

COMPETING INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES:

SETTING THE TABLE FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

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Capstone Project

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

When we came together over a year ago as a Capstone Team, we had no idea where this project would lead us. Standing on the other side of this huge milestone, we want to acknowledge those who took this journey with us.

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Four years ago, I was a passenger commuting from Portland, Oregon, to Seattle, Washington. I knew I wanted to get my doctorate, but the path was unclear. At that moment, as I prayed, I heard God say, “Organizational Leadership.” Five minutes later, after a quick Google search, I was talking to the admissions office at Vanderbilt’s Peabody college. Six months later, I began my degree program.

Little did I know that I would be expecting my first child a year into the program. There were moments when I didn't think being a new mom, working full-time, and being in school would be possible, but here I stand on the other side of that mountain, recalling the faithfulness of God who brought me to this place.

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“I would have lost hope unless I would believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living”. Psalm 27:13

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	11
Partner Organization	12
The Problem.....	14
Examining the Literature	15
Collective Impact Initiatives	16
The Role of Institutional Logics	18
Types of Institutions	19
Competing Institutional Logics.....	20
Conceptual Framework.....	23
Research Questions	26
Project Design.....	27
Data Collection	28
Gathering Organizational Context	28
Conducting a Focus Group with Staff from The Contingent.....	29
Interviewing Individual Focus Group Participants and Other Key Staff at The Contingent	30
Interviewing Partner Organizations	31
Interview with a Culturally Specific Organization	33
Triangulating findings with document analysis	35
Limitations	35
Data Analysis	36
Open, Deductive, and Inductive Coding.....	36
Axial and Selective Codes	49
Findings.....	51
Recommendations.....	76
Recommendation 1	78
Recommendation 2	80
Recommendation 3	81
Recommendation 4	82
Recommendation 5	84

Recommendation 6	85
Recommendation 7	87
Conclusion	88
References.....	91
Appendix A.....	99
Appendix B.....	100
Appendix C.....	102
Appendix D.....	103

Introduction

It began with an observation. Jillana Goble visited a child welfare office in 2012 as a parent new to supporting Oregon's foster care system. She saw kids waiting, sitting near case workers scrambling to find a home and a family who would provide a warm bed for them that night. Knowing where they had come from but not where they were going, Goble saw vulnerable children alone in a system. An idea came. What if instead of watching the receiver click every time the case worker was told "not this time," the child had a shoe box filled with small toys, a coloring book, and a few personal items to provide a moment of worth, dignity, and humanity during one of the most uncertain moments of their life? What if this box, though a small act that would not fix any significant problems, could be something constant a case worker could rely on as they scrambled to find the child resources in a strained system?

From this moment, Welcome Boxes were born. Goble secured a small grant from the Christian evangelical church she and her family attended to create 300 shoe boxes to deliver to her local child welfare office. However, as people learned about her efforts, they wanted to get involved. Members of her congregation and other churches hopped on board. From banks to Sunday schools to other local nonprofits, the community showed their support of her efforts and willingness to get involved in Oregon's foster care system. As Goble sought to respond to the wave of interest from the Portland community, Welcome Boxes turned into makeovers of local child welfare offices and office buddies who sat with kids while case workers tried to find a placement and hot breakfasts being brought to child welfare workers by eager volunteers. Still, things were just beginning.

This was the genesis of Every Child Oregon, a collective impact initiative that "mobilizes community to uplift children and families impacted by foster care in Oregon" (Every Child

Oregon, 2022). Housed from a nonprofit called The Contingent, the initiative involves organizations from various institutions, including the government sector, churches, small and large businesses, and other nonprofits. Since its inception in 2012, Every Child has been successfully duplicated in 35 of the 36 counties in Oregon, franchising the model that began in Portland with a program guide for replication.

Through the support of a matching grant, as of 2022, Every Child Oregon has served over 3,500 children and families impacted by foster care and has become the most prominent recruiter of foster parents in Oregon.

(ECO) strives to increase the recruitment and retention of families who are willing to open their home to children in crisis. The strategy invites Oregonians to contribute to the need in their community by supplying tangible goods or services, volunteering, or caring for a child. By providing simple ways to engage, community members who likely never would have become resource parents are now interacting with child welfare in meaningful ways. (Every Child Handbook, 2022)

Partner Organization

As the nonprofit organization that houses the Every Child Oregon initiative, The Contingent's origin story resembles Goble's willingness to step into a need. In 2008, Ben Sand was a 24-year-old seminary student mentoring teens through a nationally known Christian ministry called Young Life in Portland, Oregon. After two of his mentees were involved in a tragedy, he began to use the lens of his Christian faith to think deeply about systems of racial and economic injustice and how they impacted the next generation. He posited that Portland needed leaders who looked like the community they were meant to serve to change the system. He

approached the president of the university he attended about bringing Act Six—a scholarship model that had achieved success in neighboring Washington state—to the university. The program would offer full-tuition scholarships each year to ten students of color from Portland who demonstrated a vision for using their education to lead and transform their local communities (Binder, 2018).

To Sand’s surprise, the university president agreed to his proposal. Shortly after the inception of Act Six, Sand founded the Portland Leadership Foundation, which became the umbrella nonprofit organization serving the Act Six scholarship initiative (Binder, 2018). As Act Six grew, so did the Portland Leadership Foundation, taking on other initiatives. So, when Jillana Goble, a member of the local church where Sand was an elder, watched her shoe boxes for kids in child welfare offices command a current of goodwill across the community, Sand offered her a salary and a place at the Portland Leadership Foundation to incubate her initiative further.

In 2020, the Portland Leadership Foundation changed its name to The Contingent, expanding its vision to serve not just Portland but the entire state of Oregon. With a mission to “empower leaders and mobilizes community for the common good” (Every Child Handbook, 2022), currently, The Contingent houses six different initiatives under three distinct pillars: Empowering Leaders, which involves a college internship program for students of color, Mobilizing Communities which encompasses Every Child Oregon, and Scholarships which includes the original Act Six scholarship program (see Appendix A for the organizational chart of The Contingent).

Kania and Kramer’s collective impact framework is prominent in the organization’s approach to these initiatives, which first appeared in the Stanford Social Innovation Review in 2011. Encouraging a community of actors to address societal problems, *collective impact*

identifies five conditions that lead to successful collaboration in social programs: (a) a common agenda, (b) shared measurement systems, (c) mutually reinforcing activities, (d) continuous communication, and (e) backbone support organizations. In its six initiatives, The Contingent views itself as the organization providing backbone support to a collective group of actors working towards a common goal.

Each of these initiatives involves cross-sector partnerships of organizations from different institutions, including public and private education, the faith community, local businesses, national corporations, the government sector, and other local nonprofits. As a result, over 42,000 Oregonians are involved with The Contingent as volunteers, partners, or beneficiaries of the programs they oversee (The Contingent, 2022).

As of September 2022, the organization employs 35 individuals, is governed by a board of community leaders, and is funded primarily through grants. The Contingent's commitment to pursuing an Oregon where leadership accurately represents the various demographics of their community is demonstrated by the diversity of the organization's staff. Comprised of former educators and nonprofit administrators from Black, Latino, Asian, and White communities, The Contingent staff also includes several graduates of their scholarship and internship programs.

Nine of these staff members serve the Every Child Oregon initiative directly. The Contingent is now discussing plans to launch the Every Child initiative in other states, with Goble's Welcome Boxes becoming a staple component of program implementation.

The Problem

As Every Child Oregon has expanded beyond Welcome Boxes to fourteen different activities, including respite nights for foster parents, service projects for foster families, and appreciation events for staff at the Oregon Department of Human Services, the number of

partners in the initiative has grown. Each organization brings its unique perspective, beliefs, values, and logics based on the institution to which it belongs. However, as The Contingent serves as the backbone organization supporting the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative, they often find themselves sitting in the middle of these competing institutional logics. With a strong desire to create a “third” space beyond polarizing views, The Contingent often feels pressure from partners to pick a side and declare whose value or logic takes precedence. Perhaps this tension is felt most keenly when the bureaucratic structure of the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) responsible for child welfare creates policies that come in tension with beliefs and values held by the faith community, felt needs of parents caring for foster children, and marginalization experienced by communities of color. Not only does this pressure undermine The Contingent’s value of creating a third space, but it has also caused them to watch partners sever ties with the organization and cease participation in the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative.

This project aimed to answer the following question: “How does The Contingent as a backbone organization identify and address competing logics between members of the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative?”

Examining the Literature

In addition to more deeply exploring the components of collective impact initiatives, this literature review examines the influence of competing institutional logics related to partnership and collaboration among cross-sector organizations. With the understanding that the partners involved in the Every Child collective impact initiative belong to larger institutions with specific value structures, such as the bureaucratic institution (Oregon Department of Human Services)

and the religious institutions (individual churches), we seek to unpack how organizations resolve competing logics that arise among partners of different institutions.

Additionally, we explored the idea of competing logics inside the institution as we watch churches (the religious institution) seek to reconcile traditional vs. conservative values and The Contingent (nonprofit institution) strive to stay true to its mission while maintaining funding for the Every Child Oregon initiative.

Using Yin and Jamali's (2021) framework of collaborative value creation through institutional work in social partnerships, we identify an approach to examine our problem of practice more thoroughly.

Collective Impact Initiatives

Kania and Kramer first introduced the idea of collective impact initiatives in 2011. Positing that isolated impact initiatives ask funders to pick which organization will have the most significant impact without ever genuinely addressing the root of complex societal problems, Kania and Kramer suggest that when organizations work together across sectors towards a common goal, actual societal change can occur. They define *collective impact* as “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (2011, p. 36). Their framework suggests that for collective impact initiatives to be successful, five conditions must be met:

1. **Common Agenda:** All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions.
2. **Shared Measurement:** Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
4. **Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
5. **Backbone Support:** Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies. (Kania & Kramer, 2013, p. 1)

Even though several government agencies, including the CDC, have readily embraced Kania and Kramer's framework, *collective impact* has drawn a growing number of critics. Many scholars are concerned that *collective impact* is not based on scholarly research and literature but on a corporate mindset. As evidence of effectiveness, Kania and Kramer touted the success of the Shape Up Somerville initiative that began in 2003 in Massachusetts, bringing together several cross-sector organizations to address childhood obesity in the Somerville community (FSG, 2013). A scan of the literature produced only a handful of empirical case studies regarding *collective impact*, with many conducted in the past three years. The most widely cited empirical study was cited by Flood et al. (2015), examining the efforts of cross-sector organizations in providing access to fresh food in San Francisco's Tenderloin District. Although their research outlines the initiative's successes, Flood et al. call into question whether the initiative was successful because it followed the conditions of collective impact or employed methods from other more well-established and researched community organizing models.

Critics of collective impact identify key weaknesses of the framework. In addition to neglecting scholarly research, collective impact takes a top-down approach, with the backbone

organization holding most of the power. This contrasts models that seek to place leadership and power with those most impacted by the problem. Collective impact does not call for any analysis of the power structure that holds up the social issues it attempts to solve. In contrast, other community organizing frameworks call for this analysis and plan for disruption to that power structure. In this way, collective impact initiatives fail to specifically call out racial equity and justice in their design and fail to address structural racism (Christens & Inzeo, 2015; Wolff et al., 2017). Additionally, although there is evidence that some collective impact initiatives impact policy (Flood et al., 2015), the framework does not explicitly call for addressing the legal and bureaucratic structures that often hold up structural racism and compound social problems (Wolff et al., 2017).

The issue of power becomes especially important when parties in the potential collective operate under different institutional logics, often disagreeing not only on ends but also on means. For example, the Every Child Oregon initiative includes partners from church organizations (religious institutions) and government bodies (bureaucratic institutions), and even businesses (operating within a corporate logic). For this reason, we explored institutional logics, then integrated institutional theory with the ideas associated with collective impact.

The Role of Institutional Logics

Requisite to collective impact initiatives are cross-sector organizations working together. These sectors can more readily be understood in the literature as being embedded in *institutions*, with each institution holding its *institutional logic*. Reay and Hinings (2009) explain that understanding the competing logics present in a context where collaboration and change are involved is essential to realizing change.

The study of institutional logic was first introduced in the field by Alford and Friedland in 1985. “Institutions,” they write, “are supraorganizational patterns of human activity by which individuals and organizations produce and reproduce their material subsistence and organize time and space. They are also symbolic systems, ways of ordering reality, and thereby rendering experiences of time and space meaningful” (Friedland & Alford, 1991; p. 243).

Building on this work, Jackall (1988) further defined institutional logic:

I mean the complicated, experientially constructed, and therefore contingent, set of rules, premiums, and sanctions that men and women in a particular context create and re-create in such a way that their behavior and accompanying perspectives are to some extent regularized and predictable. Put succinctly, an institutional logic is the way a particular social world works; of course, although individuals are participants in shaping the logic of institutions, they often experience this logic as an objective set of norms. (1988, p. 112)

Following Jackall’s definition, in 1999, Thornton and Ocasio published what has become the most widely circulated definition of institutional logics—“the socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, assumptions, values, and beliefs by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their daily activity” (1999, p. 804). Institutional logics are essential to understand and recognize because they significantly influence decision-making at individual and organizational levels (Dahmann & Grosvold, 2017; Giddens, 1984).

Types of Institutions

Alford and Friedland (1991) suggest five types of institutions exist in contemporary Western society—the Capitalist market, the bureaucratic state, democracy, families, and religion

or science. Each institution carries a unique logic as it relates to human activity. For example, Capitalism seeks to gain and commodify human activity; the bureaucratic state seeks to regulate human activity; democracy aims to participate in the control of human activity; family seeks to motivate human activity through community, loyalty, and reproduction; and religion (or science) aims to construct the reality and truth of human activity.

However, institutional logics are not limited to Alford and Friedland's original quintuplet of institutions. For example, Dunn and Jones (2010) examine the institution of medical care, Almandoz (2012) examines the institution of banking, and Rao, Monin, and Durand (2013) discuss the institution of French cuisine. Moreover, scholars note that multiple logics can exist inside each institution, even though a dominant logic often shapes thought and decision-making (Reay & Hinings, 2009; Scott, 2008; Thorton & Ocasio, 1999).

Competing Institutional Logics

The presence of multiple institutional logics can give way to competition among these logics. Commonly known as *competing logics*, scholars have noted that institutions can create contradictions within themselves, generating great challenges for organizations (Dahlmann and Grosvold, 2017; Jamali & Karam, 2013). Additionally, competing logics often occur as organizations from different institutional fields seek to collaborate.

Alford and Friedland (1991) note that under the logic of the bureaucratic state, individuals become legal subjects that are responsible by law to the state for their actions no matter the thoughts and opinions of the larger society. In contrast, they point to Galatians 3:25-29 to explain how the institution of the Christian religion views the individual as free from the governance of the law of man and responsible first to the law of Christ:

Now that our faith is in Christ, we do not need the Law to lead us. You are now children

of God because you have put your trust in Christ Jesus...God does not see you as a Jew or as a Greek. He does not see you as a servant or as a person free to work. He does not see you as a man or as a woman. You are all one in Christ. (NLV)

We see the competition of these two logics in Binder's 2007 case study examining how the religiously affiliated nonprofit of Parents Community (religious institution) strives to maintain its professional commitments while fulfilling requirements to maintain federal funding (bureaucratic state institution). She points to the creative agency of actors to create meaning as one of the key ways they resolve these competing institutional logics. Jamali and Karam (2013) have found that "These contradictions generate tensions and conflicts within and across institutions, which over time, help to reshape the consciousness of institutional inhabitants—or what they refer to as praxis" (p.36).

Much of the literature views competing logics through a lens of isomorphism—the idea that, eventually, one logic will dominate the other (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; D'Aunno et al., 1991; Marquis et al., 2007). Conflicts arise, especially in times of transition, when a new logic is introduced, and the other side supports the old logic; this continues until one side wins or reforms to the dominating logic (Reay & Hinings, 2009).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggest three processes through which isomorphism occurs. The first process is known as *coercive isomorphism*. Taking many forms, such as government mandates, social norms, or persuasion, this process involves one institution exerting pressure or authority on another until one institutional logic dominates. *Mimetic processes* are another means of isomorphism. When uncertainty and ambiguity arise in an environment, institutions model or mimic other institutions to create stability. For example, in Reay and Hingings' (2009) example of the Canadian government's demand for *business-like* medicine, the institution of the

bureaucratic state looked to the institution of the *capitalist market* to create a more efficient and stable medical system. Finally, *normative pressures* are the third isomorphic process. As fields of professionals define themselves (ex., teachers or bankers), they are normalized to the standards of that field through education and the filtering out processes that occur through hiring and promotion. In other words, the professional field teaches the institutional logics they are meant to embody.

