



Education Foundation Australia

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

'Individually we can make a difference but together we can have impact'



Skyline Round Table 2: 10 April 2019

The opportunities offered and outcomes achieved by Australia's education system are far from fairly and evenly distributed. Skyline focuses on those who are gifted and talented and are at serious risk of not developing their academic and leadership potential due to constraints arising from disadvantage. Other organisations have a different focus, with a common thread that we all seek to break the inescapable link between social and economic inequity and educational outcomes.

Skyline brought together people from a diverse range of organisations working in education (listed below) to share their work, identify common purposes and map out the possibilities of joining forces in strategies to combat educational disadvantage. The event was convened by Dr Elizabeth Hartnell-Young (Board member) and facilitated by Dr Dahle Suggett (Patron).

The round table was an opportunity to expand our understanding of the issues and to identify opportunities for alignment among our respective programs to maximise our collective impact. Key points and comments below reflect the views of participants and are not necessarily Skyline's position.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Collective impact is a model of problem solving that aims to break down silos and allow solutions to emerge, rather than being known at the outset.

According to Stanford University, there are five conditions for collective impact:

- Common agenda
- Shared measurement
- Mutually reinforcing activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone support

KEY POINTS

1. Australian culture appears to accept inequity in outcomes and the links with socio-economic disadvantage without expressing deep outrage and insisting that education systems devise ameliorating strategies. Finland, on the other hand, has an education system designed to comprehensively support young people facing barriers to completing their education.

'my impression is that in Finland there would not be any need for an organisation like Skyline or Western Chances or Boroondara Chances because we exist to support people who face barriers to complete their education so there isn't a systemic barrier to them'

2. There is still a view in some quarters that schools in low socio-economic areas do not have any gifted and talented students. This is incorrect. Decades of research has told us there is wide diversity of children in all Victorian classrooms and that inclusive and comprehensive practices are essential for all to meet their potential.

'we need to raise awareness and expectations of staff as well as students and invest in capacity to identify giftedness and potential, and provide stimulating environments for learning'

3. Some participants wondered if it is wise to identify individuals rather than schools. For example, the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program supports whole schools to shift to a more equitable, student-centred approach to close the opportunity gap, and prepare all students for further study and careers.

'as soon as you start polarising the haves and the have nots I think you are completely missing how this sector works'

4. Often interventions are in primary or secondary school and it might be that the later they are the harder it is to actually effect long term change. When students start school there's already at least a two to three year gap. Some participants claimed that support mechanisms need to be available in the very early years – before school starts – and embedded in children, in communities and parents.

'there could be a negative message about coming in selecting the diamonds in the rough and removing them'

5. In developing a shared narrative, language is important. Is 'disadvantage' a word to avoid as it implies a deficit both at individual and community levels? Choices include 'ability' instead of 'disability', 'equity'...'capacity'...'growth'. It is helpful to understand the language of schooling.

'the biggest story is about valuing and supporting those whole communities, the teachers, the schools, the parents and everyone else'

NEXT STEPS

To progress towards collective impact, the Round Table participants offered to assist in these areas:

CONDITION	ACTIONS
Common agenda	Develop a new narrative for addressing inequity: Build urgency; express a shared moral purpose and vision; Identify potential for a joint approach and shared research
Shared measurement	Collect data and measure results consistently (mutual accountability); Provide resources and tools for schools to use; Aggregate data to show patterns; Provide case studies as role models
Mutually reinforcing activities	Offer support (e.g. scholarships) across agencies; Share professional learning opportunities; Coordinate submissions to government reviews; Conduct a consultation like the National Youth Commission
Continuous Communication	Join each other's mailing lists; Share invitations and reports
Backbone support	Explore dedicated resources to coordinate actions

In attendance

Katrina Reynen, Chair, Skyline
Jane Sydenham-Clarke CEO Skyline
Ralph Saubern, Deputy CEO ACER
Dr Sue Thomson, Deputy CEO ACER
Sue Cridge, Director, Social Ventures Australia
Helen Worlidge, CEO, Boroondara Chances
Anne Connors, Western Chances
Emeritus Professor Field Rickards, University of Melbourne
Anthony Gartner, Swinburne University
Claire Brown, AVID Program, Victoria University
Roger Page, Nossal High School
Iida-Maria Peltomaa, Produego, Finland
Annie Harper, Lead Program Manager, Skyline
Observers: Rachel, Karen, Elena from Skyline

The next Skyline Round Table will be held on Monday 11 November 2019 at the University of Melbourne and will focus on the role of Principals and school personnel. If you would like to attend please contact Grace Rankin, grace@skylinefoundation.org.au