The CLC Guidebook:

Steps to Development

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The CLC Guidebook: Implementing a Collaborative School-Community Partnership. Condensed version

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Using This Guidebook

Becoming a Community Learning Centre (CLC) is not simply a matter of offering new activities to students and the community or developing new partnerships. It is a purposeful, planned change in the organization of the school and in the relationship between the school and the community through partnerships.[1]

Recognizing the importance of the school-community collaboration the *Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec* (MELS) supported the development of *The CLC Guidebook: Steps to Development.* It outlines a series of steps that schools, vocational and adult training centres, and community groups can use to create a community learning centre (CLC).

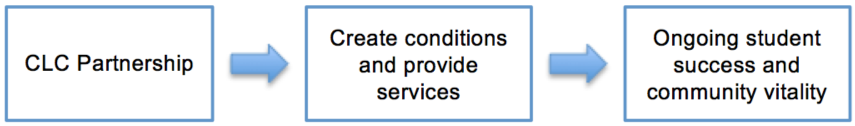
The CLC Guidebook provides practical and user-friendly suggestions for how to achieve the purpose of and undertake the actions foreseen for each step. The Guidebook was written for the person(s) assuming a leadership role in coordinating each of these steps.

Templates and additional resources are located on the ***CLC Network Resource*** website. These can be used to construct 'instruments' that you can use to collect data, measure performance, etc., and forms to record information, for example, a work plan. Instructions for using the templates are found in the guidebook

[1] Smith, 2007; Coalition for Community Schools

A Grounded Theory of Sustainable Change

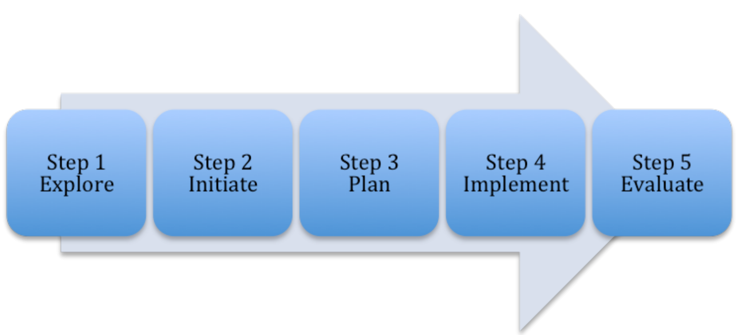
Creating a CLC constitutes a journey of change for which the CLC Framework and Guidebook provide a 'roadmap'. Together, they express an underlying grounded theory of sustainable change. **Grounded theory** refers to the development of theory based on the study of the real world, so rather than beginning with a theory, one begins by observing change in real organizations and then slowly and carefully building theories and "formulating them into a logical, systematic and explanatory scheme." [2]



Any **theory of change** begins with a desired *destination*: a set of results based on its values and beliefs.[3] Qualifying such a change theory as **sustainable** adds a time dimension - change that is meant to last.

Simply put, the Framework's theory of sustainable change is that a CLC, following the guidelines presented here, can create conditions and provide services that will promote ongoing student success and lasting community development. No find set of conditions or services is prescribed, but those suggested are grounded in the experience of diverse schools and community groups in multiple contexts. You can use these suggestions to build your own theory of change to meet the needs of your community.

The following shows the action steps and operational tasks of each of the steps to be undertaken by a school/centre and community partners to achieve the results outlined above. Going back and forth is normal: The steps in this process are sequential but what you do in one step may cause you to revisit an earlier step.



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[2] Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 21

[3] See Anderson, 2004, 2005; Auspos & Kubisch, 2004; Kreider, 2000; Organizational Research Services, 2004.

Step 1: EXPLORE	
1.1	**See what CLCs look like in other communities** • Gather useful information about community schools • Build your knowledge about community schools
1.2	**Create an image of a CLC for your community** • Construct an initial map of the community • Determine the implications of a CLC for your school and community
1.3	**Decide how to proceed** • Determine if the partners/organizations are ready to embark on this joint venture • Tentative Commitment from Partners/Stakeholders: Decision How to Proceed
Step 2: INITIATE	
2.1	**Map your assets and needs** • Identify the needs of the community in relation to the type of CLC school you envision • Identify the assets of the community in relation to meeting the needs identified above • Identify the needs of the community • Identify the gaps - in relation to the assets and needs
2.2	**Develop a mission statement** • Agree on the values and purpose for the CLC • Identify the kinds of results that the partners expect from the CLC • Establish an appropriate set of principles to guide the operation of the CLC • Combine all these elements to draft a mission statement
2.3	**Allocate Roles, Responsibilities and Resources** • Structure the CLC to meet identified needs, while dealing with contextual realities. • Given the structure of the CLC, determine roles and responsibilities with the partners • Allocation of Resources • Establish an appropriate process for developing and concluding the partnership agreement
Step 3: PLAN	
3.1	**Determine desired results** • Seek points of convergence between the results sought by the various partners • Establish a mutually beneficial chain of intended results
3.2	**Theory of Change (ToC)** • Establish an appropriate process for developing the ToC • Determine the content of the ToC
3.3	**Determine programs and services to be offered** • Determine the activities likely to produce the short term results that have been set for service delivery • Establish a process to monitor service delivery that is both feasible and effective
3.4	**Determine the capacity to deliver services** • Determine activities that are likely to produce the short term results set for capacity development • Establish a process to monitor capacity building that is both feasible and effective
3.5	**Determine how to evaluate actions and results** • Establish the parameters that define the nature and limits of the evaluation • Decide how to plan the evaluation and what needs to be evaluated • Select appropriate indicators to measure what you have chosen to be evaluated • Determine appropriate sources and methods of data collection/analysis for each indicator selected
3.6	**Complete Theory of Change with Action Plan** • Establish process for concluding the action plan • Develop action plan to guide work of CLC in 3-5 year timeframe

Step 4: IMPLEMENT	
4.1	**Allocate resources and begin service delivery** • Carry out the plan for the delivery of services • Produce the first set of outputs anticipated for Step 4: initial results from services provided to student and the community
4.2	**Allocate resources and conduct capacity building** • Carry out the plan for building capacity • Produce the second set of outputs anticipated for Step 4: initial results from capacity building of the CLC
4.3	**Monitor service delivery and capacity building** • Carry out the plan for monitoring service delivery and capacity building
Step 5: EVALUATE	
5.1	**Collect the data** • Identify the necessary data to produce the indicators chosen • Collect the data chosen after determining appropriate methods for this purpose
5.2	**Analyze the data** • Process the data collected after determining appropriate methods for this purpose • Interpret the processed data after determining the appropriate methods for this purpose
5.3	**Report to stakeholders** • Document the entire evaluation process • Prepare a comprehensive evaluation report, including process, findings and recommendations • Undertake appropriate means to inform various groups of stakeholders about the evaluation • Ensure follow-up form the results of the evaluation, including the lessons learned

Organization of the Guidebook

Like the Framework, this Guidebook is advisory, not prescriptive. It is your decision to adapt the suggestions to better meet your needs or replace them with some other approach based upon conversations with your stakeholders and the Provincial Resource Team.

Every local context is different. At the end of the day, what counts is that your actions lead to the results you have set and you are comfortable with both the means and the ends of this process. After all, it's your destination and your journey: ***it's up to you where you go and how to get there.***

All templates and worksheets referred to in the Guidebook can be found on the **CLC Network Resource** website- Framework for DevelopmentTemplates / resources are sorted by step #.

This guidebook is also intended to be a valuable online resource therefore you will find many web-links throughout. They offer valuable resources and tools.

STEP 1 - EXPLORE

The purpose of this step is to explore the possible creation of a CLC. By the end of this step, you should expect to have achieved the following results:

1. Ascertained the relevance and feasibility of your CLC
2. Decided how to proceed

Step 1 is comprised of three action steps:

- See what CLCs look like in other communities
- Create an image of a CLC for your community
- Decide how to proceed

As stated in the introductory section, this text is primarily addressed to the Community Development Agent (CDA), who is typically the person assuming the leadership role for coordinating each of the 5 steps. Given that the nature of a CLC is a collaborative venture, leadership is first and foremost concerned with building and sustaining relationships among individuals and groups. Sharing leadership and building mutual trust and confidence among all participants are key factors in the success of any community-school partnership. [4]

If a CLC succeeds in making a difference in the lives of students and community members, that difference will be made by people working together. Tensions are bound to arise when you bring together people with different backgrounds, interests, and experience. The key leadership challenge throughout the steps that follow therefore, is building bridges to connect individuals and groups in mutually respectful relationships that will benefit families, school and community.

Definition of a CLC

A formal partnership of one or more schools/ centres, public or private agencies and community groups, working together for the benefit of students, families and community.

[4] Children's Aid Society, 2001, p. 87

A PARTNERSHIP OF PEOPLE

The image of a CLC as an organization runs through this framework. You will read about 'organizational change,' 'organizational learning' and 'organizational evaluation.' It is therefore important to remember that the essence of a CLC is ***a partnership of people*** and what counts the most are the "processes and relationships" among its participants rather than its "structures and rules."[5] The organization provides a collective vehicle by which its members integrate their actions on an ongoing basis.[6]

HOLISTIC VISION

A CLC offers an alternative to the compartmentalization of services by providing a more integrative or holistic approach to delivery of resources and services. The CLC Approach reflects a more ecological view of school and community as an organic whole. It "promotes the inter-relationship between the school and the family, and the school and the community. The community is involved in the school and the school is involved in the community."[7] You should be looking at the whole picture and breaking down the barriers between sectors. To have a holistic vision, it is like a puzzle, you need all the pieces, even the smallest, to fit.

SUSTAINABILITY

The CLC is seen as a long-term investment in your community. To ensure its sustainability you will want to invest in building a strong foundation from the start, and develop core relationships with partners that are in it for the long run.

Adding sustainability as a qualifier in the Theory of Change reflects a preoccupation with the long term viability of the CLC. To many people, sustainability is associated almost exclusively with funding.[8] However, funding is only one factor in sustaining an organization over time. This Framework takes a broader view that there are significant dimensions of sustainability beyond money, notably:

- spirit
- values
- niche
- capacity

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[5] Mitchell, Walker & Sackney, 1997, p. 52

[6] See Argyris & Schon, 1996, p. 10.

[7] Saskatchewan Learning, 2000, p. 1.

[8] Horton et al, 2003, p. 164, define sustainability as: "The ability of an organization to secure and manage sufficient resources to enable it to fulfill its mission effectively and consistently over time without excessive dependence on a single funding source."

1.1 See What CLCs Look Like in Other Communities

Learning is an active process. Whether information comes to us through direct experience or from print or other media, we learn by reflecting on what we have done, seen, heard, read, etc., and then by creating our own meaning from these inputs. Thus, we transform information into knowledge.

This step presents two major leadership challenges in the exploration of the desirability and feasibility of creating a CLC:

- Gather useful information about community schools
- Build you knowledge about community schools

Gathering Useful Information about Community Schools

SEE WHAT CLCS LOOK LIKE IN OTHER COMMUNITIES

Other CLC schools in the network provide relevant examples for the CLC leadership team to consider. For instance, it may be particularly helpful to see what is happening in other CLC elementary schools in the network and your own school board if the new CLC is an elementary school.

Other resources for you to explore to help understand the community school concept and what CLCs look like in other communities:

- The CLC Network Resource Site: http://clcnetworkresources.weebly.com/
- Blogs by the PRT on Community-Based Service Learning (CBSL) and other work being done in CLC schools: (clc-blog.learnquebec.ca and clcpresents.blogspot.ca)

In Extension Models CLCs, the primary example of what CLCs look like in other communities naturally comes **from the existing site**. In the first meetings they have together, principals from the schools who will be engaging in the extension model get to know what has taken place as the CLC approach has been implemented at the originating site. The new principals may already have had some contact over the years through shared communication about such things as lifelong learning opportunities and intergenerational projects. They may also already receive support from some of the originating CLC school's partners. Many examples of what other school systems have done when choosing to expand their community school networks are provided in the Coalition's Guide to Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships (Melaville, Jacobson & Blank, 2011).

Community School Models Outside Quebec

CLCs are the Quebec model of what is known internationally as ***community schools***. Although each CLC school is unique, a common thread of values and beliefs runs across the network. Generally, they reflect a holistic approach to school and community, an organic whole, rather than as totally separate entities. Like an **ecosystem** in nature, communities are complex and characterized by diversity rather than uniformity.

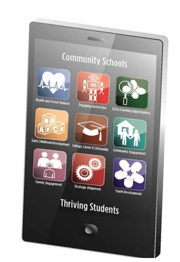
Community schools in the USA are often called ‘**full service**’ schools to emphasize their extended offerings and hours of operation. One of the best sources of information on these schools is the Coalition for Community Schools, whose capsule definition is cited below.

> *A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Community schools offer a personalized curriculum that emphasizes real-world learning and community problem-solving. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings and weekends.*
>
> *Using public schools as hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities. Partners work to achieve these results: Children are ready to enter school; students attend school consistently; students are actively involved in learning and their community; families are increasingly involved with their children's education; schools are engaged with families and communities; students succeed academically; students are healthy - physically, socially, and emotionally; students live and learn in a safe, supportive, and stable environment, and communities are desirable places to live.*
>
> *Most people think of schools today as serving a single purpose: a binary, analog-system of delivery - teachers teach and students learn. Community schools are more akin to smart phones. Schools and communities connect, collaborate, and create. Children and families have an array of supports from community partners right at their school. Communities and schools leverage their shared physical and human assets to help kids succeed.* [9]

Or think of community schools this way:

Conventional School Model

Community Schools



[9] Coalition for Community Schools, n.d., p. 2.

The Children's Aid Society, based in New York City, founded the National Center for Community Schools in response to increased demand for information and advice about community schools implementation. They describe a community school, as: "an integral part of the neighborhood, a focal point in the community to which children and their parents could turn for a vast range of supports and services."[10]

Research on community schools in the United States found that in general, community schools provided four major benefits:

1. Improved student learning;
2. Enhanced family engagement with students and schools;
3. More effective functioning of schools;
4. Increased community vitality.[11]

Another great source of research and information on the benefits of school-community collaboration would the Harvard Family Research Project.

The following provides selected examples of various forms of school-community collaborations in Québec. These have, in turn, developed many best practices that can be learned from.

Une école Montréalaise pour tous: This strategy targets elementary students in the most disadvantaged areas of Montreal, and emphasizes the importance of reciprocity in fostering school-community collaboration.

Agir Autrement or New Approaches, New Solutions**:** This strategy, which targets elementary and High School students in very disadvantaged areas, explicitly recognizes the importance of creating an educational community in support to student success.

Crucial Conditions for Successful School-Family-Community Partnerships: The goal of this program was to identify the conditions needed for successful partnerships between the school, families and the community.

10 Children's Aid Society, 2001, p. 8.

11 Blank, Melaville & Shah, 2003

The CLC as a Community 'Hub'

The Framework sketches an image of a CLC: as a 'hub' of learning, development, and community service.

A hub or the culture of learning is not defined by boundaries but by a sharing of values and vision. It thrives on individual and organizational learning by all members of the school community, continually reflecting, not only about how things are done, but why.[12]

A learning community has been described as:

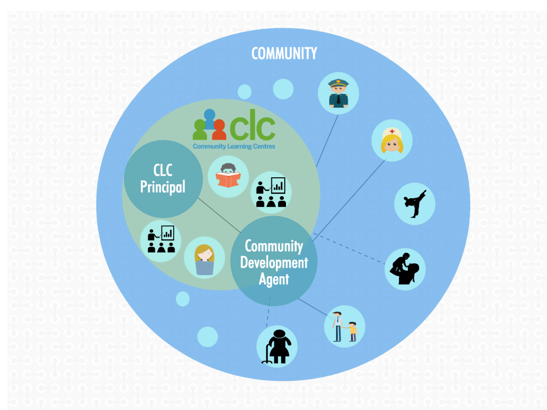
> *"A group of people pursuing common purposes (and individual purposes as well) with a collective commitment to regularly weighing the value of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continuously developing more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing these purposes."*[13]

> *"A group of people who take an active, reflective, collaborative, learning-oriented, and growth-promoting approach toward the mysteries, problems, and perplexities of teaching and learning."*[14]

> *"A place ... rife with activity, mutual respect, and the recognition that everyone in that place is responsible for and accountable to one another…."*[15]

What are the implications for a school/centre, community group or other partners if they were to come together as a 'hub' of community service?

As stated in the Framework, this image places the CLC at the centre of a network of services such as those illustrated here. The school/centre might provide the major locus of CLC activities or they might be delivered in a variety of locations. In any case, the aim is to diminish or even eliminate barriers between the school/centre and the community.



Most organizations have a physical location that people identify as its 'home base.' In the case of a CLC, this is a school or adult education/vocational centre. However it is important to remember that a CLC is NOT a physical location, it is a **strategy** to school and community improvement.

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12 Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2005, p. 10

13 Leithwood & Aitken, cited in Leithwood & Louis, 1998, p. 2

14 Mitchell & Sackney, 2000, p. 9

15 Senge et al, 2000, p. 461

SYNTHESIZING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED IN STEP 1.1

As suggested at the beginning of this Step, the information you gather on CLCs only becomes knowledge when you have processed it and made sense of it for you.

Whether you have been engaged in this knowledge quest by yourself or with others, you can use the template, **Your Synthesis of Community Schools** to transform the information you have gleaned on community schools into useful knowledge for creating your own CLC.

The template contains five **guiding questions** that can be used individually or as a group to synthesize what you have learned. The completed template provides a '**cognitive map**' of what you have learned - the territory covered in your journey of discovery.

YOUR SYNTHESIS OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS		
Guiding Questions	**Your Synthesis**	**Valuable Sources of Information**
What are the principal characteristics of a CLC school?		
What are the benefits of a CLC school for different groups of stakeholders?		
What kinds of services to CLC schools generally provide?		
What are the key factors that facilitate success?		
What are the key factors that inhibit success?		

1.2 Create an Image of a CLC for Your Community

Just as students only engage in learning when it makes sense to them, a major change in policy and practice, such as adopting the CLC Approach in a school, is unlikely to be supported, let alone sustained, unless the people most affected by it can see how it will work in their context.

This step presents two major tasks in exploring the desirability and feasibility of creating a CLC school:

- Define your Community
- Determine the implications of a CLC for your school and community

The primary output for this step is the development of a preliminary vision of a CLC for your school and community.

Whereas Step 1.1 could be completed by an individual, creating an image for your CLC necessitates the involvement of other stakeholders. The CLC leadership team needs to involve ***stakeholders*** in a conversation about what is involved in creating a CLC school. This expanding dialogue should begin with members of the school/centre staff and governing board, a community group, and/or representatives of local/regional organizations that you believe might have an interest in the broad goals of CLC development.

Deciding on Potential Partners

Potential partners come in all shapes and sizes. Some (e.g. a health and social service centre - CISSS, formerly CLSC) may be part of a larger organization at the regional or provincial level (as a CSSS is a part of the regional health and social service network which is connected to the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* [MSSS]). Others, such as a community group, may be a purely 'stand-alone' organization or group.

