Collective Impact

A shared measurement framework for Moreland community food enterprises & organisations

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Introduction

Collective Impact is an approach to addressing complex problems in dynamic systems which enables collaboration between multiple organisations to achieve greater impact on wicked problems[1] [2].

A shared measurement system is a key aspect of a Collective Impact approach:

> "Agreement on a common agenda is illusory without agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures."[3] .

Shared measurement systems also support the continuous learning, communication, and mutual accountability that are necessary for CI to be effective[3].

When applying impact measurement systems to food systems change it is also important to reflect the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of the outcomes of food system actions, and the iterative nature of their development over time.

Developing the Moreland Collective Impact Measurement Framework

Context and methodology

Developing a Moreland Collective Impact Measurement Framework (CIMF) was a recommendation from the Moreland Community Food Hub Feasibility Study. This study recommended working with a group of community food enterprises throughout Moreland to develop a shared collective impact measurement framework.

The Food Leadership Action Group (FLAG) appointed by council has been key to its development. This group was formed in early 2022 to guide a Collective Impact approach to developing a community food hub for Moreland. As per the Conversations Moreland information:

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[1] Salignac, F., Wilcox, T., Marjolin, A. 2017 'Understanding Collective Impact in Australia: A new approach to interorganizational collaboration'. Australian Journal of Management

[2] Smart, J. 2017 Collective impact: Evidence and implications for practice. CFCA Paper No. 45

[3] Kania, J. & Kramer, M. 2011 'Collective Impact' Stanford Social Innovation Review

"Establishing the Moreland Food Leadership Action Group (FLAG) is one of the recommendations of the **Moreland Community Food Hub Feasibility study** which Council adopted in May 2021.

The FLAG are a group of passionate and skilled Moreland food leaders who are leading the implementation of the **Moreland Community Food Hub**. Council has engaged consultants Open Food Network to support the backbone organisation functions of the FLAG.

Benefits of the structured collaborative approach of the FLAG include:

- Decisions / actions based on a deeper understanding of the needs across our diverse community
- Shared / more efficient use of resources and less double up of food security effort
- Strengthened food security network
- Reduced data collection / reporting burden on individual stakeholders AND
- More comprehensive and consistent evidence of the benefit of Community Food Hub activities, attracting greater support and funding

Members in non-funded positions are compensated for their contribution to the FLAG as content experts, which equates to a time commitment of around 3 hours per month in 2022. Refer to **Food Leadership Action Group brief** and **Draft Terms of Reference**"[4]

Open Food Network were engaged to support the FLAG in developing the Collective Impact Measurement Framework (CIMF). We undertook community consultation in the initial food hub feasibility study to lay the groundwork for these measures, and mapped them to global best practice forms of measurement. We then mapped how food hubs were measuring their impact globally, and whether baseline data had been generated. We engaged with potential audiences and users of the CIMF, such as funders and Council staff who might advocate for investment into a community food hub or funding for food security, to determine what needed to be measured.

These baseline components were then workshopped with the FLAG to determine what they saw as the highest priority to measure, and what was feasible to measure based on capacity and data availability. This was fleshed out in greater detail through interviews with FLAG members. We have begun sourcing and matching benchmarking data against those measures deemed most relevant, although this is an iterative process that will continue to be developed.

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[4]

https://conversations.moreland.vic.gov.au/community-food-hub-moreland/moreland-food-leadership-action-group

Community Consultation

Consultations were conducted through the Moreland Food Hub feasibility study to collate the priority impacts areas and goals identified by the community for the Hub.

This produced key impact areas relating to:

- Healthy Food Consumption

- Environmental Sustainability

- Community Connection & Resilience

- Education & Skills

- Economic Development

- Food Sovereignty

- Food System Sector Environment

Mapping Global & Standardised Frameworks

To develop an impact framework that aligns with and is comparable to wider scales and contexts, a review was undertaken of global frameworks for food systems change.

Two key frameworks offer relevant measures designed to be used as global benchmarks and targets for change.

Firstly, the Sustainable Development Goals[5] offer a widely accepted framework for aligning change projects towards social, economic, and environmental targets globally. The review identified nine Sustainable Development Goals relevant to food systems and drew on associated indicators in the SDG framework to develop measures which align with global goals for change.

Secondly, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)[6] project elaborates a framework targeted at measuring impacts of agri-food systems which explicitly addresses the complexity of food systems in a holistic perspective, in terms of interactions between social, natural, economic, and human capital along the value chain.

