

Philanthropists—both foundations and high-net worth individuals—are working together on a wide range of issues from climate mitigation, to water policy, to youth development. Funders typically pursue collaboration because they can bring expertise, relationships, and money together in a way that will produce results for society beyond the reach and capacity of any single donor. This literature review compiles existing resources on funder collaboration, including a summary of common findings, highest-value resources, and research gaps. It includes an annotated bibliography summarizing the most useful documents and a list of illustrative collaborations. The review encompasses academic research papers, practitioner blogs, and published articles and reports, as well as syntheses of field-specific research. We found and reviewed 125 pieces of literature: 65 percent were published by philanthropic advisors or intermediaries, 25 percent by foundations or practitioners, and 10 percent by academics or field researchers. Most items are from 2013 or later, predominantly studying US collaborations, though global examples are included where possible. While much has been written about collaboratives, donors will find little in the way of quantitative or qualitative research to guide their deliberations about whether to join a group of likeminded funders in pursuit of a shared goal. Each collaborative is singular, and there are no control groups for comparison purposes. They come with different geographic footprints, ranging from small to global, tackle many types of issues, and are highly individual and idiosyncratic in execution. The existing research is largely case study-based, making it difficult to discern patterns rigorously. Even so, the literature yields insights reflecting practical experience. An open question is whether there are common conditions that trigger a collaborative to alter its operations or move to a different model, as well as clear guidance on which collaborative model to select. Funder collaboratives exist on a spectrum from loose to tight control and integration: from information/knowledge exchanges to formal joint ventures, new collaboratives, and re-granting entities. Key distinctions include individual donor control versus ceding control, and pooling versus coordinating resources. An example spectrum for funder collaboratives outlines types from lower to higher integration: Exchange knowledge (e.g., Grantmakers for Education), Coordinate funding (e.g., Big Bang Philanthropy), Coinvest in existing entity (e.g., Great Bear Rainforest), Create a new entity/initiative (e.g., Gavi, Blue Meridian Partners), and Fund the funder (e.g., Warren Buffett to Gates Foundation, donors to community foundations). Collaboration typology is often fluid and evolves over time. Research gaps include investigating how and whether collaboratives adapt over time and the extent to which impact is sustained past their life. While some examples of adaptation exist, the topic isn't extensively discussed. An unanswered question is whether common conditions indicate a need for collaboration model modification. Guidance exists on defining aspects of funder collaboration, implying selection rationales based on donor's willingness to forego decision rights, strategy alignment, and issue area demands. Case studies looked at decision-making processes. Frequently identified benefits include: (1) bringing more money and public attention to an issue; (2) enabling participation at a greater scale to influence systemic change; (3) creating efficiencies by sharing research and burdens; (4) bringing strategic thinking and expertise; (5) increased risk taking; and (6) providing an entry point for strategic philanthropy. Benefits to grantees include increased funding, better funder relationships, a "stamp of approval," streamlined reporting, and core operating support. Potential risks include: 'groupthink' turning the field away from emergent ideas; harm to local funders; exacerbating power dynamics; adding layers between grantees and funders; and limiting funding opportunities. Most articles focused on funder perspectives rather than those of grantees or community stakeholders. Additionally, very few articles highlighted the different value propositions that collaboratives may have and how those value propositions affect structure and governance. Third-party assessments of impact were reviewed from 13 collaboratives (5 largely positive, 2 mixed, 3 negative, 3 non-evaluative). Evaluations echoed value propositions: more money/attention, greater scale, efficiency, strategic thinking/expertise, increased risk, and 'field-building'. Impact was seen at three levels: Field impact (policy changes, field building, convening, rapid response grants); Funder impact (deepened expertise, strategic investments); and Grantee impact (progress towards goals, existential support). Challenges included funder relationships, strategic misalignment, structure/staffing, measurement, adaptation, and poor stakeholder engagement. Although evaluations quantified the impact or assessed cost-benefit for individual collaboratives, there's a gap in comparing a range of collaboratives with a unified, rigorous approach to impact. Studies looking at a larger number of collaborations could quantify paths to impact by examining variables like increased funding, new grantees, aligned strategies, oversight, improved grantmaking (e.g., unrestricted dollars), better grantee support, and

