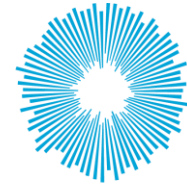


Collective Impact Literature Review Analysis



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By Lauren Greenwalt, Intern, Collective Impact
and Laura Ravinder, Intern, Collective Impact

Overview

Living Cities supports ambitious data-driven, results-oriented cross-sector partnerships committed to solving complex social and economic problems. We believe that through the collective impact framework, where cross-sector tables work together differently, cities and initiatives can achieve large-scale results and enduring change. As we continuously test this framework and learn from our partners on the ground, we took the time to conduct a literature review of the collective impact landscape so that we could use the data to drive our knowledge exploration for FY 2016 and identify where we could best contribute to the field.

Our Main Objectives in this Literature Review were to:

1. Create a repository of collective literature knowledge (in the form of blogs, resources, toolkits, case studies, webinars, etc.) that is easily assessable and categorized.
2. Analyze the existing landscape to identify trends and gaps of knowledge produced to inform Living Cities' work.

The main sources for this data were comprised from collective impact field leaders: StriveTogether, the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* website (SSIR), Living Cities, the Collective Impact Forum (CIF) and FSG, because they had the highest volume of collective impact content and also had the highest traffic of collective impact practitioners.

Main Findings

We found three main themes through our analysis:

1. **Top Topics: “Profile(s) of a Collective Impact Initiative” and “Principles of Collective Impact”**
The two topics that were most popular in the collective impact literature were “profile(s) of a collective impact initiative” and “principles of collective impact.” We think these topics rose to the top because, as the framework of collective impact is fairly new, there is a desire from practitioners to know what a successful initiative looks like and also a desire for more clarification regarding which initiatives are or are not part of the collective impact approach.
2. **Living Cities' Unique Niche: “Community Engagement” & “Racial Equity”**

Living Cities has contributed the majority of the literature in the topics of “community engagement” and “racial equity,” contributing 35% of the content in the “community engagement” topic area and 56% of the content in “racial equity.” This is not surprising; within the last year we created and released a community engagement e-course, in addition, we have intentionally operationalized a racial equity lens in our work.

3. Areas for Growth in the Field: “Public Sector Engagement” and “Private Sector Engagement”

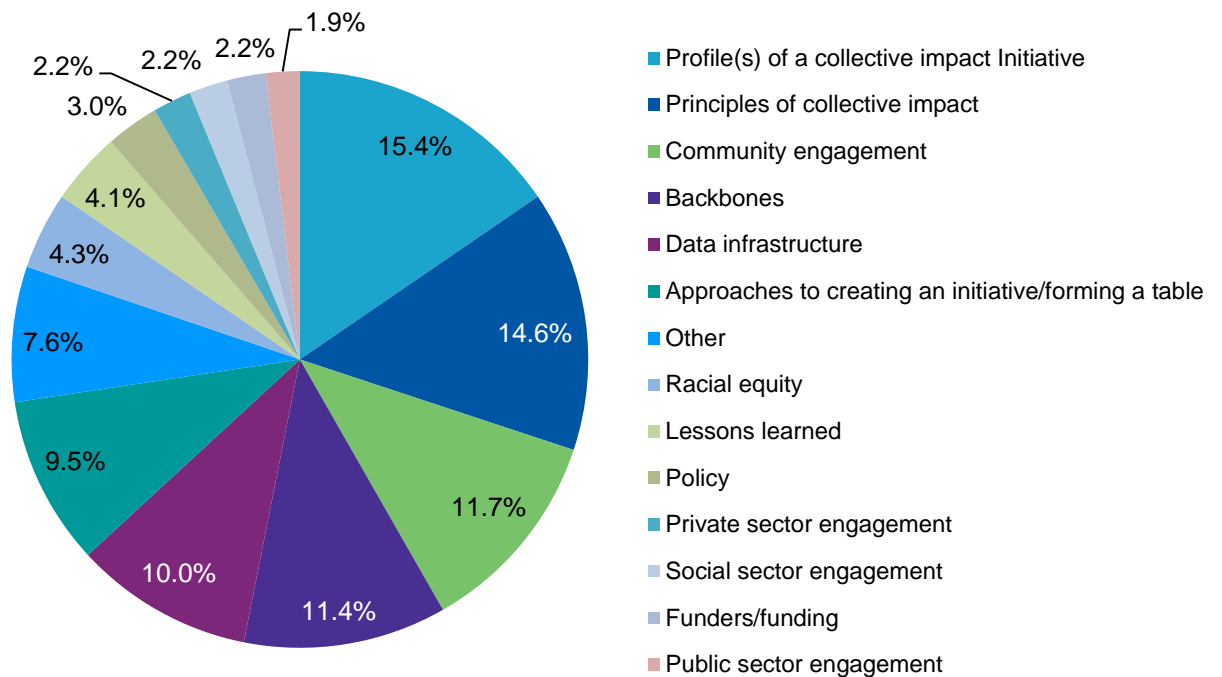
Through our analysis, we found gaps in the field and across Living Cities’ content in coverage of the topics of “public sector engagement” and “private sector engagement.” This is a great opportunity. Living Cities and other collective impact practitioners and conveners could add value to the field through further research and exploration of these topics. Additionally, we have seen that our partners on the ground are eager to engage the private sector and the public sector in their collective impact work.

