The Current State of Place-Based Initiatives

2014 Inquiry Overview
About the Centers

The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy promotes more effective philanthropy and strengthens the nonprofit sector through research that informs philanthropic decision making and public policy to advance community problem solving. Using California and the West as a laboratory, The Center conducts research on philanthropy, volunteerism, and the role of the nonprofit sector in America’s communities.

The USC Sol Price Center for Social Innovation promotes the exploration and understanding of how to create sustainable, holistic vitality in low-income, urban communities. The Center develops initiatives, leaders, and scholars to advance novel solutions with a particular eye toward creating large-scale change efforts in places and populations.
As a part of a yearlong inquiry, referred to as “The Current State of Place-Based Initiatives,” discussions were held in three cities: New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Five sessions were convened, each having a different set of questions and goals.

The five sessions were each facilitated by Elwood Hopkins of Emerging Markets, Inc. with James M. Ferris of the University of Southern California.
Session One: Goals: New York City
Session One: Goals
Ford Foundation, New York
April 23, 2014

Discussion Theme: What are our basic goals in doing place-based initiatives? What are we solving for?

The first discussion explored the overall goals of place-based initiatives as seen by philanthropic and public policymakers. What do they really hope to achieve, and how much goal variation is there across the field? The discussion was guided by the questions below.

1. What do we ultimately aim to achieve with place-based initiatives? Do we aim to reverse geographically-concentrated poverty? Or are neighborhoods a manageable, convenient scale for targeting resources?

2. What do current data projections tell us about the geography and demographics of poverty? What is the effect of the aging population, the suburbanization of poverty, and the "geography of opportunity" on this field?

3. Is place a means for directing resources to people in need, or an end in itself? Do we aim to “put a floor” beneath people in a place, accepting that success may lead them to move out as populations change? Or are we “place-making” – creating improved conditions to exist in perpetuity, for whoever lives there?

4. Are we helping some neighborhoods compete regionally, or piloting strategies to be applied in all neighborhoods? What functions do neighborhoods play in a city? Are we supporting some functions over others? What’s our ultimate frame of reference: neighborhood, city, or region?

5. How is progress toward these big-picture goals evaluated? What categories of outcomes are being measured? Can we link intermediate outcomes into a narrative showing cumulative progress toward larger goals?

6. Overall, how successful has place-based funding been? As a field, should we “declare victory around small stuff,” under the premise we’re building capacity for the long haul? Or should we hold out for more significant, quantifiable impacts? Are our goals and expectations changing?

Participants

Ana Marie Argilagos  Senior Advisor  Ford Foundation

Alan Berube  Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Metropolitan Policy Program  The Brookings Institution

Xavier de Souza Briggs  Vice President for Economic Opportunity and Assets  Ford Foundation

Robert J. Chaskin, PhD  Associate Professor and Deputy Dean for Strategic Initiatives  School of Social Service Administration (SSA)  University of Chicago

Anthony Iton  Senior Vice President, Healthy Communities  The California Endowment

Russell Krumnow  Managing Director  Opportunity Nation

George McCarthy  Director, Metropolitan Opportunity  Ford Foundation
Robert McNulty  
President  
Partners for Livable Communities

Rip Rapson  
President and CEO  
The Kresge Foundation

Margery Turner  
Senior Vice President for Program Planning and Management  
The Urban Institute

Robert Weissbourd  
President  
RW Ventures

Kenneth H. Zimmerman  
Director  
Open Society Foundations
GOALS in PLACE-BASED FUNDING

PLACE MATTERS. Different scales, shifting constructive forces

DATA: Economic, geographic, location, connectivity, poverty, distress

WHAT ARE WE SOLVING FOR? Place-based ideology

INEquality & PLACE-CONSCIOUS LEVERS

CONVERSATION

PUBLIC SECTOR

USC PLACE-BASED FUNDING MEETING 04.23.14
PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES

EMPOWER GROUPS vs. "PLACE-MAKING"

NEW SETTLEMENT

PROVIDE RESOURCES

"MOVE UP AND OUT"

RESOURCES FOR YOUNG ADULTS

NEW CITY CENTER

PLACE SYSTEM

PLACE IS A POWERFUL FRAME

DYNAMIC NETWORK

POWER

POLICY

NEIGHBORHOOD

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

IMMIGRANT PORTAL COMMUNITY

MID-INCOME COMMUNITY

BOHEMIAN COMMUNITY

UNDERSTAND THE STAKEHOLDERS

WHO SETS THE GOAL?

