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COLLECTIVE IMPACT AS A MECHANISM FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS, INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN MOLDOVA

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This article analyzes the application of Collective Impact methodology to advance childcare system reform in Moldova, grounding the analysis in social movement theory. Examination of the Family Care First initiative in Cambodia illuminates essential lessons regarding clarity of governance role definition and empowering local leadership, providing valuable context for understanding Moldova's experience. Drawing on observed changes in actor behavior documented between 2019-2025 and examined through the Six Conditions for Systems Change framework, author analyzes the way the strategic engagement established coordination infrastructure, secured policy updates, ultimately culminating in a national commitment to end child institutionalization by 2027. Findings demonstrate systemic changes across structural, relational, and transformative levels, with critical success factors including government leadership, structured coordination mechanisms, and evidence-based advocacy. Challenges persist at transformative level, in shifting mental models among stakeholders. Methodologically, the research establishes Outcome Harvesting's value for monitoring nonlinear reform processes and proposes future applications in health, education, and fulfilling recommendations within the EU association agenda.

Keywords: *Collective Impact, systems change, child protection, Moldova, Outcome Harvesting, Six Conditions for Systems Change framework, resource mobilization, childcare reform, government coordination, deinstitutionalization.*

IMPACTUL COLECTIV CA MECANISM PENTRU SCHIMBAREA SISTEMICĂ: FUNDAMENTE TEORETICE, EXPERIENȚA INTERNAȚIONALĂ ȘI OPORTUNITĂȚI DE CERCETARE ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

Acest articol analizează aplicarea metodologiei Impactului Colectiv pentru reformarea sistemului de protecție a copilului în Republica Moldova, pornind de la teoria mișcărilor sociale. Examinarea inițiativei Family Care First din Cambodia evidențiază lecții esențiale privind organizarea structurii de guvernanță, definirea rolurilor și leadershipul local, oferind context valoros pentru înțelegerea experienței din Moldova. Pe baza schimbărilor observate în comportamentul actorilor, documentate între 2019-2025 și analizate prin cadrul celor Șase Condiții pentru Schimbarea Sistemelor, autorul urmărește modul în care implicarea strategică a contribuit la stabilirea infrastructurii de coordonare, obținerea angajamentelor politice, culminând cu angajamentul național de a elimina instituționalizarea copiilor până în 2027. Rezultatele demonstrează schimbări sistemice la nivel structural, relațional și transformațional, factorii critici de succes incluzând leadership guvernamental și mecanismele structurate de coordonare. Provocările persistă pe nivel implicit, în schimbarea modelelor mentale, care sunt profund înrădăcinate. Metodologic, cercetarea validează Outcome Harvesting pentru monitorizarea proceselor nelineare de reformă și propune aplicări viitoare în sănătate, educație și îndeplinirea recomandărilor din agenda de asociere cu UE.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Impact Colectiv, schimbare sistemică, protecția copilului, Moldova, Outcome Harvesting, Cadrul celor șase condiții pentru schimbarea sistemelor, mobilizarea resurselor, reforma sistemului de îngrijire, coordonare guvernamentală, dezinstituționalizare.*

Introduction

The complexity of social problems, such as child protection system strengthening or educational inequalities, has uncovered the limitations of interventions undertaken by organizations and institutions that work in isolation. In 2011, Kania and Kramer [13, p. 36] argued in their foundational article, *"large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolat-*

ed intervention of individual organizations.” Recognition of the persisting problems that cannot be solved by a single organization or institution stood led to the development of Collective Impact (CI), a structured methodology for multi-sector collaboration that has gained significant attention internationally over the past decade.