The Children's Aid Society Handbook[16] identifies the following as key members of any community school partnership:

- School staff representatives
- Local community organizations
- Other social service and agencies with a mandate to service youth in the community
- Parents
- Community members
- Students
- Funders

In Quebec, additional community partners have been identified and are engaged with CLC schools:

- Health partners (CHSSN and local CLSC's)
- Quebec En Forme
- Avenir d'enfants
- Local *tables de concertation*
- Regional associations
- Libraries
- Arts and Culture institutions
- Youth employment services
- Local businesses
- Senior organizations

16 http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/files/upload-docs/Complete_Manual.pdf

Another resource to explore when deciding on potential partners was produced in 2013 by the Children's Aid Society would be: Building Community Schools: A Guide to Action.

The initial conversation with potential partners must be grounded in some vision of the nature and purpose of the CLC, enabling them to answer two questions: **What is a CLC?** and ***Why do we want one?***

It is usually a good idea to begin with a smaller group of potential stakeholders and expand the group as the conversation about the CLC unfolds. Sometimes however it may be helpful to brainstorm with a larger group and then invite a smaller group of stakeholders, particularly those with a shared mandate, to pursue a deeper conversation.

This is where **trust building** begins! It will do little good to talk about a collaborative venture if people do not feel that they are truly being invited as **equal partners** whose voice will be listened to and respected.

A successful partnership is built in stages but the foundation of all these stages is trust. All partners must feel that they are valued, that their opinions matter, and they will be treated with respect.

Defining the Community

It is therefore for a community group or other potential partner considering of joining a CLC to determine the 'boundaries' of its own community, and then the 'boundaries' of the CLC's community, taking into consideration all educational establishments in its area.

The CLC school/centre may be part of a single community such as a homogenous neighbourhood of like-minded citizens of similar socioeconomic status. However, most schools are more likely to be connected to multiple communities, in both geographic and socio-economic terms.

In urban settings, many schools still draw from a relatively narrow geographic area but their students come from a widely diverse population, while other schools have a specialized vocation and therefore draw from a wider geographic area.

In rural settings, declining student populations have resulted in an increased consolidation of schools for students who are bussed from many different communities. Adult and vocational training centres also differ in terms of the range of program offerings and the general catchment area of their student body.

The communities served by other organizations and groups will be different than that served by the school/ centre. The way in which these various communities intersect will affect how each potential partner views the CLC.

For the English language minority community in Quebec, “a community learning centre is an institution created by a community to preserve and transmit its linguistic and cultural heritage. The centre thus becomes a venue for uniting and expressing the vitality of the community.”[17] English schools and centres have another dimension of community to consider: they serve the ‘English-speaking community’ but are also part of a wider community not defined by language. Some other potential partners may share this characteristic, while others will not.

There is therefore a need to consider a range of communities in order to define the community of interest for the proposed CLC. For more information about the English-speaking communities in Québec, visit the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) website, paying special attention to the 2015-2016 Community Vitality survey.

You need to get a sense of the demographics of your community - cultural, socio-economic, linguistic etc. Much of the data you need to accomplish this can be found in the school MESA, Tell Them From Me (TTFM) results and other statistical resources such as:

- Statistics Canada
- CityData.com
- CHSSN
- QCGN
- Foundation of Greater Montreal
- Institut de la statistique du Québec

Use the template **Defining Your CLC Community** to define the boundaries of your CLC community, including the identification of key stakeholders.

DEFINING YOUR CLC COMMUNITY	
ELEMENT	**DESCRIPTION**
Geography	
Language / Culture	
Stakeholders	
Other	
Definition of Community:	

[17] Pilote, 1999, free translation

Construct an Initial Map of the Community

The **School-Community Connections map** has been developed to help school leaders create a visual representation of their existing relationships and assets, and the purpose they serve within the CLC Community school structure. The map consists of three regions:

- The small interior circle represents the school
- The next circle denotes the extended school community
- The large white area signifies the community at large

This map will help the school tell the story of their school community partnerships. An interview was initially conducted with the CLC School principal to gather some information; this will provide an opportunity for the CDA to learn from the principal's reflections about the existing assets, resources, and connections in their communities.

The CLC School leadership team (principal and CDA) should 'map' the school-community connections that currently exist using the icons provided. This map should be hung in the school to facilitate discussions with teachers, staff, parents, partners, and community visitors about their school-community connections.

The map that is produced then visually represents the existing connections, and more importantly, highlights where efforts can be placed to fill in any gaps that become apparent.

Over time, as connections increase, the school community will see their map evolve. It is important that CLCs take photos of the map at the beginning of the process to capture the starting point and then later along in the process, to facilitate reflection and evaluation of the approach's evolution.

Each map kit includes:

- An attractive background map (visit the CLC Framework for Action to see a sample of a completed map.
- Images to represent the CLC school's assets including students, parents, families, teachers/ staff, the school board, and other provincial education support organizations. While generic images will be provided, encourage the schools to add their own representative photos/images for these stakeholders over time.
- Program/initiative symbols to represent programs that are in place in the school, including homework, wellness, NANS, daycare, early childhood, and other teacher/school/board-led initiatives that involve community connections.
- Structures that support the school and to which stakeholders belong, including, but not limited to home & school, PPO, and governing boards.
- Community organizations and collaboratives operating in the area that the school has connections with or is aware of that have a mandate to serve the school/community. For example: regional associations, Avenir d'enfants, CHSSN NPI, CISSS, local heritage groups…
- Private companies and funders who are supporting the school community in some way.
- Community member symbols to represent the involvement of individuals not otherwise captured through program participation, volunteering, etc. For example: senior learners, breakfast program volunteers.
- Arrows/lines in a variety of colours, shapes sizes to represent the nature of the connection (human, financial, or material resources).

As you engage more stakeholders and partners in the school-community mapping process, below are some questions you should think about and use to initiate dialogue:

- What assets have been mobilized/connections made?
- What actions or processes helped the school to develop its connections? Whose involvement was critical?
- How can the assets in the community be used to address priorities we have to support students?

Looking at the lines/arrows, what existing relationships could be further developed – for example, if you are only accessing financial support from a partner, what could be done to further engage them?

Extension Model Community Mapping Exercise

When all of the schools in the extension model have been interviewed, each principal will present their map to the others. As a group you will reflect on the strengths and opportunities you see to strategically develop connections, choosing foci that align and make a manageable coordination of workload

Hot Air Balloon Activity

Use the **Hot Air Balloon Activity** template to engage potential partners in a discussion to create a vision of what a CLC could look like in your community.

How will children, families and this community be different because of your CLC?

Imagine that you are flying over your community in a hot air balloon (and brave enough to look down). What changes would you see on the ground if you were able to realize your vision, and were successful? You should describe your changes in terms of outcomes/impacts (changed situations that can be described and measured) not activities! You don't need to describe everything! Just choose those changes that you feel are most important and unique to the Anglophone community and your CLC.

QUESTIONS TO GENERATE A VISION STATEMENT	
How have economic and social factors impacted the communities you are working with? (i.e. Industry, declining enrolment, aging population…)	
How are participants and communities taking a leadership role in the development of the CLC?	
How have relationships changed amongst the groups and organizations that you are working with?	
What has the CLC school helped change over time in your community?	
VISION:	

SAMPLE VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is a healthy community that values high educational achievement and personal success, through positive youth, family and community development. The CLC aims to cultivate pride in our citizens and our community.

Implications for your community

At this point, you should have some sense of vision - what the CLC could look like and what the boundaries of its community will be. In order to take the conversation with stakeholders to the next level, it would be useful to build on the knowledge you constructed about CLCs in Step 1.1 to determine the implications of a CLC for your community.

How this exercise proceeds obviously depends on the extent to which stakeholders have become knowledgeable about CLCs.

- You might provide your stakeholders with information and resources from either the CLC website and the CLC Network Resource website. You can find PowerPoint presentations on the resource website or you can create your own from the synthesis you completed in Step 1.1.
- It is highly recommended that you show the CLC Video.
- You might wish to use any of the material suggested previously or engage stakeholders in using the template from Step 1.1, Your Synthesis of Community Schools.
- In any event, all key stakeholders involved in this conversation should construct their own knowledge about CLCs that includes a general image of a CLC and what can be expected from one as a hub of community services.
- Stakeholders should also be familiar with the definition of a CLC and the steps involved in creating one, as provided in the Framework.

This conversation leads to the next task: creating a vision of what your CLC could look like.

Creating a Vision of Your CLC

The vision of your CLC will provide an image of your long-term goal(s) - how the community will be a better place because of the results you achieve. For example, visioning the local school as a place where students, staff, families and community members work together, a school community environment that is stimulating, healthy and safe, a community that is economically and socially viable, that provides a future for its young people.

The vision underpins the mission of the CLC and provides the answer to the questions: ***Why are we doing this?*** and ***Why does it matter?***

1.3 Decide How to Proceed

Schools/centres and other front-line service organizations are subject to a barrage of pressures to meet the expectations of their stakeholders. Community groups typically lead a precarious existence, relying on over-stretched volunteers to fulfill their mission. Deciding to be part of a new initiative such as a CLC therefore represents a significant commitment for every potential CLC partner.

This step presents two major tasks in the exploration of the desirability and feasibility of creating a CLC:

- Determine if the partners and their organizations are ready to embark on this joint venture
- Decide how to proceed

Determining Readiness

The fact that your potential partners have created a vision with you does not mean that they are ready to proceed, even if they are willing to do so. Relevant factors range from the tangible (e.g., having sufficient resources), to the intangible (e.g., having a collaborative culture). They include ‘foreground’ factors: those associated with the partners themselves (e.g. the leadership of the partner organization), as well as ‘background’ factors: those that are connected to the partners (e.g., the support a partner can expect from its ‘parent’ organization, such as a social affairs agency from the regional office of its ministry).

Use the template, **Your Readiness Quotient,** to determine the ‘readiness quotient’ or ‘RQ’ of the emerging partnership to form a CLC.

Even if you aren’t using this template, it is important at this stage to have an open conversation with each potential partner about their readiness to embark upon this join venture and what additional steps may need to be taken to increase their readiness.

YOUR READINESS QUOTIENT (RQ)		
Indicators of Readiness	**Comments**	**Actions**
Legal / Administrative Readiness: Partners have legal/ administrative framework necessary to participate in the CLC		
Cultural Readiness: partners have an organizational culture that accepts the CLC.		
Leadership Readiness: leadership support for the CLC exists in the partner organizations		
Vision & Strategic Readiness: Partners have a clear vision of where the CLC is going or a desire to create such a vision		
Collaborative Readiness: Partners are prepared to work collaboratively		
Resource Readiness: partners are prepared to commit resources to the development of the CLC		

Tentative Commitment to Proceed

As stated at the beginning of this step, deciding HOW to proceed is the primary output of this step. The Framework stresses the importance of student involvement in the creation and development of the CLC. The statement quoted below from Fullan[18] and other studies suggest that students are able and willing to be involved when given the opportunity.[19] Depending on the reality at your CLC school, at this stage you should involve students by giving them a voice and a platform where they can share their thoughts on what a CLC would look like.

> "Students, even little ones, are people too. Unless they have some meaningful (to them) role in the enterprise, most educational change, indeed most education, will fail."

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18 Fullan, 2001, p. 151

19 See, e.g., MacBeath & Sugimine, 2003; Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996; Smith et al., 1998

STEP 2 - INITIATE

The purpose of this step is to initiate the partnership. By the end of this step, you should expect to have achieved consensus among partners regarding the proposed CLC venture.

Step 2 comprises of three action steps :

- Map your needs & assets
- Develop a mission statement
- Allocate Roles, Responsibilities and Resources

Initiating a CLC requires collaborative leadership of the type promoted by the Canada's Coalition to end Global Poverty:

- creating a climate for change among the partners;
- engaging and enabling the partnership; and
- sustaining change.[20]

According to Health Canada, collaborative leadership builds on the linkages in the social network of the partners and their stakeholders. "Social networks are the means by which individual community members interrelate and create a sense of community."[21] The collaborative leader is someone who can help the group to move forward and "who can safeguard the process, facilitating interaction, and patiently deal with high levels of frustration."[22] A truly collaborative partnership ensures that all partners are both beneficiaries of and agents of change.

2.1 Map Your Needs and Assets

The initiation of a school community partnership from a perceived set of needs can be a positive catalyst to action, provided that it does not create a deficit mentality - that the community is broken and needs to be fixed: "... viewing a community as a list of problems and needs leads to a fragmentation of efforts to provide solutions. This denies the breadth and depth of community wisdom which regards to problems - and the community's own problem solving capacities- as tightly intertwined."[23] The antidote to this potential approach is a dual focus on needs and assets.

This step is comprise of two tasks :

- Identify the needs of the community in relation to the type of CLC envisages
- Identify the assets of the community in relation to meeting those needs

The primary output of this step is a map of community needs and assets.This step builds on the definition of community you decided in Step 1.1.

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[20] Coleman, 2006

[21] Dorfman, 1998, p. 1

[22] Chrislip & Larson, cited in Dorfman, 1998, p. 24

[23] Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p. 3

Identify Community Needs

If, at this point, your vision of the CLC is still quite vague, your approach to this exercise is likely to be more ‘broad brush’ than focused.

Assessing community needs is not simply a matter of asking what people want but determining the gaps between what is and what should be. A ‘top-down’ approach to assessing needs often fails because it assumes that the person conducting the assessment knows what stakeholders need better than they do.

There is often a tendency to confuse needs with what should be done to meet them. When asked to state needs, respondents often answer with a solution, assuming that it will meet the underlying need or genuinely conflating the two into a single notion. Sometimes, there is a sub-text to the expression of needs.

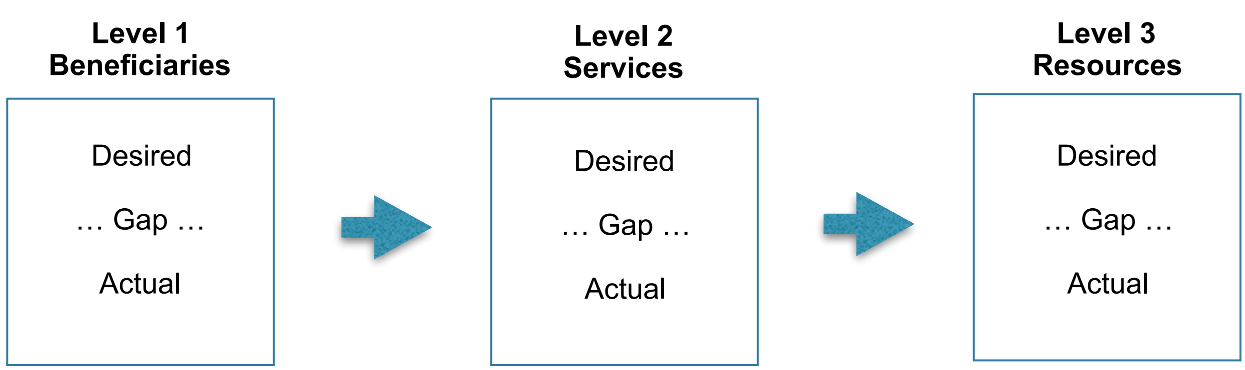
For example, the *need* expressed for an after-school program is presumed to address an underlying and unspecified student need. The sub-text might be a need for after-school day-care.

One useful technique to diminish the confusion between needs and solutions, is to think about a **hierarchy of needs**:

- starting with the **beneficiary** (e.g. student, community member),
- then the **services** required to meet these needs, and finally
- the **resources** required to provide these services.

There may be needs at each one of these levels, that is, gaps between what is desired and what exists at present, as illustrated below.

LEVELS OF NEED



Thus, one only considers the need for resources once the need for services has been established, which are not considered until the needs of beneficiaries have been established.

Determining the **actual state** at any level requires data to describe the current reality. Relying on data means that assertions by respondents are not simply accepted but verified through the use of evidence.

The challenge in determining the **desired state** is to differentiate between a true assessment of needs and a wish list - an expression of what one wants but does not necessarily need.

EXAMPLES:

> **WANT**: students want a gaming room; **NEED** (behind the want): students need a structured, safe environment where they can spend time constructively after school and on weekends.
>
> **WANT**: Adult students identified gap in technical drawing skills; **NEED**: a short refresher course; **RESOURCES**: identified as 30 hours of instructor time plus related costs.

In order to determine these needs, you will:

- Analyze the situation and draw a portrait of your school/community from all potential angles
- Identify appropriate sources of data (e.g. community members, school records);
- Determine appropriate means to collect these data (e.g. interview community leaders, observe school activities); and
- Determine appropriate means to analyze the data collected (e.g. content analysis of comments by stakeholders, statistical analysis of data from a rating scale).

Places to Find Data

- **School Management Educational Success Agreement (MESA)**
- **Tell Them From Me (TTFM)** is a good instrument used by the English school boards. It is an online student survey tool that school boards use to collect anonymous and reliable data about school climate, bullying, school safety and student engagement.
- **Healthy School Approach** assessment of your school community. This 'approach' is an agreement for the complementarity of services between the health and social services network and the education system in Quebec. The two sectors work together to achieve common goals in a comprehensive and concerted way.
- **New Approaches, New Solutions** data collection and assessment is also good tool to look at to determine needs of students and parents.

Since needs represent the gap between current reality and desired states, they cannot be determined unless there is agreement as to what the latter ought to include and you have a clear picture of what currently exists in terms of beneficiaries, services, and resources

Community Conversation

Another way to identify assets and needs, foster collaboration and drive engagement is through a Community Conversation - a facilitated exchange between key members of your CLC school and community. Guides and other resources to help you plan and facilitate this can be found on the CLC Network Resource website. The outcome of this conversation should be 2 to 4 focus areas that emerge from theming the topics of conversation.

Identify Needs & Assets of the Community

Asset mapping can be used to create a 'map' of existing assets. The **Canadian Rural Partnership**, developed the The Asset Mapping Handbook, which focuses specifically on community capacity building, a way of thinking that adds value to the social, economic, and human resources that already exist in the community.

The **Asset-Based Community Development Institute** at the Center for Civic Engagement at Northwestern University (Chicago) is also a valuable source of asset mapping tools and resources. The Institute developed a toolkit (asset-mapping tools) so that community groups and organizations can borrow from the experiences of others doing asset-based community development work.

Use the **Needs and Assets** template to help you start to clarify your community's needs and assets. It will help you determine:

A. the needs of various target groups
B. the untapped resources that could be used to meet these needs, and
C. the role the CLC could play to meet these needs.

NEEDS AND ASSETS							
Target Population / Area	**Needs**		**Gap of knowledge, skills, resources, services, etc..**	**Assets**		**Potential Role of the CLC**	**Partner Contribution**
	Current State	**Desired State (unmet needs**		**Current**	**Potential (untapped assets)**		

2.2 Develop A Mission Statement

The mission statement should serve to situate the CLC in its context and to inspire and motivate stakeholders, answering questions such as: **Why is it necessary?** and **Whose interests will it serve?**

"A written vision serves partners as a constant reminder of common goals. It specifies the endpoint toward which all their work is directed."[24] However, ultimately it is not how well the mission statement says what it says but how well the CLC does what it says.

This step involves four inter-related tasks for the initiation of a CLC:

- Agree on the values and purpose for the CLC
- Identify the kinds of results that the partners expect from the CLC
- Establish an appropriate set of principles to guide the operation of the CLC
- Combine all these elements to draft a mission statement

The primary output of this step is a draft CLC mission statement.

