

## Hope Street Group Colloquium 2015 Learnings and Takeaways

On May 5, 2015, Hope Street Group convened nearly 100 thought leaders and expert practitioners from across the country to take part in our 7th annual Colloquium focused on advancing solutions that expand economic opportunity. Specifically, our daylong action-oriented sessions resulted in the creation of four blueprints that outline collaborative action and the implementation plans to solve issues spanning the education, health and jobs markets. The work of the day does not stop at the blueprint construction, as each will be infused into the wider programmatic objectives of Hope Street Group and our broader network.

Prior to the working group sessions, the participants gleaned insights from an expert panel including moderator Ted Meisel, Hope Street Group Chairman of the Board and Co-Founder of AVIA Health Innovation; Tom Monahan, Chairman and CEO of CEB; Tony Miller, CEO and Founding Partner, The Vistria Group; and Byron Auguste, Managing Director of Opportunity@Work. Focusing on how to accelerate markets for social good, this panel was specifically constructed to share insights on Hope Street Group's belief that the most effective solutions to complex, social programs are market driven.

### Panel Reflections and Insights

The panel's intention was to 1) identify existing market dynamics and best practices including technologies, collaboration and investments, and 2) demonstrate viable opportunities to apply these practices specifically in social good markets. The dialogue centered on the deep-rooted social challenges and the necessary collaboration, speed and innovation critical for advancement. Learning how to apply market driven solutions and integrating technology to progress behaviors was deemed essential to transforming systems. The automobile industry was a noted example of responding to evolving market needs through the consistent application of new approaches and technologies to enhance product outcomes. This ongoing process must be applied to the design of our education, health and jobs systems. Due to often complex or slow progress for policy development, change agents must focus on the other ways to create shared visions, rules and interactions among market players. "With the people in this room and with everyone's 1-2 connections, we could significantly alter the functions in these markets, we could change the trajectory," said Auguste. The turnkey to market behavior founded on both business and social good interests is critical; it begins with precise problem framing and necessary collaboration with key market players.

Notable takeaways and applications from the panel include:

- Leveraging not only data but specific data analysis for scale: decisions must be based on data trends and predictions for a capital market analysis and specifically on how those trends relate to individuals.
- Deploying incentives to create shifts in essential stakeholders behavior: ideally, these incentives would spark collaboration and engrain a sense of accountability amongst market players. Individuals are already trained to optimize their investments but need more transparency; a cohesive market would provide that across social good variables.
- Applying lessons learned across systems to mitigate environmental complexities: in many social good markets, there is a consistent sense of 'recreating the wheel,' fragmented resources (human and financial), and aiding confusion in the market itself. Instead, we should prioritize knowledge sharing and the use of best practices through user-friendly playbooks, technology and analysis.

- Developing innovative market driven solutions for the evolving environment: there needs to be a clear connection between driving social good while generating profit for business leaders and technology entrepreneurs.
- Investing in the long-term strategy and gains: leadership is often turned over, causing many decisions to be based off short-term gains. By utilizing data and proper analysis, we must identify the long-term opportunities in market approaches that can be coupled with short-term 'wins' to progress momentum and wider collaboration.

The 2015 Colloquium was designed for participants to test this problem solving approach and broaden perspectives on how to create both transformative and sustained change across social good markets through market driven solutions. There was agreement that market driven solutions can be realized in the social sector by 1) focusing on the right incentives and 2) expanding public, private, philanthropic and individual investments in approaches and technologies that have demonstrated success in broadening opportunities for all Americans. Moreover, recognizing the untapped potential of working together—in and outside of government—we can enhance upward mobility throughout the country.

### **Blueprints for Acceleration Shared Themes**

Notably different this year was the structure and make-up of the working group sessions, which purposely moved the dialogues from the ideation stage towards the activation stage of Hope Street Group's approach, and focused on how to efficiently accelerate proven solutions. Each of the working group session topics were identified solutions, vetted by our network and derived from previous Hope Street Group Colloquia and related network convenings. In addition, the working groups allowed for cross-sector collaboration between education, health and jobs experts, and thought leaders.

