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# Montreal's Collective Impact Project and the first stages of its partnership and opera- tionalization

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## Table of Contents

<i>PRESENTATION</i> .....	2
<i>Rationale and objectives of the study</i> .....	3
<i>Methodology</i> .....	5
<i>Limits</i> .....	7
<b>1.0</b> <b><i>CONTEXT AND FRAMING ELEMENTS OF THE CIP INITIATIVE</i></b> .....	9
1.1 <i>Poverty reduction and social development in Montreal: achievements, gaps to be filled, uncertainties</i> .....	9
1.2 <i>The CIP approach and model: influences of the philanthropic context</i> .....	13
<b>2.0</b> <b><i>THE CIP'S ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT</i></b> .....	20
2.1 <i>First phase: a project conceived and initiated by two originators</i> .....	19
2.2 <i>The second phase of the CIP's construction: mobilization and engagement of the other partners</i> .....	25
<b>3.0</b> <b><i>INITIAL OBSERVATIONS YIELDED BY THE STUDY</i></b> .....	28
3.1 <i>The partners' motivations and expectations</i> .....	27
3.2 <i>The CIP's operating model and governance</i> .....	28
3.3 <i>Initial operationalization in the neighbourhood</i> .....	31
3.4 <i>Relations with communities: establishing a balance</i> .....	33
<b>4.0</b> <b><i>OTHER POINTS OF TENSION AND ISSUES TO WORK ON</i></b> .....	35
4.1 <i>The issue of systems change— and the processes likely to catalyze it—remain to be clarified</i> .....	35
4.2 <i>A push and pull between learning and demonstrating success</i> .....	37
4.3 <i>Partners' level of engagement in the learning project</i> .....	38
4.4 <i>The long-term vision needs to be defined</i> .....	39
<b>5.0</b> <b><i>OBSERVATIONS AND AREAS FOR FOLLOW-UP</i></b> .....	41
5.1 <i>Observations</i> .....	41
5.2 <i>Avenues for follow-up</i> .....	44
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	47
<b>APPENDIX 1</b> .....	54
<b>APPENDIX 2</b> .....	56
<b>APPENDIX 3</b> .....	57

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1:</b> <b>Concept map of influencing factors and strategies developed by Centraide of Greater Montreal</b> .....	16
<b>Figure 2:</b> <b>Timeline of the Collective Impact Project: from ideation to launch</b> .....	19
<b>Figure 3:</b> <b>Initial theory of change of the CIP, as represented by Pole and Fontan</b> .....	24
<b>Figure 4:</b> <b>Action model of the CIP</b> .....	26

## PRESENTATION

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The Collective Impact Project (CIP) is a collaborative philanthropic initiative that describes itself as an accelerator of community change in Montreal. As of January 2017, the CIP was composed of eight philanthropic partners, including the project lead and manager, Centraide of Greater Montreal (Centraide), and seven (7) grantmaking foundations acting as financial partners:

- Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation
- Foundation of Greater Montréal
- Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation
- Pathy Family Foundation
- Silver Dollar Foundation
- J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
- Molson Foundation

The following three organizations have also been enlisted as non-financial partners of the project: the City of Montréal; the *Direction régionale de la santé publique de Montréal* (Montreal Regional Public Health Department); and the *Coalition montréalaise des tables de quartier* (CTMQ) (Montreal Neighbourhood Tables Coalition). Through the pooling of financial and non-financial resources, the CIP intends to intensify and ensure greater coherence in the support given to comprehensive community development and revitalization efforts pursued by neighbourhoods in Montreal.

In order to maximize the lessons learned from this experience, the CIP's evaluation is honing in on outcomes and learnings as they emerge in relation to four focus areas:

- strategies of support to communities
- the CIP partnership itself
- the initiative's regional influence
- the philanthropic action model developed through the initiative

For each of these dimensions, the main focus of the evaluation is on *strategic learning*.<sup>1</sup> This means that the overall evaluation of the CIP, which draws on different resources at different points in the process, aims throughout to:

- support stakeholders' capacity to better understand the context in which the CIP is operating and evolving;
- follow the action as it unfolds in real time and capture effects as they emerge; and
- support decision-making, whether to:
  - adjust the strategy and adapt practices within a project that remains focused on its original goals; and/or
  - adjust these original goals to better line them up with outcomes that the evaluation has helped to identify as realistically achievable, while continuing to reflect project stakeholders' aims.

With this focus on *ongoing* and real-time evaluation, the CIP's key stakeholders are both the primary users as well as the main actors in the areas of the evaluation that concern them:

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<sup>1</sup> As proposed and agreed on by the CIP steering committee in February 2016. The approach and principles of evaluation for strategic learning have been put forward by Coffman and Beer (2011), Preskill and Mack (2013), the Spark Policy Institute (2012) and Williams (2014).

- Centraide, in particular, as project manager;
- the partners in the steering committee, as co-investors and strategic players within the comprehensive local social development (CLSD) arena; and
- the communities supported by the CIP, as the main driving force in shaping and implementing their local revitalization efforts.

The CIP's *evaluation architecture* has mobilized three platforms, each working on one or more of the four levels of action and analysis identified above. These are:

- PhiLab<sup>2</sup>
- Garrow & Evoy<sup>3</sup>
- Dynamo<sup>4</sup>

Within this overall architecture, the Montreal Research Laboratory on Canadian Philanthropy (PhiLab) was selected to:

- generate knowledge about the philanthropic action model that the CIP is developing;
- lend support to the evaluation of outcomes and effects, particularly in terms of the project's influence at the regional level.

### **Rationale and objectives of the study**

As part of the CIP's evaluation, the steering committee commissioned PhiLab to carry out an action research project that would provide an account of the context from which the initiative emerged and of how it was developed and launched.

The objectives of this evaluative piece of research are as follows:

- Set the project's origins and its initial intentions within the regional (Montreal) socio-economic context, and within the context of broader trends within North American philanthropy, including collective impact.
- Document the motivations, the process and the dynamics involving the CIP's key actors that sparked:
  - the partnership's development;
  - the design of the CIP proposal, including its original working hypotheses;
  - the very early stages of its implementation (launch and post-launch).
- Identify the components of the action system that was put in place and stakeholders' roles and functions as they were at the beginning and as they have evolved. Stakeholders include grantmaking foundations, institutional partners, the coalition of neighbourhood tables, CIP grantees and other supporting actors (including the members of the evaluation cluster).
- Identify how the CIP proposal was embraced by certain key players in the Montreal socio-economic development scene.
- Share observations and identify avenues that may contribute to the CIP's explicit theory of change (which was to be developed by the steering committee in 2016–17 with the support of the Garrow and Evoy team); and with a view to informing any similar initiatives that may take place in the future (such as a CIP II).

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<sup>2</sup> PhiLab: <https://philab.uqam.ca/en/a-propos/presentation-de-philab>

<sup>3</sup> Garrow&Evoy: <http://garrowevoy.com>

<sup>4</sup> Dynamo: <http://dynamocollectivo.com>

The study that we carried out will contribute to the CIP's overall evaluation by painting a picture of where things were at at the CIP's starting point and its early stages. This will serve as a sort of baseline<sup>5</sup> reference point for future evaluation activities.

- *The production of a baseline portrait gives an overview of how the CIP emerged and how the initial partnership was expanded.*

Evaluations typically start out with some data about the situation that existed before the start of the intervention to be evaluated. Without some sort of a “baseline” as a comparison point, it is difficult to assess and make sense of the events and changes that take place over the course of a project.

In the case of the CIP, some sort of a baseline portrait needed to be produced for each of the objects of evaluation. Dynamo and the actors on the ground undertook to assemble baseline data relevant to evaluating hoped-for changes in the neighbourhoods supported under the CIP. And this study, carried out by PhiLab, assembled a baseline portrait relevant to evaluating the process and assessing the changes that might take place both within the partnership and at the regional level. The baseline portrait also has relevance to capturing the philanthropic model as it takes shape and continues to evolve.

- *The “post-baseline” part of the evaluation maps out some key elements of the CIP's start-up period and its evolution during the first year of operation.*

Beyond the baseline portrait, the study also proposed to share initial observations on the early stages of the CIP's start-up period and roll-out, to offer ways to understand and interpret this process of emergence, and to identify possible “kinks” or points of tension to be worked out going forwards, whether these have to do with program theory or its implementation. By doing this, this action research process contributes to the strategic learning aims that the steering committee and other CIP stakeholders have set out for the project.

The CIP has the characteristics of an *adaptive initiative* because it aims both to intervene directly and to catalyze changes in a complex and dynamic environment (Britt and Coffman, 2012). By this token, its success hinges not so much on faithfully sticking to an action plan that was laid out in advance as on its capacity to innovate and pay attention in real time to the impacts of each intervention, and on its ability to respond to opportunities as they emerge. To achieve this, adaptive initiatives need to open themselves up to an ongoing and continuous process of discovery and adjustment. Developmental evaluation is generally better suited to these circumstances than more conventional summative and formative approaches to evaluation.<sup>6</sup>

Further along in this report, we explain that the CIP seeks to increase the momentum and policy traction of CLSD as a practice. In light of this ambition, from the beginning its promoters emphasized learning by doing and learning together—an ethos that applies both to the project's financial partners as well as to all the different groupings of stakeholders involved in the broader action system. The CIP was conceived of as a working ecosystem, a goal that requires a high degree of cohesion among stakeholders as well as a strong or “organic” capacity for collaboration and for reflection in action. This is achievable provided there are appropriate interactive processes and tools for capturing and analyzing what gets said and what

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<sup>5</sup> The term is used here to refer to a qualitative portrait of the situation at the project's starting point, with regards to each of the key objects of evaluation.

<sup>6</sup> Patton (2011) suggests that developmental evaluation is an approach adapted to five types of situations, including those of adaptive initiatives described here.

gets done. Moreover, this kind of working environment by and large goes beyond the traditional modus operandi of philanthropic investment. In this respect, the CIP represents a socially innovative approach and can serve as a model for the future.

In relation to the two key moments in time that are the focus of this study, we asked the following questions:

- What is the CIP's core identity and purpose? What does it want to achieve?
- How do the various actors who were involved with the project in its start-up phase understand and perceive it?
- What do any diverging views in this area reveal?
- Are the CIP's ambitions realistic? How does the evaluation and learning system allow them to be tested and suggest any realignments where necessary?

For each of the major objects of evaluation targeted by the present study, more specific questions were formulated and formed the basis for designing interview questions (see Appendix I).

## **Methodology**

A monitoring committee was set up to guide and oversee this study. It was composed of Jean-Marc Fontan and Nancy Pole (PhiLab), Myriam Bérubé and Jean-Marie Chapeau (Centraide), and Odette Viens (formerly at Centraide, engaged as a resource person to facilitate steering committee meetings). The monitoring committee met twice: a first time in early September 2016, to decide on the direction of the study, and a second time in early December, to look at and discuss preliminary results. The feedback given during this second meeting served as valuable input for the analysis.

## **Sources of information**

The study relied on three sources of information.

First, a literature review helped us to develop a reading of relevant elements of the context. These included the existing landscape of community change initiatives in Montreal focusing on poverty reduction and local social development, as well as the relevant context within philanthropy and the currents of thinking and practice trends that may have influenced the CIP's development.

Second, we consulted documents produced by partners or other organizations pertaining to the CIP and/or to these elements of context.

Third, between the end of September and mid-December 2016, we conducted 25 semi-directed interviews with four stakeholder groups (see list of actors in Appendix II):

- The project's originators (architects) within the two organizations who conceived of the CIP, in order to trace the project's origins; the intentions that each organization had; the initial logic that was present at the starting point; points of consensus; and points of contention and negotiation encountered over the course of building the project (four interviews).

- The other partners of the steering committee (nine interviews), to learn about their identity as an organization and as a social actor; any past history of collaborating with one another; their previous experience with the CLSD ecosystem that is the CIP’s focus; their motivations and interests in joining the CIP; their understanding of the project; what they hope to see happen and what benefits they hope to gain for their organization; and lastly, the requisite conditions for achieving the project’s goals.
- Key informants (nine interviews) identified by the monitoring committee according to one or more of the following criteria:
  - knowledge of the regional context that was specific to the CIP’s emergence;
  - particular knowledge or insight into an aspect of the broader practice environment (philanthropy, community change initiatives);
  - a direct role in the CIP action system.
- Since only a couple of respondents in the first three groups were able to present a vantage point reflecting community stakeholders’ perspectives, over the course of the interviews a fourth group of respondents—that of the neighbourhood tables—was added to partially fill this gap. Representatives from three neighbourhood tables were interviewed, including two tables that had been selected for CIP support and one table that had not been selected. While these interviews helped to partially fill this gap, overall the perspective of communities was underrepresented in the study.

Each of the 25 interviews lasted between one and two hours. Most of them were held in person, with five interviews conducted over the telephone. Four different interview schedules were prepared, one for each group of respondents (see Appendix III). Within the schedules there were some variations or subsets of questions in accordance with certain respondents’ profiles. Across all of them, a common set of questions was asked that related to the following topics:

- respondents’ understanding of the CIP, its objectives and its principal strategies;
- the potential value of this initiative; the nature of the possible outcomes;
- the conditions to be met in order to maximize the initiative’s chance of success.

### **Analysis of the interviews and feedback**

Interview analysis was carried out using the grounded theory approach in order to generate open categories for initial coding. Based on the summary of each interview, the distinct ideas reflected in respondents’ comments were given descriptive codes. Results analysis was an iterative process that started with the first interviews, punctuated by a number of successive moments of “harvesting” of themes that helped to orient subsequent data collection. In addition, several occasions of cross-fertilization, discussion and feedback among researchers, other members of the evaluation cluster and members of the monitoring committee offered opportunities to finetune the findings, address points of divergence or tension, and shed light on possible options to propose for follow-up.

The content of this report reflects only the main themes that emerged from the interviews, and does not feed back the specific comments of individual respondents. Unless otherwise indicated, each of the identified themes reflect the comments of at least two respondents, and often a larger number.

## **Presentation of findings**

The findings are presented in four thematic groupings.

1. The contextual elements that gave rise to the CIP, including the context of existing comprehensive poverty reduction work in Montreal and relevant philanthropic trends.
2. The narrative of the CIP's origins, and its start-up and initial operations stages.
3. A first set of reflections, observations and recommendations concerning the partnership and the organizing model, and the operationalization of the CIP on the ground.
4. Points of tension or issues to be resolved.

## **Limits**

The study does not claim to offer a fully comprehensive account of the circumstances that surrounded the CIP's emergence, nor of its start-up and early operations. The elements of narrative presented here and the analysis that emerged from it are based on the information shared with us by stakeholders, and in particular by the project's partners. To the extent that there are gaps in this information, there are also gaps in the narrative and the analysis that we share here. Thus, there may still be aspects of the CIP and what it is about that our research project was not able to capture or clarify.

Since all the partners represented on the steering committee were interviewed, it is safe to assume that their perspectives have been sufficiently and adequately considered and rendered here. However, the same cannot be said for certain other actors, especially the neighbourhood tables whose perspective was underrepresented in this study. Lastly, our study does not give a thorough enough depiction and analysis of the roles played by Centraide as the lead and manager of this initiative.



## 1.0 CONTEXT AND FRAMING ELEMENTS OF THE CIP INITIATIVE

This section consists of two subsections. In the first, we present the context of the poverty reduction and social development landscape in Montreal. In the second subsection, we focus on context relative to the philanthropic sector that is likely to have influenced the way the CIP was conceived of and designed.

### 1.1 Poverty reduction and social development in Montreal : achievements, gaps to be filled, uncertainties

#### Persistence of poverty and social inequalities

In 2010, 24.6% of the population on the Island of Montreal was considered to be low-income<sup>7</sup> (Ville de Montréal, undated), a rate which exceeds all other regions of Quebec (Fréchet et al., 2013). Between 1997 and 2010, the Montreal region was the only region in Quebec to report an increase rather than a decline in its low-income rate.

As in other major cities in North America, Montreal is a polarized region in terms of employment and incomes, despite a renewed economic vigor since the mid-1990s (Champagne et al., 2011; Klein, Fontan and Tremblay, 2011; Longtin and Rochman, 2015; Leloup, Desrochers and Rose, 2016). Poverty and unemployment in Montreal occur in a much higher concentration among people of immigrant origin<sup>8</sup>—a situation that lends urgency to the issue of immigrants’ economic and social integration (Centraide, 2016a).

Since 2001, Montreal has seen an increase in the number of working poor, defined as people who are unable to move out of poverty despite having a job. However, rather than a situation that is unique to Montreal, it is the local manifestation of a global phenomenon linked to transformations in the labour market. If anything, the issue of the working poor in Montreal highlights a paradox whereby immigrants, despite being generally more educated than the average population (Paquin, 2014), also accounted for nearly two thirds of this increase between 2001 and 2006 (Leloup et al., 2016; Centraide, 2016a).

