

ABSTRACT

InSite Waco: Serving Waco's Nonprofit Leaders Through Innovative Collaboration

Luke Ungarino

Director: Andrew P. Hogue, Ph.D.

InSite Waco is a service organization for nonprofits in the greater Waco area. InSite Waco aims to provide an efficient, cost-effective way for nonprofit leaders to collaborate with peers in their community in order to better serve their respective organizations. I believe that nonprofit leaders in Waco want to engage with their peers on a deeper level but lack the time and money. I created InSite Waco to enable more robust relationships between Waco's nonprofit leaders. These relationships take the form of partnerships focused on intentional knowledge-sharing. This thesis outlines the reasoning of InSite's methodology and the achievements of InSite's first year of activity.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

Dr. Andrew P. Hogue, Honors Program

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

Dr. Elizabeth Corey, Director

DATE: _____

INSITE WACO: SERVING WACO'S NONPROFIT LEADERS THROUGH
INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Baylor University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Program

By
Luke Ungarino

Waco, Texas

May 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Chapter One: Why Invest in Professional Development	5
Chapter Two: The InSite Model	15
Chapter Three: Review of the Year	26
Chapter Four: Evaluative Instruments	33
Conclusion	40

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

I began InSite Waco in August of 2017 on the assumption that Waco's nonprofit leaders wanted and would benefit from more intentional partnerships within the community. With the help of Baylor's Philanthropy and Public Service Program, I met with various nonprofit leaders to design a model for a grant program that I called InSite Waco.

The purpose of InSite Waco is to incentivize intentional professional development via collaboration among Waco's nonprofit leaders. We work with select nonprofit leaders to address a specific skill that they want their organization to improve upon (e.g. board management or fundraising) and then partner them with another organization that has mastered the targeted skill. We tailor our client's partnerships to meet each organization's goals and flexibility to provide the optimal learning experience. These partnerships can take many forms depending on our clients' preferences. They can last one month or they can last three months. They can take the form of a swap, where both organizations of a partnership are learning and sharing a skill from the other, or the partnership can be unidirectional with only one of the organizations teaching a skill to the other. In unidirectional partnerships, the skill-sharing organization is reimbursed for their time through a small grant award.

Chapter one of this thesis explains the logic of incentivizing nonprofit leaders to invest in professional development, highlighting the drastic difference in levels of investment in professional development between the social sector (also known as the nonprofit sector) and the private sector (or the for-profit sector). Chapter two breaks

down the developments of the InSite model into what it is currently and the logic behind each pivotal move, most of which were made under the recommendation of InSite's first clients. Chapter three details InSite's evaluation process, which we use to ensure that our partnerships generate significant, measurable results. Chapter four describes the state of our pilot partnerships today and considers the future of InSite based on the outcomes of these partnerships.

The formulation and execution of InSite Waco has been consistently a group effort. I have benefited from the assistance, advice, criticism, and support of many people—many more than that of the typical undergraduate thesis. Without the guidance of Dr. Andrew Hogue, InSite Waco would never have gotten off the ground. I owe him and his counsel a great deal. I am also grateful for the work of fellow undergraduates Jess Schurz, Daniel Karns, Daisy Mills, Parker Walton, and Ana Martinez, as well as Baylor University faculty mentors, Jeremy Everett and Charles McDaniel. Finally, I would like to thank the executive directors of InSite's pilot partnerships, Brenda Shuttlesworth, Buddy Edwards, Kathy Reid, and Susan Cowley. Their feedback enabled us to create a model for nonprofit leaders by nonprofit leaders.

CHAPTER ONE

Why Invest in Professional Development?

Introduction

InSite Waco aims to foster collaboration as a method of professional development among Waco's nonprofit leadership. This chapter cites evidence of the efficacy of such endeavors across the globe and the heightened importance of investing in professional development for the social sector, particularly via cross-cultural collaboration with a mindset of adaptability.

Why professional development?