Across all four working sessions, the dialogues were centered on more actionable tactics that connected back to the gleanings of the panel. The following are the most consistent themes deemed vital to expanding impact in our solution areas:

***Precision Problem Framing and Messaging:*** An accurate depiction of the problem and the terms for action are central to both the problem solving approach and deployment of solutions. Often by using outdated or non-vetted/tested terms, vital market players are discouraged from participating or investing in the solutions process. For example, in the *Engaging Community Stewards* Working Group, the first order of business was to restructure how we articulate our vision and the issue itself, shifting from *engaging* the community to *elevating* community voices. Simultaneously, the objective should not be elevating community voices for the purpose of responding to policies enacted from the top-down, but building an innovative and cyclical funnel for active involvement between the community and decision-makers.

The same occurred in the *Translating the Right Signals for a New Era of Work* Working Group, in which the word *train* was identified as problematic when engaging educators since most teachers in traditional systems view their role as imparting knowledge, not training. Ultimately, the group agreed that educators should understand and effectively *prepare* individuals for the demands of employers. Given how essential it is to get a variety of market players engaged in the solutions process and aligned to maximize impact, ensuring that the messaging is clear and correct is critical.

***Necessary Role Clarification and Involvement from All Market Players:*** To shift markets and create shared value, we must collaborate across all entities with effective communication channels and transparency; commit to the change process; and set clear roles/expectations for public, private and nonprofit sectors. Specifically, all groups highlighted the critical engagement

from usually nontraditional suspects including technology experts, product builders and end-users (youth and young adults).

The role of government was discussed across all groups. Specifically, how can the government accelerate the solution and how should policy ultimately be informed and developed? The consensus was that the government should help enable promising policies and practices through the provision of incentives, accountability and infrastructure for further developments and collaboration. The groups agreed that while government-funded policies are acceptable, the government should not be deploying solutions independently.

***Micro to Macro Data Driven Approaches:*** A notable challenge across all four groups was the under-utilization of data and the sharing of best practices. There was overwhelming agreement that data could be used to effectively pinpoint both learnings and gaps at the regional and local level, and if funneled appropriately, could inform decisions around scaling and national level policy. As is, without this micro-level data, results in our solution areas have proven to be less than optimal. To accelerate solutions, the data components of the marketplace must be broken down to identify the specific barriers to success at the micro-level and properly leveraged as necessary inputs for wider involvement and more strategic operations.

Simultaneously, there must be necessary investments and proper 'backbone' entities to share best practices happening in small hubs across the country. Not only is this necessary within the same market, but there is also incredible insight that players across markets can gain from each other. For example, during blueprint development, the *Engaging Community Stewards Working Group* separated into three smaller breakout groups encompassing community health, healthcare and education. Following, the working group pulled components and lessons learned across the three breakout groups and incorporated findings into one cohesive strategy, constructed by utilizing various best practices. The determination and structuring of this funnel to share and elevate these practices within and across markets is essential to driving market change at an accelerated pace.

***Investment of Scaling Efforts (through technology and policy):*** Across all groups was the agreement that viable scaling pathways of proven practices are necessary, which can be achieved through technology tools and innovations and/or policy infrastructures and incentives. Currently, our markets are unable to leverage technology and attract entrepreneurs to develop the tools and resources to help scale best practices.

Noted was the often-challenging path to accelerating scale when many of the decisions involved are specific to localized needs. Further, successful scaling requires active participation, acceptance and use by multiple entities. Therefore, the necessary infrastructure has to be constructed to allow regions implementing solutions to learn from each other. This infrastructure should also leverage existing resources including those outside specific industries, which could help the overall system develop rapidly.

## Working Group Session Summaries and Blueprints

### 1. *Translating the Right Signals for a New Era of Work*

The purpose of this working group was to develop viable solutions to improve how employers identify and signal the skills individuals need to attain and perform on a job and enjoy career growth. Participants ranged from workforce experts, employers and industry representatives to notable thought leaders. This group identified the challenges employers face articulating their skill needs, the skill-based hiring methods that could serve as alternatives to traditional hiring proxies, and the challenges individuals face to gain clear and relevant information and portable training to help them meet their career goals.