Top Topics Overall

Among all five sources, the top four topic areas made up 53% of entries (see figure 1). These topics are:

1. Profile(s) of a Collective Impact Initiative
2. Principles of Collective Impact
3. Community Engagement
4. Backbone

Figure 1: Collective Impact Literature Review Topics
284 entries



We think that these topics, “profile(s) of a collective impact initiative,” “principles of collective impact,” “community engagement” and “backbones” were covered the most because they provide clear descriptions of the collective impact framework.

Strengths of Each Source

Through our analysis, we found that each platform we analyzed had a different topic area that rose to the top as most covered. SSIR’s top topic was “principles of collective impact.” SSIR houses the original article in which John Kania and Mark Kramer defined collective impact. SSIR has published multiple sources around the five principles since the release of the original article. StriveTogether has been the leader in “data infrastructure” publications, as access to education data has many challenges including privacy and federal regulations. FSG’s top topic was “profile(s) of a collective impact initiative,” as they are a consulting firm that specialized in collective impact and have worked with many initiatives over the past few years. CIF is an initiative of FSG and the Aspen Institute where practitioners can connect to peers and resources to help them with their work. CIF’s top topic was “approaches to creating an initiative/forming a table,” which stems from their purpose of giving people tools to start their collective impact initiative.

Living Cities’ top topic was “principles of collective impact” and tied for second were “profile(s) of a collective impact initiative” and “community engagement.” Racial equity is also high on Living Cities’ topics, especially compared to the other sources. In the next section, when we analyze trends, we will go more detail about Living Cities influence in the topics “community engagement” and “racial equity.”

Trends Over Time

Next, we looked at trends over time and divided the 284 entries into four sections based on date of publication:

Section 1: January 2011 – June 2012

Section 2: July 2012 – June 2013

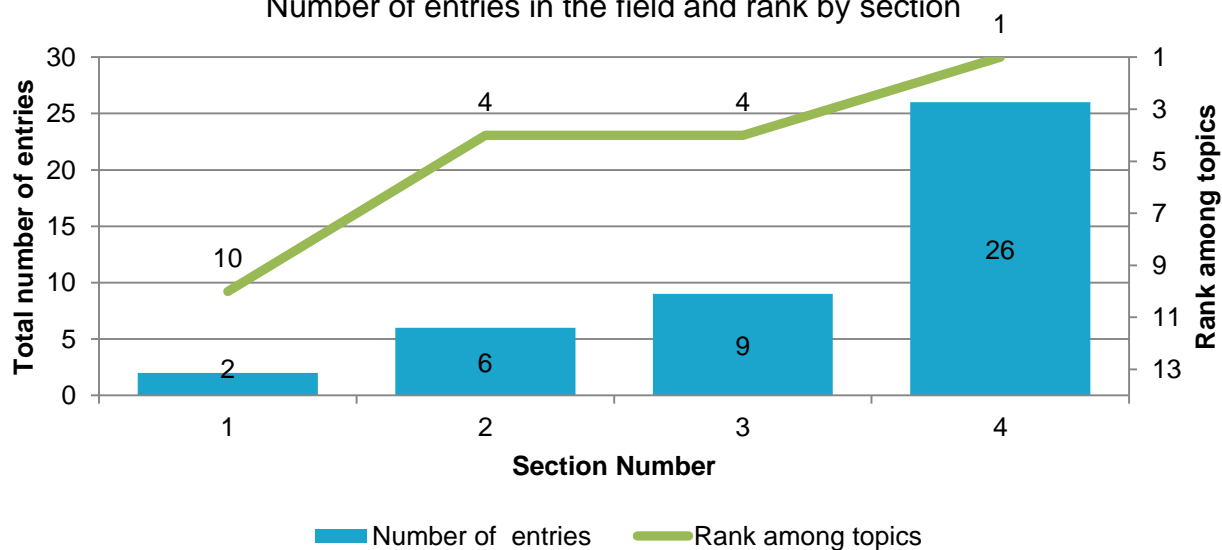
Section 3: July 2013 – June 2014

Section 4: July 2014 – Present (August 2015)

Both topics of “community engagement” and “racial equity” grew in the field over time, in part due to emphasis and intentionally of Living Cities. In section 1, the “community engagement” topic was in the bottom half of entries, then in section 2 and section 3 it rises to the fourth ranked topic. In section 4 it is the largest topic covered in collective impact entries, helping make “community engagement” the third largest topic overall in the total time frame (see figure 2). The rise of “community engagement” is mostly attributed to the Collective Impact Forum and Living Cities, with 50% of entries written by both organizations.