Professional development is the process of improving and increasing capabilities of staff through access to education and training. Professional development provides a tremendous return on investment when done well. It is a common practice among individuals in a variety of fields ranging from CEOs of Fortune 500 companies to every teacher in America; and yet it is notably uncommon among professionals in the social sector. In "The Business Case for Investing in Talent," Monisha Kapila rebukes nonprofit organizations who choose not to invest in professional development. Kapila holds up the private sector as a model of effective investment in human capital. Placed beside the private sector, which spends an annual \$120 per person on leadership development alone, the social sector pales in comparison with a mere \$29 per person.¹

¹ Monisha Kapila, "The Business Case for Investing in Talent," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2014): accessed August 28, 2016, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_business_case_for_investing_in_talent.

Surprisingly, nonprofit leaders are not oblivious to the benefits of professional development. A survey done by the Bridgespan Research Group found that the majority of the 500 nonprofit professionals they surveyed report leadership development and succession planning as their primary organizational weaknesses.² A similar study by the ProInspire Leadership Institute found that 93 percent of managers across America's social sector believe leadership or managerial training will increase their effectiveness, while 50 percent believe they do not have the knowledge, experience, or resources to be successful in their current position.³ And yet, expenditures on professional development comprise only 0.03 percent of the social sector's \$1.5 trillion total annual spending.⁴ The data does not add up. By not investing in themselves and their coworkers, nonprofit leaders knowingly hurt their organization.

Fortunately, many nonprofits have heeded the call to adopt a focus on professional development. GlobalGiving, a charity fundraising website, provides each of its employees with \$1,200 per year to be used solely for professional development. Using talent-based metrics and electronic feedback tools, they carefully evaluate outcomes to ensure that funds are used efficiently. Five years after embedding these

² "What's Your Plan A," Bridgespan Research Group, accessed August 28, 2016, <https://www.bridgespan.org/bridgespan/Images/articles/nonprofit-leadership-development-whats-your-plan-a/nonprofit-leadership-development-guide.pdf>

³ "Becoming A More Effective Leader," ProInspire Leadership Institute, accessed August 28, 2016, http://www.proinspire.org/blog/becoming-a-more-effective-leader-results-from-proinspires-managing-for-success/?doing_wp_cron=1489452383.3102040290832519531250.

⁴ Kapila, "The Business Case for Investing in Talent."

practices into their company, GlobalGiving accrued four times as many donations as before and with only incremental growth in budget and staff.⁵

If multiple nonprofit leaders in Waco believe they would benefit from professional development, and they presently do not invest in professional development as the research indicates, it seems that nonprofit leaders would take the opportunity to invest if it presented itself— and especially if it presented itself for no cost. Surely, every one of the nonprofit leaders polled by Bridgespan and ProInspire are already equipped with some skills and experience that they can share with other nonprofit leaders. Likewise, every executive director of Waco’s nonprofits possesses a wealth of information, ideas, and skills, that they can share and that someone else in the Waco community could benefit from learning.⁶

At InSite Waco, we attempt to make executive directors aware of what their organization might be missing out on by not channeling resources towards their development as a nonprofit leader. But when budgets are tight (as they usually are for small and mid-size nonprofits), nonprofit professionals are not inclined to invest in professional development opportunities. However, if given the opportunity to participate in a low-budget and timely professional development program, nonprofit professionals might have more interest. Professional development via collaboration offers one way of

⁵ Ibid

⁶ “State of McLennan Nonprofits 2011 Economic Profile,” <https://www.wacofoundation.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Public/Capacity%20Building/Economic%20Profile%20-%20State%20of%20McLennan%20Nonprofits%20comprehensive.pdf>. This study provides in-depth information about the state of Waco’s nonprofits.

satisfying both criteria. The wealth of knowledge contained in the executive directors of Waco's nonprofits needs to be shared.

Professional Development via Collaboration

Professional development frequently occurs through rotational programs. Rotational programs are often housed within large organizations. Rotational programs bring individuals together from within the same company, but from different departments or at different levels of the organization. These individuals share a common vision, namely, the promotion of the company's mission, but normally work toward accomplishing that mission from various angles. By bringing different individuals from various departments of the company, each with its own unique culture and perspective, ideas and insights are shared and each employee returns to his respective department better equipped to serve the company. This form of professional development, also known as collaborative professional development, provides a low-budget alternative to pricey consulting teams or third-party professional development. Bringing experienced individuals together yields fresh insights and for a minimal cost.