The group agreed that to achieve their shared visions for “a more efficient marketplace,” employers must know the competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors) required for job effectiveness and how to measure, communicate and hire based on those requirements. Individuals should be able to identify the skills that employers need, have access to evidence-based programs to develop the skills, and then effectively communicate and demonstrate those skills to employers.

While all stakeholders will play a crucial role in translating the signals, the most critical dynamic is between employers and individuals. The crucial component of the work will be a common language (currency) to begin the dialogue about the needs and barriers to achieving the necessary outcomes. Following the establishment of a shared language, it was deemed critical to establish definitions of the minimum skills and competencies needed to be productive in open jobs. These messages and definitions should be developed by employers and validated and legally defensible, so they can be used for hiring. Employers should also lead an effort to take an inventory of programs and create a map of existing initiatives and a blueprint for future cross-sector collaboration to clarify roles and accountability measures. To support these marketplace transformations, the government should set incentives that encourage adoption, action, and collaboration. Incentives and data systems could also be established to improve implementation, track progress and outcomes, and improve accountability.

The group developed a [Blueprint for Acceleration, I Wish I Knew What Skills I Need to Get the Job I Want](#), depicting how to create a cohesive marketplace to improve stakeholder understanding of where jobs are and what skills are needed, as well as how to contribute to the development of career pathways to lead talent to employers and empower individuals to be effective market participants. The group also suggested two analogies for the blueprint: the first suggested that the work be viewed more as building a ‘highway system’ with many on and off ramps so individuals can more easily enter and exit education and the workforce throughout their lives; the second was for the work to be viewed as the creation and cultivation of a jobs ecosystem in which all parties rely on and benefit from each other.

The dialogue consensus and blueprint construction are now being incorporated into Hope Street Group's *Re-engineering the Jobs Marketplace* Initiative. Hope Street Group intends to continue progress towards tangible action steps and results through further engagement with interested parties on work specifically related to the articulation and aggregation of the demand component in the jobs marketplace.

## 2. Engaging Community Stewards for Sustained Impact

The purpose of this working group was to identify how to build and sustain relationships with essential community stewards. Participants included a diverse mix of on-the-ground change agents including thought leaders and community mobilizers across education and health. The group was tasked to develop viable pathways to leverage current resources in the community, listen to different needs of the community, and empower community stewards in the decision making process.

While engagement from the community and practitioners is vital to ensure informed and successful policy, there was overwhelming consent that this was informing a top-down approach. Instead of building an engagement funnel to appease decision makers, the group agreed that the objective is to elevate community stewards and build an infrastructure for active and continued involvement—essentially 'turning the power balance' to those on the ground. The group identified challenges including the misalignment of goals and shared objectives, little to no accountability, unstable and uncertain resource paths, marred translation of day-to-day issues and needs, the lack of proper data and assessments, and the loose connection to the actual locality/region working towards change.

The market players in the room then identified proven practices that have been built to overcome these challenges, underscoring the common traits of:

- Building a platform to elevate and mobilize community voices
- Developing cyclical relationships and trust between the community and decision makers
- Investing and building long-term goals, while simultaneously achieving short-term wins to gain momentum and trust
- Utilizing pre-existing infrastructures and channels to leverage the wider community
- Deploying a multi-sector approach
- Enhancing transparency and cross-sharing of proven practices and resources across regions and sectors

The barriers across political environments, lack of a common language, fragmented resources, cultural differences, and inability to access essential community stewards were carefully debated and articulated with real examples and case studies from hubs across the country. The group agreed—given the complexities and difference of the barriers—that instead of constructing the blueprint on deploying this engagement program style into another social variable topic, the bigger opportunity was determining the acceleration plan to scale and sustain proven models of success.