The growth of social inequalities reflects an unequal distribution of wealth and poverty in Montreal. Since the turn of the century, observers have evoked the image of a “patchwork” to describe the geographical dispersion of poverty.<sup>9</sup> For example, poverty now stretches beyond the traditional working-class neighbourhoods, now in decline, of the east end and southwest of Montreal to include sectors in the first outer ring of the city’s post-war suburbs—which is where large numbers of recent immigrants have settled in recent decades. These districts are home to populations who are vulnerable to chronic unemployment and who are confined to the margins of the labour market (Klein et al., 2011; Rose and Twigge-Molecey, 2013; Leloup et al., 2016).

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<sup>7</sup> According to the Low-income measure after tax, National Household Survey (2011).

<sup>8</sup> In the sense used here, the term refers to both immigrants and their Canadian-born children.

<sup>9</sup> In 2010, Montreal was the city in Canada with the highest number of low-income neighbourhoods (neighbourhoods where 30% or more of the population is low-income) (Statistics Canada, 2013).

## The evolution of local poverty reduction initiatives and of their institutional context

In light of this unequal distribution of poverty across Montreal, over the years local poverty reduction initiatives have emerged in many neighbourhoods. With roots in community action and sometimes in the social economy, these initiatives have progressively moved towards more comprehensive and integrated approaches. These integrated approaches aim to create conditions conducive to people moving out of poverty and to counteracting the processes that cause people to become poor in the first place. In doing this, they try to improve living conditions and the quality of life of a given social environment (Bamogo, 2013). Over time, these approaches to poverty reduction have been integrated into a broader framework of *social development*<sup>10</sup> (Centraide, 2016a).

Until recently, public interventions have promoted and given impetus to approaches that mobilize the entire community to support poverty reduction efforts. From the 1980s onwards, various public policies have been aimed at regionalizing and decentralizing public services and have bestowed powers and mandates upon local and regional economic and social development institutions, such as CLDs and CRÉs.<sup>11</sup> Indicative of these policy trends, municipal authorities have taken on more powers in this area<sup>12</sup>; and the first two provincial government poverty reduction plans (2004–2009 and 2010–2015) gave official recognition to the contribution of Integrated Territorial Approaches (ITA)<sup>13</sup> (Klein and Champagne, 2011; Longtin and Rochman, 2015).

In Montreal, public funding for social development has evolved in ways that follow the pathways laid down by decentralization policies. These policies have partially delegated the provision of services to community organizations and local public service provider networks (Longtin and Rochman, 2015). As a result, government funding to community organizations increased during this period, driven by the motives of supporting public benefit missions and optimizing public-community sector complementarities. Responsibilities for granting and sometimes for managing funding envelopes geared towards supporting local communities' projects or actions have been passed down to local, supra-local or regional public bodies (such as municipalities, boroughs and CSSSs<sup>14</sup>) and even to civil society actors (such as CDECs<sup>15</sup> and neighbourhood tables). In Quebec, as elsewhere, the decentralization of authority and public services, and the stepping in of community organizations to deliver those services, have contributed to the multiplication and fragmentation of interventions on the ground (Christens and Inzeo, 2015). The more recent push towards collaboration and coordination of these disparate efforts can be seen in part as a response to the adverse effects of this fragmentation.

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<sup>10</sup> According to the definition adopted by the *Forum régional sur le développement social de l'Île de Montréal*, social development refers to creating and reinforcing the conditions required to enable each individual to fully develop her or his potential, to participate actively in social life, and to get her or his fair share of the collective wealth; and to enable the community to progress socially, culturally and economically in a context where economic development is oriented towards sustainable development as well as social justice ([www.frdsn.org/reglements-generaux/](http://www.frdsn.org/reglements-generaux/)).

<sup>11</sup> Centre local de développement (Local Development Centres) and Conférence régionale des élus (regional development authorities designed as spaces for ongoing partnership and alignment between various stakeholders)

<sup>12</sup> Starting in 2002, the City of Montréal began to take on policy roles in social development.

<sup>13</sup> In Montreal, the term ITA is taken to refer to the comprehensive neighbourhood-level approaches developed by Neighbourhood Tables, among others.

<sup>14</sup> Centre de santé et de services sociaux (sub-regional health and social service centres)

<sup>15</sup> Corporation de développement économique communautaire (Community economic development corporations)

Building on the broad theme of social development, both public and private funders have called upon communities and non-profit organizations to form cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination mechanisms. These entities would then take on the role of leading collective planning strategies and developing joint action plans. The following are three examples of funders and funding programs that have taken this orientation.

- The Integrated Urban Revitalization program (IUR),<sup>16</sup> initiated by the City of Montréal in 2003 and expanded since. It is in step with the overall logic of Integrated Territorial Approaches as they developed across Quebec.
- Centraide of Greater Montreal has moved from a sectoral approach to a territorial or place-based approach to funding.
- The funds that were set up based on partnerships between the Government of Quebec and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation (Québec en Forme, Avenir d'enfants and Réunir Réussir) also called upon local communities and regions to establish cross-sector collaboratives.

Thus, integrated local initiatives for poverty reduction and social development (or community change initiatives) must deal with a diversity of public and private funders, each with its own set of guidelines and parameters. For local actors working together, this complicates the task of pulling together the funding and financing that they need and of meeting a range of different accountability and evaluation requirements. Even the most skilled and successful local collaboratives run into challenges when it comes to getting funders to recognize the administrative complications that go along with implementing cross-sector community change approaches (Longtin and Rochman, 2015).

As these comprehensive, cross-sector approaches have been rolled out, communities have had to learn and develop new ways of collaborating and working together. This gave rise to a new field of work, or professional niche, that focuses on stakeholder mobilization and engagement, facilitating and managing collaborative processes, planning collective action and coordinating its implementation (Dynamo, 2014; Robitaille, 2016). This field calls for new competencies, both by the organizations that take the lead in facilitating and managing collective initiatives and by the other actors involved. In recognition of these challenges, Centraide and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation<sup>17</sup> supported the creation and development of two organizations, Dynamo and Communagir, whose role is to support community capacity-building in all of these areas (Longtin and Rochman, 2015; Centraide, 2016).

Although local collaborative initiatives for poverty reduction play an important role, they cannot, all by themselves, reverse the processes that create poverty and social exclusion. Because the problems of poverty and social exclusion are generated by forces that fall beyond the scope of local communities to affect, to many observers strategies that place too much focus on community change-type responses fall short of the mark. It is clear that the fate of urban neighbourhoods is closely linked to that of the cities and regions in which they are located, and which in turn are strongly influenced by the accelerated pace of change brought about by globalization (Mazany and Perry, 2014).

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<sup>16</sup> This program makes decentralized funds available to disadvantaged neighbourhoods to allow them to develop a long-term action plan (spanning a decade or more) to analyze and address problems of local urban revitalization and social cohesion. Leadership and management of eleven of the City's twelve IURs have been entrusted to neighbourhood tables by the boroughs.

<sup>17</sup> As the main private funders committed to promoting and supporting the integrated territorial approach.

## Particularities of the Montreal social development ecosystem

According to Verreault, Lussier and Bourque (2016), social development at the neighbourhood level has reached a certain maturity in Montreal, thanks in part to the city's 30 local cross-sector and multi-stakeholder round tables (neighbourhood tables), most of which emerged between the late 1980s and the early 2000s.

By encouraging a permanent space for dialogue and cross-sector collaboration, a good number of these neighbourhood tables have been able to support the development of a shared vision of community change for their neighbourhood. This shared vision then makes it possible to produce a joined-up action plan for the neighbourhood that then serves as a guidepost to help local organizations align their own actions with collectively-determined priorities (IMSDSL, 2015; Longtin and Rochman, 2015). In their role as facilitators and leaders of this type of comprehensive and integrated action, Montreal's neighbourhood round tables have increasingly come to be recognized by public authorities as representatives of the local level—a recognition that has been boosted by the existence of a regional alliance in the *Coalition montréalaise des tables de quartier* (CMTQ)—the Montréal Neighbourhood Round Tables Coalition in English.

The neighbourhood round tables have received critical core funding support from the *Initiative montréalaise de soutien au développement social local*<sup>18</sup> (IM) since its launch in 2006. The result of an innovative financial and strategic collaboration between the Montreal Regional Public Health Department (*Direction régionale de la santé publique de Montréal - DSP*), Centraide of Greater Montreal, the City of Montréal and the Montréal Neighbourhood Round Tables Coalition (CMTQ),<sup>19</sup> the Montreal Initiative has helped to strengthen and build the profile and recognition of Montreal's neighbourhood tables. A distinctive feature of this initiative is its networked governance, in which four partners from different sectors, as well as local organizations and institutions attached to these networks, have jointly built the framework parameters for the partnership and for its operation and hold each other accountable for their implementation. The Montreal Initiative's parameters have influenced tables to expand their makeup beyond community organizations to include other local stakeholders, particularly public institutions, and to implement the truly cross-sector alliances required for the neighbourhood to be eligible for certain other types of funding (IMSDSL, 2015).

In contrast to the local scale of intervention, social development work taking place at the regional level is more fragmented. Collaboration between the various regional actors forms an incomplete patchwork, with administrative and sectoral divisions complicating programs' ability to align or coordinate. Although different parties have advocated for the harmonization of programs and policies as well as procedures related to funding and accountability measures, much work remains to be done in this direction (Longtin and Rochman, 2015). Several actors are also advocating for the creation of a regional space for dialogue between decision-makers. An attempt was made in this direction between 2010 and 2012 to build up the *Démarche montréalaise de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion* (regional poverty reduction strategy).<sup>20</sup> This initiative, however, did not produce lasting effects according to one respondent in our study. A new opportunity arose more recently with the consultation and development process leading to the City of Montreal's Social Development Policy (*Politique montréalaise de développement social*),<sup>21</sup> culminating with the launch of the policy in June 2017.

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<sup>18</sup> Montreal Initiative for Local Social Development

<sup>19</sup> The latter as a non-financial partner.

<sup>20</sup> At the regional level, the City was mandated to lead this process by the Government of Quebec within the framework of its second government action plan to combat poverty and exclusion.

<sup>21</sup> According to the website tracking this process (<http://realisonsmtl.ca/devsocial/faqs#1266>), "In addition to orienting all of the City's municipal departments and services to incorporate social development as a dimension of all forms of development on the Island of Montreal, this policy is also an appeal to citizens and partners to work

## **Current period of uncertainty generated by political reforms, and the engagement of new actors**

Several aspects of this situation were modified in 2014, when, acting in a framework of budget austerity, the Government of Quebec announced a series of measures that had an impact on social development and the collaborative processes that supported local and regional social development in Quebec. These measures included, in particular, the abolition of the CRÉs<sup>22</sup>; the absorption of Local Development Centre (CLD) mandates by the regional county municipalities (RCMs), leading to the disappearance of community economic development corporations (CDÉCs) in Montreal; the merger of the twelve subregional health and social service centres (CSSSs) in Montreal into a couple of larger integrated health and social service authorities (CISSS/CIUSSS)<sup>23</sup>; major cuts (over 30%) to the public health budget; as well as various provincial ministries' withdrawals from having a regional administrative presence, and a refocusing on their primary mission (Verreault et al., 2016).

In addition, with the end of the partnership between the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation and the Government of Quebec, funding for the three funds linked to this partnership (Québec en forme, Avenir d'Enfants and Réunir Réussir) has not been renewed, leaving the local partnerships that established themselves around these funds uncertain about their future. Many local and regional collaboratives have seen their constituent parts reconfigured and are dealing with an overarching sense of uncertainty that has affected their ability to engage in collective projects or in regionalized approaches to social development (Verreault et al., 2016).

Alongside these changes, other factors have contributed to shifts in the landscape of integrated social development in Montreal. For example, over the last ten years, new players have openly expressed their interest and sought to provide a new impetus to Montreal's economic, cultural and social development.<sup>24</sup> In addition, new initiatives are offering opportunities for citizen engagement and encouraging innovative collective actions within and upon the urban living environment. Among these are *Je vois Montréal/Je fais Montréal* and *Amplifier Montréal*.

## **1.2 The CIP approach and model : influences of the philanthropic context**

### **The influence of strategic philanthropy**

The CIP and its participating foundations have been guided by observable trends in the world of philanthropy over the past 15 to 20 years, including the shift towards strategic or “changemaking” philanthropy. In aligning themselves with a strategic philanthropy approach, foundations move 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). These trends also call upon foundations to mobilize all of their financial resources (not just their granting budget) as well as other assets, such as expertise, networks, political capital and influence, in order to contribute to the sought-after changes (Brown, 2012; DP Evaluation, 2012).

A few major trends and influences intersect and influence one another in the discourses of strategic philanthropy, allowing foundations to draw upon a diversified range of options (Behrens and Kelly,

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together so that Montreal, as a metropolitan centre, comes to be recognized for the quality of its living environments.” (our translation)

<sup>22</sup> Conférences régionales des élus (regional development authorities designed as spaces for ongoing partnership and alignment between various stakeholders)

<sup>23</sup> Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux and Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux

<sup>24</sup> The report produced by BMO Financial Group and Boston Consulting Group (2014) is an example of this interest expressed by new players.

2008).

On the one hand, influences from the business world have permeated ways of understanding change, the thinking about preferred solutions, as well as practice within some parts of the sector (Letts, Ryan and Grossman, 1997; Porter and Kramer, 1999). Among other things, foundations inspired by the trend of venture philanthropy have identified themselves as investors rather than funders. Acting from this identity, these foundations may become directly involved in the projects or organizations that they fund, by way of which they can wield greater influence over their development.

Other foundations that have invested in systems change initiatives came to recognize that principles derived from complexity science applied to their work, and foundations adhering to this trend understand philanthropic strategy to be necessarily adaptive and in dynamic interaction with its context. According to this understanding, foundations are strategy participants seeking alignment with other stakeholders rather than the sole owners and orchestrators of strategy (Patrizi and Thompson, 2011; Center for Evaluation Innovation, 2014; Kania, Kramer and Russell, 2014).

In taking up a more strategic stance, a number of foundations in Canada have expressed their interest or asserted their intention to support social innovation.<sup>25</sup> These philanthropic actors draw upon a range of strategies, including support for risk-taking and experimentation, facilitating institutional innovation, promoting social innovation ecosystems, and leading systemic change (Pue and Breznitz, 2017).

Over the past decade, collaborations among foundations appear to have grown steadily in number in Canada (Glass, 2016). This increase may be linked to the influence of strategic philanthropy trends. For foundations that position themselves as changemakers, collaboration is often seen as the only way to achieve ambitious goals, based on the recognition that multiple actors need to work together to solve complex problems (Gibson, 2009; Fulton, Kasper and Kibbe, 2010; FPC, 2012; Huang and Seldon, 2015; Mulgan, 2016). In addition to collaborating among themselves, more and more foundations are also involved in governance networks bringing together actors from the public and private sectors, networks in which they are becoming increasingly influential (Jung and Harrow, 2014).

### **The philanthropic context in Montreal**

In Montreal, two elements of the philanthropic context were instrumental in fostering the foundation collaboration at the core of the CIP. First, during the interviews we conducted, several CIP partners indicated that over the past decade many foundations in Montreal had developed stronger relationships with one another. This relationship environment had laid the foundations for a more ambitious collaboration to take shape among some of these foundations. Second, over the last few years, new regional gathering forums emerged, creating the opportunity for Montreal-based foundations to meet more often and get to know one another better. Among these are the biennial summits on philanthropic culture held by the Institut Mallet since 2013 and policy mobilization on the part of Quebec foundations in response to increasing social inequality (Berthiaume and Lefèvre, 2016).

During this same period, Centraide of Greater Montreal was contending with major ongoing changes to the fundraising context. In recent years, the sharp increase, diversification and fragmentation of means for raising and distributing funds to charities has come to pose a major challenge to the federated philanthropic model of Centraide-United Way (Pereša and Viens, 2015; Centraide, 2016a). As Centraide felt the impact of these trends on its own annual campaign, it sought to reposition itself as a philanthropic actor by publicly promoting its added value as a leader in regional social development and in particular

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<sup>25</sup> The concept of social innovation draws its origins from different traditions of thought and action, including social entrepreneurship, territorial innovation and urban development (Lévesque, Fontan and Klein, 2014; Pue, Vandergeest and Breznitz, 2016).

its role as an expert and convener.

