Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives

In 2005, Memphis ranked number 2 of the country's metropolitan areas for violent crime, including homicides, rape, aggravated assault and robbery. Officials in the city of Memphis and Shelby County decided that something had to be done to reverse the tide.

That "something" wasn't obvious. Memphis lacked the kind of renewal forces, such as nearby suburban affluence and gentrification by young professionals that had helped lift other cities. To find a solution, public- and private-sector leaders came together to create Operation Safe Community (OSC), a 15-point research-based, crime-reduction plan. The initiative was led by then-District Attorney Bill Gibbons, and sought to combine the efforts of local law enforcement and other community sectors in a comprehensive plan. The initial response was heartening – and so have been most of its results.

More than 50 leaders worked on OSC's implementation and strategies ranging from toughening gun laws to juvenile offender re-entry programs. And as the five-year plan comes to a close, Memphis has achieved dramatic declines in major violent crime and property crime. For example, comparing the first seven months of 2011 with those of 2006, major violent crime fell by 27%. Major property crime tumbled 32% during the same time period. And, in early 2011, the Memphis murder rate dropped to its lowest point in 30 years.

Amid these successes, however, youth violence continues to be a special concern. In 2009, more than 54% (1,462) of those arrested for committing a violent crime were 24 years or younger with some offenders as young as nine years old. As a result, the collaborative's work is evolving. It has developed a new comprehensive Youth Violence Prevention Plan that will serve as the foundation for Operation Safe Community Phase 2, Memphis's new five-year plan.

Five key things have made the Operation Safe Community collaborative successful:

Clear plan rooted in strategy: *Shared vision and agenda.*
Operation Safe Community has always been crystal clear about its vision. From the start, it has aimed to "make Memphis and Shelby County one of the safest communities of its size in the nation by the end of 2011." That aspiration was

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Memphis, TN
- **Problem:** Worst violent crime rates in country
- **Results:** 27% reduction in violent crime in the 5 years from 2006 to 2011
- **Differentiating Feature:** Operation Safe Community's three-tiered structure, which consists of dedicated collaborative staff, a high profile board of directors and 15 distinct strategy teams, fosters long-term involvement from a broad group of stakeholders.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Shelby County Mayor, District Attorney, Memphis Shelby Crime Commission
- **Philanthropic Support:** Memphis Tomorrow, a group of local business leaders, leverages relationships with the private sector to raise funds.

backed up by a 53-page strategic plan, called *Operation Safe Community Strategic Agenda*, which specified the initiative's goals, baseline data on crime levels, and 15 detailed plans of attack. Each of the strategies lists lead partners, key success measures, specific action plans and the rationale behind the particular approach.

County-wide engagement: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*
The broader community contributed to the vision in a variety of ways. During the planning stages, more than 800 attendees participated in town hall meetings, focus groups, work sessions and a final full-day Crime Summit. In addition, the Memphis Shelby County Youth Congress solicited feedback from 100 youths through postings on the Youth Congress Electronic Forum.

Three-tiered structure: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*
Operation Safe Community has a three-tiered structure that includes dedicated collaborative staff, a high profile board of directors and 70+ stakeholders, which volunteer on 15 distinct strategy teams. The Memphis Shelby Crime Commission (MSCC) has a lean three-person team that serves as the dedicated capacity for the Operation Safe Community collaborative. MSCC has an executive director, a marketing and community relations manager and an administrative assistant.

Operation Safe Community was started by high-profile county leaders, including then-Shelby County Mayor A. C. Wharton, District Attorney Bill Gibbons, Sheriff Mark Luttrell, Memphis Police Director Larry Godwin, and U.S. Attorney David Kustoff, top business leaders from a group called Memphis Tomorrow and the University of Memphis Center for Community Criminology Research. Though the leadership has changed somewhat over the years, MSCC's 50-person board of directors remains a "who's who" of Memphis from both private and public sectors.

The real people power behind the OSC strategies, though, is the 70-plus stakeholders who volunteer their time. OSC engaged 20 "strategy leaders" (who are also board members) to head up the effort's 15 initiatives. For example, the anti-gang initiative includes members representing the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County, JustCare for Kids, law enforcement, education, school security, employment agencies, and other social service agencies. There's even a criminology professor on the board. And they get down to work. "*We make sure decision-makers are in the meeting from each organization. If a backup is sent, they need to have the power to make decisions,*" says Michelle Fowlkes, the executive director of MSCC.

Research-based strategies: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.*
Operation Safe Community utilizes 15 research-based strategies as a roadmap for achieving its aggressive goals. The strategies evolved out of a partnership with the University of Memphis' Center for Community Criminology and Research. Each strategy grew from careful research and is rooted in a proven approach. For example, the recommendation to toughen state laws for gun crime

is modeled after reforms in Florida and New York. Similarly, the initiative's work to expand data-driven police deployment in Shelby County is based on recent research by the National Academy of Sciences' National Research Council.

Accountable to data: *Use of data to set agenda and improve over time.* Operation Safe Community's tracking and use of data is exemplary. Memphis not only collects information on different types of major violent and property crime at a granular level but it publicly reports on progress against baseline levels on a monthly and annual basis. Results are posted on the OSC website in the form of straightforward scorecards. This level of transparency reinforces the collaborative's sense of accountability. The sophisticated measurement approach grew out of a partnership between the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission and the University of Memphis Center for Community Criminology and Research. Through this alliance, the Crime Commission is able to provide the citizens of Memphis and Shelby County with timely crime trend analysis.

Up-to-date information on crime is also actively used to continually shape OSC partner interventions. A key strategy was to adopt a data-driven approach to policing, an initiative called Blue CRUSH™. Through it, the Memphis Police Department (MPD) monitors hot spots and then deploys police officers accordingly. Michelle Fowlkes, the executive director of MSCC, explains that "*data allows MPD to focus resources on the most critical areas*". Data is even pushed out to community members through CyberWatch, a daily email reporting crimes, sex offenders and outstanding arrest warrants tailored to an individual's location. OSC uses these crime trends and statistics to measure the effectiveness of the MSCC's five-year crime reduction plan. And, through ongoing updates, the collaborative can systematically compare current crime statistics with those of 2006 as a benchmark for success.

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In 1998, Herkimer County won a planning grant from New York State's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to establish an integrated county-level planning process. The county took on the grant in an effort to improve the lives of its low-income residents through greater coordination of existing services. The first big planning question was where to focus the group's efforts.

Unlike the extreme poverty seen in urban collaborative success stories, sprawling Herkimer County has high levels of "working poor" dispersed throughout 19 towns, 10 villages and one city with a population of 5,000, Little Falls. Complicating matters, Herkimer County is spread out over 1, 412 square miles in a long, thin rectangle, creating significant challenges for service coordination. Nor was largely rural geography the only challenge to planning. Herkimer County was struggling with multiple issues stemming from the low socioeconomic status and underemployment of its population. In particular, the county was facing rising levels of at-risk youth placed in residential facilities, an intervention that experts have shown to be costly and less effective in many cases.

Herkimer County's Integrated County Planning (ICP) teams started by creating a common vision: *"to establish an integrated, interagency planning process that promotes the health and well-being of children and families in our community."*

> **Fast Facts:**
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> - **Community:** Herkimer County, NY
> - **Problem:** Economic hardship and a rising number of youth placed in residential facilities
> - **Results:** 54% reduction in number of children in foster care between 2003 and 2011
> - **Differentiating Feature:** The Herkimer collaborative brings together more than 50 key stakeholders to improve service coordination in the largely rural county on a monthly basis.
> - **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Herkimer Integrated County Planning
> - **Philanthropic Support:** NYS Office of Children and Family Services, local funds

The team then actively reviewed community level data to develop service priorities. Initially, ICP focused on five risk factors: economic deprivation, family management, family conflict, at-risk youth behaviors and the needs of the birth-to-age-five population. ICP researched best practices and developed comprehensive plans to address service gaps. The leaders of key human and social service delivery entities come together once a month to discuss priority issues, improve coordination, reduce duplication of efforts and make more efficient use of funds. Team members actively review over 800 community metrics to understand the community's needs. Over time, Herkimer County added bullying and youth violence as priorities in addition to its focus on at-risk youth in general.

