



SOCIAL CHANGE NETWORKS PLAYBOOK

for Practitioners and Funders



SOCIAL CHANGE NETWORKS PLAYBOOK

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The playbook is a valuable resource for network leaders and practitioners. Anyone working to create change through collaboration will be well served by reflecting on the questions and exploring the wealth of resources contained within.

DAVID EHRlichman
Author, Impact Networks

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Helpful and practical! This playbook is a great reference for practitioners or anyone who wants to learn how to better understand networks for impact and how to develop them. Anyone working with and developing social impact networks should have this by their side!

KERRY LEA FORRESTER
Author, Impact Networks

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Insightful and reflective of the dynamism of impact networks, the playbook offers clear and accessible guidance for network practitioners and funders alike, using a rich variety of real-world examples and resources. Recommended for stakeholders at any stage of their impact network evolution.

GWEN BEEMAN
Analyst at Small Foundation

”

This playbook has been authored by the inHive team, inspired and curated based on the learnings from hosting The Networks Learning Journey, an interactive and participatory learning series that explored the value of impact networks and best practices in network building with a group of network practitioners and funders.



SOCIAL CHANGE NETWORKS PLAYBOOK

About the Team

inHive works closely with partners to develop networks that enable communities to leverage existing resources and amplify impact on their local and global communities. We work with partners from around the world - from school networks in Pakistan, to youth leadership programmes across Africa, to global funders - to build skills and expertise, design network structures, and facilitate participatory methods and collaborative activities for shared engagement, learning, and impact.

Authors



***Adrian Röpke**, Research Analyst, is dedicated to co-create a thriving world by weaving impact networks, facilitating transformative learning journeys and offering capacity building for systemic change.*



***Prerna Aswani**, Project Lead, is committed to driving youth social mobility by equalising access to opportunities for young people from low resourced backgrounds. Prerna sees networks as a vital tool to contribute towards this mission and has worked with organisations across the globe, from UK, India and Africa to support youth development.*



***Gemma May**, Senior Project Lead, is a development specialist, working in fundraising, developing impact frameworks, project management and building alumni networks. In her 10 years in fundraising she has formed partnerships for organisations in the UK, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan that have supported scholarships and community development projects.*



***Ramyatara Mullanpudi**, Graphic Designer, is dedicated to create visual narratives that help uncover and depict a brand's vision and create memorable experiences.*

*Illustrations by **Pch.Vector** from [freepik.com](https://www.freepik.com)*



SOCIAL CHANGE NETWORKS PLAYBOOK

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge everyone who made the network learning journey and this playbook possible. Furthermore, we appreciate the numerous collaborators and partners that provided valuable feedback during the writing process. Lastly, we thank all of you who co-create a more thriving world by collaborating in impact networks and all of you who intend to make a difference.



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

The challenges that the world faces today, from climate change to highly unequal economic and social structures cannot be solved by one organisation, government or institution alone. We need to collaborate to share learnings, scale innovations and build our collective capacity to bring about social impact.

This playbook is the product of a participatory learning journey that we as a group of network practitioners, funders and researchers went on together. Together, we made sense of some of the key questions, challenges and opportunities of impact networks, as well as good practices in facilitating and funding networks. This playbook is our humble contribution to share the learnings that emerged from our journey and support fellow practitioners and funders who develop networks for social impact.

We see these networks as groups of individuals and organizations that harness their connections and relationships towards a shared purpose, to learn together and collaborate to achieve a positive impact on a complex societal or ecological challenge.

There is a rich and growing body of both lived experience and research showing that collaboration through networks can enable learning, cultivate awareness, pool resources and widen access to opportunities. Impact networks can be critical to bringing about systems change across sectors, whether this is in education, youth development, gender equality or philanthropy. However, there are still many questions about how networks can become more thriving, adaptable and resilient:

- How do we most effectively take networks from talk to action?
- How do we convey the value of networks?
- How can we better democratise access to networks?
- What are good practices to build networks?
- How can networks drive systems change?
- How do we know when networks are working?

Through this playbook, we begin to share ideas and frameworks to start addressing some of these questions. We see this playbook as:

A Practical Guide that is recognizable, useful and immediately applicable.

A Curated Overview of resources and methods to support deeper learning.

An Honest Invitation to experiment with collaboration and alignment.

In each chapter we invite you to use the resources and findings we share to reflect, learn and build strong networks in your contexts

We acknowledge that we merely scratch the surface of these questions in this playbook. The more we learned throughout our journey, the more questions arose. We, therefore, invite you to also engage deeply with the reflective questions and additional resources. It is our collective intention and sincere hope that this playbook contributes to our collective ability to realize a more flourishing world for all.

