Collaboration among grantmaking foundations:

A review of the literature

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Executive summary

By describing and critically discussing foundation collaboration as a field of practice, this literature review aims to provide a conceptual and analytical framework to accompany the Canadian case studies on foundation collaboration that form Cluster 3 of the SSHRC research development project. While grantmaking foundations support and engage in collaborations with a range of different actors, the focus here is on collaborations amongst foundations themselves, in which other types of funding partners may also be present. For the most part, these collaborations build upon and around the central role that foundations play as grantmakers – as funders to third sector organizations.

The term "collaboration" is taken to refer to a broad range of relationships between grantmaking foundations. It has become a bit of a buzzword in the sector literature, in keeping with current ways of looking at philanthropy and social change. A move towards increased collaboration in the sector closely follows the shift over the past fifteen years towards more strategic forms of philanthropy. In this context, collaboration is often seen as the only way to achieve ambitious change goals, based on the recognition that multiple actors need to work together to solve complex problems.

Broadly speaking, grantmaking foundations collaborate in order to make existing work more efficient, to develop more effective interventions ("increase impact"), to support learning and to develop now knowledge, and/or to exercise combined influence with policymakers or other funders. A review of case studies reveals that collaboration among foundations can indeed achieve some of these purposes and yield synergistic effects that could not have been achieved by foundations acting alone. However, there is some doubt as to whether collaboration helps to improve efficiency from the grantmaker's perspective.

A range of different collaborative forms exists to support these different purposes. These fall into two major groupings: "light-touch" collaboration types where participants generally retain their full autonomy over strategies and granting procedures, and deeper, more integrated forms of collaboration requiring partners to establish joint objectives and ways of working. Most actual foundation collaborations combine different purposes and take on hybrid forms that evolve over their life course.

The deeper forms of collaboration are both difficult and counter-normative, challenging foundations' attachment to autonomy and brand and requiring that they relinquish some control over decision-making. In considering collaboration, foundations should give some attention to its strategic fit with their aims and to their own organizational readiness to collaborate. The literature suggests that few if any foundations will agree to collaborate purely for the sake of impact on the problem to be solved, if there are no individual or organizational benefits to be gained. This may be particularly true for public fundraising foundations that need to position their brand in order to survive in a competitive market.

Prominent among the key conditions or factors for collaboration success are the importance of shared purpose and realistic goals, structure aligned to purpose, flexibility and adaptive capacity, and investment in strong, trusting relationships.

This literature review indicates that collaboration holds promise for many grantmaking foundations seeking to strategically leverage their own limited resources, and for those seeking to contribute to results beyond what they could hope to achieve on their own. At the same time, by enabling foundations to concentrate and coordinate their resources, collaboration can amplify existing challenges of power and legitimacy associated with private philanthropy, including how it may work to amplify foundations' capacity to set and further agendas for which they are not held publicly accountable, and how it may reinforce inequitable granter-grantee power dynamics.

Finally, the literature review points to a few areas where future knowledge generation activities could make a useful contribution to the field, by:
  - drawing more upon existing knowledge about collaboration and partnerships that has been generated within other sectors of activity;

- expanding the frame to focus on cross-sector collaborations that foundations engage in, many of which are particularly positioned to catalyze or to structure change within industries or institutional fields;
- seeking out the perspective of non-foundation stakeholders on the specific role that foundations are best positioned to play within these sector-spanning spheres of activity.

Résumé exécutif

À partir d'une description et d'une discussion critique sur le champ de pratique de collaborations entre fondations subventionnaires, notre recension des écrits présente un cadre conceptuel et analytique en support aux études de cas réalisées portant sur des collaborations entre fondations canadiennes. Notre recension et les études de cas s'inscrivent dans les activités partenariales de recherche du Groupe III de travail du projet CRSH de recherche sur la philanthropie subventionnaire canadienne.

Bien que des fondations subventionnaires soutiennent des activités de collaboration et collaborent elles-mêmes avec une diversité d'acteurs, notre recension demeure centrée sur les collaborations existantes entre fondations subventionnaires, des collaborations qui peuvent inclure d'autres partenaires bailleurs de fonds. Sans s'y restreindre, ces collaborations se développent d'abord autour de l'identité et de l'activité centrale des fondations subventionnaires, à savoir, octroyer des dons ou des subventions à des organisations à but non lucratif.

Le mot « collaboration » désigne un large éventail de relations prenant place entre des fondations subventionnaires. Autant le concept que la pratique de la collaboration sont le reflet de courants actuels présents dans le secteur philanthropique. Une tendance vers des modes d'action collaboratifs peut être liée à la place de plus en plus importante prise par le courant de la philanthropie dite « stratégique ». Dans ce contexte, la collaboration devient la voie à privilégier pour atteindre des objectifs de changement ambitieux, et ce, à partir d'une prise de conscience que la résolution de problèmes complexes nécessite de regrouper les efforts d'une pluralité d'acteurs.

En général, les fondations subventionnaires sont poussées à collaborer avec d'autres du fait qu'elles cherchent à être plus efficientes ; par le désir d'accroitre l'efficacité ou l'impact de leurs interventions ; par le désir de soutenir l'apprentissage ou le développement des connaissances, ou, encore, afin d'exercer une plus grande influence auprès de décideurs ou auprès d'autres bailleurs de fonds. Les recensions de cas révèlent que plusieurs collaborations entre fondations ont effectivement pu réaliser certains de ces objectifs et produire des effets synergiques qu'aucune fondation subventionnaire ne pourrait atteindre seule. En même temps, il est moins évident que les collaborations entre fondations subventionnaires permette de réaliser des gains d'efficience, du moins selon le point de vue des fondations elles-mêmes.

Il existe un éventail de formes de collaboration pour soutenir les objectifs différents que les fondations poursuivent. Celles-ci sont de deux ordres. Premièrement, nous observons des formes de collaboration dites légères, où les collaborateurs gardent leur autonomie stratégique et opérationnelle. Deuxièmement, nous observons aussi des formes plus intégrées, où les partenaires établissent des objectifs communs et mettent en œuvre des opérations conjointes. Souvent, au-delà des « types » aux traits distincts proposés par les écrits, les collaborations entre fondations tendent à combiner des objectifs différents et à prendre des formes hybrides, lesquelles évoluent souvent au fil du temps.

Non seulement les formes de collaboration plus intégrées sont plus exigeantes, elles posent aussi, au plan organisationnel et culturel, des défis de taille aux fondations participantes. Les conditions de réalisation des collaborations intégrées leur demandent de céder une part de leur autonomie et de leur souveraineté décisionnelle. Parfois, ces collaborations peuvent même aller à contre sens d'éléments qui font partie de l'identité distincte des fondations participantes.

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Avant d'accepter de faire partie d'un effort collaboratif, une fondation doit considérer l'adéquation entre ses propres objectifs et ceux de l'initiative collaborative. Il lui faut dès lors questionner tant sa propre disposition que sa capacité réelle à collaborer. Les écrits recensés suggèrent que les fondations n'acceptent pas de collaborer avec d'autres uniquement en vue de produire un plus grand impact dans leur champ d'action. Pour collaborer, les fondations doivent aussi espérer récolter des bénéfices pour leur organisation. Ce serait d'autant plus le cas pour les fondations qui font une cueillette de fonds publique, lesquelles doivent chercher à se démarquer dans un environnement de plus en plus concurrentiel.

Les principales conditions de succès de collaboration énoncées dans les écrits recensés sont : la clarté et le réalisme des objectifs communs ; l'adéquation de la forme ou de la structure aux objectifs poursuivis ; la souplesse et la capacité d'adaptation et d'apprentissage ; enfin, le temps et les efforts consacrés à bâtir des relations de confiance entre partenaires.

À partir de cette recension des écrits, il est possible de conclure que la collaboration, comme stratégie d'intervention, représente une avenue prometteuse :

- pour les fondations subventionnaires qui cherchent à maximiser les retombées atteignables lorsque leurs ressources sont limitées ;
- pour les fondations subventionnaires qui souhaitent aller au-delà de leurs limites et de leurs propres capacités afin de contribuer à l'atteinte de résultats à une échelle d'action plus ambitieuse que ne le leur permettrait une action isolée.

En même temps, par le fait de concentrer et de coordonner les ressources des fondations, la collaboration entre fondations peut avoir l'effet d'amplifier certains enjeux de pouvoir et de légitimité associés à la philanthropie subventionnaire privée. Entre autres, la collaboration entre fondations peut avoir l'effet d'accroître la capacité d'influence des fondations sans qu'elles aient pour autant à rendre compte publiquement de cet exercice d'influence. Elle peut aussi avoir l'effet d'amplifier des dynamiques de pouvoir entre subventionnaires et subventionnés.

En dernier lieu, notre recension des écrits comporte des limites et laisse place à des contributions futures au développement de connaissances dans ce domaine. Mentionnons les points suivants comme apports futurs à développer.
- Mettre à contribution les savoirs existants sur des collaborations et des partenariats à partir de domaines d'activités moins étudiés par les activités de recherche propres au secteur philanthropique.
- Élargir le cadre d'analyse afin d'incorporer les collaborations intersectorielles auxquelles participent nombre de fondations subventionnaires. De par leur nature, celles-ci semblent être mieux placées pour catalyser des changements à portée institutionnelle plus grande.
- Intégrer la perspective critique d'acteurs situés à l'extérieur de l'univers des fondations sur le rôle, l'influence et les responsabilités de ces dernières lorsqu'elles travaillent de façon collaborative.

I. Introduction: framing the topic of collaboration among grantmaking foundations

Focus of inquiry

Discussions and documented practices of collaboration among Canadian grantmaking foundations are

relatively few in number[1]. There are very few analytical contributions in the Canadian literature that provide a broad overview of the practice of grantmaker collaboration, the purposes it serves and its limits. At the same time, the Canadian philanthropic sector[2] has expressed an interest in building its knowledge and understanding of the practice of collaboration between grantmaking foundations.

Launched in 2014, a SSHRC-funded research development project entitled "Social Innovation, Societal Change and Canadian's Grant-making Foundations: An Agenda of Research, Networking, and Knowledge Mobilization" has provided an opportunity to further explore this topic and to begin to establish a Canadian knowledge base. To this end, one of the project's research clusters was devoted to the subject of grantmaking foundations' collaborations. This literature review is a contribution to this cluster.

The purpose of this literature review is to describe and critically discuss foundation collaboration as a field of practice, with the intention of providing a conceptual and analytical framework that will serve as a backdrop to a companion landscape scan (Glass, 2016) and a series of case studies looking at the state of collaborative practices among Canadian grantmaking foundations.

The following questions guided our inquiry:
-    What constitutes foundation collaboration? What types of practices does this term encompass?
-    Why do foundations collaborate with each other? What are the perceived or demonstrated benefits, as well as the challenges, of collaboration amongst grantmakers?
-    What are the limits of foundation collaboration? What criticisms, if any, have been levelled against this field of practice?
-    Under what circumstances does foundation collaboration appear to yield the greatest potential to achieve benefits?
-    What evidence exists of foundation collaborations having been effective in achieving intended or desired outcomes?

Because the Canadian literature on this subject is limited, we have relied primarily on discussions in the literature on foundation and funder collaboration coming from the U.S. and Europe. Here, an abundant literature on the subject of foundation and funder collaborations exists; however, much of it is "grey" literature. For this review, we consulted the following types of sources: 1) publications by or commissioned

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[1] Before the recent case studies produced by the Montreal Research Laboratory on Canadian Philanthropy, these discussions and/or documented practices included Pearson (2010 & 2014); PFC (2012); Richardson (2012); Tomalty (2013); Morris (2014 & 2015); Langlois (2011), Silkes (2016) and possibly Reid (2014) and McKnight and Irvine (2014).

[2] The SSHRC research development project's community partners requested that this be a focus of study for the project.

by philanthropic infrastructure organizations or research centres dedicated to the study of philanthropy; 2) case studies, reviews or evaluation reports of particular collaborative initiatives; 3) commentaries or discussions posted in online publications or forums; and 4) periodical articles, conference proceedings and book chapters, whether peer-reviewed or not, for the most part focused on philanthropy or on the third sector.

The following table provides a breakdown of the sources consulted by type:

	Pertaining directly to subject of foundation collaboration	Providing background or context, theoretical underpinnings	Total
Reports by or commissioned by philanthropic infrastructure	26	15	41
Case studies, reviews, evaluation reports of particular collaborative initiatives	15		15
Commentaries or discussions posted in online publications or forums	14	1	15
Periodical articles, conference proceedings, book chapters	16	24	40
			111

The report is organized to respond to the questions laid out above. The remainder of the current section continues to frame this exploration, noting different focus areas in the literature on foundation collaboration, and sharing some figures that may give a sense of this practice's prevalence. Section II discusses some of the contextual drivers for foundation collaboration, lays out the key purposes that foundations pursue when working in collaboration with others, and shares the conclusion of one study that examined the evidence as to which purposes foundation collaborations have been most successful at fulfilling. In connection with this, a series of brief profiles in Appendix A illustrate examples of funder collaborations that have demonstrated added value in terms of outcomes achieved. Section III discusses different forms of funder collaboration and proposes a few typologies as possible frameworks for looking at these forms. Section IV presents the challenges and limits to foundation collaboration that have been discussed in the literature, while section V proposes a series of conditions and practices that emerge in the literature as critical to successful collaborations between grantmaking foundations. Following this, a sixth section of this report discusses a few deeper challenges posed by foundation collaborations. Finally, a summary discussion highlights the key observations and suggests some implications for future research.

Defining collaboration

Across many fields of activity, interorganizational collaboration has come to be embraced as a primary strategy for cultivating social innovation and addressing complex problems (Woodland & Hutton, 2012; Marek, Brock & Savla, 2014).