However, scholars have recently shifted their attention away from isomorphism to explore how competing logics co-exist as organizations from different institutional fields collaborate and as new logics are introduced inside individual institution (Lounsbury, 2007; Marquis & Lounsbury, 2007; Reay & Hinings, 2005). In their 2009 study of changes to the medical system in Canada leading to the co-existence of *medical professionalism* and *business-like* logics, Reay and Hinings propose that “one logic does not have to dominate or replace another, but institutional change can occur when actors collaborate, which provides support for the co-existence of competing logics” (p. 648). This gives way to the idea of *institutional complexity*, which recognizes that actors inside an institution may be asked to respond to and cope with the presence of multiple institutional logics co-currently (Greenwood et al., 2011; Ocasio et al., 2017). The same is true when organizations from differing institutions seek to collaborate.

One means of supporting these co-existent logics is hybridity. This involves employing activities from logics held by organizations in different institutional fields to gain broader legitimacy and endorsement from a more extensive range of actors in the field. One of the benefits of hybrids is accessing a wide range of institutionalized templates that can be utilized in various distinctive ways. Hybrids can be developed in multiple ways other than typical social

and market logic, such as public-private partnerships from state, market, and civil society logics (Pache & Santos, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

Thus, as organizations from different institutional fields collaborate across sectors, it is not always clear how they resolve competing institutional logics to co-create value (Michel et al., 2018; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2013). In their 2021 study, Yin and Jamali examine how government, corporate and nonprofit organizations in China collaborate to address Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concerns. Their study asks, “*What kinds of institutional work do business, and nonprofit actors undertake to respond to multiple institutional logics unfolding in social partnerships? How does institutional work help with collaborative value creation of social partnerships*” (p. 2)?

Using interviews and document analysis to generate comparative case studies of nine different CSR partnerships in China, Yin and Jamali evaluate if these partnerships had generated value or demonstrated limited value outcomes. Leaning on the work of Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b), Bryson et al. (2006), and Steitanidi and Crane (2009), they developed a process model that includes three dimensions of collaborations: 1) initial conditions, 2) governance and structure, and 3) value creation.

Initial conditions are understood in terms of *problem framing*. Organizations seeking collaboration must identify the problem and show how collaboration will produce better outcomes than prior, independent action. *Negotiating interdependency* also occurs as organizations demonstrate how the partnership will help reduce uncertainty and manage resource scarcity (Yin & Jamali, 2021).

The model then moves to governance and structure. This begins with *goal alignment*. In their study, Yin and Jamali (2021) found that outcomes were impacted by whether or not organizations viewed their goals as collaborative or competitive. The framework then turns to *social bricolage*. Yin and Jamali (2021) explain that many organizations involved in CSRs had to address limited resources and develop solutions to overcome the limitations imposed on them by their resource environments. Finally, *adjusting to power asymmetries* is needed. This requires acknowledging that power imbalances exist inside of partnerships but regularly adjusting the power structure to meet the dynamic needs of the partnership.

Once initial conditions and governance structure are established, collaborative value creation can occur. This involves *advocating with various stakeholders*. “Advocacy refers to mobilizing support for the creation of an institution through direct and deliberate techniques of social suasion to reach an agreement for reallocating material resources and social capital” (Yin & Jamali, 2021; pp. 14-15). Successful partnerships tap into *societal-level discourse*, connecting their goals and discourse to those of other institutional fields. Yin and Jamali give the example that the most successful CSRs connected their work to policies and initiatives that are greatly important to the Chinese government. In this way, they were able to create greater value. In this way, many CSRs could *fill institutional voids*, often compensating for where the state has failed to govern or regulate in a way that benefits the public good.

All of this is mitigated by a partnership or substitution logic. Yin and Jamali describe partnership logics as an “either/and” mindset acknowledging the existence of tradeoffs and harmony inside partnerships. Joint ownership exists among partners, and roadblocks are seen as opportunities rather than framed through negativity. Additionally, goals, even when opposite, are

considered complementary rather than competitive. Partners keep shared goals and vision at the forefront and can move beyond resource constraints to generate creative solutions.

Conversely, substitution logics involve an “either/or” mindset “where one logic gains dominance over the other, with involved partners suggesting that they feel insufficiently empowered to employ institution work to bridge competing logics” (Yin & Jamali, 2021; p. 17). This conquest mentality often leads to the disbanding of partnerships. In practice, these usually take on a more traditional business relationship, with one party serving as the vendor and the other as the buyer. One party gains power in the partnership instead of maintaining a delicate balance of power.

Yin and Jamali (2021) lay out this framework in the below process model (Fig. 1).

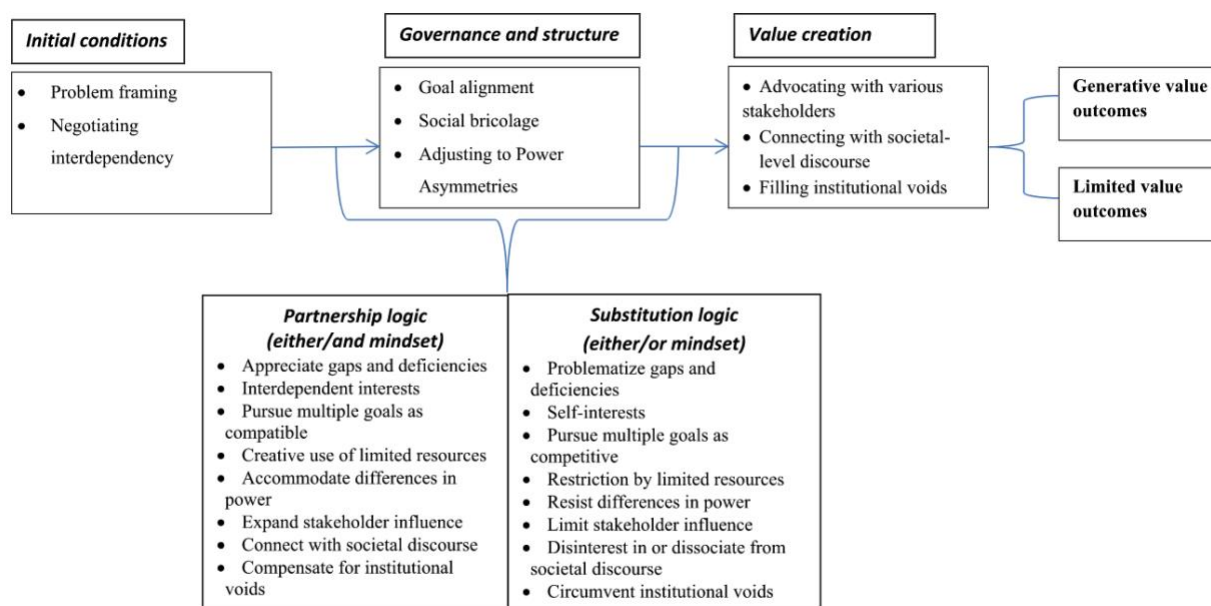


Fig. 1 A Process model of collaborative value creation through institutional work in social partnerships

For our study, we have adapted the framework slightly. As a *collective impact* initiative, the organizations involved in Every Child Oregon are governed by the five conditions in Kania and Kramer’s framework (a) a common agenda, (b) shared measurement, (c) mutually

reinforcing activities, (d) continuous communication, and (e) backbone organization support (The Contingent). Therefore, we seek to understand our problem of practice through the lens of Yin and Jamali's process model of collaborative value creation through institutional work in social partnerships while substituting the governance structure of goal alignment, social bricolage and adjusting to power asymmetries with the five conditions for collective impact (see Fig 2).

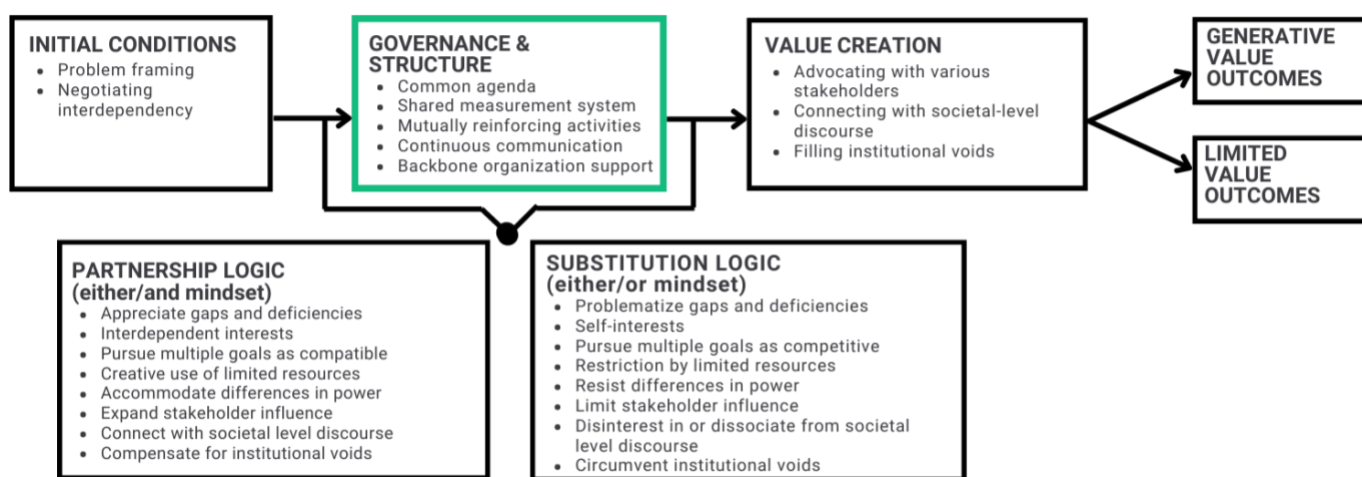


Fig. 2 A process model of collaborative value creation through institutional work and collaborative impact in social partnerships

Research Questions

Recognizing that The Every Child initiative seeks to leverage cross-sector partnerships with competing institutional logics to bring about value creation, we lean on Yin and Jamali's model to generate the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: *How are the initial conditions of problem framing and negotiating interdependency understood among partners? More specifically—*
 - *How does The Contingent help frame the problem between parties as the backbone organization?*

- *How does The Contingent negotiate the interdependencies between parties?*
- *Research Question 2: How do institutional logic(s) inform understanding and interpretation of common agenda setting, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and the role of a backbone organization among partners involved in the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative, including The Contingent?*
- *Research Question 3: How do competing logics generate or limit value creation?*
More specifically—
 - *What competing logics exist among partners in the Every Child Oregon collaborative initiative?*
 - *What is the impact of, the extent, and the type of difference in logics on moving to a partnership or substitution logics between The Contingent and prospective partners on value creation?*
 - *How do these logics/understandings align or differ from those of other organizations involved in the collective impact initiative?*

Project Design

For this exploratory qualitative project, we used a comparative case-study design. Collective impact initiatives involve multiple partner organizations. Although each organization has a relationship with the whole, they also have individual relationships with other partners. Thus, we identified individual, organizational partners as our unit of analysis and sought to compare two pairs of partner organizations—one pair that had experienced significant conflict in their relationship and a second pair that represented The Contingent’s view of an ideal partnership relationship. Through a focus group and semi-structured interviews, we uncovered

partners' perspectives, learning more about their collaboration experiences within the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative. In addition, document analysis provided triangulation with interview data, helping us better address our research questions. Table 1 summarizes the methods and data collection tools implemented.

Table 1

Research Method	Data Collection Tool	Type of Collection
Qualitative	Focus Group	Purposive: With staff from The Contingent
Qualitative	Semi-structured Interviews	Purposive and open: With representatives from The Contingent, ODHS, and nonprofit partnerships
Qualitative	Documentation	Purposive: Websites, handbooks, emails, contracts, goal-setting forms, theory of change model

Data Collection

Data collection began with purposive sampling. We intentionally curated a step-by-step process, starting with a general understanding of The Every Child Oregon Initiative and the role of The Contingent as the backbone organization and then narrowing our focus to specific partner organizations. Our data collection process progressed with the following steps:

1. Gathering of organizational context
2. Conducting a focus group with staff from The Contingent
3. Interviewing individual focus group participants and other key staff at The Contingent
4. Interviewing partner organizations
5. Triangulating findings with document analysis

Gathering Organizational Context

The Contingent provided access to The Every Child Oregon handbook and the current working draft of The Every Child's Theory of Change Model. In addition to meeting with our

primary organizational contact, we began to review these documents to familiarize ourselves further with the program in preparation for data collection via a focus group and individual interviews.

Conducting a Focus Group with Staff from The Contingent

Working with our organizational contact at The Contingent, we identified eight staff members whose job responsibilities are supporting the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative or who regularly interface with the Every Child Oregon team at The Contingent. These included senior and associate program directors who directly support Every Child Oregon and executive-level directors who serve in research and strategic growth roles for The Contingent. These staff members were invited to a voluntary 90-minute focus group designed to uncover patterns of competing institutional logics experienced by staff at The Contingent and partner organizations involved in Every Child Oregon. The focus group occurred simultaneously in person and via Zoom, with five of the eight invited participants attending. This selective group of leaders brought diverse perspectives to the table due to their varying lengths of service and positions within the program.

Our main objective in meeting with the focus group was to learn more about their relationships with partner organizations. Using our conceptual framework as a guide, we sought to uncover how *Initial Conditions*, *Governance and Structure*, and *Value Creation* impacted partnerships, if at all. Additionally, through snowball sampling, we hoped to identify two pairs of partner organizations—one pair that had experienced significant conflict in their relationship and a second pair that represented The Contingent’s view of an ideal partnership relationship. To this end, the focus group identified the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)—the

governmental agency responsible for child welfare in the State of Oregon—and Imago Dei—a local evangelical church—as two foundational EC partners.

Focus group questions were created from every category of our conceptual framework, and each was presented to the whole group for anyone to respond with their unique perspective (See Appendix B). Questions were phrased to “generate rich, thick descriptive stories,” as presented by Kakali Bhattacharya (2017), including a variety of types (i.e., Grand Tour, Task-Related, and Contrast questions). Moreover, due to the various positions and tenures present at this “virtual table,” we expected to receive information that described a range of experiences with these partnerships. A transcript of the focus group session was created via Zoom and preliminarily analyzed for re-occurring themes and possible follow-up questions. Individual interviews with members of this focus group were then immediately scheduled.

Interviewing Individual Focus Group Participants and Other Key Staff at The Contingent

Following the focus group, we requested voluntary individual interviews with each participant to explore further and test emerging themes. These 45-minute conversations allowed interviewees to further unpack and clarify their responses to key questions during the focus group conversations. Three of the five focus group members participated. Each was conducted over Zoom with at least two members of the capstone team present. These semi-structured interviews were intended to drill down further on the experiences of each EC staff member related to their previous focus group comments and their direct relationships with the identified ODHS and nonprofit partnerships. They included questions related to two primary emerging themes: 1) trust and 2) a commonly expressed desire to better partner with culturally specific organizations. These interviews were again designed with a deductive approach meant to focus

conversations around the topics of our conceptual framework but structured to allow for honest reflection on any newly emerging ideas and concepts.

A 60-minute interview was also conducted via Zoom with the founder of The Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative, who was invited to the focus group but unable to attend. In addition to the questions asked of all interview participants, part of this interview centered on learning more about the genesis and historical context of Every Child Oregon.

Interviewing Partner Organizations

Two significant Every Child Oregon partnerships were identified for comparative analysis by sourcing the focus group for a snowball sample. Here, we adjusted our original study design. From our initial analysis of the initiative, we believed that although The Contingent staff often served as the intermediary between all organizations working together towards collective impact, community nonprofits had direct relationships with each other or with ODHS. However, during the focus groups and interviews with The Contingent staff, we learned that from their view, they were always the intermediary with partner organizations coming through them to connect to ODHS. Additionally, they were uncomfortable connecting us to organizations where partnership dynamics were currently or previously tenuous. Thus, instead of comparing a pair of organizations in an ideal partnership to a pair of organizations in a strained partnership, we shifted our approach to compare the relationship of The Contingent with ODHS to that of community-based organizations.

More specifically, The Contingent sent email introductions to their primary contact from ODHS and their main contact at Imago Dei, an evangelical church in Portland, Oregon, which incubated the very first Every Child Oregon partnership. Here we began our comparative

analysis through 60-minute interviews conducted over Zoom with a sole representative from each partnering organization and our capstone team.

Again, these candid interview questions were structured around our framework with adjustments to reflect the nature of each partnering organization. These interviews aimed to draw out unique perspectives of their EC partnership, particularly the strengths and weaknesses of past experiences with EC. Table 2 demonstrates the progression and framework of the questions asked in these interviews.

Table 2
Interview Questions for Every Child Partners

PART I: INITIAL CONDITIONS

Problem Framing

1. Can you explain the history of your partnership with the Every Child Oregon program? Why did xxx decide to partner with EC?

Negotiating Interdependency

2. Can you shed some light on why or how this partnership works well/ or not so well? What are ways the partnership can improve?