Since gaining its independence in 1991, the Republic of Moldova has made an internationally recognized progress in reforming its child protection system, significantly reducing the number of children placed in residential care facilities and establishing a legal framework for family-based alternative care placements [11, p.2-3]. Despite these achievements, systemic gaps persist for the most vulnerable categories of children. Moldova child-care system continues to confront service fragmentation and inequalities when viewed at the national level, financial and other resource constraints, and coordination challenges between governmental, non-governmental, and international actors [11, p. 1]. The 2022-2026 National Program for Child Protection acknowledges these persistent challenges and reveals openness to innovative collaborative approaches, naming, among other conditions *“collaboration between authorities at different levels and sectors, as well as partnerships with civil society and development partners, for the purpose of the full and timely implementation of this National Program* [11, p. 21].

The Association Agenda between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union places strong emphasis on child protection, recommending alignment of national policies with European standards. The Association agenda includes adopting the abovementioned National Program and its action plan [6, p. 116-117]. In the list of recommended reforms related to child care, we see continuation of the deinstitutionalization process and reduction of the number of children placed in residential institutions gradually reaching the goal of “zero,” while developing alternative forms of family based care, acknowledging that despite significant progress, the most vulnerable children remain at risk of being placed in institutions due to underdeveloped community-based services and family support mechanisms [6, p. 116].

The objectives of this article can be articulated as follows: to present the theoretical foundations and key conditions of Collective Impact methodology; to examine practical applications of Collective Impact globally and in the Republic of Moldova; and to identify opportunities for future research on Collective Impact in the context of continuation of child care reform in Moldova, applying Outcome Harvesting methodology and the Six Conditions for Systems Change framework.

Contents

Theoretical Foundations of Collective Impact Methodology

Collective Impact methodology is not completely new. It finds its roots in theoretical traditions that have studied the ways social groups mobilize resources and coordinate action to achieve change long before Collective Impact was described. Resource mobilization theory, developed by McCarthy and Zald in the 1970s, claims that social movements are run by rational, organized actors who require various types of resources, like material, cultural, moral, social-organizational, and human, needed to succeed [19, p. 1213-1216]. Edwards and Gillham [5, p. 4] further develop the theory by identifying five distinct resource types: moral resources (legitimacy, solidarity), cultural resources (artifacts, knowledge), social-organizational resources (networks, infrastructure), human resources (leadership, labor), and material resources (financial, physical).

Scholars such as Tilly [27], McAdam [18], and Tarrow [25], develop political process theory, and add crucial dimensions to understanding what a collective action is. Tilly [27, p. 7] defines mobilization as *“the process by which a group acquires collective control over resources needed for action,”* while emphasizing that collective action is difficult to analyze due to evolving interests and the complex nature of human participation. McAdam [18, p. 40] introduces the concept of political opportunity structures or the degree to which groups are expected to gain access to power and manipulate the political system. He emphasizes the importance of communication networks and cognitive liberation. McAdam also claims that activists must first define existing conditions as unjust and subject to change [18, p. 99]. These theoretical foundations lay at the basement of Collective Impact methodology. As Kania, Kramer, and Hanleybrown [15, p. 3] note, successful CI initiatives require influential champions, adequate financial resources, and a sense of urgency for change, the conditions that align with resource mobilization theory emphasis on leadership, material

resources, and group grievance. In case of political process theory, the importance of political opportunities and mobilization structures help to understand emphasis on cross-sector coordination and backbone infrastructure within Collective Impact.

Based on the theoretical foundations, Kania and Kramer [13, p. 39] articulated five key conditions that put aside Collective Impact initiative from interventions that are done in isolation. These conditions include common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone support. We will have a closer look at each of them and see why they are important.

The first condition is presence of a common agenda. Researchers say that all participants must have a shared vision for change and a common understanding of the problem as well as a joint approach to solving it through actions they are willing to agree upon. As Kania et al. [15, p. 3-4] write, common agenda represents a strategic framework that needs to include: a problem statement grounded in trustworthy data or research, a clear vision or goal for social problem change, a set of principles or rules that would guide group behavior, a methodology for evaluation of performance and results, and a set of strategies integrating both short and long-term solutions and systemic approaches.