In doing so, Centraide followed in the footsteps of other North American community philanthropy organizations that have sought to position or brand themselves in ways that give them a comparative advantage with donors, in particular by taking up a “community leadership” role in the social development of their city or region (Hamilton, Parzen and Brown, 2004; Bernholz, Fulton and Kasper, 2005; Graddy and Morgan, 2006; Paarlberg and Meinhold, 2012). Centraide also adopted a five-year development plan, according to which it aims to accompany major donors on a “journey towards making a transformational gift, understood to be a large donation spread out over several years”<sup>26</sup> (Centraide, 2015, 2). The CIP, in this context, becomes a testing ground for this “transformational gift” approach.

### **Place-based strategic philanthropy and the tradition of philanthropic support for comprehensive community initiatives**

The CIP model of funding and support looks to the established tradition of foundation support for comprehensive community initiatives—a tradition that rose to prominence in the United States in the 1990s and 2000s. In Canada, the flagship initiative in this area was Vibrant Communities, supported by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation from 2012 through 2012 (Gamble, 2010; Cabaj, 2011). These initiatives have three characteristics in common (Aspen Institute, 2012):

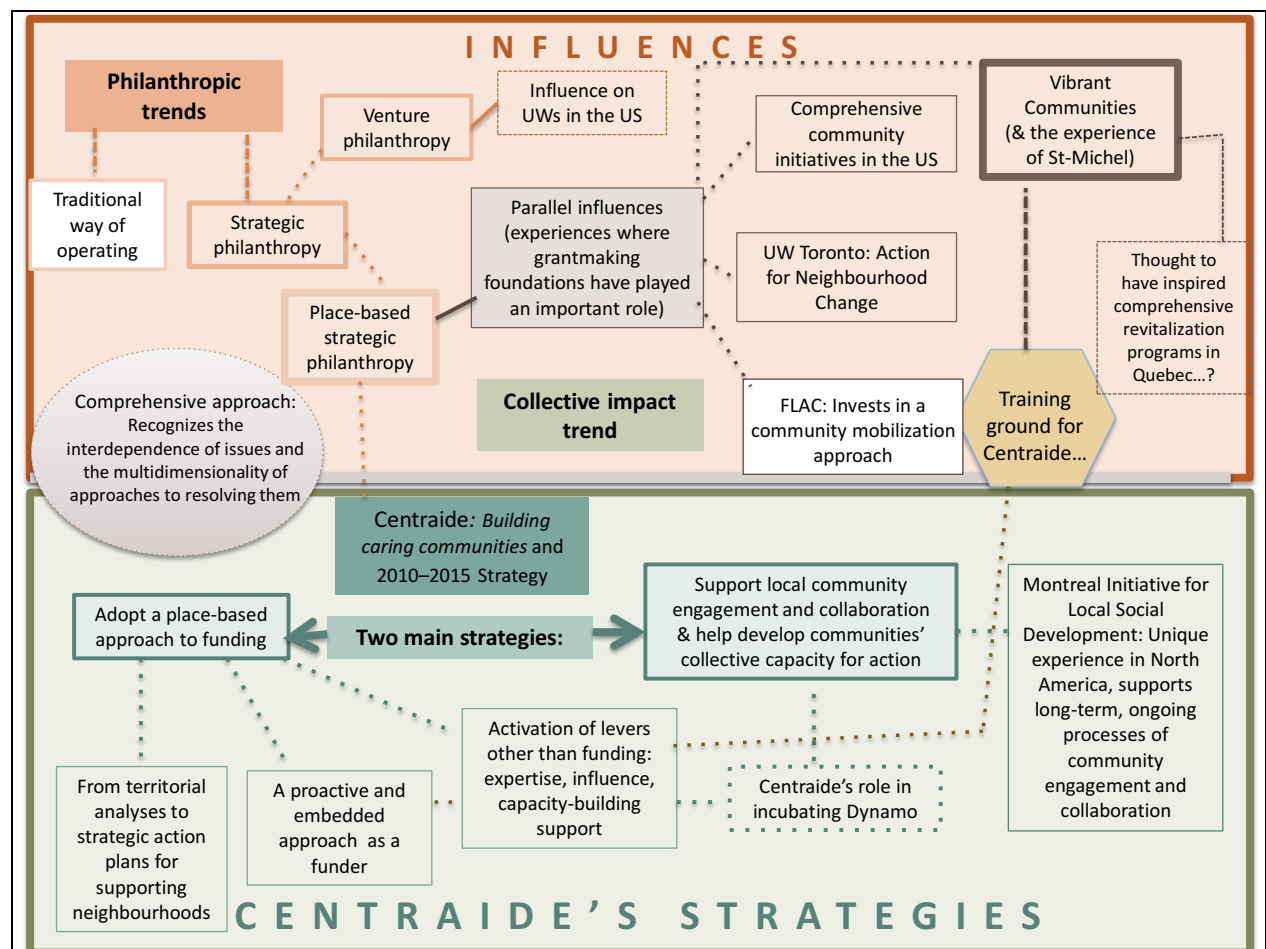
- A comprehensive and integrated orientation to community change; based on an understanding that poverty is itself a complex and multidimensional problem (Gamble, 2010; Auspos and Cabaj, 2014), these initiatives work across multiple areas, including housing and the built environment, social services, and economic and social development;
- A community building orientation, with a focus on community participation or control over their own agenda for development, on building social capital and the capacity of the community to take charge of its own future;
- An expectation on the part of their promoters that these initiatives will catalyze some kind of systems changes, so that public and private sector institutions and systems within a region more effectively support devitalized communities.

By the first two of these characteristics, these philanthropy-supported comprehensive community initiatives have several elements in common with the type of poverty reduction work already taking place in Montreal. As the CIP’s central actor, Centraide’s interest in these approaches is not new. From the late 1990s onwards, Centraide progressively developed a comprehensive approach to supporting community development, with a particular focus on cross-sector mobilization and collaboration between stakeholders (Centraide, 2000; Brodhead, 2008). Starting in 2003, Centraide began to offer a special broad form of funding support to the St-Michel neighbourhood’s *Chantier de revitalisation urbaine et sociale* (urban and social revitalization challenge) led by the neighbourhood round table Vivre St-Michel en santé. Acting from this position, Centraide helped to broker the Chantier’s inclusion in the first pan-Canadian Vibrant Communities cohort.

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<sup>26</sup> Our translation

**Figure 1: Concept map of influencing factors and strategies developed by Centraide of Greater Montreal**



Pole (2016), inspired by Pereša and Viens (2015)

In the years that followed, Centraide tested out new ways of working, positioning itself as both funder and social partner in the realm of community development and revitalization (Brodhead, 2008). This has included providing additional (non-core) funding and other supports to neighbourhood tables to help them to develop their capacity to lead comprehensive community change processes. From 2010 onwards, Centraide shifted its entire allocations process to align with a place-based approach to funding (Centraide, 2016b). Through this development, Centraide has aligned itself with the place-based strategic philanthropy movement that uses collaborative and multidimensional approaches to attempt to address the underlying causes of problems in local communities (Murdoch, 2007).



A cross-cutting review of 48 North American comprehensive community initiatives<sup>27</sup> by Kubisch et al. (2010) presents the successes and failures associated with this tradition of support. In particular, the study indicates that tangible positive outcomes had been achieved in some programmatic areas of human development, housing and physical neighbourhood change. The strongest results were on the community-building front, including strengthening social capital and connections in neighbourhoods and collective empowerment. It also noted lasting changes in the ways in which organizations and local institutions work, as well as an improvement in local actors' civic capacity to influence policy and systems.

The analyses of Kubisch et al. (2010) and other researchers (Gamble, 2010; Auspos and Cabaj, 2014; Hopkins, 2015) highlight the conditions and success factors related to the design, coordination and supports required by such initiatives. In all cases, the characteristics, opportunities and constraints of the local context are key determinants to how an initiative unfolds. For this reason, they underscore the importance of each initiative being thought out, planned and implemented by local actors. In the evaluation of Vibrant Communities conducted by Gamble (2010), the communities that generated the most significant impacts had common characteristics in terms of maturity and collective capacity. The inherent complexity of comprehensive community change processes calls for flexible and adaptive management strategies that are based on continuous learning approaches. These strategies in turn call for "transformational" or "systems" leadership skills. Two of the actors closest to the CIP, Centraide and Dynamo, took on translating the work by Kubisch et al. (2010)—*Voices from the field III: Lessons and Challenges from Two Decades of Community Change Efforts*—from English into French in order to promote its dissemination in Quebec.<sup>28</sup> It is therefore safe to assume that Centraide and Dynamo have taken some of these factors into account in the design of their own interventions in support of community change.

### **A parallel channel: foundations' interest for cities and urban development**

Alongside this tradition of support for comprehensive community initiatives, another current of philanthropic action is likewise concerned with place, in this case in connection with emerging urban development and sustainability challenges. This current views cities as paradoxical places where challenges are intertwined with opportunities, and as spaces where the most important social and ecological issues of our era are concentrated. Cities also concentrate financial and human capital, which makes them engines of economic growth and hubs of creativity and social innovation (Tomalty, 2013; MacKenzie, 2015; Espiau, 2016).

In the present context in which municipal authorities are being given increased responsibilities without receiving adequate resources to fulfill them, a consensus is emerging that the public, private and non-profit sectors all need to work together and share responsibility for resolving urban challenges and responding to the needs of urban populations. In this view, these three sectors need to bring together their resources and capacities to identify and test innovative solutions to the problems at hand (Tibbitt, 2011; Tomalty, 2013; FFSC, 2016).

The multidisciplinary placemaking movement has its roots in this context and is one of the areas of action in which foundations have taken an interest.<sup>29</sup> According to the broadest definitions of the term,

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<sup>27</sup> Including the Vibrant Collectivities initiative in Canada.

<sup>28</sup> Dynamo posted this translation of the work of Kubisch et al. (2010) on its website: [http://dynamocollectivo.ca/20\\_48/](http://dynamocollectivo.ca/20_48/)

<sup>29</sup> For example, the initiative of the Anne T. & Robert M. Bass Foundation in the United States (<https://www.brookings.edu/news-releases/brookings-announces-the-anne-t-and-robert-m-bass-initiative-on->

placemaking is a multidisciplinary collaborative process aimed at shaping the public realm of cities to better respond to the needs of the people who live in them and achieve a better quality of life (Silberberg and Lorah, 2013; UN, 2015). The philosophy and practices put forward by the placemaking movement bear some resemblance to those of comprehensive community initiatives, in particular their emphasis on intersectoral and multi-network governance as well as on collaborative planning and action to improve the quality of life in a given environment.

Other characteristics of the placemaking approach appear to dovetail well with the goals and approaches adopted by comprehensive community change initiatives, and are part of the repertoire of many community change practitioners in Montreal. These include:

- a framework that focuses more on social inclusion and the right to the city (universal action) than on poverty reduction (population-specific action);
- a focus on citizen mobilization, civic participation and local communities as sites for citizen empowerment;
- an emphasis on local democracy and processes allowing for the reclaiming of public spaces and places of local governance.

In contrast to classic comprehensive community initiatives that foundations have traditionally supported, placemaking promotes more hybrid initiative forms, recognizing that their leadership can come just as much from the private sector as the public or non-profit sectors.

As a matter of fact, there seems to be a fairly close relationship between the philanthropic tradition of support for comprehensive community initiatives and the newer current towards philanthropic investment in urban development and placemaking—to the point where writings emerging from each tradition contain cross-references to the other tradition.<sup>30</sup> However, given that the comprehensive community initiatives tradition is older and more documented, it may have relevant lessons to share with the still emerging field of philanthropic action in the urban development realm.

### **The collective impact framework**

The term “collective impact” and its framework first surfaced about five years ago and today occupy a dominant place in the landscape of comprehensive community change in North America<sup>31</sup> (Cabaj and Weaver, 2016). A series of seminal articles<sup>32</sup> provided practitioners with a common language and frame of reference to succinctly describe the underlying principles of comprehensive community change and other collaborative initiatives (Weaver, 2014; Christens and Inzeo, 2015).

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[innovation-and-placemaking/](#)) and the Cities for People initiative launched by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

<sup>30</sup> In their inventory of placemaking practices in Canada, Horwitz and Woolner (2016) attest to this by making explicit reference to writings from the field of comprehensive community change. Conversely, a recent work on the current state of comprehensive community initiatives contains a paper on the potential of placemaking for creating economic opportunities for low-income residents (Burns, 2015).

<sup>31</sup> Albeit somewhat less in Quebec; to our knowledge, only one of the foundational collective impact articles has been translated into French.

<sup>32</sup> Kania and Kramer, 2011; Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012; Turner, Merchant, Kania and Martin, 2012; Kania and Kramer, 2012.

The collective impact framework is built on the premise that solving complex problems requires the intensive engagement of influential partners across a variety of sectors, who then collaborate to leverage the resources at their disposal to drive toward outcomes in line with the desired changes (Weaver, 2016). The framework identifies five conditions to be met for partners who wish to make significant progress with regard to a given problem (Kania and Kramer, 2011; Hanleybrown, Kania and Kramer, 2012). According to Easterling (2013), some of these conditions—a common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, and continuous communication between the partners—are already well known to community development practitioners. Alongside these, the collective impact framework names two other conditions that had not received as much previous attention: a shared measurement system and a backbone support structure for coordinating the work.

In shifting the emphasis in the organizing process towards the outcomes to be achieved, the collective impact concept has attracted particular attention from funders of collaborative initiatives (Christens and Inzeo, 2015). There seems to be a good fit between the collective impact framework and the interests of strategic philanthropy, which some authors refer to as “outcomes-oriented philanthropy” (Brest, 2012). Inspired by these and other trends, these funders have for some time been communicating expectations that collaborative initiatives be able to measure and demonstrate their own impact (Walzer, Weaver and McGuire, 2016).

Despite the succinctness and resulting popularity of the collective impact framework, writings on the subject reflect ambiguities, contested interpretations and even divergent paradigms of change. More recent contributions propose to update and improve upon the initial framework proposed by Kania and Kramer (Brady and Juster, 2016; Cabaj and Weaver, 2016; Kania and Kramer, 2016). Others flatly suggest that the field should move beyond “collective impact” to embrace more appropriate ways of conceptualizing collective action (Wolff, 2016; Himmelman et al., 2017). These recent contributions are helping to bring the collective impact framework and the principles and practices of community development closer together, infusing more recent thinking about collective impact with the lessons learned from the older community change tradition.

Some of these reframings propose a revisiting of the “who” and the “what” of collective impact. The earlier writings on the subject emphasize the importance of bringing together decision-makers and influential people to channel change. According to some of these early framings, funders, and in particular foundations, are called upon to play a lead role as catalysts and conveners, and stay on as active participants in the governance bodies and working groups of the initiative. Others have criticized this idea, noting 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 (Kubisch et al., 2010; DP Evaluation, 2012; Glass, 2016). In a similar vein, the most recent reframings insist on the need to bring together not just powerful influencers, but also all stakeholders in the system who are concerned with bringing about change. They also point to the importance of paying more attention to power relations and equity issues within collective impact partnerships (Williams and Marxer, 2014; McAfee, Glover and Blackwell, 2015; Schmitz, 2015).

These recent contributions also argue that the actual scope of action of many collective impact efforts often falls short of the scope laid out in the framework, as their scope of action is often limited to improving the coordination of services and activities in a given area. The authors of these more recent reframing texts<sup>33</sup> insist that if collective impact initiatives actually want to tackle complex problems, they need to go beyond service integration to focus on policy and systems change.