PART II: GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURE

Common Agenda

3. What's the goal of this initiative? What values do you share with EC? What values do you share with ODHS? Have these changed over time?

Continuous Communication

4. How do you communicate with EC? How do you communicate with your staff about EC?

Shared Measurement

5. What data or measures do you report to EC? Are you held accountable for providing this information? If so, how are you held accountable? How do you know if the initiative is succeeding?

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

6. What coordinated activities help reinforce the initiative and your participation?

Backbone Organization Support

7. Can you think of a situation when conflict arose between the two organizations? What did that look like? How was it solved?

PART III: VALUE CREATION

8. Why is it important to work with nonprofits such as the Every Child Oregon program? What do you hope to gain from these interactions?

These partner organization interviews revealed new themes of power dynamics, unmet expectations, fear of overstepping relational boundaries, relational proximity, and motivations. With the recognition of these new themes, we quickly realized that the perspectives of additional partners would be needed to test whether these findings were more generalizable across the collaboration or the isolated experiences of specific partners. After requesting from The Contingent to organizations involved in the initiative, we were provided a selective list of additional church partners. We emailed these partners and received one response from a church. The Contingent staff had identified as one of the strongest partners involved in the initiative. We were able to conduct a 60-minute interview with the pastor.

Additionally, the interviewee from ODHS introduced us to two additional ODHS staff members involved in Every Child Oregon via email. One of the two contacts agreed to a 60-minute interview.

Interview with a Culturally Specific Organization

During the focus group and individual interviews with The Contingent staff, interviewees spoke strongly of the need for more culturally specific organizations in the Every Child Oregon initiative—especially from the African American community. Using convenience sampling, we conducted a 60-minute interview with a prominent church and nonprofit leader in Portland’s African American community who had extensive personal and professional experiences with Oregon’s foster care system but no knowledge of the Every Child Oregon program. Although there was some overlap with the interview protocol created for existing partners, this interview focused on the opportunities and barriers to a partnership through Every Child (see Table 3).

Table 3
Interview Questions for Culturally Specific Organizations

PART I: INITIAL CONDITIONS

Problem Framing

1. Can you explain your nonprofit's role in the community and the other hats you have worn as a community leader?
2. What do you know about The Contingent or the Every Child Program?
3. As you think about the community you serve, would you partner with an organization like EC? Why or why not? Do you think initiatives like these address the needs of your community?
4. How does foster care impact your community?

Negotiating Interdependency

5. What resources are you aware of in your community regarding foster care? Are community members involved?
6. Do you feel your community has a voice at the table? Why or why not?
7. When it comes to foster care, to what resources, people, or programs do you or your community have access? Is there access you don't have that you would like to have?

PART II: GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

Common Agenda

8. What values do you share with ODHS? Have these changed over time?

Continuous Communication

9. Do you feel your community has any agency to impact the system? Why or why not? What kind of agency would you like to have?
10. What do you feel is communicated to your community about foster care from other communities (ex., the White community, the state, etc.)

Shared Measurement

11. Regarding the foster care system, what would you use to measure success?

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

12. What would it look like for your community to be supported in foster care? Is this something you think the community wants?

Backbone Organization Support

13. What do you think are the pros and cons of one Oregon organization being the conduit to support these efforts?
14. Are you aware of other organizations doing similar work not involved in EC?

PART III: VALUE CREATION

15. Is there value in collaborations such as EC? Why or why not? If so, what do you think the value is?
16. What would make you say, "We have moved the needle," regarding foster care in Oregon?

Triangulating findings with document analysis

To triangulate findings from interviews and the focus group, we turned to document analysis. Our organizational contact at The Contingent provided two principal documents to assist in our fundamental understanding of what the Every Child Oregon initiative was created to do. The first was their Every Child Oregon Handbook, recently updated in February 2022. This 230-page document serves as the comprehensive guide for all staff and prospective partners on the how, what, why, and when of program activities, goals, and mission. The second principal document was the Every Child Oregon program's Theory of Change Model (see Appendix C). This document describes the perceived goals, dependencies, and key metrics to be considered as the initiative progresses.

Additionally, we sourced individuals for prominent documents they mentioned during their interviews. These included the Every Child Annual Goal Setting Template (a document designed by The Contingent staff to assist ODHS staff in mapping out realistic and achievable goals toward a shared strategic vision), specific partner contracts, and emails. Additionally, we analyzed The Contingent, ODHS, and church partners' websites for more information about Every Child Oregon.

Limitations

Although the collected data highlighted yielded significant findings, a larger sample size would generate more generalizable results within the initiative. Wanting to protect relationships, The Contingent provided careful access to partners resulting in a small sample size. The partners we were given access to were all churches, although, The Every Child Oregon initiative also includes community and business partners, limiting the scope of our findings. Additionally, The Contingent was interested in learning more about barriers to entry for the culturally specific

organizations connected to the Every Child Oregon initiative. However, they did not want to provide access to these relationships without agreement that we would compensate individuals for their time interviewing. After consulting with the Institutional Review Board, we were advised that this would go against research best practices and had to find other avenues to collect this data.

The Every Child Oregon initiative spans 35 of Oregon's 36 counties. Our interviews covered three of these counties, centering on some of Oregon's largest cities, including Portland, Bend, and Salem. The perspectives of more rural areas were not included in our analysis or findings, which we recognize may impact the competing logics uncovered. Additionally, each county has an independent 501c(3) organization that serves as the backbone for the initiative in that county and reports to The Contingent as subsidiaries. The time and scope of this project did not allow us to interview any of these organizations or their affiliated church and community partners. Interviews were focused on the experiences of partners affiliated with the Every Child PDX team serving Portland, Oregon, which is staffed by The Contingent.

Data Analysis

Open, Deductive, and Inductive Coding

Transcripts from all interviews were created via Rev.com. These and the focus group transcript and supporting documents were uploaded into Dedoose for coding. Table 4 shows the progression of deductive to inductive emerging codes as data was added to analyze in Dedoose.

Table 4 Deductive and Inductive Coding	
Deductive coding	Inductive coding (first round)
Initial Conditions	Competing Logics
Negotiating Interdependency	Partnership Logic
Problem Framing	Substitution Logic
Governance and Structure	Trust
Backbone Organization Support	Cultural Sensitivity: Dignity & Equity
Common Agenda	
Continuous Communication	Inductive coding (second round)
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Overstep/Hesitancy
Shared Measurement System	Power Dynamics
Value Creation	Relational Proximity
Advocating with Various Stakeholders	Shared Values
Connecting with Societal Level Discourse	Unmet Expectations
Filling Institutional Voids	The Table

We designed a five-step process for the analytical review of our qualitative data guided by the recommendations of Carl & Ravitch (2021, p. 260). Our design considered the reliability and validity of our analysis. Each transcript and document was coded multiple times by at least two members of our team and followed the below progression:

1. Read the transcript with no coding
2. Draft memo addressing the following questions:
 - a. Emerging learnings
 - b. Lingering questions
 - c. Reactivity
 - d. Ideas and thoughts about potential codes
 - e. How does the emerging learning map onto and/or challenge my theoretical and/or conceptual framework?
 - f. What literature do I need to consult or reread?

3. Open coding of transcript
4. Deductive coding of transcript
5. Inductive coding of transcript

Throughout this process, team discussion, memo creation, and review encouraged emerging learnings, reactivity, and lingering questions to be addressed. We analyzed the data through the lens of our conceptual framework and literature review.

As our research questions centered on our theoretical framework, we began the coding process with deductive codes. Through this process, new themes emerged. Following the framework of Yin & Jamali (2021), we started to identify comments supporting partnership or substitution logics. These comments, especially made by The Contingent staff, identified examples of where shared logics and competing logics existed among partners. In some cases, competing logics came into collaboration through partnership logics producing generative value outcomes. In other cases, competing logics came into isomorphism through substitution logics producing limited value outcomes. The themes of trust and cultural sensitivity emerged, though not a part of our original framework. Table 5 highlights examples of these emergent themes.

Conceptual Framework Dimension	Open Code	Case Evidence
Initial Conditions	<p style="text-align: center;">Trust</p> <p><i>A means to coping with uncertainty (Butler & Gill, 1995), an enabling condition that facilitates the formation of ongoing networks (Ring, 1997), required to initiate collaboration (Webb, 1991)</i></p>	<p>"So, we have built this trust with the Agency, we have a place at the table with them."</p> <p>"Well, we hope to be able to really gain, um, a partner that is a trusted community partner. I mean, we've already gained that but this particular partner has an established trust and presence with a community with which we do not. Historical distrust and historical kind of trauma that the state of Oregon child welfare has kind of earned its reputation, right?"</p> <p>"Ultimately, there's been a foundation of trust that's allowed us to weather that and, I think a humility on both sides to say what can we learn from you."</p>

<p>Governance & Structure</p>	<p>Cultural Sensitivity</p> <p><i>The extent to which ethnic/ cultural characteristics, experiences, norms, values, behavioral patterns, and beliefs of a target population, as well as relevant historical, environmental, and social forces, are incorporated in the design, delivery, and evaluation of targeted materials and programs (Resnicow et al., 1999).</i></p>	<p>"Having documented processes or having thought through pursuit, just in processes or the way that we organize events, for example, that are going to be mindful of and more friendly to attendees of color."</p> <p>"We want to be informed by people who have had experiences with our organization or they've experienced some kind of discrimination or harmful outreach by our organization. And we want to do better by listening to them and leading our work from their approach."</p> <p>"The church was expressing a lot of historic trauma from congregants that had tried to be become certified to care for their nieces and nephews and grandchildren who maybe had a prior offense and were denied. Now, the agency is really trying to screen people in versus screen people out, which is a huge distinction. However, someone in that meeting said, 'if somebody now is screened in to take care of their relative, how many certifiers of color are there at the north Portland child welfare office?'"</p>
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As interviews progressed to include church partners and ODHS, the themes of building trust and cultural sensitivity continued to emerge and subsequently converged with each other (see Table 6).

<p>Table 6 Theme Convergence</p>		
<p>Conceptual Framework Dimension</p>	<p>Emergent Themes</p>	<p>Case Evidence</p>
<p>Governance & Structure</p>	<p>Building Trust (through Cultural Sensitivity)</p>	<p>"And in order for us to do that, we have to understand the families with which we're working. So, we have a parent advisory council we work with that informs and looks at our policies and our constructs, and gives that feedback on child welfare work and our foster care work."</p> <p>"I just know that we, as an organization, are continuing to shift and try to make sure that our staff reflect the characteristics of the communities that we're working in."</p> <p>"So, it's not just needed, but it's strategic to have more trust established and built with leaders in communities of color because we know that building trust with leadership and those who are well respected within communities of color is going to be the most strategic way to build trust and create inroads for building trust on an individual level as well."</p>

		<p>"I would say some tribal groups, historically Confederate Umatilla tribes [is an example of a] culturally specific organization that is hesitant to work with Every Child yet we've made a lot of progress and developed a lot more trust."</p> <p>"We don't have any partnerships with culturally specific African American organizations. Because of the disproportionate representation of children of color in the system, and our original audiences—Every Child Oregon was mostly a movement started out of white, mostly evangelical, nondenominational churches—it's not just needed, but it's strategic for us to have more trust established and built with leaders in communities of color... Where are there gaps and opportunities for growth for us in terms of creating opportunities or removing potential barriers for folks from communities of color?"</p>
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Following Yin and Jamali's model, we added the codes of "partnership logic" and "substitution logic." Table 7 presents several examples of these logics, demonstrating that the Every Child initiative experiences power imbalances and creative solutions.

Table 7 Substitution Logic vs. Partnership Logic		
Conceptual Framework Dimension	Open Codes	Case Evidence
Value Creation	<p>Substitution Logic</p> <p><i>An "either/or" mindset "where one logic gains dominance over the other, with involved partners suggesting that they feel insufficiently empowered to employ institution work to bridge competing logics." This conquest mentality often leads to the disbanding of partnerships. In practice, these usually take on a more traditional business relationship, with one party serving as the vendor and the other</i></p>	<p>"A lobbyist coalition wanted Every Child to be part of it [but] was very negatively viewed and very aggressive in their approach—anti department of human services with no heartbeat for collaboration. It just wasn't a good fit."</p> <p>"Starbucks is a very different sized organization than Every Child and as a result of that, the culture of how decisions are made and how quickly they're [made] was very, very different."</p> <p>"We want to be able to share the gospel and our faith at the event, which is a no-no when we're talking about something that is partially funded by a state agency."</p> <p>"We want to be able to share the gospel and our faith at the event—which is a no-no when we're talking about something that is partially funded by a state agency."</p> <p>"There was removal of them being involved with Every Child as a result. It's just not a good fit anymore. The state put out new guidelines that resource parents, regardless of who they are, who they plan to accept in their home, they need to be willing to be affirming of gender pronouns of the youth in their care. And</p>

	<p><i>as the buyer. One party gains power in the partnership instead of maintaining a delicate balance of power (Yin & Jamali, 2020).</i></p>	<p>that's a no-no for, for this [faith community]. So essentially that was kind of the last straw for that community. And they actually started to put out some public statements saying, [ODHS] is intentionally staying away from trying to be a good partner to faith communities and is intentionally marginalizing and trying to oppress the involvement of faith communities in the foster care system."</p>
Value Creation	<p>Partnership Logic</p> <p><i>An "either/and" mindset acknowledges both the existence of tradeoffs and harmony inside partnerships. Joint ownership exists among partners, and roadblocks are seen as opportunities rather than framed through negativity. Additionally, goals, even when opposite, are considered complementary rather than competitive. Partners keep shared goals and vision at the forefront and can move beyond resource constraints to generate creative solutions (Yin & Jamali, 2020).</i></p>	<p>"And while it's important to show allyship and the state needs to demonstrate a commitment to things like diversity, equity and inclusion to help repair historic wrongdoings, we still continue to consider kind of this third way, or this third space. It doesn't need to be either/or. There is, what we call that third way of, you know, it's not Democrat versus Republican and really bringing it back to what's going to be in the best interest of outcomes for child welfare?"</p> <p>"Our lane was, we were creating the blueprint to make a relational bridge between the community and the child welfare office. [The new partner] lane was to walk with us. We were going to hold their hand and say, 'walk across the bridge and there some ways to do it.' So, we were like the liaisons, between the community and child welfare just through our relational posture with both and kind of relational credibility with both kind of meeting in the middle, so to speak."</p> <p>"Little did I know that Welcome Boxes would be a catalyst, really, I say for the community to begin thinking outside the box in a lot of ways. You know, there's nothing uniquely special about a Welcome Box. I think that the idea of helping local children in your community is always appealing, especially in Oregon where there's such an emphasis on local and community."</p> <p>"And, oh my gosh, you know, people kind of felt an energizing sense of encouragement on the DHS side, thinking we're not alone. Oh my gosh, people are like rooting for us. They are beginning to understand what we're doing and they're wanting to help."</p> <p>"Because it gave the opportunity for the values of the agency and the values of the community to align."</p>

More themes emerged as we interviewed an African American pastor not currently involved in the Every Child Oregon initiative. Significantly, themes related further to power dynamics and relational proximity developed within the conversations related to cultural sensitivity (see Table 8).