Another advantage of collaborative professional development is that it brings together individuals who often serve overlapping constituencies but normally never interact. The nature of major social issues is always nuanced and solving them is never as easy as it seems. A single mother who is struggling to provide food for herself and her child may be well-served by a local food pantry, but until she gets the help she needs to protect her child from an abusive father, she will never achieve stability. When the food pantry and the family abuse center work together, they can better recognize the issues

faced by their constituencies and can work towards getting that mother into a stable environment.

Jodi Nelson, author of “A Guide to Actionable Measurement,” expounds on the eminent importance of relationships when tackling complex problems. As the head of Measurement and Evaluation at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Nelson operates in a highly analytical field, making her spirited advocacy for teamwork and relationships even more surprising. Nelson says, “If you look at the most relevant data for the work that we actually do as grant-makers, the variable that we can most clearly control and adjust, it is the relationships we have with grantees and partners. This is the vehicle through which we achieve our impact.”

Although the efficacy of relationships is not easily measured, establishing strong relationships between social leaders is essential to tackling complex social issues and thus merits primary focus in grant awards. Each social leader in a community has a unique repertory of talents and experiences. By strengthening partnerships between these leaders, better problem solving and innovation can occur with a wider array of perspectives. By having the right people connected before undertaking a new social initiative, grants can enable the execution of that initiative with greater efficiency.

Emergent Strategy

A grant aimed solely at fostering collaboration can fall prey to certain inefficiencies. By getting caught up in networking for its own sake and losing sight of the intended results of the partnership, grant money can become unproductive and

unmeasurable for success. However, even if a partnership identifies specific best-practices to target before initiating the partnership, the way in which these best-practices should be attained is more effectively decided after each partner spends time together and getting to know what skills they can offer. As an alternative to robust front-end planning, grant-makers are better-served utilizing a method of “emergent strategy.”⁷

Emergent strategy is an approach that emphasizes constantly evolving solutions that are uniquely suited to the time, place, and issues at hand.⁸ This means that grant-makers do not attempt to spell out the specific outcomes expected from a grant award right away, but rather allow the grant recipients time and flexibility to utilize the grant as they deem fit. In “Strategic Philanthropy for a Complex World,” John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Patty Russell note the revolutionary use of emergent strategies by The Rockefeller Foundation. Kania, Kramer, and Russell’s research found that foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, which adopted the build-as-you-go mentality inherent to the emergent strategic approach, achieved a unique flexibility that allowed their grants to circumvent the rigidity that typically stifles innovation in structured grant awards. The following section of this chapter takes a closer look at the unique advantages of emergent strategy applied to relationship-based grants.

Relationship-based Grants with an Emergent Strategic Approach

⁷ John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Patty Russell, “Strategic Philanthropy for a Complex World,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2014), accessed 24 December 2017, https://ssir.org/up_for_debate/article/strategic_philanthropy.

⁸ John Kania, “Strategic Philanthropy for a Complex World.”

There is a standard formula that many foundations follow when designing grants: focus on a clear and limited set of goals, thoroughly research the target area and surrounding relevant information, frame a realistic hypothesis, and develop an evidence-based method to learn from results.⁹ This formula serves as doctrine in the expansive knowledge pool of philanthropic strategy.¹⁰ And yet the research shows that it merits correction.