As partially mentioned in the description of the common agenda as a key condition, having shared measurement system is linked to the common plan and is very important for success. Regular and consistent collection of data, measurement of results across all participating organizations, groups and entities helps to ensure that efforts bring the results and remain aligned. These systems also help to ensure that participants hold each other accountable. Here we observe the linkage with another key condition – mutually reinforcing activities. Developing a shared measurement system represents a considerable challenge, as multiple stakeholders should not only agree on common indicators, but also be ready to share data and information with others within Collective Impact. Data being collected and inputted in the system needs to be comparable, trustworthy relevant and timely. However, modern web-based platforms enable monitoring systems that respond to the needs of CI members, initiative funders, and other actors within the consortium or group [8]. Shared measurement systems are very important because they enable initiatives to demonstrate impact, practitioners -to use data for decision-making, and communicate progress to partners and funders.

The third key condition is rooted in the first two we discussed above - mutually reinforcing activities. Activities within Collective Impact are considered to fulfill this criterion when they are differentiated but at the same time remain coordinated through a mutually reinforcing action plan. This is achieved when stakeholders coordinate well during planning process and exclude overlaps in their activities. As a result, partner interventions are dependent on one another, reinforcing accountability and stimulating activities. The multiple causes of social problems and components of their solutions are interdependent and cannot be addressed through uncoordinated actions by partners that did not plan well for their intervention, did not exclude overlaps and grey zones in implementation.

Continuous communication among Collective Impact stakeholders is necessary not only to coordinate around the common agenda, but also to build trust, ensure objectives are mutually recognized and shared, and create a sense of motivation or desire for change. According to Kania and Kramer [14], regular communication among actors involved in a CI effort facilitates mutual trust and transparency, that are critical elements for avoiding fragmentation within the initiative. Communication and regular contacts within the group, help CI members develop a common vocabulary that facilitates communication and sustains group belonging [9].

The last but not the least condition of Collective Impact is backbone support. This can be explained as the presence of independent, dedicated staff providing support and fulfilling secretariat and other key functions for the ongoing operation of the Collective Impact [4, p. 5]. The backbone structure or organization works to ensure that the stakeholders make progress toward common agenda by facilitating the other four conditions. Collective impact researchers have identified six key roles or functions of backbone organizations. These include guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources [15].

Kania, Kramer, and Hanleybrown [15] also describe three phases of Collective Impact, in addition to the five key conditions. These phases are titled as follows: phase 1 - initiate action, phase 2 - organize for im-

pact, and phase 3 - sustain action and impact. The duration of each phase is different and flexible, however the practitioners observed that the first two phases last between six months and two years, while the third phase may last from three to fifteen years. By dividing a Collective Impact initiative into stages, progress towards resolving a complex social problem becomes more measurable and successes at early stages can be recognized and celebrated [15]. However, the three phased approach is not the only way to break a Collective Impact intervention into stages. The Tamarack Institute [24] offers a more detailed five-phase framework: phase 1 - generating ideas and organizing dialogues, phase 2 - initiating action, phase 3 - organizing for impact, phase 4 - beginning implementation, and phase 5 - sustaining action and impact. However, the similarities are clearly observable. We can observe that both approaches to phasing emphasize stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, and continuous learning.

Limitations and Critiques of Collective Impact Methodology

Despite the fact that method popularity is growing, Collective Impact methodology has faced significant critiques. Tom Wolff [30, p. 1-11] identified ten limitations, including: the lack of real engagement with communities whose problems he CI intends to solve, top-down approach building on business consulting experience, insufficient attention to policy and system-level change, neglect of social justice core and assumptions that the coalition, implementing CI can secure funding for a well-resourced backbone organization. Karp and Lundy-Wagner, in their turn, [17, p. 1-4] highlight challenges, such as the lack of standardized and clear definition, difficulties in continuous and effective cross-sector collaboration as well as measurement and evaluation challenges. Schmitz [21] identifies ten dangers of Collective Impact going wrong. These dangers include: pro forma meetings, loss of focus on core values, decreasing accountability and lack of appropriate and trustworthy authority among working group members. These critiques underscore that without flexible approaches, well adapted to context, Collective Impact may remain a theoretical framework without significant practical results.