Writing your mission is a crucial step in achieving a common ground with all partners. What you are creating is a new collective identity.

Agree on Values & Purpose

As stated in the Framework, the CLC values should serve as 'beacons' to guide policy and practice and they should also reflect the particular values of its community.

The mission statement itself need not be lengthy but the process to produce it may well be a lengthy one. Time spent on the mission statement is time well spent if it helps clarify the purpose of the venture, resolve differences of intent among the partners, and enhance commitment to the CLC.

A school's mission statement is contained in its educational project (MESA) and your community partners will likely come to the table with their mission statement. A key challenge facing a new CLC in drafting its mission statement is first to understand where each partner is coming from individually and second, where, together, they want to go and the results they want to achieve. It is important to review the mission statements of your partners together and see the extent to which each partner's mission supports a common vision and mission for the CLC.

Each partner should have a vision of its role as articulated in either its mission statement, or some other expression of its character and aims: "An organization's vision defines the kind of a world to which it wants to contribute.... Missions, on the other hand, are a step in operationalizing the vision, an

[24] Melaville, 2004, p. 26.

organization's raison d'être."[25] Of course, each mission will differ in terms of a number of key variables, such as:

- values: the core beliefs of the organization;
- purpose: why the organization exists;
- character: the nature of the organization; and
- guidance: the direction it provides to the organization.

Example of A CLC Vision and Mission Statement

Riverview CLC (Lester B. Pearson School Board)

Strong Families, Strong Community...

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide social, cultural and pedagogical programs/ services to the Anglophone minority in Verdun in order that they become lifelong learners and remain in Verdun as healthy, successful citizens. We seek to empower our community by cultivating life skills and supporting the personal and collective development of our community members. We do this by forming partnerships with the businesses and community organizations of our neighbourhood, in order to provide programs/services and learning opportunities for the families of Verdun, now and in the future.

Our Values

Our values center on fostering a desire and respect for lifelong learning from a young age through being an integral part of the community. The Riverview CLC is committed to promoting and reflecting the following values in all that we do:

- Supporting all forms of learning
- Responsible & active citizenship
- Pride in self and community
- Respect for self, others, and community

[25] Lusthaus et al., 2002, p. 93.

Partner Mission Statement

Use the **Partner Mission Statements** template to ascertain the extent to which each partner's mission supports a common vision and mission for the CLC.

A: MISSION	
Key Descriptors:	
What are the points of compatibility in the core values of each partner organization? Are there any incompatibilities in these values?	
Do all partner organizations have complimentary aims/mandates? Do any appear to be operating at cross-purposes?	
Is there anything in the nature of the mission of any partner organization that is likely to be problematic for the CLC?	
B: VALUES AND PURPOSE OF THE CLC	

A round table discussion of this data and further analysis can provide the basis for considering the mission of the CLC. Use this discussion to draft your mission and a statement of the values and purpose of the CLC.

Creating the mission statement will require the input of all partners but the drafting should probably be left to one or two persons, with feedback and revision until everyone is comfortable with and feels ownership of the statement. Whatever means are chosen to draft the mission statement it is important to remember that the process is as important as the product. This will be the first real test of the partners' willingness and ability to work together for a common purpose.

Your CLC mission should be revisited every year with your stakeholders and partners.

> "In building shared mission, a group of people build a sense of commitment together.... Without a sustained process for building shared vision, there is no way for a school [or CLC] to articulate its sense of purpose." (Senge et al, 2000, p. 72)

Identify Results

The CLC Framework has adopted an **outcome-based management approach** to the development and operation of a CLC. A statement of the intended results of any organization is a declaration of what really matters to it, an expression of its values and purpose.

Outcome-based management is used extensively in both the public and non-profit sectors. Experience has shown that partnerships can use this approach to:

- help generate interest in and commitment to improving the lives of children and families;
- help them know where they are, where they want to go, and what progress is reasonable to expect;
- help them track and improve performance.”[26]

Outcome-based management replaces the language of ***action*** found in objectives-based management with the language of ***change.*** **Action** language focuses on the completion of activities - what we intend to do - typically, from the perspective of the service provider; whereas ***change*** language focuses on the improvements sought - what changes will occur - typically, from the perspective of the target clientele.

Objectives-Based Action Language		Outcome-Based Change Language
Promote Child Development	→	Students adopt healthy lifestyle
Involve parents in life of the school		Parents take an active part in school life

BUILDING A RESULTS CHAIN

As illustrated graphically below, a results chain is used to express the presumed sequence of change: activities produce outputs that lead to desired outcomes that lead to desired impact.

		Results Chain				
Activities	→	Outputs	→	Outcomes	→	Impact

The first challenge in developing a results chain is to differentiate outcomes from activities.

> **EXAMPLE:** A workshop for parents has been completed. The **OUTPUT** of this activity is that parents have enhanced capacity to advocate for their children. An anticipated **OUTCOME** of this output is that parents become more effective advocates for their children.

26 Watson, 2000, pp. 7, 8, 9

Activities are a process that uses resources and other capacities to produce an outcome. However, the completion of an activity should not be considered as an outcome.

Using the example in the above text box, if parents do not acquire the enhanced capacity envisaged, then there is no result, even though the workshop was completed.

Distinguishing long term impact from other results is not usually problematic. However, differentiating outputs from outcomes is another matter. Reviewing various source materials will reveal that one person's output is another's outcome. Therefore, the second challenge is to differentiate these two types of results.

Accordingly, in the CLC Framework:

- an ***output*** is defined as the direct result of a given activity;
- an ***outcome*** is a precondition to attain the next step in your result chain.

Again, using the example in above text box, one could ascertain if parents had developed the knowledge and skills that enhanced their capacity to advocate. However, whether parents actually become effective advocates or not cannot be ascertained immediately but only after some time has passed.

The most important challenge is determining and demonstrating the rationale that links activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. In other words: **What leads you to believe that the results chain you have in mind is valid?**

Answering this question expresses the **theory of change** that underpins the causal logic of your results chain. Since the Framework is not prescriptive, the general theory of change which it expresses is articulated differently by each individual CLC when it chooses its own particular activities and results.

Step 3 (Plan) deals with these linkages in detail. At this stage (step 2), the aim is to set forth '**results areas**' - a general statement of the types of results that the partners wish to achieve. In terms of developing your theory of change, these results areas constitute the destination of the journey of change.

The three results areas that CLCs focus on and which provide a starting point for such an exploration. Alternatively, one might start with the areas relating to the core mission of each partner.

:

- Student Success, engagement and well-being
- Community success, engagement and well-being
- Family Support

Results Area / Partner Input

Use the **Partner Input** template to provide a broad-brush statement of the types of results expected by each of the partners. Ensure that your results areas are aligned with and reflect your identified needs.

PARTNER INPUT		
RESULTS AREAS	**PRIORITY ***	**COMMENTS**

* Indicate the relative priority of each results areas as follows:

1 = Low Priority

2 = Moderate Priority

3 = High Priority

Ask each partner to list a maximum of five **results areas** for the CLC, indicating the level of priority for each area. Add any **comments** that are necessary to explain both the results areas and their priority.

A Round table discussion for arriving at a preliminary consensus over the desired results areas of the CLC, is a good way to ensure that everyone's voice is heard

Establish Guiding Principles

Guiding principles 'chart the course' for the CLC. Change theory regarding community schools suggests that guiding principles for community schools relate to three general areas:

- purpose
- leadership for building community;
- managing for results.

The following provides a suggested set of principles based on these themes. You can choose any that are pertinent to your future CLC and/or add ones suggested by your partners.

Suggested Themes for Guiding Principles

Purpose - A Commitment to:

- Respect the values underpinning community schools in general and those values which the CLC has specifically endorsed;
- Engage and support students to develop their full intellectual, emotional, social, and vocational potential;
- Engage and support families and other community members in achieving their individual goals;
- Contribute to the core mission of schools/centres - the provision of quality educational services to students;
- Contribute to the development of the community in accordance with partnership goals.

Leadership for Building Community - A Commitment to:

- Transformational leadership - guiding the organization to ensure the commitments and capacities of its members;
- Take into account the environment of the CLC, especially where people are at in relation to where they want to go;
- Promote collaborative outreach to the community members and groups as partners;
- A continuing focus on what is required to develop the capacity of the CLC to achieve desired results.

Managing for Results - A Commitment to:

- Strategic management - a holistic and integrative approach to service delivery supported by ongoing monitoring;
- Continually strive for effectiveness - achieving the short, medium and long term results being sought by the CLC;
- Continually strive for efficiency - allocating a sufficient level of resources to achieve results and making optimal use of these resources;
- Continually strive for equality - ensuring that all members of the school community receive equal opportunities for success;
- Accountability and improvement - taking responsibility for evaluating performance, communicating the findings to stakeholders and taking action based on these findings.

The following is an example of a set of Guiding Principles from the School of the 21st Century, "a model for school-based preschool, after-school care and family support services designed to promote the optimal growth and development of children beginning at birth."[27]

EXAMPLE

The School of the 21st Century is firmly grounded in the belief that all families in need of support and quality child care should be able to obtain these services. To achieve this goal, 21C sites uphold the following principles:

- strong parental support and involvement;
- universal access to programs achieved through sliding scale fees based on family income;
- programmatic focus on the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of children
- quality programming as measured by staff qualifications, staff-child ratios, group size, staff turnover, and other relevant criteria;
- professional training and advancement opportunities for child care providers; and
- non-compulsory programming utilized at the discretion of the family.

At this point you should take the time to identify a statement that will reflect what your CLC is all about. Keep it short and sweet. Answer the following questions:

- What does your CLC school/centre/community most believe?
- What does your CLC school/centre/community do to act on its beliefs?

Use the **GUIDING PRINCIPLES** template to prepare a draft set of guiding principles for discussion by the partners.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	
THEME	**STATEMENT**

To be useful, guiding principles must be easily understood and helpful in assessing a particular policy, program, action, or behaviour. They differ from belief statements which are not action-oriented, and from guidelines which are more specific directions to implement a policy, follow a course of action, etc..

[27] School of the 21st Century, n.d., p. 1

SITUATING GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Belief Statement: Transparency is an essential quality of good governance.
Guiding Principle: The development of policy should be transparent - open to scrutiny.
Guideline: Set forth the method used to develop the policy and make this information available to stakeholders.

Developing a Draft Mission Statement

Use the **DRAFT CLC MISSION STATEMENT** template to prepare a draft of the mission statement for the CLC. The template consists of two segments shown separately below.

Part A: The first segment of the template comprises a box for each of the three components of a mission statement:

- values and purpose;
- results areas; and
- guiding principles.

You may decide to structure your mission statement differently but it should include these three elements.

PART A:	
Values & Purpose:	
Results Areas:	
Guiding Principles	

Part B: Once a draft has been completed, ask each partner, as well as any other persons involved in developing the mission, to review both the process used to craft the mission and the draft mission statement itself using each of the statements listed in the second segment of the template. This could be done using flip charts as a group rather than individually.

Each respondent is expected to place a check next to any statement to which he or she can answer yes, leaving the space blank if not. The respondent should then add any reservations, comments or questions about the item.

Use the results of this check list to review both the process used to craft the mission and the mission statement itself, redoing part of the process or revising the mission statement as required.

PART B: Review of Draft Mission Statement		
Review Questions	✓	**Reservations, comments, questions**
The process used to develop the mission was open, providing everyone an opportunity to express his/her views.		
The process enables a consensus to be formed about the prepared mission statement.		
As a result of this process, I believe that my organization/group will endorse the proposed mission statement.		
The mission statement expresses the values I think the CLC should hold.		
The elements of the missions statement are important to me.		
The elements contained in the mission statement fit together.		
The mission statement is clear and can be understood by all partners and stakeholders.		

2.3 Allocate Roles, Responsibilities and Resources

Having set the course, the purpose of this step is decide on how the CLC and the partnership should be structured; how the roles and responsibilities of the bodies and individuals within this structure should be assigned, and how resources should be allocated, bearing in mind the four principles outlined in the Framework:

- Reciprocity
- Equal Voice
- Collaboration
- Flexibility

This step poses four inter-related tasks for the initiation of a CLC:

- Structure the CLC in order to meet the identified needs, which dealing with contextual realities
- Given the structure of the CLC, assign appropriate roles and responsibilities to the stakeholders and partners
- Allocation of resources

- Establish an appropriate process for developing content and concluding the partnership agreement

The primary output of this step is that the organizational structure is created with primary roles and resources allocated.

Structuring the CLC

The structures of school-community ventures vary but the most successful CLCS follow an integrated model, where the previously separate mandates are replaced by the new structure. As illustrated in the Framework, a CLC can be structured in relation to two dimensions. Any structures or roles shown here are meant to ***illustrate not prescribe***, how you should set up your CLC; as always, it is up to you.

In **single-site** models, the CLC has only one location, for example a neighbourhood elementary school. This approach is usually less cumbersome to operate and promotes greater community involvement. However, it offers less scope and may discourage involvement of partners who could find themselves in a multiplicity of CLCs.

In **multi-site** models (i.e. CLC Extended Models, or when a CDA is supporting multiple schools in a region), the CLC comprises two or more locations, for example, a regional adult education centre with several satellite centres. This approach can provide more scope and some economies of scale and is attractive to agencies that cover the territory of several schools. On the other hand, it tends to be more complex and can even detract from local ownership.

The Partnership Table / Network

Deciding how the school-community partnership will be structured, presents choices ranging from very formal to very informal arrangements, depending on the nature and scope of the CLC and the comfort zone of each partner.

Regardless of the structure, collaboration is the by-word; moreover, even in the absence of any partner-level structure, the partners will still exercise some roles such as the following:

- create and sustain the vision of the CLC;
- initiate the CLC by means of the partnership agreement;
- ensure liaison among the partners and with outside groups;
- act as a ‘gateway’ to home, school and community;
- offer support in the development of the action plan and the evaluation plan;
- be responsible for the operation and results of the CLC;
- provide resources, technical assistance, coordination and advice.
- Be an advocate and ambassador for the CLC; link to their organization and other partners

Each partner must act in accordance with its own terms of reference. Thus, some roles may be exercised by an individual (e.g. executive director of an agency), while others may have to be fulfilled by a corporate body (e.g. school governing board).

The partnership table will exercise roles such as the following:

- prepare the draft Action Plan and submit it to the partners;
- implement the plans approved by the partners;
- monitor delivery of the programs, services and activities;
- conduct the evaluation of CLC operations and results;
- submit the evaluation report to the partners
- prepare the next Action Plan, as the cycle begins again

Successful partnership tables require:

- clearly defined roles
- effective governance arrangements, ensuring democracy and equality of all partners
- strong operational and strategic leadership
- capacity to build on existing relationships
- effective means of communication
- adequate resources and support. genuine commitment to work together
- a speedy process for resolving differences

Source: Adapted from Coleman, 2006, p. 16

Determine Roles and Responsibilities

Use the **Partnership Table - Roles and Responsibilities** template to help define the roles of partners and stakeholders, CLC Principal, CDA. It is important for all members of the partnership table to understand their roles as it pertains to the table.

PARTNERSHIP TABLE - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES		
Members of the Partnership Table	**Roles and Responsibilities**	**Comments**
CLC Principal		
Community Development Agent		
Teacher		
School Board Representative		
Partner		
Partner		

Well-integrated CLCs tend to have clear and complementary relationships established between the CLC and school board. This includes a clear conceptual understanding of the relationships between the entities of CLC, school, school board, and community and how they can fit together. Begin by determining the roles and responsibilities' that the stakeholders feel comfortable accepting/ volunteering.

It is highly recommended to complete the above template with partners in great detail and to insert the table into the partnership agreement so that all roles and responsibilities are outlined and the Partnership agreement can be referred to ensure clarity.

Use the guidelines provided in the previous section for the roles assigned to Partners to complete the remainder of this segment.

The following are recommended roles and responsibilities for the CLC school principal, Community Development Agent (CDA), school board representatives, and PRT.

PRINCIPAL

Just as this framework has been designed to dovetail with existing policy and practice, so must the operational work of the CLC. Ensuring harmony between the CLC and current school operations is essential if it is to succeed.

Harmony cannot be assumed; potential and actual conflicts need to be managed, especially in the school/centre (assuming that is where the CLC is located). This task is facilitated if the principal leads or is a member of the partnership table; if not, then a key role of the team leader is to ensure ongoing liaison with the CLC School principal.

Being a CLC principal requires a shift from the traditional principal leadership style to a more community-based, collaborative leadership style. Empowerment, shared leadership, trust, flexibility, versatility, innovation, capacity building, and sustainability are all common place in the vocabulary and daily work of a CLC Principal.

The CLC Principal:

- Shares CLC leadership with CDA
- Collaborates with the CDA and the various partners to develop a school culture that engages families & community members
- Help teachers and the CDA make connections to the QEP and the school MESA - encourages them to work together
- Participates in the development of the CLC theory of change

- Ensures the CDA has appropriate working conditions including flexibility to attend events in the evening, attend partnership table meetings during the day and a quiet working space within the school.
- Works with the school board to ensure the school is open and welcoming to the community, addressing school board policies that may need to be modified to facilitate being a CLC school; i.e. who gets access to the school and who is accountable?
- Provides feedback and has regular meetings with the CDA

CLC CDA (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENT)

Every partnership table must have a leader, be it a CDA/community development agent, or some other leader occupying the position. The leader is expected to help a diverse group of individuals become a partnership that can work collaboratively and develop collaborative efforts to address the concerns about students, families and the communities in which they live. [28]

The CLC Community Development Agent:

- Reports to the CLC School Principal
- Collaborates with partners to address school and community needs - in support of common outcomes.
- Participates on local community development tables that correspond to objectives in the CLC theory of change
- Facilitates effective communication between the CLC school and the students, parents, and community.
- Prepares monthly updates for Governing Board meetings and participate in school staff meetings.
- Collaborates and shares leadership with the CLC School Principal
- Develops and updates the CLC theory of change annually, in collaboration with stakeholders
- Provides leadership, support, and growth opportunities for staff, volunteers, and community partners.
- Participates in learning communities (e.g., CLC network) and shares effective practices with others.

SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

Each school board has assigned a 'liaison' person to support all the CLCs in the board. At the beginning of the development of a CLC, the School Board representative will likely be more actively involved in various meetings, including the partnership table meeting.

[28] Molloy et al., 2000, p. 3.

The role of the School Board representative is to:

- Advise and keep the Director General informed about any matter relating to CLC program and network, including providing assistance in identifying services, programs and activities that may achieve the aims of the community school philosophy and model.
- Ensure accountability of the CDA (i.e. regular reporting)
- Advocate for the CLC and the CDA at the school board; CLC-related information is consistently circulated at the school board
- Meet regularly with your CLC team(s), helping to coordinate the CLC team meetings.
- Facilitate the development of a collaborative relationship between the principal and the coordinator.

PROVINCIAL RESOURCE TEAM

LEARN's Provincial Resource Team (PRT) provides centralized coaching, mentoring and capacity building for the CLC schools and school teams. They also offer on-going professional development, in addition to a variety of resource materials, and communications support. Each CLC is 'assigned' a PRT person to support their development, but the whole PRT team is at the disposal of each CLC.

