

FIELD BUILDING FOR PLACE-BASED CHANGE

with The Bridgespan Group



ONLINE WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP - EVENT DATE 21/10/2024



Key resources from the session

Link to recording : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWgWGPgX8Qo>

Shared by Bridgespan:

- <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/how-philanthropy-can-support-systems-change>
- <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/community-driven-change-africa-and-india/report-community-driven-change-africa-and-india>
- <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/funding-field-catalysts>
- Link for tool with questions to help define the field : NCRP's 'Power Moves: Your Essential Philanthropy Assessment Guide for Equity and Justice': <https://ncrp.org/power-moves/>
- To question on research - this field catalyst prioritized building a broader, equity centered research based (grounded in "student experience") for the education field: <https://studentexperiencenetwork.org/>
- Slides from the session were sent round to those who registered

Shared by Place Matters:

- Here is a link to a blog Place Matters published on what we think Field Building means for place-based change in the UK. <https://placematters.org.uk/stories/place-based-working-more-than-the-sum-of-its-parts-through-building-fields-of-practice/>

Shared by Attendees:

- Shaping Places for Wellbeing, starting from a Local Authority base and building from there with a delivery partner of Public Health Scotland to bring in health authorities, then connecting with communities through Community Link Leads <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/planning-and-place-based-approaches/shaping-places-for-wellbeing-programme>
- In LocalMotion (a collaboration of five funders and six places) - where the issues are defined by local communities and where we're building capacity around inclusive decision making, working with group dynamics, systems change in practice and doing this through an anti-racist lens and building local cross sector collaboration aligned behind shared goals www.localmotion.org.uk
- We are trying to do this work in Scotland through a programme called Shaping Places for Wellbeing, starting from a Local Authority base and building from there with a delivery partner of Public Health Scotland to bring in health authorities, then connecting with communities through Community Link Leads : <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/products-and-services/planning-and-place-based-approaches/shaping-places-for-wellbeing-programme>
- <https://www.phf.org.uk/news-and-publications/changing-funding-practices-for-a-changing-world>

Where do you see field catalysts best sitting -e.g. public sector or third sector considering likely ability to have independence vs influence. Is a field catalyst similar to a systems steward? Do you see clear differences between field catalysts and system stewarding?

- In our research, almost all of the field catalysts are independent from gov't and are nonprofits/NGOs. in a few public health examples there is a more direct connection to government (e.g., SANAC in South Africa, which addresses the AIDS epidemic and coordinates private and public sector etc.). We see independence key to playing a servant leadership role, and disrupting power dynamics

To what extent can you consider a field to be a set of interconnected systems?

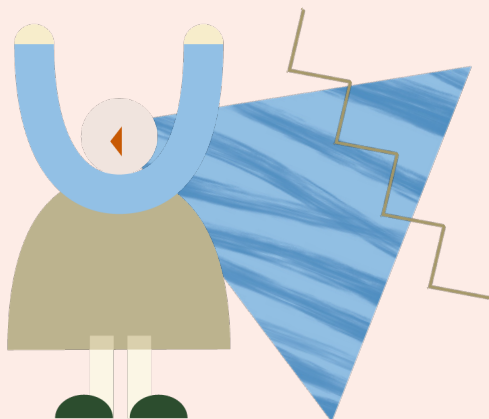
- Field catalysts and field builders would call their fields a set of interconnected systems, and deploy systems mapping as a way to understand/diagnose the field's infrastructure, actors, etc.

To what extent would you say shifting narratives and changes in public attitudes are required for successful field building? And do you think it's important that funders resource this kind of narrative framing work?

- Yes! Shifting public attitudes is often a critical part of this work and requires distinct funding to support. In many of the examples we have of fields making great progress - teen pregnancy, smoking cessation, for example - changing public attitudes have been critical.

Have you found that the field catalysts are consciously and purposefully taking this role or this is the outcome of them doing what they see needs doing?

- Great question. Here's a piece we wrote about field catalyst origin stories: <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/funding-field-catalysts>. Frequently, field catalysts come to this intentional role by reaching an impact ceiling of other approaches.



Love these examples but they do seem to have quite clear and singular objectives (like zero smoking) - is that a prerequisite for success? Can you apply this to something more intangible like 'human flourishing' or a moving to a regenerative economy...?

- Attendee Answer: Love this question - I think you can (I would say that wouldn't I). I do think that it lengthens the development whilst people work out what people want to/ can align behind
- Bridgespan Answer: Great question. Yes the broader the aperture, the more complex and long-term the work. We think about fields such as those you described as "issue-level," and those fields are critical for nurturing knowledge and relationships, but we also find a multitude of more tightly bounded problem-based fields required to make discrete progress on intermediate efforts

Is this partly because we also need to keep reimagining infrastructure and the role of infrastructure. Do we need a broader conversation about what we have and don't have? And whether some of the 'catalyst' role is sometimes not what we have.

- Attendee Answer : I agree - I feel because of the challenge of scarcity there is less collaboration than ever - when what we need is to resource catalysts/stewards whatever we want to call it as I feel this is what can have the greatest impact and affect infrastructure
- Attendee Answer : Agree with this - what we're finding in 'our organisation' is that a) it takes time for people to trust enough to say what they don't know and b) outside of London some of the skills people want are just not available locally - and so we're setting out to learn them together!

We're seeing a lot from collectives of funders, LAs/CAs and governments across the 4 UK nations focusing on Child Poverty at the moment, which could be a theme.

- Attendee Answer : agreed. it is the policy priority in Scotland
- Attendee Answer : Agree with that too and for me it really needs to have a strong equity lens given the intersectionality of issues around ethnicity, gender and poverty
- Attendee Answer : Yes, agree, and it stigma free too

Questions and reflections from Place Matters:

- Where are you seeing field building or elements of Field Building develop in the UK - what does it look like here? Anyone like to share what they are doing?
- What sorts of challenges or fields of action might be suited to a FB approach in the UK?
- How might funders support Field Building?
- How do we balance local empowerment with this more collective approach? Are there tensions between them to be considered?