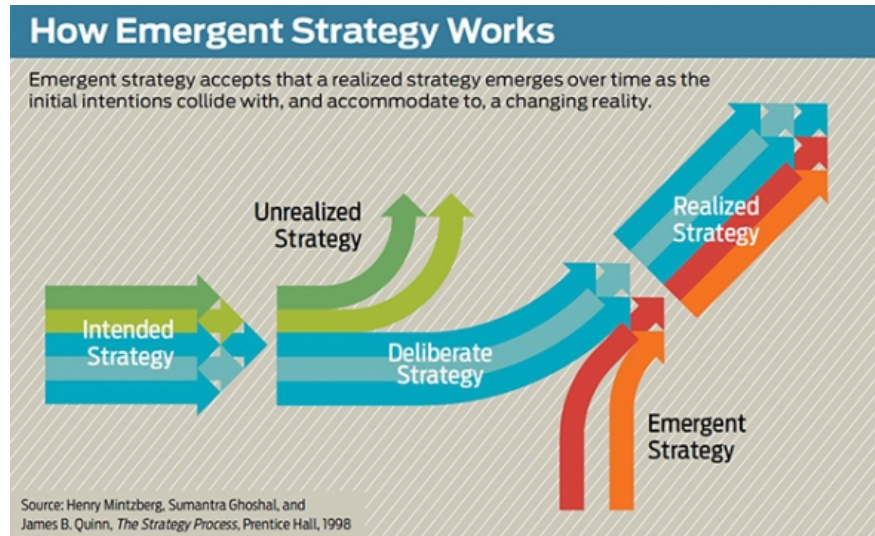
Michael Porter and Mark Kramer were chief proponents of the standard grant design formula. Their article, “Philanthropy’s New Agenda: Creating Value,” published in *Harvard Business Review*, reiterated the mantra of the standard grant design formula, advocating for clear front-end goals in grant design.¹¹ However, in the fifteen years following that article’s publication, they have changed their tone, advocating instead for adaptive leadership strategies and cross-cultural collaboration among social leaders; in effect, moving away from rigid plans and immutable strategies to flexibility and strong relationships as the new virtues when complex social issues.¹² They believe an emergent strategy that embraces adaptation and change is much more suited to the complexities faced by organizations in the social sector.

⁹ Ibid. This formula is described in a 1999 *Harvard Business Review* article “Philanthropy’s New Agenda: Creating Value,” cited below.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Michael E. Porter and Mark Kramer, “Philanthropy’s New Agenda: Creating Value.” *Harvard Business Review* 77 (1999), print.

¹² John Kania, “Strategic Philanthropy for a Complex World.”



Kania, Kramer, and Russell point to the revolutionary successes of the Aaron Diamond Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation as direct results of an emergent strategy approach. The Rockefeller Foundation’s grant-making strategy, outlined on its website in three points, serves as an excellent exemplar of emergent strategy:

- Reframing complex problems to create breakthrough solutions
- Identifying emergent opportunities and then testing and executing time-bound initiatives
- Leveraging...brand, reputation, knowledge, networks, and convening power to achieve scale¹³

Their strategy has a clear emphasis on adaptation (“reframing,” “emergent”) and collaboration (“networks,” “convening power”) that reflects the build-as-you-go mentality of emergent strategy. The Rockefeller Foundation’s reputation for problem

¹³ “Our Strategy,” The Rockefeller Foundation, accessed January 19, 2017, <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/our-strategy/>.

solving via collaboration also bears testimony to the tremendous impact that can be achieved by combining emergent strategy with collaborative initiatives. In fact, the Rockefeller Foundation's most impactful initiative, commonly dubbed the "Green Revolution," owes its hallmark success to prioritizing collaborative efforts. By hosting international conferences, the Rockefeller Foundation brought leaders from across the social and private sector into conversation together, which then laid the groundwork for a project that enabled third-world farmers to triple their food production.¹⁴

However, when The Rockefeller Foundation first set out to alleviate global food insecurity, they did not know where to start. Their first step was inviting leaders across industries to a one-week conference on combatting food insecurity; but even then, they did not know what results rallying these individuals together would generate. Only by exercising a build-as-you-go mentality and tailoring their strategies to the guidance and counsel of their partners were they able to spark the most radical increase in crop production of the developing world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, emergent strategy is an especially effective approach for grants that focus on collaboration. A partnership between two high-powered nonprofit leaders can lead to a wide range of potential results. As the individuals in a partnership become increasingly familiar with the skills that the other can share and learn, they should be afforded the freedom to change their method of skill-sharing as the partnership

¹⁴ "Alliance For a Green Revolution in Africa," The Rockefeller Foundation, accessed January 19, 2017, <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/our-work/initiatives/alliance-for-a-green-revolution-in-africa/>.