The PRT may participate in partnership table meetings at the beginning stages of CLC development, to support you through the Framework steps. Other responsibilities of the PRT include:

- Assisting CLC schools to develop and align their ToC/action plans with the school MESA - in collaboration with school and community partners in support of common outcomes
- Building the capacity of teachers to provide community based learning (CBL)
- Supporting the use of the videoconference/telepresence network for educational and community purposes
- Representing the interests of the CLC network at the provincial level and with various partners and non-profits organizations
- Data collection and evaluation - assist CLC coordinators in compiling and analyzing the collected data
- Building school board engagement through developing collaborative relationships with School Board representatives.

Please note that this process could be undertaken by Principal and CDA to ensure good communication and transparency at the onset of the planning stage to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Accountability & Reporting

Two key issues in assigning roles and responsibilities of members of the partnership table concern accountability and reporting: who is responsible to whom for the various roles they exercise, and the nature of both the role and accountability in relation to other CLC leaders, notably the school/centre principal. The partnership table and the CDA/ facilitator - and all others involved in the CLC - must be clear on the reporting relationship.

Generally members of the partnership table would be responsible to the CDA who in turn would be responsible to the principal who in turn is responsible to the governing board of the school. This does not mean that one person must assume all responsibilities for the CLC school/centre. It does mean that one person must have overall responsibility so even though the CDA manages the partnership table, the CLC principal is ultimately responsible for overseeing the CLC.

In terms of reporting, CDAs are required to complete a j**ournal of activities** monthly. This is an online document which requires a user name and password to access. A report can be printed each month for your principal and quarterly, for your school board representative. The Provincial Resource Team also has access to these journals and will support you in their completion.

The **Steps to Sustainability** is a tool that has been developed as a kind of 'checklist' to assist principals and CDAs in assessing the development of the CLC during the start up phase. CDAs are asked to include comments on the major steps that were followed, whether or not they are identified in the list of "recommended steps." It should be filled in at the end of each year until the CLC has completed 'step 5' of the framework. It will reflect your developmental progression. This template can be found on the CLC Network Resource website.

Allocation of Resources

Determining the resources for any program is a 'Catch-22' exercise - the program manager cannot determine the activities that can be offered without knowing the resources available but the funder will not allocate the resources without knowing what planned activities will cost.

The allocation of resources tends to be an interactive process, with preliminary decisions about resources leading to preliminary decisions about programs, then to tentative decisions about each, and so forth.

The partners of a newly created CLC may solely be responsible for providing these resources. In many cases, the resources provided by partners may be contributions 'in-kind' in the form of staff, volunteers or other material resources.

Alternatively, the CLC may have 'start-up' funds from another source. In either case, sustainable funding is a critical issue that should be addressed in preparing the Partnership Agreement.

Almost every new venture eagerly desires start-up funding but these resources can be a mixed blessing:

- First, while low levels of funding may not be of much help, it may be very difficult to sustain high levels once this initial funding ends.
- Second, start-up funding may create unrealistic expectations that most costs will be incurred in this initial period and that the ongoing costs of the venture will be quite low.
- Third, start-up funding may be restricted to the provision of programs/activities, so that the capacity building that is essential to sustainability are ignored.
- Fourth, while a very short start-up period (e.g. one year) may be insufficient, a longer period (e.g. 3 years) may encourage participants to defer any consideration of the long term financial sustainability of the venture.

"The things that everyone says you need to build … a strong, community-led effort - will, collaboration, data, strategic planning, grassroots support, organizational and individual capacity - are often the things that nobody wants to fund."

Source: Cited in Cornerstone Consulting Group, 2002, p. 12

Whatever situation prevails, it is incumbent upon the partners to plan resources for tomorrow, not just today and a lack of long-term funding for a given project should not necessarily deter one from continuing with the project. With proven results, a project is more likely to get further funding.

Use the **Allocating Resources** template to decide on the allocation of resources by each partner. Remember, the contributions should be aligned with the roles and responsibilities of the CDA previously defined by the partnership table

ALLOCATING RESOURCES			
AREAS	**SOURCE**	**CONTRIBUTIONS**	**TERMS & CONDITIONS**
Financial Resources			
Human Resources			
Material Resources			

This template has been subdivided into three blocks: financial, human and material resources.

In the **second column**, record each source (i.e. a Partner, parent, etc.) for each type of resource, adding extra rows as required so that there is a separate row for each source listed.

In the **third column,** record the contribution to each type of resources. The contribution of financial resources will either be a specific amount or a range, while for others, the contribution 'in kind' should be specified as much as possible (x teachers, y computers, etc.).

The **final column** provides space to briefly outline any terms and conditions that govern the allocation of the resources listed.

The Partnership Agreement

This step marks the end of the '**initiation'** process and sets the foundation for all actions to follow in steps 3 to 5. A joint venture such as the development of a CLC needs to be formalized so that the partners and other concerned stakeholders have a clear understanding of what has been agreed to. Documenting the ground rules for your partnership will help ensure the partnership has a firm foundation and can withstand problems and changes of personnel in key positions."[29] This can be done in a **written document** that could take several forms, including a contract, protocol, or a memorandum of understanding.

In a formal written agreement, it is inappropriate to include details that are subject to change. For example, rather than include a detailed budget as part of the agreement, it is preferable to specify the financial and other resources to be provided by each partner during the life of the agreement, as well as the terms and conditions for the approval and revision of annual budgets.

Use the **Partnership Agreement** template to draft the content of any partnership agreement you enter into, using the guidelines provided below. These elements have been determined in earlier sections of this process.

[29] Department for Education and Skills, 2005b, p. 21

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Main Sections</td><td>Provisions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Name of Partner</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Date</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Mission Statement</td><td>Values & Purpose</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Results Area</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Guiding Principles</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Division of Responsibilities

(be specific about who is responsible for what)</td><td>CLC Partner/Stakeholder</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>CDA / Meeting Facilitator (if not CDA)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Other</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Allocation of Resources</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Other Provisions</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The Partner: Name the partners to the agreement. Each partnering organization should have their own signed partnership agreement with the CLC.

Date: Always include the date that the Partnership Agreement was initiated. In the future, this will help you determine when partnership agreements need to be updated.

Mission Statement: This section provides the vision for everything that follows in the partnership agreement. As stated in the Framework, it should include the following which you determined earlier in Step 2.2 (refer back to your Draft CLC Mission Statement):

- the values and purpose of the CLC
- the results areas to be pursued
- its guiding principles

Division of Responsibilities: This section of the partnership agreement should set forth:

- the responsibilities of the partner who is signing this agreement;
- the responsibilities of the CDA/facilitator,
- Responsibilities of other key stakeholders

Allocation of Resources: This section should specify the partner's allocation of:

- financial resources;
- human resources; and/or
- material resources

Other Provisions: This section should include any additional information such as:

- the time frame (one year, multi-year period); and
- any conditions attached thereto.

The conclusion of the Partnership Agreement will typically involve the following tasks:

- Drafting each section of the agreement
- Reviewing all provisions in a consolidated draft
- Referring tentative agreement to partners for approval
- Signing the agreement

Reminder: You should have a signed partnership agreement with each of your key partners.

NOTE. In some cases, it will not make sense to sign the partnership agreement until the action plan has been developed. In such cases, laying out a preliminary agreement makes sense but the signature and final details can be deferred until the end of STEP 3.

Conclusion of Step 2

In accordance with the process decided above, the conclusion of Step 2 is provided by the signature of the Partnership Agreement by all parties. This is the beginning of the partnership in action.

Although the Agreement will always remain an important expression of how the partnership is meant to work, the real working relationship happens on a day-to-day basis.

True partnership occurs in the actions taken by the partners and the other people who work in and are associated with the CLC. These relationships will rely on the Agreement but they will rely even more on the "give and take" that participants demonstrate in breathing life into the Agreement.[30]

[30] See National Council for Voluntary Organisations, n.d.

STEP 3 - PLAN

The purpose of this step to determine the results you want to achieve by developing a Theory of Change and putting an Action Plan to guide your work over the coming 3-5 years. Step 3 comprises of six action steps:

- Determine desired results
- Undertake a Theory of Change planning process
- Determine program/services to be offered
- Determine capacity to deliver programs/services
- Determine how to evaluate actions and results
- Develop an action plan

Now that you have **explored** (step 1) and **initiated** (step 2) it is time to be SMART about what a CLC School will do to meet the two or three long-term outcomes it wants to achieve through school-community partnerships.

Examples of CLC School long-term outcomes include:

- Students make healthy food choices
- Students feel a sense of belonging in community
- Students have access to recreation and physical activities in their community, in English
- Community members feel welcome in school

Once it is clear what you want to achieve, a CLC leadership team needs to go through a planning process to know how to get there. Each school and community is unique and evolving, so effort must be taken to develop a tailor made plan.

In the education context, teachers plan using a back-mapping exercise to decide what lessons and learning situations they will take the class through. **Start with the end in mind and then work backwards**, putting in place scaffolds that will provide the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for students to be successful on an exam or amazing community service-learning project.

Step 3 in the CLC framework, asks the CLC leadership teams do something similar, but instead of a lesson plan book, we use something called the **Theory of Change**. A Roadmap to Change - Developing Your ToC can be found on the CLC Network Resource website.

3.1 Determine Desired Results

The Mission Statement, adopted in Step 2 outlined the results areas that should direct the work of the CLC. In step 3, you 'pinpoint' your destination on a map, and figure out how you're going to get there as opposed to saying: 'We are going that-a-way.'

> A goal without a plan is just a wish.
>
> -Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

'Making the vision concrete' is the first operational task in making the shift from the results areas articulated in the mission statement to a set of results that are SMART. When we take the time to get SMART, we shift from the why to the how.

SMART

Specific - state precisely what is being sought;

Measurable - so we can see if they are achieved;

Achievable - success is realistic;

Relevant; - to client/organizational needs; and

Time bound - we can establish a deadline.

In other words, SMART outcomes.

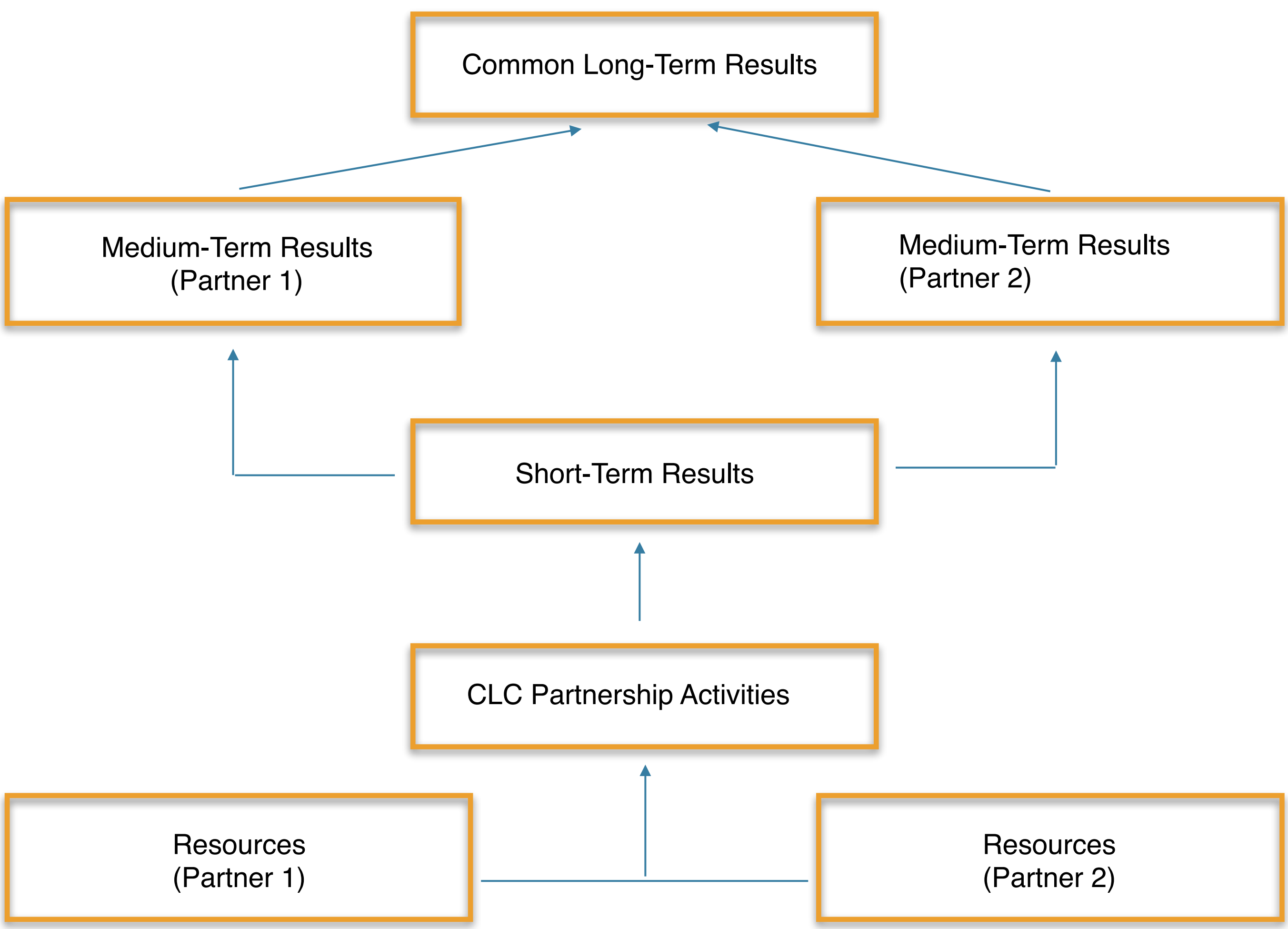
The graphic illustration below shows what a ToC can look like. Behind each outcome and precondition are the SMART details.

BE SMART WITH PARTNERS

CLC Schools are all about mutually beneficial school-community partnerships. The best partnerships are win-win. For example, a CLC school and literacy organization likely have some overlapping goals, it is not a stretch to imagine specific ways they can work together to foster a love of reading in the school and community. Be SMART with a partner, talk about mutually beneficial outcomes and specific ways to move the needle towards making the dream a reality. To be clear, working together does not mean doing everything together, rather recognize how one organizations activity mutually reinforces knowledge and skills.

Explore literature on building school-community partnerships through the Coalition of Community Schools website.

The following graphic illustrates the scenario where two partners discover common outcomes served by separate but complementary preconditions, both of which can be served by short term preconditions from common activities, thereby justifying a mutual investment of resources.



Glossary of ToC Terms

Source: [Actknokwledge, Centre for Theory of Change]

A theory of change (ToC) defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks — interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions — is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process.

Backwards Mapping: The process of beginning with your long-term goal and working "backwards" toward the earliest changes that need to occur. This is the opposite of how we usually think about planning, because it starts with asking "what preconditions must exists for the long-term outcome to be reached?" rather than starting with the question: "What can we do to bring the outcome about?" a questions that comes later.

Long-Term Outcome: The goal you want to reach which is the purpose of your program; for example, academic achievement for youth, or employment for a certain group. All other outcomes on your framework are preconditions to this outcome.

Outcome: An outcome is a state, or condition, that must exist for your initiative to work and does not currently exist. An outcome may represent a change in a group of people, organizations, or places. They are the building blocks of your ToC**.** Except for the long-term outcome, all outcomes on your change framework are also preconditions which are necessary for other **outcomes.**

Precondition: All outcomes, except the long-term outcome, are also preconditions. They are conditions that must exist in order for the next outcome in the pathway to be achieved. Think of them as precursors because they must be achieved before the next outcome in the pathway, and as requirements for the accomplishment of the next outcome.

Assumption: Conditions or resources that your group believes are needed for the success of your program, and that you believe already exist and will not be problematic. An assumption like a precondition is a condition that is necessary for your program's success. Unlike a precondition, it already is in place and does not need to be brought about. When your group states your assumptions, it is a good time to take into account the various conditions that your program's success will rely on. Assumptions are crucial because if they are incorrect it can completely alter how your program works.

Indicator: Measurable evidence of meeting a goal. Indicators are visible signs, (e.g. reading scores, attendance) that demonstrate that the outcomes are achieved. Often, indicators can be counted (quantitative), but sometimes evidence will be something more descriptive (qualitative). Each indicator needs to have four components: population, target, threshold and timeline. These answer the questions: Who or what is to reach this goal? (population) How many of that group do we need to have reach the goal? (target) What level needs to reached — how good is good enough?) (threshold) By when does this goal need to be reached? (timeline).

Intervention: The things your program or group of stakeholders will undertake to bring about outcomes. Sometimes people use the term strategy or activity. We use strategy to describe the overall focus of the initiative, and activity to describe all the specific actions that make up an intervention. So, for example, an intervention might be "hold literacy classes" and the various activities needed to make that happen would be things like identifying space and teachers, choosing a curriculum, screening students, etc. We indicate where an intervention is needed to bring about an outcome with a dashed arrow leading from one outcome to another.

3.2 The Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) is a popular **planning method** for organizations to bring about **complex change** (go ahead, google it). A great resource you would be **ActKnowledge**, they are the leader in the development of Theory of Change.

A ToC is the foundation of **an outcomes-based process** that drives an initiative or organization. It allows you to be accountable for your results in a way that makes sense to you.

As the name implies, it is **your CLC theory of how desired change will happen**. A ToC is an organization's story of how and why the school and their communities will be different because of the work the CLC School and partners are doing. However, developing a ToC is not a solitary endeavour. Ensuring group involvement in developing a ToC is important because you will work together to **create a common vision** of the long-term goals, the support required by all participants and what will be used to **measure progress** along the way. The process of creating your ToC can help all involved "get on the same page".

A ToC is a visual representation of the '**building blocks**' required to bring about your long-term goal. This set of causally linked building blocks — interchangeably referred to as outcomes, or preconditions — is depicted on a map known as a **causal pathway** or an **outcomes framework**. It is a graphic representation of what participants in the process believe needs to happen to achieve the long-term outcome.

Why a Theory of Change?

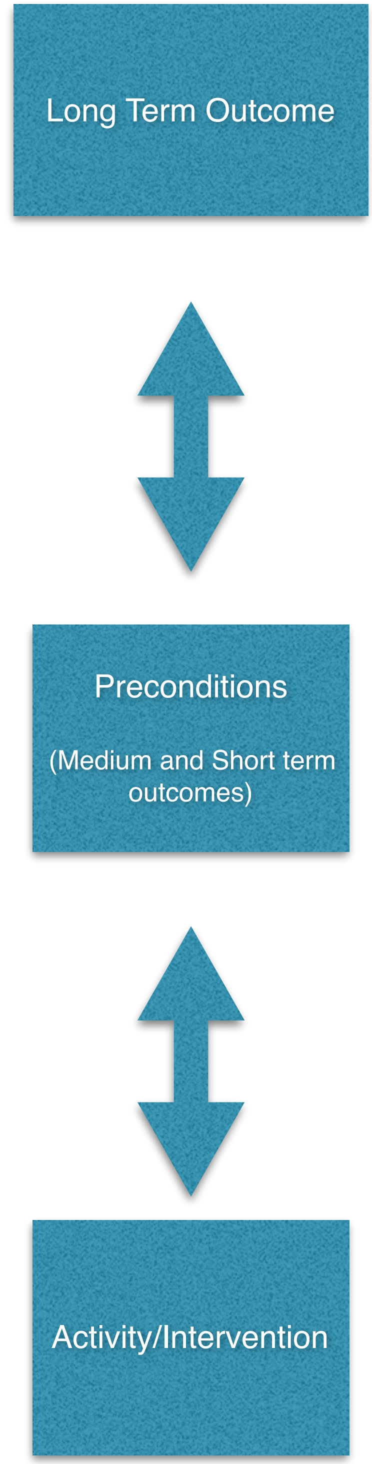
Each outcome in the causal pathway is tied to an intervention, revealing the complex web of activity needed to bring about change. Because a ToC provides a clear and testable hypothesis about how change will occur and what it will look like, it allows for accountability in the work process. As a roadmap, a ToC identifies measurable indicators of success and keeps the process of implementation and evaluation transparent, so everyone knows what is happening and why.