Table 8
Power Dynamics and Cultural Sensitivity

Conceptual Framework Dimension	Emergent Themes	Case Evidence
Initial Conditions	<p style="text-align: center;">Power Dynamics</p> <p><i>the ability or authority to influence others, to decide who will have access to resources, and to define reality or exercise control over oneself or others (Frontline Solutions)</i></p>	<p>"This has been ongoing since the beginning of Embrace Oregon. Folks within leadership at the state level, both within the DHS agency, as well as governmental authority positions acknowledge and recognize that in order for the system to improve statewide, the faith community is a pretty integral stakeholder. It's a very integral stakeholder in terms of a volunteer and support base."</p> <p>"I think important to people in our city is political correctness. And the trickiness with that is that that really like changes with the tide. It shifts so much depending on generation, who has power, who has the largest voice, who's kind of determining morality in any given community."</p> <p>"There are some things that did go well, but I would say, largely things that didn't go well, where, as a result of not having a similar level of decision making power for the same geography."</p> <p>"In Portland, that's a battle that we won around sun services. There were actually some sun contracts that got moved from some predominantly white organizations to SEI because we pushed on, they're not culturally specific and the kids are not being served. So that's when it was culturally responsive and culturally competent."</p> <p>"Yeah. You got, you got a whooping, you got snatched up and, and you got a whooping and, and sent to the room or whatever. And then it became frowned upon that you did that. So, then it was like, you better be careful. You can't whoop your kids anymore. And it was like, I'm whooping my kids. I don't care what these [government] people say. You know? And so [they're] not understanding culturally why that is, what's been taught, what's been ingrained as a culture around whooping, around punishment and around those things."</p> <p>"We had to keep that very clear line of church and state. We had to say "We're not going to proselytize at all. We're not going to be handing back boxes with cross necklaces in them, or Jesus loves you, or any of that stuff."...We were working with a government entity, and we needed to prove to them that we weren't going to cross those lines. So, all 500 of them were vetted by teams of people who showed up in the evenings to look through them, make certain that nobody had crossed the lines, and then we sealed them up and we sent them off. So, we gained some relationship there. We showed our local [O]DHS office that we were trustworthy."</p>
Value Creation	<p style="text-align: center;">Relational Proximity</p>	<p>"We've been more intentional seeking out for very specific partnerships and we've become an organization that can bring people together to a table to have conversations around key</p>

	<p><i>Sharing foci of social activity, geography, and common interest</i></p>	<p>issues. One example of that is when COVID hit there really was no forum for foster care organizations that were involved across the state to connect and to understand how COVID was impacting everybody's organizations and partnerships. Every Child set the stage for that and actually managed a monthly meeting for about nine months with those different organizations."</p> <p>"It feels beautiful to find an organization that could make space for faith communities in a way that honors them for who they are rather than using them for who they are."</p> <p>"I think that's an opportunity for The Contingent when we talk about, in Portland, not being able to find the table. Sometimes you have to build your own table. Yeah. <laugh>, right? And just start. We got a table and we just going to meet over here because we're tired of trying to figure out what you all are doing."</p> <p>"We were a strong church partner that had a lot of history and could speak to a lot of the last decade of work that we've been doing together...Do they know who to invite and, and who should sit there? ... I can name off certain people from other churches that I'm friends with as well that have been at the table as well. But I think those are, have been early adopters of the ministry or the agency and we kind of are the beginning. I'm not quite sure how you get at the seat at the table outside of that."</p>
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Iterative readings through each transcript led us to revisit the framework from Yin and Jamali (2021), which identified the concept of partnership logic vs. substitution logic that either supported or impeded collaboration. In considering the Governance & Structure dimension of our framework, we identified supporting evidence for instances when substitution logics established an isomorphic partnership and when partnership logics established a more collaborative partnership (see Table 9).

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 9 Isomorphism vs. Collaboration</p>		
<p>Conceptual Framework Dimension</p>	<p>Emergent Themes</p>	<p>Case Evidence</p>
<p>Governance & Structure</p>	<p>Isomorphism</p>	<p>"I would say one of the conversations was, what do we need Every Child for at this point? They're asking us for money, they're asking us for volunteers, but we could be supporting these people directly and we need volunteers to be caring for</p>

	<p><i>An "either/or" mindset "where one logic gains dominance over the other, with involved partners suggesting that they feel insufficiently empowered to employ institution work to bridge competing logics." This conquest mentality often leads to the disbanding of partnerships. In practice, these usually take on a more traditional business relationship, with one party serving as the vendor and the other as the buyer. One party gains power in the partnership instead of maintaining a delicate balance of power.</i></p>	<p>these families in house also right now. I've asked Every Child this question and I haven't received any feedback as to change my mind on that position."</p> <p>"Every Child has this tight relationship with the state, but then can I as a church leader and foster parent talk honestly with you about my experience? If you're kind of in bed with the government on this, who are you for?"</p> <p>"The kind that is an organization that does not commit to communicating with the whole community."</p> <p>"People are tired of trying to knock on the doors. It's exhausting. You try to get in with the county, to get in with the state. Who has time for that? It's just exhausting trying to do that."</p> <p>"With that, you know, when it ceases to be something that you're doing because you know it's right and that these kids need it. So, it becomes now a job with a paycheck. And you're just, you know, checking off the boxes."</p> <p>"We did have an awkward [invitation]. A marijuana shop wanted to get involved, and we have a lot of substance dependency that is part of the reason for child welfare involvement. So, we didn't feel like [this was] a great mission fit."</p> <p>"We have to take a side."</p> <p>"Who are we sending our people to? And will there be anyone that is culturally sensitive to their specific needs in that office? And the answer is very likely not."</p> <p>"And at the end of the day, it's going to be someone from dominant culture walking into their house, talking to them about that."</p>
<p>Governance & Structure</p>	<p>Collaboration</p> <p><i>An "either/and" mindset acknowledges both the existence of tradeoffs and harmony inside partnerships. Joint ownership exists among partners, and roadblocks are seen as opportunities rather than framed through negativity. Additionally, goals, even when opposite, are considered complementary rather</i></p>	<p>"Every Child has built up relational capital with the state in a way that they've been able to like make changes that other people have not been able to. And that like really resonates with [us], not in a like manipulative way, but in a way that we're like, yeah, it is possible to have hope and to create change."</p> <p>"So in the ones where we struggled a bit more, we did organize a face to face meeting, where we could sit down together and really clarify expectations talk through what some of the challenges or pain points or barriers to collaboration had been talked about what communication pathways will be most helpful or effective going forward so that we can have those regular kind of touch points or communication."</p> <p>"We've become an organization that can call [and] bring people together to a table to have conversations around key issues"</p>

	<p><i>than competitive. Partners keep shared goals and vision at the forefront and can move beyond resource constraints to generate creative solutions.</i></p>	<p>"That they be vetted specifically to make sure that they don't have any bias and that they understand culturally what it means to raise a Black child. That's from how do you do their hair? You know, our hair is not like you all's hair, so you can't do stuff. And I'm telling you, I've seen some Black foster kids and I'm like, Lord have mercy. Somebody's got to get to that mother and teach her how to do that child's hair. That hair's going to fall out. I mean, I've seen matted hair, I've seen all sorts of things. So, just to equip white families or any other majority family or even a Hispanic family, where this child is coming from, This is their culture, and how do you esteem their culture?"</p>
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Returning to our open codes, several stood out as significant in how the governance and structure of Every Child activities and experiences embody the requisite conditions of a collective impact initiative (See Table 10).

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 10 Governance & Structure as Collective Impact Conditions</p>		
Conceptual Framework Dimension	Open Code	Case Evidence
<p style="text-align: center;">Governance & Structure</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Common Agenda</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions.</i></p>	<p>"Every Child continues to kind of demonstrate, tell us, and then also demonstrate that they want to be the best partner that they possibly can with ODHS. And that's through the thick that's through the thin that's through the ugly that's when things don't quite go right, even within the scope of our partnership."</p> <p>"And then bringing those stakeholders together and allowing them to then discuss and hopefully get onto paper we're agreeing and have agreement on who is doing what towards each of those goals."</p> <p>"So how do we talk about healing? Right? These kids are going to, if they don't find some pathway to healing, they're going to age out and then you're going to see them in the justice system."</p> <p>"We don't want to be about just families in our church family...There are kids that are in great need in our own backyards, and what are we doing about that? How can we come alongside and make that journey any better for them or for the people that work with them?"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Governance & Structure</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Continuous Communication</p>	<p>"So, we have scheduled and set meetings. We communicate through email. They also produce a biannual report based on the grant that we are managing for every child. And so, we'll</p>

	<p><i>The process of regular meetings and communication among different participants to build up enough experience with each other to recognize, appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts, and create a common vocabulary. This includes seeing that their own interests will be treated fairly, and that decisions will be made on the basis of objective evidence and the best possible solution to the problem, not to favor the priorities of one organization over another.</i></p>	<p>show a history of the work and interventions that they've done. It has a good amount of data, and then they provide some recommendations for ways to improve both on their end and ours, and our partnership."</p> <p>"They partnered with Microsoft to be able to build one specifically for their organization and the data that they were able to collect was on an innovative approach to where our administrative data couldn't even match. We have a lot of data within our organization, but it's on server based programs. It's hard to actually mine and assess and analyze. And the leading edge technology that went into building their CRM allowed for great visual displays of the data that they're collecting."</p> <p>"So, our action plans are something that on a regular basis is shared with Every Child's staff. We also, because they share data with us from inquiry information, through an API exchange, we then return a data file set to Every Child so that they can compare our certified families."</p>
<p>Governance & Structure</p>	<p>Shared Measurement System</p> <p><i>Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations. This ensures all efforts remain aligned and also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures.</i></p>	<p>"Initially it was to grow the number of fostering families...there was a need back in 2012, 2013 for 883 more foster families in the Tri-County area...So the goal would be what if we had foster families that we're waiting? What if, what if instead of kids waiting, there are foster families that are trained and ready and willing and they're waiting for placements."</p> <p>"What would you use as a measure of success if we were able to say this system did what it was meant to do and it did it in the best way possible? I think the measure of success is looking at a kid that was in foster care at the age of 25. So, at the age of 25, are you working a living wage job? Have you gone to school or are you working in a trade that allows you to live independently?"</p> <p>"Part of the measurement of our effectiveness as an organization is not just how many people from the community we can mobilize and then sort of hand off, but ultimately how many of those people sign on to become foster parents."</p>

Lastly, within the dimension of Initial Conditions, experiences of negotiating interdependency led to discovery of challenges related to clarity of communication, goals and expectations. Furthermore, within the dimension of Value Creation, experiences of filling

institutional voids led to opportunities to address equity in the program. Table 11 shows evidence of these emerging themes of clarity and equity.

Table 11 Emerging Themes of Clarity & Equity		
Conceptual Framework Dimension	Emerging Themes	Case Evidence
Initial Conditions	<p>Negotiating Interdependency</p> <p><i>The use of collaborative partnerships to manage "turbulence and uncertainty in the resource environment"</i></p>	<p>"Folks within leadership at the state level both within the DHS agency, as well as governmental authority positions, [need] to acknowledge and recognize that in order for the system to improve statewide, the faith community is a pretty integral stakeholder."</p> <p>"So communities of color are especially inherently skeptical toward partnership with an entity that has been historically oppressive."</p> <p>"I would say that relationship before Every Child did not exist in any kind of way that looked healthy."</p>
Initial Conditions	<p>Clarity</p> <p><i>Common goals set in such a way that they resolve uncertainties in the project environment (Hong et al, 2004)</i></p>	<p>"I think a lot of that conflict between the state foster parent and church communities is so frustrating [because] there was never clarity. There's all these unspoken expectations. And if I'm Every Child, I probably want to leave some of that unspoken so that I can like earn some clout to keep doing what I know is so important. Right? I like do think what they're doing is important. So, I don't want to start the conversation with 'we probably won't ever really be able to help you with anything once you get going, but here's this box with a game in it.' That's not a great approach to nonprofit work. But that is the reality. And so that lack of clarity in the process has been a conflict."</p> <p>"I would say that it has been I have been curious about what the real heart and vision of every child is going forward at times. Okay. As somebody who's pretty well connected to that team I've still felt that way. And so I think that just in itself kind of speaks to the level of communication or how maybe things are communicated. There's not always clarity on what's the call or what's the vision, where are we going? That has felt like interesting to me at times."</p> <p>"What do you want from our church partnership? Do you want to know are people? Do you want volunteers and that's kind of what our relationship is? You just want volunteers to get sent to you? Are we recruiting foster parents? Are we supporting DHS?"</p>

		"Who are you for? What are we doing? How does this look? What's my invitation? I think that has been a little of the clunkiness over the years."
Value Creation	<p>Filling Institutional Voids</p> <p><i>Compensating for where the state has failed to govern or regulate in a way that benefits the public good</i></p>	<p>"They've been able to impact at every level from finding families to say yes to foster care, finding volunteers, to wrap around families that say yes, uh, to provide respite, tangible gifts, tangible goods, supports, um, peer mentoring for resource parents."</p> <p>"We want care for the caregivers—caring for the social workers who are in those positions of decision making around the lives of these kids....We want to be about the families in our church that are choosing to bring kids in. How do we care for them as they're caring for people's kids in a season where they're most vulnerable."</p> <p>"It doesn't need to be either or. There is what we call that third way. It's not Democrat versus Republican—really bringing it back to what's going to be in the best interest of outcomes for child welfare."</p>
Value Creation	<p>Equity</p> <p><i>Mobilizing support for the creation of an institution through direct and deliberate techniques of social suasion to reach an agreement for reallocating material resources and social capital</i></p>	<p>"We have this opportunity where we're engaging with hundreds of people that walk through our doors every Sunday. So, why not give them vision for how they can participate in this great work of providing homes for kids in crisis."</p> <p>"Because there was a system that was very disjointed with some racist policies, understaffed, and not equipped...But when you combine that with what happened in our community with gentrification and the fraying of the safety net around our kids—the safety net, especially for African American kids, youth, and young adults is frayed so much. We don't have a community anymore. And there's something to be said about having a place that you know is yours, that you know you're safe. There's some churches that can rally around you. There's some organizations that can rally around you...but, those, those nets are frayed. There's a lack of affordable housing, the gang problem, gun violence—all of the things. You can combine that with then not having the resources, not having the program strengthened in this hour, not having the church is strengthened in this hour to be able to answer. It's all in trouble if you ask me, and I can see it in our kids."</p> <p>"In Portland, that's a battle that we won around sun services. There were actually some sun contracts that got moved from some predominantly white organizations to SEI because we pushed on, they're not culturally specific and the kids are not being served. So that's when it was culturally responsive and culturally competent."</p> <p>"Where organization may have disproportionately opened up assessments on families that are Black or Hispanic or BIPOC communities where children might enter the foster care</p>

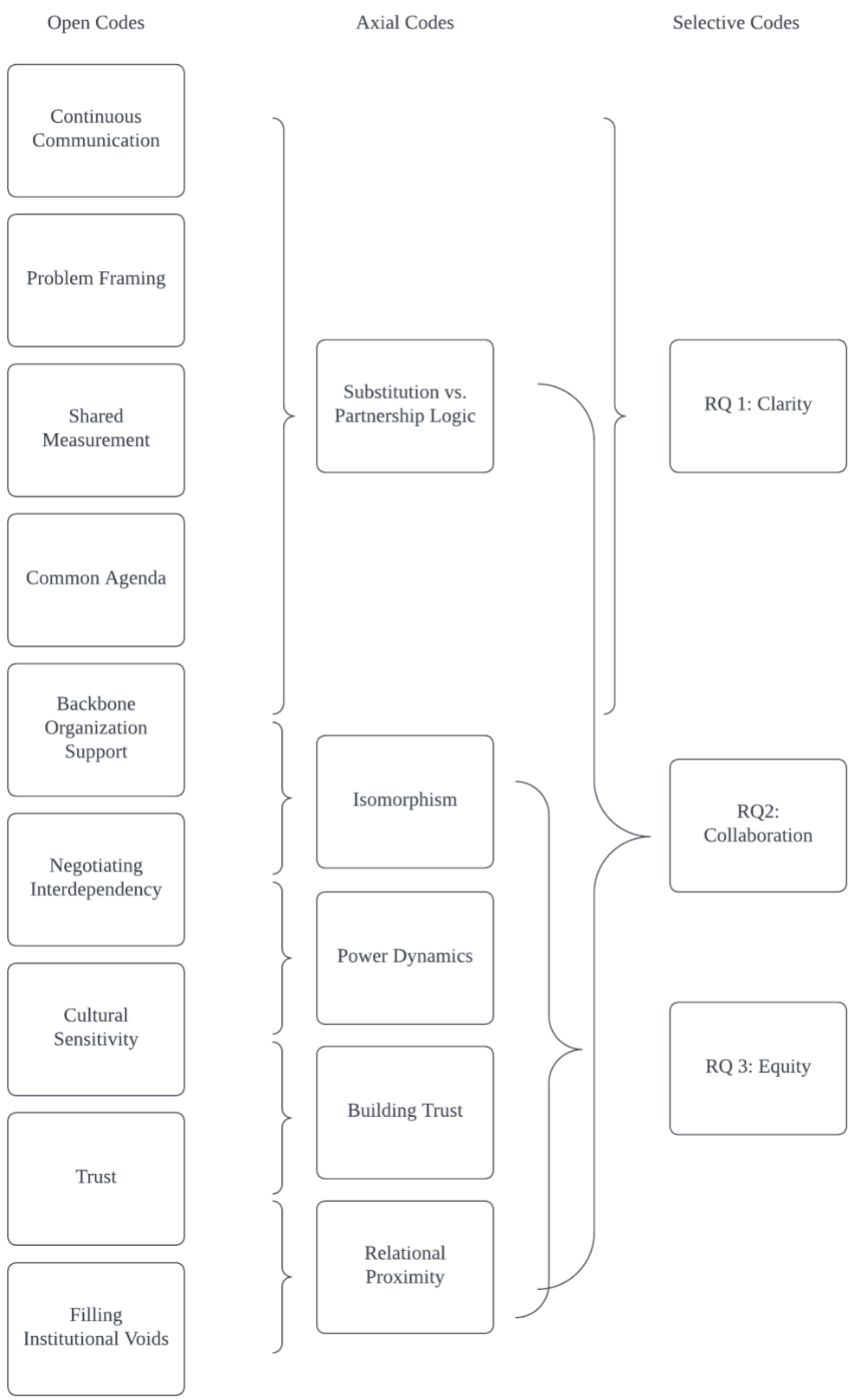
		system at a disproportional rate, depending on the color of their skin."
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Axial and Selective Codes

We identified emergent themes from our original deductive codes through open coding excerpts from interviews and documents. The primary open codes used in this analysis were Continuous Communication, Problem Framing, Shared Measurement, Common Agenda, Backbone Organization Support, Negotiating Interdependency, Cultural Sensitivity, Trust, and Filling Institutional Voids. These nine open codes were identified through Dedoose as significant due to their frequency of use and common overlap. From these open codes, five axial codes, Substitution vs. Partner Logic, Isomorphism, Power Dynamics, Building Trust, and Relational Proximity, emerged to define the parameters of our study.