One of the collaborative's recent efforts is the Return Home Early Project. It was established in 2008 in response to high out-of-home placement numbers for at-risk youth and tight county budgets. Consistent with best child-welfare practices, the project identifies children in residential facilities who would be better served by intensive community-based services in their homes. The initiative includes Herkimer County's Department of Social Services, Kids Herkimer (a nonprofit providing support to families with at-risk youth) and collaborates with placement facilities, families, family courts, school districts, and community partners. The intent is twofold: to provide services to children and families in their homes and

communities (in lieu of expensive residential facilities) and to realize better results. Since 2003, Herkimer County's Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) program has also addressed youth who are a danger to themselves or others, with a combination of counseling, probation, preventive strategies and family support.

Herkimer County ICP's long-term commitment has paid off. The total number of children in foster care fell from a high of 138 in May 2003 to 64 in August 2011, which is the lowest in-care number recorded in the past 20 years. In parallel, Herkimer County significantly reduced costly juvenile placements in residential facilities through a series of coordinated interventions. Since 2002, the number of PINS youth placed has fallen by 55% and residential care days have dropped by 32%. This intervention saved the county hundreds of thousands of dollars and realized better outcomes for youth. With an 8% recidivism rate for children returning to residential care, the Return Home Early Project produced significantly better results than the national average. It has reduced care-day usage by a stunning 4,430 since 2008, resulting in a cost avoidance of more than $1.1 million.

One coming challenge for Herkimer County is to further refine its data collection efforts. At the start, Herkimer County set up an extensive data collection effort with the help of Communities That Care, a research institution focused on risk factors that contribute to youth problem behaviors, and with Herkimer County HealthNet, a rural health network funded by the NYS Department of Health. As a result, the collaborative has maintained a formal report that has been updated every three years since 2000. But to add more rigor to its measurement, the team is now utilizing Ready By 21 funding allocated by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to formalize its evaluation capabilities and revisit its metrics.

Two key things have made the Herkimer collaborative successful in increasing the well-being of their county's children:

Matching involvement to scope on breadth: *Cross-sector engagement.*
The Herkimer Integrated County Planning collaborative regularly brings together more than 50 key stakeholders. Participants range from law enforcement and mental health professionals to school officials and the director of the youth bureau. Given the broad scope of the collaborative, several subgroups have formed: the human development committee, which is focused on children, youth, families and vulnerable adults; an overall steering committee; a youth violence prevention group; and a Best Start planning group, which is focused on the birth-to-five-year-old population. Such taskforces form and disband over time, based on the community's needs.

Proven impact sustains funding: *Sufficient resources.*
Bolstered by its early successes, Herkimer County was able to keep the initiative running after the state grants ran out in 2003. At the start, Herkimer County was one of 15 counties awarded funding for five years at $65,000 per year from New York State's Office of Children and Family Services. The county used those funds in 1998 to hire Darlene Haman as Herkimer County's strategic planning

coordinator. Haman is ICP's sole dedicated staff resource and is responsible for coordinating data collection efforts, facilitating meetings and keeping the collaborative running. Jim Wallace, Herkimer's county administrator, served as ICP's legislative liaison and helped earned the legislature's backing by reporting on the collaborative's significant outcomes and money saved. While other communities had to modify their efforts when funding ran out in 2003, Herkimer County was able to push forward with the support of the legislature and Jim Wallace. County officials have also worked to find scarce county revenues to sustain Integrated County Planning to this day. ICP's proven impact, broad-based legislative support and lean management structure were instrumental in securing these ongoing sources of funding.

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In 2006, Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky's school leaders realized that the region's students were slipping further behind in their preparedness for college and careers. As a dwindling number of employers demanded ever higher levels of education, it was becoming clear that students were simply not succeeding in school. Ohio ranked a discouraging 42nd out of the nation's 50 states in the attainment of bachelor's degrees among its youth. Nearby Kentucky was almost at the bottom, ranking 49th.

This was not news to the city's nonprofit providers. They were working hard to build a better future for the area's youth, but were often providing siloed services and using distinctly different approaches. Not surprisingly, the result was a community and educational system that was according to Cincinnati State's president Dr. O'dell Owens, "program rich" but "system poor." Put another way, a great deal of work added up to little traction against a problem that threatened the next generation's preparation for life and work.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Cincinnati, OH and Northern Kentucky
- **Problem:** Students leaving high school not prepared for college or careers
- **Results:** 10% increase in graduation rates in Cincinnati since 2003; 16% increase in college enrollment rate in Covington, KY since 2004
- **Differentiating Feature:** The Strive Partnership's Student Roadmap to Success outlines a series of systemic interventions that guide The Strive Partnership's cradle to career efforts.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** The Strive Partnership
- **Philanthropic Support:** KnowledgeWorks, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, United Way of Greater Cincinnati

The Strive Partnership of Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport began with conversations between Dr. Nancy Zimpher, the former president of the University of Cincinnati and Chad Wick, the former CEO of KnowledgeWorks. This conversation expanded to include Cincinnati's superintendent of schools, broadening the discussion to strengthen the public schools and create stronger pathways for students to enter college.

KnowledgeWorks, a leading education foundation, provided resources for this effort, which eventually came to be called The Strive Partnership. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the United Way of Greater Cincinnati and other universities from around the region got on board, and the emerging group began to conduct research into what actually works in increasing student success. Then, they jointly defined a vision for how to increase student achievement. The resulting plan recognized and incorporated a set of key points in a young person's life that are critical to student success. These were the basis for The Strive Partnership's "student roadmap of success." This roadmap guides the way forward by laying out the collaborative's perspective on what it takes to make all young people successful.

Out of this work, The Strive Partnership developed five broad goals for student success in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky:

- Be prepared for school

- Be supported inside and outside school
- Succeed academically
- Enroll in college
- Graduate and enter a career

With the community focused on each goal, Strive partners have since seen 40 of it 54 indicators for student success move in a positive direction. On the following core indicators, The Strive Partnership has reached needle-moving change of 10% or more over the baseline in the following areas:

- Greater preparation for school
- School test scores, graduation rates and college enrollment in Cincinnati schools
- College readiness, retention rate and graduation in many of Cincinnati's colleges

These amount to stunning achievements over just five years.

Detailed roadmap to goals: *Shared vision and agenda.*
Underlying The Strive Partnership's progress is its Student Roadmap to Success. This roadmap diagram shows a series of systemic interventions needed for cradle to career progress for each child, based on education and child development research. The roadmap describes five life stages: early childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, transition from school or postsecondary training into a career. The map has critical checkpoints at each stage – and the indicators for tracking success all along the way. Using the roadmap allows the collaborative participants to align the community's efforts.

The roadmap was a critical part of the process for creating a shared vision, along with an agenda for moving forward. Its adoption was not easy. Core partners grappled with the research and Cincinnati's data over several years before agreeing to this course of action.

Structured to sustain impact: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*
The Strive Partnership realized that the roadmap and clear goals were not enough in themselves. Success also hinged on creating a robust structure. Initially, that structure was led by a large steering committee that met monthly to review changes in the incoming data and to provide feedback on the process. By design, it represented a range of community members from across sectors. Continuing today, a 30 member executive committee meets quarterly to oversee the collaborative's efforts and make recommendations on the general direction of the effort. The executive committee houses five subcommittees or strategy teams focused on the core priorities of the partnership, including "Teacher and Principal Excellence" and "Advocacy and Funding Alignment to Support Innovation." The Strive Partnership also has 10 "collaboratives", which are networks of providers and school officials that are focused on specific goals, such as early education.

They provide the specific interventions needed along Strive's roadmap to success and receive support from the Strive staff in one or all of the following areas: facilitation and coaching, data analysis, communications, advocacy and grant-writing.

KnowledgeWorks contributed staff and funding to support these collaborative efforts. Strive's dedicated capacity consists of six people, who include an executive director, two programs directors, one director of the collaborative's data work, and two support personnel. This core group is responsible for supporting data management and use and for administrative and facilitation tasks across the network. In addition, Strive has a number of part-time coaches that provide support to its network of collaboratives and a contracted government affairs consultant to support the collaborative's advocacy work.

Data-informed decision-making: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*
Key to The Strive Partnership's process and success is data. From the beginning, data informed The Strive Partnership's strategy and shaped its process. Each of the collaborative networks has made a significant commitment to data collection, to collectively discussing the data's implications and to using it for continuous improvement. Strive regularly reports its progress against those metrics to the community. Currently, Strive is working with partners to create advanced data systems, most notably a common Learning Partner Dashboard. The dashboard will collect in-school and out-of-school data about each student in a shared system to make targeted interventions possible. Strive has worked closely with Cincinnati schools' legal team to respect privacy issues.