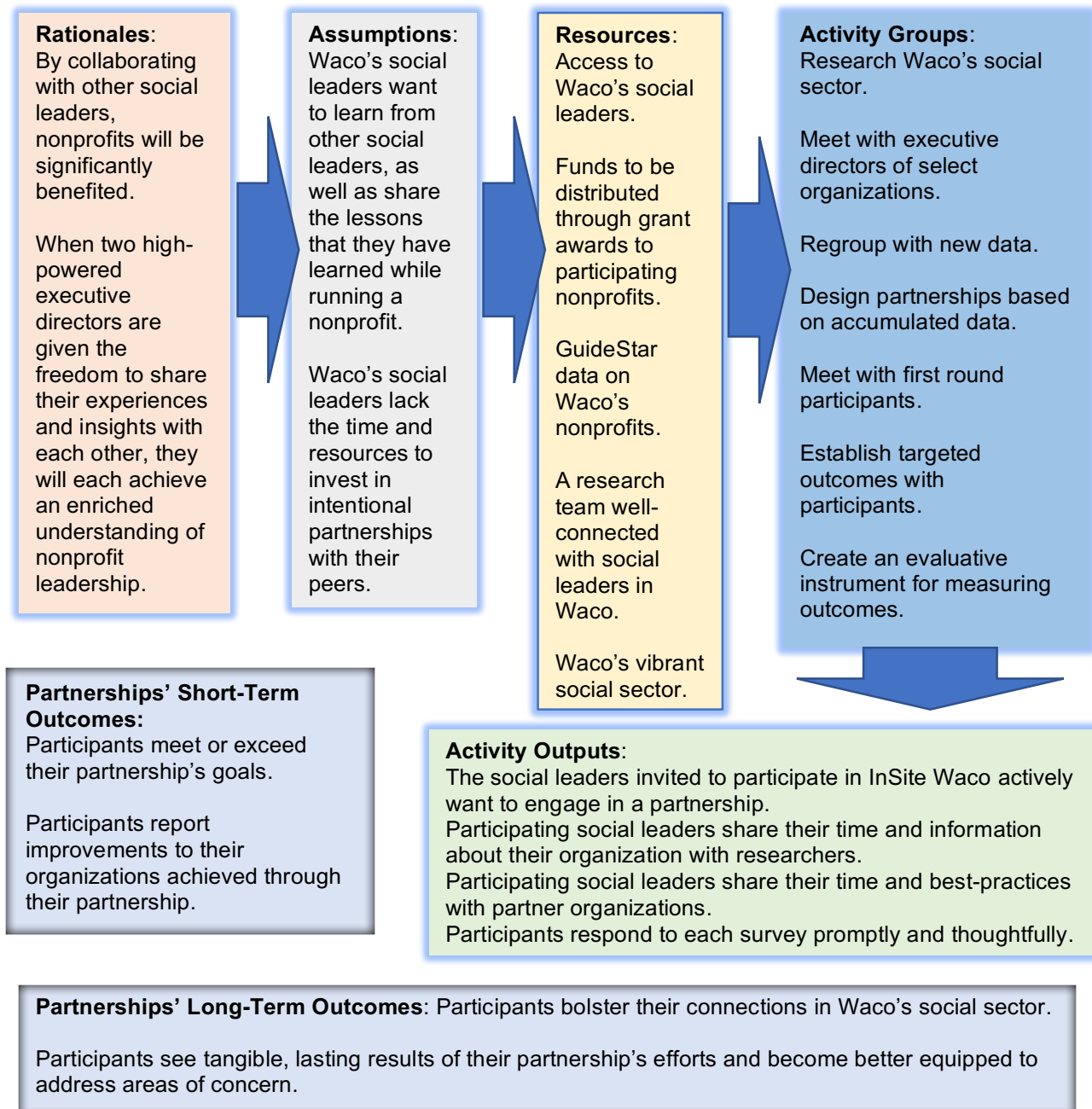
progresses. By encouraging this approach in their grants, grant-makers can generate more effective results. However, grant-makers should make up for the lack of front-end planning with other measures, for example consistent accountability throughout the execution of the grant. This is just one of the several features that make the InSite model work. The following chapter expounds on this model in greater detail.

CHAPTER TWO

The InSite Model

Problem Statement: There is an abundance of social sector leaders in Waco, each with valuable experiences and knowledge that is not being shared.

Goal: To enable social sector leaders to collaborate with other social leaders in the community.