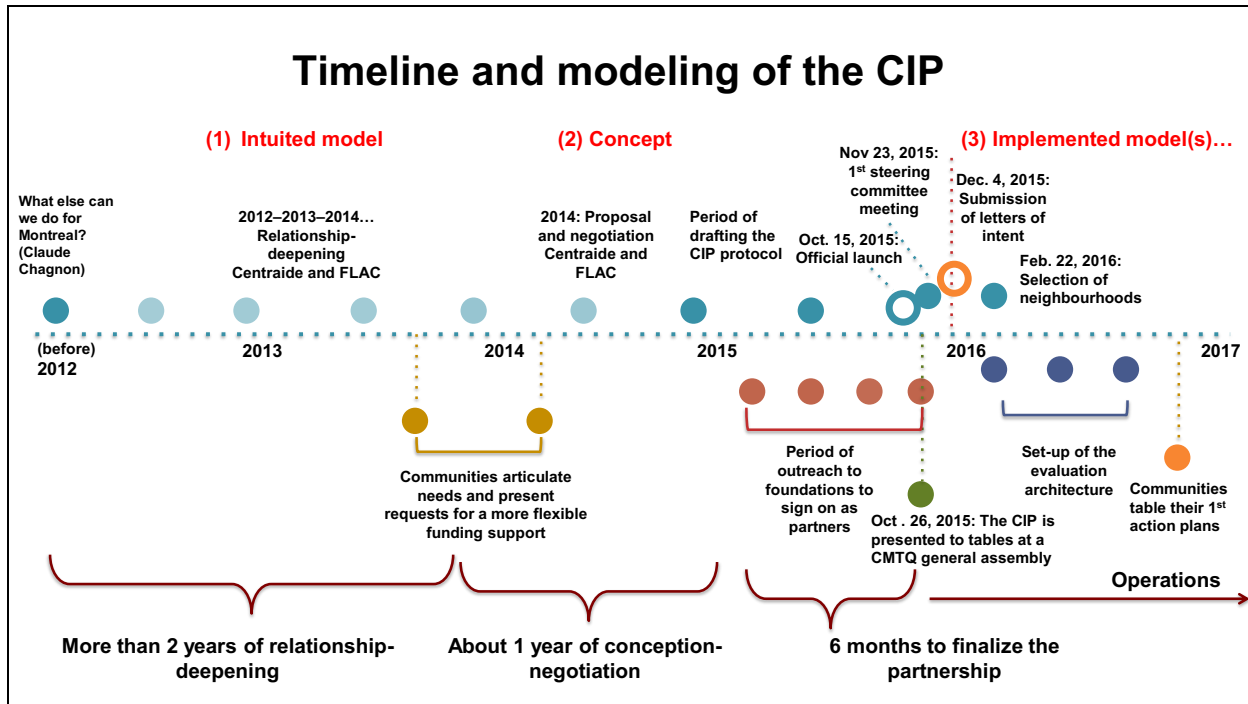
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<sup>33</sup> Including an external stakeholder interviewed as part of this research.

## 2.0 THE CIP'S ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The originating ideas that led to the CIP date back to 2013. The timeline in Figure 2 summarizes some of the key points in the project's conceptualization, development and early implementation .

Figure 2: Timeline of the Collective Impact Project: from ideation to launch



### 2.1 First phase: a project conceived and initiated by two originators

The idea for the CIP emerged from a collaboration between Centraide and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, each of which had a history of supporting broad-spectrum community development approaches. Centraide's background in this area is described in the previous section. The Chagnon Foundation's experience is rooted in the three province-wide funds that it had set up, starting in 2005, in partnership with the Government of Quebec. The parameters of these funds had called for cross-sector organizing and engagement in local communities across the province (Brunet, 2014).

With their respective backgrounds in this area, these two philanthropic foundations had been in contact with each other for a number of years in connection with this field of action, and had had even engaged in more formal dialogue regarding a couple of common areas of intervention.<sup>34</sup> In addition, since 2008 the Chagnon Foundation has contributed an amount each year to Centraide's annual fundraising campaign, specifically to support cross-sector collaborations and comprehensive community change approaches in Greater Montreal.

<sup>34</sup> In particular *1,2,3 Go!* and *Avenir d'Enfants, Communagir* and *Dynamo*

At one of the annual meetings held to follow up on the Chagnon Foundation's gift, Claude Chagnon challenged the two organizations to work together to develop a specific strategy for Montreal. The context was conducive for both actors to take up this invitation. As the sunset period approached for the three funds set up by the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, the foundation was engaging in a strategic reflection about its future social development investment strategies. Centraide, for its part, was aware of the limits of its own capacity to support comprehensive community change work, whether this be within the *Initiative montréalaise de soutien au développement social local* (IM) funding partnership or on its own. Centraide was looking to explore new ways to reach beyond these limits. A short time after this initial challenge was launched, Centraide also undertook a strategic repositioning exercise to better deal with the new challenges that had emerged in the fundraising world.

Together, the two foundations worked for more than a year to hammer out the basis for their own partnership, and for six months after this (from late 2014 to early 2015) to draft and obtain approval for a framework presenting the rationale, logic, goals and outcomes of a "Montreal strategy." This work culminated in the CIP's foundational presentation document.<sup>35</sup>

### **The initial project's theory of change, as proposed by its original architects**

Based on information contained in the CIP presentation document and presented to us in interviews with the project's co-architects, we were able to sketch out the CIP's implicit theory of change at the start-up phase. Along with the project's logical framework, the theory of change also identifies a set of underlying hypotheses and premises. It shines a light on the type of changes that the two organizations aimed to bring about or to influence, and sketches out the sequence of actions to be implemented and their anticipated outcomes. Because it is based on a series of *hypotheses* about the way change will happen, a theory of change is never set in stone. At most, it lays out the thinking underpinning a project's intention, and it needs to shift and adapt as its various working hypotheses are either confirmed or refuted.

The following rendering of the theory of change represents the ideas that were present at the CIP's starting point. It can be thought of as a rendering of the starting framework that served to orient the project and to launch its operations.

#### Premises

As a starting point, the CIP's two co-founders focused in on comprehensive local social development (CLSD) in Montreal as a field of action. For Centraide, in particular, the Montreal neighbourhood tables are the main CLSD intermediaries.

The initial hypothesis was that some neighbourhoods had reached a certain level of maturity in their stakeholders' ability to work and accomplish things together. These tables were considered to have met the preconditions for achieving appreciable results in poverty reduction and for improving their residents' living conditions and quality of life. The reference neighbourhood in this area is St-Michel, whose *Chantier de revitalisation* had been singled out as a pilot project to receive special support since 2002 from Centraide. In this area, the project's originators agreed on a premise that is consistent with those held by other foundations providing support for comprehensive community initiatives. In addition, they share the premise, or principle, of respecting the pace set by communities, and of allowing them to articulate what kinds of outside supports they need, based on the priorities for change that local stakeholders and residents have established together.

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<sup>35</sup> This French-only document, entitled *Projet Impact Collectif mobilisant les grandes fondations familiales et Centraide du Grand Montréal*, has not been publicly released.

### A common understanding of the problem to be solved

The project's originators had a shared understanding of the main issue to tackle: available funding for neighbourhood revitalization processes was limited in scope, standardized in nature and highly fragmented, because it was tied to established, top-down public and private funding programs. Local round tables, for their part, cast into the role of managing the different funding envelopes obtained for their neighbourhood's development, were challenged to coordinate and fit the different pieces of funding together in ways that would support the integrity of their neighbourhood action plan. The upshot of this was that neighbourhoods relying on existing funding sources ran up against concrete limits to implementing their collective change strategies.

This issue had already been recognized by several actors at the regional level. Both Centraide and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation had already participated in previous attempts to harmonize public and private funders' funding programs at the regional level, or even the local level in a couple of cases. None of these previous attempts had brought about conclusive and enduring changes.

Over the course of the period when the two originators were laying the foundations of the CIP partnership, on two different occasions community stakeholders voiced their frustration with the limits of existing funding measures, and asked funders to innovate in their own ways of operating. In the first case, community stakeholders who had gathered at a forum-type event in the fall of 2013 expressed the need for a flexible funding source that would allow them to carry out certain actions that had been collectively prioritized by their neighbourhood but that did not fit into the priorities of existing funding programs.

Six months later, representatives of *Vivre Saint-Michel en santé* (VSMS) met with Centraide to convey a similar message. After more than a decade of special support for the *Chantier de revitalisation* as a pilot project, this neighbourhood had made tremendous progress in terms of developing its collective capacity, and had completed two rounds of implementation of its neighbourhood strategic plan. However, in spite of VSMS' efforts to get funders to loosen their funding criteria to enable more flexible support for the neighbourhood's priorities, funders proved unable to break with their standardized program criteria. The St-Michel neighbourhood still had to fight to defend the legitimacy of acting on local priorities that did not fit into any existing funding niche. Representatives of *Vivre Saint-Michel en santé* challenged Centraide to use its influence to find a solution.

### A central hypothesis concerning a new way of operating for funders

As presented by Centraide (2016a, 36), the CIP's central hypothesis is that:

[...] the action of a certain number of funders, if it is well organized and coordinated among them, will allow for greater local and regional coherence and consistency and will have a more powerful collective impact than the isolated outcomes achieved so far. [our translation]

Among other things, the CIP presentation document (2015, 1) expresses the ambition that funders working together will be able to "remove obstacles to a truly comprehensive and integrated action for reducing poverty and advancing social development in neighbourhoods" [our translation]. The CIP initiative gave itself a five-year time horizon to make significant progress in this direction.

### The principal means to achieve these ends

At its core, the CIP is focused on deploying resources to support the action of local initiatives for comprehensive community change. Two key decisions helped to shape the main strategies that would seek to deliver on the working hypothesis outlined above. First, the decision was made that Centraide would act as the project's lead and manager. Second, the project's two originators decided that they would mobilize other financial partners to join the initiative.

Several features of the CIP's strategies set it apart from other existing support measures present in the CLSD ecosystem.

- The flexible and comprehensive nature of the funding. The CIP aims to make substantial amounts of funding available to neighbourhoods to support them in implementing their action plans. Rather than be subjected to the normative constraints that generally apply to programs, this funding would be flexible and adaptable to the different needs expressed on the ground. In addition to this main funding scheme, various CIP partners have made complementary funding amounts available, to be disbursed in accordance with these funding partners' granting niches but also, and more importantly, according to the needs and the opportunities that arise in CIP-supported communities.
- Two sources of accompaniment and capacity-building support for communities
  - A first source of customized support is offered to a certain number of communities by Dynamo, an organization that specializes in supporting collective processes and in developing the local capacities and skills for leading and participating in comprehensive community change initiatives. Initially, Dynamo's role in the context of the CIP was meant to focus on strengthening evaluation capacity in communities. As the CIP was rolled out, however, Dynamo's capacity-building role expanded to become broader and more adapted to the varying needs of funded neighbourhoods.
  - A second source of accompaniment relates to the role that Centraide plays with Montreal neighbourhoods—the value proposition that allows it to act as CIP project lead and manager. Since it reorganized its granting operations in 2010, Centraide believes that it has developed the necessary infrastructure and in-house skills that would allow it to bring substantial expertise to bear in the CIP's implementation. As a key feature of this reorganization, the role of program officers has shifted towards a more proactive one based on close, embedded relationships with neighbourhood stakeholders across Montreal.
- The strategic action to be undertaken by the partners that make up the CIP's governance, around two goals: first of all, influence funding practices within their own organizations that are likely to have repercussions for CLSD; and secondly, influence the practices of other regional actors involved in funding local initiatives. Beyond this intention, the actual meaning and direction that this strategic action would take were less well defined than the other strategies in the initial proposal. The actual strategy beyond the intention remains to be defined at a later stage of the CIP's development.
- Evaluation, knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer activities to support the project's learning goals. Knowledge transfer activities can occur between local communities in Montreal as well as between these communities, the CIP's partners and other communities engaged in comparable initiatives elsewhere in Quebec, Canada and the United States.

## Outputs

The CIP proposes two main means for channelling supports to local communities:

- Intensive support (CIP track 1): Five (5) neighbourhoods would receive substantial resources “conducive to giving a new impetus to their collective efforts to reduce poverty”; these would become the testing ground of the CIP’s central hypothesis.
- Targeted support (CIP track 2): A certain number (12) of other neighbourhoods would be funded for specific actions or projects in order to strengthen their work and to positively influence their capacity development. The idea behind this funding track was to avoid creating too much of an imbalance between the few Montreal communities that would benefit from funding track 1 and the remaining communities.

## Short-term effects

The co-architects of the project anticipated that the supports rolled out would have a boosting and leveraging effect on communities in the short term. A *boosting effect* would manifest in increased community capacity, in particular for planning and implementing comprehensive approaches. This aim is consonant with the conclusion that Gamble (2010) was able to draw from his evaluation of Vibrant Communities, that the maturity of collaboration and the development of community capacity represent preconditions for achieving more significant effects. Once these preconditions have been met in a number of neighbourhoods, the notion of a *leveraging effect* evokes the idea of a tipping point being reached that allows these neighbourhoods to start operating in “collective impact” mode, that is to say in terms of outcomes-focused stakeholder engagement and collective action.

## Medium- and long-term outcomes

The initial proposal anticipates four kinds of medium- and long-term outcomes. No hierarchy was set up between the four kinds, in the sense that each is a valid end in itself; at the same time, the theory of change’s logic model suggests that certain outcomes would need to be achieved as a prerequisite for others to be achieved.

The visual representation of the theory of change (Figure 3)<sup>36</sup> illustrates this relationship between the outcomes without placing them in a hierarchical relationship.

- The first order of outcomes are those that achieved on the ground within CIP-funded communities. Based on the boosting and leveraging effects achieved in the short term, it is expected that a certain number of communities will be equipped to bring about the changes that they have identified in their neighbourhood development plans, including in the area of poverty reduction. Since communities choose their own change targets, the CIP does not have direct control over the range of outcomes achieved on the ground. Communities can set a range of different goals and targets for change, including improvements to collaborative processes and engagement dynamics, improvements to living conditions and quality of life in the neighbourhood, or systemic issues that affect the welfare of local populations.

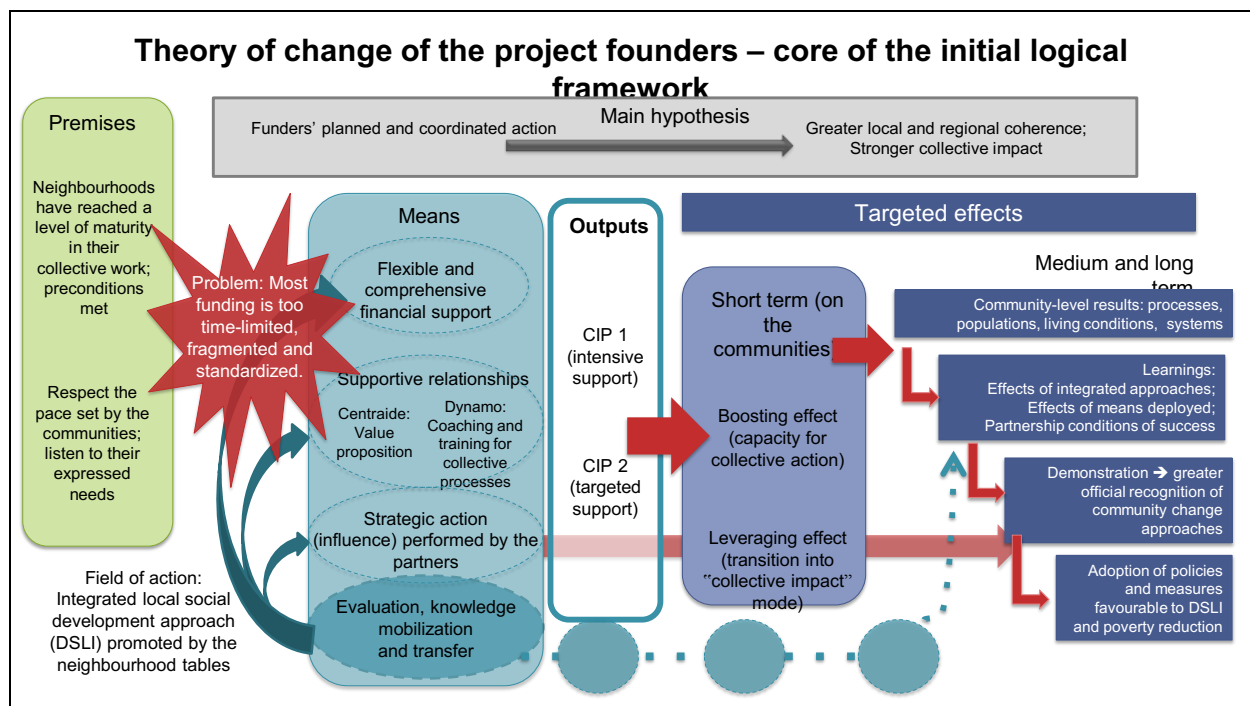
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<sup>36</sup> Visual representation proposed by the authors, putting in relationship the different elements presented in this section.



- The second order of outcomes concerns all levels of the CIP action system (stakeholders on the ground, project managers, financial and non-financial partners). It concerns the learnings generated or enabled by the CIP initiative; the creation of new practical knowledge, the lessons that the experience brings to light and their transfer and application to practice for each of the stakeholders. These learnings are not brought to light only at the end of the project. On the contrary, certain learnings need to happen on a real-time basis during the project, to help stakeholders to shift their attention from one type of outcome to another.
- The third order of outcomes relates to the broader CLSD ecosystem, and is contingent upon the first two orders of outcomes. If meaningful outcomes are achieved on the ground, and if the CIP's learnings facilitate a clear understanding of the local and regional conditions and strategies that contribute to achieving these outcomes, then the project's promoters believe that the CIP will be able to demonstrate that collaborative, integrated approaches to community-led development are both the cornerstone of CLSD and a poverty reduction approach that works. The project's originators believe that these types of approaches will come to be better recognized and supported by funders and other institutions on the basis of this demonstration.
- The fourth order of outcomes also falls within the broader CLSD ecosystem. It targets changes to the practices of key public, private and philanthropic-sector organizations that are active at the regional level. If these organizations were to adhere to a joined-up vision for social, cultural and economic development, they would be more inclined to align their policies and practices to better support CLSD and poverty reduction. This order of outcomes is partly contingent on the ability of the CIP to demonstrate the effectiveness of CLSD practices and achieve greater recognition for them. By utilizing their own strategic leverage, the CIP partners could potentially play an active role in driving towards this outcome.