Foundation of funders provides stability: *Sufficient resources.*
A trio of Cincinnati funders – KnowledgeWorks, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and United Way of Greater Cincinnati – further helped the collaborative's efforts by helping guide funding towards strategies and programmatic efforts recommended by the collaborative. KnowledgeWorks has continued to fund The Strive Partnership's dedicated staff through contributions of $500,000 per year. Strive also has received commitments from two other foundations that will provide funds primarily to their partners, ensuring that they are capable of continuing their high-quality services. Despite two changes in school district superintendents and changes in the leadership of the committees, The Strive Partnership continues to function effectively and to build momentum.

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In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Boston experienced an epidemic of youth homicides largely stemming from a rise in violent gang activity and the widespread use of crack-cocaine. Juvenile handgun homicides more than tripled – from 22 victims in 1987 to 73 victims in 1990. When youth homicide rates remained high, averaging 44 homicides per year between 1991 and 1995, Boston authorities knew they had to act.

Operation Ceasefire came into being in 1995 to address this issue, with the support of a grant from the National Institute of Justice. A working group of community participants – including the police force, educators and front-line practitioners – led the effort to develop a viable solution for this gun-related slaughter among its urban youth.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Boston, MA
- **Problem:** High and rising youth homicide rates
- **Results:** 66% reduction in youth homicide rates between 1995 and 1997
- **Differentiating Feature:** Operation Ceasefire focused on 1,300 gang-related chronic offenders after in-depth research showed that 60% of youth homicides were driven by this 1% of all youth.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Operation Ceasefire
- **Philanthropic Support:** National Institute of Justice

The project applied a radically different approach to gun violence, focusing on direct deterrence rather than traditional methods. The working group began by identifying gangs with the highest risk of gun-related violence. Then, it systematically contacted their members. In face-to-face confrontations, Operation Ceasefire communicated an unequivocal warning: if violence continued to occur, authorities would unleash an immediate and certain response. Operation Ceasefire's novel group accountability model, where attention is paid to everyone involved in the crime not just the killer, served as powerful deterrent.

The approach made powerful, strategic use of existing authorities – such as police, parole officers and the like – to aggressively prosecute violent actions and to create a strong deterrent. Family members, community leaders, and service providers also engaged directly with gang members to communicate a moral message against violence and to offer help to those willing to accept it.

Living up to its name, Operation Ceasefire was associated with significant reductions in youth homicides and gun assaults. Youth homicides dropped to 15 in 1997, about one-third of the average between 1991 and 1995. Shots-fired calls to police fell 32%, reflecting a 25% decrease in gun assaults. Due to its achievements, the Operation Ceasefire model was institutionalized as the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) and since 2000 has been replicated in many other communities.

Yet Operation Ceasefire's initial successes were not unalloyed. In its early phase, one consequence of this success was that multiple sides tried to claim credit for the achievement. Those touting themselves included the police,

probation officers, social workers and the Ten Point Coalition. Many groups stood to gain by claiming responsibility for "The Boston Miracle" even though it was really the sum of their efforts which made the difference.

All of these divisions created a toll. Operation Ceasefire discontinued operations in 2000 due to loss of key leadership, shortages of manpower and political wrangling. As a result, gang-related homicides started to increase again as conflicts among gangs grew unchecked. With the appointment of a new commissioner of the Boston Police Department in 2006, however, the effort was reinvigorated. The city has since experienced a decline in youth homicides. The experience in Boston highlights the need for a long-term investment to sustain progress.

Three key things made Operation Ceasefire successful in reducing youth homicide rates:

The power of diverse perspectives: *Cross-sector engagement.*
Operation Ceasefire expertly utilized a combination of enforcement officials, probation officers, front-line practitioners, black clergy and researchers to create a new working group. This group tapped into the strength of each member through bi-weekly meetings to discuss the activities within their agencies and the conditions they observed on the street. Over time, the experience sharing among working group members helped to evolve the direction and priorities of the project.

A key differentiating factor of this collaborative was the inclusion of both external researchers and practitioners on the streets. Researchers provided a vital outside perspective, bringing new practices to the group. The researchers also were able to communicate issues to agency leaders who had been unavailable to the working group members. Meantime, the use of the front-line practitioners provided a channel for acquiring qualitative research directly from the streets, validating the feasibility of programs and communicating directly to gang members.

Direction-setting use of data: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*
Boston's Operation Ceasefire undertook a rigorous "problem-oriented" approach to attack the issue of gun-related youth violence in that city. This strategy required extensive research and analysis to shape both the definition of the problem and resulting actions. For example, the working team originally classified the problem in Boston as one of "juvenile gun violence." But after in-depth research on gang-related violence in Boston, the working group discovered that the majority of the youth violence offenders came from a small community of 1,300 chronic offenders involved in Boston-area gangs. Only 1% of Boston youth actually participated in youth gangs. Yet these youth generated at least 60% of

youth homicide in the city. This data helped refine the group's broad focus on "juvenile gun violence" to a more actionable focus on "chronic gang offenders."

Codifying success for replication: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.* Operation Ceasefire's best-practices have been be utilized by other cities through the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS). Replication sites have experienced highly significant, near-term reductions in crime using existing resources in a strategic and focused way. Most recently, a target group comprising 11 cities is slated to be part of the National Network "Leadership Group" to codify GVRS best practices and create a new national standard for addressing violent and drug-related crime. These cities must make a 5 year commitment and in return receive technical assistance. Looking back, several cities helped lay the foundation for the GVRS model and have had formal evaluations including:

- **Chicago, Illinois (2001 – Present):** An adaptation of the GVRS model focused on individual parolees in several violent neighborhoods with gun or violent crime convictions
  - o **Results:** a 37% decrease in community homicide rate; 30% decrease in recidivism among treatment group parolees

- **Indianapolis, Indiana (2000 – 2002):** Citywide group violence reduction strategy
  - o **Results:** a 34% reduction in total homicide; 70% reduction in black male homicides

- **Lowell, Massachusetts (2002):** Citywide group violence-reduction strategy
  - o **Results:** a 44% reduction in fatal and non-fatal gun assaults

- **Stockton, California (2002):** Citywide group violence-reduction strategy
  - o **Results:** a 42% decrease in gun homicide

- **Cincinnati, Ohio (2006 – Present):** Citywide group violence-reduction strategy
  - o **Results:** a four-year, sustained 41% decrease in gang-related homicide; 22% decrease in non-fatal shootings

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Parramore was Orlando's toughest neighborhood when Buddy Dyer became the city's mayor in 2003. Data painted a bleak picture of the 1.4-square-mile neighborhood adjacent to downtown Orlando. Fully 73% of Parramore's children were living in poverty and 47% of neighborhood adults neither had a high school diploma nor a GED. A disproportionate percentage of city crime occurred in Parramore. Multiple structural issues contributed to the area's decline: the placement there of seven homeless shelters, closure of both the neighborhood's two elementary schools and the paving of a four-lane highway right through the residential sector.

But Parramore's luck began to change when Dyer was elected. As one of his earliest priorities, the mayor committed to its revitalization. The city began allocating significant resources to address the neighborhood's housing, public safety, quality-of-life and business-development problems. This effort culminated in the Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ), a neighborhood-based education collaborative modeled after the well-known Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ).

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Parramore neighborhood in Orlando, FL
- **Problem:** 73% of children living in poverty; 47% of adults lacking high school diploma or GED
- **Results:** 21% increase in number of children at or above grade level on standardized math test (FCAT) between 2006 and 2010
- **Differentiating Feature:** Parramore deliberately incorporates proven strategies both inside and outside of the community in its initiatives, beginning with the Harlem Children's Zone model.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Mayor Dyer and Parramore Kidz Zone
- **Philanthropic Support:** Orlando's Mayor Dyer has raised most funds through city money and personal fundraisers.

Using the HCZ model as a starting point, PKZ began investing in, enhancing and scaling up the neighborhood's existing services and institutions wherever possible. But it made some specific adaptations: Rather than centering services around a particular school, PKZ focused on providing primary prevention services, such as tutoring and youth development programs, to children at neighborhood-based sites. PKZ lowers barriers for kids to join such programs through grassroots marketing, subsidized fees, streamlined paperwork, and transportation to programs. PKZ has also expanded the capacity of participating (mostly neighborhood-based) non-profits serving Parramore children through funding, free rent, and technical and administrative support.