Introduction

Since I first started working at nonprofits in Waco and Washington, D.C., I have heard executive directors say that they want to learn from their peers, but cannot justify the time it takes out of their already too-busy schedules. These leaders' lacking initiative to invest in their development as executive directors reflects only a lack of incentive. Social leaders want to collaborate with peers. In Waco, this want can be easily satisfied. Waco is overflowing with successful nonprofit leaders, but most of them are untapped treasures. InSite Waco aims to bridge the gap between the goldmine that is these nonprofit leaders and the miners that want the gold. The beauty of it is that the same people who want the gold also have their own gold to offer. This chapter will walk through how InSite leads the goldminers to the gold.

Overview

InSite Waco is essentially a grant program. We coordinate partnerships between executive directors in the greater Waco area to enable leaders of local nonprofits to collaborate in organized partnerships revolving around learning a specific skill. Our partnerships take many forms, and have a variety of aims and purposes, all of which revolve around the basic principle that cross-cultural collaboration yields major results. We believe that when two high-powered executive directors are given the freedom to share their experiences and insights with each other, they will each achieve an enriched understanding of nonprofit leadership that leaves them more equipped to serve their organization than previously. By partnering social leaders together who possess a shared desire to better serve the Waco community, new ideas and problem-solving strategies naturally emerge that can then be applied to each partner's respective services for Waco's

underserved. There are five key steps that go into executing these partnerships. Each step is summarized below and expounded upon in each section of this chapter.

1. **Research.** First, we research and survey nonprofits in Waco in order to design the optimal learning experience for our clients. This phase also includes site visits to each nonprofit's facilities.
2. **The connection.** After achieving a basic understanding of our client's goals, we organize our clients into partnerships based on their respective desired skills and shareable skills.
3. **The sit-down.** Then, we have the first sit-down with both clients of a partnership together to establish the basic parameters of the partnership and determine how the pursued skills will be shared.
4. **The exchange and survey questions.** Then, each partnership is set loose to share the targeted skills as they best see fit. We monitor the exchange phase only through intensive evaluation following each meeting between our partners.
5. **The due date.** On the due date (the established deadline at which point the partnership concludes) we do a more thorough evaluation of the results of our partnerships.

Research

The action of the research phase is two-fold data collection. First, the research team collects data on Waco's top nonprofits using GuideStar, a nonprofit directory resource that offers everything from annual budgets to transparency ratings on local

nonprofits. Each chosen nonprofit then receives a formal invitation to participate in InSite Waco. These emails read as follows:

Good morning, [executive director name],

I hope this email finds you well. Because of your strong reputation and many accomplishments as a nonprofit leader in our community, I would like to invite you to participate in InSite Waco, a new program designed to foster learning and idea-sharing between effective nonprofit organizations in the Greater Waco area.

Anyone who has ever tried learning a new language knows that the key to fluency is immersion. When completely immersed in the environment of a foreign country, everyday surroundings become a natural classroom, and learning occurs quickly. We applied the same logic by creating InSite Waco.

InSite is a low-stakes service for charitable organizations designed to help them find solutions, as well as share the best practices of their organizations.

- Wish you had a solid plan for fundraising or board engagement?
- Ever admired another nonprofit's communications and social media?
- Wondered how a thriving organization turned the corner on sustainability?

What if an effective organization invited one of your key staff members to learn on-site – for insight. We believe this sort of collaboration is vital to building a strong community. InSite Waco facilitates this collaboration via a simple, two-step process.

The first step is for us to listen to you. We want to talk to you about where you would like your nonprofit to grow, as well as areas in which you are especially proficient. This conversation will allow us to coordinate the second step, a partnership between a “visiting” organization and a “host” organization.

The InSite Waco partnership will take the form of one employee from the visiting organization working for a number of days at the host organization. By living and breathing the air of this host nonprofit alongside a willing guide, we aim to facilitate the most optimal collaborative learning experience.

If you'd be willing to explore this further, please email Luke Ungarino at InSiteWaco@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Select members of the research team then make site visits to each organization in order to get the meatier data. The primary objective of the site visits is to achieve a deeper understanding of the inner-workings of each nonprofit. These meetings take place on the organization's property and if time allows, include a tour of the organization's facilities to provide greater familiarity for our team with the organization's operations.