As we sought to answer our research questions, the data that stood out through multiple repetitions of readings and coding led us to recognize that participants involved with the Every Child Oregon initiative consistently experienced pivotal, revelatory, and emotionally charged moments relating to one or more of these five distinctive axial themes. We further refined these themes to reflect the three dimensions of our conceptual framework of Initial Conditions, Governance and Structure, and Value Creation and our research questions. To connect directly to each dimension, we selected three codes of *Clarity* (RQ1: Initial Conditions), *Collaboration* (RQ2: Governance and Structure), and *Equity* (RQ3: Value Creation). While these axial codes and selective codes overlap in many ways, the idea of visually representing them in a Venn diagram seemed, at first, logical. Despite our best efforts, we found this exercise futile. Therefore, we represent these codes through this flowchart diagram (Figure 3), which captures the most significant connections we found.

Fig. 3 Open to Axial to Selective Codes



Clarity constitutes the qualitative data representing those initial conditions where competing logics interact at the early stages of partnership and where clarity is needed, or sometimes ignored, to move forward. *Collaboration* captures the full scope of the collective impact conditions and how competing logics interact in partnership management. *Equity* embraces and names the greatest and most consistently desired, dismissed, and sometimes created value of these partnerships.

Findings

Research Question 1: *How are the initial conditions of problem framing and negotiating interdependency understood among partners? Specifically—How does The Contingent help frame the problem between parties as the backbone organization? How does The Contingent negotiate the interdependencies between parties?*

Finding 1.1: *There is a lack of clarity on what problem the Every Child Oregon initiative is truly trying to solve and if the inputs and activities of the program get to the root issues experienced by children and families in the foster care system.*

On the surface, the objectives of the Every Child Oregon initiatives seem clear—"Every Child mobilizes community to uplift children and families impacted by foster care in Oregon" (Every Child, 2022). Their promotional materials emphasize that a strained state system cannot produce all the resources needed to care for the over 7,000 kids in Oregon who will spend tonight in foster care. While acknowledging children will experience a level of trauma, they seek to make that trauma less extensive through small acts of kindness (such as Welcome Boxes) and through greater commitments (like becoming a foster parent). The initiative has four key pillars easily accessible on the Every Child Oregon website and readily recited by staff members from The Contingent:

1. Storytelling: Every Child shares the realities of foster care while demonstrating a positive, collaborative and hopeful tone that challenges the stereotypes associated with the system and those involved.
2. Empowering Volunteers: Every Child provides meaningful ways for anyone and everyone to engage with the child welfare system.
3. Raising Up New Foster Parents: While inviting individuals to get involved at any level, Every Child Oregon is relentless about sharing the need for more foster families and has become the Oregon Department of Human Services' strongest foster family recruiting entity.
4. Supporting Families: As foster families come forward at an unprecedented rate and families of origin get reunified (the goal of foster care), Every Child provides relational, community, and tangible support for families. (Every Child, 2022)

However, not all partners are clear on the goals of the initiative. One church partner states, "There's not always clarity on the call or the vision. Where are we going...What do you want from our church partnership? Do you want to know our people...[do] you just want volunteers to get sent to you? Are we recruiting foster parents? Are we supporting DHS?"

Our analysis suggests that the answer is yes to all these things. The Every Child Oregon handbook, authored by The Contingent, outlines 14 avenues for partner or volunteer involvement in the initiative. These range from dropping off treats at a local child welfare office to becoming a certified foster parent. The Contingent staff explain that not everyone can do a lot, but everyone can do a little, which adds up to a lot. To this end, they try to provide as many onramps as possible to involvement in child welfare services.

While The Contingent is in the process of creating a logic model to support program inputs, activities, and outcomes, there is currently no cohesive document that specifically helps faith and community partners understand the direct cause and effect of the various activities they are asked to take on. Some activities might be obvious (becoming a foster parent means Oregon has another home in which to place a child), partners are not clear on what success looks like or the big picture of the problem they are trying to solve.

However, through document analysis and interviews, there was a strong theme demonstrating that one of the primary goals of The Contingent through the Every Child Oregon initiative is to be the best partner that the Oregon Department of Human Services has ever had. One representative from The Oregon Department of Human Services put it this way:

But when I look at what our partnership and what our connection with Every Child and The Contingent have done in the space of foster care, I would say they've been the most impactful movement in the past decade for our program...Every Child continues to tell us and then also demonstrate that they want to be the best partner that they possibly can with ODHS. And that's through the thick, that's through the thin, that's through the ugly, that's when things don't quite go right, even within the scope of our partnership...They've been able to impact at every level, from finding families to say yes to foster care and finding volunteers, to wrapping around families that say yes to provide respite, providing tangible gifts and tangible goods, and support and peer mentoring for resource parents.

The Contingent staff was the first to recognize that ODHS has challenges and critics. One ODHS worker mentioned a scathing report of the agency released by the Oregon Governor's Office in 2018. While The Contingent paints the problem in terms of resources, some partners

view the problem in terms of the system. A leader from a culturally specific organization focused on the perpetuation of trauma rife in the system as foster children age out at eighteen

If they don't find some pathway to healing, they [foster kids] are going to age out, and then you're going to see them in the justice system—the foster girl that is raped in the foster home and then, “Oh, our bad” and moved to another home “Oh. Our bad” and moved to another. And now she's got behavioral issues. Now she's fighting, now she's turning over stuff, and now she's a problem kid and now she's in juvenile...Now she's got that record...when nobody stopped to say, “Wait, how do we get this girl healed?” ...And, that's what nobody talks about.

Although all are clear on the activities of the initiative, outcomes and impacts are less defined. There is a lack of clarity on what problem the Every Child Oregon initiative is trying to solve and if the inputs and activities of the program address the root cause of issues experienced by children and families in the foster care system.

Finding 1.2: *In terms of negotiating interdependency, The Contingent and ODHS need faith partners for the resources their congregations provide, and faith partners need The Contingent to provide credibility for them with ODHS.*

Our data reflects the power of faith communities to bring about this change and suggests that without the resources local congregations have provided, none of these changes would occur. One staff member at The Contingent says, “Folks within leadership, at the state level, both within the [O]DHS agency, as well as the governmental authority positions, acknowledge and recognize that in order for the system to improve statewide, the faith community is a pretty integral stakeholder. It’s bar none. It’s a very integral stakeholder in terms of a volunteer and

support base.” We saw further evidence of this as one pastor mentioned their congregation raised \$42,000 in one day across three Sunday services to benefit the Every Child initiative.

Through participation in the Every Child Oregon initiative, churches have reaped the benefits of The Contingent’s close relationship with ODHS. “For a long time in our city churches have tried to care about foster care,” explains one pastor, “but there was not something that bridged the gap in a way that wasn’t trying to convert every kid or every foster parent...There’s an [O]DHS office less than a mile from our central campus, but I would say that relationship before Every Child did not exist in any way that looked healthy...ODHS had probably a healthy, skeptical view of many of the faith communities in the Portland area.”

The pandemic has slowed church participation. Post-COVID, even the most engaged church partners have struggled to find footing and momentum within the initiative. One pastor speaks of how their congregation used to stop by their local child welfare office to bring breakfast, hand out flower baskets on May Day, and celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. Post-COVID, many ODHS workers have gone home to work, and the pastor is unclear who to contact at ODHS. Consequently, these kinds of engagements have ceased even though interested volunteers are eager to help. Another pastor explains that post-COVID, people in the congregation are not well and not ready to engage at the level they once were in the Every Child program, even though there is a great need.

Research Question 2: *How do institutional logic(s) inform understanding and interpretation of common agenda setting, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and the role of a backbone organization among partners involved in the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative, including The Contingent?*

Finding 2.1. *The bureaucratic and religious institutions have differing views on the role of the common agenda of the initiative as it relates to ultimate desired outcomes.*

As we examined that data, it became clear that involvement to what end has posed a challenge for partners. While the Every Child initiative seeks to bring comfort in times of trauma, some are left questioning why the program does not focus on eradicating trauma in the first place. This becomes especially relevant as The Contingent staff and partners discuss the disproportionate representation of children of color—specifically African American children in the foster care system. Interviews with The Oregon Department of Human Services, The Contingent, and culturally specific organizations cited racist policies and cultural views held by ODHS that exasperate the issue. As an example of such policies, one African American leader pointed to the cultural practice of giving a child a whooping—a commonly accepted practice in the African American community that became frowned upon in recent years by a White dominant culture. Sharing stories of children who have been taken from their homes for such practices, the leader pointed to the irony that it was the plantation system that first taught the practice of whooping as appropriate.

Additionally, the practices of redlining and the impact on resources were cited. “Some parents [were] not being allowed to be foster parents,” the leader stated. “They were told they didn't have enough resources; they didn't make enough money. You know, lots of love to give but not enough money.”

One staff member at The Contingent recalled a time when they were invited in to do a presentation about Every Child at a pillar African American church in the community.

The church was expressing a lot of historic trauma from congregants that had tried to become certified to care for their nieces, nephews, and grandchildren who had a prior

offense and were denied. Now, the agency is really trying to screen people in versus screen people out, which is a huge distinction. However, someone in that meeting said, “So if somebody now is screened in to take care of their relative, how many certifiers of color are there at the north Portland child welfare office?”

Finding 2.2: *The Contingent shares different measurements and communication with the bureaucratic and religious institutions. This leads to a lack of clarity related to mutually reinforcing activities.*

The Oregon Department of Human Services and The Contingent spoke of robust data sharing and continuous communication. One representative shared

Yesterday, for instance, The Contingent leadership met with the the Director of Child Welfare and some of our deputy directors, and Foster Care Program Manager. And then, after that, we had our own meeting separately to talk about the Every Child program... We have scheduled and set meetings. We communicate through email. They also produce a biannual report based on the grant that we are managing for Every Child. We'll show a history of the work and interventions that they've done. It has a good amount of data, and then they provide some recommendations for ways to improve both on, on their end and ours.

ODHS discussed a CRM that The Contingent created specifically to manage their relationship with child welfare and to address the support needs of families

They partnered with Microsoft to be able to build one [a CRM] specifically for their organization...We have a lot of data within our organization, but...it's hard to actually mine and assess and analyze. The leading edge technology that went into building their CRM allowed for great visual displays of the data that they're collecting, and for us to be

able to make some immediate decisions and have some data-driven data-informed conversations about our practice based on the data that they were collecting...We were drawn to the way in which they were able to collect, present and share their data, so much so that we ended up creating, from one of our ODHS systems, an API exchange where they could take data from their system and transfer it directly into ours when it comes to the tracking of inquiring resource [foster] parents. From my understanding, this is the first one in the area of foster care.

Document analysis also shows the strong relationship between ODHS and The Contingent regarding data sharing. ODHS references this CRM in their 2021-2023 Agency Request Budget in their Audit Response Report, which addresses the 2018 audit of the agency conducted by the Oregon Secretary of State (CITE).

When ODHS hired Champions—staff members for the agency dedicated to supporting the recruitment and retention of foster parents and working with the Every Child initiative—The Contingent and their subsidiaries were involved in the hiring process. Additionally, when tensions rose between the subsidiaries and the Champions, The Contingent staff stepped in to create means for continuous communications through goal-sharing documents and common metrics. Additionally, this helped establish which activities would be the responsibility of each party.

New activities and goals emerge as The Contingent maintains continuous communication with ODHS. One interviewee from ODHS who works directly with a subsidiary of The Contingent explains her relationship with the director:

We have met twice monthly, at least since I came on board, and do a lot of future planning, you know, sketching out...We got more strategic around what worked well,

what didn't work well, planning how many recruitment events are we going to do and where our retention focus is going to be. We've worked, um, very closely and collaboratively.

Church leaders were asked what data they reported to The Contingent and how they know if the initiative is succeeding. Besides reporting numbers for a specific event—Foster Parent Night Out—churches said there are no specific numbers they are reporting to The Contingent. Additionally, they were unsure how success was defined or how their church's contribution lined up with metrics important to The Contingent. When asked about the specific, measurable goals of the partnership, one pastor said:

Initially it was to grow the number of fostering families...there was a need back in 2012, 2013 for 883 more foster families in the Tri-County area...So the goal would be what if we had foster families that we're waiting? What if, what if instead of kids waiting, there are foster families that are trained and ready and willing and they're waiting for placements.

However, when asked how many foster families had been recruited across the initiative and if there was still a need for 883 more homes, the pastor said this was not information with which they were familiar.

Additionally, one pastor spoke of the need for transparency around finances

There's a question of, "Is that money just going to the government?" ...Even if it's, yeah, "Here's where our funding goes. It supports these three staff, people on the Portland, Every Child team...When we're asking for extra money for different initiatives, that's why we're asking for extra money."

Churches also mentioned struggles with communication and getting the information they needed quickly and efficiently. One pastor mentioned that post-Covid, they were unsure who their contact was at ODHS. Another pastor mentioned how communication was not always timely. Sometimes they would have to resort to personal connections to receive answers to questions or suggestions. Additionally, activities and requests for volunteers would come so late that it was hard for the church to respond: “One example I would give is foster care awareness month. They're calling churches into this big campaign. I got an email about it the week before. I don't know what church can like pivot and like do a bunch of things in seven days.”

The discrepancy in communication and metrics can be explained in terms of the differing logics between the bureaucratic state and the Christian religion. Alford and Friedland point to the legal responsibility of the state. As evidenced by the budget report, the sharing of metrics and the evidence of outcomes are justifications for the validity of the relationship between ODHS and The Contingent—especially as a large grant is involved in their association. The Contingent has no such legal responsibility to the Christian religious institution as the laws under which they operate or not earthly. The preference for the sharing of data shifts towards meeting the state's needs rather than the religious institution's needs.

Finding 2.4: *After establishing initial credibility with ODHS through The Contingent and participation in the Every Child Oregon initiative, church partners are no longer certain they need The Contingent to continue impacting the foster care system.*

For some partners from the religious institution, there are questions about whether participation in The Every Child Oregon initiative is necessary to make an impact. When we interviewed staff members at The Contingent, they positioned their role as the go-between. From interviews with their team, we believed that no community or church partner had contact with

ODHS without going through them. However, the pastors interviewed confirmed that relationships existed with ODHS without the mediation of The Contingent. One partner went as far to say that their congregation has questioned whether or not they still needed to participate in the initiative

One of the conversations was, “What do we need Every Child for at this point? They're asking us for money, they're asking us for volunteers, but we could be supporting these people directly and we need volunteers to be caring for these families in house also right now.” One of the statements that was made was, “I've asked Every Child this question, and I haven't received any feedback to change my mind.” ...I think that has been a complex thing for some churches that have been in it for a while with Every Child—that question of “Do we need you, or do you need us? “

Research Question 3: *How do competing logics generate or limit value creation? More specifically—What competing logics exist among partners in the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative? What is the impact of, the extent, and the type of difference in logics on moving to a partnership or substitution logics between The Contingent and prospective partners on value creation? How do these logics/understandings align or differ from those of other organizations also involved in the collective impact initiative?*

Finding 3.1: *When differences in logics are viewed as complementary rather than competitive, organizations involved in the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative see generative value outcomes.*

In our interviews with The Oregon Department of Human Services, we met passionate individuals who care about the needs of the children and families they serve. However, the bureaucratic system they work in often limits their agility in meeting these needs. Alford and

Friedland (1991) write, “Bureaucratic state organizations attempt to convert diverse individual situations into the basis for routine official decisions and cannot easily handle conflicting claims over the substantive ends toward which bureaucratic rationality is directed or demands for popular participation in them (p. 249).

Conversely, when we look at the Christian religious institution, it is driven by morality. “Contemporary Christian religions,” state Alford and Friedland (1991), “attempt to convert all issues into expressions of absolute moral principles accepted voluntarily on faith and grounded in a particular cosmogony” (p. 249). One of these moral principles found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible centers on caring for orphans (Exodus 22:22, Isaiah 1:17, Deuteronomy 29:14, James 1:7). Thus, as Christian churches participate in the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative, it is with a sense of fulfillment to a moral obligation based on Biblical principles. One pastor said, “We don't want to be about just families in our church family...There are kids that are in great need in our own backyards, and what are we doing about that? How can we come alongside and make that journey any better for them or for the people that work with them?”