Sincerely,

The Networks Learning Journey Collaborators



INTRODUCTION

The Networks Learning Journey Collaborators



Amanda Folsom
Results for Development



Gwen Beeman
Small Foundation



Areebah Shahid
Pakistan Youth Change Advocates



Jahazi David
Mastercard Foundation



Asha Curren
Giving Tuesday



Jihad Hajjouji
African Leadership Academy



Ashley Collier
Mastercard Foundation



Lucy Ashman
Teach for All



Danny Gilliland
HunderED



Rogsin Fogarty
Reach for Change



Sharath Jeevan
Intrinsic Labs



ALIGNING TOWARDS A PURPOSE

CHAPTER 1

You can't describe the world you want to get to know, because the whole point is to build a world that right now, we cannot imagine. A world where fundamental decisions are based on solidarity. That goal is very rewarding to work towards and elusive at the same time.

Areebah Shahid
Pakistan Youth Change Advocates



Impact networks are characterized by continuous evolution towards a shared purpose. To align towards a shared purpose with all network members is critical because it generates clarity and motivation. Purpose, if it is aligned with the members' sense of purpose, intrinsically motivates members and leads to a real sense of community. This step-by-step guide on how to **build a powerful shared purpose can help**. The guide provides practical steps to move from many different desires, visions and ideas to clarifying a shared intention. However, creating a statement of purpose once is not all there is to it: Purpose is animate, adaptive and continuously evolving. It will change over time as members focus on action and realizing concrete goals. All in all, a shared purpose aligns members, guides strategies and helps to focus attention.

CASE STUDY

Purpose can be long term or shorter term if it excites members and fosters action. **Teach For All** is a global impact network with **the vision** of a world where educators, policymakers, parents, and students are working together to ensure that their communities' children have the foundation they need to shape a better future for themselves and all of us. Teach For All's purpose is very big and long-term: "In 2040, communities in every part of the world are enabling all their children to have the education, support and opportunities to shape a better future for themselves and their communities. These communities are inspiring and informing a worldwide movement to achieve this everywhere." A shared purpose can also be shorter-term and more specific, such as **Pakistan Youth Change Advocate's intent** to lobby the regional government to increase spending on girls' education.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we facilitate deep conversation about what our shared sense of purpose is?
How can we enact this sense of purpose in all that we do?

2. LEARN

Learn how to apply the step-by-step guide on how to build a powerful shared intent by CoCreative.

3. BUILD

Build your skill to use the **Ikigei**, a traditional Japanese way of conceptualizing purpose for yourself and the impact network.

FOSTERING COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

CHAPTER 2



Whenever someone feels capable, they should take over leadership and in the next situation that can change. So, everyone who has the capacity should be enabled to lead.

Rebecca Ottman
Siemens Stiftung



Impact networks are complex, working not only at multiple levels but constantly evolving. This complexity demands **collaborative leadership** at every level. All members need space to make sense of their unique contributions. This ensures continuity of the network even when energy from one group of leaders might wane. Fostering agency in all members also makes the network more adaptive to respond to quickly changing circumstances. Leadership in a network, therefore, shifts away from the heroic manager who motivates everyone, to many people who lead together. There are many **different leadership roles** necessary for a network to thrive including conveners, weavers, advocates, event organizers, evaluators, storytellers and more. Some of these roles can be fulfilled by network facilitators from the organisation(s) the network has emerged from. However, most of these roles should be rotated among network members based on members preferences and the needs of the network. The role of network facilitators then becomes to support **capacity building** and **foster skills**.

CASE STUDY

The vision of **the Mastercard Foundation** is to create a world where everyone can learn and prosper, with the ambitious goal of ensuring 30 million young people have dignified and fulfilling work in Africa by 2030. Through their extensive partnerships, they provide scholarships, leadership development, vocational training and entrepreneurship support to young Africans. For the Foundation, building deep collaborations and networks has been a crucial part of their **strategy** to achieve this impact. Wedded in the values of co-creation and listening to the needs of the young people they serve, the Foundation set up its pilot alumni network chapters. They identified a diverse range of young leaders to drive the direction, reach out and engage their peers, and determine network priorities. Seven alumni committee members co-decide the plans, activities and engagements of their chapters. The Foundation's staff provides extensive backend support, such as training on network development to enable successful youth-led leadership. This is an initial but fundamental step to redistributing the power to develop a truly member-led network.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we distribute leadership in a way that it becomes a truly collective practice? How can we support network members to step into leadership roles?