Practical Applications of Collective Impact Methodology. The Case of The Family Care First Initiative in Cambodia

Cambodia was selected in 2015 as the first country to pilot Family Care First (FCF) initiative, against a backdrop of pressing need. At that time over 16,000 children lived in residential institutions [20, p. 23]. Numerous non-governmental organizations were already active in child protection but have always worked in isolation without structured coordination and common agenda oof activities. In spring 2014, through a participatory co-creation process, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) requested the Global Alliance for Children (GAC) to submit a proposal for organizing and coordinating the Family Care First (FCF) initiative in Cambodia, applying the Collective Impact methodology. Proposal to apply this method was made by USAID's Development Lab. So, CI was adopted as the initiative's foundation, and subsequently organization "Save the Children" was selected as an implementation partner to complement GAC's role in coordination [23, p. 7]. FCF Cambodia adopted the CI model under the leadership of Cambodian government [10, p. 2]. In their turn *Save the Children*, possessing strong local presence, assumed the role of a backbone organization [2]. However, structural challenges emerged as it becomes clear from GAC evaluation report noting that *"dual arrangements... led to specific challenges that were critical for the two principal organizations... to address and overcome"* [23, p. 7]. Lack of rigorous clarification of roles in initiative coordination, led to overlaps and frustrations, with local staff unsure which organization to approach for guidance [23, p. 8]. Ambiguity about whether GAC was *"a funder group or an NGO group with special access"* [23, p. 8] undermined trust and made the initiative be seen as strongly US-centered [23, p. 11]. Tension between expatriate and local professionals represented another challenge [23, p. 8]. Local Cambodian staff lacked autonomous decision-making authority and important decisions often were taken in Washington [23, p. 14]. In 2017, the evaluation identified *"high levels of confusion among local actors regarding GAC's role"* and documented that *"lack of clear definitions of roles and responsibilities negatively affected coordination processes and diminished trust among actors"* [22, pp. 7-8]. Following evaluation and restructuring, coordination was organized under Save the Children's sole leadership, with the FCF network growing to over 60 member organizations [12, p. 5]. Lessons from this experience emphasize the importance of transparent governance with clear mandate, need for

a diversified sources of financing, knowledgeable and empowered local leadership, evidence-based approaches to programming and strategic engagement of all relevant actors [23, p. 10-14].

Changing the Way We Care Initiative in Moldova

Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC) is a global initiative launched in 2018 to promote safe, nurturing family care for children [28, p. 5]. Due to its unique experience and success in child-care reform, Moldova was selected as one of five demonstration countries, alongside Guatemala, Haiti, India, and Kenya, each in their turn being representative of a certain childcare context. Later, in 2021, under USAID funding, CTWWC Moldova adopted a Collective Impact methodology, recognizing that sustainable reform required coordinated action among government actors, civil society, faith-based groups, and international partners. CTWWC's theory of change emphasized the nested nature of reform work, more specifically, driving change locally, at the level of children and families, nationally within care systems, regionally and globally through learning and influence approaches [28, p. 5]. The initiative's revised Results Framework from 2023 focuses specifically on: *"National (and subnational) care systems in demonstration countries are strengthened, with government coordination, to provide care in alignment with UN-endorsed Guidelines on the Alternative Care for Children"* [28, p. 6]. Notably, prior to CTWWC's launch, Moldova was mentioned in USAID and Global Alliance for Children (GAC) analyses as a country with a demonstrated success in residential care reform, offering foundations for Collective Impact initiatives [23, p. 6].