SOME RESIDENTS DON'T HAVE STAKES

COLLECTION OF GOALS

THE OPPORTUNITY INDEX

INVESTMENT + PREVENTION

ENHANCE RESILIENCE

RESOLVE POVERTY + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PREVIOUS FIELD-BUILDING:

ISOLATED INDIVIDUALS

EFFORTS DON'T ALWAYS ADD UP

ADOPTING SPECIFIC GOALS

USC PLACE-BASED FUNDING MEETING 04.23.14
PLACE AS COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK

CHALLENGES
- Dynamics
- Scale
- Pluralism vs. Unification

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- Popular Opinion
- Education
- Job Centers

SEGREGATION
- Drivers of Growth
- Inclusive Growth
- Minority Owners + Business
- Transition
- Generational Change

SOCIAL MOBILITY + DIVERSITY

ALIGN & MOVE FORWARD

USC PLACE-BASED FUNDING MEETING 04.23.14
Session Two: Theories of Change: New York City
Discussion Theme: What are the theoretical assumptions driving place-based initiatives today?

The second session examined the basic theoretical assumptions underlying place-based initiatives in general, as well as the theories of change and corresponding implementation models driving individual initiatives: The discussion was guided by the questions below.

1. What social problems (e.g. under-education, crime, poor health, unemployment) are best addressed at the neighborhood scale? How are we using data to drive our theories? Which need to be addressed regionally or societally? Is there any consensus around the optimal scale for place-based initiatives?

2. Place-based initiatives generally intend to achieve comprehensive change. But comprehensiveness can be achieved by working on all issues simultaneously, or by starting with a single “driver” issue and expanding the scope of the initiative from there. What is current wisdom on which approach works better?

3. Do we recognize different types of neighborhoods? Do they represent distinct states of maturation along a life-cycle, or are they non-sequential? How do the theoretical assumptions underlying each type determine the choice of interventions, funder role, investment time frames, and expected outcomes?

4. What are the different “models” for place-based initiatives today? Social service integration? Economic development? Civic empowerment? Hybrid, or comprehensive models? What theories underlie each?

5. To what extent have theories actually guided work on the ground? Has it been possible to keep a range of constituents focused on a shared theory? Or have funding initiatives become more reactive in practice?

Participants

Tonya Allen  President and CEO  The Skillman Foundation

Prudence Brown  Independent Consultant

Thomas Burns  Managing Director  Urban Ventures Group

Frank Farrow  Director  Center for the Study of Social Policy

Greg Giornelli  President and COO  Purpose Built Communities

Richard Harwood  Founder and President  The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

Jerry Maldonado  Program Officer  Ford Foundation

Ralph Smith  Senior Vice President  The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Susana Vasquez  Executive Director  LISC Chicago
PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES: THEORIES OF CHANGE

PLACE-CONSCIOUSNESS

AUTHORIZING ENVIRONMENT

Societal Problems

District Level vs. Individual Neighborhood Level

ARE THE NEIGHBORHOODS "WORTH IT"?

School, Health, Crime, Multi-Issue

Build Local Non-Profit

Clarity + Priority + Flexibility

Building Neighborhood Capacity

Implementable Change

Drivers that lead investment & change perception of neighborhoods

Supply & Demand

Conflict Values

Community Innovation + New Voices

 Inform Leadership

Neighborhood-Owned Enterprise

Resiliency

Tackle Larger Issues

We at the Table Are Outsiders

"I'm in the room but not with them"

USC PLACE-BASED FUNDING MEETING 04.24.14
Session Three: Operating Capacity
University of Southern California, Los Angeles
April 30, 2014

Discussion Theme: What on-the-ground capacity is required to effectively carry out place-based initiatives?