2. LEARN

Learn about the Collective Leadership Compass, a tool to measure, plan, and assess the level of collective leadership in collaboration by **the Collective Leadership Institute**.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to help others to enact their unique leadership style and role by reading up on and sharing about different network leadership roles.



Networks are messy and complex; as with all people-based structures, there is no one size fits all set up, but by bringing positive energy and a clear shared purpose, they can thrive and innovate to deliver real social impact.

LUCY ASHMAN
Teach for All



Co-defining and communicating the benefits of impact networks is key to unlocking resources and participation. It is important to highlight both the tangible value, such as more innovation and knowledge sharing, but also the intangible value that stems from relationships. One of the key benefits to emphasise is that the impact of any intervention is multiplied when driven by a network approach. This is because learnings can be quickly shared and replicated among a wider group. It is important to engage early supporters and members, create a positive and meaningful experience and then leverage the initial active members to attract more.



CASE STUDY

At the **Mastercard Foundation**, developing buy-in for a network approach was critical for successfully unlocking internal capacity and resources. For the alumni network, in particular, the youth engagement team formulated and communicated a strong value proposition to show its benefits. It has been carefully framed while embracing that not all value-add is tangible:

FEEDBACK LOOPS

Staying connected to alumni through the network would enable the Foundation to integrate youth voice more easily into their future programmes and increase impact.

ENHANCING BRAND AWARENESS

Alumni serve as important ambassadors to amplify the Foundation's work as they interact with the government, private sector and civil society as scholars, community leaders and workers.

BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF IMPACT

Supporting alumni on their journeys after completing their studies or program through the network, will allow the Foundation to better understand its long-term impact, learn from it and adapt.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we clearly outline the value of developing a network for different stakeholders?

2. LEARN

Learn about some of the *evidence of the importance and impact* of networks by Ilona Haselwood.

3. BUILD

Build your communication strategies based on who you talk to by becoming aware of their key motivations, intent and strategies.



We invested in our internal capabilities to create a network and we also work very closely with our partners for them to be able to have the resources they need to create the networks that are meaningful for them.

ASHLEY COLLIER
Mastercard Foundation



Financial as well as non-financial resources such as new connections, increased visibility or consulting are both crucial for network facilitators to set up, structure and coordinate impact in networks. Resources can be acquired through multiple pathways, for instance working with foundations, developing a social enterprise approach or working with governments. To fund networks requires a shift to more open-ended funding that is adaptive to changing circumstances. This is because while programmatic interventions have a definitive set of inputs, outputs and outcomes, impact networks are more emergent and therefore less definable in a single proposal. It is also important to sufficiently fund the core support functions of an impact network as it is the backbone for all activities, without which impact cannot be coordinated. *This guide* can help to understand in more detail how funding an impact network is different from traditional funding. Resources then also need to be allocated in a way that will generate impact. For that, a network needs principles, decision-making processes and general guidelines on how to allocate e.g., money across diverse projects. Useful software to allocate money collaboratively is *OpenCollective*. Networks that emerge out of organisations often require not just a specific set of network coordinators to drive the network but also support from across different functions within the organisation.

CASE STUDY

At the Mastercard Foundation, it was important to engage the internal communications, legal, management and impact teams. It has been crucial for alumni committee members to work together with the Foundation communications team to build their credibility and raise awareness of the network among alumni. Likewise, alumni committees working together with the impact team has enabled network impact to be integrated into the broader impact and learning framework of the Foundation, rather than alumni engagement being siloed from the rest of the Foundation's work. Because of the need for these collaborations between the alumni network committee and internal teams, the Foundation found that the network strategy and mindset need to be embedded across the entire foundation to ensure successful implementation.

ACTION POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS

1. REFLECT

How can our network be resourced and funded? How can we allocate resources equitably and effectively?

2. LEARN

Learn about how resourcing needs to change over the lifespan of a network and how to create agreements around money in this [brief on resourcing](#) (p. 10 onwards)

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to co-define what the main sources of resourcing for the network are and thoroughly design how they can be allocated across different initiatives.

ACTION POINTS FOR FUNDERS

1. REFLECT

How can we best show up to support networks in a collaborative, power-aware and supportive way?

2. LEARN

Learn about key considerations when engaging with a network as a funder with this thorough [guide](#) by the Rockefeller Foundation

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to critically reflect upon the power you hold in a network and engage in deep conversations with the practitioners about what serves the network most.

