

Collective for Youth

Organizational Assessment & Program Theory Project



Collective for Youth Overview

Purpose & Structure

- The purpose of Collective for Youth (CFY) is to increase the capacity of out of school time organizations by providing professional development, technical assistance, and coaching.
- CFY serves as a connector for many stakeholders in the out of school time system including CFY staff and board members, strategic partners, local funders, coordinating agencies, program providers, and afterschool sites.



Project Overview

Purpose

- The purpose of this project was to partner with CFY to conduct an Organizational Assessment and Program Theory project. Results from the project can be used to guide actions, support partners, align stakeholders, and support future measurement.

Approach

- A discovery process and series of facilitated workgroup sessions were used to identify strengths and areas of opportunity with CFY as well as co-create a program theory. An equity lens was applied at all stages.
- Data were collected from five sources including internal documents, archival data, stakeholder interviews, extant literature, and facilitated workgroup sessions.

Organizational Assessment

Definition

- An organizational assessment is a process used to determine what is working well and what could be improved with an organization or initiative.

Summary of Findings

- There were six main findings from the organizational assessment. These are listed below.

01	Activities. The implementation of CFY's activities was rated quite high with the highest rated item being connection to resources and the lowest rated item being coordination with schools. Ratings varied by activity and interviewee with Program Providers and Funders providing some lower ratings.
02	Trust. Trust between CFY and their partners was rated higher than trust among CFY partners. A lack of interaction and atmosphere of competition were primary reasons cited for perceptions of lower trust among partners. Most interviewees mentioned communication and transparency as key factors for improving trust.
03	Strengths. Over 50% of interviewees indicated that the training model and quality is something that is working well with CFY. Other themes included funding management, programming quality, partner relationships, CFY staff, assessments and use of data, network coordination, and open communication.
04	Opportunities. Over 50% of interviewees reported that streamlined communication is something that could be improved with CFY. Other themes included CFY capacity to serve, funding and communication, partnership with school district, role clarity and onboarding, training offerings, long-term visioning, and advocacy efforts.
05	Equity. Interviewees felt that CFY does a good job considering issues of equity and provided multiple examples including how CFY selects schools, places programming, and provides funding. Interviewees also provided several suggestions for improving equity with most related to schools served, resources, and transparency.
06	Best Practices. CFY is implementing a collective impact model that aligns with best practice, is using an evidence-based approach to program quality, and is embedding equity into their work. CFY should work to examine equity at deeper levels to ensure each student receives high quality programming.

Program Theory Stage #1: Situation Analysis

Definition

- A situation analysis is a comprehensive analysis designed to understand the nature and extent of a problem and set the stage for future change.
- The situation analysis focused on answering six questions: what is the problem or needs CFY is trying to address through their work, what is the size of the problem, what are its causes, what are the consequences if left unsolved, who is affected, and what is the history and future of the problem.

Summary of Findings

- There were six main findings from the situation analysis. These are listed below.

01	Problem. CFY is focused on addressing six main problems including lack of afterschool supervision, not enough OST programs, program quality variability, opportunity and equity gaps, funding and resource deficits, and limited system coordination.
02	Size. 1 in 5 children are unsupervised for ~8.15 hours per week during peak juvenile crime times (2-6pm). 80,000+ children would participate in OST programs if available. Two-thirds of the achievement gap is due to limited access to extended learning. Afterschool programming costs ~\$127 per week if pay is required.
03	Causes. Three primary causes were identified for each problem mentioned above such as school vs. work hour misalignment, programs not being embedded in each school, no sector-wide practices or standards, generational and situational poverty, limited government funds, and lack of a coordinating body prior to CFY.
04	Consequences. Eight main consequences to the aforementioned problems were identified including funding declines, programming deteriorates, basic needs not met, fewer learning opportunities, achievement gaps widen, juvenile delinquency increases, equity gaps widen, and coordination issues persist.
05	Who's Affected. Youth and young adults, parents and families, programs and staff, schools and teachers, neighborhoods and communities, and the entire society were all mentioned as being affected by the problems CFY aims to address. Underserved and underprivileged groups in each category are more negatively impacted.
06	History & Future. The identified problems have and will continue to change over time. Future changes suggest that the need for afterschool supervision, more OST programs, higher program quality, more focus on equity, more long-term funding, and expanded system coordination will be needed into the future.