The third session reflected on the organizational infrastructure and leadership required for successful place-based initiatives, and the ways in which public and private funders create or strengthen this infrastructure. The discussion was guided by the questions below.

1. What “preconditions” do place-based funders have at the civil society level? What are the “readiness factors” in local government? Are there signs indicating that a neighborhood is ready for a place-based initiative?

2. What are the roles of informal associations, natural helping networks, extended families and local leaders? Does the “map” of social networks coincide with geographic boundaries?

3. What types of nonprofit organizations (CDCs, social service agencies, advocacy groups) have turned out to be key partners? What capacities do they need? What do funders seek in terms of collaboration with them?

4. Is there a need for a “lead agency”? What does such an organization look like? How can one know if it is authentic and accountable?

5. How much are funders willing to invest in building this operating capacity versus only funding in areas that already possess it? What roles have funders played in cultivating local capacity?

6. What does it mean for a funder to partner with a neighborhood? Do funders work with a single partner organization that represents community-wide interests? Or do they work with a configuration of partners, a steering committee, or a specially-constructed governance structure? Does the “partner” evolve over time?

7. When a foundation or government agency undertakes a place-based agenda what internal institutional retooling is required? What capacities, competencies, and decision making structures does it need to acquire?

Participants

Denise McGregor Armbrister Executive Director
Wells Fargo Regional Foundation

Judith Bell President
PolicyLink

Brent A. Brown Executive Director
beWORKSHOP

Tom Dewar Independent Consultant

Rafael González Director of Best Start
First 5 LA

Dr. Beth P. Reynolds Executive Director
National Dropout Prevention Center

Beatriz Solís Director, Healthy Communities (South Region)
The California Endowment
SESSION 3: OPERATING CAPACITY

HOW DO YOU ADDRESS COMMUNITIES WHO DON'T HAVE CAPACITY NOW?

- Staff as Changemaker
- Partnership with Other NGOs
- Creative Engagement
- Respect in Place and Process
- Who is the Anchor?
- Network
- Ourselves
- Staff
- New Support
- Funds for Conversation
- Incongruent
- Our Story: F.U.N.
- Our Vision
- Intrinsic
- Impact
- Engage

WHAT ON THE GROUND CAPACITY IS REQUIRED TO EFFECTIVELY CARRY OUT PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES?

- Partnership: Neighbors and Others
- Who Needs What?
- Needs Assessment
- What's the Vision?
- Why We Care
- Our Story: F.U.N.
- Our Vision
- Intrinsic
- Impact
- Engage

WHAT ARE THE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS?

- Needs Assessment
- What's the Vision?
- Who's the Anchor?
- Our Story: F.U.N.
- Our Vision
- Intrinsic
- Impact
- Engage

WHAT COULD WE WORK ON?

- Needs Assessment
- What's the Vision?
- Who's the Anchor?
- Our Story: F.U.N.
- Our Vision
- Intrinsic
- Impact
- Engage

WHAT CAN WE WORK ON?
WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR FIELD?

- DATA
- RESULTS
- SYSTEM
- COMMITTED BEING ACCOUNTABLE

NO ABILITY HES A KEY

BALANCE
- QUALITATIVE ROOT CAUSES
- QUALITATIVE HOW

CONTEXT MATTERS

WHAT IS OUR ROLE?
- PROVIDE COMMUNITY BUILDING CAPACITY

EMERGING COMMUNITY PRACTICE

LEARNING COMMUNITY

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

NO 20 better PRACTICE
Session Four: Market Influences: Los Angeles
Session Four: Market Influences
University of Southern California, Los Angeles
May 5, 2014

Discussion Theme: What role do economic and market forces played in place-based initiatives?