DEVELOPING UNIFYING PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER 5



Unifying principles have been crucial to driving unity across the network and clarity on what the common purpose and aims are of the network are, whilst leaving a lot of room for local members to define how they achieve the shared purpose.

WENDY KOPP
Teach for All



What makes a network cohesive in its approach are the goals it is working towards and alignment on shared values and principles. It is this alignment that also guides and binds network members towards a shared identity, behaviour and belonging within the network. Unifying principles that facilitate self-organization, but do not prescribe anything about how to live them. Yet, they guarantee that there is enough commonality to foster meaningful collaboration. Principles are often a tangible way to identify, communicate and build a collaborative network culture. Culture is deeply ingrained, implicit and a way to transmit new mental models and practices. That is why building individual and collective behaviours that reinforce a collaborative culture are key. Habits such as curious listening, continuous inquiry and respect for each other can shape a regenerative network culture.

CASE STUDY

For **Teach For All**, a *set of unifying principles* has been crucial to driving unity across the network. Examples of their 10 principles include: pursue our networks' shared purpose, support and develop participants, cultivate lifelong leadership and pursue measurable impact. These provide clarity and guidance for members while leaving a lot of room for members to define how they enact the principles in their unique way. This has enabled the network to be locally led by *independent organisations* who ensure that the way they work is best for the context that they exist. They also make the culture Teach For All strives for more tangible and easier to grasp for new members.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we embody a more collaborative culture by living unifying principles and enacting our shared values?

2. LEARN

Learn from other networks by examining the *Overview on Network Values* by Network Weaver.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to *design regenerative cultures* by reading the book from Daniel Christian Wahl.

RELATIONSHIPS



It shouldn't always be about work; forging friendship goes a long way.

AREEBAH SHAHID
Pakistan Youth Change Advocates



Networks are nothing without the relationships among members that bring life to the network's work and activities. Being in the right relationship with each other takes time and patience. It needs a willingness to appreciate, acknowledge and nurture people and their ideas and unique contributions. The role of network facilitators is often to identify who can potentially help each other and to enable a positive interaction. This practice of connecting others for mutual benefit supports the natural emergence of relationships during gatherings and doing shared work. Over time, each positive interaction creates a web of nourishing and reciprocal relations. Ideas, learning, resources, and others can then more seamlessly flow through the whole network. As a result, lasting relationships build resilience during challenging times, an overarching sense of community, access to more diverse information and increased agency.



CASE STUDY

Teach For All has invested heavily in in-person and virtual gatherings between local members to cultivate strong relationships between members. Creating both formal and informal opportunities for people to network and build ties at every level has been critical for *their impact*. Having informal points of connection is particularly important to build friendships that enable sharing, learning and collaboration with one another. This strong web of connections has enabled Teach For All to stay resilient during challenging times and to make an impact in most countries around the world.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we create nourishing relationships? How can our relationships enable us to share more knowledge, resources and information?

2. LEARN

Learn about the practice of network weaving by reviewing the website networkweaver.com

3. BUILD

Build your communication strategies based on who you talk to by becoming aware of their key motivations, intent and strategies.



Impact in networks is a long game, investing in them requires a level of trust in the process and understanding the value of connections.

LUCY ASHMAN
Teach for All



Fostering a real sense of trust is *essential for building a lasting network*. If people in a network don't feel they can rely on each other, the collaboration will be impeded. Investing in creating space for network members to form bonds, get to know each other and share openly is therefore key. When we become truly curious and committed to a healthy sense of relating, we generate deep trust. This in turn increases the commitment of members to share resources, information or honest feedback. Due to the pandemic and digital transformation, it is also important to consider how to build trust in virtual environments. Virtual environments require even more emphasis and time for informal connection. Here is concise advice on *how to create thriving virtual meetings* and a thorough *playbook on virtual facilitation*.



CASE STUDY

The African Leadership Academy (ALA) seeks to transform Africa by developing a powerful network of young leaders who will work together to address Africa's greatest challenges, achieve extraordinary social impact. Young leaders complete *an intensive two-year programme* of intellectual growth and hands-on leadership development. ALA consciously designed their programme to build in activities and events where young people get to know each other deeply and share openly. They created experiential aspects to their gatherings where network members had to work with each other. This has created a strong foundation of trust that enables the network to stay resilient and sustainable in the long term.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

What conditions and activities can we co-create to build trust over time?

2. LEARN

Learn how to use the free worksheets on *Trust: Foundation of Effective networks* by June Holley to assess the trust in a network.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to co-create experiences that generate a *sense of psychological safety* and model *giving and receiving honest feedback*.



Create something experimental that gets people engaged in some way or another and create spaces for openness, which accelerates connection.