We use two questions to guide the onsite meetings. First, we ask each executive director what skills they want to learn or improve upon. These skills can be personal leadership skills for the director or best-practices that the director wants her nonprofit to master. Examples of skills that nonprofit leaders report wanting to have or wanting to do a better job with include board management, fundraising, accountability structures, etc. Second, we ask what areas each organization believes they are especially proficient in (i.e. the best-practices that their organization has mastered and can share with other organizations). We call these shareable skills.

These meetings also cover more specific information about an organization's operations, such as plans for expansion, recent promotions within the organization, etc. Although the information gathered in our site visits helps our team know how to craft the optimal partnership for each of our organizations, we do not necessarily invite each organization we visit to participate in a partnership. These site visits are somewhat of a brainstorm. The research team aims to pull as much information out of the directors as possible so that we can later create partnerships based on a greater pool of data.

The Connection

Based on the data gathered in the research phase, we design a partnership tailored to each organization's needs and flexibility. A partnership can take three forms for each organization, depending on their preferences and the skills being shared. The first two options are one-way. An organization in the first type of partnership acts as a "skill-sharer." A skill-sharing organization does not learn any particular skill from their partner, but only receives a monetary grant award for their donation of time and effort. An organization in the second type of partnership acts as a "skill-learner." This organization only learns some particular skill from their partner, and does not share a skill in return, nor receive a monetary grant award. The third form is a "swap." In a swap, each partner learns a specific skill from the other. Each partner acts as both a skill-sharer and a skill-learner.

It depends on the breadth of the problem, but greater diversity of parties in these partnerships is generally better (e.g. having both an executive director who runs a food pantry that distributes food all across Central Texas and an executive director who runs a therapeutic nursery for only a few neighborhoods in the pool of participants who might be partnered with each other). Typically, collaborative efforts in the nonprofit world do not span across different sectors.¹⁵ InSite aims to combat this issue by emphasizing cross-cultural collaboration. Because InSite exists to benefit the entire Waco community,

¹⁵ John Kania and Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2011): accessed September 28, 2016, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact. In "Collective Impact," John Kania and Mark Kramer point out that "Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations."

we coordinate partnerships of individuals from fields not necessarily in the same area of expertise (e.g. we might have the board president of a foodbank learning more effective board management from the local executive director of Habitat for Humanity). We believe that best-practices need not be limited in applicability to one type of organization. Cross-cultural collaboration broadens nonprofit leaders' perspective of Waco's social landscape, in turn enabling them to better serve their own constituents.

The Sit-down

After establishing the what (i.e. what skills are to be shared and what form the partnership will take), we sit down with the heads of each organization to determine the how: how will the skills be shared and how much time will be invested in the partnership. These meetings begin with two soft reminders, namely, the importance of onsite learning (i.e. spending time on the property of the skill-sharer organization for a more substantive learning experience), and a reiteration of the mindset of abundance rather than scarcity that is necessary for a partnership to work. The sit-down also determines the “due date” of the partnership and the particularities of the grant award (more on this later).

Establishing the Due Date

The due date is one of the few limitations in InSite's partnerships. We choose to limit the time of a partnership, rather than constrain the means by which two partners can achieve their goals. We do not want to limit how our clients use their grants to learn their desired skills. We want to give them the freedom to spend their time as they please (they know how they need to spend their time in the partnership better than we do). We hold each party accountable to meeting the agreed-upon due date through intensive

surveying throughout the partnership. However, if unexpected bumps in the road prevent a partnership from meeting the initial deadline, we work with our clients to reassess their methodology and meet their goals as efficiently as possible. In other words, extensions are provided.

Grant Awards

The monetary amount of each grant is determined based on the time commitment of the skill-sharing organization. Rather than attaching a fixed amount of time and money to each partnership's grant award, we allow partners to spend the amount of time on their partnership that they deem necessary to effectively share the sought-out skills and best-practices. Typically, the executive director of the skill-sharing organization is awarded \$100 for each hour he or she puts into the partnership.¹⁶ This minimal front-end structure reflects the lean grant-making methodology that foundations such as The Rockefeller Foundation, The Aaron Diamond Foundation, and the like have begun to implement. As explained in chapter one, lean grant-making, as well as the unique adaptability afforded by relationship-based grants, can lead to effective outcomes without rigid pre-partnership structures; which is why specificities are avoided at the first sit down meeting. As partners get a better feel for each other's assets and needs, more effective ways of spending time together are realized that could not be imagined at the outset of the partnership.