Despite a vast literature in support of interorganizational collaboration, Woodland and Hutton (2012) contend that collaboration itself remains an underempiricized and misunderstood concept taken to refer to a wide range of distinct practices. For the purposes of this discussion, the term *interorganizational collaboration* refers to "a cooperative, interorganizational relationship that is negotiated in an ongoing communicative process and that relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control" (Lawrence, Hardy & Phillips, 2002, 282). This definition is inclusive enough to encompass a wide range of collaborative arrangements, but distinguishes interorganizational collaboration from other arrangements in which cooperation is either purchased (as in a supplier-client relationship) or based on some form of legitimate authority (as in a relationship between a public agency and an organization operating within its jurisdiction).

In discussions of collaborative practices among grantmaking foundations, the term "collaboration" is most often used to refer to any situation where foundations (funders) are working together towards a common purpose (Hughes, 2005; DP Evaluation, 2012). These discussions seek to keep the definition intentionally broad in order to capture the many different ways in which foundations work together.

An abundant literature… but gaps in knowledge and analysis

In his reflection upon current waves of cross-sector collaborative practice, Mulgan (2016) notes that collaborative responses to achieve social change have a long history. Despite this long history, Mulgan observes that successive generations of social change efforts most often fail to capitalize upon lessons learned both by past generations and within other sectors of activity. Prager's research (2011a) echoes this observation for the philanthropic foundation sector. Foundations engaged in collaboration, she observes, are making it up as they go along, rarely drawing upon expert knowledge that exists beyond their sector on collaboration and partnerships.

Collaboration has become a buzzword in the philanthropic sector, Knight and Hartnell (2011) affirm, and most writings reflect an inherent bias that collaboration is a good thing. Similarly, Hughes (2005) and Prager

(2011a) note that most literature on funder collaboration is uncritical, drawn as it is from case studies whose aim is to highlight foundation successes. While "evangelistic" promoters of foundation collaboration claim that long-term collaboration has the potential to achieve greater impact, Prager (2011a) considers that current data is insufficient to substantiate this claim.

Along with Prager (2011a), Knight and Hartnell (2011) attempt to reframe the discussion, contending that collaboration has no inherent value – that it can be useful in some situations and counterproductive in others. Following their lead, our starting assumption is that collaboration is a value-neutral proposition, neither inherently good nor detrimental. Along with this, we consider that collaboration's costs and benefits must be weighed for each situation and by each organization considering collaboration.

Given these limits in practice and analysis, it would appear that new contributions towards building a body of critical knowledge specific to collaboration practices in the foundation sector would potentially be welcomed. This literature review aims to contribute to this endeavour.

Focus areas in the literature

The literature on the subject of grantmaking foundations and collaboration shines a light on one or more of four different focus areas:

1) Collaboration solely *between* private and/or public grantmaking foundations;
2) Collaboration *with* other funders from the public and/or private sector;
3) Collaboration *with* non-funding partners from the public, private and nonprofit sector, including with grantees;
4) Foundation *support* for grantee collaboration and networks as an expression of foundation strategy, sometimes with the foundation playing an active convening role.

These focus areas are not mutually exclusive and tend to overlap, with many discussions of cross-sector collaborations or partnerships involving at their core a group of foundations working together, and other discussions looking at foundation collaboratives supporting grantee networks[3]. This blurring is particularly

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[3] The collective impact literature, discussed briefly at a few points during this review, is a particular source of the latter type of blending. Two thematic publication issues on collaboration in the foundation sector illustrate these overlaps more generally: the range of articles in *The Foundation Review* (vol 5, 1) and in *GMNsight* Issue 6 (http://www.gmnsight.org/category/issue-6-collaboration/) encompass the full range of focus areas described here.

evident between the first two focus areas named above – to the point that much of the literature referring to "funder" collaboration speaks primarily or even exclusively to foundation collaboration.

Initially, this literature review set out to look only at the first focus area, that of collaboration between grantmaking foundations. Because of the embeddedness and overlaps in the literature between different focus areas, this proved to be impractical and counterproductive. Among the rare Canadian perspectives to be found on the subject, some have called into question a singular focus on inter-foundation collaboration. Both Chouinard and Bird (cited in Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2012) consider that collaboration's greatest "value add" lies in relationships between foundations and other sectors (government, universities, private sector). Given these perspectives and given the overlaps in the literature, we chose to broaden the focus area somewhat – looking at funder collaboration that involves two or more foundations, but that can also include other funding partners.

How prevalent is collaboration among grantmaking foundations?

Various sector-sponsored studies have reported upon the prevalence of collaboration practices among foundations. In a survey conducted by the U.S.-based Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (McCray, 2014), 69% of 629 foundation respondents indicated having developed strategic relationships with other funders. In another survey conducted with UK foundations (DP Evaluation, 2012), 70% of 125 respondents indicated that they worked in collaboration with other funders and 67% indicated that they were involved in networks of funders. In contrast to this, the proportion of Philanthropic Foundations Canada survey respondents that indicated collaborating or planning to collaborate drops to 30% (Pearson, 2010). The conclusion that this suggests - that foundations in Canada may be less involved in collaboration than their counterparts in some other countries - receives some anecdotal support in another study. A research brief on the role of philanthropy in promoting urban sustainability in Canada notes a lack of vehicles for facilitating learning and knowledge transfer among funders interested or involved in this sector (Tomalty, 2013, 77).

Working with another sample of UK foundations, Prager's research (2011a) reported that 71% were already involved in collaboration(s), and that the 69 respondents reported at least 100 different current or recent collaborative enterprises. Prager's (2011a, 28-30) study also assessed foundations' direct experience and attitudes to collaboration with other sectors.

- Three quarters of respondents indicated direct experience or openness to collaborating with

government, with 43% reporting direct experience with this.

- Almost nine out of ten foundations indicated that they had or would be prepared to partner with voluntary sector organizations, although respondents expressed conflicting perspectives as to whether these relationships could be considered true collaborations or not, given the power differential.

- While most expressed openness to the idea of partnering with the private sector, only one third of responding foundations had any direct experience with this.

Seldon, Tierney and Fernando (2013) comment on these trends, noting that, anecdotally, many funders participate in collaborations with like-minded organisations. However, they are of the opinion but that few of these go beyond simple donor information-sharing and coordination. None of the figures from these surveys give any indication as to the breakdown of types, forms or purposes of collaboration discussed in sections II and III. Given the range of practices that the term "collaboration" encompasses, it is difficult to draw conclusions or to establish comparisons between the results of these different surveys, as we do not know whether the different studies were working with comparable definitions of collaboration.

II. Incentives and drivers of foundation collaboration

A practice closely aligned with non-traditional "strategic" philanthropy

While not a new practice (Buchanan, 2016), several commentators indicate that interest in foundation collaboration has grown in recent years (Prager, 2011a; James, 2013). This increased interest appears to have followed the increased prominence of strategic philanthropy, characterized as a shift away from a traditional responsive relationship with grantee communities towards a position that assumes more active responsibility for identifying and framing problems, as well as for designing strategies to address them (Patrizi, Thompson, Coffman and Beer, 2013). Reflecting this evolution in more recent years, one influential text by the Monitor Institute (Fulton, Kasper & Kibbe, 2010, 2&9) calls upon foundations to take up the challenge of coordination with other sectors:

> As the relevance and role of philanthropy has become a more urgent question over the past decade, newer actors and older institutions alike have been striving to be **more strategic** [emphasis added] in a

variety of ways [....] In the coming decade, [...] the most successful funders will combine long-standing instincts toward independent initiative and action with an emerging "network" mindset and toolkit that helps them see their work as part of a larger, diverse, and more powerful effort overall.

Foundation practice appears to be keeping up with this discourse, reflecting this association between a more strategic posture and an interest in collaboration. A study of 125 UK foundations (DP Evaluation, 2012a) explored the traits and practices of strategic philanthropy (called "Funder Plus" in the study), and found a clear connection between foundations' involvement in deeper, more high-engagement forms of collaboration and their embracing an agent of change role, according to which

> "a funder can and... should do everything in its power to achieve a particular social change [beyond providing funding and support to organizations], including ....becoming an actor working to achieve [its] objective through activities such as convening or lobbying" (DP Evaluation, 2012, 57)..

Alongside this embracing of a more strategic posture comes the recognition that foundations acting alone are unable to address complex social problems:

> Funders may not legally *need* to work with others, but if they hope to achieve significant impact on their communities—let alone on really wicked problems—they'll *have* to.
> Fulton, Kasper & Kibbe (2010, 8)

This recognition is by far the most frequently-named incentive in the literature for funders to collaborate (Huang & Seldon, 2015; James, 2013; Backer, 2004; Gibson, 2009; Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010; Mulgan, 2016). In many cases collaboration is perceived to be intrinsic to the solution, in the sense that different interventions from different organizations are required to deal with it. As Kania, Kramer and Russell (2014) and others such as Wei-Skillern, Silver and Heitz (2013) have pointed out, in taking up this kind of strategic change focus, foundations need to locate themselves as one player within a broader ecosystem of actors that extends well beyond their own actual or potential grantees, and engage with sectors of activity that may be new to them.

The notion of philanthropic "ecosystem" has been used by Martineau and Girard (2015), Lévesque (2015) and Fontan (2015) to convey similar ideas, as a way to situate organized philanthropy and philanthropic foundations in relation to the spheres of state, market and civil society. The ecosystem metaphor also captures the complex relations of interdependence linking actors from these different spheres. While, by their legal status and purpose grantmaking foundations are understood to be a part of the third sector, their hybrid identity connects them to all three sectors and allows them to be boundary-spanners (Fontan, 2015, 123-124).

This position that foundations occupy in relation to all three sectors suggests at least two different

directions or considerations for foundations when it comes to fulfilling their strategic ambitions and focusing their collaborative intentions. In keeping with their primary affiliation, many and perhaps most strategically-inclined grantmaking foundations continue to focus their attention and actions on the third sector, expanding beyond their traditional role of grant support for nonprofit organizations to play a more active ("Funder Plus") role in building fields[4] of civil society endeavour. The bulk of collaborations that are between foundations alone follow this first direction, directing their strategic attentions and focus towards the third sector.

In other instances, grantmaking foundations' systems change ambitions lead them to become sector agnostic, recognizing that a range of actors from all spheres (government, the private sector and civil society) are implicated in creating and perpetuating some of the messy, intractable problems that strategic philanthropy aims to take on, and that they also have a role to play in designing, implementing and scaling up the social innovations that can resolve these problems. Stepping fully into an agent of change identity and role, these foundations may choose to enter into cross-sector collaborations or partnerships - collaborations that themselves serve to catalyze or to structure change across institutional fields.

Other contextual drivers and enablers

Gibson (2009) and Hughes (2005) name a number of other contextual drivers and incentives that have also contributed to the collaboration trend. Amongst these, they note:
- An increase in the number and density of foundations with overlapping programmatic and geographic interests (Gibson, 2009);
- The influence of changes in fields of foundation investment, with shifts towards state and local arenas leading to collaborations between national and local funders (Hughes, 2005). Speaking more specifically about collaborations between national and local grantmaking foundations, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (2013) describes how formal fund matching requirements, such as those laid out by the U.S. federal Social Innovation Fund, can act to incentivize many of these types of collaborations between organizations acting on a different geographical scale.
- Next, Gibson (2009) notes the possible effects of a generational change, with younger donors

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[4] A field is defined by Bernholz, Seale and Wang (2009) as a multidisciplinary area of specialized practice that engages diverse stakeholders. Field-building, defined by Social Innovation Generation (2013) as actions to connect fragmented players in a given area of work to create an organized industry around an issue or challenge, is discussed by Bernholz et al. (2009) as a signature strategy of foundation philanthropy. Among its key attributes: a focus on multiple institutions and strategies to address an issue, efforts to increase issue attention and legitimacy, cross-disciplinary knowledge exchange, and incentives for collaboration that may not have happened organically.

approaching philanthropy with collaboration inscribed in their DNA.

- Finally, some have been influenced by broader calls for foundations to "walk their talk" and to practice what they have been asking their grantees to do (Gibson, 2009).

Mulgan (2016), for his part, describes the role played by technology in enabling collaboration, noting that various digital tools have emerged to support collaborative sharing and tracking of work, while others can be used to assess collaborative networks by revealing details of their actual structure (form). On the same note and with reference specifically to foundation collaboration, Kasper, Kimball, Lawrence and Philp (2013) offer a comprehensive review of technological tools that can enable new ways for funders to work together, supporting the phases of discovery (information-sharing and learning), action (strategy design, decision-making and implementation) and impact (assessing and communicating progress).

Purposes pursued by foundation collaborations

What do foundations hope to gain or achieve when they collaborate? Prager (2011a) groups the different purposes pursued by foundation collaborations into four areas; these are broad enough to capture all of the purpose variants named by the other sources consulted in the literature. These purpose groupings are:

1. Help make existing work more *efficient*, by:
    - doing more with less (Prager, 2011a), reducing the amount of overlap or redundancy in grantmaking (Morris, 2014, TPI, 2010); sharing costs (Prager, 2011a) and due diligence responsibilities (Morris, 2014);
    - providing longer-term funding security to grantees (Prager, 2011a; DP Evaluation, 2012), and simplifying life for grantee partner organizations who only have to deal with one body (James, 2013; Morris, 2014);
    - building on existing local momentum, in the case of national foundations partnering with local foundations (GEO, 2013).

2. Develop more *effective* interventions, by:
    - increasing the expertise base, sharing risk, increasing scope, scale and capacity (Proscio. 2010; Prager, 2011a; DP Evaluation, 2012, Chouinard in PFC, 2012, GEO, 2013);
    - framing comprehensive solutions (Prager, 2011a); achieving synergy among various types of resources (Proscio, 2010; GEO, 2013), identifying and filling gaps in strategy or activity (Morris,

2014; Tomalty, 2013).