The result? Parramore's transformation was nothing short of remarkable. Scores for the FCAT, Florida's standardized test, have moved up sharply. For example, 60% of elementary students were at and above grade level in reading in 2010 compared with 45% in 2007. Similarly, the FCAT math percentages nearly doubled to 48% from 27%. And while Orlando's overall juvenile crime rate declined by an impressive 67% from 2006 to 2010, Parramore showed significantly better results – with an 81% reduction.

Housing-improvement projects and an influx of city funding played a critical role in Parramore's progress. But the key to its children's success has been the real

collaboration among all its varied sectors – nonprofit, government, faith, civic, education, philanthropy and corporate. As Lisa Early, director of Families, Parks and Recreation says, "*We make sure all boats are rowing in the same direction.*"

Another unique strategy was PKZ's commitment to invest in the neighborhood's nascent social capital. As a result, most partners today are grassroots organizations with offices and programs already inside Parramore. Armed with this experience, PKZ is exploring expansion into an adjacent neighborhood, Holden Heights. While PKZ will continue to invest in Parramore, the replication effort is a testament to the enormous progress PKZ has made over the last 5+ years.

Four key things have made PKZ successful in improving the lives of Parramore's children:

Building on others' successes: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.* Parramore deliberately incorporated proven strategies both inside and outside of the community in its initiatives. Lisa Early recalls she was searching in 2004 for a viable strategy when she first read about Harlem Children's Zone. Within months, a mayor's office team visited Harlem, liked what they saw and began to model a similar PKZ. With Ms. Early leading the team, PKZ adopted and customized HCZ's evidence-based and developmentally appropriate approaches across the cradle-to-career continuum. PKZ doubled the neighborhood's Head Start program, established a childcare funding pool and, using research-based tools to measure quality of childcare centers, funded a childcare quality-improvement project. For older youth, PKZ also used the tried and true. It makes investments using the Positive Youth Development (PYD) theoretical framework, which 1) emphasizes the building of youth assets, skills and competencies, and 2) connects youth with trusted adults as the key mechanism for healthy development.

Powerful, committed leader: *Effective leadership and governance.* Mayor Dyer's commitment has endured. Indeed, he put his reputation on the line from the outset, saying: "*The time to act is now. You can measure my success as Mayor of Orlando by my ability to rebuild this once proud neighborhood.*" Dyer allocates significant city monies to Parramore and donates 100% of the proceeds from his annual charity fundraiser. Mayor Dyer also dedicates 50% of the time of his director of Families, Parks and Recreation to the project. Another strong advocate over time has been State Representative Geraldine F. Thompson.

Investing in data: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.* Data has always shaped PKZ's course. From the start, PKZ engaged the Local Health Council of East Central Florida as an external evaluator to measure its progress against best practices. To establish a baseline, residents participated in a face-to-face survey in 2006, and they will be surveyed again in the first half of 2012. Survey results were used to shape programming. As the PKZ team

declares: "*We invest in what the neighborhood wants. We found that 80% of parents wanted more tutoring for their kids and adapted our services accordingly.*" To provide ongoing data on service utilization and effectiveness, PKZ tracks each youth's attendance through sign-in sheets.

Yet PKZ has to work hard to gather its data. Parramore does not have its own zip code and students attend many outside schools. PKZ and its external evaluator had to work with various government entities to get granular, geography-specific information. Tracked at the neighborhood level today are: teen pregnancy rates, reading and math proficiency scores, readiness for school by kindergarten indicators and juvenile arrest rates. The collaborative is working to start gathering individual indicators for youth on education progress and health issues.

Rooting programs in community opinions: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*
Parramore residents are instrumental in shaping and marketing PKZ services. PKZ uses community feedback and survey results to design programming. Or as one PKZ staff member puts it: "*We never would have been successful if we tried to tell the community what services they needed instead of listening to what they wanted.*" To stay informed, the collaborative constantly holds neighborhood meetings. There, PKZ gathers feedback on its services and marketing strategies, disseminates information, plans activities and generally builds resident ownership of the effort. To boost attendance, PKZ provides free childcare, transportation and food. PKZ's resident community ambassador is Brenda March, the city's children and education manager. Born and raised in the community, Ms. March oversees day-to-day PKZ operations. Ms. March has led community engagement efforts in Parramore for her entire career and has earned the respect of neighborhood leaders, pastors, business people, and residents.

Door-to-door and street outreach and the engagement of community members directly drives impact by spreading the word about PKZ's services. The marketing tactics employed by PKZ are unique and culturally relevant, including "wrapping" PKZ vans in the neighborhood youth's designs; collaborating with youth to organize neighborhood events; and distributing PKZ t-shirts and other give-aways. The project has saturated the neighborhood with information about services and engaged so many grassroots partners that the brand is easily recognized throughout Parramore.

SOURCES

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More is not always better. Despite the work of more than 175 nonprofits working separately to improve Nashville's public schools, by 2002, the system was near failure. High school graduation rates hovered around 58% and school attendance was dismal.

Most dispiriting was the wasted effort by all these nonprofits, whose net impact was negligible, if not negative. Each organization was addressing problems in the schools individually and no attempts had been made to coordinate efforts. Vast monetary and human resources were pouring into the district. Yet the end result was an administrative drain on the schools and ineffective support for students. Serving an urban district with more than 75,000 students who lived amid a poverty rate of more than 65%, Nashville's schools faced a daunting challenge.

A study conducted by the Nashville Chamber of Commerce in 2002 shone light on the fragmented nature of this support network. And with clear data to show the way, the city's business leaders seized an opportunity to focus and coordinate all the disparate efforts aimed at youth. Born from the business community's investigation and analysis was Alignment Nashville. Designed as a nonprofit intermediary, it began by pooling the thinking and advice of more than 100 nonprofit leaders and community members to develop a vision shared by all.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Nashville, TN
- **Problem:** High school graduation rates as low as 58%
- **Results:** 20% increase in graduation rates at Nashville Public Schools since 2002
- **Differentiating Feature:** Alignment Nashville's formalized collaborative structure includes dedicated staff, 22 committees, an operating board and a system for regularly inviting others in the community to participate.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Alignment Nashville, Mayor Karl Dean, Councilman Ronnie Steine
- **Philanthropic Support:** Local public funders: Nashville Public Schools, Mayor's Office, Nashville Chamber of Commerce. Other granters: America's Promise, State Farm, National Science Foundation, Centers for Disease Control

Building on Alignment Nashville's progress, the city's mayor convened a group to address student truancy once researchers connected it with graduation rates, school performance, youth crime and public safety. Then in 2010, community leaders worked diligently to develop what they called the Children and Youth Master Plan. It was the city's first overall formal roadmap for how Nashville would actually connect youth with needed services. Several significant reforms emerged from that effort. For example, research showed many youth had a hard time literally getting transportation to school and other programs. In response, the city created new bus stops, instituted fare waivers for qualifying students and touted these changes with several city-wide marketing campaigns. Moreover, this snowballing activity genuinely reflected the city's longtime culture. As Councilman Ronnie Steine put it: "*Nashville, with its consolidated city-county government, has a long history of collaboration. Anyone trying to act on their own in this town quickly realizes they are on the wrong bus.*"

Getting Nashville's school efforts on the same bus has definitely paid off. Graduation rates at public schools have risen by more than 20 percentage points, to 83%, since 2002. Nashville has also shown a 35% to 40% reduction in student truancy in the last few years. Who should take the credit? Maybe that's not the real question. Rather, it's how can you tell what's working. Indeed, one key challenge in any community-wide effort is attributing progress to a specific set of interventions. Nashville is particularly complex, with multiple collaboratives and a reform-mind school district. While Metro Nashville Public Schools were the driving force behind graduation improvements, Alignment Nashville and other collaborative efforts in the city were integral to the progress. The striking shift in student outcomes would not have been possible without the coordinated efforts of the school, the mayor's office, Alignment Nashville, government entities, non-profits, and the Chamber of Commerce. In other words, each played a key and complementary role.

Five key things have made the Nashville collaborative successful in increasing graduation rates:

Data leads to unity: *Shared vision and agenda.*
As noted, Nashville came together in 2010 to create a formal shared roadmap for the city, the Child and Youth Master Plan (CYMP). Mayor Karl Dean delivered the initial call to action but the plan was painstakingly developed by a 52-person taskforce consisting of leaders from schools, government agencies, businesses and nonprofits, along with youth and parents. The taskforce was divided into topical committees – for example, separate focuses on out-of-school time, health, safety and the like. This is where most of the work was done. The groups started by analyzing data on a broad set of youth outcomes to set and prioritize goals. Armed with that critical information, the committees established strategic objectives and specific implementation strategies for each. And they had to hurry to do it. The mayor set a six-month timeframe for the development of the CYMP. This very-short deadline stirred some groans. But it also created a sense of urgency, and forced the group to put aside politics and individual agendas in support of the common vision. The Ready By 21 Quality Counts – a nationwide initiative that offers tools and technical assistance to improve the quality and reach of community programs for youth – also provided critical support to Nashville.