To put this ToC talk simply, when you get the plan out of your head, put it on paper and show it to all the relevant stakeholders a few things will likely happen. First, people will know what to expect over the next year or three. They will tell you what they think (give you feedback). Second, stakeholders (teachers, families, community partners etc.) will be able to make their own connections because they know the plan. Third, accountability is good. It's a chance to do what you say you're going to do, and if you need to change the plan, you can show where and why.

Stakeholders value theories of change as part of program planning and evaluation because they create a commonly understood vision of the longterm goals, how they will be reached, and what will be used to measure progress along the way.

Back mapping

Back mapping is a key strategy in change theory. It asks planners to think in backward steps from the long-term outcome to preconditions to the activities/interventions that would be required to cause the desired change. In other words, once you establish your destination, you follow the trail from this end point back to your current position. The purpose of this strategy is to avoid starting out on paths that may not lead to your destination.



Developing long-term outcomes, outcome frameworks and pathways

An outcome statement is a **clear, concise statement** of the outcome. Outcomes are normally **stated in the present tense with an active voice**, e.g., "*All families have access to recreational activities in English*." The outcome statement is what appears in boxes on the graphic outcomes framework.

Take care to **avoid compound outcomes**—for instance, if you say "All families will have access to recreational activities and life long learning activities," you will have mixed together two distinct outcomes which should each have its own pathway of change.

As a general rule, outcome statements should **avoid relative quantifiers**, such as more, most, greater, higher. Instead, write "All families have…" or "Families have…" The appropriate place to define realistic quantities is in the outcome definition and/or in indicators. While the **outcome statement is brief**, the outcome definition allows you the space to fully explain the outcome.

ToC is built by a process of "**drilling down**" the pathway of change **from longer-term outcomes to medium-term and short-term outcomes**. Medium and short-term outcomes on the pathway are preconditions to the long-term outcome.

Beginning with the **long-term outcome**, we ask ourselves:

- "What are the necessary preconditions to achieving that outcome?"
- "Are the preconditions we have identified sufficient?"

Answers to these two questions will produce the next row of outcomes along the pathway.

Preconditions

A **precondition** is a condition necessary for a program to succeed. You need to identify the preconditions (medium and shorter term outcomes) necessary to achieve your Long-term Outcome. Ask yourself: What outcomes need to be achieved in the medium-term for you to achieve your long-term outcomes?

Let's use a silly example:

If you want to go to the Carnaval de Québec (**long-term outcome**). A lot of knowledge, skills, attitudes need to be put in place to make a road trip successful, but it is all achievable. A few very key things (**preconditions**) need to be in place BEFORE we can go to the Carnaval. You need:

- a drivers license (if driving to Quebec)
- money to pay for the car, gas (not to mention some money to buy tire d'érable sur neige)
- to speak enough French so you can talk to Bonhomme Carnaval

If you continue to drill-down, you need to determine what preconditions are necessary to:

- get a drivers license
- make some money to pay for car/gas/etc..
- you have acquired capacity to speak some French to Bonhomme Carnaval

Then continue to ask 'Why' and 'How' questions to elicit **rationales** and **assumptions** and record them.

- What tells you that this is needed?
- What data do you have?
- What would indicate that you're making a difference?

State your Rationale

Rationales explain the logic behind each causal relationship on the pathway. To put it simply, the rationale explains why making a precondition happen will enable a longer-term outcome to be achieved.

Making Assumptions

In ToC, assumptions are the conditions that your group believes are needed for the success of your program—conditions that already exist and will not be problematic. In other words, the conditions you take for granted. An assumption, like a precondition, is a condition that is necessary for your program's success. Unlike a precondition, it already is in place and does not need to be brought about. A common false assumption for many rural schools includes after-school transportation will be available for students who want to participate in a homework help program. If the assumption is not right, what precondition needs to be put in place to make it right? In the case of the rural school in question, they arranged a late bus to allow targeted students to participate in after-school programs.

A further and more sensitive assumption might be, all parents want their children to go on to post-secondary education. In rural communities, going to post-secondary would mean youth leaving the community for years and potentially not having appropriate skills for available jobs if and when they return. Without making judgments, it is worth acknowledging the complexity of life and recognizing that implicit and explicit assumptions are not the same in a community.

It is worth taking the time to bring to the surface often-implicit assumptions in a group setting to reveal the different assumptions people around the table hold. For example, what assumptions are we making about parents? Bringing assumptions to the surface and developing a consensus on which assumptions are workable is a critically important foundation for constructing an achievable Theory of Change.

Narrative

After all the preconditions in the framework have been identified, facilitators should tell the story of the outcome pathway, this is also called the narrative. Telling a story is a great way to review the logic with the group to capture any gaps in rationales that did not come out during the pathway development process.

3.3 Determine Programs and Services to be Offered

Interventions are what your initiative or group of stakeholders will undertake to bring about outcomes, what you will do to achieve your outcomes.

Choosing your Interventions

Think critically about how strategies, programs and activities you are already doing are contributing to your outcomes – would you be able to achieve the same outcome more efficiently or effectively with other interventions?

- **Strategies** – i.e. for communication
- **Activities-** specific actions that you will undertake or make possible for others to do
- **Programs** – longer-term offerings that may include multiple activities

People trying to make change in the world tend to think first of interventions—that is, of what they're going to do rather than of the long term outcomes they want to achieve.

STOP! Don't rush to thinking up interventions and activities before confirming you know where you are going and you have what it takes to get there. Rushing to action, and getting to do something concrete might feel good but activity for the sake of activity becomes busy work and not a targeted action that leads to a desired result. It is ultimately a poor use of time, energy and resources.

Example:

Your outcome is "Students make healthy food choices". You might immediately suggest an after-school cooking class but after some reflection, you realize the class will not necessarily get you where you want to go for the following possible reasons:

- the 5 students that expressed a need for the program already eat healthy - the need may be a more general interest in an extra curricular activity.
- participants will have no transportation home after the activity because their bus leaves at 3:30 and the activity finishes at 5:00.
- you need to pay the chef/course facilitator and buy food. Do you have funding? Does a grant exist?
- the CLC School does not have a kitchen
- the class has a capacity of 15 students, most students will not impacted by the activity

An after-school cooking club is a good intervention, but is it the best intervention given the outcome you want to achieve? Don't get discouraged, but be sure to think through the intervention before sending out flyers advertising the class.

ToC is a process that prompts us to reverse the order of planning by **starting with the end in mind**. It asks us to be explicit about our desired outcomes and then choose the interventions that seem to us most effective and strategic in producing the outcomes on our theory.

In the real world, most organizations and schools are already doing things, and so the task of including pre-existing interventions within a ToC is a chance to reconfirm it is the right activity in light of the pathway of change. ToC should prove very helpful in making decisions about which courses of action to follow and which actions we should re-evaluate and/or discontinue.

Interventions

"Intervention" includes what is meant by "strategy" or "activity". A strategy may be a coordinated sequence of interventions to bring about outcomes. Strategy and intervention both refer to the sphere of acting in the world to create change. Many partners already have well thought out strategies that are evidenced based. In the spirit of mutually beneficial partnerships, work with a partner to integrate a strategy among your community.

For example, the CHSSN Action Framework or the Breakfast Club of Canada have extensive planning resources and funding to achieve goals that align with common CLC School outcomes.

The Coalition of Community Schools produced a document called **Strengthening Partnerships: A Community School Assessment Checklist**.

The detailed ToC should include interventions mapped onto the outcomes framework. Most interventions appear in the lower levels of the outcomes framework because work is needed to produce the foundational outcomes. Longer-term outcomes can fall into place without specific interventions if their necessary and sufficient preconditions have been achieved.

ActKnowledge's Centre for Theory of Change offers examples of ToCs. **Click here** to see an example of a TOC on school readiness.

Choosing the Right Intervention

A SWOT analysis is a common organizational tool for choosing appropriate interventions. SWOT stands for **Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat** - it is slightly more sophisticated than an old fashioned pro and con list.

Innoweave offers two SWOT analysis tools to understand where you are and where you might go. Use this tool to understand the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for a particular project or organization, so that you can choose the clearest path to achieving your goal. They offer two versions of this micro-tool:

1. A **generic version** for SWOT analysis.
2. A version for **Constructive Engagement** plans.

Strength	**Opportunities**
Weakness	**Threats**

The 'Why' Game

When a ToC team is sitting around the table working on interventions, a useful (but slightly annoying) game to play is '**The Why Game**'. The Why game is simply asking why you are doing something, getting a response and then asking why? again. **Ask the why question seven times**. This should help ensure an intervention will lead to your long term outcome.

For example, let's say there is a need to facilitate the transition from elementary to secondary school. Play the Why Game.

- Why do we want a better transition? Because we want more students to be successful in secondary school?
- Why do we want students to be successful in secondary school? Because we want more students to get a diploma.
- Why do we want more students to graduate with a diploma? Because students who graduate with a diploma have a better chance of finding work in their desired field and have better health.
- Why do we…
- Why? Why? Why? Why?

3.4 Determine Capacity to Deliver Services

You've worked hard to figure out the preconditions and interventions that will achieve your long term outcome but a bit more work is necessary to ensure your plan can become a successful reality. Part of good planning is ensuring capacity exists to achieve your outcomes. Doing things fast is great, but don't set yourself up for failure. If what it takes to make a precondition happen does not exist, then put appropriate building blocks in place. I don't know if you've heard - but Rome wasn't built in a day.

Monitoring System

An essential part of knowing how an intervention or activity is going, is having an appropriate monitoring system in place. A good monitoring system can let you know how things are going in regular intervals, and not wait a year to realize that certain capacities are lacking and gaps exist.

> How will you track progress? Indicators let us know that change is (or is not) taking place. What measurable outcomes will we look for?

A gas gauge is a monitoring system in your car. We don't wait until we run out of gas and stranded on the side of the road to look for a gas station.

Developing indicators to measure progress

In Theory of Change, we use indicators to track progress on outcomes. Indicators are said to work in service on outcomes by identifying and collecting data that can verify whether and how much you are moving the needle on the outcome towards success. An indicator is measurable evidence of success.

MONITORING: An ongoing process to ensure that planned activities or processes (including resources) are 'on track' and that progress is being made toward intended results.

How will you track progress? Indicators let us know that change is (or is not) taking place. What measurable outcomes should you look for? To find the right indicator ask yourself: what does it look like if the outcome is met?

QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

For many outcomes, the indicator is a quantitative measure.
For example:

- attendance
- test scores
- membership levels
- rates of participation

Identify **INDICATORS** for each outcome you want to address.

Example 1:

- **Outcome**: Children enter primary school ready to learn in English and French
- **Precondition**: Parents in community have access to Bilingual Early Childhood programs
- **Indicator**: Proportion of parents of young children in English Speaking Community that participate in a Early Childhood program.

The indicator you choose should reflect the concept or idea that will determine success – how that concept will be measured should only be asked after you have determined the indicator.

Example 2:

An identified **outcome** is: '*Students will graduate from grade school academically ready for secondary school.*' [31] An appropriate **indicator** is: 6th grade reading scores.

[31] This example is inspired by ActKnowledge presentation 'Fundamentals of Theory of Change', June 5, 2013

Once an indicator is identified, it is the moment to be specific by asking **what must be determined for each indicator**? In this case:

- Who will be impacted? (sixth graders in your CLC school)
- How many will change? (the lowest 30%)
- How much will it change? (improve reading scores by 25%)
- When will it change by? (by December 2020)

Indicator: 30% of the grade 6 students scoring below 60% on their reading score will improve by 25% by 2020

After an annual reading assessment in each grade, time is taken to monitor the results. Annual monitoring of reading scores in every grade will indicate if the various interventions to improve the lowest 30% of grade 6 students scores by 25% is on track to happen by December 2020. If after an appropriate amount of time you see the intervention is not working, it is ok to ask why? Does capacity need to built? Is the intervention hitting the mark?

QUALITATIVE INDICATORS

Some outcomes cannot be captured through quantitative measures. For outcomes pertaining to what people know, value, believe or the behaviour of people and institutions, you need to find one or more measures that indicate the condition of a phenomenon or the direction it is taking.

If an outcome is: students make healthy food choices, how can we know if the various interventions are making a difference? We could stand outside a local dépanneur and count the number of students leaving with a chocolate bar for lunch, but that seems hard and inefficient. More appropriate ways to get indicators can include: surveys, interviews, or focus groups. These tools gather data on beliefs and attitudes which can offer evidence (indicate) whether an outcome is on the way to being achieved.

Changes in behaviour can be indicated by observation using tools like a checklist and/or by observing conditions that result from changed behaviour. For example, one can observe healthier lunches or less french fries being consumed in the cafeteria.

Examples of indicators from the Coalition of Community Schools - “Students Succeeding at School and in Life”.

SHARED MEASUREMENT

It is a good practice to develop multiple indicators that provide a reasonable measure of performance that will be accepted by stakeholders, and can be produced within the CLC context. Don't choose an indicator if the capacity does not exist to collect the appropriate data.

The concept of Collective Impact highlights the importance of collaboration to achieve common outcomes. What information can the school board provide? What information can the local Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) or Community Health and Social Services (CHSSN)-NPI share? What specific indicators can you share to help know whether an intervention is moving the needle on a specific precondition or outcome?

Read more about shared measurement to achieve common outcomes in the context of volunteer organizations.

Each indicator should be able to answer the following questions:

- What?
- For Whom?
- How Many?
- How Good?
- By When?

PRODUCING THE INDICATORS

Selecting the right indicators for each outcome or precondition requires determining the appropriate sources and methods of data collection and analysis for each indicator selected. While the CLC Community Development Agent (CDA) may do the initial work around identifying appropriate indicators, this is an opportunity to tap into local expertise among your stakeholders. School Principals, School Board representatives and local community organizations also work with indicators and data. Start a conversation about collective impact and shared measurement - there is growing literature and support for this community and school improvement strategy. Be sure to look at existing CLC resources on indicators and evaluation on the **CLC Network Resource** website.

- How will you "measure" the indicators?
- What measurement tool to use?
- When to measure?
- Who will do the measuring?

Developing indicators requires:

- selecting appropriate sources of data;
- adopting, adapting or creating instruments to collect data;
- ensuring that ethical guidelines for data collection are respected;
- developing methodologies to analyze the data that will be collected.

At this planning stage, it is not necessary to create the instruments or develop the methodologies to be used. All of these challenges are dealt with in detail in Step 5. The aim at this stage is simply to ensure that:

- appropriate sources of data are available;
- appropriate instruments exist or can be developed;
- you have or can acquire the capacity to collect and analyze the data envisaged.

The notion of organizational capacity simply refers to what it takes in order to do well. The CLC's capacity to perform is comparable to an athlete's capacity to successfully complete a race or a student's capacity to learn. Most work happens in the background to ensure a reasonable expectation of success. Part of the role of a CLC Community Development Agent is to ensure the people, resources and plans exist to ensure targeted actions, and the actions contribute to desired change.

The performance of any CLC will ultimately be judged on the basis of how well it delivers services and achieves intended results. However, organizations, like people, cannot perform unless they have capacity - 'what it takes' - to do well. Capacity provides the 'building blocks' of performance, while capacity building determines which blocks are important, how they should fit together and then assembles them.

- **Organizational capacity** (also called pre-conditions): the resources, systems and other capabilities of an organization that enable it to attain and sustain high levels of performance in accordance with the expectations of its stakeholders.
- **Organizational capacity development:** a continuing process by which an organization increases its capabilities to perform.

The lack of capacity is the most important reason why innovations fail and, more particularly, why they are not sustained. Capacity is of obvious importance to a CLC, as the reason for its creation is to share the capacity of its partners so that together they can produce results that none of its partners could achieve on their own.

Paying attention to capacity building from the start is perhaps the most important thing a new CLC can do to ensure its sustainability over time.

Capacity development and the enhanced capacity it creates can be viewed as the last links in the results chain. In this step, one back maps from the services that will produce desired results to the capacities required to deliver these services and, if necessary, to the actions required to build these capacities.

A CLC inherits some of the capacities of its partner organizations but it may not have all the capacities it needs, especially as a new organization. An important planning task, therefore, is to determine which pre-conditions are required and how they should be assembled to best meet its needs in its context.

Pre-conditions come in all sorts of tangible shapes - for example, facilities and equipment - and intangible forms - for example, inter-personal relations and organizational culture. Capacity building is not something that can be completed as a start-up activity but is a long- term endeavour.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CAPACITY - WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO ENSURE SUCCESS?

- **Services:** capacity building could include the development of a suitable program if none was available. (material resources);
- **Actual delivery:** capacity building could include professional development for teachers (human resources); and
- **Surrounding conditions:** capacity building could include the development of links with community groups (external linkages) or changes in the way the teaching time was organized (management systems).

LEADERSHIP

The CLC Approach asks schools to work in a holistic way though school-community partnerships. In many cases, a school leadership team will need to explicitly explore literature around organizational change and reflect upon the capacities to be built as an organization to ensure preconditions can be achieved. The Coalition of Community Schools is a great place to read about organizational change in a community school context, including principal leadership, or having the capacity to talk about the next step of a CLC by looking at the evaluation toolkit.

Telling the story of your CLC Theory of Change - The Narrative

Your ToC is almost complete. One of the best ways to ensure clarity and logic is to tell a short and compelling, plain language story that explains your ToC map. What are the outcomes? What are the preconditions? Talk about assumptions being made and the capacity building that needs to be built. What are the indicators that will be in your monitoring plan?

It is a good practice to have different versions of your narrative, as you will encounter different stakeholders and want to emphasize different points, level of detail, etc. The organization **ActKnowledge** worked with an organization to develop a ToC for **Project Superwoman**. Have a look at their narrative towards the end of the document.

3.5 Determine Means To Evaluate Actions & Results

You've come far. Now is the time to look three years down the line.

This step of the planning phase asks you to look ahead and be aware of the specifics that go along with an evaluation of the actions and results foreseen for the CLC.

Take the time to look at the CLC Evaluation Framework as set out in Step 5 and the CLC Evaluation Report Template (which can be found on the **CLC Network Resources** website. It provides you with a clear expectation of the kind of data you will need the capacity to collect and make sense of. If an appropriate amount of planning ahead takes place, the evaluation report will not be an onerous task, but rather an opportunity to share results and learn from the TOC process that informed the actions of the CLC School. The Coalition of Community Schools also offers a variety of resources in the **Community School Evaluation Toolkit**.