TEEB provides a series of areas in which to assess change across these key factors of food systems. For the CIMF, OFN developed measures of change to align with the TEEB framework for measuring stocks and flows of types of capital in food systems.

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[5] https://sdgs.un.org/goals
[6] http://teebweb.org/

This combination of bottom-up and top-down development of measures produced a 'global' list of potential measures for assessing impacts in food systems, which addresses both community priorities and global, comparable approaches to impact.

Mapping Literature on Food Hub Impact Measurement

In addition to these frameworks, a review was undertaken on the literature evaluating food hub impacts to explore examples of impact measures applied to community-based food hub projects.

A review of impact frameworks designed for food enterprises, including co-design processes, provided a structure for exploring and categorising expected impacts from community food projects:

- The Share-It Framework[7] provides an example of mapping impact areas identified through bottom-up community engagement against global frameworks for change through a co-design process, linking impact areas developed out of community workshops with Sustainable Development Goals, and refining indicators to be relevant both within and beyond the communities served.
- Similarly, the CAWR Social Impact Toolkit[8] for community food businesses outlines a process for community-based identification of goals and desired outcomes for food systems and links these to potential indicators of change.

These frameworks informed the methodology of the consultation process for the CIMF as well as providing example impact areas and metrics for the first draft of the Moreland framework, which was then reviewed, supplemented, and refined by inputs from the FLAG.

Beyond these frameworks, we reviewed further research undertaken on a range of food hubs to identify common impacts and commonly used measures, to assist with comparability and relevance of impact indicators.

These reviews identified some common domains of change. Documented impact areas emerging out of community food enterprises included:

- Increased healthy food consumption
- Improved community knowledge of nutrition, cooking skills, and food literacy

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[7] Mackenzie, S G & Davies, A R 2019 SHARE IT: Co-designing a sustainability impact assessment framework for urban food sharing initiatives, Environmental Impact Assessment Review

[8] Owen L et al 2020 Social Impact Toolkit for Community Food Businesses Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience

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- Engaging and supporting diverse communities including CALD, migrant, and low-income populations
- Support to local producers and higher prices paid to producers.
- Reduced environmental impact of food, via reduced food waste, energy savings, composting, and recycling.
- Supporting environmentally sustainable food production
- Job creation
- Increased employment skills
- Facilitating food system change
- Community-building
- Facilitating food justice
- Improving food systems governance

The literature reviewed varied in metrics used due to the wide variety of goals, scales, and types of work undertaken in local contexts. The lack of consistent measurement areas and approaches means that it isn't possible to benchmark what an impactful food hub's outcomes might look like within the scope of this project. However, it offered potential metrics and approaches for measuring these impacts.

Some metrics commonly used in community food enterprise evaluation literature included:

Healthy food access and consumption

- Number of households supplied with fresh food
- Self-reported change in fruit and vegetable consumption before and after CFE
- Self-reported change in accessibility and/or affordability of healthy and culturally appropriate food
- Increased skills or knowledge for food literacy

Local economies

- Jobs created both directly and indirectly through supported or incubated enterprises
- Number of enterprises incubated
- Skills training provided
- Number of local businesses supported
- Financial sustainability of CFEs

Community-building and equity

- Demographics of populations served – cultural background, socio-economic status, and whether of disadvantaged or under-served demographics
- Opportunities created for social connection
- Increased connection across social groups and cultures

- Self-reported improvements in mental health through involvement in CFEs
- Number training or volunteer opportunities for community leadership roles
- Increased affordability of food
- Fair pay to workers and producers
- Level of stakeholder engagement
- Civic engagement opportunities to participate in food system governance and policy

Environmental sustainability

- Reduced volume of food waste
- Reduced food packaging
- Reduced carbon footprint
- Supports soil health and biodiversity through support for sustainable practices

Engaging funders

In line with the goal of a CI measurement framework to communicate impact and support collaborations, interviews were conducted with funders to understand their needs from impact measurement data.

Interviews were undertaken with philanthropic organisations, government agencies, and not-for-profit funding schemes, to explore data needs and priorities for potential supporters of food security projects in Moreland.

Key needs identified:

- Provide a clear understanding of prevalence and distribution of food security issues and their outcomes. Highlight both reach and representation.

- Communicate what improving food security means in real-life changes across multiple areas: health, social, economic.