As a working rule, Alignment Nashville has committed itself to supporting the school district's strategic plan and carefully aligns its work with the district's vision.

Empowered community members: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*
Right from the beginning, youth and families contributed to the development of the CYMP – at every level. A high school student served as one of the three co-chairs for the CYMP and other students took places on the taskforce. The taskforce worked closely with the mayor's standing Youth Council and removed

barriers to student participation – for example, by scheduling meetings after the schools' 3 PM close and by assisting with transportation. Youth members also took responsibility for a creating large-scale survey of 1,000 city youth. They wrote, administered and analyzed it themselves. The broader community got actively engaged too, mainly through listening sessions involving hundreds of residents and youth. The taskforce employed a variety of meeting formats to gain community insights, such as small group discussions and one-on-one exchanges. At each, translators enabled Hispanic participation.

Well-known leaders attract partners: *Effective leadership and governance.*
In calling for the development of the city-wide Child and Youth Master Plan, Mayor Dean stepped up to a daunting challenge. The convening power of the mayor and Councilman Ronnie Steine, in particular, was critical for the resulting broad, cross-sector engagement. Indeed, when asked why they participated in the CYMP, most participants simply responded: "Because Mayor Dean or Councilman Steine asked me." The mayor's office also used its power to allocate funding and resources to support the collaborative strategies. It has also acted as a strong advocate for education reform in Metro Nashville Public Schools. And this advocacy continues in hard economic times. Despite budget cuts in other areas, the mayor's office has allocated funds from the Metro City government's general operating budget to education-related programs.

The power of a strong leader can be seen as well in the city's progress on truancy rates. Mayor Dean summoned a three-day conference on truancy in early 2008, bringing in representatives from the Metro Police, Metro Nashville Public Schools and the Juvenile Court. Among other strategies, the group devised an aggressive approach to attendance. Putting the strategy into place, Mayor Dean created the Metro Student Attendance Center, which involves a partnership among a number of government entities. It identifies and provides early intervention for chronically truant students.

Formalized structure: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*
Alignment Nashville is an outstanding example of a formalized collaborative structure. It encompasses:
- Committees: The collaborative developed a sophisticated committee structure to ensure its partners have a meaningful role. Each of the 22 committees meet monthly and has a chair and vice chair in addition to its standing members. Specific guidelines exist for committee membership and most have between 10 to 20 members.
- Dedicated staff: More than seven individuals work directly for Alignment Nashville, organizing and supporting the committees.
- Operating Board: Alignment's Operating Board is composed of the chair and vice-chair of each committee. Committees report out on their work in monthly meetings, and the board provides oversight, collaboration and accountability.

- Community alignment: At least yearly, the committees issue an Invitation to Participate (ITP), which is an open call to interested community organizations to share their expertise. Committees select organizations based on their ITP responses to determine which resources best align with a given initiative. Today, there are more than 300 organizations participating in Alignment initiatives.

Similarly, the Mayor's Office has committed resources to coordinate the CYMP and tapped into a pool of college interns to provide additional capacity. Experience had shown that dedicated resources were necessary but not sufficient for the CYMP's success. Among those making significant contributions was Laura Hansen of the Mayor's Office for Children and Youth. The architect for the CYMP work, she was uniquely suited to take on the coordination role, given her extensive experience in strategic planning and project management.

Diverse fundraising success: *Sufficient Resources.*
Alignment Nashville has been remarkably successful in its fundraising efforts and consistently disperses almost half of its funding to partner organizations through grants. The collaborative is able to raise more than $1.1 million each year. The base funding of $450,000 per year comes from Nashville Public Schools, the Mayor's Office, and the Nashville Chamber of Commerce. An additional $550,000 annually comes from federal and foundation grants, such as America's Promise, the National Science Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and State Farm.

SOURCES

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13) *Children and Youth Master Plan.* Mayor's Child and Youth Master Plan Taskforce. July 2010.
14) *Alignment Nashville 2010 Annual Report.* Alignment Nashville. 2010.

In 2004, less than half of Chicago's youth were graduating from its public high schools. And things weren't getting any better. Officials estimated that two-thirds of incoming freshmen were at risk of not graduating in four years. As the third-largest school district in the nation – with more than 80% of its economically challenged student population on free or reduced-cost lunch – Chicago's increasing drop-out crisis looked like it might affect the city for another generation, adding to the cycle of poverty.

Chicago Public Schools decided it needed to take bold action. To accurately determine the scope of the problem and find potential interventions, it partnered with the Chicago Consortium on School Research (CCSR), a University of Chicago research institution, and later the Parthenon Group, a consulting firm. This analysis led to the Chicago Public School's Pathways to Success program in 2008, which enlisted public agencies, nonprofit organizations and corporations in a collaborative to support the school system's determination to keep all students on pace to graduate.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Chicago, IL
- **Problem:** On-time graduation rates lower than 50%
- **Results:** 10% increase in number of freshmen on-track to graduate in the 3 years between 2008 and 2011
- **Differentiating Feature:** Chicago Public Schools initially enlisted external organizations to conduct extensive research into students at risk of not graduating. It now has two offices analyzing data and flagging students that need more support from collaborative partners.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Chicago Public Schools
- **Philanthropic Support:** Gates Foundation

At the core of the program's philosophy was the belief that no single provider or program was capable of improving graduation rates to the degree necessary. Rather, the problem begged for a broad and coordinated solution. To this end, the school system convened the first Graduation Pathways Summit in 2008. Upwards of 200 public officials, community partners and city agencies attended. More than gaining critical mass, though, the event drew appropriate attention to a problem that had been quietly building for years. And that helped allow "CPS," as the school system is known in the Windy city, to organize local stakeholders around a data-driven approach to combat the crisis.

Since that beginning, the Chicago Public School System has melded the efforts of such partners as the Chicago Urban League and the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago to produce multiple graduation pathways for students not well served by the traditional high school route.

With fewer than three years of collaboration under way, the city has already seen the proportion of freshmen on-track for graduation rise 10% and graduation rates inch upwards by 3% -- a figure that may not sound like much but translates into more than 13,000 students on their way to a better life. Meantime, the programs supporting Pathways to Success have grown more comprehensive and diverse, as well.

Four key things have made the Chicago collaborative successful in beginning to increase graduation rates:

Data determines strategy: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*

To keep the Pathway to Success's strategy on track, data has constantly marked the way. This has been true since the group first posed the critical question: Who is at risk of not graduating? CPS initially relied on the University of Chicago's CCSR research group and later the Parthenon Group to give an accurate profile of the at-risk student – and determine which interventions were successful in improving graduation rates. CPS now has two permanent offices, REA (Research, Evaluation, and Accountability) and IMPACT (Instructional Management Program and Academic Communication Tool) that work with CCSR to collect, analyze and present data to principals, instructional leadership teams and teachers. These groups jointly produce three regular reports that identify and monitor at-risk or off-pace students. In addition, a Freshmen Intervention Database, which documents interventions used with students, enables increased transparency and opportunities for communication among relevant stakeholders.

Getting behind proven programs: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.*
Simply put, Pathways to Success is committed to employing programs that have demonstrated success in helping students graduate. For example, Parthenon found that the two-year Achievement Academies program, a joint venture with Johns Hopkins to help over-aged students qualify for high school, almost doubled the graduation rates for participants. As a result, Pathways to Success is looking to expand the academies to a four-year program. Pathways to Success also constantly seeks out effective new interventions. With funding from the Gates Foundation, CPS has placed staff in six public schools as part of its On-Track Labs initiative to explore and test different strategies for keeping freshmen on track. Based on the level of On-Track Labs' success, CPS will roll out the best interventions to other district schools and partners.