Tapping into these two competing logic as a means of community engagement has been a key driver of The Contingent’s success in growing the Every Child Oregon initiative. Through their four pillars of storytelling, empowering volunteers, raising up new foster parents, and supporting families, The Contingent, as the backbone organization, has watched The Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative fill institutional voids. They have asked the morally conscious Christian religious institution to compensate for the limitations of the bureaucratic state institution and thus have generated value. Of the initiative, one interviewee from ODHS said, “They've been able to impact at every level from finding families to say yes to foster care,

finding volunteers, to wrap around families that say yes, uh, to provide respite, tangible gifts, tangible goods, supports, um, peer mentoring for resource parents.”

Though some interviewees claimed that involvement of churches naturally occurred without intention by The Contingent, in our data analysis, we see repeated evidence that the Christian religious institution is specifically targeted and solicited for involvement. One pastor stated, “I think that in the beginning, it was really all about the faith community. How do we mobilize the faith community?” In the partnerships section of *The Every Child Handbook*, The Contingent mentions two distinct types of partners and lays out the specific steps to engagement—the faith community and business partners. Additionally, one interviewee mentioned growing the initiative throughout the state by meeting with pastors and asking for introductions to other pastors. Another posited that the faith community was the most important support base that The Contingent and ODHS had to leverage volunteers.

Leaning on Yin and Jamali’s process model of collaborative value creation through institutional work, we see in our analysis that leveraging these competing logics towards institutional collaboration has resulted in a partnership logic with generative value outcomes. This can be explained in Reay and Hinings’s (2009) study of the Canadian medical system, where they saw the co-existence of competing logics leading to institutional change as actors chose collaboration.

Finding 3.2. *Although formally serving in institutional roles as a part of the collaborative, each actor involved in the collective impact initiative embodies multiple institutional identities.*

Although in their roles as child welfare workers, our interviewees at ODHS are governed by the bureaucratic institution, they also each belong to the family institution in their personal lives—an institution that Alford and Friedland (1991) say is driven by human need. Thus, the

competing institutional identities and logics associated with each individual become purposive actions that disrupt the bureaucratic system.

Our analysis showed individuals working inside the bureaucratic institution, governed by the rules of that institution while having an extremely human experience. “Child welfare is a thankless job,” said one interviewee from ODHS. “We don't get to speak out when there's controversial topics that, you know, might be reported incorrectly. It's discouraging when you see all the negative press that your agency gets and you know, all the really good work going on behind the scenes.”

Much like those who work for ODHS, participants from the religious institution also tap into their desire to meet a human need or the institutional logic of family. One pastor explains, “We want to care for the caregivers—caring for the social workers who are in those positions of decision making around the lives of these kids....We want to be about the families in our church that are choosing to bring kids in. How do we care for them as they're caring for people's kids in a season where they're most vulnerable.”

However, even as individuals inside the system look to common logics to create shared values, the competition of institutional values brings about conflict, breeding mistrust. The Contingent sits as the intermediary between these logics as a non-religious entity comprised entirely of employees that belong to the Christian religious institution. While this organizational complexity makes the legitimizing of one logic over another more difficult, it also allows The Contingent to hold to their value of being a “third space,” able to explain to each institution the other's vantage point.

Finding 3.3. *When questions of creating, maintaining or disrupting the system arise due to competing logics among institutions, The Contingent moves away from a partnership logic towards a substitution logic through coercive isomorphism.*

Throughout data analysis, The Contingent staff spoke of wanting to find the “third way”: “It doesn't need to be either or. There is what we call the third way. It's not Democrat versus Republican—really bringing it back to what's going to be in the best interest of outcomes for child welfare.” The team seeks to lean into tensions and maintain collaboration among competing logics. This is explicitly written out in their program values:

1. Hopeful—Every Child believes in a hopeful future for children and families in Oregon.
2. Collaborative—Every Child connects individuals, families, businesses, and faith communities with acute needs.
3. Determined—Every Child relentlessly fights for children in crisis and commits to finding safe, nurturing places where they can flourish.
4. Generous—Every Child provides radical hospitality with a posture of humility and care for children, families, and our partners working in child welfare. (Every Child, 2022)

The Contingent addressed how these values impact their work. One staff member shared

I feel like our core values are so important to the way that we show up to this work so that when there is conflict, we have to put that cap back on and remember we stay hopeful, we stay positive, we stay collaborative, and stay determined—no matter what. I show up to this work as a foster parent of 14 years and an adoptee. There are times when I don't want to show up that way, but I've committed to showing up that way.

These values have helped them generate unique ways of partnering with organizations and institutions with competing values. For example, a marijuana dispensary wanted to become a

business partner in the initiative. Many children in foster care have been impacted by substance abuse, including marijuana. Instead of barring the dispensary from participation, The Contingent found a unique way for them to contribute behind the scenes where they were not publicly endorsing the industry. The competing logics remained, but they were able to generate value through collaboration.

There have been moments where The Contingent has been unable to reconcile the competing logics. Through coercive isomorphism, the bureaucratic institution mandates that all other institutions submit to its authority. Instead of challenging this authority, The Contingent succumbs to the pressure of the bureaucratic state. It becomes an extension of their authority by requiring partners within Every Child Oregon to fall in line.

We saw two concrete demonstrations of coercive isomorphism by The Contingent as the backbone organization in our analysis. The first, though seemingly small carried a significant impact. In the past year, the State of Oregon changed the terminology of “foster parent” to “resource parent.” One pastor explained the reaction among families fostering in their congregation:

Everyone I know who's a foster parent didn't understand why, all of a sudden, Every Child was using that terminology and the stuff that they're sending out—even emails to foster parents—to say resource parents. Every Child said this is what we do because this is what the state decided, and this is what other states are doing. And this is now best practice. This is now the politically correct thing.

Another example of coercive isomorphism centered around the state's mandate that every family fostering children be a gender-affirming family. Specifically, this has caused pause for some churches. One interviewee said:

There has been tension in partnering with faith communities and the state's unabashed stance that every family needs to be an affirming family and asking that question very directly.

We're not saying one way or the other...but I think that that's an example of where we're really trying to be the bridge.

However, another interview yielded a different perspective—although The Contingent seeks to be a bridge, they do feel forced to take a side. Speaking of one specific church partnership, they said

[There are] issues where we're invited publicly to take a side—to join the black and white of certain issues. This church organization picked the other side than the state and the other side from where we were really landing...So, there's been a removal of them being involved with Every Child as a result. It's just not a good fit anymore—mutually. The state put out new guidelines that resource parents, regardless of who they plan to say yes to accept in their home, need to be willing to be affirming of gender pronouns of the youth in their care. So, essentially that was the last straw for that community. And they actually started to put out some public statements saying...the state is intentionally going away from trying to be a good partner to faith communities and is intentionally marginalizing and trying to oppress the involvement of faith communities in the foster care system.

Alford and Friedland (1991) explain that the Christian religion views itself as responsible to the laws of God before the laws of man. Although stances on homosexuality are debated inside the Christian religious institution, the Christian tradition points to passages in both the Old and New Testaments (e.g. Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Romans 1:18-32) speaking against the act of a man having intercourse with a man or a woman intercourse with a woman. Interpretation is further made of a gender binary, with many

Christians pointing to Genesis 5:2 where God created male and female in his image. Within the Christian religious institution, this is viewed as God's law, which supersedes the bureaucratic state's legal authority and the popular opinion of society .

Though seeking collaboration, in this instance, The Contingent could not find the third way. They did not test the religious institution's power to impact the state's laws or seek to find means of participation for those who, because of a competing institutional logic, did not feel able to affirm gender pronouns. Instead, they parted ways.

ODHS, The Contingent, and the church enact a substitution logic in this way. The interest of each organization is pursued over the larger interest of the initiative. Competing logics are problematized without appreciation among institutions for the logic of the other. The application of substitution logic through coercive isomorphism disrupts the current institution. However, value generated or value limited is subjective as each organization views this value through its institutional lens.

In their study, Yin and Jamali (2021) found that substitution logics limited value creation as they were held by the less successful partnerships they evaluated. However, when it comes to issues of moral clarity, we argue that the institution to which one belongs dictates what is viewed as value creation. In this scenario, The Contingent sees value in parting ways with a partner who does not match their logic on gender pronouns. They believe for a child to feel safe and cared for in a home, their preferred gender pronouns must be used. From this lens, value is generated in ensuring a child would not be placed in a non-affirming home.

However, from the vantage point of the church partner, this substitution logic limits value creation. As society moves away from absolutes and the law of God, morality becomes subjective and based solely on man's feelings. Their moral stance, not the love, care, or resources

they provide to children, has become why they are barred from participation. To participate with Every Child in following the moral law of caring for the orphan, they must affirm a law they do not view as moral.

Finding 3.4: *Value generation is limited through the failure of the governance and structure of collective impact to address power asymmetries—especially as they relate to church vs. state and racial equity.*

Scholars in the field of community organizing criticize the *collective impact* model for its failure to analyze the power structures that uphold the systemic issues they seek to solve and their failure to build initiatives through the lens of racial equity. Additionally, they say the model stays at the program level and does not seek greater systems change (Christens & Inzeo, 2015; Wolff et al., 2017). Kania and Kramer, the authors of the *collective impact* model, have only recently addressed these concerns, publishing an amended definition of *collective impact* in 2022: “*Collective impact is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions that advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change*” (Kania et al., 2022, p. 38).

As we dug into the founding story of the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative, analysis of the power structure and equity were not at the center of the model. Instead, partners were gained through relational proximity. The Contingent pointed to three specific churches that were the first partners and remain ardent supporters of the initiative today. We noticed a theme that underlined the participation of these churches. Not only did they have relational proximity to staff members at The Contingent, but their church bodies also had financial and human resources to meet needs in the foster care system. One congregation raised \$42,000 for foster care on one Sunday across three church services. The pastor of this church stated, “We have this opportunity

where we're engaging with hundreds of people that walk through our doors every Sunday. So, so why not give them vision for how they can participate in this great work of providing homes for kids in crisis.”

However, in these interviews, we saw a problem that existed outside of the church community. With the majority of congregants being from white middle class backgrounds, they could decide to participate or not to participate in helping with a need that they themselves were not experiencing. The same was not true when we interviewed a pastor from of an African American congregation not involved in the Every Child Oregon initiative. When asked how the foster care system had impacted the African American community, the pastor replied

Wow. I almost have to say, how is it not? Because there was a system that was very disjointed with some racist policies, understaffed, and not equipped...But when you combine that with what happened in our community with gentrification and the fraying of the safety net around our kids—the safety net, especially for African American kids, youth, and young adults is frayed so much. We don't have a community anymore. And there's something to be said about having a place that you know is yours, that you know you're safe. There's some churches that can rally around you. There's some organizations that can rally around you...but, those, those nets are frayed. There's a lack of affordable housing, the gang problem, gun violence—all of the things. You can combine that with then not having the resources, not having the program strengthened in this hour, not having the church is strengthened in this hour to be able to answer. It's all in trouble if you ask me, and I can see it in our kids.

The pastor went on to state that, “There's no shortage of information about foster care. In the Black community, everybody knows about it.” This contrasted with the narratives of

predominately white churches that spoke of educating their congregants about the child welfare system, getting them excited about participation, and creating ways for them to get involved.

Clear in our data was a desire of The Contingent to be better aligned with culturally specific organizations—a term defined in Oregon to mean an organization that focuses on services to minoritized groups who have experienced structural racism by service providers who have lived experiences with the issues they seek to address (Madriral & Duncan, 2015). The staff readily recognized that the initiative has attracted participation from people who identify as white and upper to middle-class backgrounds. A staff member shared:

We don't have any partnerships with culturally specific African American organizations. Because of the disproportionate representation of children of color in the system and our original audiences—Every Child Oregon was mostly a movement started out of white, mostly evangelical, nondenominational churches—it's not just needed, but it's strategic for us to have more trust established and built with leaders in communities of color...

Where are there gaps and opportunities for growth for us in terms of creating opportunities or removing potential barriers for folks from communities of color?

However, staff members at The Contingent spoke with what we perceived as hesitancy when creating these partnerships. This hesitancy seemed to stem from a fear of being a poor partner. One staff member said, “[We] want to do it really well and having seen it be done unwell. There's just a desire to excel and be a good partner.” When referencing a particular culturally specific organization that The Contingent is engaging, another staff member said:

Two years in on engaging with them it's still really early on. So, we're still trying to navigate what that looks like and we're trying to build relationship honestly and not ask

for things from them, but just share with them what we're doing and if it can support the work that they're doing, then we want to be contributors.

When we asked staff members for introductions to the culturally specific organizations with whom they are building partnerships, they also hesitated, requesting that we compensate anyone we interviewed. Were we to meet this requirement, they would be comfortable introducing us to potential partners from their network. This stopped our research through this avenue as it fell out of scope with best practices as advised by the Internal Review Board and caused us to use our networks for interviewing leaders from culturally specific organizations.

Thus, we saw a theme of trust emerge. The Contingent put great intention towards building and maintaining trust. However, fear of breaching trust also slowed the organization's progress in addressing the felt equity concerns in the initiative.

This theme emerged more clearly as we heard staff, pastors, and our contact from a culturally specific organization speak about the table. This was a metaphor that seemed to emerge in conversation organically. “We've been more intentional about seeking out very specific partnerships,” said one member of The Contingent staff, “and we've become an organization that can bring people together to a table to have conversations around key issues.”

One pastor we spoke with commented that a seat at the table was granted due to tenure with the initiative and relational proximity

We were a strong church partner that had a lot of history and could speak to a lot of the last decade of work that we've been doing together...Do they know who to invite and, and who should sit there? ... I can name off certain people from other churches that I'm friends with as well that have been at the table as well. But I think those are, have been

early adopters of the ministry or the agency and we kind of are the beginning. I'm not quite sure how you get at the seat at the table outside of that.

This contrasted with the response of the African American pastor we interviewed, who is not involved with the Every Child Oregon initiative. When asked if the Black community had a seat at the table when it came to Oregon's foster care system, the pastor replied

Oregon is one of these places where you can have a seat at the table if you can find the table. They don't make it easy for you to find the table. Portland is notorious for that, notorious for parent meetings that are at two o'clock in the afternoon when they know parents are working. It's like that in the education system. It's in all of those things. They don't make it easy to find the table.

The pastor went on to say

I think that is a great opportunity for The Contingent to build a table and say, "We are going to put our stake in the ground that we want to wrap ourselves around foster kids in this city or in this state. We then will be diligent about finding who needs to be around this table."

The Contingent also made it clear that they had a spot at the table with ODHS, which was confirmed by the ODHS staff members we interviewed. Document analysis revealed an audit of the Child Welfare division of the Oregon Department of Human Services in 2018 by the Oregon Attorney General. This report highlighted the gaps and deficiencies in the agency (Richardson & Memmott, 2018). In their response, ODHS crafted its Vision for Transformation a detailed plan that includes three guiding principles on how the agency will transform to meet the demands of the 2018 audit (Oregon Department of Human Services, 2020). In their July 2022 update

detailing progress towards these goals, ODHS lists key activities within the Every Child Oregon initiative as means of transforming the system (Oregon Department of Human Services, 2022).

When asked what kind of organizations they would not partner with, the overwhelming response from The Contingent was partners who were overtly negative towards ODHS. One staff member gave the example of a lobbying group who sought a partnership with The Contingent. Though their goals for child welfare were aligned, the staff member stated the group was overtly negative towards ODHS. For this reason, they declined to partner.

In this way, the power dynamics of the partnership seem to lean toward ODHS and away from the faith and business partners that also participate in the Every Child Oregon initiative. ODHS set the rules of engagement, and partners, including The Contingent, adhere to those rules in an effort to establish trust. One pastor gave the following example regarding Welcome Boxes:

We had to keep that very clear line of church and state. We had to say “We're not going to proselytize at all. We're not going to be handing back boxes with cross necklaces in them, or Jesus loves you, or any of that stuff.” ...We were working with a government entity, and we needed to prove to them that we weren't going to cross those lines. So, all 500 of them were vetted by teams of people who showed up in the evenings to look through them, make certain that nobody had crossed the lines, and then we sealed them up and we sent them off. So, we gained some relationship there. We showed our local [O]DHS office that we were trustworthy.

Thus, competing logics are managed as the religious institution yields its power to ODHS and shifts from its core evangelistic mission to accommodate the lines between church and state. The Contingent serves as a mediator, clarifying to faith communities what rules must be followed.