The Provincial Resource Team recommends that each CLC conducts a **self-evaluation every three years**. A self-evaluation is an approach in which the organization takes primary responsibility for evaluating its own performance, as defined previously in Step 2.2. This approach is consistent with both Québec's public service management framework and the school-centred reform of education. A self-evaluation is an important moment to take a look at the ToC as it was developed, and investigate specific questions the CLC stakeholders would like answered. The questions might include an assessment of progress towards the outcomes, or answer questions about the efficacy of the pathways developed. An evaluation will conclude with findings based upon data and evidence and offer an opportunity for recommendations to be integrated in a revised theory of change that will guide the next 3 years.

Evaluation is the systematic inquiry about the performance of an organization, in this case a CLC school, for the dual purpose of accountability and improvement.

Self-evaluation is a **participatory process** involving all major stakeholders. Like the overall process described in the Framework, it begins with planning, the focus of this Step (3.4), then proceeds to the actual conduct of the evaluation (Step 5), which ends with 'feedback loops' that set the stage for the next cycle of planning and service delivery.

Setting the Direction

Mindful of keeping the evaluation manageable, the CLC has evaluation resources to help plan and narrow down the scope of a site-level evaluation by a CLC to key areas of performance. The self imposed limitation of scope does not ignore the importance of more in-depth or specialized evaluations; it merely assumes that they will be a shared responsibility of the CLC, its partners, local and regional agencies or relevant government ministries, according to the nature and purpose of these evaluations.

If the evaluation is to have credibility, the plan should outline the ethical and other standards it will respect. Any evaluation needs to be trustworthy; if stakeholders do not have faith that it paints a complete and accurate picture of whatever is being evaluated, they will ignore its findings. If this happens, all the investment of time and energy may be for nothing.

The ethical guidelines should deal with a number of issues including:

- privacy and confidentiality regarding 'raw' data
- informed consent for participants;
- accuracy and honesty of analysis and reporting

Deciding What Will Be Evaluated

Step 5 of the framework is all about evaluation. Be sure to read it so you can plan for the evaluation stage.

In brief, most evaluations of organizational performance in the CLC context focus on three main questions:

1. Building organizational capacity to provide services, to
2. Delivering the services to students and the community, and
3. Achieving intended results (outcomes and preconditions).

In order to focus the evaluation on the most important aspects of performance, the CLC must decide precisely which aspects will be evaluated. Once a CLC has decided what is to be evaluated, it must then ask itself: How do we measure performance in relation to each object? This question will be answered in step 5.

3.6 Complete Your Theory of Change with an Action Plan

We've come far. Through the ToC process you have determined where you want to go, how you are going to get there and ways to let you know if you are going in the right direction. Your ToC is an endeavour that will roll out over 3-5 years.

It is essential to **develop an action plan to guide the work** that will happen each year. What chunk of the ToC will you tackle to take into account a logical progression to get from A to B taking into account time, resources and capacity. Haven't you heard, "Rome was not built in a day".

The key to an action plan is the specificity of **who will do what, when, with which resources**. Review the link provided to read more about developing an action plan.

In brief, the organization **Community Tool Box** states that an action plan should answer the following questions pertaining to work unfolding over a one year period;

- What actions or changes will occur?
- Who will carry out these changes?
- By when they will take place, and for how long?
- What resources (i.e., money, staff) are needed to carry out these changes?
- Communications - who should know what?

The Community Tool Box goes on to offer criteria for an action plan. Is the action plan:

- ***Complete***? Does it list all the action steps or changes to be sought in all relevant parts of the community (e.g., schools, business, government, faith community)?
- ***Clear***? Is it apparent who will do what by when?
- ***Current***? Does the action plan reflect the current work? Does it anticipate newly emerging opportunities and barriers?

Follow this link to access a tool to guide the action plan process.

This final step consolidates and review all aspects of the TOC and forces you to decide what will be implemented in chunks. It will be the chance to implement strategies to achieve specific preconditions that lead to a long term outcome.

The action plan step is the moment to take into account each partner's annual planning and action plan. Ensure there is alignment in timing and expectations as to when something will be started and completed.

Once the plan has been reviewed, it needs to be approved in accordance with any relevant parameters of the Partnership Agreement. Sign a partnership agreement, if the actual signing of the partnership agreement (Step 2.5) was deferred until the action plan was completed.

STEP 4 - IMPLEMENT

The purpose of this step is to implement the action plan developed in Step 3. By the end of this step, you should expect to have services to students and community in place, and be providing some capacity-building activities.

Step 4 is comprised of three action steps:

- Allocate resources and begin service delivery
- Allocate resources and conduct capacity building
- Develop and execute a plan to monitor service delivery and capacity building

In this step, you will enter the first link of the results chain, by undertaking the activities that have been designed to produce the short-term results set for the CLC school.

4.1 Allocate Resources and Begin Service Delivery

This step is, in theory, quite straightforward: do what the Action Plan says should be done and allocate the resources needed for each program/service outlined in the plan.

In practice however, this step may prove to be more difficult and some 'readjusting' of the Action Plan may be required.

This is also the point in which the strengths and weaknesses of the initiation and planning steps come to light. If a solid, viable partnership structure has been created, with appropriate roles and responsibilities assigned, supported by adequate resources; if realistic results have been operationally defined, with programs and other services designed to achieve these results, and proper attention has been paid to capacity building (see Step 4.2 below), then this step ***should*** unfold easily and smoothly.

If, on the other hand, there are serious flaws in the partnership structure, if the assignment of roles and responsibilities has been muddled, or lacking in appropriate support; if results are not realistic or have not been operationally defined, with a weak match between programs and other services and these results, and if little attention has been paid to capacity building, then this step *will not easily and smoothly.*

In all likelihood, the reality will be between these two extremes. A reasonable partnership structure will likely have been created. Appropriate roles and responsibilities will have been assigned, but some details may still need to be worked out (e.g. matching roles of the various stakeholders). Resources will have been provided, but more will always be needed. The results will probably be realistic, though they are less likely to have been operationally defined. The design of programs and other services will have assumed that they will achieve intended results but it is quite possible that all relevant factors will not have been considered. Finally, it is likely some attention will have been paid to capacity building but key elements may have been sacrificed in allocating scarce resources.

The reaction of any ***inexperienced*** CDA to the foregoing is likely to be: Help! While reaction of any ***experienced*** CDA is likely to be: So? That's the way it is. That's what it means to manage a program, to keep it on track toward desired results. To do this requires a timely response to problems as they emerge, and that is a function of monitoring (step 4.3).

4.2 Allocate Resources and Conduct Capacity Building

Service delivery requires capacity and it is possible that some capacity building activities may need to occur ***before*** some aspects of service delivery are undertaken. Others may take place at the same time or at a later date as circumstances warrant. The key point is that **capacity development** should not be neglected and put off.

Capacity building is an **ongoing process** that cannot be accomplished by 'one-off' activities and it is essential feature of program management. A CLC school cannot aspire to become a learning community without it.

Capacity Building is much more than training and includes the following:

- **Human resource development**: equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.
- **Organizational development:** the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within the organization but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors.[32]

In theory, at this point you simply have to implement what the action plan has laid out in terms of capacity development. However in practice, this may not be that simple. There is even some reason to suggest that the action plan may contain shortcomings:

- first because the CDA is likely to have less experience with capacity development than with service delivery; and
- second, there will be greater pressure on the CDA to focus on services/activities for students and community members, etc., leaving capacity development for tomorrow, tomorrow and ….

There is also a danger when pressures are high and time and resources are limited, to go with 'time honoured' practices, the same ones you have relied on time and time again, whether they work or not.

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32 http://www.gdrc.org/uem/capacity-define.html

In terms of capacity development, the 'time honoured' tendency will likely mean a focus on professional development. This is not an inappropriate focus, but it may mean that the holistic approach to capacity development stressed earlier will go by the wayside.

Assuming that holistic capacity development is something new for members of the CLC team and other stakeholders, this approach involves the following:

- **Engagement**: the ability to recognize an issue or situation that has no clear definition, let alone an obvious solution; and the capacity to engage others in understanding the issue or situation and discovering a solution together.
- **Systems Thinking**: the ability to see the hidden dynamics of complex situations - to think outside the box.
- **Leading Learning**: the quality of leadership that models and encourages in others a 'learner-centred' as opposed to an 'authority-centred' approach to problem solving.
- **Self-Awareness**: knowing the impact the leader is having on people and the system and how that impact has changed over time.

4.3 Monitor Service Delivery and Capacity Building

In this third step of the delivery phase, the overarching leadership operational challenge is to implement the plan for monitoring your service delivery and capacity building activities.

Monitoring needs to be simple to be effective. Assuming that the monitoring system envisaged in the action plan has followed the advice provided earlier, then the CDA may proceed to implement the plan as summarized below.

✦ Start by ensuring that the monitoring system has that procedures have been devised and preferably tested prior to implementation to ensure their feasibility. Are the forms user friendly? Do they provide all data required, while excluding any that are not required? The fastest way to discourage participation in monitoring is to collect data that serves no purpose.

✦ Ensure you communicate how the monitoring system works and why you need it to all staff members/volunteers concerned, emphasizing the importance of monitoring to achieve the desired results. This is an opportunity to receive feedback from them, especially if it was not pilot tested.

✦ After making any revisions required, the CDA must then ensure that data about resources, activities and results are collected in accordance with the frequency foreseen in the plan. It is up to you to follow up with your staff members/volunteers. They may forget to collect data, you must not.

✦ The CDA should review this data on a regular basis. Prevention and early intervention are key to effective monitoring.

✦ Lastly, the CDA must do something with the data collected. The most common failing of monitoring systems, aside from being too cumbersome, is that no one does anything with the information they provide.

The aim of data collection is to help the CLC team see if program services are on track and, if not, to make appropriate and timely adjustments.

There are a number of resources available to CDAs to help them monitor their programs and services. Two are of particular interest for you and can be found on the CLC Network Resource website. Should you encounter the need to enter a password on the resource website, it will ALWAYs be: ***community***.

- Online Monitoring Tool - the monthly web journal reporting tool
- Grant Tracking tool

The Activity and Youth Monitoring report is another online tool available to you. With this data base, you will be able to consolidate all your information from year to year, produce financial statements and keep track of students attendance and behaviour. It is available on the CLC website however you will need a password to access the tool. Please send an email to your PRT representative to acquire the necessary log-in information. *NOTE: This tool is best to use to track students taking part in CLC activities and in schools with smaller student populations.*

STEP 5 - EVALUATE

The purpose of this step is to evaluate the performance of the CLC in relation to the results, actions and conditions foreseen in the Theory of Change plan developed in Step 3. Evaluation provides "the reflective link between the dream of what should be and the reality of what is[33]." By the end of this step, you should expect to have achieved the following results:

- Relevant data has been collected and analyzed; lessons are learned and feedback loops constructed
- Evaluation Reports have been created (accountability to stakeholders and data for improvement and course-correction)
- Changes to CLC purpose, ways, and means, as required; ready for next cycle of planning

Step 5 is comprised of three steps.

5.1: Collect the Data

5.2: Analyze the Data

5.3: Report to Stakeholders

It is the culmination of one planning cycle and the harbinger of the next, generating reflections on past experience and lessons learned for the future. In operational terms, its path is largely predetermined by the evaluation component of the Action Plan (Step 3.5) which established, among other aspects:

- the standards of ethics to be followed;
- what would be measured and how

Contrary to what some might expect, evaluation does not occur only at the end of the year (or other evaluation period) but during the year as well, when much of the data gathering happens.

ADDITIONAL EVALUATION RESOURCES:

CLC Resource website page on planning

Innoweave's Developing a User Profile

Tamarack Institute: **Children, Youth and Families: Education and Research Network**

[33] Government of Saskatchewan, 1997a, p. 2.

5.1 Collect the Data

This step is all about ***data*** - *bits* of information - that a CLC transforms into knowledge about its performance, enabling it, by the end of the evaluation process, to 'tell its story' to stakeholders. Like any good story, it must make sense to the reader and it must be complete. This step begins to build this story by assembling good data that will create a whole picture related to the short, medium, and long-term outcomes of the CLC's plan.

This step of the evaluation process consists of the following sub-steps:

- Choose an evaluation focus
- Revisit and update the indicators chosen in step 3.5
- Identify and review existing data sources
- Determine what additional data is needed and the appropriate methods to collect it.

Record: "any written or recorded statement prepared by or for an individual or organization for the purpose of attesting to an event or providing an accounting."

Document: any written or recorded material that is not a record nor a product of the evaluation.

Artifact: any human-made product or 'trace evidence' of human activity, other than a document or record.

Choosing an Evaluation Focus

The documents on the CLC Resource Site on Evaluation can help you choose a focus and plan. The key points are that **you cannot evaluate everything**, but what you choose to evaluate should be linked to your Theory of Change:

- What major programs or initiatives did you introduce?
- Which results areas have you focused on?

Revisiting Indicators

- Are your indicators outcome-specific?
- Are your indicators still relevant at this time?
- What is the change you're trying to see?
- What are you trying to learn?
- How can you leverage existing data sources and where are the gaps?

Each indicator should be able to answer the following questions:

- What?
- For Whom?
- How Many?
- How Good?
- By When?

Sources of Data

People are one of the most common sources of data, via direct or indirect contact. Data may also be found in 'records', such as a list of student marks or minutes of a meeting; 'documents', such as reports or photographs; and 'artifacts,' which can include a range of materials from photographs and emails to litter in the playground (see text box on following page).

EXISTING DATA SOURCES

Presumably you have been monitoring key indicators on a regular basis over the course of your CLC's development. Once you have a sense of what you are evaluating and what the indicators are, consider where you may look for existing data. Some suggestions include:

- CDA Journals/Online Monitoring Reports
- TTFM (Tell Them From Me) results
- School Board reports and publications
- PRT reports
- Feedback forms and written (or otherwise recorded) testimonials from program participants or partners
- Emails, photos, or artwork containing relevant data related to your indicators
- Facebook pages, social media
- School MESA (Management & Educational Success Agreement)

Most of the above should be easily accessible by accessing records and information you already have. In addition, at this stage you can speak to your school principal(s), teachers, and staff to find out if they have additional relevant data they are willing to share (note that in some cases this is a sensitive area and you may not be able to gain access to student records etc). Additionally, you can talk to partners about your evaluation focus and find out what data they can provide.

Data may already exist in a usable form (e.g., a summary record of parental attendance at school events) or may require some level of processing to be usable (e.g., raw data about parental attendance that must be compiled and summarized to be usable). When the data does not already exits, it may have to be gathered or generated by the evaluator (e.g., responses by parents on a questionnaire about attendance at school events).

TRIANGULATION

Where possible, you will be looking for complementary sources of data about a given object, a process known as *triangulation* (more in the practical implications of triangulation in the data analysis section). Like benchmarking, this term comes from surveying: **using two or more reference points** instead of just one to pinpoint a location.

- In evaluation, triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of data, methods, perspectives or evaluators to establish greater certainty, and thereby, greater credibility in the findings and the report.
- An example of triangulation could be data collected from parents, teachers and community using different sources of data, questionnaire, focus group and statistics; in other words several data sources that would validate your results
- Triangulation may also be used to identify discrepancies that either call into question a particular finding or bring to light different perspectives.

Types of Data

There are two major types of data:

- **Quantitative data**, that are numerical in nature, that is, information bits that can be counted; and
- **Qualitative data**, that are verbal or visual in nature, that is, information bits that cannot be counted.

These terms are often assigned false meanings, reflecting a rigidly dichotomous view that data are either *objective* and *hard*, unbiased, i.e. quantitative, or *subjective* and *soft*, biased i.e. qualitative.

In this Guidebook, we use **subjective** to refer to data emanating from one person's consciousness or perception (individual meaning); and **objective** to refer to data that are external or independent of individual perception (shared meaning).

Both quantitative and qualitative data can be either objective or subjective. For example:

- If respondents provide narrative comments about the warmth of the school climate, they are providing **subjective, qualitative** data.
- If they rate the warmth of the school climate on a numeric scale, they are providing **subjective, quantitative** data.

Subjective data will tend to provide different kinds of information than objective data but no type of data is inherently better or worse than another. One may be preferable to the other, depending on your information needs. Take, for example, the question:

EXAMPLE:

Does this school provide a safe environment for students and staff?

- **Objective data** might come from a check list of recognized safety features in a public building, a chronology of past incidents of accidents, violence, etc.
- **Subjective data** might come from the perceptions of stakeholders.

Objective data would provide useful information but alone would be insufficient if the subjective data revealed that people were afraid to be in the school after hours.

For the purposes of your evaluation, you will want to **collect both qualitative and quantitative data**. It is useful to think about data in terms of the extent to which they enable you to answer the question you have posed in ways that others will find meaningful and credible.

Identifying the Data

In Step 3.4, tentative sources of data were identified for each indicator. It would be useful at this point to revisit these and decide for each indicator whether these sources still seem appropriate. It may also be necessary to revisit the Action Plan (step 3.6).

Tip: Including different stakeholders in your data set ensures ***diversity of voice***. In addition, the more people you involve in the data collection phase, the more people will be invested in the outcome; people are much more likely to pay attention to an evaluation if they have been included as participants.

Since most data will likely come from people, you may find yourself asking questions such as:

- Do I need to send a questionnaire to all parents? Interview all teachers in the school?
- If not all, then how many, and how do I decide whom to include?
-

Answering these questions requires a brief discussion of when and how to collect data from a **sample** of the **target population**.

In general, your target population is going to be the total number of individuals in that category (i.e.: students, teachers, parents etc). While you certainly do not need responses from everyone for your data to be valid, a helpful approach is to invite input from everyone, knowing that only some will respond. Survey Monkey provides a **basic online** tool to help you calculate your desired sample size based up on your target population size.

In rare cases where you are seeking qualitative data from a large group, you may wish, from the beginning, to target a representative sample rather than the full population. In such cases, there are a number of important considerations, and we recommend you review the information on Target Population and Sampling found on the **CLC Network Resource website**.

However, in practice the number of respondents is often outside of your control. In most cases you will not be able to require participation from your target population and you will only be able to collect data from a sample, according to those who choose to respond to your request. It is nonetheless important to understand whether the responses are representative (for example, only 50 out of 300 parents responded to a survey, but they represent a roughly equal number from each of the neighbourhoods in the school's catchment area, or one neighbourhood had more respondents, but that neighbourhood represents a larger portion of your parent population).

This means that in designing your data collection tool, you want to be sure to capture demographic or other information that will help you know whether the responses you received are representative, while still respecting the respondents' anonymity. For example, with students you will likely want to know the respondent's grade, in order to know if trends vary by cycle or if they apply to the full student body.

The validity of data is affected by sampling; an unrepresentative sample cannot be used to draw valid generalizations about the target population. This doesn't mean this data isn't useful, but its limitations must be acknowledged in your report.

Evaluation Ethics

When planning your research methods, there are a number of ethical considerations. Before embarking on the evaluation journey, be sure to review the **Statement of Ethics** (on the **CLC Network Resource website)**. Below is a brief recap of key themes and ethical considerations.

Transparency: Any kind of school evaluation creates anxieties, especially for those stakeholders most affected, notably participants and staff. Thus it is critical to provide all relevant information to stakeholders, especially potential participants. Participants should receive a copy of the Ethics Statement and a written description of the evaluation; this should be short and written in accessible language suitable for its intended audience. However, you don't want to give the impression of hiding the true purpose or nature of the evaluation; evaluators should be prepared to answer any additional requests for information.