**Figure 3: Initial theory of change of the CIP, as represented by Pole and Fontan**



Although the CIP framework document envisions all of these outcomes, it does not initially set a line of accountability for the project. The latter would allow stakeholders in the CIP action system to distinguish between those levels of outcomes that they can expect to be within their reach and those that they cannot directly affect. These levels of outcomes are then understood to be hoped-for ripple effects. During the interviews carried out for this study, representatives of the two originating organizations recognized that they needed to be modest in their expectations for the CIP, acknowledging that the CIP will not by itself be able to reduce poverty in funded neighbourhoods within five years.

## 2.2 The second phase of the CIP's construction: mobilization and engagement of the other partners

Once the collaborative design process with Centraide was completed, the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation committed \$12.5 million over five years, both to fund activities carried out by CIP-supported communities, as well as for the CIP's coordination and evaluation components. Once the orientations and key design features of the initiative were established, between the beginning of 2015 and the launch of the CIP in the fall of the same year, Centraide and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation worked to expand the partnership by engaging five other philanthropic foundations.<sup>37</sup>

The new partners were invited to sign on to a project proposal whose main features had already been decided upon. In signing on, partner foundations agreed to make a five-year financial commitment ranging between \$500,000 and \$2.5 million. As a result of this engagement process, a total amount of \$21 million would be made available over five years for communities selected for CIP support.<sup>38</sup> Funds are disbursed annually according to individual partner agreements, and a steering committee bringing together all the partners focuses on the project's goals and smooth operations and contributes to investment scenarios.

Most of the individual partner agreements were concluded over a six-month period, a relatively short period of time in comparison to the much longer process of relationship-deepening and negotiation that took place between the two co-architects. Two factors contributed to this rapid mobilization of new partners:

- This proposal to partner around the CIP was built upon existing relationships between senior executives at Centraide and those of partner organizations. During the interviews, a number of respondents stressed the key role of trust relationships that existed between these individuals.
- The presence of the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation was a reassuring element for many of the partners. The Foundation's own financial involvement in the CIP stood in as a guarantee that the initiative was both solid and serious.

### **Engagement of non-financial partners: relationship between the CIP and the Montreal Initiative for Local Social Development (*Initiative montréalaise de soutien au développement social local*)**

Beginning in the summer of 2015, Centraide approached the City of Montreal and the Montreal Public Health Department (*Direction régionale de la santé publique de Montréal*) and invited them to join the project as non-financial partners—an invitation which was accepted. Their association with the project is

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<sup>37</sup> A sixth foundation joined the project in 2016, after its launch. In addition, three non-financial partners, mentioned further below, were also mobilized to be part of the project's governance.

<sup>38</sup> These are confirmed financial commitments at the time of writing. The CIP partnership continues to be open to new contributions and the number of funding partners and total contributions will continue to evolve over the five years of the initiative.

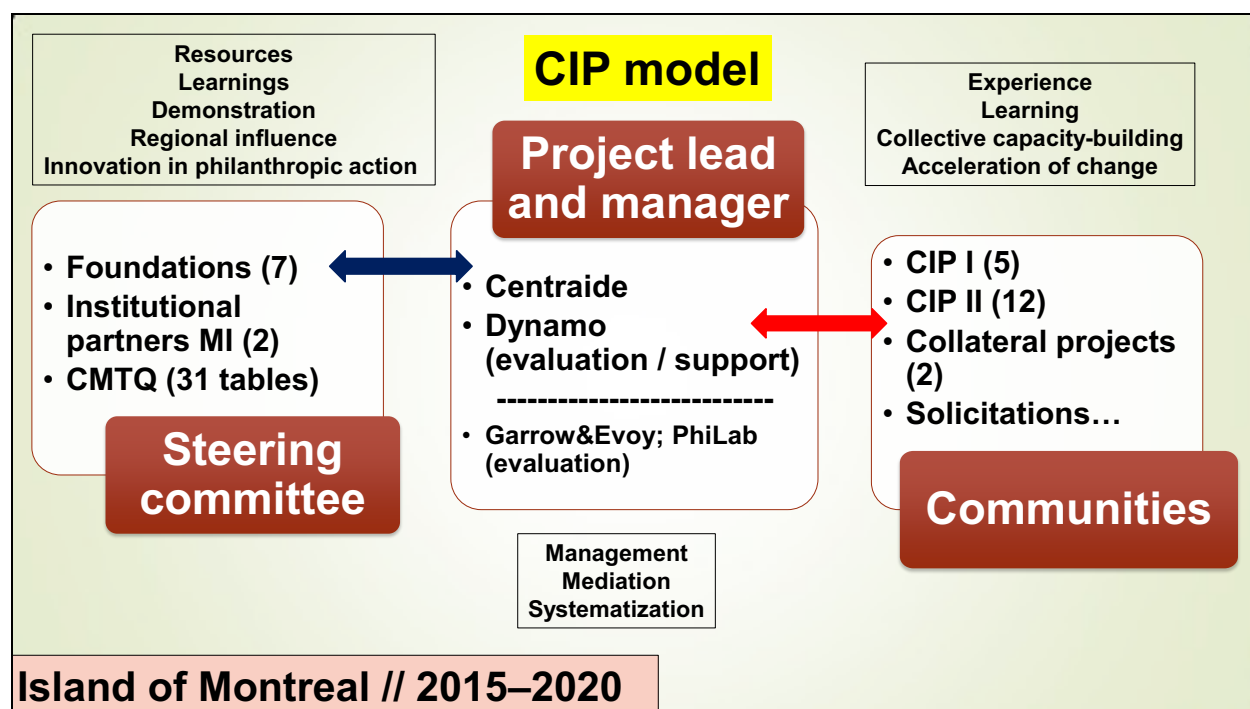
strategic, as they are at once the two other funders of the Montreal Initiative and the managers of a number of other funds that support local collaborative initiatives.

The CIP is built upon foundations that have been laid in part by the Montreal Initiative, which is based on a partnership between Centraide, the City of Montreal, the Montreal Public Health Department and the Montreal Neighbourhood Tables Coalition (CMTQ). The Montreal Initiative’s reference framework (IMSDSL, 2015) lays out the role and the defining characteristics of neighbourhood tables, who within the CIP act as lead organizations and contact points in communities.

The CIP sets itself apart from the Montreal Initiative and from various public sources of funding for local projects stemming from collaborative processes; it is distinct in the process by which it was conceived, its intentions, forms of funding and mode of governance. The CIP is a philanthropic project, conceived entirely by foundations. It leverages philanthropic funds only, with no public investment. The two public institution representatives participate in the CIP steering committee as partners who bring to the table:

- valuable additional expertise, based on their institution’s deep knowledge of Montreal neighbourhoods;
- a power of influence within their organization regarding policies and practices with a bearing on CLSD.

**Figure 4: Action model of the CIP**



The CIP is based on an action model (Figure 4) that mobilizes private funders and non-funding partners. Centraide is the project’s lead and manager. The CIP’s operating model is similar to those adopted by philanthropic foundations that have defined and led traditional comprehensive community initiatives. This type of operating model implies a different relationship between funders and fundees than the one that characterizes the Montreal Initiative. In this new environment, the neighbourhood tables have had to adjust their expectations and ways of relating to their funders.

## 3.0 INITIAL OBSERVATIONS YIELDED BY THE STUDY

### 3.1 The partners' motivations and expectations

The series of interviews conducted with the CIP's steering committee partners provided an opportunity to more fully understand their motivations and expectations in joining the partnership.

Overall, respondents expressed a strong interest and a real willingness to engage in the CIP. Most are interested in at least one element of the project originators' proposal. In particular, they recognize that the project offers an opportunity to:

- collaborate between foundations;
- produce systemic effects in the area of poverty reduction;
- be better able to measure the impact of their grants;
- learn about ways to support CLSD that are most likely to produce lasting effects in communities.

On the other hand, the interviews revealed that many partners joined the CIP in the hope of creating a space for collective decision-making and action that would shift the initial proposal in the direction they wanted to see it go. From the outset, we observed a dynamic tension between the initial proposal promoted by the co-architects and the wishes of the other partners.

As strategic actors, the partners were accustomed to setting their own direction and priorities. They were not able to do this with the CIP, where they were instead asked to sign on as co-investors and co-learners in a project that had already been defined. With the exception of the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, neither the financial partners nor the other partners (connected to the ) had the opportunity to contribute to the major decisions that shaped the initial project proposal.

Under these conditions, the other foundations' buy-in and participation has been more transactional. They signed on in the hope of drawing some benefit from it for their own organization. Some were reluctant to sign on to the project in the way that was asked of them, instead negotiating specific participation and contribution conditions for their own organization.

The partners are in agreement with the CIP's overall principles and objectives, albeit to varying degrees. They do not necessarily agree with all the premises and underlying assumptions; among others, some question the premise that neighbourhood tables are the natural backbone organizations for community change initiatives. It should be noted that the majority of the CIP's funding partners do not have their own history of supporting CLSD in Montreal. Instead, they are coming to the CIP with their own particular philanthropic strategies and their own frame of reference, whether this be social innovation, social entrepreneurship or the role of philanthropy in urban development.

Beyond the intentions laid out in the co-architects' proposal, the other funding partners also have their own interests and intentions. By joining the CIP, some hope to bring a wind of change into the CLSD ecosystem and open it up to new influences. To some of them, the prevailing conception of neighbourhood action is not wide open enough to all the networks of actors who could have an influence on living conditions and quality of life at the local level. Others, for their part, would like to disrupt the CLSD ecosystem's established ways of operating and providing funding, opening it up to different ways of thinking about and welcoming change.

Finally, some foundations view their participation in the CIP steering committee as an opportunity, beyond what takes place within the framework of the CIP, to orient and align their own funding initiatives in Montreal neighbourhoods.

### 3.2 The CIP's operating model and governance

A number of aims motivate the partners' collaboration within the CIP. During the interviews, each of the following purposes was mentioned by at least three partners.

- Enable a more *efficient* allocation of funds, through cost sharing and reducing the due diligence workload for each participating funder as well as by offering pooled funding aimed at simplifying grantees' administrative burden.
- Learning and developing knowledge, be it about conditions and best practices for providing support for CLSD or about funder collaboration and ways to align funding and other supports.
- Increase the scope and impact of the initiative beyond the effects yielded by combining financial resources; for some this involves developing synergies between different resources and developing and implementing coordinated strategies to achieve common goals.
- By setting an example, induce a shift in foundations' and other funders' practices; however, beyond this demonstration effect, for some partners the CIP's systems change work should target specific policies and practices within the public and/or private sectors.

Different organizing models exist to support funder collaboration around each of these different purposes (Prager, 2011; DP Evaluation, 2012). The initial operating model of the CIP, as laid out in the initial proposal, is well suited to pursuing some of these purposes and less suited to others. Under the original model, the partner foundations disburse the funds that they have committed to the project to an intermediary organization (Centraide), itself a funder that has particular expertise in the CIP's content area (Huang and Seldon, 2015). In this model, both decision-making powers and risks and responsibilities reside primarily with the intermediary funder. Centraide is the linchpin in the project, mediating between partners and neighbourhood round tables, fulfilling coordination and community relations roles, providing analysis and expertise, and managing the project's implementation.

In many respects, this operating model could well meet some of the partners' expectations. While well suited to pursuing the purposes of efficiency and learning, the model represents a form of collaboration that places relatively few demands on the organizations involved. The partners' role in decision-making has so far been rather limited. The current CIP model is designed to serve them in their role as co-learners, allowing them to receive information for accountability purposes and knowledge development.

It is important to recall here that, unlike the two co-architects, the partners as a group did not have the chance to get to know each other and develop a working relationship within the CIP context before the start of activities. Given this, a lighter-touch and less constraining model of collaboration could be appropriate for the first year of the partnership. During this initial period, the partners need to get to know one another, understand each other's motivations, and develop trusting relationships—essential preconditions for more demanding forms of collaboration (Prager, 2011; James, 2013; Huang and Seldon, 2015; Mendes Campos, 2015).

Despite this, during the first year of the CIP's operations, most partners expressed some discomfort with the project's operating model. In order to maximize what they are able to get out of this experience, almost all partners expressed the desire to play a more active and assertive role in the CIP's learning and knowledge generation project. In addition, some have been keen to move quickly to deploy their own

organizations' supports within neighbourhoods, as a complement to CIP funding. The CIP, for its part, recognizes these potential complements and seeks to activate them within the context of the project.

While wanting to play a more active role, partners feel they are unable to do this within the current structure. The issue of partners' roles and authorities within the steering committee seems to be a source of ambiguity. When at one point they were invited to weigh in on the selection of neighbourhoods or proposed projects, some felt that they were not yet equipped to bring an informed viewpoint to bear on the communities or their proposals. In order to assume this more active role and to develop a more informed viewpoint, the partners expressed the need for a more direct connection with CIP-supported communities. To this effect, most partners are increasingly uncomfortable with Centraide acting as the exclusive interface with communities; in their view, its linchpin role has become a bottleneck that acts to filter information coming from the ground.

Thus, the initial model is less suited to certain other purposes that motivate the partners, in particular achieving a truly collective impact and exercising a more active influence, both of which would require partners to coordinate strategies and leveraging capacities. These purposes tend to require more integrated and high-engagement organizational models in which partners collaborate to establish common goals and decide together on the actions to be taken (DP Evaluation, 2012; Huang and Seldon, 2015). However, if the CIP was to evolve in this direction, it would cease to be "Centraide's project," as it is commonly referred to, and become a project where the distribution of power, authority and risk is shared.

However, this opportunity also has a drawback, since the more integrated forms of collaboration are also much more demanding and require deeper commitment from participating organizations (Gibson, 2009; Pfitzer and Stamp, 2010; Prager, 2011; Morris, 2014). Thus, even though most partners have expressed their desire to play a more active role in the project, some have also expressed a reluctance to move the operating model towards a more integrated form requiring a deeper commitment of time and energy. A few partners have even indicated that with their current time and capacity constraints, they are already finding it difficult to maintain their current level of commitment to attend monthly steering committee meetings. If the CIP was to move towards an even higher-engagement model of collaboration, the risk is that some partners would not be able to follow along and possibly stop being involved in the project governance aspect altogether.

### **Next steps and recommendations**

Three options should be considered:

- First, an activity should be planned allowing steering committee partners to identify, clarify and prioritize the different purposes that draw them into the CIP, and to map the level of engagement and risk involved in pursuing each one of these purposes. This activity would help partners to arrive at a shared understanding and agreement around the purposes to prioritize within the CIP and of the corresponding investment in terms of time and risk that each partner would eventually be willing to put into the project.
- Based on the results of this activity, the organizing model may need to evolve to better reflect the purposes that remain on the table. To take into account the partners' different capacities for engagement, options could be explored that allow for differential levels of engagement. For example, there could be a core of partners that is more intensively engaged and another group of partners who take on a lighter degree of engagement. These types of options could be proposed as an alternative to a more unified model that is forced to drive towards the lowest common denominator of engagement—which would be likely to reduce the CIP'S scope and ambition,

and become a source of discontent in the long term.

- Regarding the distribution of roles within the steering committee, the CIP could draw on some of the lessons learned from past experiences of philanthropic support for comprehensive community change initiatives. These lessons reveal (Aspen Institute, 2012) that place-based foundations are best positioned to support the work carried out within local communities, while foundations that operate on a greater geographic scale often have more capacity to take on policy or systems change issues and to support knowledge sharing and dissemination between different localities.

### 3.3 Initial operationalization in the neighbourhoods

The period of outreach to potential new partners drew to a close by the end of the summer of 2015. Over the following two to three months, partnership and contribution agreements were finalized. It was only at the moment of its public launch in October 2015 that the CIP was also announced to all of the neighbourhood tables, some of which would be selected for intensive or targeted support.

Needless to say, the outcomes sought by the CIP's partners are intimately bound up with the outcomes achieved by neighbourhoods. In this sense, neighbourhood actors are the primary stakeholders to be affected by the CIP. For this reason, this study sought to understand how the project has unfolded on the ground.