Program Theory Stage #2: Theory of Change

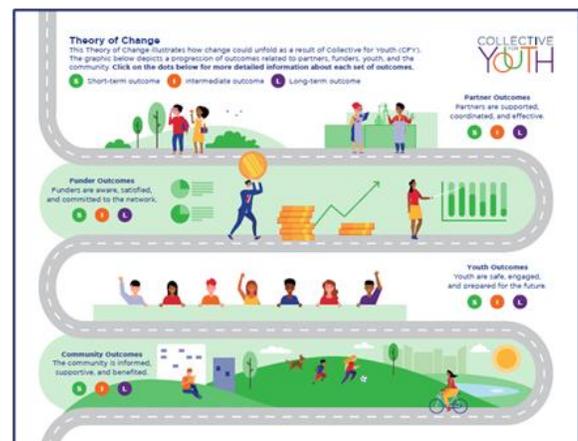
Definition

- A theory of change is a hierarchy of outcomes illustrating how change will unfold and informing actions required to address the problem.

Theory of Change Model

Partner outcomes focus on partners being trained, feeling supported, being confident in their skills, adhering to quality standards, increasing program quality, and serving more sites and youth.

- **Funder outcomes** focus on funders being aware and confident in their giving, feeling satisfied with disbursements, seeing an impact on outcomes, and continuing to meet the funding need.
- **Youth outcomes** focus on youth having positive role models, gaining new experiences, being motivated in school, missing fewer days of school, graduating high school, and being prepared for the workforce.
- **Community outcomes** focus on the community understanding and advocating for programming, seeing fewer disparities in learning opportunities, and having informed and capable citizens.



Program Theory Stage #3: Theory of Action

Definition

- A theory of action is a description of how an initiative will be resourced and implemented in order to achieve the outcomes required for change.

Theory of Action Model

- **Resources** include buildings & supplies, CFY staff, partners, school district, curriculum & technology, training resources, assessments & surveys, databases & systems, and funding & philanthropy.
- **Guiding Principles** include being a visionary leader, equity centered, adaptive minded, improvement focused, data informed, and relationship driven.
- **Activities** include advocacy & leadership, fundraising & resource management, network coordination, programming facilitation, training & assessment, and data collection & reporting.
- **External Factors** include staff turnover, funding availability, partner and school district practices, poverty, disparities & inequities, youth health, family involvement, regulations, and politics.



Program Theory Stage #4: Measurement Framework

Definition

- A measurement framework can serve as a roadmap for evaluating the implementation of actions, achievement of outcomes, and ultimate impact on a problem.
- CFY could use this condensed measurement framework as a starting point for future measurement and evaluation efforts if they are interested in adjusting any of their current measurement practices based on the organizational assessment and program theory processes.

Framework Components

- **Research Questions.** Research questions focus on the extent to which CFY is implementing their activities with fidelity and the extent to which they are achieving their intended outcomes with partners, funders, and youth. Community outcomes are not included due to their system-wide and long-term focus.
- **Logic Model.** The logic model provides a high-level illustration of how the TOA activates the TOC.
- **Research Design.** A longitudinal, mixed-methods research design could be used to evaluate CFY with qualitative and quantitative data being collected from stakeholders at multiple timepoints to assess change over time.
- **Participants.** Data could be collected from six main participant groups including partners, funders, youth, parents, teachers, and other school staff.
- **Measures.** A variety of measures could be used to address the research questions listed above including surveys with youth, partners, funders, and teachers as well as program assessments and archival data.
- **Implementation.** Five steps are recommended to implement the measurement framework including conducting a data scan, identifying data gaps and creating a data collection plan, creating and updating measurement tools, creating data collection and analysis plans, and creating a data distribution plan.