Multiple pathways, multiple partners: *Cross-sector engagement.*
The collaborative's commitment to multiple graduation pathways requires many partners to provide a range of alternative education routes. CPS has integrated public, private and nonprofit organizations into the Pathways to Success program portfolio and publicly showcases their results at the annual Graduation Pathways Summit. Critical to the development of the collaborative's successful strategy have been the CCSR and Network for College Success, a provider of professional development resources for CPS leaders and teachers. Pathways to Success manages a variety of partners, ranging from Jobs for Illinois Graduates, a career-preparation program, to Aventa, a virtual learning provider. Also part of the mix is VOYCE, a youth-led collaborative focused on education reform, and the Chicago Police Department.

United around the primary service provider: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*
Chicago Public Schools acts as the convener of the Pathways to Success collaborative. It has drawn awareness to the problem, convened stakeholders and administers the majority of its programs. In this central role, CPS works with individual partners to fold their respective programs into the larger portfolio.

Partners primarily serve to support CPS' mission and agenda, rather than to collaborate on the goals and strategy of the group. This hub-and-spoke structure has been successful because of CPS' natural role as the primary service provider – as well as lead convener. CPS is figuratively and literally at the center of things, well able to integrate services across providers, ensure alignment toward what works and provide an array of services that best meet the needs of its student beneficiaries.

SOURCES

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In 2006, Milwaukee took note of a sad distinction: it had one of the highest rates of teen births in the nation, with 52 births per thousand teen-age girls (defined as live births to female teens in Milwaukee between the ages of 15 and 17).   Civic leaders became even more troubled when they explored the data and consequences. Rates for black teens were five times higher than for whites. The economic cost to Milwaukee of births by unmarried teens in 2002 came to a staggering $137 million over the lifetime of the children born. The child poverty rate (41%) ranked fourth in the nation, fueled in part by teen birth rates. Most disturbingly, interviews with service providers showed that "teen pregnancy" statistics were quite often a manifestation of sexual abuse, incest, dating violence and statutory rape, with 71% of all teen births fathered by men over the age of 20.

Civic leaders recognized teen pregnancy as closely linked to other issues Milwaukee was grappling with: education, crime and the cycle of poverty. Moved to action, United Way of Greater Milwaukee (UWGM) convened a group that same year. They called it the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Oversight Committee. Chaired by Elizabeth Brenner, the publisher of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, and Bevan Baker, the city's commissioner of health, it brought together a broad cross section of public officials, service providers, researchers, and funders. What emerged was a highly specific roadmap for action and an ambitious goal: to reduce the teen birth rate by 46% by 2015, bringing Milwaukee in line with the national average and well below the average for a large city.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Milwaukee, WI
- **Problem:** One of the highest rates of teen births in nation
- **Results:** 31% decline in teen birth rate for 15 to 17 year olds since 2006
- **Differentiating Feature:** United Way of Greater Milwaukee is uniquely positioned to play the convener role. It has the trust of the community, the power (and political neutrality) to convene at the highest levels, and the independence to make a long-term commitment to a politicized issue.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** United Way of Greater Milwaukee (UWGM)
- **Philanthropic Support:** Collaborative Fund, which includes the Brico Fund, Faye McBeath Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Johnson Controls, Inc. Foundation, Rockwell Automation Foundation, UWGM, Daniel M. Soref Charitable Trust, Aurora Health Care Foundation

Progress has been encouraging. Preliminary data for 2010 shows a 31% decrease in the teen birth rate since 2006; with births dropping to 36 per thousand teenage girls A cutting edge public awareness campaign has ensured that virtually every Milwaukeean, both urban and suburban, is now aware of the issue. The greatest focus has been on teens, themselves. For example, in partnership with the Milwaukee Public Schools, the collaborative has trained close to 1,000 teachers. This effort has dramatically increased the proportion of MPS' approximately 80,000 students who are receiving age-appropriate, science-based curriculum on sexuality. Meantime, United Way's continuing Healthy Girls programs have provided about 16,000 young people with additional education on the topics of teen pregnancy, sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV prevention. Praise for the initiative has also come from the respected National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, which cited the collaborative's broad partnership; focus on evidence-based interventions and ambitious goal.

Yet, given the controversial nature of teen pregnancy, predictable challenges have emerged. UWGM's CEO Mary Lou Young says, "I still answer questions from donors almost every day on why we are tackling this issue. It is a constant effort to reinforce the message that teen pregnancy is a catalyst for poverty." Early on, though, UWGM made the decision that it would commit to the issue long term. While some donors withdrew their support, others have stepped forward so that overall support has increased.

Three key things have made the Milwaukee collaborative successful in reducing teen pregnancy rates:

Dedicated staff provides momentum: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*
Describing UWGM's role in the collaborative, Nicole Angresano, vice president of Community Impact, states, "We conduct the orchestra." It does so by providing a full suite of administrative support that keeps things moving ahead. The Oversight Committee holds quarterly meetings open to the public, receiving input and advice for the effort. But the real work happens in four sub-committees that meet monthly. They focus on public awareness, sexual victimization, collaborative funding and the faith community. A UWGM staffer is assigned to each of the five committees to coordinate across committees by maintaining and updating the roadmap and logic model, creating agendas, handling public relations and providing talking points. UWGM supports these activities in-kind out of its own full-time staff, supplementing with interns, fellows and volunteers when needed.

Respected, neutral leader: *Effective leadership and governance.*
UWGM was uniquely positioned to play the convener role—it had the trust of the community, the power (and political neutrality) to convene at the highest levels, and the independence to make a long-term commitment to an issue. While the UWGM convenes the group and staffs the collaborative, it does so with a light touch. As CEO Young is careful to point out: ["We have publicly committed to getting this done, but we don't own the agenda. The collaborative and the community own the agenda."] UWGM also ensures that proper credit goes to partner organizations, such as the Milwaukee Public Schools. The result is a collaborative focused on impact rather than on programs, funding or credit. In a very few cases, the collaborative has formalized decisions rules (for example, Oversight Committee co-chairs have veto power over any new public awareness ad), but otherwise operates without bylaws or formalized roles, relying on a strong culture of trust among participants.

Comprehensive public awareness: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*
In Milwaukee's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, United Way of Greater Milwaukee saw clearly that teens needed multiple reinforcing messages to change their behavior. The initiative centers on direct education and counseling

via public schools, nonprofits, and the faith community. In addition, an innovative public awareness campaign by Serve Marketing changed the conversation among teens, their friends and parents. The campaign began with ads making the case that teen pregnancy impacted everyone in greater Milwaukee (even the suburbs) due to its economic cost. Subsequently, peer teens were engaged through a series of provocative ads, radio spots, and even a fake movie premiere. The collaborative also reached out to parents, providing them with a "Let's Talk toolkit" to help them talk about sexuality with their kids

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Philadelphia was facing a high school drop-out epidemic that threatened the potential of the city's youth and the capacity of the region's future workforce. Only about half of the entering ninth graders slated to graduate in the classes of 2000 through 2005 in the city's public high schools graduated on time, and only a slightly higher proportion would graduate at all within a six-year time period (54-58%). From those classes alone, researchers estimated 30,000 students left school with no diploma. To combat this crisis, the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), a local youth workforce intermediary, brought together a broad collaborative that would launch the Project U-Turn campaign. It was made up of representatives from the Mayor's office, school district, service providers, family court, child welfare system, advocacy groups and local funders. With funding from the Youth Transition Funders Group and the William Penn Foundation, the collaborative commissioned research to understand the drop-out problem, and created a call to action with roles and responsibilities for all sectors of the community. The group then developed a detailed roadmap and work plan, and began to align resources and programs toward practical solutions with an initial focus on juvenile justice and child welfare populations.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Philadelphia, PA
- **Problem:** On-time graduation rates as low as 50%
- **Results:** 6% increase in graduation rate between 2006 and 2011
- **Differentiating Feature:** Project U-Turn's partnership with Youth United for Change, an organization of disconnected youth, has provided insight and generated buy-in among those the collaborative serves.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Philadelphia Youth Network (a local youth workforce intermediary)
- **Philanthropic Support:** William Penn Foundation, Youth Transition Funders Group

Today, coordination among city government, the school system, philanthropic entities, service organizations and young people themselves has never been more focused on getting students to graduation day. More students are on track to graduate, available slots in alternative and accelerated high schools have nearly doubled, and graduation rates are up by 6%. In 2011, Harvard Kennedy School included Project U-Turn as one of its "36 Noteworthy Government Programs and Practices."

Along the way, Project U-Turn has faced tough choices and real challenges. By choosing to tackle multiple systems at once (juvenile justice, child welfare, and education), the collaborative chose a slower but potentially more permanent path to change. From Project U-Turn's perspective, focusing on the easiest kids (juniors and seniors close to graduation) might have created larger short-term gains but would have sacrificed the institutional changes required to sustain the gains.