JIHAD HAJJOUJI



To co-create spaces in which we can share, see and be witnessed is critical. Designing experiences that are guided by powerful questions, space to be open and to learn together truly enable strong bonds to form. It is however important to create safety first because vulnerability is not possible for all: This is particularly true for those who have been oppressed or experienced significant trauma. It is therefore important to be sure to allow people the space they need to engage or not and to honour distance where appropriate. The art of **facilitation** can help convene people and to hold spaces that both honour and expand boundaries.



CASE STUDY

At **the African Leadership Academy** creating spaces that are both safe and brave has been highly effective in accelerating connection within the community. The invitation to be vulnerable if possible and open has been built into the design of ALA's sessions. An example of an activity that invites members to be vulnerable during ALA's networking events is "the 15 toasts of failure" where members are invited to share stories of 'failure' in an intimate setting of peers. Further, even as the young leaders within the programme transition to higher education, ALA provides well-being support to its alumni, which enables a strong sense of belonging within the network to be established.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

Are you willing to show up and be seen when you can't control the outcome? (Brene Brown) Are we showing up vulnerably among collaborators?

2. LEARN

Learn about the nuances of vulnerability by reading *Daring Greatly* or watching the *TED Talk on vulnerability* by Brene Brown.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to facilitate trauma-informed spaces by watching the movie *The Wisdom of Trauma* or visiting the annual *Collective Trauma Summit*.



It is difficult to make networks both high quality and broadly accessible. There isn't just inequality of access to networks, but inequality of benefit. Making networks more inclusive is hard work.

DANIEL MARKOVITS
Professor of Law at Yale Law School



There are many challenges regarding inclusion, diversity, and equity in our societies today. Groups are marginalized and excluded, because of race, sex, gender, skin colour, education, and more. Networks are not inherently good and can be equally susceptible to reproduce marginalization and opportunity hoarding if inclusion and diversity are not prioritized. To address this, it is necessary to craft **agreements**, uncover **implicit biases** and **create safe spaces** to inquire how the network can become more intentionally inclusive.



This takes time, empathy, humanity, and humility. It requires those who traditionally held power to step back, listen with compassion, acknowledge the pain and co-create authentic strategies. In addition, there are different pathways regarding inclusion. A network can be inclusive even if entry into the network is not open to all. Some networks might be exclusive for a specific group who share a mission or identity but then designed to produce and expand benefits for all. So, creating an inclusive network doesn't always mean making it accessible to all, but it can also mean democratizing benefits.

CASE STUDY

The African Leadership Academy is investing in supporting and developing all members of the network: by nurturing the talents of all young leaders. While ALA is an exclusive network, as it focuses on young leaders only, the benefits of the network through the leadership training members get are intended to be spread far and wide through the work that members go on to do. Still, ALA makes an intentional effort to centre inclusion, because "when networks succumb to opportunity hoarding, they rarely sustain. They often implode. When networks genuinely are truly talent nurturing, they create value for both individual members and society at large." (Sharath Jeevan, Intrinsic Labs). Then they are also far more likely to sustain and thrive. It is therefore crucially important to foster diversity, equity and inclusion with concrete guidelines, measures and strategies.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How could I and we become more willing and skilled at having conversations that address inclusion, diversity and equity?

2. LEARN

Learn about *the Diversity Atlas* tool that helps networks to map diversity with an intuitive and well-researched survey tool and the practice based *story of The Wallace Center*.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to identify and speak to the different dimensions of privilege and marginalization with *the Wheel of Privilege*.

WELLBEING



Wellbeing is not just the absence of ill-being, but the presence of many positive states

KAPIL DAWDA



Creating impact networks is intense and complex. There are so many different elements to sense into and consider that it can easily become overwhelming. It is therefore important to realize that being well in the process is as important as any positive outcomes. It is already part of the impact. During the networks process, it is therefore important to stay attentive and attuned to the wellbeing of individual members, the whole network, societies, and the natural world. This requires developing practices to step back, to be mindful and to support each other. The result of a network that creates a nourishing social field is that it becomes more attractive for people to join and reduces the likelihood of burnout. Only when we are well, we can co-create from a healthy basis when engaging with the big social and ecological challenges of our times.