While The Contingent wants to be a good partner to faith communities, efforts to maintain trust focus on ODHS. This has led some partners to question the true neutrality of The Contingent as a backbone organization and if they serve all parties in the initiative equally. This point became especially salient when there were questions of not just supporting ODHS but seeking to transform the system. One pastor stated:

[The Contingent] has this tight relationship with the state. But, then can I as a church leader and foster parent talk honestly with you about my experience, if you're in bed with the government on this? Who are you for? What are we doing? How does this look? What's my invitation?

However, our analysis revealed The Contingent is intent on not just maintaining but transforming the child welfare system in Oregon—though the means of doing so may be different than expected. Transforming the system comes through supporting ODHS. A healthy agency means greater capacity for the bureaucratic institution to fulfill its legal duty of protecting Oregon's vulnerable children. According to The Contingent's working draft of a logic model for the Every Child initiative, this means that "vulnerable children experience less trauma," and there is a "safe, loving and strategic home for every child in foster care" (Every Child Oregon, nd).

However, without careful attention to power asymmetries, The Contingent appears to have moved from a partnership logic to a substitution logic. A matching grant written by ODHS to fund the Every Child Oregon initiative heightens has perpetuated this process, as The Contingent has contractual obligations to fulfill to maintain the grant. Yin and Jamali (2021) found that partnerships operating from a substitution logic began to take on the form of a business-vendor relationship. Describing substitution logics they state:

In this scenario, the business is likely to emphasize the primacy of the business logic over any other logic, on the premise that business brand, reputation, and their own interests take dominance and priority over social goals, beneficiary needs, and the preferences of the nonprofits in the partnership. Meanwhile, the nonprofit may live with the dominance of the competing logic mostly because it much relies on the business partner's resources to achieve an objective, or it may refuse any compromise of its own logic out of fear of "mission drift" (Ebrahim et al. 2014). With this either/or mindset, partners perceive each other as in a "vendor—buyer" relationship, not much different from a traditional business partnership relationship. Businesses see their nonprofit partners as similar to their regular business suppliers, probably expecting them to be similarly efficient and professional and business-like, while the non-profits treat the cross-sector collaboration as not very distinct from a social project. (p. 17)

In the case of the Every Child Oregon initiative, ODHS operates as the business with church partners operating as a non-profit. However, unlike Yin and Jamali's study of CSRs in China, The Contingent, as the backbone organization, serves as a third party mediating these relationships. We found evidence of strong relational trust and creative collaboration among ODHS and The Contingent. However, if faith partners who provide essential monetary and human capital resources to ODHS feel dominated by the competing logics of the bureaucratic state, The Every Child Oregon initiative runs the risk of operating from a substitution logic and limiting value creation.

Recommendations

Undoubtedly, the Every Child Oregon has achieved great success. With beginnings as small as a shoe box, they have become an integral partner in the Oregon Department of Human

Services' strategy to transform the agency. Scaling from serving one child welfare office to serving child welfare offices across Oregon, they are now beginning to expand the influence of their initiative to other states. They've been able to scale programs such as Foster Parent Night Out and have become the largest recruiter of resource parents in the State of Oregon. What they have achieved is profound.

Still, there is work to be done. Partners highlighted challenges in how The Contingent, the backbone organization serving the collective impact initiative, implements governance and structure. Specifically, gaps were seen in continuous communication and shared measurement, which impacted the understanding the common agenda.

Additionally, the absence of equity as a central tenet of the initiative has caused a conflict with the communities most impacted by the foster care system, and has not considered those communities in decision making. Critics of collective impact point to the framework's failure to build through a racial equity lens and address the power dynamics, policies, and practices that hold up inequitable structures. In their 2022 amendment to the collective impact framework, Kania et al. offered five strategies for centering equity.

1. Ground the work in data and context, and target solutions.
2. Focus on systems change, in addition to programs and services.
3. Shift power within the collaborative.
4. Listen to and act with the community.
5. Build equity leadership and accountability. (p. 41)

Finally, competing logics between the institutions of the bureaucratic state and the Christian religion creates a substitution logic, undermining the stability of the initiative and limiting value outcomes. We make the following recommendations based on these findings and

building from the redefined equitable collective impact strategies defined by Kania et al. (2022). A timeline of these strategies along with relevant resources can be found in Appendix D.

Recommendation 1: *Create a task force that includes representatives from the communities most impacted by Oregon's foster care system to inform program design and implementation.*

Across interviews with ODHS, The Contingent, churches, and community organizations, we saw the theme of “the table” emerge as a place of influence and decision-making power granted to specific participants in the initiative. Long-standing partners had a seat at the table based on relational proximity and long-standing friendships with staff members from The Contingent. ODHS has a seat at the table through initiative focus, funding, and bureaucratic power. Kania et al., 2022 state, “Some hold power as a result of formal positions, some by virtue of controlling financial resources, others through the influence of their relationships” (p. 43). However, the communities most impacted by foster care were absent from the table—specifically the African American community.

Oregon is one of these places where you can have a seat at the table if you can find the table. They don't make it easy for you to find the table.

Kania et al. (2022) suggest that to build equitable collective impact initiatives, power must shift within the collaborative, and the community must be listened to and acted with. Establishing diverse partnerships increases the ability to gain direct access to the community and the lived experiences of individuals whose perspectives are essential to correctly interpreting data (Davis, 2020; Kania et al., 2022; Willing et al., 2021).

I think that is a great opportunity for The Contingent to build a table and say, “We are going to put our stake in the ground that we want to wrap ourselves

around foster kids in this city or in this state. We then will be diligent about finding who needs to be around this table.”

To expand and establish an equitable metaphorical table, we recommend The Contingent create a task force charged with bringing a more significant understanding of the communities most impacted by child welfare to the collective involved in the Every Child Oregon initiative. In addition to representatives from ODHS, church partners, business partners, and The Contingent, this task force should include leaders in communities of color (including but not limited to the African-American, Hispanic, and Native American communities), families who were separated and reunified in the child welfare system, and adults who aged-out of the foster care system. Additional members may include educators who work with children in foster care, therapists who work with children experiencing trauma, and legal counsel with expertise in the family court system. Additionally, consideration should be given to the geographic location of task force participants. Representatives from both rural and urban counties should be included.

However, as the table changes shape, it is essential to note the asymmetries that may exist in power. “Too often we focus on diversity to change who sits at the table,” note Kania et al., “without changing the underlying dynamics of decisions made at the table by shifting culture and power. Equitable results require more equitable decision-making tables” (p. 43). They note one strategy to address this employed in collective impact initiatives is to give those with lived experience the last word before a vote is made regarding any specific matter.

Additionally, we recommend creating space for constructive dialog among communities of color. Inclusive of all groups, constructive dialog seeks to bring about transformative change by enlisting each person’s unique story and knowledge (Powell et al., 2011). As a starting point, we recommend hosting town hall meetings or listening sessions in culturally specific churches to

learn more about the impacts of the foster care system on communities of color, the agency they are employing towards change, the issues most important to their community, and the support (if any) they desire from an initiative such as Every Child.

These steps help The Contingent address power asymmetries inside the collective impact initiative and encourage a partnership logic through advocating with various stakeholders, connecting with societal-level discourse, and filling institutional voids.

Recommendation 2: *Clearly define the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the Every Child Oregon initiative that can be shared with existing partners.*

In his 2018 study of President John F. Kennedy's charge of NASA to put a man on the moon, Andrew Carton identifies stages of connection building that helped NASA employees see their everyday tasks as a part of a larger aspirational goal. In the first stage, proximity, leaders take a distant aspirational goal and give it a more immediate timeline with timebound objectives. In stage two, incremental stepping stones are laid out in service of the larger goal. In the third stage, individual contributions are clarified as each participant sees how their specific activities contribute to the larger whole.

Though The Contingent and ODHS may understand out the 14 different activities in *The Every Child Handbook* are intended to affect success. However, partner organizations do not see it as clearly. Additionally, partners questioned whether The Contingent was set on programmatic activities or committed to addressing the policies and practices that hold up a historically inequitable child welfare system in Oregon. A strong understanding of programs by partners is linked to more robust engagement, strategy, and external leadership — including fundraising (Board Source, 2017; Minemyer, 2016). Creating a clear planning document for distribution would help The Contingent share with partners timebound objectives, lay out the steps towards

those objectives, illustrate how individual activities impact the whole, and demonstrate the system-level policies The Contingent is committed to addressing. Planning documents also serve as communication tools allowing stakeholders to see how activities are linked to outcomes (Innovation Network, n.d.). By providing a road map of the sequence of events that lead to significant systematic change, planning documents help clarify goals, illuminate gaps, and allow stakeholders to test different theories of change through an easy-to-read visualization (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2014).

“There’s not always clarity on the call or the vision. Where are we going...What do you want from our church partnership? Do you want to know our people...[do] you just want volunteers to get sent to you? Are we recruiting foster parents? Are we supporting DHS?”

The Contingent shared a working draft of their theory of change for the Every Child initiative. However, we suggest that a plan be created with the express purpose of providing clarity to stakeholders as to how their interdependent and mutually reinforcing activities lead to larger systematic outcomes. This planning document can also be leveraged to imagine and evaluate the validity of new activities that partners or The Contingent might want to introduce into the model.

Recommendation 3: *Identify shared performance measures between organizations involved in the Every Child initiative, and create a partner dashboard demonstrating how the activities conducted by faith communities and business partners contribute to the desired outcomes of the Every Child Oregon initiative.*

Church partners told us that outside of the number of Foster Parent Night Out activities they host each year, they did not share data with The Contingent, and little data was shared back

with them. Following the completion of a logic model, The Contingent should establish performance measures for all activities identified in the model. Performance measures link activities to goals and objectives (Matthews, 2011) and help track movement toward these goals (Yoskovitz, 2013). These measures must be easy to report, creating low barriers to entry and ensuring that data can be easily collected from partner organizations. Additionally, as appropriate, they should match metrics shared with ODHS to ensure the easy flow of data across all institutions involved in the initiative.

“There was a need back in 2012-2013 for 883 more foster families in the Tri-County area...So the goal would be, what if we had foster families that were waiting? What if, what if instead of kids waiting, there are foster families that are trained and ready and willing, and they’re waiting for placements.”

As performance measures are established, they should be tracked through a partner-facing dashboard. ODHS mentioned the ability to share data and track metrics as one of the strengths of their partnership with The Contingent. Examples of possible metrics include the number of families who have signed up to foster vs. the number of families still needed or the number of Welcome Boxes donated vs. the number of Welcome Boxes still desired. Such a dashboard can serve as a practical visualization of a shared partnership logic and demonstrate value creation. Partners will be able to readily identify where resources are being leveraged or are still needed and how their individual contributions help to fill institutional voids.

Recommendation 4: *Create channels for continuous communication with faith communities and business partners, such as a monthly newsletter, video updates, monthly video conference meetings, and annual partner convenings.*

As we spoke with partner organizations, they seemed to lack clarity on The Contingent's role as the backbone organization and why they needed The Contingent for continued engagement with ODHS. However, ODHS identified The Contingent as the most crucial partnership they hold with an outside organization—a fact that partners may not know. Additionally, partners mentioned receiving spotty and untimely communication, limiting their ability to participate in encouraged activities.

“They’ve been able to impact at every level, from finding families to say yes to foster care and finding volunteers to wrap around families that say yes to provide respite, tangible gifts, tangible goods, support, and peer mentoring for resource parents.”

Although much work is put into creating new partnerships, existing partnerships often lack engagement and must continue to be developed (Minemyer, 2016; Willing et al., 2011). Collaborations can grow as individual relationships are nurtured, leading to a greater understanding of the influences on the partner's decision-making. We recommend The Contingent establish continuous communication channels with partner organizations highlighting program goals, key conversations occurring with ODHS, stories from the field, and progress toward key metrics. These communications should highlight the interdependent interests of all organizations and subsequent institutions involved in the initiative, encouraging participants to maintain a partnership logic. Through the administration of a survey, partners' preferred methods of communication can be identified.

Additionally, consideration should be given to creating an annual convening where partners can network, learn from other organizations, share innovative ideas, and gain a greater understanding of how their individual contributions impact the whole. Additionally, these

convenings can help highlight The Contingent's role as the backbone organization and the value they add.

Recommendation 5: *Present partners with data on Oregon's foster care system grounded in the historical context of systemic racial injustice.*

As we spoke with church partners, we found clear evidence that foster care was an issue they were choosing to engage in that sat outside their immediate community. Additionally, The Contingent identified that most of their partners are white from middle to upper-class socio-economic backgrounds. In their 2015 quantitative study, Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty examine how the race of individuals belonging to a faith community impacts their view of racial inequality either as the fault of the system or the fault of the individual. In general, they found that Whites are more likely than Blacks to blame racial inequality on the individual rather than the system. However, Blacks in multicultural churches were more likely than Black in homogenous churches to adopt this view as well. Latinos, by and large, held that racial inequality was both the fault of the individual and the system's fault.

“We don't want to be about just families in our church family...There are kids that are in great need in our own backyards, and what are we doing about that? How can we come alongside and make that journey any better for them or for the people that work with them?”

As The Contingent works with partners from White evangelical churches, data must be presented with historical context. We repeatedly heard from staff that children of color, especially African American children, are disproportionately represented in the foster care system. However, without historical context to the system of inequities that generate such a

result, racist narratives are perpetuated. Not only should partners understand the data, but they must also understand the why behind the data's existence (Kania et al., 2022).

Kania et al. (2022) suggest several activities that can help bring historical framing to the data, including listening to the stories of people from impacted communities or conducting focus groups or surveys. They go on to state, "Many collective impact efforts begin with 'data walks,' in which all participants in the collective impact effort, including organizational leaders and residents with lived experience of the issues, review easy-to-understand visual data and together analyze, interpret, and create shared meaning about what the data say" (p. 42). These may be activities that The Contingent requires as a part of onboarding for new partners or undertakes as a part of an annual partner convening or incorporate into meetings for families interested in fostering.

Grounding data in the historical context can help partners gain greater empathy for the families they serve, understand their role and privilege in the current system, and challenge them to move from maintaining to disrupting that system.

Recommendation 6: *Create a direct forum where ODHS can converse with church partners. Focus conversations on areas of agreement between institutions with competing logics in an effort to continue to find the third way.*

Yin and Jamali (2021), in their study of cross-sector relationships, note how competing logics influence partnership vs. substitution logics:

When partners believe that their goals are incompatible or competitive, they tend to pursue their self-interests opportunistically. Instead, with positively-related goals, they are more likely to minimize the opportunism and maximize value synergy. It should be noted that harmony and tension always co-exist in the same partnership for both input

(means or activities) and output (ends or goals). However, with an “either/and” mindset (“either” indicating the existence of tension, tradeoff and conflict; “and” indicating the existence of harmony, synergy and complementarity), partners perceive each other as a team, and are more committed to mutual benefit. (p.16)

Throughout our data analysis, we saw clear distinctions in institutional logics between the Christian religion and the bureaucratic state. When these differences in logics were viewed as competitive rather than collaborative, partnerships were severed. In their 2021 commentary on the challenges of public health collaborations with faith-based organizations related to the COVID-19 vaccine, Levin et al. note

Public health and faith community leaders should recognize that trust is a mutual covenant—an irreplaceable, bidirectional community asset to be protected and nurtured on both sides of the relationship. These two sectors may have distinctive worldviews and characteristic values that overlap only partly. Work can be done to build partnerships even when values conflict. (p. 14)

We recommend The Contingent, in seeking a third way, create greater access for engagement between church partners and ODHS. Our data clearly pointed to the Christian religious institution as a critical partner in the initiative’s success. Faith partners go to great lengths to build trust with ODHS, but we did not see evidence that ODHS reciprocates an effort to build trust with churches. Thus, when ODHS says, “Follow me,” policies are met with skepticism.

By bringing leaders from both institutions together to talk about the moral lenses that govern their engagement, The Contingent can step out of the morality debate between church and state and take a solutions-oriented stance. Though organic conversations may occur between

church partners and ODHS as they participate in hospitality activities (such as bringing coffee to caseworkers), we do not see evidence of a forum for open and honest dialog between churches and ODHS. We recommend holding quarterly convenings or creating a forum where leaders from ODHS can hear directly from faith-based and other community partners their concerns with policies, practices, and positions and share the same. These may best occur as small, roundtable discussions of a few leaders at a time to encourage candid dialog.

Additionally, when conflicts do arise, common goals should be re-established and overlapping values highlighted. Though there may be specific commitments that either the church or state feel outside the bounds of their logics, the places of alignment should be considered. For example, in the case of the church that felt they could not affirm gender pronouns, could they be considered as foster parents for infants rather than for teenagers? Could they continue to participate in Welcome Boxes or bring hot breakfast to child welfare offices? Can the state delineate and track gender affirming homes vs. non-gender affirming homes and make intentional placements in this way?

Closing the gap between the current state of needed resource families and those available necessitates creative solutions. We do acknowledge that there are times where a parting of ways is necessary when competing logics cannot be reconciled, however, as ODHS and church partners come into greater relational proximity, the human element of the system can be discussed in a way that gives context to the impact of policy and practice or lack thereof.