This second cluster of purposes tends to be what the shorthand of "increasing impact" alludes to in the literature.

3. Provide opportunities for learning and knowledge development, either to explore new fields of interest, to discover new ways of doing things, or to contribute to and expand field-level knowledge (Prager, 2011a; Proscio, 2010; Morris, 2014; Tomalty, 2013).

4. Have a greater combined influence with key players, including in the policy arena (James, 2013; Morris, 2014, Proscio, 2010) and with other foundations (Tomalty, 2013).

These purposes can coexist within one collaborative effort. Indeed, not all foundations involved in one collaborative effort may prioritize its purposes in the same way, as each one may have distinct reasons for participating (Prager, 2011a).

Gibson (2009) and others (TPI, 2010, Marra, 2015) emphasize that funder collaboration's greatest added value – both to its participants and ultimately to grantees - lies in its non-granting aspects. These include access to pooled information and expertise, access to new networks and stakeholders (Prager, 2011a), the opportunity to develop non-grantmaking ("Funder Plus") strategies, the ability to leverage philanthropic resources to help strengthen a field's infrastructure, the collective capacity to influence and to increase public attention to critical issues, and the opportunity to level the playing field between smaller and larger foundations.

What difference does funder collaboration really make?

Does working in collaboration with each other achieve these purposes? Does it make funders more effective? This is the question that DP Evaluation (2012a, 101-102) asked as it examined a handful of examples of funder collaboration for evidence of this. The authors' conclusion is two-fold: on the one hand, collaboration can in fact can make funders more effective, as several examples point to results that would not have been achieved without collaboration. On the other hand, they conclude, collaboration in itself does not lead to greater *efficiency*: not only are there many situations where collaboration is not the appropriate option to pursue, even when it is, it is costly and difficult to get it right.

Appendix A profiles seven examples of foundations collaborations pulled from the literature. With each of these, case studies or evaluations have revealed results and synergistic effects that could not have been achieved by participating foundations acting on their own.

III. Collaboration between grantmakers: typologies of form and purpose

1. Types placed along a linear integration continuum

Most discussions describe a variety of forms or types of foundation collaboration, agreeing that these different forms exist to support different purposes. In most cases, the range of types described can be placed along a continuum of integration, ranging from the loosest to the tightest forms of alignment. As such, they appear to be variants of the classic collaboration continuum proposed by Mattesich and Monsey (1992):

Compete	Coexist	Communicate	Cooperate	Coordinate	Collaborate	Partnership
Organizations compete for resources, partners, public attention	Organizations have no systematic connection between each other	Organizations regularly network and share information with each other	Organizations cooperate on a project by project basis but remain autonomous	Organizations automatically adjust and align their work with one another	Organizations formally share decision-making resources and risks	Organizations fully integrate select programs, planning, funding

Figure 1: Continuum of alignment in collaboration efforts (from competition to partnership)

In the literature consulted for this review, no one typology proposed by a single source consulted manages to capture the entire range of types discussed across the literature. The table and Figure 2 that follow on pages 16-19 propose a slightly hybridized rendering of the most frequently-occurring types in the literature. Following the lead of DP Evaluation (2012a), the types fall into two major groupings:

1) With "light-touch" collaboration types, participants generally retain their full autonomy over strategies and granting procedures.
2) Deeper collaboration types require partners to establish joint objectives and ways of working. These correspond to the "high-stakes" forms of collaboration described by Seldon et al. (2013) and by Huang and Seldon (2015), involving a major commitment of time and money, the loss of unilateral decision-making control, and the assumption of shared reputational risks. These types tend to emerge in

response to more complex challenges, where the answers to problems are not known in advance, and where no single entity has the resources or the authority to bring about change. DP Evaluation (2012) notes that much of the discussion pertaining to success factors and challenges of funder collaborations (reprised in sections IV and V) appear in fact to be most relevant to these more highly aligned forms of collaboration.

In some discussions, the continuum is presented as a series of stages through which collaborators progress: the types at the right end of the spectrum represent more advanced and desirable forms of collaboration, as they are considered to present the greatest potential for impact (Morris, 2014, Huang & Seldon, 2015).

Others such as Prager (2011a) argue instead that the different types occupy distinctly different niches. Prager (2011a) and others (Richardson, 2012) note that the dynamic, shifting nature of funder collaborations does not follow a linear progression: many start off as one form and evolve towards another one in response to opportunity, the arrival or departure of key figures, or other factors. Finally, they note, many collaborations in the real world do not correspond to one single type, instead taking on hybrid forms. This is consistent with the defining attributes of interorganizational collaboration more broadly; it is developmental in nature (moving through different stages) and entails cycles of inquiry and action (Woodland and Hutton, 2012).

2. A two-dimensional variant on the integration continuum

Pond and Bearman (2010) propose a somewhat different two-dimensional framework for classifying forms of collaboration. Rather than organize types along a linear continuum of integration, they split the dimensions of *scope of work* (how much an organization's staff, time and resources is bound up in the endeavour) and *intensity* (the investment, risk and potential reward of the alliance), and plot them along two axes. This two-dimensional framework has the advantage of catching up some forms of collaboration that may not easily be represented in the linear continuum. Figure 3 on page 20 presents an attempt to plot the types identified in Figure 2 within this framework, and goes further to suggest how a few Canadian examples might be located within it.

3. A third variant: typology of integration and of public sector involvement or engagement

The continuum represented in Figure 2 depicts types of collaboration amongst foundations alone. However,

foundations do not act – whether it be alone or together - in a social and political void. The deeper forms of collaboration, in particular, seek in one way or another to interact with and to influence systems. As Mulgan (2016) asserts, "The best large scale examples of collaboration – with explicit targets, large scale public engagement, and commitments from many agencies – have been associated with governments rather than private foundations."

An acknowledgement of this can be found in the literature on foundations' cross-sector collaboration, which includes a number of discussions of foundation partnerships with government[5]. Leat's (2009) discussion of foundations' engagement in cross-sector partnerships uses a typology of integration that is similar to the one reproduced in Figure 2, suggesting that this typology can be equally applicable to cross-sector relationships involving foundations, government and business.

Mulgan (2016) suggests a lens for analysis that explicitly brings these other players into the equation, proposing that the integration continuum intersect with a second axis representing the level of government involvement in these collaborations. The resulting representation in Figure 4 on page 21 is that of a roughly wedge-shaped graphic; while "light-touch" forms of foundation collaboration may have little need to engage with government, deeper forms are much more likely to seek to do this – and indeed may develop under the leadership of government actors.

With reference to the discussion in the previous section that seeks to locate foundations within a broader ecosystem, it should eventually be possible to expand upon this last two-sector typology to encompass a range of collaborative relationships with a broader matrix of actors from the market sector and civil society. While this falls beyond the scope of the current literature review that has opted to focus primarily on inter-foundation collaboration, a second stage of research that tackles foundations' engagement in cross-sector collaborations could attempt to construct new typologies that capture this range.

A note on collective impact and funder collaboration

The term "collective impact" has emerged in the past five years[6] to describe and promote a certain type of collaborative response designed to address complex problems. However, along with the rapid uptake and

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[5] These include Abramson, Soskis & Toepler (2012a & b), Ferris & Williams (2012), GrantCraft (2010), Rader (2010), and Person, Strong, Furgeson & Berk (2009).

[6] In the wake of a series of influential articles introducing the framework: Kania & Kramer (2011), Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, 2012; Turner, Merchant, Kania & Martin, 2012; Kania & Kramer, 2012.

spread of the concepts associated with the collective impact framework have come inevitable ambiguities; some have noted that the term has become a buzzword used to describe collaborations of all sorts (Kania, Hanleybrown & Juster, 2014). In response to this, Weaver (2014) emphasizes that the collective impact framework is not suited to every collaborative effort; it is demanding, requires a long time commitment and a high degree of coordination and adequate resources.

These ambiguities are also present in the literature on funder collaboration, which uses the term collective impact to describe several experiences of high-alignment collaboration[7]. For the purposes of clarity, in this literature review we attempt to use the term collective impact in ways that are consistent with its more restrictive applications; here we use it to describe high-alignment formal strategic partnerships, that are not made of funders primarily but of a range of stakeholders, including grantees, aimed at achieving specific goals and objectives in a defined area of need (Wiley, Bierly, Reeve & Smith, 2013, 89). For this reason, we do not include collective impact as a distinct type in the Figure 2 typology that looks only at collaboration between foundations. However, it does conceivably have its place in the two-dimensional typology of cross-sector collaboration reproduced in Figure 4.

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[7] See, for instance, Reid (2014), McKnight & Irvine (2014), Wiley et al. (2013), Jordan & Loehrke (2016), Whitehead & Sotsky (2013).

Table 2. Forms of foundation collaboration by degree of integration (see also Figure 2)

"Light touch" forms of collaboration			
Form and purposes	Characteristics/features of form	Open to	Notes
Information or knowledge exchange: purpose is to provide ongoing venues for funders to exchange information, discuss common interests and learn about issues of common relevance.	Membership tends to be large, inclusive and fluid (network model). Often nested within larger organizations. Can serve as "dating agencies" leading to other forms of collaboration (DP Evaluation)	Most funders can cooperate at this level. - requires little financial investment and few if any shifts to funders' individual strategies..	Type proposed by Hamilton (2002), with similar variants proposed by Prager (2011), Pftizer & Stamp (2010), DP Evaluation (2012), Marra (2015) and Huang & Seldon (2015).
Co-learning and knowledge production: purpose is to facilitate funders' ongoing engagement and exploration around a defined issue or problem, usually with the goal of developing a common intellectual framework, a shared approach or agenda, and/or positioning an issue differently in the foundation world. Also assists in identifying emerging issues and strategic opportunities. Can involve jointly commissioned research.	Membership requirements vary from open to restricted. Often nested within larger organizations.	As above: Many funders can cooperate at this level.	Type proposed by Hamilton (2002) and Gibson (2009). For others (see above), the information exchange type encompasses this purpose as well.
Informal alignment, coordination, strategic co-funding: purpose is to align different foundations' resources within a common area of activity. Activity focus information sharing with a view to facilitate aligned action Rationale might be to avoid duplication, increase coverage, ensure complementary support	Selective membership, with participation generally tied to the expectation of collaborative grantmaking. Each partner retains ownership of its individual strategies and autonomy over its own grantmaking activity (process). Typically no operational support	Possible for many funders – may be difficult for those with purely reactive (responsive) funding models, where the ability to strategically align would be limited. Such aligned efforts typically require more of a funder's time, greater flexibility from its board and staff, and in many cases larger financial investments. (Marra, 2015)	Type proposed by Hamilton (2002), with similar variants proposed by Gibson (2009), DP Evaluation (2012), Gair (2012), Morris (2014), Huang & Seldon (2015), Marra (2015),
Formal alignment, coordination, strategic co-funding: purpose is to align	Selective membership, with participation generally tied to the		

"Light touch" forms of collaboration			
Form and purposes	**Characteristics/features of form**	**Open to**	**Notes**
different foundations' resources around a shared strategy. Rationale might be to avoid duplication, increase coverage, ensure complementary support	expectation of collaborative grantmaking. Each partner retains ownership of its individual strategies and autonomy over its own grantmaking activity (process). Gradations of formality within this type, ranging from no to some operational support. Some joint decision-making and some established rules for governance and contribution		
Coinvest in an existing entity/ initiative, where one funder raises money from other donors to support a specific initiative or organization. A variant of this is **Fund the funder,** where a group of funders invest in another funder with strong expertise in a content area.	Coinvest: To reduce transaction costs, reporting to donors is often done jointly, coordinated by the lead funder Fund the funder: re-granting funder has full decision-making authority Both forms require some formal rules for contribution, reporting and distribution of decision-making between lead funder and contributing funders	Participants (contributing funders) may be funders who do not wish to or are unable to devote resources to program or strategy development in a particular area	Both types proposed by Huang & Seldon (2015). Note that Gibson (2009) does not consider these types to be true collaboration, as they refer to the initiative of one funder who mobilizes other to support the initiative that it has defined.

Deeper/"high stakes" forms of collaboration			
Purposes	**Characteristics/features of form**	**Open to**	**Notes**
Joint advocacy: purpose is to plan, coordinate and conduct direct policy	Not described. Presumably a coalition model where members	Those with advocacy and coordination capacity in a high-	Type proposed by DP Evaluation (2012) and Prager (2011a).

Deeper/"high stakes" forms of collaboration			
Purposes	Characteristics/features of form	Open to	Notes
advocacy as foundations (as opposed to through funded grantees), in order to influence public attitudes and debate about a policy issue of concern.	commit to an agreed-on purpose and shared decision making to influence an external institution or target, while each member organization maintains its own autonomy	trust environment with a common goal	
Pooled funding: purpose is to create a funding pool from multiple sources in order to re-grant for a given area/sector/set of issues	Money is typically granted to, held and re-granted by the collaborative entity. The decision-making process is specified, although processes vary widely. In some cases, the whole collaborative makes decisions, while in others grant-making is delegated to an intermediary. Administrative and governance structures also vary widely from the virtual to the highly formalised.	Those who wish to extend their capacity without necessarily creating a new entity. Requires that participants give up a greater degree of control over their own funds. Participants share credit, blame, accountability, risk and grantees (Proscio. 2010)	Type proposed by Hamilton (2002), Gibson (2009), Gair (2012), DP Evaluation (2012), Proscio (2010).
Joint ventures: creation of a new entity, either for the purpose of re-granting or of operating particular projects. Usually emerge out of perceived void in policy and/or practice, to raise the profile of an issue, or to develop new ideas.	Often interdisciplinary or cross-sectoral boundaries. May evolve into more traditional organisations over time.	Those who are open to a wholesale sharing of strategy and process	Blend of type proposed by Hamilton (2002) and by DP Evaluation (2012), with variant proposed by Huang & Seldon (2015).