CASE STUDY

The Weaving Lab is a global community that is dedicated to bringing about systemic changes to realize the universal well-being of self, society and nature. Though creating a lot of collaborative projects, the team regularly step back and reflect on how to best nourish the well-being of themselves and their community. The Weaving Lab does this through small reflection circles, exchanging insights on practices such as *mindfulness-based stress reduction* and specific learning sessions on well-being. It is their conviction that structural changes cannot happen if individuals do not engage in nourishing and growing themselves. In this way, they combine a way of being that centres well-being and a way of doing that fosters co-creative and systemic action.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we interact and be in a way that continuously fosters the wellbeing of ourselves, society and the natural world?

2. LEARN

Learn how to quickly assess your wellbeing with the *wheel of wellbeing* that can help to quickly map 10 intuitive dimensions of wellbeing.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to create an ongoing inquire on how the energy and boundaries of individual members and the network can be respected.



Key for network leadership is to leverage networks and people around them who can provide contextually aware perspectives to shape the strategy towards the shared purpose.

ROISIN FOGARTY
Reach for Change



It is challenging to align diverse members around a shared strategy, especially when working in a decentralized way, which is suitable for impact networks. It is therefore important to constantly adapt a **good strategy** by co-creating roadmaps that define milestones yet remain open to emergence. For further guidance review the Collaborative **Roadmap and Process Model** by CoCreative that is helpful to get a general overview. Furthermore, it is important to organize and create synergies between various activities. Self-organizing into working groups can be helpful to do so in closer, more tangible collaborations. Approaches to project management such as **Agile** or other iterative methodologies bring concreteness and clarity to the implementation of ideas. When co-creating a strategy, it is challenging to make decisions that are both inclusive and efficient. In practice, decisions often have a limited time horizon. To tackle this challenge, it is important to co-design governance structures, which outline how, by whom and when decisions are made.

CASE STUDY

Giving Tuesday is the global generosity movement that aims to democratize giving. It began as a campaign for giving on the Tuesday after Black Friday and Cyber Monday in the U.S. Their global organizing team plays a key role in facilitating the whole network, spreading learnings and innovations. At Giving Tuesday, innovation is considered successful when it is replicated or iterated in other countries. As such, the global arm of the organization sees itself as facilitating the information exchange that enables each local organization to shape its strategy based on global learnings but also local context. This means that how the movement is run in each country is determined at the local level. Each local Giving Tuesday leader has freedom on how they want to drive action in their region. This model of low hierarchy and highly decentralized decision making is a crucial component because it provides members with the freedom to innovate and iterate on their strategy in a globally informed but locally rooted fashion.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we create continuously create strategic alignment and organize ourselves to implement ideas effectively? How do we want to make decisions together?

2. LEARN

Learn about the detailed **Roadmap and Process Model** for strategy development by CoCreative. For governance review **consent decision making** and **principles for governance**.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to become more emergent in approaching strategy and governance by reading the book "**Emergent Strategy**" by **Adrienne Maree Brown**.



Networks thrive when its members can engage and co-create its activity, as this gives a strong sense of ownership and drives action by its members.

PRERNA ASWANI
inHive



It is important to find ways to foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Sustained interest comes from providing extrinsic benefits, such as training opportunities, salaries, or public appreciation. And to fuel intrinsic motivation through fun engagement, meaningful interactions and career opportunities. Fostering motivation then allows members to co-create activities, which gives a strong sense of ownership. It is a common challenge that members want to be involved in but do not know how – either because they don't know what is expected of them, or because they don't feel 'permission' to act. For that, it is essential to create a shared understanding of how to engage to *meet the needs* of members and to make member contributions visible. This helps to amplify the energy of highly engaged members and involve less engaged members in a structured way. As a network's goals are often long-term and complex, it is natural that the willingness to engage ebbs and flows. For that, it is important to celebrate achievements and the process as well as to continuously *hold each other accountable*.

CASE STUDY

HundrED is a not-for-profit organization, which seeks and shares inspiring innovations in K12 education. They have created welcome guides for all our community members that clearly outline what is expected of them, ways they can engage, and how they can contribute. This allows their more excited members to contribute significantly by guiding their energy while encouraging participation from those that are still feeling out the community.

Teach For All makes it very clear that the participants are responsible and many of their sub-communities have been self-organizing for over 5 years. They have achieved this in part by providing *detailed resources* on their website including videos on how early set stages looked like for a national chapter and clear articulations of the vision. In addition, the network stayed committed and engaged during this time by celebrating mini milestones along the way. Each of these was celebrated in its own way as a critical steppingstone.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we stay motivated to contribute in the long term? How can we collectively stay accountable to our commitments?

2. LEARN

Learn how to *build a culture of Accountability* by Cocreative that outlines concrete practices on how to keep each other accountable.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to engage with your collaborators on what truly motivates you and how to co-define the terms of your engagement.