- Recognition of the need to aim for systemic change

- Support for community-led identification and prioritisation of challenges and solutions: demonstrate support and capacity for action within community

- Enable data users to connect short term outcomes to long term impacts

- Balance clear, easily understood statistics with richer qualitative data about lived experience of food security and insecurity.

Workshopping impact measures with FLAG

The 'global' framework of food systems impact measures was refined to a 'local' list of key impact areas for addressing food security in Moreland through workshopping the draft framework with FLAG members.

An initial CIMF workshop session produced a series of impact areas and outcomes that FLAG identified as priorities for food security in Moreland. These were reviewed against the global framework to refine priorities to a local framework specific to Moreland and FLAG while maintaining comparability and relevance at wider scales.

The 'local' framework was then shared with FLAG to rank the relevance and feasibility of each impact area and measure.

FLAG interviews: Feasibility & Relevance

Interviews were conducted with FLAG members with interest and expertise in impact measurement to further review the framework for feasibility and relevance to the range of work on food security being undertaken in Moreland.

Interviews also explored capacity and technical skills available for data collection to assess whether measures in the framework were feasible for FLAG organisations to apply.

Key constraints for impact measurement among FLAG organisations are resourcing and technical expertise to collect, collate and analyse data. Some measures ranked medium-to-low importance and very difficult to measure were removed from the framework - CI research recommends that shared measurement systems be a shorter list of measures that can be consistently applied across collaborating organisations over time. Consequently, some measures represent proxy indicators for the impact area if more direct measures were not considered feasible; for example where a customer survey is required to determine increase in accessibility of fresh fruit and vegetables we have instead used number of customers as a proxy indicator.

Measures that were ranked medium feasibility were included where the specific measure or impact area was ranked as high and there was potential for Open Food Network/FLAG support to establish a data collection system to increase the feasibility of measurements in this area.

Benchmarking data

A range of data sources are available for benchmarking data against local and state-level data on some measures.

Where relevant data is available for comparison across time or with regional and state statistics, these have been included in the framework as sources for benchmarking impact.

Where impacts are specific to changes made in the local context over time, a baseline comparison is more relevant. For these measures, a baseline will be established over the first year of implementation of FLAG projects for comparison with ongoing impact measurement. Additionally, where benchmarking data is not available or relevant from external sources, FLAG will seek to establish baseline data during the first round of data collection for future comparison.

In some cases (listed as To be developed) some external data sources exist but are not currently in a form that supports an accurate benchmarking process. Where this is the case the FLAG will have the opportunity to establish its own baseline data, but also to continue working with those external sources where possible to continue shaping a comparable baseline.

The Moreland Collective Impact Framework V3 (2022)

It is proposed for the Framework to be split into 'Core Measures' (marked with **) and 'Optional Measures', to reduce the number of indicators each organisation aims to measure, while capturing the range of impacts that CFEs can achieve in their varying types of work.

Core and Optional measures and benchmarks will be reviewed over the first year of use of the Framework, to revise which measures are most useful and feasible for capturing impact.

** = **Core Measures**

Impact Area	Importance of Impact Area (FLAG rated)	Measure	Importance of measure	Feasibility of Measurement	Benchmark
Increases availability of healthy, local food	Very High	**Average monthly customers for fresh produce	High	High	FLAG Baseline
		**Proportion of suppliers are local to Melbourne food bowl	High	High	Melbourne's Foodbowl Report[9]

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[9] Sheridan, J., Larsen, K. and Carey, R. (2015) Melbourne's Foodbowl: Now and at 7 Million. Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab, The University of Melbourne.

		**Proportion of customers have experienced food insecurity in last 12 months	High	High	Food Security in the City of Moreland Background Report[10]
		**Average spend on 'basket' of healthy food (affordability comparison)	High	High	Victorian Healthy Food Basket Survey[11]
		**Proportion of total $ is fresh/whole foods	Medium	Medium	Victorian Healthy Food Basket Survey[11]
Increases consumption of fruit & vegetables	Medium	**Average monthly sales/supply of fruit & vegetables	Medium	Medium	FLAG baseline
		**Customers report increase in F&V	Medium	Medium	FLAG baseline/ Victorian Population Health Survey [12]