Informed Consent means the permission of an individual to participate in the evaluation and/or allow a third party to release information about himself or herself (in the case of a minor, consent may need to be obtained from the person's parent or guardian) Consent alone is not deemed to be sufficient unless the individual:

- has been adequately *informed* about the evaluation – its purpose, any risks involved, how any information obtained will be used, and so forth;
- agrees to participate *voluntarily* – that is without any coercion, subtle or otherwise; and
- has the right to *withdraw* his or her consent at any time

Consent raises three important issues mentioned above: privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, be sure not to confuse these terms in your consent forms or report.

Privacy : participant's control of other's access to him or herself and associated information, protection against giving or receiving information.

Confidentiality: control regarding what may or may not be done with information supplied by or about a participant.

Anonymity: control regarding whether or not a participant will be identified in any way in published reports or by other means.

In addition, bear in mind the inherent **power dynamics** in your school. For example, you would not want to schedule a focus group with teachers where the principal is present, as this is their direct supervisor, and they are less likely to be forthright if he/she is in the room (or accessing the raw data from the focus group wherein the teachers can be identified).

As the evaluation is not performed by a single individual, a critical issue for many participants may be knowing - and controlling - precisely who will have access to the raw data, both now and in the future. It is important to communicate this clearly to participants and to strictly abide by what is agreed to in the consent form (which might mean restricting access to team members).

Requesting consent is done by means of consent forms and accompanying letters explaining the request. Remember: any new methods of data collection will require new consent forms.

Consent Letters & Forms

Use the **Sample Consent Forms** template, found on the CLC Network Resources website, to develop your own forms to obtain the consent of participants.

There is no set form for either a consent letter or a consent form, each of which must be tailored to match the circumstances of each case, taking into account:

- the nature of the participation being requested;
- the participant group; and
- any special circumstances.

In all cases, the **letter** should be short but enable the participant to make an informed decision, by providing:

- the purpose of the evaluation;
- a clear statement of what consent is being requested;
- any conditions that apply; and
- a date by which the form should be signed and returned.

In all cases, the **consent form** itself should:

- identify the participant;
- clearly state what is being consented;
- provide a place for the participant to sign and date the form; and
- include the signed statement of the person given the responsibility to assure that the conditions stated in the letter will be respected.

Trustworthiness of the Data

The trustworthiness of performance indicators are dependent on the trustworthiness of the data. It is therefore necessary to ask yourself:

- Does the data selected for a given indicator provide a valid and dependable source of information?
- Will this source be viewed as credible by stakeholders?

Example: teacher observations may be a **valid** source of data regarding playground safety but those immediately consigned to notes will be more **dependable** than those recalled at a later time.

Collecting the Data

Before deciding on the methods and instruments used to collect data, you should clarify who will undertake the various tasks associated with this step; specifically

- developing the consent forms;
- constructing the instruments;
- designing the methodology;
- administering questionnaires;
- conducting interviews

At a CLC School, most of these tasks will likely be led by the CDA (with assistance from the PRT) but as with all steps in the framework, it is best when these can be done in conversation with other members of the CLC leadership team - be it the principal, CLC committee, a partnership table etc.

Methods & Instruments

There are a wide variety of methods for collecting data in a site-based evaluation, which have been grouped under three broad headings:

- **interactions with people**: this method can be sub-divided into three main types:
    - **survey**: usually a 'pen and paper' exercise, either face-to-face with a group of respondents or individually by telephone, mail, email or web server;
    - **interview**: a personal interaction between the evaluator(s) and 'key informants,' usually in person but sometimes by telephone or video hook-up; and
    - **focus group**: in this method, which is not merely a group interview, the evaluator moderates an informal discussion that is intended to allow "one person's ideas to bounce off another's creating a chain reaction of informative dialogue;"
- **observation**: a multi-variant method whereby an observer as participant or spectator in a single or multiple visits uses formal or informal approaches with a narrow or broad focus to observe a setting or activity; and
- **archival**: gathering of records, documents and artifacts.

In practice, observation is rarely practical or necessary. For collection of new data you will probably rely primarily on direct or indirect participation though your existing data is likely archival.

The success of these methods depends first on the quality of the instruments used to collect the data, and then on the skills of the persons who actually collect the data. Constructing instruments and training people to use them may require the help of the PRT, a partner experienced in research, or other outside resources.

A '**direct participant**' is someone who takes part in the evaluation by completing a questionnaire, being part of an interview, focus group or observed activity; an '**indirect participant**' is any one about whom a third party provides information, for example a teacher or parent responding about a student's behaviour.

Method	Strengths	Weaknesses
Survey	Can be easily administered via an online tool like survey monkey Is highly efficient for routine data with a large number of respondents. Lends itself to quantitative analysis Can provide for individual comments and perspectives in the respondent's own words.	Can be unreliable because respondents suffer from 'questionnaire fatigue' or misunderstanding of question. Might require extensive planning and pre-testing of instrument. Can be 'tainted' by data entry errors.
Interview	Allows for in-depth analysis of key issues. Permits immediate pursuit of details or other issues arising in the interview. Encourages good response rate and good validity; few potential interviewees refuse.	Respondents more likely to aim to please rather than be truthful. Interviewer must be highly skilled. Time-consuming to organize, conduct and analyze results.
Focus Group	Allows for qualitative input from a large number of people in a short space of time. Uses group synergy to maximize input (group greater than the sum of individuals). Fosters spontaneity and serendipity – data emerges 'out of the blue.'	Some individuals may monopolize the discussion, others may remain silent. Requires skilled facilitator, one that can handle above problems. Time consuming to analyze results. Can be biased by groupthink
Observation	Enables the evaluator literally 'to see what is going on' in the school. Permits comparison of other accounts ('words and deeds'). Provides a holistic view of performance in context.	Requires structured observation protocol to direct observations. Observer must be highly skilled. Time-consuming to conduct and analyze results.

Each of these major methods uses various ***instruments*** for collecting data. The most common instruments are:

- **questionnaire**: a set of questions used to ascertain opinions or obtain other information from respondents;
- **check-list**: a set of characteristics about various objects of inquiry used by respondents or the evaluator to determine the presence or absence of these characteristics;
- **rating scale**: a set of statements about various objects of inquiry used by respondents or the evaluator to assess each item, using the scale provided;
- **protocol**: guidelines for both the content and the conduct of an interview, a focus group or a structured observation.

Some instruments are closely associated with particular methods, a good example being questionnaire and survey. Other instruments are commonly used in different methods; a rating scale, for example, can be completed as part of a survey or used in observation.

Each method and instrument also has implications for data analysis. It is a good idea to be familiar with these implications before deciding how data will be collected. For example, collecting a mass of quantitative data will be problematic if there is no capacity to conduct the proper analysis of these data. Conversely, open-ended questions may be easier to construct but are much more time-consuming to process and analyze.

Gathering of Archival Data

The first challenge in gathering archival data is knowing what to look for. In some cases, certain types of information must be available by law; in others, prior experience will indicate what types of information one would normally expect to find. In still other cases, this method begins with informal interviews with partners or people within your school to determine not only what information is available but the form(s) in which that information exists. Note that partners often have a variety of data available; **no need to duplicate their efforts**.

In some cases, the data may be in more of a raw form and could take considerable time to transform it into something usable (e.g. scores from individual tests that must be tabulated to determine aggregate scores for the school). Any work that must be done to make the data usable is dealt with in Step 5.2 (Data Analysis). At this stage, you simply want to ensure that you obtain the data in the most useful form available.

Archival data can be an important source of measurement in evaluation. For example, student records (if made available to you) can confirm or call into question a statement by a respondent that students from all communities served by the school are equally successful.

The following provides an example of how to link different data gathering approaches to performance measures, taken from a Harvard Family Research Project report, **Beyond the Head Count**, that deals with family involvement in various out-of-school programs[34].

Performance Measures	Sources of Data
Extent of parental satisfaction with program characteristics, quality, and content.	Interviews with approximately half of the program teachers and a sample of parents (parents were selected by AES program personnel based on their availability).
• Extent to which programs offer adult education classes and activities • Number and type of adult education classes and activities offered • Rate of parental participation in adult education classes and activities • Proportion of programs to use adult volunteers • Volunteers' self-reported changes in attitude toward children and community as a result of volunteering • Proportion of programs to provide family support services • Proportion of programs to foster community dialogue and problem solving • Degree to which program-sponsored family and community events attract diverse audiences	• Interviews/focus groups with youth, staff members, supervisors, and principals in host schools about issues including parent and family involvement and support • Focus groups with parents and other adult participants to understand their participation patterns and how they perceive the Beacon • Observation • Surveys

A clearly laid out sample of instruments can be found online, including:

- General Introduction
- Requesting background information
- Likest-Style questionnaire on teaching and learning (for students, teachers, and parents)
- Checklist for parental involvement
- Rating scale for school facilities
- Community Focus Group Protocol

In most schools, student input is already being collected regularly via TTFM (Tell Them From Me) surveys. Coordinators can often work with principals to have a few specific questions added on to the TTFM surveys for input on programs or strategies of particular interest during the CLC evaluation.

[34] Each row is taken from a different program; for details, see the HFRP information brief: Caspe, Traub & Little, 2002.

Designing Your own Instruments

Even the best sample instruments must be adapted to meet your needs. It will take time and effort to develop these instruments but the investment is worthwhile, as you can expect to use various versions of them for years to come.

PREPARATION

When preparing instruments for data collection, there may be pressure to get on with it and move quickly to really *do* something - as if designing the instruments was not real action. However, skimping on preparation time is a false economy. Getting the results you want from data collection necessitates back mapping through all the mini steps that are required to get there. Preparation includes 'big picture' issues - for example, will this method produce the data we need - to 'small picture' issues - how can we schedule the completion of questionnaires in one school day?

What Should I Ask?

We want to learn to what extent your initiative or program has achieved its outcomes. Use the outcome to form a question, often beginning with 'How' or 'To what extent' has the program affected or increased or decreased 'x'? To drill down more, you may say 'In what ways' has .... resulted in ....?

SEEKING DIFFERENT KINDS OF INFORMATION

The following provides some guidance in terms of designing questions based upon **what** type of information is sought:

Experience/Behaviour	Questions about what a respondent does or has done.
Opinion/ Values	Questions about what a respondent thinks about a given subject.
Emotions	Questions about how a respondent feels about a given subject.
Knowledge	Questions about what a respondent knows about a given subject.
Sensory	Questions about what a respondent has seen, heard, touched tasted or smelled.
Background	Questions about the respondent's background characteristics.

Whatever information you are seeking, there are still many different types of questions:

Types of Questions	Example
'**Open-ended'** questions pose the issue in neutral terms leaving the respondent complete latitude in crafting his or her response.	How would you describe your involvement in this project?'
'**Leading**' questions are not neutral but suggest the answer that is expected; as a general rule, they should be avoided.	Tell me how this program was successful?'
'**Funnel**' questions start with a wide perspective of a topic and then progressively narrow the focus to 'zero in' on sub-topics or selected aspects of the general question.	Tel me about this program.' ...[then] 'How would you characterize the practicality of the field work component?'
'**Closed**' questions predetermine the possible answers to a question, one of which must be selected by the respondent.	Generally, would you characterize your experience in this program as: (a) very positive; (b) positive; (c) negative; or (d) very negative?'

The form questions take will vary depending on your method. However, questions should always be **clear**, **specific** and '**singular**' (i.e. do not ask double-barrelled questions: 'Do you think this presentation was informative <u>and</u> entertaining?').

Using the Instruments

As suggested by the grid comparing different methods (p. 78), using some instruments require more skills to use than others. For example, it takes more skill to moderate a focus group than administer a questionnaire.

The following provides some guidance for conducting a **focus group**.

- Keep the discussion **on track.**
- **Draw out** participants, especially shy persons, to ensure that everyone's voice is represented.
- **Reign in** participants who monopolize the discussion or belittle the opinions of others.
- **Verify** what you think you are hearing by verbally summarizing responses.
- Seek various **perspectives**, especially if groupthink seems to predominate.
- Use **probes** (follow-up questions such as: "can you tell me more about x") to delve into significant issues and stimulate discussion.

Although designing good instruments requires some technical skills, using them effectively relies on **people skills.** An attitude of openness, acceptance, and curiosity are key, as well as a sensitivity to individual comfort levels, and an active listening stance. All of these will help motivate participants to provide forthright, meaningful, and complete answers to your questions.

Trustworthiness of Data Collection

No matter how trustworthy the sources of data may be, the collection of data must be both valid and dependable to maintain the integrity of the evaluation process. When finalizing your data collection plan, ensure you are considering any inherent bias or other problems that may compromise the quality of your data when it comes to instruments, methods, and application. **Pilot testing** can be helpful in detecting and correcting problems before starting to collect data. Ensuring **transparency** throughout the evaluation (and in your reporting) enhances trustworthiness after they have been implemented.

5.2 Analyze the Data

Making Sense of Raw Data

Here's where things get *even more* interesting! It's time to start making sense of all we learned. But how to do it?

There are many methods to choose from. In this sub-section, we will describe two *methods of analysis that offer rigour to your sense-making process without breaking the 'time-bank' and one validation technique:

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

1. Thematic Analysis
2. Data Triangulation

VALIDATION TECHNIQUE

1. Member Checking

**Depending on the time and expertise available to you, you may wish to apply additional methods (and rigour) to your analysis.*

Organize the Data, Analyze & Interpret the Data

Quantitative Data

- Create a table summarizing the total number of participants by stakeholder group & data collection method.
- Calculate response/participation rates (i.e., the number of people who completed the survey – or participated in a focus group - divided by the total number of possible respondents/participants)
- Get a sense of your **sample size** - how reliable is your data?
- Highlight or compile relevant data points you've collected from external data sources (e.g., reports, Tell Them From Me surveys…etc.)
- Compile survey responses (the percentage of respondents who selected each answer)*

*Compiling and analyzing survey responses used to be quite tedious but thanks to online platforms like **Survey Monkey**, much of this work is now automated.

Qualitative Data

Print detailed notes or transcriptions from focus groups and interviews

MAKING SENSE OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Thanks to the availability of regional studies from local partners and modern tracking, monitoring and evaluation tools, you are likely to have salient demographics, program participation rates and summaries of survey responses (i.e., how many people selected each possible answer, lists of comments, response rates) at your finger tips. That means you don't have to do much, if any, tabulation to get a sense of data trends (yay!).

That said – don't take everything you see at face value. Consider the reliability of each data set (i.e., **sample sizes**, quality of questions, how old the data is, source…etc.) – you don't want to attribute a lot of value to something that isn't substantive or overstate anything when writing your report (e.g., if only five of 50 students respond to a survey, it would be misleading to present related findings as highly significant or representative of the larger group).

Sometimes concerns with some aspect of the data or the data collection process may simply warrant a cautionary note. For example: “these comments came from a small number of respondents.” In extreme cases, they might cause you to disregard the data set completely.

Select a manageable amount of data to review; privilege data sets that appear highly relevant (i.e., data that speak to your evaluation questions or offers important context) and reliable.

When seeking to review comprehensive external reports, give yourself permission to be practical - don’t feel obliged to read all 100 pages of a report carefully when only 10 pages appear relevant.

Once you feel ready to proceed, consider each data set in relation to your evaluation questions (don’t ignore any written comments additionally solicited in surveys):

- What demographics could help to contextualize the relevant challenges facing your CLC school(s) and community?
- What does summary data suggest is working well about the CLC school(s) or program(s) you are evaluating?
- What does summary data suggest could be improved? Any surprises?

If you’ve collected significant amounts of survey data using paper copies of a questionnaire, it is recommended that the survey be (re)created online and responses entered manually. While it may sound a bit tedious, it will likely take you less time than tabulating responses yourself, and offers the promise of accuracy and longevity.

Make note of (or highlight) relevant findings. Revisit these findings as you consider new data sets.

With quantitative data, you can create tables and info graphics (more on that in step 5.3) or simply showcase summary statistics (e.g., 90% of respondents indicated that the program significantly improved their French language skills). Be sure to feature important data points in your report.

MAKING SENSE OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Start by reflecting on your overall research questions. **What are you hoping to learn?** Keep these questions in mind while conducting the thematic analysis. Remain open to unanticipated findings.

Inductive reasoning interprets data to derive general concepts, while **deductive** reasoning interprets data on the basis of predetermined general concepts.

Summarizing and coding data is not a mechanical exercise but one that requires **judgment**. Throughout this analytic process, the evaluator uses both inductive and deductive reasoning.

Consider your **personal biases** – assuming you are a CDA, your position will allow you contextual insights that can be leveraged when interpreting the data; however, you must also try to be mindful of suspending any pre-existing conceptions you may hold about existing programs and stakeholder groups as you begin coding and categorizing data.

Set aside a minimum of 2-3 hours of time (in a quiet place where you won't be interrupted) to analyse 5-7 pages worth of content. Data sets should reflect responses to a common set of questions from one or many stakeholder groups.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

- Rigour is key to credibility – take your time and **don't** skip any of the six steps;
- An inductive process (i.e., you are *not* trying to fit the data intro a pre-determined framework);
- It's not just about the frequency of statements. It is important to use your judgment about how contextually significant statements are;
- Writing is an integral part of sense-making – not something you do later on.

A 6-STEP PROCESS

1. Familiarize yourself with the data
2. Generate initial codes
3. Search for categories
4. Review categories
5. Define and name themes
6. Write your analysis

STEP 1: FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE DATA

Read through the data set.

Once done, read through the data set a second time. This time, take note of your initial impressions about the data – what's of interest? What's standing out to you?

STEP 2: GENERATE INITIAL CODES

Codes are assigned words that act as ***labels****,* allowing us to easily identify the basic element (or essence) of an individual statement.

Read through your data set carefully and use plain language to capture the essence of each statement (whenever possible, try to use the same language as respondents).

Pay equal attention to all statements; don't ignore statements that depart from the dominant story.

EXAMPLE:
Here is an excerpt from a developmental evaluation of school bullying programs and related codes for each statement:

***Question**: What does bullying look like in the schoolyard?*

"Boys will often hit and push each other in the school yard, especially when they don't want someone to play with them. The girls call each other names and trash talk one another more often. Their feelings get really hurt and people get excluded from games for days at a time" [Supervising Teacher]

Codes**: **HITTING (BOYS), PUSHING (BOYS), EXCLUSION, NAME CALLING (GIRLS), TRASH TALKING (GIRLS), EXCLUSION, HURT FEELINGS

Once you've completed this step, make a list of all the codes you've generated on a separate piece of paper. It can be helpful to additionally make note of whether or not an individual code was used frequently.

STEP 3: SEARCH FOR CATEGORIES

Consider how your codes can combine to form categories. Categories act as broader labels that speak to the relationship between codes.

To form categories, think about patterns and the relationships between your codes: similarities, differences, frequency, sequence, causation, and correspondence.