Data sharing also has been difficult, creating problems in tracking progress at the sub-group level. The collaborative began with commissioned research that linked graduation data with data about youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare system — the initial targets of the effort. Since the initial report, however, Project U-Turn has had to rely on the schools district's data, which does not disaggregate these sub-groups.

Lastly, project U-Turn has faced four changes in Philadelphia's superintendent of schools, a key partner in their pursuit of higher graduation rates. Nevertheless, the district's latest strategic planning process illustrates the collaborative's success in overcoming this revolving-door challenge. By working very closely with multiple institutions across the community, Project U-Turn's perspective continued to be represented on many of the district's planning committees, as well as in much of the input given by community members and parents.

Four key things have made Project U-Turn successful in beginning to turn around the dropout problem:

An inside/outside approach: *Cross-sector engagement.*

The collaborative approaches the problem from two sides, operating both within the school district and city government infrastructure, and outside of the normal bureaucratic and political channels through teaming with external organizations aligned with the same strategy. This comprehensive approach ensures that the collaborative can push for important changes that may be at odds with what the district or the city might want, without compromising key partnerships within the system.

Meaningful youth participation: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

Many collaboratives focused on youth issues, including graduation rates, struggle with getting young people, themselves, involved. Not so for Project U-Turn. In 2009, it partnered with Youth United for Change (YUC), which had just organized youth who were not in school, or were in alternative high schools. The purpose: to advocate for issues related to the public education system. The youth named their chapter of YUC "The Pushout Chapter," reflecting the sentiment among many "drop outs" that they did not choose to leave school. Rather, they believed they are pushed out by factors beyond their control. Youth for Change staff – many of them former disconnected youth themselves – then bring the views and ideas of the group to the collaborative, as well as seek to align their advocacy with the collaborative's vision.

Staffing to facilitate action: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

Through the support of the William Penn Foundation, PYN's vice president, Jenny Bogoni, is able to focus on daily operations of Project U-Turn. She creates agendas, facilitates the steering committee, pushes the work ahead between meetings, and maintains relationships with the broader partner group. One important benefit of Bogoni's active participation is the creation of the steering committee's workplan of required activities. Having a current document that captures the committee's consensus view allows partners to respond quickly to opportunities related to funding and policy change. The foundation also funds a policy analyst within the mayor's office, and a data analyst and a director of a re-engagement center at the school district.

Metrics, metrics, metrics: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*

The Network uses a unique four-part dashboard to gauge progress. It measures the six-year cohort graduation rate, the percentage of first-time 9th graders on track to on-time graduation, the number of youths on waiting lists for alternative high schools, the available slots in those programs, and the dollars earmarked for the Project U-Turn agenda. All stakeholders receive updates to ensure everyone is working from the same data.

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In 2004, the City of Stockton was identified as the most violent city in California with a rate of 1,362 violent crimes per 100,000 residents. The broader San Joaquin County (SJC) has long been a hotspot for gang violence and was hit hard in the economic recessions. While Stockton and the surrounding San Joaquin County have many nonprofits and government agencies, historically everyone worked separately with narrowly focused services and different intake systems. The burden of coordinating services fell on the recipients. One study estimated that families literally had to fill out a barrel-full of paperwork and travel to multiple different offices to access services.

In the late 1990s, a group of 60 leaders came together to ask why outcomes had not improved for SJC families despite significant resources at the community's disposal. After reflection, the group came together to start the Community Partnership for Families San Joaquin (CPFSJ), a collaborative that brings local services for families under one roof. The approach was a radical departure from the past for a community that had previously acted as if the solution to every problem was to start a new nonprofit. To kick-start the effort, the community brought in Stewart Wakeling, currently a researcher-practitioner at the Public Health Institute with deep criminal justice expertise, to serve as a facilitator and leader.

CPFSJ transformed social service delivery in San Joaquin County enabling 25,000 families to easily access services and get help "where they are". CPFSJ co-locates multiple service providers in neighborhood centers to increase accessibility of services for families. CPFSJ even created a mobile unit to deliver services to more remote areas in San Joaquin County. The centers provide comprehensive, integrated services, including prevention and early intervention for issues such as obesity, truancy, unemployment and education. CPFSJ also developed a common intake form to minimize the administrative burden on families and better share information among providers.

Since their launch, neighborhoods around CPFSJ centers have been steadily making progress. The five centers have deep penetration in their neighborhoods with each supporting around 5,000 families. An extensive survey conducted by CPFSJ suggests that participants realize 25%+ reductions in arrests, child protective services interventions, unexcused absences and school suspensions. In crime-ridden North Central Stockton, crime is down 65% in the five years since the center was opened there.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** San Joaquin County / Stockton
- **Problem:** Hotspot for gang violence and acute financial need
- **Results:** 65% reduction in crime reporting since 2004 in the neighborhood around center
- **Differentiating Feature:** Meaningful engagement of a group of residents and faith-based institutions, the Coalition United for Families (CUFF), to shape programs and oversee center operations
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Community Partnership for Families San Joaquin
- **Philanthropic Support:** Local funds

One key thing has made CPFSJ particularly successful in reducing crime in San Joaquin County:

Developing community ownership: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*
CPFSJ engaged the Coalition United for Families (CUFF), a group of community residents and faith-based institutions in the early days of the collaborative. CUFF was initially a reluctant participant, having had very negative experiences working with city and county government previously. The courtship was intense and CPFSJ backed up its collaboration overtures with action. CPFSJ collaborated with PACT, a community organizing nonprofit, to run a training program for CUFF. CPFSJ also brought in several private foundations to talk with CUFF and advocated for CUFF with city and county officials.

The relationship with CUFF culminated in the establishment of a new CPFSJ center in 2007 after four years of community organizing and planning. While CPFSJ provided funds and operated the center, CPFSJ put CUFF in the driver's seat. CUFF made key decisions for the Center, hired community residents to staff the Center and served as the Center's Advisory Board. CPFSJ earned the support of the local community in the process and ended up with programming that was more relevant to the community as a result.

CPFSJ, under the six-year leadership of Executive Director Robina Asghar, continues to develop the capacity of families to serve as forerunners for change in their neighborhoods around issues such as educational disparities, school readiness and attendance, foster care placement and civic engagement.

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East Lake was once one of Atlanta's wealthiest neighborhoods, attracting vacationers and professional golfers to the East Lake Golf Club. But by 1995 it had deteriorated into what some called "Little Vietnam" due to the level of violence. East Lake had become home to a murder each week and crime rates 18 times the national average. The neighborhood's public housing project, East Lake Meadows, was economically and educationally depressed, with 59% of its residents on welfare and only 5% of its fifth graders achieving state standards in mathematics.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** East Lake neighborhood of Atlanta, GA
- **Problem:** Crime rates 18 times the national average
- **Results:** 95% reduction in violent crime rates since 1995
- **Differentiating Feature:** East Lake Foundation acts as the hub for the collaborative, working directly with partner organizations individually, rather than bringing them together.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** East Lake Foundation
- **Philanthropic Support:** East Lake Foundation (initially), private donors

To create new opportunities for its besieged residents, a prominent real estate developer, Tom Cousins, started the East Lake Foundation in 1995. His ambitious goal: to transform the neighborhood. Over the next two years, the Foundation worked with the Atlanta Housing Authority and the East Lake Meadows housing project residents' association to evaluate the neighborhood's needs and to develop strategies to replace the dilapidated public housing project. A turning point for the community was the razing of East Lake Meadows housing project and the development of the new, mixed-income apartments, Villages of East Lake.

East Lake Foundation's comprehensive strategy focuses on three essential goals: cradle-to-college education, safe and affordable housing, and community wellness. A series of public and private partnerships serve as the scaffolding for the collaborative. For example, the nonprofit Sheltering Arms provides early childhood education; its EdisonLearning manages a new K-8 charter school with funding and a charter from the Atlanta Public Schools. Private real estate management group, JMG Realty, manages the safe new affordable housing within The Villages of East Lake. The local YMCA works closely with Drew Charter School to offer physical education classes in addition to its other services and the Charlie Yates Golf course offers classes and employment opportunities for neighborhood residents.