Purposes and forms of foundation collaboration according to degree of integration

Figure 2: Purposes and forms of foundation collaboration according to degree of integration

Purposes and forms of foundation collaboration according to the Pond & Bearman framework
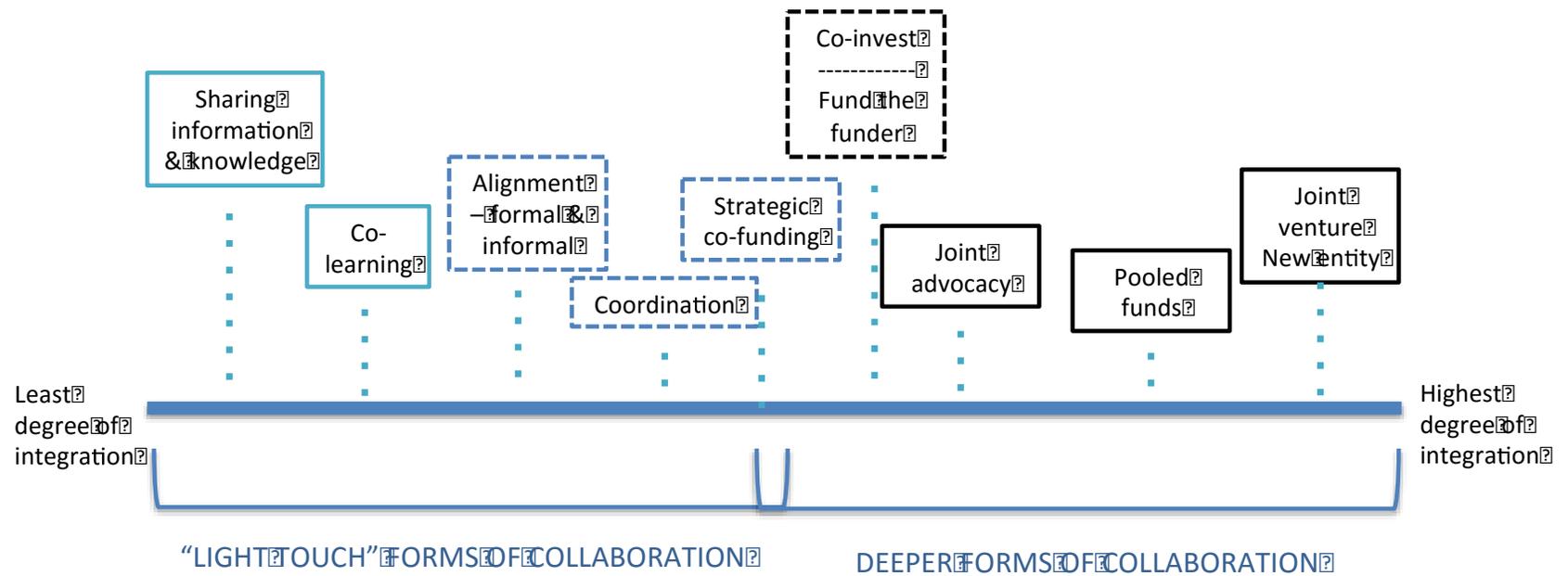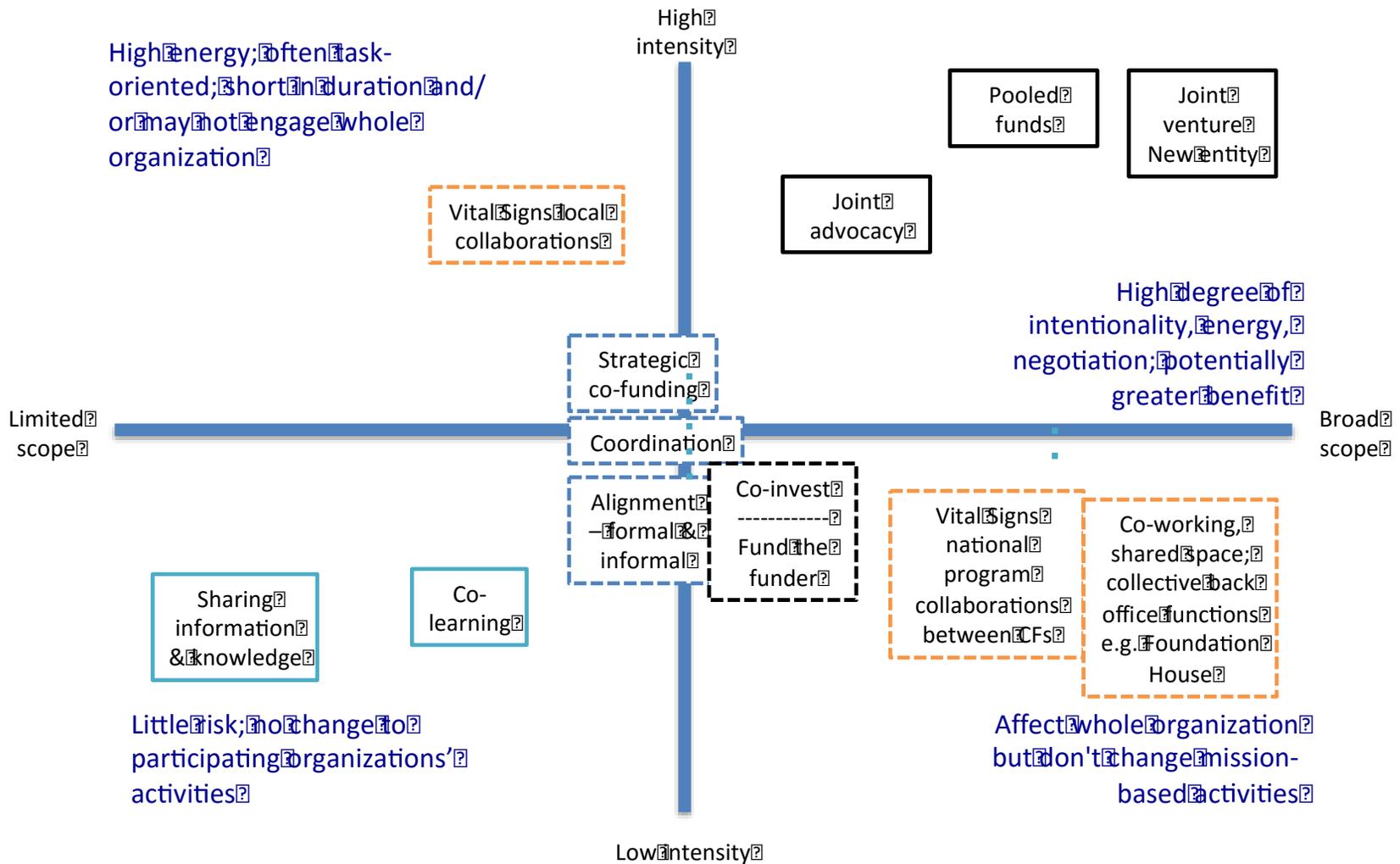

Figure 3: Purposes and forms of foundation collaboration according to the Pond & Bearman framework

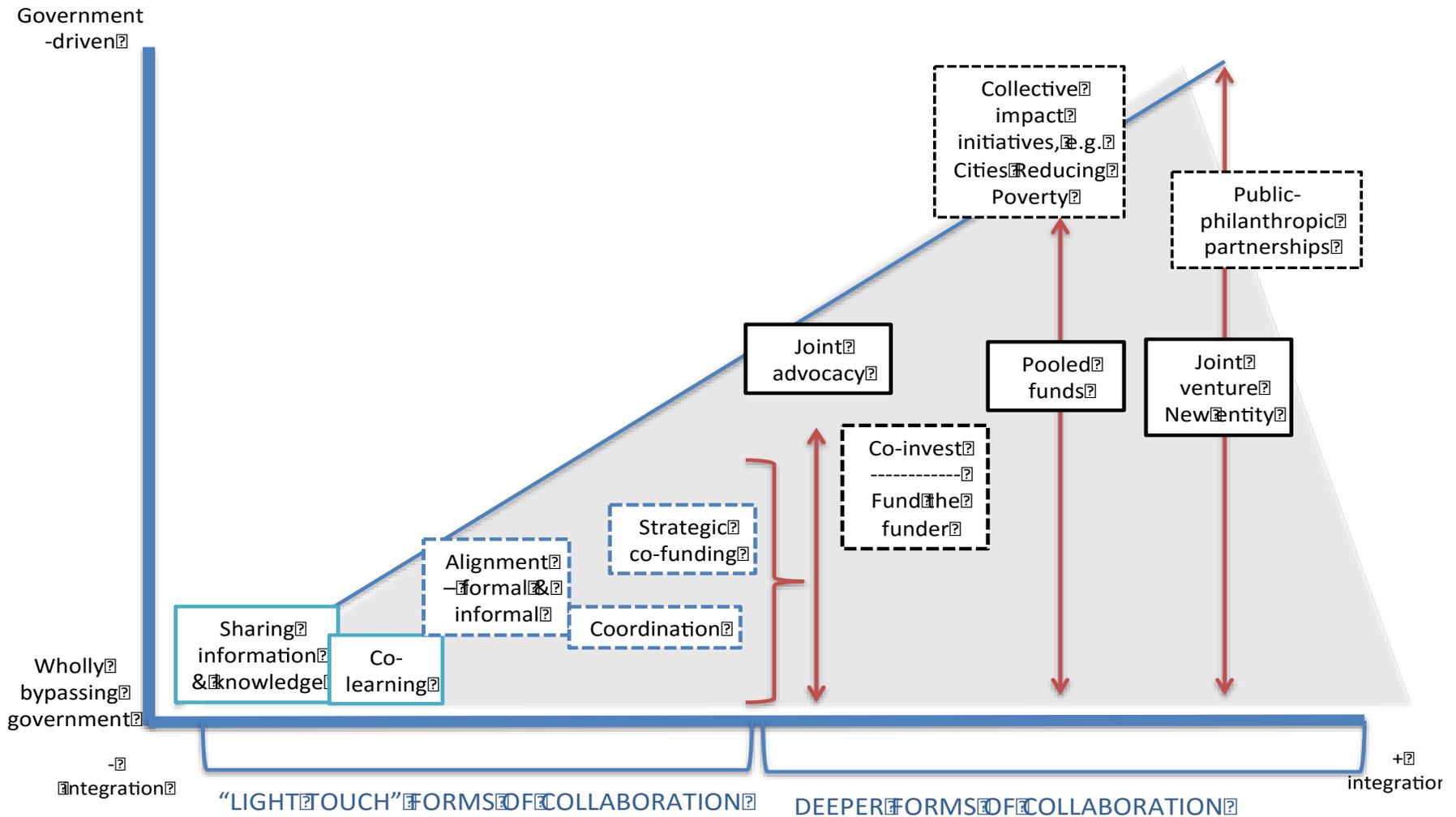# Purposes and forms of foundation collaboration according to degree of integration and interaction with government

Figure 4: Purposes and forms of foundation collaboration according to degree of integration and interaction with government

IV. A challenging and counter-normative practice

Despite increased attention to foundation collaboration, extensive discussions in the literature and its reported prevalence in practice, many still describe collaboration among grantmaking foundations (and between grantmaking foundations and other funders) as a counter-normative practice. Based on their own experience and observations, a number of sector commentators express reserves as to the true prevalence of collaborative practices among foundations, considering that the practice lags well behind the rhetoric (James, 2013; Kabel, 2016; Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010; Kramer, 2014; Hughes, 2005). As James (2013) contends, in reality many foundations remain deeply ambivalent about funder collaboration.

Why might this be the case? Two reasons are discussed in the literature. First, collaboration is costly in terms of time, staff effort and organizational support (Gibson, 2009; Prager, 2011a; Morris, 2014) and should not be embarked upon lightly (Knight & Hartnell, 2011). It often requires more time, effort and resources than it takes to execute programs in isolation (Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010).

Collaboration is also difficult at the best of times: it requires knowledge and respect of one's partners' priorities, expertise and perspectives and a readiness to adapt and compromise (Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010). The need to achieve consensus among participants as well as buy-in from within each organization's senior leadership can significantly slow the pace of work, with consequences for relations with external partners (James, 2013; Morris, 2014; Wiley et al., 2013).

Second, collaboration runs contrary to natural impulses:

> Collaboration has been defined as an unnatural act between non-consenting adults. We all say we want to collaborate, but what we really mean is that we want to continue doing things as we have always done them while others change to fit what we are doing.
>
> Jocelyn Elders (cited in Backer, 2004, 9)

It challenges foundations' attachment to autonomy and to their traditional ways of working (Gibson, 2009; Leat, 2009). It requires of its partners that they compromise and relinquish some control over decision-making (Gibson, 2009; Prager, 2011a; Morris. 2014). The more demanding forms of collaboration entail a loss of participating foundations' authority, brand identity, and their ability to leave their stamp on ideas and grant transactions (Proscio, 2010, 3).

The deeper forms of collaboration also challenge participating organizations to adapt their own systems and procedures. Invariably these requirements run up against the different cultures, institutional norms, accountability structures and constituencies of participating organizations (Gibson, 2009, Morris, 2014; Kabel, 2016).

Cultural barriers

Compounding this, Kramer (2014) speaks of a larger cultural issue in the foundation world – the presence of a mindset that looks for a precise accounting of benefits to be gained from each action. It is for this reason, he believes, that foundations may be reluctant to make grants outside their defined strategies and specified theories of change, even if that means losing opportunities to collaborate.