The Six Conditions for Systems Change Framework

The Six Conditions for Systems Change framework, developed by Kania, Kramer, and Senge [16], provides an analytical tool for investigating systemic changes. The framework identifies three levels of conditions for system change. The top or the explicit level is the most visible and formal. It includes three key conditions, such as policies, practices and resource flows. At the middle, less visible semi-explicit level, authors place two conditions. These are relationships & connections and power dynamics or, in other words - distribution of decision-making authority. The deepest and the least visible is the implicit level. It includes only one condition - mental models. These are deeply held beliefs and assumptions that shape thinking and action) [16, pp. 6-8].

As Kania et al. [16, p. 7] emphasize, *"foundations have shown increasing interest in supporting comprehensive community change, Collective Impact, and other methodologies that create cross-sector coalitions, engage affected communities in developing solutions, and address equity issues. These efforts can begin to address both relationships and power dynamics"*. The framework builds on systems thinking traditions, particularly Donella Meadows' Iceberg Model [26], which similarly includes visible events, patterns of behavior, system structures and mental models. The ABLe Change Framework developed by Foster-Fishman and Watson, [7] also emphasizes the interplay between the content, what is changing or needs to be changed and process, or the way the change occurs.

Opportunities for Researching Collective Impact in Moldova

Outcome Harvesting (OH), developed by Wilson-Grau [29], is a methodology for retrospective identification followed by analysis of specific changes or so-called "outcomes", achieved in the process of realization of projects, programs or initiatives. The methodology is specially designed for complex contexts where *"relationships between cause and effect are difficult to understand both in the planning process and in the implementation process"* [28, p. 1].

The methodology, as described by author, includes six essential steps [29, p. 8]. Step one - designing the harvest, step two - reviewing documentation to identify potential observable changes, step three includes engaging individuals with contextual and program knowledge to ask "What changed? How did the intervention contribute?". Step four suggests external substantiation or evaluation by independent consultants or researchers. At step five, Outcome Harvesting practitioners perform analysis and interpretation of the collected data and at step six, data and information are used for decision-making. The suggested data collection instrument is designed as a simple chart and includes four elements: the outcome, which can be expected or unexpected, positive or negative, the outcome's relevance to intervention objectives or results framework, the intervention's contribution to the observed behavior change and the information source [29, p. 55]. Each element must be written according to well-structured and quite strict rules and include verifiable information [29, p. 41].

Research Design for Studying Collective Impact in Moldova

As any recent phenomena, Collective Impact initiatives requires innovative research methodologies. At the same time, the approaches need to be designed to capture complexity, unpredictability and collaborative nature [1, p. 32]. Within current research, it is suggested to apply mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure comprehensive and rigorous overview.

Through documentary analysis, researches will examine available initiative documents including meeting notes, quarterly and evaluation reports, policy documents, and quantitative data on meetings, events, and participants. As Bowen [3, p. 27] notes, *"organizational and institutional documents have been a staple in qualitative research for many years."* Expert interviews with key stakeholders will help researchers to explore perspectives, challenges, and strategies in a greater level of detail as well as unpack details, not discovered during the documentary analysis. Semi-structured interview guides, adapted for respondents owning different knowledge are structured around the five key conditions of Collective Impact methodology and the Six Conditions for Systems Change framework. This approach will enable interview analysis against five key conditions as well as allow application of the selected theoretical model, The Six Conditions of Systems Change, described above.

Because Outcome Harvesting methodology was applied as a monitoring method within CTWWC, it provides a rich retrospective dataset for understanding how and in what ways initiative contributed to system strengthening and sector influence [28, p. 34]. The results will be further enriched and triangulated through key informant interviews with practitioners directly involved in the Collective Impact initiative in Moldova, providing deeper insight into the mechanisms of coordination, power dynamics, and relational work that stimulate system level change.