Figure 2: Community Engagement

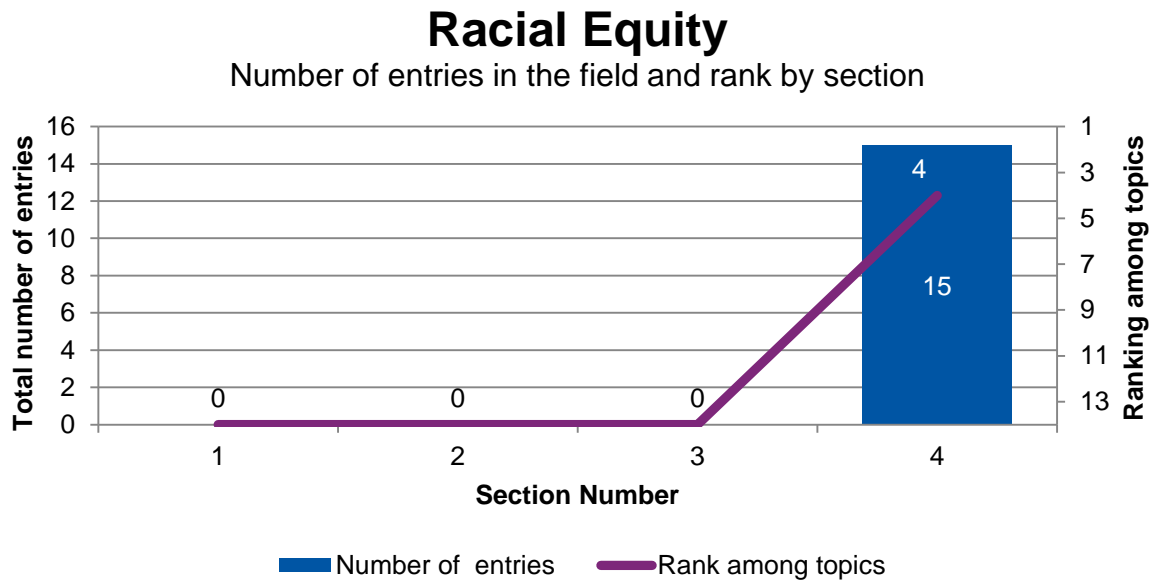
Number of entries in the field and rank by section



In section 4 there was a 56% growth of “community engagement” entries and Living Cities contributed to 58% of that growth. In the summer of 2014, we noticed an increase interest in community engagement by our sites and with our partners, so we decided to spend time intentionally learning more about community engagement in collective impact and sharing that with the field. In March 2015 (section 4), Living Cities launched “The Why and How of Working with Communities through Collective Impact: An E-Course” with the support of the Collective Impact Forum, which attributes to the growth of the “community engagement” topic.

“Racial equity” has had a more dramatic rise over time. In sections 1 – 3, there were zero entries written about racial equity in collective impact, and then in section 4 it rises to the top half of topics covered, with Living Cities

contributing nearly 60% entries (see figure 3). Over the last two years, Living Cities has taken the effort to explore the many ways that issues of institutionalized racism, white privilege and individual biases play out in our grantmaking work and individual lives. Since July 2014, we have started to operationalize what we have been learning and have documented our successes and challenges along the way.



“Backbones” is the one topic that has been diminishing over time. “Backbones” is the number one topic in section 2. It then falls to third in section 3 and then drops even further to eight out of fourteen in section 4.

Although the topic of “backbones” has declined, we feel that there is enough knowledge and tools in the field that have already been created that we do not need to expand upon this topic in the near future.

Recommendations for 2016 and Beyond

Areas for Opportunity and Growth

Two categories that were low across all five sources were “private sector engagement” and “public sector engagement.” “Public sector engagement” had the lowest representation (1.9%) and “private sector engagement” was tied for second to last (2.2%). Our recommendation is that this is a great opportunity for Living Cities and other collective impact practitioners and conveners to add value to the field. Additionally, we have seen that our partners on the ground are eager to engage the private sector and public sector in their collective impact work.

Our second recommendation is that Living Cities and other collective impact practitioners and conveners should continue to elevate the learnings from our racial equity work as the field continues to incorporate a racial equity and inclusion lens within the collective impact framework. This topic is critical to our work because, in order to achieve dramatically different results for people of color, we need to scale equitable opportunities and ensure social and economic inclusion. Historically, there have been very few resources of “racial equity” and “collective impact.” Even as “racial equity” has dramatically risen in the last year, it is such a complex and pervasive issue that we believe more time and effort should be devoted to this topic.