The fourth session looked at the extent to which place-based initiatives have acquired a market orientation and have attempted to connect low-income areas with larger economic tides. The discussion was guided by the questions below.

1. How are markets conceptualized for the purpose of place-based initiatives? Are they focused on stimulating neighborhoods as self-contained micro-markets, or connecting the neighborhoods to regional economic opportunities? Do funders tend to consider themselves “market makers” or “market shapers”?

2. What types of market research have enabled funders to become more market-oriented? How has this data been used? How effective has it been?

3. What aspects of the economy have been emphasized by place-based funders? Labor markets? Real estate markets? Financial markets? Retail markets? Have funders found themselves to be more effective in some than others?

4. To what degree have funders of place-based work moved beyond grants to program-related investments, social investments, loans, or other financial instruments?

5. More broadly, what is the role of the funder in these market-oriented strategies? Do they directly or indirectly engage private sector players?

Participants

Raphael Bostic  
Professor, Judith and John Bedrosian Chair in Governance and the Public Enterprise  
Sol Price School of Public Policy  
University of Southern California

Peter Dreier  
Dr. E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics and Chair, Urban and Environmental Policy Department  
Occidental College

Renee Glover  
Chair of the Board  
Habitat for Humanity International

Antonio Manning  
Vice President  
Office of Corporate Responsibility  
JP Morgan Chase & Co. Global Philanthropy

Mauricio Lim Miller  
Founder, President and CEO  
Family Independence Initiative

Gary Painter  
Director of Graduate Programs in Public Policy and Director of Research, Lusk Center for Real Estate  
Sol Price School of Public Policy  
University of Southern California

Manuel Pastor  
Professor of Sociology and American Studies and Ethnicity and Director, Program for Environmental and Regional Equity  
University of Southern California
Benson “Buzz” Roberts  Director, Office of Small Business, Community Development, and Affordable Housing Policy
US Department of the Treasury

Kim Zeuli  Senior Vice President and Director of Research and Advisory Practice
Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC)
Session Five: Funding: Washington, D.C.
Session Five: Funding

USC Office of Research Advancement, Washington, D.C.
June 4, 2014

Discussion Theme: How have place-based initiatives altered funder behaviors?

This fifth session examined how funders have adjusted their own practice to be more effective in specific places, and whether or not these new funding practices have worked. In particular, it examined how public and philanthropic funding streams can be aligned in places. The discussion was facilitated by the questions below.

1. What kinds of funding strategies are necessitated by place-based efforts? Have funders changed the way they practice philanthropy, or is it essentially business-as-usual, but within geographic constraints?

2. What has been the role of corporate funding in place-based initiatives? To what degree have corporate foundations leveraged the assets of their companies? What has the corporate social responsibility lens meant for place-based funders?

3. Is there a logical division of labor between philanthropic and public sector funders? How do the sectors separately or in combination influence the private sector? What vehicles exist for funders to collaborate amongst themselves and between the sectors? Have these structures been beneficial?

4. When lead funders launch an initiative, have they tended to attract other funders to the place and leverage other resources? Or does their leadership presence actually repel other funders?

5. What is the lifecycle of a funder’s engagement in a place? How has it coincided, aligned, or fallen short of the pace of neighborhood change?

6. Have place-based initiatives really served as laboratories for innovation? To what extent do these innovations ever achieve scale?

7. What have we learned about what works and what doesn’t in funding place-based efforts? What guidelines can we give ourselves in the funding field moving forward?

Participants

Ana Marie Argilagos  Senior Advisor
                      Ford Foundation

Sheri Brady  Senior Associate for Strategic Partnerships
                      The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions

Henry Cisneros  Chairman and CEO
                      CityView

Salin Geevarghese  Deputy Assistant Secretary
                      HUD Office for International and Philanthropic Innovation

Frederick “Bart” Harvey  Former Chairman
                      Enterprise Community Partners

Amy Liu  Co-Director and Senior Fellow
                      Metropolitan Policy Program

Rolf Pendall  Center Director
                      Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center
                      The Urban Institute