Moldova Case Study Results

By January 2025, through Outcome Harvesting Methodology, CTWWC Moldova had influenced and registered 90 examples of actors changing their behavior as a result, at least partially, of CTWWC interventions [28, p. 12]. The published report includes the results of quantitative analysis. Thus, there were observed and recorded 69 changes amongst national and subnational government actors, representing 76% of all outcomes. Nine outcomes were registered amongst residential care actors, equaling 10% of the total number. Four behavior changes were observed amongst civil society actors, 3 outcomes - amongst faith-based actors, and 3 were observed within the newly created network of people with experience of living in care [28, p. 12]. The team has also analyzed what exactly has changed and recorded 30 changes in commitment (34%), 13 changes in coordination (14%), 13 in legislation or policy (14%), 14 changes in service delivery (15%), 2 in financing, 8 in workforce, 4 in social norms, and 6 in evidence or monitoring and evaluation [28, p. 12]. The structure of the dataset also enabled analysis of the level of change. Thus 58 outcomes occurred at the national level (64%) and 33 were observed at subnational level, including rayon or local levels (36%) [28, p. 12].

The evaluation team moved further and analyzed the outcomes through the Six Conditions of System Change framework and revealed that behavior changes were observed across the three levels [28, p. 32]: At structural or explicit level, there were registered 14 outcomes under policies, 16 - under practices and 13 under resource flows. Notably, within the Collective Impact initiative, there were observed multiple changes under relational or semi-explicit level of system change. These include 12 outcomes under relationships and connections and 19 results under power dynamics. At the least visible, transformative level, under mental models condition of system change there were recorded 16 outcomes.

This distribution demonstrates that while explicit, structural changes in policies and practices were substantial, the initiative also achieved significant shifts at relational level, particularly in shifting power dynamics as well as made notable progress at the implicit level. As report authors observe, *"paying attention to semi-explicit conditions is critical for sustained progress"* and while transformative changes in mental models *"remain the most challenging to harvest"* their presence in the dataset suggests meaningful shifts in deeply held beliefs about child protection among Moldovan stakeholders [28, p. 30].

Behavior changes registered through Outcome Harvesting were organized in chains and visualized to vividly represent the system change pathway. It was interesting and insightful to take a closer look at the

chain of outcomes harvested in Moldova. The chain seems to reveal a consecutive narrative of systemic change centered on government coordination and commitment to end institutional care for separated children [28, p. 16, 20]. The systemic change occurred during three distinct stages, each building on the progress of the previous one. During the first stage, the focus was on establishing the coordination or backbone infrastructure. Due to strategic engagement and 2021 comprehensive analysis of Moldova care system, the analysis key recommendations were included into the draft of the National Program for Child Protection 2022-2026. Quite quickly, by November 2021, CTWWC had been formally acknowledged and included as partner, responsible for implementing 21 specific activities within the program's action plan [28, p. 16]. During the second stage, the collective centered on securing important policy commitments, deriving from the previous year's situational analysis. To achieve this, in June 2022, CTWWC convened the Financing for Better Care conference, at which the government made formal commitments. It is important to mention that during the same month, the Ministry prioritized the inclusion of foster care in Moldova's minimum social protection package [28, p. 16]. The third stage, as seen from the chain of outcomes, marked a shift towards accepting the need to continue childcare reform at the highest levels of government. Thus, in January 2023, the Prime Minister was approved to lead the National Council for Child Rights Protection, that was intended to formally serve as the backbone structure within the collective. In June 2023, during another conference, the President of Parliament has publicly committed to achieving zero children in residential institutions in Moldova by 2027 [28, p. 20]. Alternative family based care policy adjustments in August 2024, development and presentation of comprehensive deinstitutionalization plans in March 2025 followed this commitment [28, p. 20].

Research Opportunities and Recommendations

- The Six Conditions for Systems Change framework provides an analytical tool for investigating system change observable within Collective Impact initiative, offering a comprehensive framework for observing progress at three different levels, including explicit, semi-explicit, and implicit. Analysis of the experience of applying collective Impact and outcome harvesting in the context of the Republic of Moldova, contributes to the growth of theoretical and academic literature in both areas.