increased grantmaking efficiency. Frequent success factors: strong relationships; aligned beliefs, goals, and strategies; mutually agreed-upon governance structures; and continual measurement and reevaluation (including having exits/ends in sight). Better outcomes also arise from periodic reexamination of core beliefs, values, goals, and success definitions, and using grantee feedback. The 'human dimension of collaboration' is particularly critical, involving navigating power politics, tacit assumptions, and fostering candid, trusting, open communication. Specific success factors exist for different collaboration types, such as building on community efforts for place-based initiatives and adaptability for advocacy collaboratives. Despite many perspectives on success factors, the literature typically didn't clearly define 'success' for collaborations, nor did it quantitatively or qualitatively compare successful and less successful ones. Very few studies incorporated the grantee perspective or explicitly addressed diversity, equity, and inclusion when determining success factors. Further investigation integrating these voices would yield additional insights for serving all stakeholders. The literature identifies numerous challenges collaborations face, often mirroring the absence of success factors (e.g., weak relationships, unclear structure). There were a limited number of case studies that explicitly grappled with failure or significant course correction (sometimes anonymously). No studies were found that drew insights or patterns from multiple examples of collaborations facing significant challenge or failure. An analysis of challenges across a large sample of successful and less successful collaborations would be valuable to identify frequent challenge types and mitigation tips. Potential research questions include: 1. What impact are funder collaboratives generating, and how do they set goals around impact? (Sub-questions: Impact on the field, on collaborative members, on grantees. Hypothesis: focusing on collaborative life cycles (start-up, shifts, exit) may provide lessons.) 2. How and to what extent do collaboratives incorporate diverse perspectives, and what is the potential for impact or harm when doing so thoughtfully? 3. What can be learned from stories of collaboratives that have faltered or failed? After reviewing 125 resources, key research gaps were quantified: No resources explicitly compared funder collaborations across defined criteria to identify 'ROI' or predict potential impact. Fewer than five resources incorporated the perspective of high net worth individuals. Thirteen resources incorporated the perspective of grantee(s). Sixteen resources detailed challenges and strategic adaptation. This section summarizes the most interesting resources from the literature review, selected for their breadth or depth of insights, strength of research methodology, and other factors. It includes annotations for key publications, highlighting their main arguments, typologies of collaboration, success factors, benefits, and challenges. This section categorizes many publications across three themes for deeper exploration: Lessons learned from case studies of specific collaboration, Highlighting different types of collaborations (including place-based, capital aggregation, funder collaborations focused on advocacy, going beyond funder collaboration, nonprofit collaboration, and private-public partnerships), and Funder collaborations focused on advocacy. A comprehensive list of 126 sources reviewed for this study, including academic papers, reports, and articles, is provided with titles, authors, and publication details, along with URLs where available. This section provides a table of 30 funder collaborations, illustrating a range of collaborative fund types cited in the literature. These are organized by type and chronologically within each type, with information on the year established, issue focus, and geographic focus. Examples include: Alliance (exchange ideas and raise awareness): - Grantmakers for Education (1995, Education, US) - BC Freshwater Funders Collaborative (2014, Environment, British Columbia) - California Common Core Funders Collaborative (2014, Education, US) Coordinate or Match (shared strategies, aligned causes): - Communities for Public Education (2006, Education, US) - Big Bang Philanthropy (2011, Poverty alleviation, Global) - True North Fund (2011, Youth development, US) Co-Invest (support specific initiative/organization): - Great Bear Rainforest of British Columbia (2000, Environment, US) - Central City Collaborative (2006, Community development, New Orleans) - Pew Charitable Trusts Global Ocean Legacy (2006, Environment, Global) - California Immigrant Integration Initiative (2007, Immigration, California) - Campaign for Grade Level Reading (2010, Education, US) - Silicon Valley Out of School Time Collaborative (2010, Youth development, US) - The Grand Bargain (2013, Community development, Detroit) - Collective Impact Project (Centraide of Greater Montreal) (2016, Community development, Canada) - Art for Justice Fund (Ford Foundation) (2017, Criminal justice, US) New-Co (create new entity/initiative for grants/programs): - Robin Hood Foundation (1988, Poverty alleviation, New York City) - Energy Foundation (1991, Environment, Global) - Living Cities (1991, Urban development, US) - NewSchools Venture Fund (1998, Education, US) - Strategic Grant Partners (2002, Youth development, Massachusetts) - Four Freedoms Fund (2003, Immigration, US) - Charter School

Growth Fund (2006, Education, US) - ClimateWorks Foundation (2008, Environment, Global) - Disability Rights Fund (2008, Human Rights, Global) - Oceans 5 (2011, Environment, Global) - END Fund (2012, Global health, Global) - Kigali Cooling Efficiency (K-CEP) (2016, Environment, Global) Fund the Funder (invest in another funder with expertise): - Security & Rights Collaborative (Proteus Fund) (1996, Democracy, US) - Growth Capital Aggregation Pilot (EMCF) (2007, Youth development, US) - African-American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (National Trust for Historic Preservation) (2017, Racial equity, US) Special thanks are extended to several Bridgespan colleagues for their contributions, including Zach Crago, Carole Matthews, and Bradley Seeman. Funding for this work was provided by the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation; the Ford Foundation; the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; JPB Foundation; the McConnell Foundation; and the Oak Foundation. These funders also serve on the initiative's steering committee alongside Susan Bell, Julia Coffman, and Stephanie Gillis.