Knight and Hartnell (2011) implicitly acknowledge these cultural considerations with the three-level matrix that they propose for assessing the costs and benefits of a given collaboration:

- individual level: how collaboration impinges upon or facilitates one's own work as a professional or trustee;
- organizational level: how collaboration enhances or distorts the foundation's work;
- field level: impact on the problem to be solved.

The authors consider that foundations will be more inclined to agree to collaborate if individual and/or organizational benefits are to be gained, and less inclined if the only benefits in sight are at the field level. This, Kramer (2014) argues, is precisely the problem. For him, a mindset of diffuse reciprocity – a willingness to give while accepting that benefits may accrue to the group rather than to the individual foundation -- is a precondition to collaboration within the sector.

Based on their study of a number of collaborative endeavours, Wei-Skillern and Silver (2013) convey a similar set of ideas about the "network mindset" as a precondition to effective collaboration:

- Collaboration requires prioritizing the shared goal or mission above any single organization's considerations;
- Those who embrace the collaborative mindset see their organizations as one part of a larger web of activity directed toward a shared goal or mission, not the hub of the action;
- It is far more important to focus on cultivating trust and seeking value alignment than on establishing formal control mechanisms, such as contracts or accountability systems;

- Network leaders exhibit a strong norm of humility above all else, sharing credit and foregoing opportunities for individual advancement and institutional growth and brand building. As Bartczak (2015) points out, this means that grantmakers, who are often accustomed to being the strongest presence in the room or at the table, work alongside their peers as equals and willingly take a backseat when others are in a better position to lead.

Resource model barriers

The discourse of collaboration also features in discussions of place-based strategic philanthropy[8] (Murdoch, 2007), a niche in which community foundations and United Ways occupy a prominent place. However, for these types of grantmaking foundations, existing impediments to collaboration can be amplified. As public charities, community foundations and United Ways are both grantmakers and fundraisers, typically drawing upon a broad base of donors in order to channel support to the community (Graddy & Morgan, 2006; Ostrower, 2007). As competition has increased in the fundraising landscape, several observers have noted how these community-based grantmaking organizations have sought to position or to brand themselves in ways that give them a comparative advantage with donors (Paarlberg & Meinhold, 2012, Graddy & Morgan, 2006, Bernholz, Fulton & Kasper, 2005). In particular, community foundations have been invited to take up "community leadership" roles[9] as a way to solidify this comparative advantage (Hamilton, Parzen & Brown, 2004).

A key tension lies at the heart of this embracing of a community leadership role: while it may ultimately be motivated by a desire to enhance the community foundation's brand, community foundations cannot exercise these convening and partnering leadership roles without collaborating with other change agents in the community (Fulton and Blau, 2005). Speaking about place-based foundations and community leadership Auspos et al. (2009, 144) echo the points made above in the broader literature about foundation collaboration:

> (P)artnerships of any kind require giving up exclusive control, sharing credit for the work, and staying strategically in the background as needed. These practices may work against the grain of any single institution's advancement agenda — and foundations are no exception.

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[8] With this current, foundations that have a stake in "place" engage in multidimensional and collaborative approaches that attempt to address the underlying causes of complex problems that are felt within local communities, seeking improvement in the areas of local economic development, community revitalization, educational outcomes and social cohesion

[9] These roles are described in greater detail in a case study within this research cluster looking at the Vital Signs program.

In addition, the nature of existing relationships and networks at the community level affect the space that exists for a foundation to carve out is own distinctive niche. In this last area, the literature finds that community foundations' identification with community leadership roles is not without tension and ambiguity. As one illustration, for decades community foundations and United Way organizations have existed in close proximity to each other in the same local communities (Ragey, Masaoka & Peters, 2005). Since the 1990s, a changing philanthropic landscape has led to an ever-greater convergence in terms of grantmaking focus, donor base and competing claims on the position of community leadership. While Ragey et al.'s (2005) study examines these relationships in the U.S., as early as 1996, the then-director of Community Foundations of Canada recognized a similar ambiguity in the relationship between community foundations and United Way organizations in Canada (Patten, 1996).

Collaboration is not a panacea

Finally, as some commentators argue, collaboration is not always the most appropriate strategy; there are areas where foundations function best when working alone.

This may be the case when dealing with potentially controversial issues, where it can be easier for one funder acting alone to take risks (DP Evaluation, 2012). The push for consensus that occurs within collaborations can squeeze out the best thinking, which is based upon vigorous, robust debate, and drive towards simpler, lowest-common-denominator resolutions (Mulgan, 2016).

Lastly, because collaboration often entails a slower pace of work, it is not always a productive option when radical innovation in required (Mulgan, 2016), or when an organization needs to be able to make fast and flexible funding decisions to take advantage of windows of opportunity and influence.

V. Conditions and factors for successful collaboration

Almost all of the discussions of foundation collaboration consulted conclude that the higher-engagement types are difficult to do well, and offer some considerations as to conditions or factors for achieving success in collaborative undertakings. On this topic, there is strong consistency of themes across the literature; these have been clustered under four headings.

To recall, however, collaboration between foundations is a dynamic and changing process, embracing hybrid forms and evolving in purpose, strategy and composition. Given the dynamic and developmental nature of collaborative endeavours, it should be noted that certain conditions or factors named in the literature may be appropriate or even critical to some stages and not to others. While this was largely absent from the literature consulted for this review, a more complex reading of the phenomenon of foundation collaboration would seek to locate these different success factors with regards to the different developmental stages[10].

1. Preconditions – collaboration fit and organizational readiness to collaborate

Funder collaboration is a strategic choice that individual foundations should consider based on fit (their own predisposition and readiness), and based on the collaboration's potential relevance to advancing their own aims. Prager (2011a) proposes a decision-making matrix based on several of the factors outlined under this heading. This is reproduced in Appendix B.

A first critical precondition to developing collaboration is foundations' openness to collaborating and appreciation of its value (Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010). Prager (2011a) and DP Evaluation (2012) speak of an organizational predisposition -- a tendency to see collaboration either as a good thing in and of itself, or as an action to engage in based on a strategic reading of one's environment. They note as well that organizations are more likely to have this predisposition if they have a prior history of collaboration.

Next, Backer (2004), Huang and Seldon (2015) and others[11] emphasize that foundations should actively seek to determine whether collaboration is the right fit for helping them to achieve one or more of their objectives or strategies. The choice to engage in collaboration should always be a carefully considered one, and the costs and benefits should be weighed. On this note, Knight & Hartnell (2011) propose three questions to consider before getting involved in collaboration:
1. Could you achieve the desired impact working on your own?
2. Is collaboration an essential element of what you want to achieve?
3. If you are looking for impact in the field and collaboration isn't essential to achieving it, is

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[10] Some practitioner resources in the field of community change and collective impact field engage with the developmental stages of collaboration and present the tasks and challenges associated with each stage; examples can be found at at tamarackcci.ca and tamarackcommunity.ca

[11] Gair, 2012; Knight & Hartnell, 2011; DP Evaluation, 2012; Prager, 2011a; Parker, 2010

collaboration likely to be worth it, given the inevitable costs particularly in terms of time and energy?

In a similar vein, several commentators[12] advise foundations that are considering collaboration to do a strategic reading of the landscape, in order to assess how the collaboration fits with the overall philanthropic and community environment of issues and players, and to clearly define the role that their organization can play in a collaborative effort.

Several reflections on funder collaboration experiences[13] have noted that the buy-in of a foundation's senior leadership is crucial to its ability to engage successfully in collaboration. Some reviews go even further, noting that the direct involvement of participating foundations' senior executives was what made the collaborative successful (Parker, 2010; Proscio, 2010). For example, during its first ten to twelve years, the National Community Development Initiative (or NCDI, now Living Cities[14]) had the rule that foundation principals had to be around the table. This gave each participating foundation the latitude to improvise, stretch, compromise and innovate (Proscio, 2010).

Mulgan (2016) contends that in order for collaborative efforts to achieve lasting impact, much deeper-rooted habits of collaboration mist be seeded within and between participating organizations. These habits tend to have the greatest effect when they are given enough time to become embedded in everyday cultures, and when they are reinforced by leadership and incentive systems.

Bartczak (2015) and others (Backer, 2004; Prager, 2011a) make a similar point, arguing that philanthropic organizations that engage in collaboration also need to adapt their internal practices and processes to support collaboration. These adaptations include:
- providing the resources needed to engage in collaboration and covering the costs related to a collaborative's cycle of inquiry and action;
- developing formal mechanisms that help to maintain collaboration as an organizational priority so that it does not get lost in the pressures of the day-to-day demands.

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[12] Backer, 2004; Bartczak, 2015, Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014, Parker, 2010

[13] Seldon et al, 2013: Huang & Seldon, 2015; Bartczak, 2015; James, 2013; Prager, 2011; Parker, 2010; Proscio, 2010

[14] profiled in Appendix A

2. *Appropriate and aligned purpose and partners*

> It is vital to be very clear why you are collaborating, what the added value is meant to be and how you expect that to be realised. Once the core purpose has been rigorously thought through, the type of funder collaboration can be selected accordingly.
> James, 2013

From the literature, there is strong agreement that the *sine qua non* of collaboration is clarity of shared purpose or goals[15].   Reflecting on the Packard Foundation's experiences with "high stakes" collaborations, Huang and Seldon (2015) note that it is a time-intensive process to reach this, often requiring external research and a clear process for discussion.

These goals need to be realistic, tempering ambition with humility[16]. In James' (2013) account of a foundation collaborative operating in Africa, the partners failed to achieve this balance and lost a sense of what was realistically achievable. As a consequence, he notes, the project set itself a degree of difficulty that was almost bound to fail.

Sources in the literature present varying perspectives regarding the partners to choose for a collaborative effort. A few authors speak to the fundamental importance of knowing one's partners and of seeking out cultural fit or alignment[17]. Others speak of the value that a diverse group of partners brings to collaborative efforts[18].

These are not necessarily conflicting perspectives. For many collaborations, a diversity of form, capacity, and geographical base of partners can suit the effort's needs and purposes. At the same time, a certain degree of alignment among partners around interests, worldview and values is needed in order to facilitate agreement on core issues.

Several authors (Prager, 2011a; Proscio, 2010; Parker. 2010) speak specifically to the importance of going beyond collaboration only between foundations to engage partners across sectors. Proscio (2010, 5-7) notes that because the NCDI was not solely a philanthropic alliance, "it created a rare opportunity for a cross-sector conversation... making possible a strategic approach to capital that

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[15] Mendes Campos, 2015: Marra, 2015: Huang & Seldon, 2015; Backer, 2004; Gibson 2009; Gair, 2012; Kabel, 2016; Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010; TPI, 2010. GEO, 2013, Pärker, 2010, Proscio, 2010

[16] Huang & Seldon, 2015; James, 2013; Prager, 2011a,; Mulgan, 2016

[17] Mulgan, 2016; James, 2013; Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014; Huang & Seldon, 2015.

[18] TPI, 2010; Prager, 2011a, Proscio, 2010, Parker, 2010, Vair, 2011

would not have been available to either type [foundations and businesses] acting separately".

This last point is consistent with the observation in an earlier section of fluid and shifting sectoral boundaries for foundation collaborations (between foundations only, between foundations and actors from other sectors), and what appears to be an emerging recognition among foundations that cross-sector collaborations have greater capacity to engage systems change.

3. *Structure, process and resources*

Developing a structure that is appropriate to purpose also emerges in the literature as a particularly critical factor for collaboration success[19]. The notion of structure refers in particular to a clear process for decision-making as well as delineated roles and responsibilities for collaborative members. It is important that this structure be co-designed by all of the partners involved, to ensure their buy-in as well as the relevance and groundedness of the initiative (GEO, 2013). Some accounts and reflections on experiences involving higher-integration (deeper) forms of collaboration report that formal agreements have helped to anchor these elements (James, 2013; Veir, 2011; Backer, 2004).

At the same time, another recurring theme In the literature is the importance of flexibility[20]. The notion of flexibility refers variously to three elements:
- inclusion and the capacity to respect differences (TPI, 2010, DP Evaluation, 2012);
- the adaptive capacity to learn and make adjustments over time (Seldon et al. 2013);
- a flexibility in expectations and/or requirements that allows partners to respond differently to opportunities (Putnam-Walkerly, 2015).

Proscio's (2010) account of the Living Cities collaborative offers an example of the ways in which a structure can evolve dramatically over the years of an initiative's existence. During the first twelve years of the NCDI initiative, partners adhered to an informal collaborative model, delegating administration and implementation to intermediary organizations. As the initiative entered a new phase of its existence, embracing a broader, more comprehensive mission and a new name, the group's level of involvement in shaping and assessing the program deepened tremendously: a new

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[19] Marra, 2015: Seldon et al, 2013; Backer, 2004; Gibson 2009; Gair, 2012; James, 2013; Knight & Hartnell, 2011; DP Evaluation, 2012; Veir, 2011, Parker, 2010
[20] Mendes Campos, 2015: Huang & Seldon, 2015; Seldon et al, 2013; Putnam-Walkerly, 2015; Kabel, 2016; Brodhead, 2012; TPI, 2010; Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010; DP Evaluation, 2012; Veir, 2011

staffed entity was created, and participating foundations' and other partners' involvement in governance and policy operations increased.

Numerous authors also underscore the importance of committing adequate resources to the collaboration; these may vary as the collaboration makes different demands at different points in time. Above all else, an adequate commitment of time is needed from all partners, without which many of the other conditions for success can founder. Various reflections and accounts of more intensive collaborative experiences[21] consider that dedicated coordination or administrative staff can also be a critical investment.

Several discussions emphasize the importance of putting the mechanisms in place that can support evaluation, learning and adaptation[22]. These are what allow the collaboration to assess its progress and help individual foundations to continue to justify their investment.