A good idea or an innovation can be rapidly adopted across the network, and I think there are powerful implications in that.

WENDY KOPP
Teach for All



Networks foster innovation through meaningful exchanges, creating accelerators or setting up **innovation funds** to support multiple **ideas** at the same time. For that, network facilitators play a connecting role to collect and share information, stories and learnings

between members. A clear and concise way to look at how innovations diffuse is the **Adoption of Innovation Model** that helps to guide the process of implementing a valuable idea. It is, however, also important to critically reflect on the obsession to be innovative. Sometimes it might even be better to integrate different ideas instead of trying to come up with something new. Furthermore, there is a tendency to spread innovations widely, i.e., to try to reach more people and places with an innovation. However, this is not enough: rather it is important to ensure that mindsets and worldviews evolve alongside so that any innovation remains sustainable in the long term. For further insights on widening, deepening and lengthening social innovations review the **SCALE3D tool**.

CASE STUDY

HundrED's mission is to identify impactful education innovations and help them spread. One of the ways they do that is by telling the stories of their community members that are uplifting, motivating, and validating. Stories are generally the most engaging content for people to read and bring an individual, human element to big global networks. As a result, they tend to be the most highly shared by community members to their networks, creating more interest and views which creates a virtuous loop of stories and visibility for innovations.

It is important to experiment with different formats of storytelling to share great ideas. Documenting what worked and what failed and distributing these lessons across the network helps to scale innovations. Common places to share and spread breakthroughs are **LinkedIn**, **Medium** or **TED talks**. Creating an appealing visual identity and **graphical facilitation** can create further visibility and inspiration.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

When do we want to innovate and when do we want to integrate diverse ideas? How can we scale innovations widely, deeply and persistently?

2. LEARN

Learn about the **Adoption of Innovation Model** from CoCreative that clearly outlines how innovation becomes adopted over time.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to share innovations, stories and breakthrough insights in your network and with a wider audience.



It often takes time for the impact of networks to be seen. We may see an early indication of impact, but many of the issues we are working on are systems-oriented and require time to show measurable impact.

ABI NOKES
inHive



Part of the challenge of networks is to have a shared understanding of exactly what the direct impact of a network has been. Most challenges impact networks tackle are systemic and therefore require time to show measurable impact. The impact of a network often comes from connections members create and the initiatives they are inspired to lead as a result of the network, meaning network leaders and funders may not always hear or see the collaborations that network members take forward independently. Network impact is often non-linear, and unintended outcomes can often be an important route to the impact that is not accounted for in the network's evaluation framework.

To learn what works and what does not work, it is important to have an alignment on a shared *theory of change*, and clear learning questions to hone in evaluation priorities. This process needs to be participatory, so that impact measurement is grounded in the realities of what members are experiencing. It is important to identify and track interim outcomes as early indicators of success. For example, the strength and depth of connection within a network is a crucial interim outcome that can be traced using *social network analysis* and qualitative story gathering. Tracking long term impact of the network by its members can be done through *longitudinal studies*. This data is not only important for reporting but *learning how to adjust the strategy* and approach of the network.

CASE STUDY

Small Foundation has created an *Impact Measurement and Management* framework that focuses on understanding network performance, rather than compliance to a set number of quantifiable targets or indicators. It looks at understanding the multiple layers of the impact of a network, including network connectivity (through social network analysis); network health (through administrative data on levels of engagement within the network); interim outcomes (through network participant surveys) and the collaborative activity happening in the network which captures the unpredictable, emergent outcomes and collaborations to speak to the longer-term outcomes of the network.

ACTION POINTS

1. REFLECT

How can we align on a mix of methods to track our impact? How can we use data and insights to further develop our approach?

2. LEARN

Learn *how to better intervene at leverage points*, places where, if people focus their collaborative efforts more impact is possible.

3. BUILD

Build your capacity to operate with a systemic mindset is key to co-create large scale impact and how to adopt it across the network with *this report* by Metabolic.

CLOSING

In this playbook, we explored the different ingredients that are necessary to develop a thriving impact network. We hope that this playbook proves to be useful in practice by showcasing concrete approaches, case studies and action steps for network practitioners and funders. The playbook covered a concrete, actionable overview of how we can impact urgent systemic challenges collaboratively and adaptively. We are convinced that the generations of today and tomorrow need a deep transformation towards sustainability, social justice and well-being. That is why we have faith in the power of networks: because we long to foster the flourishing of individuals, societies and the natural world.