The collaborative's impact is evident in the transformation of East Lake from a warzone to a safe, inviting and attractive neighborhood. Violent crime has dropped by 95% in the neighborhood and the proportion of individuals supported by welfare has fallen from 59% for East Lake Meadows residents to just 5% for the entire neighborhood. Educational attainment has risen dramatically, as well. Today, fifth grade math proficiency has risen from its single digit low in 1995 for East Lake Meadows residents to greater than 80% for those who attend the neighborhood charter school. And the reading proficiency for all students in the K-8 charter school has attained the same high percentage number.

These dramatic improvements are partially the result of an influx of higher-income individuals and the exclusion of those former inhabitants with the worst criminal records. However, one-time residents who lived in the East Meadows

project prior to 1995, and have returned, have seen similarly impressive gains along these metrics among their children (Thomas Boston has tracked all residents who lived in the East Lake Meadows housing project in 1995. Comparing those who have returned to those who have not, shows that life is much better for those who have returned - *Benefits and Cost of Reducing Concentrated Poverty, 2005.*).

Three key things have made the East Lake Foundation and its partners successful:

Community shapes its own future: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

The East Lake Foundation began its efforts to help the neighborhood with two years of bi-weekly meetings with the local residents' association and the Atlanta Housing Authority. These meetings gave neighborhood participants a genuine opportunity to shape the future of their community. For example, as a result of community feedback, the residents' association's president strongly advocated for a 50/50 ratio of market-rate to subsidized housing in the new development. The original proposal was for an 80/20 mix, with the majority earmarked for market-rate housing.

Resources to attract more resources: *Sufficient resources.*

The East Lake Foundation provided the funding and personnel necessary for the initial two-year planning phase, which culminated in the replacement of the public housing project with a mixed-income development. Costs of demolition and construction were split between the Foundation and the Atlanta Housing Authority. With three of its seven non-programming staff members dedicated to fundraising and a fourth focused on marketing and communication, the East Lake Foundation is able to attract resources in a diversified, sustainable manner from a variety of major partners. These contributors include the Coca-Cola Company, supermarket chain Publix, Georgia State University, Atlanta Public Schools and the Atlanta Housing Authority. The Foundation's dedicated fundraising team, combined with a patient long-term approach to investments and a commitment to tracking and publicizing progress on neighborhood metrics, attracts additional funds from local public and private funders and directly contributes to the sustainability of the collaborative's efforts.

Hub and spoke model: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

In many collaboratives, partner organizations come together in a forum of equals to interact and take action, even when one organization is acting as the convener or leader. East Lake Foundation instead acts as the hub for the collaborative, working directly with partner organizations individually, rather than bringing them together. The Foundation has the sole power to select and recruit partners, reinforce the collaborative's vision and helps integrate programs across providers.

This hub and spoke structure allows for less-complex governance and centralized resources. East Lake Foundation's high level authority and dedicated

program coordinator also allows it to effectively integrate partner services, identify gaps and fill them. The program coordinator meets regularly with partners to ensure their alignment with the collaborative goals and to collect data on their progress. In this role as convener of public and private organizations, the Foundation is able to quickly respond to arising community needs by bringing on new service providers or phasing out existing partners no longer relevant to achieving the collaborative's goals. In other words, the Foundation uses its role as a funder and leader to ensure partners are aligned with the collaborative's goals. For such a hub and spoke model to work, the hub must be either the primary service provider or the lead fundraiser in a community and must have the capacity to actively coordinate among partners.

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By the late 1980s, many of San Jose's once safe neighborhoods had become crime-ridden. The city had experienced a 300% rise in violent juvenile crime, along with significant increases in drug-related and other criminal activity. To take back their streets, community members, led by the citizens' group People Acting in Community Together (PACT), approached the City Council and mayor for help.

The resulting Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF), launched in 1991, has put forth a sustained commitment ever since to reducing violent and antisocial behavior within the city's youth population between the ages of 6 and 24, who exhibit high-risk behavior. With a mission to address the root cause of youth violence through personal transformation, MGPTF has aimed its strategy at prevention, intervention and most recently re-entry. It works directly with targeted youth, seeking to reconnect them with their families and communities, using law enforcement only as a last resort. The ultimate intent is to get troubled young people back into schools, provide them with a supportive and healthy environment in which to learn and grow, and redirect them towards more productive behaviors.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** San Jose, CA
- **Problem:** High and rising violent crime rates
- **Results:** 38% reduction in violent crime rate between 2001 and 2010
- **Differentiating Feature:** San Jose mayors have served as central leader and spokesperson for the collaborative, convening monthly meetings, heading up a principal subcommittee, and helping to support it with city funds.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** San Jose Mayor and Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF)
- **Philanthropic Support:** City Funds, BEST

MGPTF today coordinates multiple efforts aimed at addressing the challenges of San Jose's disconnected youth. This wasn't always the case. Originally, MGPTF was focused on gang prevention in the San Jose area. But because of a commitment to continuous improvement, MGPTF has broadened its support of youth to include academic success, workforce preparation and neighborhood safety.

Due in large part to MGPTF, San Jose is now one of the safest big cities in America. The rate of violent crime in San Jose decreased by 38% from 1991 to 2010. During the same period, the city experienced a sustained 41% decrease in property crimes. Today 32% more high school graduates in the San Jose area meet the admissions requirements for the University of California than in prior recent years. The state has even adopted the "San Jose model" as the official structure for California gang prevention. In the midst of these successes, MGPTF acknowledges the need for greater involvement from philanthropy and the business community and is actively working to forge those partnerships.

Five key things have enabled MGPTF to have success in reducing crime in the city:

Strong, central leader: *Effective leadership and governance.*

With a strong precedent set by the founding Mayor Susan Hammer, MGPTF has had continuing prominent leadership by the subsequent mayors of San Jose. Today, Mayor Chuck Reed serves as the central leader and spokesperson, convening the monthly meetings of MGPTF. He is also the head of the Technical subcommittee. Since the mayor has final approval of the city budget, strong mayoral leadership has helped guarantee adequate annual funding – in good times and bad. As the public face of MGPTF, the mayor frequently makes public appearances on behalf of the group including the community forums. Indeed, the leadership of a long line of San Jose mayors has helped to procure funding and get traction in the community.

Commitment to strategy refreshing: *Shared vision and agenda.*
To keep the group focused on the community's latest priorities, MGPTF revises its strategic plan every three years. This regular strategy-setting process is a collaborative effort between the group and community members. The group reviews city-wide statistics and previous performance of the collaborative's grantees to identify emerging trends on the street. This data, as well as qualitative information from MGPTF members, shapes the strategy for the next several years. Also determined through this process is the funding mix for grantees. As the process moves along, hundreds of community members also provide input through public forums, youth focus groups and designated seats in the policy team. As MGPTF puts it: "*Change must be driven by the community and sustained by the community*".

Emphasizing cross-collaboration: *Cross-sector engagement.*
MGPTF encompasses a wide variety of community organizations and members. These include representatives from the city and county, dozens of nonprofits, courts, law-enforcement agencies, school districts, faith-based organizations, gang intervention experts and parole officers. Government agencies play a larger role in MGPTF relative to other collaboratives. Cross-collaboration within this disparate group has been enhanced through much effort, with an astounding 80% of participants citing that they have established new or strengthened existing community-building relationships through participation in MGPTF.

Innovative allocation of funds: *Sufficient resources.*
Taking an innovative approach to funding, MGPTF's rolled out what it calls its Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) program. General city funds are pledged to BEST, which then makes yearly grants to more than 25 organizations. BEST represents one of the larger children and youth funding sources in San Jose. Originally, BEST allocated its funding with an emphasis on prevention, intervention and law enforcement. Today, the funding allocation mix is recalibrated each year to reflect San Jose's changing needs. Recently, funding has become tenuous for BEST. Due to budget cuts, BEST lost its entire budget of $4.7 million in direct city funds last year. But the mayor saved the day by providing $2.8M from the city's general fund to keep BEST running. Nevertheless, funding will continue to be a challenge.

Clearly defined roles: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*
MGPTF operates through a policy team and a technical team to ensure effective support, alignment and coordination. The policy team consists of government officials, school district leaders and representatives of key community-based organizations. Chaired by the mayor, this group provides strategic direction for MGPTF. The technical team consists of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) staff, police officers and direct-service organizations. This latter team assures the effective development of programs for gang prevention, intervention and law enforcement. And with its members' direct knowledge of the street environment, the technical team provides updates to the policy group on changes in the gang climate. To support this infrastructure, MGPTF has a team of 6 BEST analysts and 2 supervisors at PRNS.

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