- Outcome Harvesting methodology proves valuable for evaluation and monitoring complex, multi-level interventions. Through this methodology researchers can capture emergent, non-linear, verifiable behavior changes of external actors, addressing the limitation arising from confirmation bias. Future research should build on the outcomes harvested in Moldova between 2019-2025 [28, p. 32].

- Methodological research and recommendations for adapting Outcome Harvesting methodology to monitoring interventions within Collective Impact initiatives would help to develop a comprehensive structural framework for other researchers and collective impact practitioners. The practical experience of applying OH, demonstrates both the benefits and challenges, including the need for clear guidance, regular refresher training, strong leadership, and persistence [28, p. 8]. Within this context, collecting and analyzing key informant interview data becomes essential for better understanding the peculiarities of implementation of Phase 3 of Collective Impact, where long-term institutionalization of reforms depends on trust, negotiation, and the shifts in power dynamics and coordination.

- As a structured methodology for solving complex social problems, Collective Impact has the potential to contribute to system strengthening in Moldova beyond childcare. There are significant opportunities for cross-sectoral application, e.g. in health, education, social protection, and European integration reforms.

Conclusions

Bringing together the theoretical foundations of Collective Impact with evidence from its practical application in Moldova, this article advances several conclusions.

- Collective Impact methodology is based on theoretical traditions, including resource mobilization theory and political process theory. These theories provide frameworks for understanding how social actors mobilize resources, coordinate action, and seize political opportunities to achieve systemic change.

- The five key conditions of Collective Impact, including common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support, in ensemble provide a structured approach to multi-sector collaboration, potentially addressing the limitations of isolated interventions.

- International applications, particularly the Family Care First initiative in Cambodia, offer valuable lessons for Moldovan contextual application of the methodology. This includes the importance of clear governance structures with clear and recognized definition of roles. Cambodia experience underlines the necessity of securing diversified financing. It is also important to secure empowered local leadership with genuine decision-making authority. When applying CI within childcare sector at the national level, it is important to use evidence-based programmatic practices and secure strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholder groups, from government to local communities.

- Experience within Changing the Way We Care Moldova initiative demonstrates that Collective Impact methodology can be effectively adapted to context, quite different from Cambodia, where childcare service provision is government funded, led and centralized.

- The Six Conditions for Systems Change framework and Outcome Harvesting methodology offer powerful tools for researching Collective Impact in Moldova. The framework enables analysis across explicit, semi-explicit, and implicit levels, while Outcome Harvesting captures emergent, non-linear changes often missed by traditional evaluation methods.

- Future research should apply the Six Conditions framework in the Moldovan context, combine Outcome Harvesting with key informant interviews to better analyze the dynamics of systemic change, and explore opportunities for cross-sectoral applications of Collective Impact methodology in health, education, and potential alignment with European integration reforms.

In the context of the Republic of Moldova, integrating Collective Impact methodology into different reform processes can open new opportunities for collaboration, relationship building and policy improvement. As Moldova progresses toward European Union integration and needs to solve multiple social problems, Collective Impact methodology can help align multiple actors, incl. government institutions, civil society, private sector, and development partners towards realizing common agenda and achieving shared goals. For instance, the first recommendation in child rights section of the EU recommendation is completing deinstitutionalization and developing alternative family-based care options [6, p. 116]. This exemplifies the kind of complex, multi-actor challenge that Collective Impact is designed to address.

Reinterpreted through the Moldovan experience, Collective Impact is not merely a North American product but a flexible methodology that can be adapted to diverse systemic contexts. The documented success in Moldova, with 90 behavioral changes among key actors, and Parliament commitment to end child institutionalization by 2027, demonstrates that with appropriate contextualization, Collective Impact can catalyze change at different levels per 6 conditions framework. Building and consolidating the collective capacity to generate knowledge from practice, interpret it through theoretical frameworks, and act upon it in a collaborative, adaptive, and persistent manner constitutes the ultimate purpose of any Collective Impact initiative and a promising opportunity for future research in the Republic of Moldova.

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