Most neighbourhood stakeholders initially gave the CIP a favourable reception, expressing both positive reactions as well as some critical reactions in the weeks following the project's announcement.

According to interview respondents who had an ear to the ground, the type of support offered by the CIP corresponds to a real need. For the most part, these respondents were relatively comfortable with the CIP being a philanthropic initiative, expressing a recognition that philanthropic and government funding can occupy different and complementary niches.

On the other hand, the way in which the CIP initiative was developed and announced was a source of discomfort for many of these respondents. For some, it was indicative of a new and different approach on Centraide's part to being a funding partner to communities. Before the CIP, neighbourhood tables for the most part had more of a partner-type relationship with Centraide, owing in part to the Montreal Initiative, and enjoyed a positive rapport with Centraide program officers. More than anything else, the way in which the CIP was developed—that is to say, without consulting neighbourhood tables, who were its intended grantees—was seen to represent a break with the more partnership-oriented relationship that existed up to that point. Some stakeholders with a connection to communities felt that the CIP's co-architects should have consulted with neighbourhood tables while they were developing the project, as this would have allowed them to test out some of their assumptions and working hypotheses, and make needed adjustments before launching the operation. In addition, the choice of holding the CIP's public launch at the Chamber of Commerce without any prior or simultaneous launch events directed towards communities was considered by some to have sent a clear message about the public that the CIP's promoters were prioritizing.

There were also some irritants in connection with the CIP's initial roll-out process. The time between the project's public launch and the deadline for the submission of letters of intent from neighbourhood tables was tight, less than two months. However, despite time constraints and variable degrees of readiness from one neighbourhood to the next, each neighbourhood table submitted a letter of intent.



The neighbourhood selection process happened fairly quickly, in less than three months. Centraide's program officers conducted a preliminary analysis and formulated recommendations. Based on these, the steering committee partners made a final selection of neighbourhoods that would receive intensive support (5 neighbourhoods / CIP track I) and that would receive more targeted support (12 neighbourhoods / CIP track II). Starting at the end of February 2016, the neighbourhood tables were convened one by one by Centraide to be informed of the results of the process, and whether or not they had been selected for funding.

Following these initial stages, the pace of implementation in communities and of the roll-out of the CIP's supports slowed down somewhat. The first projects proposed for funding on the basis of existing neighbourhood action plans were submitted to Centraide in the fall of 2016 and presented to the steering committee in the winter of 2017.

Expectations around the pace of project implementation in communities has been a point of tension between steering committee partners on the one hand and stakeholders on the ground on the other. Many steering committee partners found this pace to be too slow and expressed impatience with having to follow the pace set by Centraide and by neighbourhoods. Without themselves having any direct access to communities, they felt powerless to do anything to accelerate that process. For their part, community stakeholders felt the pressure to move faster. They pushed back against this, arguing that imposing a faster pace would run the risk of destabilizing local dynamics; in a collective impact context, no community project can be implemented without local actors' engagement and buy-in. Community engagement takes time, they argued; in order to build and maintain this engagement and buy-in, it is vital to respect and follow established democratic decision-making processes within communities.

Studies that share some of the lessons derived from comprehensive community initiatives validate these concerns, and argue that philanthropic funding partners need to learn to manage their own expectations about the time it takes to implement action and achieve outcomes (Mack et al., 2014). Past experiences show that comprehensive community initiatives need a longer time frame to develop and implement than more conventional foundation-supported initiatives. What is more, the outcomes of community change initiatives are unpredictable, implying an inherent degree of risk for their promoters (Auspos and Cabaj, 2014).

As the project lead and manager, Centraide acknowledged these concerns and attempted to take them into consideration in the early stages of the CIP's roll-out. Among other things, it came to see that the CIP's initial premise, or condition, concerning neighbourhoods' maturity and readiness to act from a "collective impact" mode to implement projects had not been fully met at the starting point of the project. This realization led Centraide to make two main adjustments. First, it refocused more of the CIP's attention on short-term outcomes related to strengthening community capacity<sup>39</sup> than on achieving medium- or long-term outcomes. Secondly, Centraide agreed to provide additional operational support funding to certain tables in order to help them develop the capacity to handle the additional workload involved in managing CIP-specific community engagement and project development and implementation. This willingness to adapt was appreciated by stakeholders on the ground. However, despite these adjustments, the expectations communicated by Centraide continued to convey an undue pressure to move quickly to implementation, according to community stakeholders.

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<sup>39</sup> This is a provisional observation made at a point in the process before CIP neighbourhoods submitted their action plans for funding.

### 3.4 Relations with communities: establishing a balance

Even if the CIP's reception within communities has generally been favourable, its ongoing implementation requires great skill in order to cultivate and maintain the trust and buy-in of community stakeholders. At the point of the CIP's launch, a certain amount of existing trust and goodwill could be drawn upon, even if tables had not been consulted in the project's design. However, that trust is not unlimited and needs to be maintained throughout the project.

Almost all interview respondents with a connection to communities expressed a desire to see greater consistency and transparency in communications with neighbourhoods, in particular to make the parameters and expectations more explicit. The feedback received from these respondents drew attention to aspects of the CIP's roll-out that contributed to community stakeholders' perception of a lack of consistency and transparency.

Respondents noted that the field presence and support provided by Centraide (in its role as CIP project manager) was uneven from one neighbourhood to another. It was their perception that Centraide's program officers had not all been equally equipped to fulfill the kind of role that they were meant to play within the CIP. Based on this observation, some respondents consider that Centraide should seek to more clearly define the kind of partner role that it is best equipped to play. Either it should refocus on its role at the regional level, and act to disembed itself from neighbourhoods; or it should fully assume its role as an embedded funder in neighbourhoods, and allocate appropriate internal resources to allow it to properly play this role.

Relations within the CIP framework work to the benefit of neighbourhood stakeholders who had already established strong relationships with their Centraide program officers, and developed proactive habits of proposing and negotiating with their funder. However, even the neighbourhood stakeholders who find themselves in this more privileged position have had to contend with ambiguities in their new relationship with Centraide within the CIP, indicating among other things that they have had trouble understanding the rationale behind the CIP's choice of neighbourhoods. They also spoke of having to work harder than usual to "decode" the language used to describe the CIP's intentions, and of not being given any guidance to understand the frameworks and concepts that they were being asked to work with.

Although in the first stages of the CIP's roll-out, Centraide has been the only interface between communities and the CIP's financial partners, this situation is likely to change as CIP steering committee partners have expressed their desire to have a more direct relationship with communities. This wish expressed by the CIP's financial partners could eventually open up opportunities to forge new relationships with stakeholders on the ground. A more direct relationship with neighbourhoods could benefit both communities and the CIP's implementation as a whole, by increasing partners' sense of buy-in and commitment and by allowing them to identify new opportunities for funding or other supports that are connected to actual needs on the ground.

On the other hand, this forging of new relationships between partners and the neighbourhood tables will need to happen in a way that acknowledges and respects the conditions for maintaining communities' trust and buy-in to the CIP. If this linking up is not done in the right way, it runs the risk of disrupting the relational foundations that are the bedrock of neighbourhood-level collaborations as well as the basis for trust and good communication between funders and communities. In this area, the relational capital which Centraide has built over the years with the tables represents an undeniable asset. For this reason, it would make sense for Centraide to act as broker and intermediary in this linking up process, a role which it has already begun to take on before the end of the CIP's first year.

## Next steps and recommendations

It is important to recognize that this role of broker and intermediary is a new one that is added on to the responsibilities that Centraide already has as manager of the CIP. In seeking to develop more direct ties with communities, the partners should make sure that the financial resources allocated to the CIP's management are enough to enable Centraide to fulfill this role.

The project lead and the partners should reflect on the common position that they want to assume in their relations with communities, and revisit it regularly. On this point, literature from the comprehensive community change field recognizes certain key pillars of this position that funders should assume; these include close or even embedded relations with communities, providing guidance and capacity-building support, and even taking on the role of active partner in local development (Brown, 2012). It is a position that is demanding and difficult to take on well. It is important to recognize that this type of funder role doesn't always produce positive effects; it can sometimes distort local dynamics and introduce more room for subjectivity and individual variability in funding decisions (Auspos and Cabaj, 2014).

Centraide, possibly together with its partners, should invest more in developing a line of communication with communities that is as transparent as possible, and through which the CIP's funders should be willing to demonstrate humility when appropriate. In this regard, influential players in the field of place-based strategic philanthropy argue that a foundation's own legitimacy as a changemaker depends on its ability to be transparent about its goals and strategies, and even the hypotheses, assumptions and expectations underlying them, and its willingness to engage in an ongoing dialogue with other important stakeholders (Brown, 2012; Fehler-Cabral et al., 2016).

In order to maintain the foundations of community trust and buy-in to the CIP, and in order to communicate partners' willingness to collaborate with communities in learning together and in working together to generate impact, CIP partners should consider setting up feedback and dialogue mechanisms with communities.

Because of the inherent power dynamic in the funding relationship, grantees will often self-censor in their communications with funders, depriving the latter of useful feedback. In cases where it is not possible to create anonymous feedback mechanisms,<sup>40</sup> Ranghelli and Moore (2016) encourage foundations to openly solicit feedback on an ongoing basis from their grantees and demonstrate that they won't suffer consequences if they do offer feedback. The authors also encourage foundations to be more transparent by publicly sharing the feedback that they receive.

One of the partners on the steering committee expressed the wish that the voice of communities be better represented in the governance of the CIP. At some point the CIP may in fact evolve in a direction that leads to a stronger partnership with communities. In this regard, some partners and other stakeholders would like to see the steering committee activate strategies of influence to remove certain systemic barriers that challenge neighbourhoods' ability to carry out their locally-determined action plans. This option will be explored further in the next section. At the very least, these kinds of strategies would require setting up a dialogue mechanism allowing neighbourhood stakeholders to identify and share the systemic obstacles or barriers that they are encountering, and that might fall within partners' sphere of influence. Beyond dialogue alone, CIP partners may want to explore avenues to establish a stronger, more complicit partnership with community stakeholders, following the lead of other actors in the field who recognize that authentic inclusion and collaboration foster stronger philanthropic strategies (Patrizi and Thompson, 2011; Bartzak, 2016).

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<sup>40</sup> Such as the grantee perception reports that the Center for Effective Philanthropy issues for the benefit of client foundations or the platform created by the Philampify initiative of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

## 4.0 OTHER POINTS OF TENSION AND ISSUES TO WORK ON

During the interviews, other issues were raised as points to be resolved. The first of these relates to the kind of systems changes that the CIP seeks to influence. The second one looks at facilitating factors and challenges that arise in relation to the CIP's goal of ongoing learning. The third relates to the level of stakeholder involvement in the learning project. The final issue concerns the long-term impacts and ripple effects that the CIP hopes to contribute to.

### 4.1 The issue of systems change—and the processes likely to catalyze it—remain to be clarified

According to the project presentation document, the CIP proposes not only to mitigate the effects of poverty but also to address its causes and to target associated systems change. Systems change often features prominently among the goals of foundation-supported comprehensive community initiatives. In general, the notion refers to lasting changes in the routines, relationships, values, resources, policies and power structures of a given system (Abercrombie, Harries and Wharton, 2015). In the field of practice of comprehensive community change, “systems” most often refer to organizations and institutions that may influence local communities' development trajectories.

The notion seems to be used in the comprehensive community change field to designate two distinct levels of change. Referring to the framework used by Living Cities' Integration Initiative (Mt. Auburn Associates, 2012), the first level of systems change refers to a scope of action that is clearly within local initiatives' sphere of influence, designating changes to boundaries, relationships and perspectives within local ecosystems that act as an entry point to shifting how stakeholders work together to get things done.

At another level, the comprehensive community change practice field recognizes that broader policies and social trends shape and constrain what local initiatives can undertake and hope to accomplish (Hopkins, 2015). These broader structuring elements include public and philanthropic funding programs and investment policies; policies and regulations related to housing, urban planning and commercial development; and procurement and local hiring practices in the public and private sectors (Mt. Auburn Associates, 2012). In light of this, in most of the literature in the comprehensive community change field, “systems change” refers to sustainable changes to policies and practices within the broader ecosystem that forms the backdrop to local or neighbourhood initiatives—the idea being that changes have to occur within this broader ecosystem in order to allow transformations to take place at the local level (Auspos and Cabaj, 2014).

Reviews of past experiences of philanthropic support for comprehensive community initiatives reveal that local initiatives are not usually able to catalyze systems change on their own (Aspen Institute, 2012). Rather, in recorded cases where systems did shift in response to community change initiatives, these were “transactional” (case by case, benefiting only one neighbourhood) rather than transformational changes. On the basis of these lessons, current practices in this area recognize that actors at other levels with access to decision-making are in a better position than local communities themselves to work to change practices and policies that hamper local revitalization efforts (Auspos and Cabaj, 2014).

According to the CIP's implicit theory of change, over the medium to long term the project aims among other things to influence the adoption at the regional level of policies and measures favourable to CSLD and poverty reduction. During the interviews, it transpired that steering committee partners had two different understandings of what this aim represents.

For some of the partners, meeting this goal calls on more funders to follow the CIP's example and adopt flexible funding practices that better support integrated community change efforts. This first systems change option is echoed in the literature from the comprehensive community initiatives field, including Living Cities' Integration Initiative, which also aimed to achieve a greater integration of programs and practices that were in place to support poverty reduction at the local level (Mt. Auburn Associates, 2012).

Other steering committee partners would like the CIP, as a regional initiative, to pay attention to policies and administrative practices that pose barriers to the capacity of local communities to implement certain actions to improve their neighbourhood. Stakeholders on the ground also expressed the wish that CIP partners act on this second option. This second option is also well reflected in the literature from the comprehensive community initiatives field. Kubisch (Aspen Institute, 2012), for example, argues that if the aim is really to engender transformational systems change, funders have a special role to play in helping to influence the policy and systems reforms needed in order for communities to be able to meet their own change targets. She observes that foundations involved in supporting community change work often carry out a parallel strategy focusing on policy and systems change.

In this area, the current state of practice in the field tends toward coordinated dual strategies that seek to link the micro and macro levels within an overall intervention framework (Hopkins, 2015). The type of systems changes targeted may involve both private and public sector practices. Some initiatives discussed in the literature specifically seek to engage private sector players to offer new ways of supporting local revitalization efforts; these include opening up new financing channels, including social finance. At other times, they seek to nudge urban development trajectories in a more inclusive and equitable direction so that they offer up local employment opportunities or support homeownership for low-income residents, sometimes seeking even to influence the direction of major urban development or redevelopment projects (Mt. Auburn Associates, 2012; Ferris and Hopkins, 2015). Again, public policy levers can sometimes offer the most effective means of bringing about and structuring changes in private sector practice, for instance through incentives or regulation (Auspos and Cabaj, 2014).

Hopkins (2015), for example, observes how United Way Toronto has worked simultaneously to support local action while also seeking to reform policies that shape the context in which local action takes place. The organization's policy influence targets have included employment standards, payday lending regulation, and zoning changes that would allow a greater diversity of businesses to operate in low-income neighbourhoods.

### **Next steps and clarification of partners' intentions**

At this stage, the steering committee partners' intentions still need to be clarified as to the role they would like to play in a regional influence strategy. Based on feedback from the ground, both of the systems change options identified by the partners are relevant. Other experiences from the community change field suggest that they could be complementary parts of an overall strategy carried out by the partners.

Two of the three non-financial partners on the steering committee (Ville de Montréal and Direction régionale de la santé publique de Montréal) are both strategic and financial partners of the Montreal Initiative as well as the managers of a number of other funding programs for local collaborative initiatives. It is hoped that their participation in the CIP steering committee will lead them to use their leverage within their own institutions in order to create greater coherence between these different funding programs for local and regional projects operating in the area of community change and revitalization.

If a core group of partners does wish to work to influence the systems-level policies and practices that impede the accomplishment of certain elements of neighbourhood action plans, this would imply designing a strategy in coordination with community stakeholders, based on the barriers and obstacles that they have identified. If this were to happen, the CMTQ could take on a more explicit role as an interface and spokesperson for the neighbourhood tables, helping to relay the issues that affect them locally but that are beyond their control to change. Here, to echo the recommendation of Auspos and Cabaj (2014), it will be important to allow neighbourhood actors to define the influence strategies in which they can take leadership, wherever possible and relevant.

## 4.2 A push and pull between learning and demonstrating success

Interviews with steering committee partners reveal that most of them are fairly invested in the idea of the CIP learning project. Several express attitudes that are consistent with a learning focus, communicating a desire to learn from failure and to have their thinking be challenged.