The group developed a [Blueprint for Acceleration, Adaptability and Scalability of Models and Practices](#), depicting how to conduct a sustainable community engagement plan that could be scaled within and across communities by utilizing the different perspectives and best practices in the room. To operationalize this, the group broke into three separate breakout groups encompassing community health, healthcare, and education to articulate the components of the blueprint. Across all three, the barriers (e.g. lack of trust, data, self-awareness, no internal catalyst), incentives (e.g. funding, tax credits, exposure, information and access, more economic opportunity) and infrastructure (e.g. funnel and environment for data and information sharing, relationships with the decision makers, leveraging existing resources) were very similar, further connecting the day's discussion and hypothesis. However, this group was very keen that to develop an effective implementation model to scale, involving and leveraging the expertise from technology experts, business leaders and innovators was the vital next step.

The dialogue feedback and blueprint construction process served as outputs following previous work and network pilots focused on addressing social variables through community oriented cross-sector collaboration. Hope Street Group and partners will share the findings with relevant stakeholders to inform and impact both investment and decision making processes.

### 3. *Building the Movement, Inspiring Change*

This working group was tasked with identifying methods and tactics to build momentum and interest specific to enhancing career mindedness through the use of effective campaign and movement building. Specifically, this solutions approach was derived from previous convenings with the White House and through the consensus of diverse leaders spanning employers to education on the vital need for a broader public understanding and a greater sense of urgency, which ultimately can accelerate change across policy and practice. Identifying effective campaigns through health related initiatives, the group dived into a dialogue on how to develop a new language and understanding to address the challenge of job preparedness for youth and young adults (16–24 year-olds) not meeting the demands of the workforce. Simultaneously, students have a weak understanding of which skills and degrees will best help them find a job.

The group discussed the issue and agreed that access to meaningful workforce learning opportunities including workforce development and employment programs have the capacity to set young people on the path to a long-term career, while helping to decrease the unemployment rate. And, for at-risk high school students, having a meaningful job or a workforce learning opportunity (e.g. internship or apprenticeship) has been shown to decrease their likelihood of dropping out of school. Young adults who have employment opportunities, mentoring, and professional support early in their lives are far better equipped to meet the demands of the contemporary workforce than if they had entered mid-level or professional settings later in their career trajectories. Research strongly indicates the benefits of early work exposure for young people and their employers. Yet, the system has fundamental perception challenges that shift both interest and exposure to alternate sources of career preparation. This was notable across two campaign topics: 1) Promotion of Workforce Learning Opportunities Through Vocational Programs and 2) Promotion of Entrepreneurial Skills and Pathways.

The group engaged in dialogue on both topics and identified that in both cases, the opportunities for learning offer flexible and adaptable skill sets that can help young adults build the foundation of skills necessary to enhance their career trajectory and seize more opportunities over time. In both cases, existing best practices and the need to elevate work currently being done to shift parent, educator, and teacher perceptions were highlighted.

Fundamental to the dialogue was the aspirational tone that the entrepreneurial positioning has compared to vocational programming. This led into questions about the different targets and audiences needed per campaign. Across both, parent and teacher engagement remains key but the primary target for perception change should be the youth/young adults, with campaigns constructed on a motivating and aspirational platform. The group agreed that instead of choosing one campaign over the other for the blueprint process, they would focus on identifying, finding, and activating the youth audience, with the vision that through an effective campaign, all youth would be aware of the various career pathways—across vocational, academic, and entrepreneurial—that lead to lifelong learning and work opportunities.

In the [Blueprint for Acceleration, Changing Perception, It's Our Future](#), the group identified opportunities to accelerate action including strategic partnership development and integration into the messaging, investment in market analysis and scans, and the necessary engagement of end-users (youth and young adults) to test the articulation and perception case. Potential

barriers included the broad lack of awareness and clear scope of the job market problem on the youth end, significant cultural differences, and the remaining negative connotation of certain work programs. The implementation plan included tangible movement building ideas such as a national Launch Career Acceleration Day, the utilization of social and traditional media for storytelling opportunities, the deployment of continuous youth and parent assessments, the construction of an effective feedback loop, and the eventual involvement to reach and mobilize parents and educators.