[10] Tran, C. T. T. 2016 Food Security in the City of Moreland Background Report
[11] Palermo, C. & Wilson, A 2007 Development of a Healthy Food Basket for Victoria
[12] Victorian Agency for Health Information 2021 Victorian Population Health Survey 2019: summary of results

		consumption through the project			
Reduces packaging and other waste	Medium	Number of products with reduced or recycled packaging	Medium	Low	To be developed
Uses renewable energy	Medium	Percentage of energy use from renewable sources	Medium	Uncertain	FLAG baseline
Supports regenerative farming practices	High	**Proportion of product price paid to producers	High	High	To be developed
		**Proportion of suppliers classify themselves as regenerative or organic producers	High	High	To be developed
Increases equitable access to nutritious,	Very high	**Proportion of customers receiving government benefits	High	Medium	Food Security in the City of Moreland report[10]

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culturally appropriate food		(experiencing disadvantage)			
		Number of customers report improved access to culturally appropriate foods through project			FLAG baseline
		**Volume of whole/fresh food accessed free or at subsidised rates by people experiencing food insecurity.	High	High	Food Security in Moreland Needs Assessment[13]
Provides engagement and empowerment opportunities for disadvantaged communities	High	**Proportion of customers/participants from disadvantaged communities	High	Medium	Australian Population Census 2021[14] neighbourhood data

[13] McCluskey, K 2009 *Food Security in Moreland: A Needs Assessment*, Merri Community Health Services
[14] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 *Australian Population Census*

		Project activities address identified social barriers to food security	Medium	Medium	Food Security in Moreland Needs Assessment[13]
Supports social cooperation and community development	High	**Number and type of community connection opportunities created	High	Medium	FLAG baseline
	High	Number of project activities explicitly target identified needs of disadvantaged populations		High	FLAG baseline
Educates community	High	**Number of community education activities provided	High	High	FLAG baseline

		Customers/participants report improved knowledge of nutrition, cooking skills, or food literacy	Medium	Low	FLAG baseline
Educates volunteers and staff	Medium	**Number of staff/volunteers trained	High	High	FLAG baseline
		Evidence of skills gained by staff/volunteers (e.g. demonstrated pathways of skills development, pathways to employment or own enterprise)	High	Medium	FLAG baseline
Financials: 'viable' business model, in which trade / enterprise contributes	Medium	Proportion of costs covered by enterprise revenue	High	High	FLAG baseline
		Proportion of costs covered by funding	Medium	High	FLAG baseline

	Medium	**Surplus/shortfall of revenue vs operating costs	High	High	FLAG baseline
Local employment opportunities	High	**Number staff employed	Medium	High	FLAG baseline
		Number of volunteers gain skills for employment or own enterprise	Medium	Medium	FLAG baseline
Resilient and adaptable food enterprises	High	**Change in customer numbers pre-, during, post-pandemic (effectiveness of crisis adaptations)			FLAG baseline
		Climate adaptation plans developed/undertaken	High	Medium	FLAG baseline
Network and infrastructure, collaboration	High	**Number of partnerships developed within	High	High	FLAG baseline

		community supporting food security projects			
		Number of enterprises gain access to sufficient infrastructure through partnerships developed	High	Medium	FLAG baseline
Increases farm viability and control among supplying producers	High	Number of Moreland producers supported to grow food	High	Medium	FLAG baseline
		Proportion of food price paid to producer	High	Medium	To be developed
Increases eater and community control of their food systems	High	**Number of community members involved in decision-making with the project or with local food policy through project involvement	High	Medium	FLAG baseline

			High	Medium	FLAG baseline
		Number of people accessing food through activities undertaken to grow or share food within community			
Support for short supply chains	Very high	Average distance to suppliers	High	Medium	Melbourne's Foodbowl Report[9]; CERES Farm Food Miles Report[15]
		Proportion of food sourced direct from producer	Medium	Medium	To be developed
		Proportion of suppliers are Moreland producers	Medium	Medium	To be developed
		**Proportion of suppliers are local to Melbourne food bowl	High	Medium	Melbourne's Foodbowl Report[9]

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[15] Gaballa, S., Abraham, A.B. 2007 CERES Farm Food Miles Report

Part of the movement: building involvement in broader systems change	High	**Participating organisations identify benefits to their projects from effective collaborations	High	Medium	FLAG baseline

Next steps

Collective Impact measurement frameworks are part of ongoing processes of communication, governance, and evaluation. The framework will continue to be refined as it is put into practice by FLAG.

The next steps in implementation are to develop tools and processes for data collection through FLAG, to further refine measures based on testing the feasibility of these tools in practice, and the useability and relevance of the data collected.

This ongoing process expects to produce a usable and repeatable process for regular information collection and synthesis for FLAG, which the Open Food Network will continue to facilitate and refine before stepping back for FLAG to take over as part of their collective impact approach.