According to Brest and Harvey (2008), the ability to learn from failure, including the failure to achieve one's goals, is one of the central tenets of strategic philanthropy. While this capacity is important, it is not easy to develop. Darling (2010) and Darling and Smith (2011) examined the learning cycle in several philanthropic foundations, observing that, in the absence of an explicit theory of action and appropriate evaluation practices, failures tend to go unnoticed or to be rationalized.

Other factors may also dampen the willingness to learn from failure. To recall the initial theory of change, the CIP aims, among other things, to demonstrate that collaborative, integrated approaches to community-led development are both the cornerstone of CLSD and a poverty reduction approach that works. On the basis of this demonstration, the CIP's promoters hope that these practices will be better recognized and supported by funders and other institutions who have the power to influence their future.

This end purpose of demonstration seems to weigh more heavily, relatively, for some actors in the CIP system than for others. During the interviews, stakeholders closer to the ground and to the project's operation reported the pressure they felt to have to succeed at all costs. These are also the actors who effectively bear most of the risks and for whom the consequences of failure weigh heaviest.

- For Centraide, the actor at the heart of the experience, several things are at stake, among them its ability to maintain the trust and support of partners, its public image, and ultimately, its ability to raise funds.
- For the neighbourhood tables, by participating in the CIP they risk affecting the trust relationship that their main funders have with them, their local credibility and even hard-won local mobilization and cohesion among neighbourhood stakeholders.
- For Dynamo, its role in the CIP puts at risk the position it occupies within its particular niche of action, a position it owes to the relationship of trust forged over the years with Centraide as well as with the tables and other collaborative community initiatives on the territory that it serves.

This resonates with the comments of observers who note that comprehensive community initiatives are "risky" both for their local operators and for their funders (Aspen Institute, 2012; Auspos and Cabaj, 2014). Given the complexity of the systems that local communities interact with and seek to act upon, the success of these initiatives is never guaranteed. Several levers of change lie beyond their control. According to Auspos and Cabaj (2014), foundations that invest in this field of practice need to understand and accept the inevitability of some failure, and come to see instead that it is the learning drawn from the experience that constitutes the return on investment.

The challenge for all actors involved in the CIP's evaluation is not to let the objective of demonstrating success determine which information gets prioritized for data gathering and sharing and which signals will be cast aside.

In order for everyone to be able to learn from what doesn't work, information and "intelligence" that emerges from the ground needs to be shared freely, stakeholders need to feel that they can take risks, and the system needs to demonstrate a capacity to adapt in real time.

### **Options to consider**

It will be up to the partners who are less exposed to risk in the CIP to demonstrate to the actors on the ground and connected to the project's operations that they wish to create conditions where failure is not only allowed but welcomed as an opportunity for learning. To this end, three options should be considered.

- Recognize that certain actors are exposed to greater risk than others within the CIP; and collectively recalibrate the relative weight that the goal of demonstration takes with respect to the learning goal.
- Demonstrate to community stakeholders that the CIP's partners really want to support the creation of "safe-to-fail" environments of experimentation. This message can more readily be transmitted as trust relations develop between both sides. As a gesture of good faith, the funding partners could seek to establish mutual accountability mechanisms between themselves and grantees. Under these mechanisms, funders could be accountable to communities for their ability to ensure that all supports provided by the CIP are flexible enough to allow communities to adaptively manage their community change processes (Auspos and Cabaj, 2014).
- Focus some efforts on identifying "micro failures" and learning from them in real time to help develop all stakeholders' ability to capture signals and to learn to adjust in low-risk situations, before other higher-stakes failures occur (Darling and Smith, 2011).

### **4.3 Partners' level of engagement in the learning project**

Another challenge emerging in connection with the CIP's networked learning project has to do with the level of engagement of all stakeholders of the CIP action system, including the steering committee partners. To increase and maintain this level of engagement, the CIP learning agenda should be designed to serve the decision-making needs of all actors involved: community stakeholders, the project lead and the partners (Mack et al., 2016). Partners' decision-making related to the CIP occurs both together within the project's governance structure, and also separately within each of their respective organizations.

Just as the partners bring different intentions and interests to their CIP participation, their information needs to support their decision-making may also differ one from another. Again, it may be useful to explore options that allow for differential levels of engagement of partners in the learning project, according to the importance that different aspects of the CIP learning agenda have to their own decision-making needs.

In this vein, the options to consider are the following.

- Fine-tune and, if necessary, change the learning agenda to correspond with a more precise mapping of the decisions that each stakeholder will have to make based on the evaluative information provided by the CIP. As much as possible, the strategic questions on the learning agenda should be formulated to reflect partners' key hypotheses, whether these be explicit and shared among all or implicit and specific to some organizations only (Mack et al., 2016).
- In a spirit of transparency, partners should think about sharing all parts of the CIP's learning agenda with everyone in the CIP action system, including grantee communities. This will allow stakeholders on the ground to better understand how the data they are providing will be used to inform the decisions of other stakeholders within the CIP action system (Mack et al., 2016).

#### **4.4 The long-term vision needs to be defined**

Several external observers estimate that the CIP is not only an interesting initiative in and of itself, but that its real value resides in the broader meaning it can be expected to take on beyond the experiment in progress. To this end, the CIP partners should try to agree on a common vision of the broader sustainable changes, in terms of longevity and ripple effects, that they would like to see the CIP engender beyond the five years of the initiative.

The vision to aim for should also reflect partners' assumptions regarding the role of philanthropy in relation to the spheres of the state and civil society, for instance:

- evidence generation and demonstration,
- complementarity or substitution,
- field building,
- contribution to the emergence of a new social pact and participating in its governance.

Several respondents expressed the wish that the CIP partners make their vision clear with regards to these questions, by way of which these ideas would be put up for public discussion. Indeed, far from seeking to avoid any such debate, these respondents consider that it has its rightful place in a democratic society in which the roles, powers and responsibilities of the major categories of actors, their fields of intervention, expertise and skills are negotiated.

Once this common vision has been established, the CIP theory of change will need to be revisited to take this into account. According to the aims that are prioritized as a result of this revisiting, the outcome of this exercise will also have implications for the organizational model and for the length of time that is appropriate to dedicate to the type of experimentation implied.

Some references to the CIP describe it as a model of philanthropic action (co-investment with joint strategy) that should be expanded upon and replicated elsewhere as a way to support community-led change. Others describe it as a demonstration project whose purpose is to influence public policies and practices that have an impact on community-led change, and others still as a hybrid of these two possibilities. Each of these options should be assessed for its potential and its limitations.

1. A philanthropic action model to expand upon and replicate: Alongside the benefits (greater coherence, increased impact) that CIP partners associate with funder collaboration, a few stakeholders—both among partners and community representatives and among external key informants—noted that funders working together can also have perverse effects. By creating a



single gateway for federating community support from most of the major philanthropic foundations active in Montreal, the CIP or a model similar to it could have the effect of reducing the diversity of funding options available to communities, and in particular to those that have been turned down for CIP support. One respondent illustrated this point by referring to a similar experience observed elsewhere, where the bargaining power of grantees was reduced when they faced a united front (“cartel”) of funders.

2. A demonstration project with the purpose of influencing public policies and practices that have an impact on community-led change: In his review of the knowledge gained from over 25 years of interventions in support of comprehensive community initiatives,<sup>41</sup> Hopkins (2015) observed that even the most successful comprehensive community initiatives have rarely achieved the desired demonstration effect, in the sense of serving as a model for institutionalizing financial supports to community change through public programs. This observation appears to be particularly salient in the current context of vulnerability of public funding programs. In fact, although policy influence is very often an aim of foundation-supported comprehensive community change initiatives, it would appear that policy influence is not achieved by demonstration but rather by carrying out more active and focused policy advocacy work. Another element that would help to explain the weak public uptake of foundation-developed funding practices for comprehensive community initiatives is that philanthropic support for comprehensive community change actually occupies funding niches that are distinct and complementary to government funding (Aspen Institute, 2012).

3. Hybrid option: A more promising trend in the field of support for comprehensive community initiatives appears to be the emergence of structures that foster complementarity and linkage of philanthropic, public and private sector resources (Ferris and Hopkins, 2015). For now, these structures remain the exception rather than the rule, but their ability to leverage and aggregate more significant financial resources makes it possible to support more ambitious and longer-term initiatives. It is clear that in Quebec, the development of private-public-social partnerships in various permutations has raised and will continue to raise substantive issues. It is equally clear that the actors involved will need to adopt new ways of doing things. However, these ways will need to pass the test of social acceptability and be strongly rooted in democratic practices where transparency, on the one hand, and the respect of each party’s identity, on the other hand, will be the focus of intense scrutiny.

The negotiation of these kinds of hybrid structures implies, at the outset, that a shared understanding exists among philanthropic, private, social and state actors of their respective roles and competencies. However, it cannot be assumed that these different actors’ understanding and assumptions about each other all line up, say Healy and Donnelly-Cox (2016). The Integration Initiative of Living Cities illustrates the complexity inherent in this quest for a shared understanding. The initiative, launched by philanthropic foundations, sought to mobilize public sector partners to become co-sponsors of local initiatives. Yet those attempts were less successful than expected, because government stakeholders were inclined to see foundations as substitutes for state action rather than as collaborators (Hecht, 2014). As a result, public sector partners were less inclined to see the role that they themselves could play within the initiatives.

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<sup>41</sup> The majority of the practices that have been studied are in the United States; hence, caution is advised when extrapolating these findings to Quebec’s political and institutional context.

## 5.0 OBSERVATIONS AND AREAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

In our study of the development stage and first year of the CIP, we sought to identify the learnings that are decisive for the project's success.

Accordingly, we shared a series of observations and identified areas of work to focus on to improve the overall undertaking. Some of these options are fairly self-evident and can be implemented quickly. Other options, however, involve more structural issues and require discussion among stakeholders to ensure that appropriate decisions can be made at the right levels.

### Context and the role of knowledge mobilization

- Over the last ten years, the socio-economic and socio-political landscape of Quebec and Montreal has revealed a new context marked by a reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and civil society organizations.
- Since the beginning of the current decade, the Quebec economy has been doing relatively well, with relatively low unemployment and a steady increase in the creation of new jobs despite company closures. Despite this, poverty and inequality persist, indicating that employment no longer guarantees financial security or social mobility.
- We are also witnessing a dying down of the wave of social innovations that characterized the 1980s and 1990s. In its place, a new wave is coming to prominence. We have moved from a focus on community development to a focus on social development approaches, and from the type of local and regional development supported by organizations that are rooted in specific geographical areas to a form of development framed by sectoral organizations that focus on technological or social innovation.
- In this context, we are seeing a growing number of new actors emerge, including grantmaking foundations. A number of Montreal's philanthropic foundations have some prior experience of collaborating with one another.
- Our report reflects the importance of knowledge mobilization in a project context where the intervention process is characterized by experimentation. In such a context, it is important both to draw upon existing knowledge, as made available in the literature, and to produce new knowledge that is directly linked to the experiment in progress. This kind of "research and development" function becomes key to making the most of the learnings generated by an experience that seeks not only to innovate but also to demonstrate its ability to achieve results.

## 5.1 Observations

Observations are grouped around a few central themes. For each of these themes, we then identified key elements that emerged from the study.

### The financial and strategic partners in the steering committee

- The partners expressed a good understanding of what the CIP is about, as well as an interest and willingness to engage in it.

- While the partners have signed on to the broader objectives of the CIP, they do so to varying degrees:
  - for the most part, their commitment is transactional;
  - they seek to derive some benefit for their organization and are working from the standpoint of their own interests and frameworks of reference;
  - through all this, there is a real openness on the part of partners to try to reconcile their own interests with the project's explicit goals.

#### Roles and responsibilities

- Overall, there is a relatively healthy ambiguity that sometimes obscures the definition of different stakeholders' roles and functions. While some aspects of these roles and functions are clear, others need to be clarified:
  - at the governance level, between financial partners and strategic partners;
  - at the level of the organization serving as project manager, which has borne sole responsibility for the initiative's implementation on the ground and which redeployed its own internal operating structure in order to support the new imperative and funding strategy represented by the CIP;
  - at the community level, between neighbourhood table members, the local organizations responsible for implementing specific projects, and within the neighbourhood table itself as an organizational entity, with regard to the management of funded projects (accountability, monitoring, etc.).

#### The project manager: Centraide of Greater Montreal

- As Centraide occupies a central position as co-architect and especially as project manager, the risks reside primarily with this organization.
- Despite some point of tension, Centraide's openness to listen and to adapt its actions has been appreciated both by partners and the stakeholders on the ground.

#### Gateway to the communities involved: the Montreal neighbourhood tables

- In spite of initial criticisms and a few more enduring critical reactions, the CIP's reception on the ground has been by and large favourable.
- Local communities recognize that the type of funding and supports offered correspond fairly well to the needs that communities have expressed on a number of occasions in the past.

#### Operationalization on the ground

- The pace of implementation has represented a point of tension between:
  - the partners and the project manager, on the one hand, who have deemed the process to be too slow; and
  - stakeholders on the ground, on the other hand, who have deemed the process to be too fast.

- Stakeholders close to the ground would like to see greater consistency and transparency in the CIP management’s communication with the communities. More specifically, they would like to see parameters and expectations that are more explicit with regard to the initiatives that are being supported on the ground.

#### Operationalization of collaborations and of the operating model

- According to accounts gathered from the CIP’s financial partners, the collaboration operationalized by the CIP needs to enable the pursuit of several different purposes in terms of efficiency, learning, amplifying the scale and impact of local communities’ capacity for action, as well as systems change advocacy.
  - The current modus operandi is fairly well suited to pursuing the purposes of efficiency and learning. Partners work together to co-invest in an intermediary funder who has the required expertise. The decision-making powers as well as the risks and responsibilities are concentrated around this intermediary funder.
  - On the other hand, the purposes of exercising influence and achieving a truly collective impact require the coordination of strategies and leveraging capacities. They also require a more integrated and high-engagement organizational model in which the partners collaborate to establish common objectives and decide together on the actions to be taken.
- We observe a certain tension between the CIP’s objectives of learning on the one hand and of demonstrating the success of the project on the other.
  - Stakeholders close to the ground and the operation of the project communicated the pressures that they felt, both external and internal, to demonstrate that the initiative is a success;
  - A number of partners expressed the wish to learn both from what works and from what does not work (a position that reflects the lower degree of risk that they are exposed to, with the corresponding pressures). When all is said and done, there needs to be a way for risk and learning to coexist.
- In the initial theory of change, one of the ultimate goals is to see more policies and measures adopted at the regional level that are conducive to DSLI and poverty reduction. The partners’ intentions in this area need to be clarified, in particular with regard to the advocacy and influence role that they are prepared to play.
  - The partners of the CIP steering committee expressed their desire to have a direct connection with the communities on the ground and to draw benefit from the project for themselves:
    - Almost all would like to play a more active role in the learning and knowledge generation project that is at the heart of the CIP.
    - In addition, some are looking for ways early on in the project to deploy their own organization’s supports in neighbourhoods, as a complement to the CIP’s pooled funding envelope.
- If CIP partners assert their intention to work together to remove certain systemic constraints to the implementation of neighbourhood action plans, the CIP could evolve towards a more explicit partnership between the steering committee and the community stakeholders.

### Sustainability and scaling

- Several stakeholders expressed the wish that the CIP partners communicate their vision for how the CIP's effects are to be sustained and scaled.
- In connection with this, two questions have been raised:
  - What lasting changes or systemic effects do CIP stakeholders wish to see scaled out and up beyond the five years of the CIP?
  - What position and role should grantmaking philanthropy fulfil in relation to the spheres of action of the state and of the community sector?

## **5.2 Avenues for follow-up**

Based on some of the observations presented in the previous section, we have identified areas for follow-up, grouped thematically, that could help the CIP improve both its theory of change and its chances for success.

### The steering committee partnership

- In order to help clarify roles and functions within the partnership, which in turn will help to strengthen the CIP's overall vision and working hypotheses, we recommend doing a mapping exercise that identifies the purposes and goals prioritized by each partner on the steering committee. Two important elements to take into consideration in this mapping are the current and optimal levels of commitment and risk that each partner can take on. After an initial one-on-one stage (with each of the steering committee's partners), the mapping exercise could then be done, in a second stage, as a joint activity where the elements of convergence and divergence are identified alongside the purposes around which there is stronger and weaker consensus.
  - Rationale: The CIP was conceived as a learning initiative. With this in mind, it is important to identify the specific learning needs and goals of each partner. The CIP's own learning agenda could then be adapted to try to accommodate these needs, as long as the partners themselves are prepared to adapt along with the project and allow their current roles to evolve.