Our collective inquiry and journey are continuous. There are more questions to be asked, challenges ahead and impacts to co-create. Further attention is required on how networks can thrive and understand as well as deliver the social impact we strive for. Our learnings are context specific and apply to some types of networks and not all. So, make this your own and adapt it to the specific needs, visions and people in the impact network you support. We are looking forward to journeying with you as we discover how to collaborate, co-evolve and co-create together.

If you found this playbook helpful, and want to continue to engage with inHive in your journey towards deepening understanding of networks we invite you to:

1. JOIN NEXUS

The learning community of network practitioners powered by inHive

2. REACH OUT

Reach Out to us for specific support on the networks you are facilitating by emailing Abi

3. SUBSCRIBE

Subscribe to our [Newsletter](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Playbooks

For other, complementary playbooks and resources, click on the links that make you curious:

- **Impact Networks:** A Transformational Approach to Creating Connection, Sparking Collaboration, and Catalyzing Systemic Change. Book and tools by David Ehrlichman
- *Catalysing networks for social change:* A playbook specifically addressed to funders.
- *Network weaving card set:* Visual, somatic and pragmatic card set with network principles.

Toolboxes

For a curation and overview of resources on many of the topics explored in this playbook, visit:

- *Network Weaver*
- *The Weaving Lab*
- *Converge*
- *Collective Mind Global*

Events & Learning Opportunities

Many networks offer learning events and training, some of these can be found here:

- *Catalyst2030*
- *Ashoka*
- *10Directions*
- *CoCreative*



References

We honour the individuals and collectives who have been creating so many useful resources on how to develop impact networks.

- Trust the foundation of effective networks by June Holley
- A Review of the Evidence on Developing and Supporting Policy and Practice Networks Ilona Haslewood
- Building trust by giving and receiving effective feedback by CoCreative
- Designing a Powerful Shared Intent - CoCreative
- Seven Secrets of exceptional facilitators by Gwyn Wansbrough
- From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice by Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens
- Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead and The power of vulnerability by **Brené Brown**
- The Wisdom of Trauma Dr Gabor Mate
- The collective leadership compass by The collective leadership institute
- 3D framework and SCALE3D tool by Tim Strasser, Adrian Röbbke and more.
- What are the capabilities we need for system change? Anna Birney
- Embracing complexity - Towards a shared understanding of funding systems change Ashoka, McKinsey & Company, Catalyst 2030, the foundations Co-Impact, Echoing Green, Schwab and Skoll and SystemIQ
- OpenCollective by Alana Irving
- Resourcing, Monitoring and Evaluation: Scaling challenges and pathways by the TRANSIT project
- Engage How Funders Can Support and Leverage Networks for Social Impact Rockefeller Foundation
- Designing Regenerative Cultures by **Daniel Christian Wahl**
- Cards and Tips for thriving virtual events by Adrian Röbbke
- The Digital Facilitation Playbook by HowSpace
- Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brené Brown
- The power of vulnerability by Brené Brown



- The Wisdom of Trauma by Science and Non Duality
- Collective Trauma Summit by The Pocket Project
- Racial Equity Guiding Resources by Wallace Center
- Strategies to Address Unconscious Bias by University of California San Francisco
- Creating a Safe Space at Work for Discussing Social Justice Topics by SHRM
- Diversity Atlas by Cultural Infusion
- Becoming An Anti-Racist And Multicultural Organization by Wallace Centre
- The Wheel of Power/Privilege by Sylvia Duckworth
- Wellbeing Wheel Self-Assessment by Coco Labs
- 8 elements of Good Strategy by CoCreative Consulting
- Collaborative Roadmap and Process Model by CoCreative
- Agile Program Management: Make Work Connected and Visible by Planview
- Consent Based Governance is a Great Choice for Collaborative Networks by Michelle Smith
- Principles For Ecosystem Governance by Societal Platform and Aapti Institute
- Emergent Strategy by Adrienne Maree Brown
- Building a Culture of Accountability by CoCreative Consulting
- How to set up an innovation fund by June Holley
- Adoption of Innovation by CoCreative Consulting
- 4 Brainstorming Techniques
- SCALE 3D by Tim Strasser
- Visual Facilitation Cookbook by Torben Grocholl, Deniss Jershov and Kati Orav
- Theory of Change Explainer by Al Onkka
- Network Assessment by Network Weaver
- The Case for Developmental Evaluation by Marice Parkhurst, Hallie Preskill, Jewlya Lynn, and Marah Moore
- Impact networks: measuring towards success by Small Foundation
- Leverage Point Identification by Network Weaver
- Using Systems Thinking to Transform Society: A Guidebook