Finally, several sources mention the importance of planning around an exit strategy[23]. The great majority of the funder collaboratives discussed in the literature appear to have had a time-bound existence; this has made it easier to obtain and keep participants' commitment.

4. Managing the human dimensions

A third decisive factor named in almost all discussions is the importance of developing strong working relationships with partners[24]. With some collaborative experiences, pre-existing productive personal relationships have proven to be critical (Irie, 2015; Seldon et al. 2013).

Trust is described by all as the interpersonal linchpin that allows collaborative efforts to thrive ... or that causes them to fail. Strong and frequent communication is needed to support this[25]. A few authors (Mulgan, 2016; Brodhead in PFC, 2012; Prager, 2010; Veir, 2011) make reference to the

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[21] DP Evaluation, 2012, Prager, 2011a, Veir, 2011, Putnam-Russell and Walkerly, 2014

[22] Mendes Campos, 2015; Huang & Seldon, 2015; Seldon et al. 2013, Backer, 2004; Gair, 2012; Prager, 2011a; Pfitzer & Stamp, 2010; Parker, 2010.

[23] Huang & Seldon, 2015; Backer, 2004; Brodhead in PFC, 2012; DP Evaluation, 2012; GEO, 2013; Parker, 2010.

[24] Mendes Campos, 2015, Irie, 2015; Seldon et al, 2013; James, 2013; Bartczak, 2015; Gibson, 2009; Gair, 2012; Prager, 2011a; TPI, 2010; Kabel, 2016; Veir, 2011; Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014; GEO, 2013; Parker, 2010.

[25] Mendes Campos, 2015; Marra, 2015; Huang & Seldon, 2015; James, 2013; Putnam-Walkerly, 2015; Brodhead in PFC, 2012; Prager, 2011; Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014.

"systems leadership" skills required both to cultivate and tend to these relationships, and to coax along the practices of alignment amongst partners.

Mentioned earlier amongst the key challenges facing funder collaborations, the willingness on the part of individual organizations to cede control comes up frequently as a requirement of the deeper forms of collaboration (James, 2013, Bartczak, 2015, Wei-Skillern & Silver, 2013; Gibson cited in PFC, 2012).

James' (2013) case study, in particular, describes how this willingness to compromise and to give up individual autonomy and recognition came about as levels of trust developed between foundation partners. As this progressed, each of the organizations made considerable compromises to make the collaboration work, both around priority focus areas as well as grant management and reporting systems.

V. Questioning the assumptions: cautions about foundation collaboration

A few commentators invite a more sober reflection on the subject of foundations and collaboration. In particular, Mulgan (2016) contends that collaborations between foundations amplify the challenges of democracy that private philanthropy already poses.

Foundations' unique role with regards to other social sectors has been the subject of numerous discussions in the broader literature. Private foundations' freedom from the constraints of state and market accountability affords them the autonomy to take the kind of risks and to act upon the kind of longer time horizon that is needed to experiment and develop ways to address complex and often intractable problems. As Anheier and Leat (2006) and Reich (2013) contend, foundations can leverage this autonomy in order to foster social innovation, to support the scaling up and out of promising practices, and to extend their influence towards policy change in support of their goals.

This unique position gives foundations a potential influence that extends beyond their proportionate weight in the funding universe. While the annual amount that foundations grant is only a fraction of what individual Canadians give, sector commentators consider that "their institutional status enables them to act strategically and for the long term in ways that most individual Canadian donors cannot or do not" (Imagine Canada & Philanthropic Foundations of Canada, 2014, 1). The collective assets of grantmaking foundations also represent only a fraction of state resources (Fontan, 2015, 115). Rather

than try to substitute for the role of the state in a context marked by decades of New Public Management reforms, in light of currently dominant trends within philanthropy, most foundations are likely to consider that their best bet once again is to leverage their autonomy to play a role that is distinct from that of the state (Healy & Donnelly-Cox, 2016). There is of course no consensus on what this role should be, but much of the discourse of strategic philanthropy supports some version of catalyzing, nurturing and supporting the scaling up of social innovation (Kasper & Marcoux, 2014).

However, the challenge of accountability is often raised in connection with this unique role and potential influence. As Edwards (2011) sums it up, philanthropy's greatest strength -- its independence and freedom to focus on long-term prospects and risky or unpopular options -- is also its greatest weakness, for there is nothing to hold it accountable to the public interest with regards to the priorities and strategies that it pursues. The accountability deficit that characterizes philanthropy becomes more acute when large volumes of resources are spent on controversial issues or techniques and allow an undue influence on public policy (Edwards, 2011; Skloot, 2011).

In this context, the first democratic challenge raised by Mulgan (2016) has to do with private philanthropy's legitimate role in shaping or driving collaborative efforts to address complex social problems. Mulgan notes that some collaborative efforts seek to circumvent the authority invested in the appropriate level of government, claiming a competing legitimacy to that of elected officials. Tensions and problems can result when publicly unaccountable philanthropic foundations are the driving force behind these collaborations.

In the United States and internationally, some foundations have worked together to wield collective influence on policy in ways that have drawn sharp criticism. As an example, Reckhow and Snyder (2014) document the ways in which the coordinated grantmaking of a group of U.S. foundations has worked to advance an educational reform policy agenda that institutionalizes the place of "jurisdictional challengers" to the public education system.

As Buchanan (2016, 9) observes, concerns about foundations' role in policy debates are not new, but they appear to be on the upswing, at least in the U.S. In Canada, these debates appear to be less developed[26]; indeed, the role played by Canadian grantmaking foundations in the public policy arena

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[26] with a few exceptions: Lefèvre (2015) discusses a Canadian angle to the challenges that philanthropic money may pose to democracy; the model of public-philanthropic partnership piloted in Québec by the Chagnon Foundation was

is less researched and less well known (Elson & Hall, 2016). However, these debates may yet emerge if this role comes to greater prominence.

Recent research (Elson & Hall, 2016, 28) aims to begin to fill this knowledge gap, discovering that leading grantmaking foundations in Canada engage in the policy influence process in both direct and indirect ways, both by leveraging their own experience, knowledge and reputation to weigh in to policy debates, and by supporting grant recipients that actively engage in the public policy process. Their findings are consistent with Pittam's (2013) reflection on the dual role that foundations are positioned to play in social change processes – supporting both "bottom-up" approaches expressed through civil society advocacy and empowerment, and "top-down" approaches by exercising their own convening power and by building partnerships with public and private agencies in order to influence policy and resource flows.

For Mulgan (2016) and DP Evaluation (2012), foundation collaborations can also pose a second problem of democracy. When funders work together to increase their own efficiency and effectiveness, they can amplify existing inequitable power dynamics between funder and grantee.

James (2013) critically reflects upon the experience of a collaboration involving four foundations in Southern Africa, noting that the funder collaborative added even greater weight to the inherent donor power dynamic: "It was easy for such ownership and high commitment to become quite controlling and disempowering of the field" (James, 2013, 9). He notes that the collaborative approach of the funders did not genuinely extend to other stakeholders in the project, and concludes that

> [T]o be successful, the project needed all the stakeholders to be pulling in the same direction and performing well, not just the four funders. The ethos of authentic collaboration needs to extend beyond the funder group in ways that recognise and mitigate the power that donors inherently bring.
> James, 2013, 14

Others, however, note that the distortion induced by the funder-fundee power dynamic can become even more acute when foundations act as *both* funder and member of an implementing coalition (DP Evaluation, 2012. 75). Several critical reflections on the funder's role in collective impact raise this issue.

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contested, having been seen to impose social priorities and commit public funds to these priorities without having emerged from a process of public debate.

In much of the collective impact literature and many of its profiled initiatives, funders typically act as the catalysts and conveners, and stay on as active participants in the governance bodies and working groups of the initiative[27]. As Kania and Kramer (2011, 41) state in their original article, "funders must help create and sustain the collective processes, measurement reporting systems, and community leadership that enable cross-sector coalitions to arise and thrive"[28]. Easterling (2013, 68) explains the reasoning behind the idea that foundations should play a lead role in organizing collective impact efforts. As collaborative problem-solving is a time-consuming, often frustrating process with an uncertain payoff, Kania and Kramer (2011) consider that cross-sector collective action does not naturally arise without leadership by an actor who brings a larger frame of reference. In their view, foundations are uniquely positioned to play this sort of role because of their knowledge of and influence over the nonprofit actors working in the target issue area.

Alongside this, most proponents of collective impact promote the idea that grantmakers must be just one voice among many in shaping strategy and goals (Bartczak, 2014, 9). Critics of the funder-led approach to collective impact have pointed out that this is unrealistic; by virtue of the financial and convening power that they exercise, when funders are present, they are hardly just one voice among others within a collective impact initiative (Carson, 2012). Easterling (2013) points to Kubisch et al.'s (2011, 140) review of funder-driven community change initiatives, noting the finding that these initiatives can "distort local energy, provoke resistance, and disrupt existing relationships among local players and programs".

These two democratic challenges are not unique to the field of foundation collaborations, but appear to be inherent to the model that private and public grantmaking foundations incarnate. A discussion of options to mitigate these challenges – by holding foundations to greater public account, by injecting greater democracy into their processes – lies beyond the scope of this literature review. Still, it is worth pointing to a few spheres of research, opinion and practice where these discussions continue to take place[29].

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[27] As Pearson (2014) observes, in Canada collective impact has most often been undertaken at the community or city level by public funders such as United Ways or community foundations, and by multi-partner backbone organizations. The *Avenir d'enfants* initiative described by Brunet (2014) is one of the few funder-led models in Canada in which a private foundation has played a significant role.

[28] It is worth noting, however, that some proponents of collective impact do not place funders in this kind of catalyst/convening role. Thus, to the extent that the original authors do not "own" the concept and its key characteristics (Hanleybrown in Weaver, 2014b), the idea of funder leadership is not intrinsic to *all* visions and versions of collective impact practice.

[29] See, for instance, Lefèvre, 2014; Watson, 2012; Pittam, 2013; Easterling, 2012.

VI. Discussion and conclusion

From this review of the literature, a number of observations stand out that frame what we can expect to find in setting out to explore collaborations in the Canadian foundation landscape. It is important as well to name the study's limits, and what has been left out of this frame as a consequence.

First, the term "collaboration" is taken to refer to a broad range of relationships between grantmaking foundations. The most common and accessible forms of collaboration are "light touch", in which foundations come together for purposes ranging from information exchange to various types of aligned or coordinated funding. Much of the literature, however, concerns itself with the less frequent, higher-stakes forms of collaboration, forms that require higher engagement from their participants and deeper integration of their ways of working. While an effort was made in this review to identify different "types" or forms of collaboration from the literature and place them along a continuum, collaborations in reality rarely correspond to any single type; they often pursue several different purposes, develop hybrid forms to suit these, and typically evolve over time. What is more, behind the stated common goals, different partners within one collaborative effort may differ in their motivations and in the benefits that they seek.

Second, there is little in the literature that gives us a sense of the prevalence of collaborative practices among Canadian foundations. Studies from the U.S. and the UK reveal that well over two-thirds of surveyed foundations indicate that they engage in collaborative relationships with other foundations for one or more purposes. It will be important to get a sense of whether the Canadian foundation sector resembles or lags behind its counterparts in these countries.

Third, collaboration has become a bit of a buzzword in the sector literature, in keeping with current ways of looking at philanthropy and social change. An abundance of "grey" literature exists on the subject of foundation and funder collaboration, much of it from the United States. It is a fairly recent literature and seems to reflect an uptick of interest for the subject within the past ten or twelve years, an uptick that closely follows the shift towards more strategic forms of philanthropy. In this context, collaboration is often seen as the only way to achieve ambitious change goals, based on the recognition that multiple actors need to work together to solve complex problems. However, much of the writing on the subject is uncritical, reflecting an assumption that collaboration is an inherently better way to work. In conducting this literature review, we have attempted to adopt more of a neutral stance, assuming that the costs and benefits of collaboration will vary from one situation and

one organization to another.

In fact, the literature reveals that the deeper forms of collaboration are both difficult and counter-normative, challenging foundations' attachment to autonomy and brand and requiring that they relinquish some control over decision-making. The literature suggests that few if any foundations will agree to collaborate purely for the sake of impact on the problem to be solved, if there are no individual or organizational benefits to be gained. This may be particularly true for public fundraising foundations that need to position their brand in order to survive in a competitive market. In considering collaboration, foundations should give some attention to its strategic fit with their aims and to their own organizational readiness to collaborate.

What does funder collaboration help to accomplish? While many foundations engage in collaboration in the hope of increasing the *efficiency* of their operations, one review concludes that many forms of collaboration do not actually yield gains in efficiency. This is because collaboration itself is work, requiring an investment of time and resources. On the other hand, the same review (see also Appendix A) concludes that funder collaboration can indeed help foundations to work more *effectively*, achieving synergistic results that cannot be achieved alone. While there are a number of case studies and evaluations of individual collaborative experiences, there appear to be very few in-depth comparative reviews of the actual added-value outcomes achieved by funder collaborations. An in-depth study on this topic would make a valuable contribution to knowledge about the sector.

Referring mainly to the deeper forms of collaboration between grantmaking foundations, the literature is replete with best practices and success factors. Prominent themes here are the importance of shared purpose and realistic goals, structure aligned to purpose, flexibility and adaptive capacity, and investment in strong, trusting relationships. However, it should be kept in mind that there are no recipes for this, and that collaborative efforts must navigate different types of challenges at different developmental stages.