Recommendation 7: *Engage in institutional work to help reconcile competing logics and create a third way in the collective impact initiative.*

Institutional work is a valuable viewpoint to investigate how tensions are deeply-rooted in competing institutional logics and how they may be addressed over time (Dahlmann &

Grosvold, 2017). Focusing on how action and actors affect institutions, institutional work is recognized as “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 215).

Individual actors are central to institutional work as they use their embedded agency to impact an organization's change or maintain the existing logic against change (Hwang & Colyvas, 2011; Dahlmann & Grosvold, 2017). As they interact with other individuals and the organizational structure, they enact change or fight against disruptions to the current logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). When it comes to disrupting organizations, actors must feel supported by their organizations to help “diffuse its values, assumptions, rules, and beliefs across their organizations through different forms of institutional work (Dahlmann & Grosvold, 2017, p. 285).

As The Contingent seeks to fill institutional voids that the bureaucratic state cannot through the Every Child Oregon initiative, they should consider what type of institution they would like to build. Determination should be made as to if they are seeking to disrupt or maintain the foster care system or create a new system entirely. This is one means of dealing with competing institutional logics. After determining the type of institution they seek to create, disrupt, or maintain, we recommend they empower individual actors who embody these logics and values to distill them throughout the larger initiative.

Conclusion

This capstone aimed to explore how competing logics impede collaboration within collective impact and limit or generate value. Although desiring to find the “third way,” the Contingent is often caught between competing institutional logics and obliged to pick a side. We formulated three key research questions based on Yin and Jamali’s collaborative value creation

model through institutional work in social partnership. We explored the initial conditions, governance and structure, and value creation that led to generative or limited value outcomes as mitigated by the presence of a partnership or substitution logic. These questions were developed to help identify where competing logics among partnering organizations exists and how members work despite these differences. The literature highlighted how collective impact initiatives seek to produce societal change but traditionally have neglected to analyze the power structure and build with an equity lens.

This exploratory qualitative project utilized a comparative case-study design to generate findings by conducting a focus group, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to triangulate data. Findings from this capstone uncovered a need for more clarity on the intended outcomes and impacts of the Every Child Oregon initiative. There are differing views from the partnering organization regarding initiative activities as they relate to the ultimate desired impacts. However, even with these differences, partner organizations see generative value outcomes when the differences are acknowledged as complementary rather than competitive.

In our data, we saw that when competing logics cannot be resolved among the institutions, the Contingent engages in coercive isomorphism. This was especially true in differing views of morality between the Christian religion and bureaucratic institutions. We suggest that in these instances, although a substitution logic is enacted, limited or generative value creation is viewed through the lens of one's own moral compass.

After analyzing the data, this capstone provided recommendations based on gaps in the collective impact model and the latest collective impact research requiring the centering of equity as a pre-requisite to successful collective impact initiatives. Additionally, we lean into places where The Contingent could grow in its partnership logic and thus generate more

significant value outcomes. The recommendations include a timeline centered around actionable items that will help strengthen The Contingent as a backbone organization.

It is without question that Every Child is a prominent non-profit organization in Oregon committed to serving children at one of the most challenging moments in their lives. Their success is due to many factors, including a solid organizational framework, committed staff, and long-standing partnerships. The Every Child collective impact initiative has continued since its founding to ensure that ODHS is supported in its work as a dedicated staff and community partner. As The Contingent plans to expand the Every Child initiative into other states, we are confident that they will continue to collaborate with various community organizations using this information to make new partnerships to reflect the communities in they serve.

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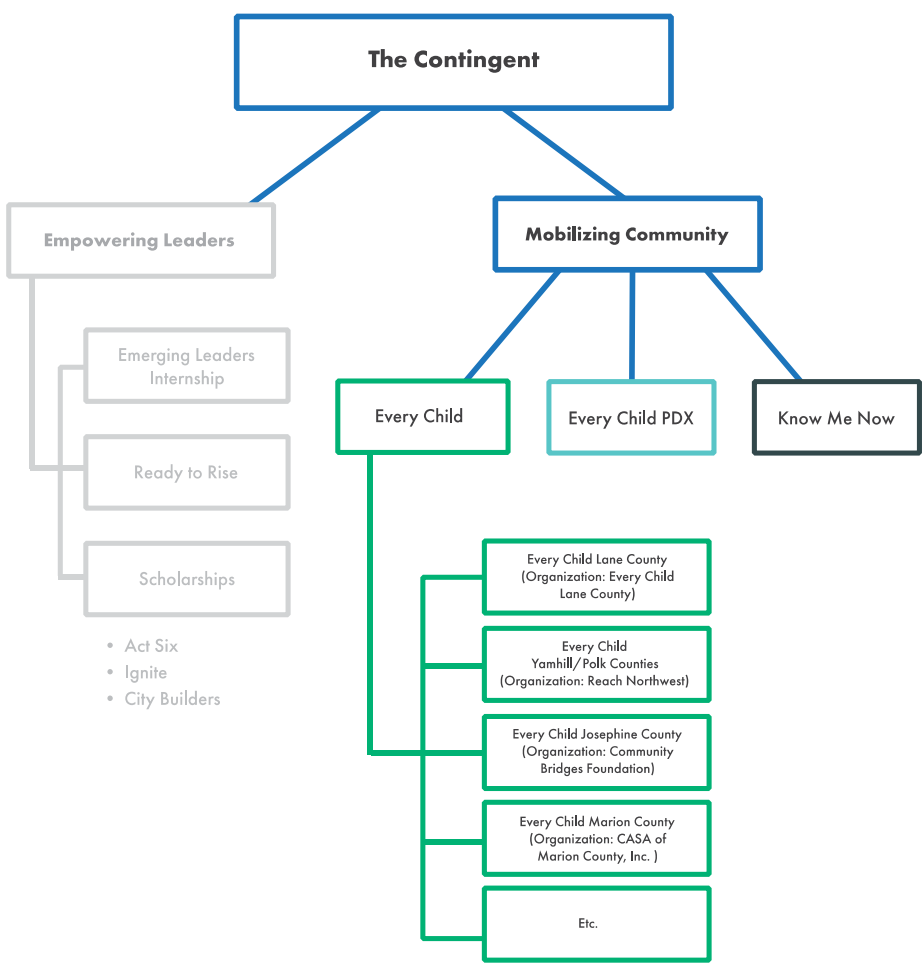
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Appendix A

The Contingent + Local County Organizational Chart



Appendix B

Every Child Focus Group Discussion Questions

Introduction: We have devised a set of questions we hope and expect will guide us through an open conversation about conflict in collaboration. The first few questions are 10,000ft. Type questions that should help you recall experiences from general to perhaps specific. We'll not spend a lot of time on these questions; some are even rapid-fire. I will offer a preemptive apology if I need to interrupt or do not ask you to respond to each question. The goal will be that even if you do not think about these earlier questions, your experience will be brought to mind so that when we arrive at the deeper questions, each of you will be prepared to contribute to the discussion.

1. **How are Every Child (EC) partnerships initiated? (GRAND TOUR/IC: Problem framing)**
 - Thinking back to one partnership example you have hands-on experience with, how did that partnership come to be?

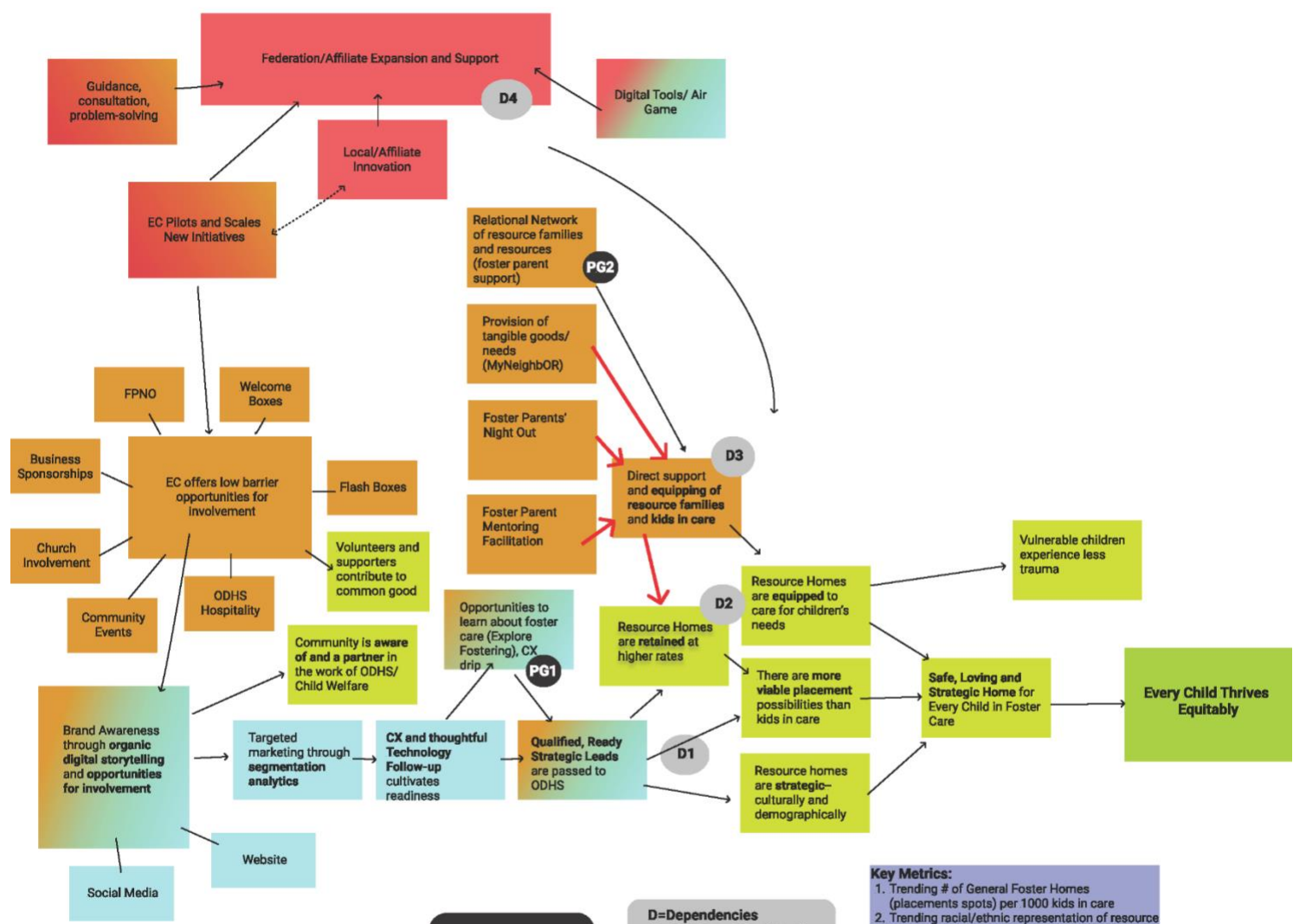
2. **What are the criteria for selecting your collective impact partners? How do you evaluate the "fit" with your partnerships before you agree to collaborate? (TASK-RELATED GRAND TOUR/IC: Negotiating interdependency)**
 - Have you experienced strong partnerships? (thumbs up for yes or down for no)
 - Have you experienced weak partnerships? (thumbs up for yes or down for no)
 - Have some partnerships changed in their strength over time? (1=rarely, 5=always)
 - How well did you anticipate this partnership being strong or weak from the get-go? (1 = rarely, 5 = always)
 - Do you feel YOU have influence over whether a partnership ultimately becomes strong or weak? (1=rarely, 5=always)
 - As a follow-up, let me ask some of you what role did you play in facilitating this partnership? How was your voice heard or not?

3. **What are your goals for entering into a partnership? What goals and values do The Contingent/Every Child and partners tend to share immediately? What goals, if any, have developed through partnership? (SPECIFIC GRAND TOUR/GS: Common agenda/VC: Advocating with various stakeholders)**
 - List three goals you have had in mind when establishing a partnership. Maybe these goals are universal to every partnership; maybe they are unique to each partnership. [Write them up on board. Assess commonalities and differences].
 - How often do you experience that partnerships share the same goals as you? (1=never, 5=always)
 - In your experience, how often do goals change as partnerships mature? (1=never, 5 always)
 - When goals need to change (for any reason, really), how often do they change for the better or lead to a stronger partnership? (1=never, 5=always)

4. **How do you share information with your partner to strengthen their operations and programs? (STRUCTURAL/GS: Continuous communication)**
 - For those who feel like they may influence the strength of a partnership, walk us through it, and tell us how you've experienced this.
 - Talk about communication and how it might play a role in partnerships. Building off the goals you've identified, how have you communicated with these partners that helps or hinders the strength of their contribution to reaching those goals?

5. **What have you done to monitor the progress of your partnerships? Any formal (Collective Impact) or informal governance mechanisms to control risks? (DESCRIPTIVE/GS: Shared measurement systems)**
 - How do you go about keeping track of progress?
 - Do you use any proper tools or informal communication? What do those look like?
6. **Is there any crisis situation that happened in the partnership implementation which had an impact on your relationship? Are you able to work through differences? (ALTERNATE PERSPECTIVE/VC:?)**
 - Tell us about a specific collaboration/initiative/project when partners clearly conflict with each other. They may share a common goal but hold other values in conflict.
 - When conflict arises, how do you address it? How do you work through it? Successfully or not.
7. **What describes your most successful EC partnership? What describes the least successful experience? What makes the difference? (EXAMPLE/ALTERNATE PERSPECTIVE/VC:?)**
 - Describe your most successful Every Child partnership.
 - Describe your least successful EC partnership.
8. **Would you mind recommending your colleagues, nonprofit partners, and other company stakeholders who might be interested and willing to participate in our interviews? Thank you! (SNOWBALL)**

Appendix C Every Child Oregon Theory of Change Model



PG=Perceived Gaps

- Ongoing learning opportunities for "not ready-now" inquiries
- More consistent relational networks and resources for resource parents

D=Dependencies

- ODHS certification of "Ready Now" handoffs
- ODHS "customer service" and support of certified foster parents
- ODHS Training and ongoing development of certified resource parents
- Local initiative and performance of affiliates

Key Metrics:

- Trending # of General Foster Homes (placements spots) per 1000 kids in care
- Trending racial/ethnic representation of resource homes v. kids in care
 - Inquiry handoffs to ODHS disaggregated by race
- Increased "placement stability" esp. from Every Child connected families
 - ODHS measures # of placements per 1000 days in care (4.13)
- Measurement of "EC" involvement from foster families correlated to placement stability
 - FPNO participation
 - Mentorship participation
 - Relational network participation
 - welcome/flash box recipients
- Resource Family Retention
 - rates at which general pop. foster homes affiliated with EC have placement stability
- Volunteer Inquiries, retention, and satisfaction
- Measurement of "counternarrative"
 - sentiment analysis (over time?) of EC-related posts and materials

Appendix D Recommendations Prioritization and Timeline



RECOMMENDATIONS

Undoubtedly, the Every Child Oregon collective impact initiative has achieved great success. Still, there is work to be done. We make the following recommendations based on these findings and building from the redefined equitable collective impact strategies defined by Kania et al. (2022).

ORDER AND PRIORITY

We order our recommendations in three levels of priority. The first priority recommendations are related to racial equity. We believe these will have the greatest impact on the overall initiative. The second priority recommendations are related to clarifying intended outcomes. The third priority recommendations are related to helping partners see their specific role(s) in those outcomes.

PRIORITY ONE

① Representative Task Force

Create a task force that includes representatives from the communities most impacted by Oregon's foster care system to inform program design and implementation.

② Ground Data in Historical Context

Present partners with data on Oregon's foster care system grounded in the historical context of systemic racial injustice. Consider adding this as an element of new partner onboarding or foster parent training.

PRIORITY TWO

③ Channels for Communication

Create channels for continuous communication with faith communities and business partners, such as a monthly newsletter, video updates, monthly video conference meetings, and annual partner convenings.

④ Partner Facing Logic Model

Create a logic model clearly defining the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the Every Child Oregon initiative that can be shared with existing partners.

PRIORITY THREE

⑤ Performance Measurement Dashboard

Identify shared performance measures between organizations involved in the Every Child initiative, and create a partner dashboard demonstrating how the activities conducted by faith communities and business partners contribute to the desired outcomes of the Every Child Oregon initiative.

⑥ ODHS & Church Forum

Create a direct forum where ODHS can converse with church partners. Focus conversations on areas of agreement between institutions with competing logics in an effort to continue to find the third way.



TIMELINE

As recommendations are considered, we offer the following suggested timeline. This timeline reflects the need to approach implementation thoughtfully, allowing time for research and strategy. However, the aggressive six-month timeline also reflects the urgency with which recommendations should be implemented, especially as they related to racial equity outcomes.