Hope Street Group intends to share the plan more broadly with campaign builders working on this issue and/or with this specific audience, and with those across the Administration and government who originally asked for our network's insights into how to shift these perceptions.

#### *4. Empowering the Individual, Utilizing Technology as the Powering Agent of Change*

This working group was comprised of leading technologists focused on ways to develop, test, and scale new methods to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to decide the work that will lead to prosperity and fulfillment, and how to achieve their desired path. These tools could help individuals navigate the myriad of choices to quality and effective career paths, and provide access to information at scale.

The group started by identifying the different audiences in need of help, starting with the 150 million Americans in the workforce and segmenting down into different subpopulations. These included: the "service" economy (25 million), 1099 workers (70 million workers and growing at more than 10% per year), low-skilled workers (36 million), middle-skilled workers (which overlap with the "service" economy), first-time job entrants (15–20 million), 14–25 year-old at-risk disconnected youth (5–7 million), displaced workers, veterans (20 million and 2.5 million returning from Iraq/Afghanistan), transitional workers, and those with some college/no-degree (35 million).

The group then discussed the individual's journey from cradle-to-grave and the tools and options that would be needed at each stage to empower the individual to take control of his/her education and career path. These stages were broken into K-12, Individual Support, Post-Secondary (when appropriate), Vocational, Work-to-Learn, Getting the Job and Excelling, Growth and Lifelong Learning. There was debate about whether it is possible to identify these tools without first considering the important role of the employer in providing clear information about what is needed to excel in a job. For this reason, the group operated under the assumption that employers and educators were willing change participants and developed a set of "complementary employer tools" that would be needed to achieve the shared vision.

The group then developed key elements and requirements of a connected marketplace and the corresponding solutions that would be needed to empower the individual along his/her career pathway. Following the discussion, the group centered on a refined vision to construct the blueprint for acceleration: 150 million Americans with the tools, information and support to participate economically as each wishes by 2025, titled, [\*Three R's: Record, Reputation and Recommendation\*](#).

Participants identified the key stakeholders to achieving this vision including individuals, employers, technologists, caring adults, policymakers, media, trainers and educators, and counselors. They noted the most significant barriers to the connected marketplace as lack of investment, common language, data transparency and access; time constraints for the individual; financial debt; and employer hiring bias/risk aversion. They then highlighted key incentives for individuals and employers to get involved at scale: advice and training, evidence

of career progress, and labor market value are critical for individuals; increased retention, demonstrated ROI, development of a talent pipeline, and reduced “cost per employee” are critical for employers.

Citing technology as the most powerful tool to overcome barriers, the group agreed that it is important for the individual to be empowered through a 'digital career passport' with real labor market value and for policy incentives to be aligned to this change. Implementation would include development of an open data repository on skills, developed by technologists and fueled by employer information, which could be accessed by all stakeholders and utilized by technologists to develop new tools that empower individuals and their support networks. These technology based tools could serve as the backbone of a connected marketplace, enticing vetted mentors to participate at scale, enabling individuals to experiment with career options through readily available internship and volunteering opportunities, and providing career growth through ongoing support and training that is both accessible and affordable.

The group agreed that the development of a shared operating system is necessary to achieving a connected marketplace, which would include an open data model that could be accessed by all key stakeholders with an infrastructure that allowed for BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology). It was agreed that end-users should be involved in the design process and that big data should be used to micro-target populations in different ways according to their individualized needs and preferences, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. The ultimate success of this effort will be measured by No NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) in America among people who want to participate in the economy by 2025.

The findings, debates, and blueprint construction are now being incorporated into Hope Street Group's *Re-engineering the Jobs Marketplace* Initiative (similar to working group 1). Hope Street Group will continue to progress towards tangible action steps and results through the formalization of an expert and committed working group to bridge demand and supply of our jobs market through a connected and evolving marketplace.