EXAMPLE:

"Boys will often hit and push each other in the school yard, especially when they don't want someone to play with them. The girls call each other names and trash talk one another more often. Their feelings get really hurt and people get excluded from games for days at a time." [Supervising Teacher]

***Codes**: HITTING (BOYS), PUSHING (BOYS), EXCLUSION, NAME CALLING (GIRLS), TRASH TALKING (GIRLS), EXCLUSION, HURT FEELINGS*

***Category 1** - Physical Violence (primarily boys)*

- *Hitting (boys) [code]*
- *Pushing (boys) [code]*
- *Exclusion [code]*

Category 2 *- Verbal Abuse (primarily girls)*

- *Name-calling (girls) [code]*
- *Trash talking (girls) [code]*
- *Exclusion [exclusion]*

Bear in mind that individual codes *can* belong to multiple categories. At this stage, you may also choose to 'drop' codes that don't come up that often or don't seem that relevant in relation to the rest of the data set.

STEP 4: REVIEW CATEGORIES

Are your categories well supported by the data?

To add rigour to your process, review the categories you've generated in relation to your codes and corresponding data excerpts.

Reconsider your discarded codes. If a category isn't well supported by the data, consider dropping it.

Consider if any of your categories can be collapsed.

STEP 5: DEFINE & NAME THEME(S)

To generate themes, you will need to think about how broader categories relate and how they respond to your evaluation questions – what meaning can you make?

> "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set." (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

EXAMPLE:

Theme*: Exclusion Tactics are Gendered at School*

Category 1 *- Physical violence (primarily boys)*

- *Hitting (code)*
- *Pushing (code)*

Exclusion (code)

Category 2 *- Verbal abuse (primarily girls)*

- *Name calling (code)*
- *Trash talking (code)*

Exclusion (code)

Once you have finished generating themes, reassess their validity by comparing them to related categories and codes. Have you inadvertently taken 'creative license' along the way or are your themes well supported by the data?

STEP 6: SUMMARIZE & ANALYZE FINDINGS

In this final step, you want to prepare a written summary of your findings. What major themes (and related categories) emerged from the data set?

EXAMPLE:

"…findings suggest that bullying at X school can be understood through a gendered lens, with boys described as more likely to commit acts of physical aggression and girls described as more likely to verbally abuse their peers. In both cases however, the motivation behind the bad behaviour is believed to centre on excluding select students from peer groups.".

Now is also the time to move past description – where data is organized and summarized – to interpretation, where you try to explain the significance of your findings and their implications.

EXAMPLE:

"…given what we've learned about bullying behaviours at X school, it is recommended that the CLC work with partners & school staff to develop more targeted interventions…."

What do your findings mean in relation to your evaluation questions? What does the data suggest is or isn't working well?

Are there other data points that can help you to make further sense of this information? What recommendations for development could you make based on this data set?

Parts (or all) of your written summary can be easily inserted in your final evaluation report.

To add rigour to your process, invite another evaluator to perform a thematic analysis (independently from you) on the same data set. Compare and contrast your findings.

NOTE*: As you consult additional data sources (quantitative and qualitative), your findings can (and should) be compared and contrasted for further analysis and added rigour. More on this below (see section on data triangulation).*

TO LEARN MORE:

Aronson, J. (1994). A pragmatic view of thematic analysis. The Qualitative Report, Vol 2.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology.

University of Auckland and University of West of England.
Dye, J., Schatz, I. et al. (2000). Constant comparison method: A kaleidoscope of data. The Qualitative Report, Vol. 4.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann. S. (2009). InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing (2 nd ed). Los Angeles: Sage.
McNaught, C. & Lam, P. (2010). Using Wordle as a supplementary research tool.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China.
Saldana, J. (2013). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. Los Angeles: Sage.

Pulling it Together: Data Triangulation

Triangulating data can help you to validate and challenge findings as well as enhance your understanding of the ‘big picture.’

It involves the comparison of at least three unique sources of data (within or across stakeholder groups and data collection methods).

EXAMPLE:

Let’s assume you were evaluating the school climate. You could compare survey data collected from:

- *School staff;*
- *Students;*
- *Partners;*
- *Parents.*

To further contextualize and interpret data collected from a student focus group about school bullying, you could compare it with:

- *Tell Them From Me survey data collected by the school over the past few years;*
- *Teacher responses to a survey about bullying;*
- *Notes from an interview with a partner leading an anti-bullying program at the school.*

By comparing and contrasting responses from different stakeholder groups and data sources, you can begin to identify commonalities and nuances relating to your area(s) of inquiry.

You can be more confident in the validity of a finding if it comes up across multiple stakeholder groups/data sources. If there are stark differences in responses from one group to the next, try and account for them in your analysis.

BE PRACTICAL

Limit yourself to a reasonable amount of *relevant* and *reliable* data sets, especially if you are conducting this analysis on your own.

Set aside 2-3 hours of time in a quiet space where you won't be interrupted.

Keep your evaluation focus in mind as you sift through the data.

As you compare and contrast data points across a variety of sources, make note of:

- What's common – and *relevant* - across at least three data sets (note your sources);
- What's different – and *relevant* – across the data sets? How do you make sense of these differences?
- Important insights and recommendations that can help to improve relationships, programs and CLC development;
- Relevant statistics or quotes that you could feature in your report to help contextualize your findings.

Consider how you can use this information to paint a richer picture of your findings and integrate your notes accordingly.

When writing your report, be sure to let readers know when a key finding has been triangulated (describe sources) – it will add credibility to your findings.

TO LEARN MORE:

Wilson, V. (2014). Research Methods: Triangulation. Evidence Based Library and Information Practice. Vol 9.

Validation Technique: Member Checking

Member checking is a common practice that refers to evaluators and/or researchers sharing notes or transcripts from interviews and focus groups back with participants to verify their accuracy (i.e., participants are invited to clarify or confirm the accuracy of statements captured).

With respect to analysis, this method can be applied in a similar fashion; however, unlike the other methods described above, **this method can only be applied once you've completed your analysis of the data** (or at least made some significant progress).

Only when data analysis is (almost) complete, are you ready to consider inviting a representative group of participants (a large or select group) to a meeting to help validate your findings.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Prepare a short presentation on your evaluation and preliminary findings (key questions, data points and themes);
2. Select a representative group of participants (i.e., consider including members of various stakeholder groups) and organize a 1hr-1.5hr meeting;
3. Share your presentation and invite participants to consider:
   - *Their reactions– given their own experiences, what resonated with them? What surprised them?*
   - *What would they add to the analysis presented?*
   - *What might they challenge?*

You can also take the opportunity to:

- *Present any recommendations that may have emerged (participants' or your own) and solicit participants to comment/make additions.*

4. Take notes and consider participant feedback in relation to the data you've already collected and analyzed. Have you garnered any new insights? To what extent did participants validate your findings (or not)?
5. Incorporate feedback/suggestions to the extent that you deem appropriate (i.e., you do not need to edit your report to account for a fringe perspective but you may wish to if it seems particularly insightful or practical with respect to future development). Keep in mind that data can be interpreted in a variety of ways; it is not necessary to account for *all* perspectives presented in your report.

While this method requires some coordination and attention to detail (*you must be careful not to highlight data that includes personal identifiers or inflammatory statements), it has the benefit of allowing you to further your analysis while simultaneously reporting back to stakeholders.

A common criticism of this method is that member checking rests on the (faulty?) assumption that there is a single objective reality for members to validate. In the CLC school context, we favour member checking because it creates a meaningful context for exchange while adding some rigour to your process.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Group sense making can be an excellent way of expanding and aligning a team's understanding of existing challenges and strengths but it does come with its own set of risks.

When sharing data points collected, you must be careful not to jeopardize any agreements you've made relating to the confidentiality of sensitive statements and/or anonymity of participants.

Similarly, you don't want to present information that blames or defames an individual or organization – aside from being in poor taste; it will get in the way of a productive exchange. Use your judgment when selecting data points to feature in a group context (think about who's in the room and their ability to deduce who said what); always err on the side of caution.

SUMMARIZE YOUR FINDINGS

No matter the methods applied for analysis, make sure that you are producing summaries of your findings and interpretations along the way.

Taking the time to organize data and write about data is not just an important part of sense making; it will help you to expedite the preparation of your final report.

Here are a few simple tricks for producing useful summaries of your findings:

- Keep it short– what is necessary and sufficient?;
- Avoid jargon;
- 'Show your work' - make clear connections between your evaluation questions, your findings and supporting data;
- Don't shy away from including 'negative' findings – evaluations are about learning and development! It will be hard for your CLC school(s) to grow without a clear sense of challenges and weaknesses as well as strengths.

5.3 Report to Stakeholders

Now that you've collected, organized and analyzed the data, it is time to produce a report that will allow stakeholders to learn about what you discovered and consider recommendations for future development.

A compelling evaluation report conveys information *simply* and makes thoughtful use of visual tools to reinforce or showcase salient points.

> Simplicity means striving to enlighten rather than impress. "It often involves more work and creativity to simplify than to rest content with a presentation of complex statistics as they originally emerged from the analysis."

The evaluation report is the primary tool you will use to capture and share your findings; however you may wish to package (or repackage) content differently for different stakeholder groups*.

If you created **user profiles at the onset of the evaluation process, now would be a good time to revisit them.*

What to Include in the Evaluation Report

Here is a general overview of what to cover in your evaluation report:

- Introduction
  - What this report is about
  - Your CLC's Mission & Vision
  - Your CLC's Theory of Change
- Evaluative Goals
  - What you hoped to learn & why
  - Outcome areas examined
  - Indicators used
  - Programs and/or activities evaluated
- Methodology
  - Describe the type of data you gathered
  - Describe how you gathered the data
- Findings
  - Describe what you learned from the data
- Conclusion and Recommendations
  - Describe implications
  - Share recommendations for future development

A more detailed "evaluation report template" is available on the **CLC Network Resource** website.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Review your report to ensure it respects confidentiality agreements:

  Identifying participants can be done explicitly by naming someone or implicitly by giving enough contextual information for a reader to deduce a participant's identity (e.g., saying 'the grade 5 teacher at X school' instead of 'a teacher at X school' when the teacher hasn't consented to being identified).

- While the report you are producing will become a public document, it is important to be honest about your findings; where the CLC is excelling as well as where and how it could improve.

- ✦ To be honest does not mean to be without tact. Be mindful of how you disclose any sensitive information you may have collected.

- ✦ Exclude any statements that you believe seriously risks harming an individual or an organization (their livelihood or reputation).

- ✦ Occasionally, an evaluation brings matters to light concerning staff, students or others that must be handled outside the framework of the evaluation.

- ✦ Maintain a copy of your evaluation questions and any raw data collected in a secure location for up to one year (in case you wish to revisit it). Make sure the raw data is stripped of any personal identifiers.

Use of Visuals

Pictures, information tables and charts, and info graphics can help bring your report to life but be careful not to include too many – this risks diluting their overall effect and can detract from the substance of your report.

Visual tools can also be used independently to help convey key pieces of information succinctly to a variety of audiences.

PICTURES

Aside from being visually appealing, pictures can help to connect the story you are telling to the people affected by the CLC's work.

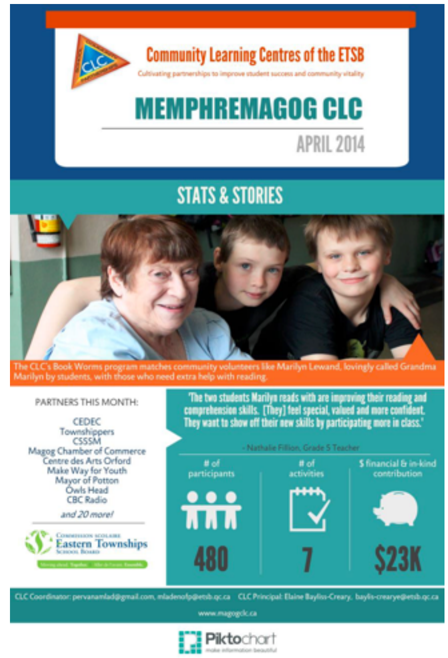
****Always make sure you have the necessary permissions to use a photo in your report.*

TABLES & CHARTS

Tables and charts can help you to display quantitative data more succinctly as well as visually.

You can create tables and charts in Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel as well as online at **www.piktochart.com** (a site you can use to build info graphics).

INFO GRAPHICS



Info graphics can help key data points to stand out, especially in larger reports. They can also be shared independently.

You can use web sites like www.piktochart.com to build info graphics using ready-made templates.

A few tips for building an info graphic:

- Use a minimal amount of text;
- Less is more (don't try to include too many data points);
- Stick to one visual theme and font type;
- Consider what visual markers could help 'speak' to your data;
- Make use of the ready-made templates.

Sharing your Evaluation Findings

Disseminating your evaluation results is an opportunity to share accomplishments, lessons learned, and highlight potential areas of improvement. The goal is not to just to have a final report, but also to communicate information that you or some other organization can use to make a decision or take action.

- ✦ Who do I need to share with? Is there anyone missing from this list?
- ✦ School staff
- ✦ Teachers
- ✦ School board representative
- ✦ Director General
- ✦ Parents
- ✦ Students
- ✦ Community Partners
- ✦ Funders
- ✦ Commissioners

You will need to determine what the best format to share with which audience is:

- ✦ School board representatives and Director Generals make decisions about the future of CLCs at both the provincial level and in your school board; they have a high investment in the CLC initiative. They are busy people and have little time to read the full length report so you need the information presented in a condensed way that promotes efficient action and decision making – i.e. **executive summary** (a short version of your report—usually one to four pages— containing condensed versions of the major sections/highlights of the report. It should be understandable as a stand-alone document).

- ✦ School staff, teachers, governing board may want a more casual report – perhaps an **article for the school newsletter** which gives a snapshot of key indicators and results.
- ✦ A great way to involve community members in your evaluation would be to present the results at a **community conversation or town hall** (**CLC Network Resource** website/Communications). You can then engage them in a discussion on the recommendations and conclusions. You can also issue a **press release** to generate interest from the wider community.
- ✦ School Board Commissioners guide the work of the school board by setting policies and overseeing the annual budget. They are the connection to their local community, understanding particular strengths, challenges and demands. Ensuring they have a good understanding of your CLC and the work you are doing will serve you well in the long run.
- ✦ Local politicians – city councillors, MNAs, MPs – these are all good people to share your results with. Like DGs, they are busy people so share the information you think they need to have and present in a **condensed, easy-to-read format** (executive summary or info graphics).
- ✦ Building awareness of your CLC with your stakeholders is critical. Short communications — **newsletters and brochures** — serve to highlight evaluation information, help to generate interest in the full evaluation findings, and serve as a PR tool. Use photos, graphs, color, with a format that is attractive and eye-catching to the reader. An excellent opportunity to use **infographics** (i.e. **piktochart**). Create a **YouTube** video; this brings together the power of visual imagery, motion and sound and is the second most used search engine next to Google.
- ✦ **Poster session**: provide quick, visual, and easily read information to audiences with little or no knowledge about a program or organization. Posters typically include photographs, graphs, tables, charts, drawings, and text on poster-size boards. Poster sessions can be used at conferences to display condensed evaluation information.
- ✦ **Your CLC website** can be used to disseminate written evaluation reports and evaluation documents.
- ✦ **Social media**: Facebook and twitter can also be used – often redirecting people to another location to read the report. Social media can feature key results or highlights.

Next Steps

YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE: RETROSPECT & PROSPECT

This Guidebook began with the Framework's grounded theory of sustainable change. However, as stated at the outset, the Framework theory of Action does not prescribe a fixed set of conditions or services. Rather, you were invited to use the suggestions offered in the Guidebook to build your own theory of change to meet the needs of your community.

Thus, in **Step 1** you explored the possibilities of a CLC that enabled you to create your own **vision** of a CLC in your community and a decision to proceed.

In **Step 2**, you transformed the vision into a **mission statement** and Partnership Agreement, outlining your values and purpose, the results areas to be pursued and the principles that would guide your actions.

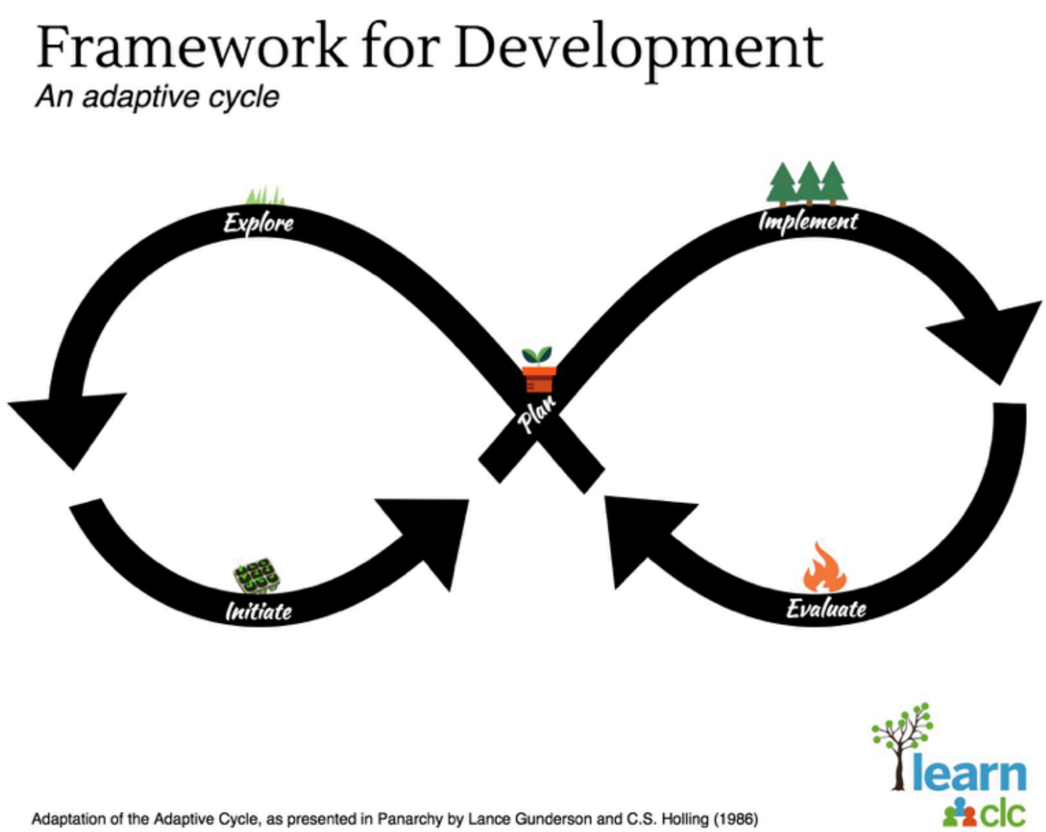
In **Step 3**, you transformed this statement of purpose and intent into an Action Plan that provided the **route map** of your journey of change toward your destination (intended results) and the activities required to build capacity and deliver services to achieve them.

In **Step 4**, you implemented the plan by building capacity and delivering services; in other words, you undertook the journey of change.

At this point, you can see that this journey has already led to some results (**destination**) but others will only be realized in the future, reminding you that change is a long-term process.

In **Step 5**, you began the evaluation of the journey - *began* because you have yet to evaluate the contribution of the journey to longer term results. This evaluation also provided **feedback loops** that enable you to reflect on your destination, the planning and conduct of the journey and **continue your journey** in ways that will benefit students and community.

As you complete Step 5, remember that CLC development is an iterative and adaptive process. As conditions and opportunities in the CLC environment continue to evolve, the need to begin the steps anew will become more and more apparent.



Adaptation of the Adaptive Cycle, as presented in Panarchy by Lance Gunderson and C.S. Holling (1986)