



CONVENING OF PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS FOR KNOWLEDGE-SHARING AND COLLABORATION IN 2015-2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, the Trump Foundation embarked on a pilot year of serving as a convener. We took on this role as a proactive step to increase coherence, collaboration and effectiveness between programs and to encourage sustainability of the foundation's strategy among its partners. We did so in response to the request and expectation expressed by grantees in the GPR of 2014 to facilitate mutual learning and cooperation between different foundation programs.

We designed our convening activities to address different needs and forms, including cluster networks for programs of a similar nature; exchange fairs to facilitate interaction between developers and operators; and practitioner affinity groups to cultivate mutual learning among professionals from different programs. We initially planned 22 convening events over the course of the year for 280 participants. In reality, we executed 21 meetings and events for 409 participants. They included 14 cluster meetings, 4 exchange events and 3 affinity group workshops, of which 15 were performed in the new office and 6 in an outside facility. One of the affinity workshops included a residential stay, to enable deeper learning.

Cluster networks were launched for programs of teacher residency training; professional communities of practice; diagnostic assignments; and municipalities and school networks, all of which met 3-4 times each. Several cluster networks went on to organize their own activities, such as an international conference and study visits abroad. Additional grants were approved to support these activities.

An external and internal evaluation of the activity, which comprised interviews with participants and staff members, revealed the following:

- a. The overall response from participants is highly positive, and the role of a convener is one that our partners encourage us to maintain. They expect the foundation to deepen the content and learning in these meetings, including more significant mutual learning through observations and sharing case studies. They also expect the foundation to advocate for their interests with the Ministry of Education.
- b. The participants note that the foundation staff is very active in preparing and running the meetings and events. However, those who engaged in more significant activity – such as a study visit, overnight seminars, or organizing a shared conference - developed a greater sense of ownership and felt more connected, obligated and satisfied by the convening experience.
- c. The organizational decision to place the convening activity under our program team, who have close working relationships with the professionals in grantee organizations, benefited the convening activity. Nevertheless, this meant that the convening placed an emphasis on the programs, and less on the grantee organizations, their leadership and the larger surrounding eco-system.

- d. Five foundation team members dedicated approximately 20% of their time to operating the convening activities over the year. Their expertise lies in grant making and they did not undergo specific training on how to effectively convene partners. They had to learn the craft on the job from successes and challenges as they progressed throughout the pilot year.
- e. The foundation's role as convener included preparing a detailed operational plan, aligning milestones with budget, monitoring progress and performance, and coordinating the work between different team members. In practice, this was more difficult than expected and will require active steps to improve next year.

Learning from these lessons, we propose the following goals for the foundation's convening activity in 2016:

- to increase the volume and scope of convening activities, and create more opportunities for peer-led learning, observations, and case studies in the field;
- to encourage members to exercise ownership and responsibility for the network, and become more involved and committed;
- to diversify the affinity groups so that they include different professionals in grantee organizations and their leadership;
- to improve effectiveness of internal operations, including performance and financial monitoring, team communications and mastering the craft of convening.

CLUSTER NETWORKS

In 2016 we will add a fifth network which will convene training programs for instructional coaches, including 7 programs from different partner organizations. They will work together to build an agreed-upon process and best practices for training teachers to become instructional coaches, and to explore the profession further in Israel. They will discuss the institutionalization of the role of instructional coach; how to embed it into the education system; and how to cooperate with the Ministry of Education to formalize the role and solve the issues surrounding it.

The other four networks will continue to meet, will expand to include new grantees, and will work towards taking responsibility for the network and a more significant level of learning and interactions. They will build their own annual plan and goals together with the foundation, focusing on knowledge sharing, learning from each other's case studies, visits to one another's programs, and producing joint publications for the professional community.

AFFINITY GROUPS

This year, we intend to significantly expand the scope of the Practitioner Affinity groups, to include 10 workshops for the following professionals:

- a. Practitioners affiliated with cluster networks: school principals, PLC facilitators, instructional coaches, teachers who implement diagnostic instruction and teachers who use classroom-based videos. For the latter, we are planning a

- workshop for 50 participants with Judy Shulman on the use of video in professional development of teachers.
- b. Practitioners in grantee and partner organizations: CEOs, CFOs and Communications Officers of leading education organizations.
 - c. Ministry of Education district mathematics supervisors. Their two-day workshop will be residential, in order to increase trust between participants who are aren't used to working together, and enable time for a more significant learning process.

EXCHANGE FAIRS

We will convene an Exchange Fair, "Shuk 5", our annual "market" for operators and developers to meet, network, and present their programs and processes to one another. In total, over the course of the year the foundation will convene 765 participants in 28 events, meetings and seminars. Preparation for and by participants for the workshops and seminars will include translation of relevant academic literature, adding subtitles to classroom videos, and preparing literature reviews.

A detailed work plan will be prepared, including internal division of labor and responsibilities across the foundation team. Progress and performance will be monitored throughout and feedback will be collected from participants at a range of convening events. During the year, a team member will learn more about the craft of convening from literature and from colleagues in philanthropy, in order to train the rest of the team.