### The initiative's operationalization

- The function of project manager of this kind of initiative requires more human resources than those initially allocated to the CIP's management. We recommend that the budget for the Centraide-CIP team be reassessed to ensure that the initiative's operations are properly resourced and that there is an appropriate alignment between internal and external human resource mobilization (including the evaluation unit).
  - Rationale: The CIP is an experiment whose success will depend to a large extent on the ability to derive learnings from it. Consequently, the work of supporting and providing guidance to the action on the ground, and of capturing and analyzing the data generated in that process, is of central importance for both community stakeholders and steering committee partners. Management capacity needs to be deployed at the right scale to meet these needs.

### The learning project

- A working environment that is open to success and failure.
  - Rationale: All stakeholders in the CIP, whether it be as partners, community participants or external support resources, are taking part in an experiment that requires a working environment that is open to both success and failure. It needs to be made clear when the process matters just as much if not more than the achievement of concrete and tangible results. As part of that, from defining the framework to gathering data and interpreting results, the entire endeavour must allow both for rapid iteration and for capturing all information relevant to understanding what is and isn't working and what kinds of problems or obstacles are emerging.

### Systems change advocacy and influence

- By seeking to engage in systems change work to create enabling conditions for work done at the neighbourhood level, the CIP partners are opening up a field of intervention that itself requires operational capacity. As a first step, we recommend that the steering committee partners work to define their capacity and scope of influence and that community partners be asked to do the same. The results of this exercise will have implications for the action model that is needed to support the steering committee in its advocacy and influence work. An internally-focused model would be appropriate if the systems change sought does not extend beyond the partner organizations' own policies and funding practices. A different type of model would be appropriate if the systems change focus was external, looking to influence the practices of governments, the private sector and civil society, and even public attitudes and behaviours. A mixed approach might be appropriate if the systems change focus was both internal and external.
  - Rationale: Currently, all of the CIP's resources are dedicated to supporting the proper development and implementation of activities within local communities. As community partners encounter systemic obstacles to the implementation of locally-defined solutions, they will turn to steering committee partners for assistance in overcoming them. These partners will then need to be prepared to respond to these requests with a solid knowledge of their own readiness and capacity to act. This capacity to act could be enhanced if specialized resources were dedicated to this function.

### The theory of change, action model and operational model

- As the CIP experiment continues to evolve and as the options for follow-up identified here are acted upon, there will be implications for the CIP's theory of change and the initial action model. Already, both of these have evolved somewhat from the form they took in the original proposal. We recommend that a retreat-type event be convened and held at mid-point of the process, bringing together all stakeholders in order to revisit these foundations (theory of change, action model and operational model) in the light of the project's developments.
  - Rationale: From its theory of change to its operating model, the entire CIP concept was conceived by its two co-architects based on an original set of ideas that may need periodic revisiting. For example, the governance arrangements could be revised in order to give a greater place to community stakeholders. Likewise, projects complementary to the CIP that have been initiated by steering committee partners (at least two of which were identified over the course of our study) could be considered as a more integral part of the CIP initiative and could benefit more fully from the CIP's logistical support.

### Sustainability of the project over time

- We recommend that the question of the vision for the CIP’s long-term sustainability and scaling be placed on the agenda of the retreat meeting.
  - Rationale: At the very least, local communities concerned by the CIP should have the opportunity to know whether or not the CIP is likely to have any impact on the social development funding landscape in the future. At a broader level, it should be explored whether or not the CIP is likely to pioneer a new way for philanthropic funders to work together that is complementary to—and thus not a substitute for—state action and that local communities can count on as a means to advance their development.

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## Appendix 1

**Table 1: Research questions, sources of information and data collection methods**

Research questions	Sources of information, data collection methods
<b>Object of evaluation: The partnership</b>	
<p>What was the initial vision of each partner regarding the CIP's goals and intended outcomes?</p> <p>What motivated each partner's participation at the outset? What expectations does each partner have in terms of their own commitment towards Centraide and towards the other partners?</p> <p>What prior experiences (history) have shaped partners' visions, expectations and motivations?</p> <p>What insights does this information provide about the possible avenues and challenges to navigate in building a collectively-owned change strategy?</p>	<p>Individual interviews with each of the steering committee partners (one representative per organization).</p> <p>Individual interviews with the co-architects of the CIP partnership at Centraide and the Chagnon Foundation.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Review of documents produced by Centraide and the steering committee, setting out expectations for the partnership and how it would operate, and/or providing information about how these have evolved since the beginning.</p> <p>Literature review of inter-foundation collaboration experiences: conditions for success and challenges.</p>
<b>Object of evaluation: Regional influence</b>	
<p>What regional context gave rise to the project, in particular with respect to the CLSD ecosystem?</p> <p>Potential sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What knowledge of the CLSD approach did public institutions and private funders have at the outset of the CIP? What importance did their organizations give to this approach?</li> <li>• How do representatives from partner organizations and other actors describe the current state of alignment or harmonization of policies, programs and practices in support of CLSD?</li> <li>• What prior attempts have been made to align or harmonize policies, programs and practices in support of CLSD? How have the outcomes of these attempts been assessed?</li> </ul> <p>What does this state of affairs indicate with regard to the CIP's potential to achieve its desired influence and with regards to challenges to be met?</p>	<p>Interviews with selected key stakeholders from public institutions and/or with some connection to prior attempts to align or harmonize policies and programs, as needed to obtain additional clarification or perspectives.</p> <p>Interviews with selected actors in the CLSD ecosystem in order to obtain complementary perspectives.</p> <p>Review and consultation of relevant documents (reports, policy statements, reviews, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- produced by selected public institutions related to their CLSD support strategies</li> <li>- relating to past experiences attempting to align or harmonize policies, programs and practices in support of CLSD</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Research questions, sources of information and data collection methods**

Research questions	Sources of information, data collection methods
<b>Object of evaluation: Philanthropic model</b>	
<p>How did CIP partners describe the philanthropic model they were trying to create at the beginning of the first year and at its end?</p>	<p>Individual interviews with each of the steering committee partners (one representative per organization).</p>
<p>What type of organizing model has the CIP partnership adopted? What is its potential and limitations, the conditions for success and the challenges associated with this model?</p>	<p>Individual interviews with the architects of the partnership at Centraide and the Chagnon Foundation.</p>
<p>What practices and trends in philanthropy have influenced the CIP partnership? What prior experiences does it look to or build upon? How have these been reviewed?</p>	<p>Interviews with selected actors from the CLSD ecosystem to obtain their commentary and reactions to the CIP's announcement, launch and implementation.</p>
<p>How is the CIP perceived and what welcome has it been given by key players in the Montreal socio-economic development scene?</p>	<p>Interviews with selected actors from within the arenas of Quebec, Canadian and North American philanthropy for further clarification or perspectives.</p>
<p>What insights does this information provide with regard to the options to consider and challenges to be faced in creating the philanthropic model that partners aspire to?</p>	<p>Literature review, evaluation reports and other types of documents on relevant trends in philanthropy, prior experiences and theoretical and practical reference points for the CIP model.</p>



## Appendix 2

### List of interviewees

#### Group 1: The CIP's original architects

Lili Anna Pereša and Mario Régis, Centraide of Greater Montreal

Jean-Marc Chouinard and Patricia Rossi, Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation

#### Group 2: Other members of the CIP steering committee

- Claude Pinard, Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation
- Violaine Des Rosiers, Pathy Family Foundation
- Jane Rabinowicz, Silver Dollar Foundation
- Nicolina Farella, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
- Yvan Gauthier and Diane Bertrand, Foundation of Greater Montréal
- Yves Bellavance, Coalition montréalaise des tables de quartier (CMTQ)
- Johanne Derome and Monique Vallée, Ville de Montréal
- Liette Allaire, Direction régionale de la santé publique de Montréal

#### Group 3: Key informants

- Nathalie Fortin, Conseil local des intervenants communautaires de Bordeaux-Cartierville (also president of the CMTQ and the Forum régional sur le développement social de l'île de Montréal)
- Benoit Lévesque, professor emeritus, UQAM, member of CRISES and the scientific committee of the Institut Mallet
- Jean-François Aubin, Collectif des partenaires en développement des collectivités; former member of the board of directors of the Réseau québécois de revitalisation intégré
- Patrice Allard, Ville de Montréal (Service de la diversité sociale et sports)
- Ève-Isabelle Chevrier, Table nationale des CDC and former executive director of Vivre St-Michel en santé
- Marie-Ève Locas, Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM)
- Tim Brodhead, former president and CEO of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, member of numerous boards of directors of philanthropic foundations
- Liz Weaver, vice president, Tamarack Institute
- France Brochu and Christine Harel, Dynamo – ressource en mobilisation des collectivités

#### Group 4 – Neighbourhood tables

Representatives of grantees and grantseekers:

- One person from a table located in a CIP 1 neighbourhood
- Three persons from table(s) located in CIP 2 neighbourhoods
- Two persons from a table located in a neighbourhood not selected for CIP funding

## Appendix 3

### Interview Schedules

#### Commissioned PhiLab research project on the CIP's origins and first year Interview schedule for the partners of the CIP steering committee

##### Background

1. We would like to know a little more about your organization and the context it was in when you decided to engage in this partnership.
  - How does the Foundation describe its mission and interests?
  - As a grantmaking foundation, how would you describe your approach? What do you support and how?
2. You already had an established relationship with Centraide before joining the CIP partnership. Could you describe it?
3. Tell us the story of how you came to join the CIP partnership and steering committee:
  - How (in what context) was the proposal presented to you and how were you invited to be a part of it?
  - What sparked your interest to participate?
4. The CIP describes itself as an accelerator of change that aims to increase the impact of collective action and to achieve measurable and significant outcomes to reduce poverty in Montreal neighbourhoods. Does your organization have any prior experience in supporting community development? How would you describe your background in this area?
5. Before joining the CIP partnership, other than Centraide, did your organization have ties to other partners on the steering committee? How would you describe them?

##### Goals, vision, aspirations in relation to the CIP

6. Why did you say “yes” to the CIP? There are two aspects to this question:
  - a) What do you or your organization seek to get out of your experience of participating in the CIP partnership?
  - b) Beyond what your own organization might gain from the partnership, what benefits do you anticipate that the CIP might deliver: within the Montreal area, within the philanthropic community, or elsewhere?
7. In your opinion, what conditions does the CIP need to meet in order to achieve its objectives?

##### Contribution and requirements

8. What contribution did you expect to make at the outset of the partnership and the CIP initiative as a whole? Have your expectations changed since that time? How?
9. What does your participation in the CIP partnership require of your organization?
10. Do you have any other comments or observations that you would like to share about your experience within the CIP partnership?

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#### Commissioned PhiLab research project on the CIP's origins and first year Interview schedule for the architects of the partnership at Centraide

##### The context, precursors and process of building the partnership

1. What was the **internal** context (observations, opportunities) that gave rise to the idea of the CIP?  
*Sub-questions:*

- When Centraide completed its philanthropic repositioning exercise in 2014–2015, what goals did you set for the years to come?
- When you carried out the evaluation of the 2010–2015 Social Development Strategy, what goals did this lead you to set for the years ahead?
- How do you think the CIP will contribute to accomplishing these goals?

**2. Reconstruction of the timeline leading up to the CIP’s launch:**

We know that the CIP idea emerged from a series of discussions between Centraide and the Chagnon Foundation.

- Could you tell us a bit about the background of these discussions? How did the idea of the CIP emerge? What were the original premises at the outset of these discussions?
  - At the end of this period of discussions with the Chagnon Foundation, what elements of the project had been set in place? How were they decided on? Can you think of a time when you or the Chagnon Foundation influenced the discussion in any particular way?
3. Once the project’s main ideas were in place, when did you start designing a broader collaboration around the CIP?
- How was the choice of the partners made? How would you describe the relationship you had with each of them?
  - What individual or collective interests did you appeal to?
  - Who did you talk to first? Who was the first to join?
  - Did the initial proposal made by Centraide evolve in any way during this phase of reaching out to potential partners and soliciting their engagement? How? What factors played a role?

**Vision, objectives and operating model of the CIP**

4. What does Centraide seek to gain from this experience? (How do you hope to benefit from it?)
5. Beyond what Centraide might gain from it, what benefits do you anticipate that the CIP might deliver:
- for the Montreal area?
  - for the philanthropic community?
  - other?
6. How would you describe the role that Centraide plays in the project’s overall implementation? How would you describe the role that Centraide plays in relation to the CIP partnership?
- What changes do these roles imply for Centraide at the level of its own operations:
    - to act as lead and manager of the project?
    - to act as convener of the CIP partnership?
  - Do you anticipate that these roles or their operational implications might come to change over the five years of the project? How?
7. At the outset of the project, what expectations did Centraide have regarding the role and contribution of the steering committee partners? Have these expectations evolved? How?
8. In your opinion, what conditions must be met for the CIP to achieve its objectives?
- Has progress been made with regard to any of these conditions since the beginning of the project?
  - Are there any conditions that continue to pose a challenge?
9. Do you have any other comments or observations that you would like to share regarding Centraide’s experience with the CIP partnership?

**Commissioned PhiLab research project on the CIP's origins and first year**  
**Interview schedule for external key informants**

1. What is your understanding of the CIP and its intentions, starting premises and specific aims? (*As needed, share elements of the project description*)
  - What do you understand about its leadership and how it is run?
  - What is it trying to achieve and by what means?
  - What do you think is realistic considering the time frame the CIP has given itself and the strategies it is using?
  - Of all the strategies and tools the CIP is using, which ones do you see as having the greatest potential added value?
2. Conditions for success: Building on what you have already mentioned, are there other conditions to be met or other processes and practices to put in place to ensure that this added value becomes reality?

Specific questions pertaining to the CLSD ecosystem

3. What elements of context pertaining to CLSD, comprehensive community change, community development or community-building approaches might have given rise to the desire to do a project like the CIP? What previous experiences might have informed the CIP?
4. What repercussions, if any, has the CIP project had on your organization?
5. To the best of your knowledge, based on what you have experienced or heard, how has the CIP been received by stakeholders in communities or within institutions in Montreal or elsewhere?

Specific questions pertaining to the philanthropic model

6. What is the socio-economic, community-level, and/or philanthropic context in which the CIP emerged?
7. How do you see its potential scope of influence, on what or whom? What conditions should be met to reach this scope of influence?
8. Do you have any words of caution or concerns you wish to share?

Specific questions pertaining to influential reference frameworks

9. How would you describe the strengths and challenges of the collective impact approach and the practices that have developed in connection with it? What challenges do you see in connection with its next phases of development?
10. What role should funders play in a collective impact effort? Are there particular challenges related to funders' role in a collective impact effort?

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**Commissioned PhiLab research project on the CIP's origins and first year**  
**Interview schedule for Dynamo**

1. Please provide an account of how Dynamo came to be involved in the CIP: background, how the invitation to play a role was communicated and received.
2. Dynamo's strategy for capacity-building and support to community-wide measurement and evaluation (with reference to a document submitted which presents Dynamo's role and the approach it takes with regards to the CIP):
  - How is this strategy unfolding?
  - What adjustments or adaptations have been made with regards to Dynamo's original proposal?
3. How the CIP has been rolled out in communities:

- From what you have seen and heard, what can you tell us about how the CIP has been received by actors on the ground?
- Have there been any unexpected revelations or repercussions?

4. Dynamo within the CIP action system:

- How does Dynamo see its role with regards to “delivering” on certain expected outcomes laid out in the initial theory of change, including measurement of community change outcomes as well as learnings about the process? How is this role negotiated?
- Do you see any issues or points of tension?
- What is Dynamo’s perception of the project’s overall learning architecture, and of its own place within that architecture?
- Are there any links or interrelationships to be created or strengthened within this learning architecture?

**Commissioned PhiLab research project on the CIP’s origins and first year  
Interview schedule for neighbourhood tables**

1. Background

- Prior to the announcement of the CIP, what relationship did your neighbourhood table have with Centraide?
- If applicable, what relationships did your table have with other CIP partners?

2. How the CIP was received and rolled out in your community

- How did you hear about the CIP?
- What did your table and your community understand this project and this invitation to be?
- How did your table and your community receive and react to the invitation?
- In your opinion, was your community in a good position to take advantage of it?
- What process did you go through to prepare and submit a letter of intent?
- What was the nature of the project that your community proposed?
- What feedback did you get from Centraide?
- Are there factors that appear to have facilitated the process of back-and-forth communications with Centraide?
- Are there factors that might have impeded this process?

3. **Implementation** (questions pertaining to tables accepted for CIP 1 or CIP 2 support)

- If applicable, how has your understanding evolved of the opportunities and expectations related to the CIP?
- As applicable, how would you describe the dialogue sustained with Centraide and/or Dynamo in relation to the support and capacity-building assistance they have offered?
- What has the arrival of the CIP project changed for your community?
- Do you have any words of caution or concerns to share?