Here we come up against a first limit of this present study. Much of the literature looking specifically at foundation collaborations does not appear to be well connected to bodies of knowledge about collaborations and partnerships that other disciplines have produced. By focusing specifically on the literature about foundation collaborations, this review does not draw upon sources within the broader literature that may better speak to the complex, dynamic nature of all collaborations and partnerships and that analyze "best practices" in the light of the particular challenges associated with different

developmental stages. A future study could seek to correct for this limit by bringing in more of a cross-disciplinary analysis.

Effectiveness at achieving the purposes pursued by collaborative participants themselves cannot be the only gauge by which the value of foundation collaboration is measured. From a critical external vantage point, foundation collaborations must also be assessed by what they may do to further or to subvert existing power relations between funders and grantees, and how they may work to amplify foundations' capacity to set and further agendas for which they are not held publicly accountable.

This brings us to a second limit of this literature review. This literature review focuses on a subset of all forms of collaboration in which foundations engage – namely, collaborations between funders involving two or more grantmaking foundations. For the most part, these collaborations build upon and around the central role that foundations play as grantmakers – as funders to third sector organizations[30]. It does not focus on the cross-sector collaborations that foundations may pursue with government and/or private sector players, not does it engage with questions about how they can best enter into genuine partnerships with civil society actors, including grantees. Thus, a broad swath of collaborative relationships has been excluded from this study, notably the cross-sector collaborations that are particularly positioned to catalyze or to structure change within industries or institutional fields. As the study of Canadian grantmaking foundations' collaborative practices moves beyond its infancy, a second stage of research should consider engaging with a broader range of cross-sector collaborative partnerships, including:

- public-philanthropic partnerships formed with the aim of piloting programs, influencing policy change or structuring fields of activity;
- collaborations with private financial institutions to aggregate and channel financing opportunities and tools towards the social and solidarity economy[31];
- cross-sector networks and collaborative initiatives formed around supporting market-based innovation ecosystems, whether the emphasis be on influencing mainstream supply chains, or on supporting the capacity of innovation providers to meet mainstream demand through these supply chains[32].

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[30] As characterized within the Funder Plus role described by DP Evaluation (2012a)

[31] The Living Cities collaborative profiled in Appendix A is one early example of this, but in more recent years the impact investing movement in Canada has attracted mainstream attention and interest (Doyle & Carnegie, 2014 ; Harji, Reynolds, Best. and Jeyaloganathan, 2014).

[32] A couple of examples of this type of action appear to be occurring in the area of sustainable food supply and procurement, where foundations have helped to catalyze the use of the "change lab" formula. A pioneer here has been

Throughout all this, a central focus of inquiry should be the specific role that foundations are best positioned to play within these sector-spanning spheres of activity, and to integrate the perspective of other (non-foundation) stakeholders into this inquiry (Fontan, 2015). This is a subject around which there is no easy consensus, and one that may become particularly contested as foundations increasingly seek to engage with actors across sectors. As Healy and Donnelly-Cox (2016) argue, in order for voluntary collaborations between philanthropy and the state to be successful and sustainable, there has to be an alignment between the worldview that organized philanthropy holds of its own roles and competencies, and the prevailing political understanding of this within any given state. They conclude, however, that public policy expectations of philanthropy do not concur with philanthropy's expectations of itself.

Two of the cases profiled in Appendix A illustrate the complexity of achieving this alignment. Both the Corston Independent Funders' Coalition and the Integration Initiative (TII) of Living Cities sought to engage national or local government, on policy issues in the first case, and as co-leaders of regional or local revitalization initiatives in the second. In the case of the Integration Initiative (TII) case, Hecht (2014, 5) notes that engagement of the public sector was more challenging when TII was seen primarily as a philanthropic initiative; it would appear that government actors were inclined to see the foundations participating in the collaborative effort as substitutes for state action rather than as collaborators. The case of the Corston Independent Funders' Coalition illustrates the ways in which the foundations' capacity to be seen as policy interlocutors was muddied by their funder identity:

> Externally at least, the legitimacy of CIFC within the policy discourse appears to have continued to be perceived as a potential source of financial support rather than that of an advocate.
> Jung, Kaufmann & Harrow, 2014, 49-50

In seeking to influence actors from other sectors, grantmaking foundations may first need to carefully consider how to downplay their own traditional role as funders.

We can conclude from this literature review that collaboration holds promise for many grantmaking foundations seeking to strategically leverage their own limited resources, and for those seeking to

the international Sustainable Food Lab (http://www.sustainablefoodlab.org) of which the Kellogg Foundation was an instrumental founding partner. In Canada, the Ontario Tender Fruit Lab was hosted by the MaRS Solutions Lab and the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience with both the support and input of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

contribute to results beyond what they could hope to achieve on their own. At the same time, collaboration can be a difficult and costly endeavour, and organizations considering it need to weight its costs and benefits. Not only does a clear case need to be made for how it can advance their own aims, but careful consideration should be given as well to a more fundamental ethical alignment; the practice of inter-foundation collaboration needs to fit as well with each participating organization's changemaking philosophy and its conception of how it seeks to relate to grantees.

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Appendix A - Examples of foundation collaborations that have had some success in achieving desired impact

1. **Partnership for Higher Education in Africa** (Parker, 2010; Lewis et al., 2010)

   Number of participating foundations: 7 U.S. foundations

   Duration: 10 years (2000-2010)

   Purpose: support the development of Africa's intellectual capital by encouraging systemic and sustainable change to higher education institutions in 9 African countries

   Four broad purposes of the funder collaboration:
   - Make a public affirmation of the critical importance of higher education to Africa's future;
   - Raise visibility of higher education in Africa and increase funding for African universities by other donors;
   - Tackle larger initiatives than were possible individually;
   - Learn from one another's work in a more systematic way and improve individual grantmaking.

   Type/form of collaboration: primarily strategic alignment; moved towards a hybrid form over its life course, with joint grantmaking accounting for 25% of the grants made in later years

   Strategies: Core principles were to provide direct support to African universities, respond to African university demand, focus on a subset of universities (going deeper rather than broader), and treat consultation as key to effective support.

   Achievements:
   - Improvements were made to African higher education infrastructure, capacity, and access in the following areas:
     - Increased technology and communications capacity and infrastructure;
     - Increases in gender equity and higher education access for marginalized groups;
     - Expansion of policy research and advocacy for higher education;
     - Programmatic changes to increase the relevance of university research, teaching and learning to national problems;
     - More efficient systems (e.g. strategic planning, financial management, automation, resource mobilization).

   - The leveraging effect of funding provided by participating foundations influenced the work and priorities of other funders and governments.

   Perceived added value of the foundations' collaborative effort:

   "It … made it possible for the foundations involved to accomplish things that they could or would not have done had they each been acting on their own. Perhaps more significantly, being part of a collective helped the individual foundations improve the effectiveness of their own efforts by exposing them to new strategies, leveraging their grants with other grants, helping staff develop expertise, and suggesting other co-funding opportunities."

   in Knight & Hartnell, 2011

Added value of the collaborative according to Parker (2010) and Lewis et al. (2010):

- mobilized greater voice and convening power in advocating for African higher education issues;
- supported large initiatives beyond any single funder's capacity, such as the Bandwidth Consortium, the Educational Technology Initiative, the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa;
- leveraged investments from participating foundations that were greater than what would have been on the table had they not been part of the partnership.

2. **Donors' Education Collaborative (DEC) of New York City** (MacKinnon, 2006; Donors' Education Collaborative, 2015/2016)

Number of participating foundations: 27 foundations and donors over its life cycle (currently 11)

Duration: initiated in 1995; ongoing

Purpose: initially, increase public support for New York City's public schools; currently, support efforts to improve the New York City public school system for *all* of its students through system-wide policy reform

Type/form of collaboration: pooled funding with advocacy (policy change) focus

Strategies: Initial strategy of creating a broader constituency for better schools

Two complementary theories about how philanthropy could make a difference:
(1) A pooled grantmaking approach could advance social change in an area that had long resisted reform efforts because it would engage a range of foundations, make available a large pool of funds, and leverage members' interests, influence and knowledge; and
(2) Sustainable, system-wide reform could be achieved by combining policy-change strategies with efforts to build permanent, broad-based constituencies that would advocate for and monitor those strategies.

Achievements of collaborative (through work of funded grantees):
Over its lifetime, the collaborative and its grantees have learned to work more strategically with school system and city officials and to deploy their collective influence to leverage change such as:
- The education policy platform during the 2012 and 2013 mayoral campaign, with recommendations adopted by the de Blasio Administration including: expanded pre-kindergarten and afterschool programs; more community schools; reformed school discipline and policing; and strengthened involvement of parents in schools.
- Renewed commitment to parent engagement by the Department of Education
- Organization of low-income parents of color, immigrant families, and students who have become regular participants in policy discussions
- Reforms enacted in State Education Budget and Reform Act of 2007, including a large increase in aid to schools across the state, and a more equitable funding formula for school aid based on student need.
- Revisions to the City's School Discipline Code to reduce the emphasis on automatic suspension (decreased by 39% since 2010-2011) while increasing help for struggling students.

Perceived added value of the foundations' collaborative effort: (from MacKinnon, 2006)

- Pooled resources can bring more significant resources to bear on a problem—and therefore promise a greater likelihood of success: By aggregating funds from large and small donors into one grantmaking vehicle, New York-based grantmakers leveraged their investments and accomplished much more than

they could have alone.

- Collaboration with other funders can yield a distinctive, opportunistic grantmaking strategy that is broadly owned and different from what a foundation might do on its own: To make a difference in the difficult political environment of New York City in the mid- 1990s, DEC settled on the unconventional strategy of re-energizing neighborhood activists and unifying them into a citywide constituency for better schools—a strategy and set of grantees that some DEC members would not have funded independently.
- Collaboration pools not only grantmaking dollars but also grantmakers' wisdom and knowledge: By working in tandem, foundations can enrich and inform each other's work. DEC members adjusted their own education strategies in New York City and elsewhere based on lessons learned from DEC's grantmaking results.

3. **Name: No official title - informal California foundation collaboration** (Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014)

Number of participating foundations: 6 foundations with varied goals and priorities for public education

Duration: 2012-2013 (less than 2 years)

Purpose: work together to ensure that California policy makers had the best possible information and nonpartisan analysis available as they developed the new school finance policy.

Type/form of collaboration: aligned funding with advocacy (policy change) focus, formed to take advantage of a specific policy window

Strategies:

In a nutshell, the policy investment made by this foundation collaboration focused on shaping and sharing the "story" of how education funding could be better for California's children (Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014, 9).

Individually and collectively, the members of the collaborative made strategic investments in 5 key areas of policy investment, choosing grantee organizations that could:
- Help inform the discussion of finance reform through research and financial modeling;
- Build trust and transparency in the process of designing a new education finance formula;
- Create consensus among both policy makers and grassroots/grasstops leaders;
- Amplify the voices of underrepresented stakeholder group;s
- Continually monitor and contribute to the public conversation as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) moved toward passage.

Achievements:

In 2013, the state of California passed sweeping changes in the way it funds public schools. New legislation shifted $50 billion from a "convoluted, very ineffective and inequitable" system to a new system, called the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), by which funds flow more equitably to school districts.

"Achieving reform of this magnitude is a spectacular win," says a consultant to the collaborative. "No other state has a weighted student funding formula like this in place, statewide.... I hope that all the

boards of all the foundations involved over the past decade recognize the scale of this win, and how very rare this is." (Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014, 10).

Perceived added value of the foundations' collaborative effort:

1 – Relationships: all of the foundations participating in this collaborative point to the value they gained from forming relationships with other foundations and learning from them.
Fro example, for the national foundations, participating in a collaborative with state and local foundations enhanced their understanding of local and state issues and provided a means for targeting efforts and leveraging investments.

2 – Depth of field: For grantee partners, having multiple foundation perspectives in one place was a top benefit. "Each foundation engaged their own networks — very different networks... Having all of that intelligence was a great help in thinking about who to engage, and it expanded our capacity to under-stand where the field was." Putnam-Walkerly & Russell, 2014)

3 – Credibility: For the policy effort itself, the collaboration of foundations eliminated perceptions of a behind-the-scenes agenda that a single foundation might have generated.

Others factors that are considered to have helped:

1 – Joint support for one designated nonprofit to act as captain of a campaign to build support for education finance reform;
2 - A deeper investment in communications to further power message development and outreach; an all-day meeting on communications strategy, a new name for the effort were considered key to ultimate success.

4. **European Partnership for Integration and Migration** (discussed by Prager, 2011b, Krapels et al., 2016)

Number of participating foundations: 20 European foundations over its life cycle (currently 12)

Duration: founded in 2005; ongoing

Purpose: strengthen the role played by NGOs active on migration and integration issues in advocating for a European agenda that benefits migrants and receiving communities.

Type/form of collaboration: pooled funding with advocacy (policy change) focus

Strategies:
Three-pronged strategy:
1) granting (creation of thematic funds and subfunds);
2) NGO capacity-building;
3) networking/peer learning between national and pan-European NGOs

Achievements (through the work of funded grantees)[33]:
Working in a particularly difficult political climate, Krapels et al. (2016) point to the following

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[33] Consistent with the nature of evaluating advocacy efforts' role in achieving policy change, Krapels et al.'s (2016) evaluation is careful to speak of grantees' contribution to outcomes, rather than directly attribute achievements to them.

achievements:

- Evidence of research and policy advocacy capacity-building outcomes and development among all grantees
- Research, data collection and dissemination (by grantees) on migration issues has been of added value to other civil society organizations and to policymakers
- Contribution to early stages of EU policy change (delivery by grantees of evidence-informed policy advocacy messages)

Perceived added value of the foundations' collaborative effort:
- access to EU-level policy makers enhanced by EPIM-facilitated networks
- facilitation of partnership between national and European foundations
- bridged gaps in services that no single organization could fill

"The evaluators tell us that EPIM demonstrates the benefits of collaborative funding. It can expand the amount of funding available for a particular issue. It can bring new foundations into a field that is poorly served by private philanthropy. It is a way for foundations to support projects across national or other boundaries when they would normally be restricted to funding within a particular region. It can help foundations reach grantees they would not normally encounter."

