
	Key Opportunity	When policies, practices, data, innovations or new/redirected funding streams require or catalyze cross-sector partnership to occur
	Crisis	When an emergency event or increased awareness of a persistent problem galvanizes cross-sector players to come together to address the problem
2. Structure The arrangement of and relations between stakeholders in the cross-sector partnership.	Formal	Reflects an arrangement of and relations between stakeholders that have established procedures, roles, and commitments, which are codified through operating documents, MOUs, contracts, etc.
	Informal	Reflects an arrangement of and relations between stakeholders that possess fluid procedures, roles and commitments
3. Financial Resources How the achievement of the cross-sector partnership's goal is supported financially.	None	The partnership's work is not financially supported
	In-Kind	The partnership is supported through in-kind contributions
	Dues	Members contribute money to participate in the partnership
	Fees	Stakeholders (within or outside partnership) pay fees for the products or services the cross-sector partnership provides
	Sponsorship	Stakeholders (who may or may not participate in the cross-sector partnership's work) fund particular components of the work
	Grants	Private and public grants support the work of the cross-sector partnership
	Redirected/Aligned	Existing public funding streams within stakeholder organizations are formally redirected or aligned to support the work of the partnership

FACTOR	TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS
4. Positioning How the cross-sector partnership positions itself in relation to other individuals, organizations and partnerships working on the same issues and/or in the same geography.	Opposer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May or may not be recognized in its area of work and/or geography, and does not possess the track record, relationships or membership to ensure that its own agenda can become reality • Positions itself to oppose the work of individuals, organizations and partnerships with which it does not agree. Outside stakeholders often do not work with this partnership, or if they do it is to prevent opposition to their own agendas
	Supporter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized as a “player” in its area of work and/or geography, but does not possess the track record, relationships or membership to ensure that its agenda will become reality • Other individuals, organizations and partnerships will work with this partnership because supporters are positioned in a way that adds value and legitimacy, but does not guarantee results
	Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized as the expert, authority or chief influencer in its area of work and/or geography based on its track record, relationships and/or membership • Positioned in such a way that other individuals, organizations and partnerships believe they need this partnership’s blessing/support to get work done
5. Lifespan What happens to the cross-sector partnership when it accomplishes or abdicates its goal.	Sunset	When a cross-sector partnership ends either because it achieved its mission, it has reached its time boundary, or it has ceased to be relevant
	Institutionalization	When the cross-sector partnership continues and its role relating to an issue/in a geography becomes the norm
	Reboot	When the cross-sector partnership winds down or builds upon its existing work, and starts a new or expanded agenda

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