Prager, 2011b

5. **Name: Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme (YEPP)** (discussed by Veir, 2011; Hasibovic, S., 2011. YEPP, 2011).

Number of participating foundations:
- At least 10 national-level European and US foundations over its life course, along with 2 philanthropic infrastructure organizations (European Foundation Centre and Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation);
- Other partners have been the OECD and the Free University of Berlin;
- Place-based foundations have also been significant actors at some local sites;

Duration: 2001-2011 as a foundation-led program; continued since 2011 under coordination of a registered not-for-profit organization.

Purpose: promote youth and community empowerment in disadvantaged areas throughout Europe. by setting up multi-level networks and partnerships to fight social exclusion and promote youth participation in decision-making.

Three goals:
1 - Youth and community empowerment: o empower disadvantaged young people (...) to contribute to their local communities as equals alongside community leaders, thus becoming active citizens of their national societies and Europe; to support processes promoting changes to the environment in which children and youth develop.
2 – Partnership: to form strong and sustainable cross-sectorial partnerships and strategic alliances at local, national and transnational levels fostering youth and community empowerment.
3 – Advocacy: to ensure that the principles of youth empowerment, community empowerment and partnership become integral to public and independent sector policy across Europe.

Type/form of collaboration: Appears to have been a joint venture - shared funding and steering of a transnational program that eventually became a distinct not-for-profit entity; variable foundation support for local sites (responsive to locally defined priorities)

Strategies: Core principle: by bringing together diverse stakeholders at local, national and international levels, circumstances affecting marginalized young people can be addressed in more effective and sustainable ways. "Partnership has been at the heart of the entire YEPP framework. The highly complex nature of youth and community disempowerment and social exclusion requires truly integrated approaches based on partnerships across a wide range of sectors, governance levels and social groups." (Hasibovic, 2010, 3).

Multi-level approach:
Local: stakeholders build cross-sectoral partnerships, engage in comprehensive planning processes and implement initiatives to address important issues facing their communities.

Regional and national level: local teams and their partners provide peer support and establish alliances in order to increase their influence on policy change.

Transnational level: Steering Committee supervises the program, provides resources, supports and services to local and regional sites, promotes expansion, networking and advocacy at the European level.

Implementation: 23 local sites in 9 countries over the course of the 2001-2011 phase of the program

Achievements:

Because of YEPP's multi-tiered model and process-focused goals, assessment of comparable results across sites has proven to be difficult. Still, YEPP (2011) reports evidence from its evaluations that significant and sustainable changes in youth and community empowerment, cross-sectorial partnership, youth policies and youth funding were achieved in the local communities during the 10 years of the program:
-    has given young people new opportunities to get their voices heard, from meetings with their municipalities to European workshops on youth participation;
-    has resulted in sustainable cooperation between local and transnational stakeholders.

Achievements reported by several local sites (Hasibovic, 2010, 45-48):
-    broader vision of development centered around youth opportunities; more local government attention to youth issues, especially to the usually "forgotten" group of structurally disadvantaged young people; gaps filled in public service delivery for children and youth; increased youth civic engagement; cross-sector partnership model has had a lasting influence on the way in which participating organizations and public institutions work.

Cross-site learning inspired partners to develop new approaches; for example, In Germany, YEPP acted as a prototype for a Federal Ministry of Education program.

Perceived added value of the collaborative effort:

The foundation collaboration at the core of YEPP was what allowed it to develop as a transnational program. "The close foundation collaboration behind YEPP sustained the program and was the basis on which it expanded and fostered a range of other, dynamic, innovative partnerships among different stakeholders at local and national levels." (Veirs, 2011).

A key advantage of the partnership has been the solid European dimension it provided to local initiatives. As one partner stated, this contributed to the overall achievements of the program: "Having that kind of European level link gives legitimacy and status to local activities."

As one foundation partner stated, "partnership allows small foundations to create synergy with larger foundations for more complex and long-term projects." (YEPP, 2011).

Finally, the program had a significant impact on the wider foundations' landscape in Europe, acting both as a model for cooperation and visibility of the foundation sector and as a training ground for foundations that came to frame issues in European, as opposed to national, terms.

6. **Living Cities (formerly the National Community Development Initiative)** (discussed by Proscio, 2010; Living Cities, 2011; Mount Auburn Associates, 2012; Hecht, 2014)

Number of participating foundations: 7 foundations and one insurance company at outset; currently 22 foundations and financial institutions

Duration: Phase 1 (NCDI) initiated in 1992; Phase 2 (Living Cities) ongoing

Purpose: <u>NCDI phase:</u>
1) achieve scale in urban renewal: inject enough capital into the work of community development corporations that they would be able to expand and accelerate production (of urban redevelopment/housing projects) to a level that could genuinely transform decaying neighbourhoods;
2) achieve a synergy among the various kinds of resources flowing into redeveloping neighbourhoods.

Moving into <u>Living Cities phase</u> (mid-2000s): added purpose was learning: enrich the general level of knowledge about urban vitality and development; translate what is learned into more effective public policy and better uses of private capital

Type/form of collaboration: pooled funding, with a move in Phase 2 (Living Cities) to make field-level learning and knowledge creation a more central part of its mandate.

Strategies:
<u>NCDI phase</u>: work through two established implementing intermediaries, Local Initiatives Support Corporations and the Enterprise Foundation, for capacity-building and project financing; leverage additional, outside resources for redeveloping neighbourhoods.

<u>Living Cities phase</u>: strategic decision to diversify investments in a broader set of community development financial institutions and a broader set of activities.
- The Integration Initiative (TII) was launched in 2010 as a laboratory to test a series of assumptions about what would have a transformative effect on community development and revitalization: the importance of cross-sector collaboratives, reaching scale through going beyond project and programs to changing systems, driving private capital to work on behalf of low-income people, the importance of engaging the public and private sectors in a new way.
- The five selected sites received a combination of direct grants, philanthropic capital directed to program-related investments (PRIs) and commercial lending ($85 M in total).
- Core assumption that foundation philanthropy would strengthen the work in multiple ways: by bringing their local knowledge, relationships, influence and convening powers to TII work; by aligning their resources with the work of the sites, thereby creating greater and more sustainable funding streams to support systems work.

Achievements:

<u>NCDI phase</u>: leveraged investments of more than $2 billion, of which $250 M was direct NCDI investments (Proscio, 2010, 9). Funded development included 19 500 housing units and over 1.6 million square feet of other kinds of development.

The NCDI was credited by the Urban Institute (Walker, Gustafson and Snow, 2002) with helping to expand

the menu of financial products being used for neighborhood redevelopment, encouraging the formation of new public policies and programs to support this work, and developing new models of development that could be replicated nationwide.

"Living Cities proved to be an organization that pushed the boundaries of community development.... It candidly faced the complexities inherent in community development and the lack of a short-term, magic bullet to achieve rapid transformation of other neighborhoods or the lives of those who live in them."

M. Willis in Living Cities (2011, 18)

Living Cities phase (The Integration Initiative)

The evaluation of the first three years of the Integration Initiative pointed to interim results:
- Work in the five sites led to changing relationships, perspectives, and boundaries amongst public and private sector leadership in each community, built the communities' capacity to work across sectors, and broke down issue area silos;
- New CDFIs were introduced in some of the communities and became important players in the civic infrastructure, while existing CDFIs expanded their capacity;
- Evidence of changing policies, practices, and funding flows at three levels: within the individual organizations involved in TII work, within the systems that were targeted for change, and, finally, in the larger civic infrastructure where addressing equity and using cross-sector collaboratives to address complex issues have become more embedded in the way work is done;
- Knowledge gained was translated into new frameworks that are having an influence more broadly in the field, leading to replication in place-based efforts beyond TII.

Source: Mt. Auburn Associates, 2012

Perceived added value of the collaborative effort:

NCDI: The great majority of the alliance's direct investment, Walker at al.'s (2002) study concluded, was the kind of money without which projects tend not to be developed at all.
Living Cities, 2012, 10: noteworthy example of the potential of foundations to help leverage and target private and public investment into poor communities

Living Cities/TII evaluation (Mt Auburn Associates, 2012): The involvement of multiple philanthropic partners provided both positive alignment as well as providing sites with increased access to potential resources to support aligned activity. However, Hecht (2014) reports an important learning regarding one of the key assumptions: engagement of the public sector was more challenging when TII was seen primarily as a philanthropic initiative.

 "There have been times when the membership has stepped back and genuinely constructed approaches that by virtue of their boldness, innovation or potential impact take us beyond what each one of would do within our own portfolio."

R. Rapson in Living Cities (2011, 12)

"This seemingly odd venture changed the way people think about scaling efforts, the viability of commingled funding, the virtue of coordinated efforts, the exchange of ideas between funders and those using those funds... addressing public policy, and private/public ventures with the federal government."

B. Harvey in Living Cities (2011, 20)

7. **Corston Independent Funders' Coalition** (described by DP Evaluation, 2012b, Jung, T., Kaufmann, J., Harrow, J., 2014; Kaufmann, J., 2011).

Number of participating foundations: 22 UK trusts and foundations

Duration: 2008-2011

Purpose: aimed to influence government policy on the treatment of women in the UK's criminal justice system, in particular to push for implementation of the Corston report's[34] key recommendations (Jung et al, 2014, 37 & 43)

2 objectives:
1) reduce the number of women in prison through political commitments and adequately funded community service provision;
2) demonstrate that funders can, by working together, contribute to sustainable change.

3 strategic priorities (Jung et al. 2014, 43):
- achieve real political commitment to diversionary, preventative and rehabilitative community responses to women's offending
- ensure that women are consistently diverted from custody into community provision
- have a well-funded sustainable network of women's community provision

Type/form of collaboration: advocacy coalition

Strategies:
- Initial open letter in 2008 to Secretary of State for Justice, followed by choice to influence policy proactively by directly funding a position (eventually housed in a member foundation) to undertake ongoing advocacy work

Achievements:
- Raised the profile of women in prison; achieved some political support and ensured that the Corston Report did not get shelved or lost with the change of government in the UK
- Community programming: expanded network of women's centres providing integrated alternatives to custody (Kaufmann, 2011, 30)
- Collaboration with the Ministry of Justice to fill community service provision funding gaps through essential fund-matching. "Unexpectedly, the positive dynamic between the funders' Coalition and the Government actually gave rise to a partnership-like working relationship between MoJ and private funders, notably providing co-funding for the two Women's Diversionary Funds." (DP Evaluation, 2012b 32). On this note, Jung et al. (2014, 50) consider **CIFC's main achievement to be one of traditional funding partnership over and above advocacy.**

Perceived added value of the foundations' collaborative effort:

Kaufmann (2011, 29 & 31-32):
- CIFC considered to have made a valuable contribution by adding its influence and funding to achieve changes (discussed above) in the social and political landscape.
- Demonstrated the role of funder advocacy: the foundations' financial independence enabled them to approach Government on a more equal footing; regarded as a credible partner in the social policy process

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[34] independent report commissioned in 2006 on women in the criminal justice system after a high incidence of female deaths in prison

- Cooperation with government included information and intelligence-sharing; shaping complementary strategies in awareness of each other's plans; running two major co-funding initiatives; acting in a coordinated fashion to consolidate change

"It is almost certain that the partnership with the Ministry of Justice could not have been attracted by one funder or even by a few", as the agreement needed to be reached with a group that represented a critical mass (DP Evaluation, 2012a, 99).

Jung et al. (2014, 49-50): **CIFC demonstrates the paradoxical nature/effects of direct funder advocacy, with blurred identities between funder and advocacy roles**: "Externally at least, the legitimacy of CIFC within the policy discourse appears to have continued to be perceived as a potential source of financial support rather than that of an advocate."

Appendix B - To Collaborate or Not to Collaborate?
Decision-making matrix proposed by Prager (2011a, 40-41)

Foundations should consider collaboration is some of these factors exist, or are dominant:	Foundations should *avoid* collaboration is some of these factors exist, or are more dominant:
The foundation internal culture and values include: - a basic belief that collaboration is good - enjoyment of risk-taking - willingness to learn and adopt new ways of working - previous positive experience of collaboration - good internal communications, so the experience and learning is shared with colleagues - a pluralist approach to change	The foundation internal culture and values include: - intent to maximize direct grant funding and minimize administrative or "grants-plus" costs - a mode f change that is not shared by others - a belief that grantees (and not foundations) should steer the agenda - an individualistic approach - reliance on competition - a wish to be a leader in the field and gain sole credit for innovation
The board and chief executive are supportive and willing: - to give up control of some grantmaking - to trust the people who will do the work - to allocate time and resources to the collaboration	The board and chief executive: - consider direct grantmaking to be core to the foundation's purpose - are unwilling to compromise - are comfortable about undertaking advocacy as a foundation, whether or not others participate
The people will form a good team: - Those who represent the foundation in the collaborative enterprise are food at working in teams (they are good leaders, can listen and facilitate and negotiate, can manage conflict and are emotionally mature). - The partners (individuals but also their organizations) are people that like and trust each other.	The people who might be involved: - lack the necessary skills to work in teams - promote their own agenda above the needs of the collaboration - find it difficult to engage with organizations with different values - are too busy with existing work programmes to allocate time to collaboration
The opportunity: - needs more money than an individual foundation can allocate - would benefit from the joint advocacy efforts of several foundations - would benefit from a model of support that the foundation cannot easily provide - can be linked with some identifiable impacts or outcomes - enables genuine sharing of costs.	The opportunity: - is not relevant to the foundation's existing programmes of work - is not timely.