¹⁶ Note that there might be two skill-sharing organizations if a partnership takes the form of a swap.

The Exchange and Survey Questions

The exchange phase begins with a second meeting, again with each executive director and myself. It is not required, but we encourage this meeting to be a Q&A of sorts that allows the skill-learning party to better understand how the skill-sharing organization has achieved its skill in the targeted area. It might also entail a historical overview of the events leading up to its success in the specific skill area, as well as a more detailed roadmap for the partnership ahead. This meeting also serves as an opportunity for me to develop the survey method for the partnership (e.g. how often I will survey and what specific questions I will ask).

Despite the fact that a mere 36 percent of all grant-makers solicit feedback from their grantees, we evaluate our clients heavily.¹⁷ We send follow-up surveys to the skill-learning client after each meeting with their partner and also ask partners to complete a more extensive survey after the partnership's conclusion on what we call "the due date".

Our survey questions are designed to encourage thoughtfulness in our partners and enable grant-recipients to develop their own strategies for how they use their partnership. By polling our clients, we make it easier for our clients to bring issues to our attention and find ways to improve the InSite model. Indeed, 97 percent of grant-makers report making changes in their approach to grant work based on the feedback gathered in polling their grantees.¹⁸ Chapter three of my thesis will go into greater detail on the nature of the surveying questions, but a common theme in our surveys is big-picture goal-

¹⁷ Kathleen P. Enright and Courtney Bourns, "The Case for Stakeholder Engagement," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2010): accessed October 28, 2016, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_case_for_stakeholder_engagement.

¹⁸ Ibid.

setting and asking the simple question “what’s next” in order to meet those goals. With specific goals in mind, grant-recipients develop their own strategies for tackling their problems.

Our surveys employ a great deal of self-reporting through Likert scales, as well as open-ended questions about the most recent insights and knowledge gained from a partnership. These surveys also allow us to circumvent difficulties in measuring non-quantifiable outcomes. Because most of the outcomes of our partnerships are non-numerical in value, our surveys also enable us to gage the effectiveness of our grants through self-reporting without encroaching into the partnership’s space.

The Due Date

In addition to borrowing The Rockefeller Foundation’s emphasis on emergent strategy in grant-making and maintaining the significance of relationship-based grants, InSite also takes the example of The Rockefeller Foundation to heart with respect to its emphasis of time-bound initiatives. Rather than restricting the ways a grant can be used, The Rockefeller Foundation focuses on restricting the amount of time in which a grant can be used. This allows grantees the freedom to employ means of reaching their grant’s goals beyond the initial plan, while still holding grantees accountable for substantial results in a timely manner. At InSite, we work with our clients to establish what we call the “due date.” The due date is the final day that time can be put on the clock by our partners. After the due date, partners are welcome to collaborate, but they will no longer be compensated for their time by InSite.

Still, the due date is not a strict deadline. We do not believe a partnership ends until both parties are satisfied with the knowledge and skills that have been shared. If a

deadline is fast approaching and one party does not believe they have achieved their desired results, we sit down with both of our partners to discuss the problem and develop a strategy for how to move forward. We encourage clientele to voice problems well-before the due date and assure them that we will work together to solve whatever it is that is keeping them from meeting their goals.

CHAPTER THREE

Evaluation Design

Including the Quantitative

This chapter outlines the three-part surveying method used to evaluate InSite's partnerships, as well as an explanation of the logic and purpose behind our evaluation process's overall design. Initially, InSite was going to forego using quantitative measurements when evaluating our partnerships' results. As InSite was just getting off the ground in October, we thought that the relationships that our clients formed in their partnerships would yield significant results, but not results that could be quantitatively measured. But as the InSite model developed, we realized that relationship-based learning and visible quantitative improvements are not mutually exclusive.

In one of our pilot partnership's first meetings, Brenda Shuttlesworth (executive director of Habitat for Humanity), Buddy Edwards (executive director of Caritas), and I sat down to flesh out the methodology of their partnership and the evaluative methods to be used. I explained to them the unideal but unavoidable fact that a partnership focused on board-engagement could not be held accountable for quantitative results and thus the focus of our evaluations will be simply regular follow-up surveys to Mr. Edwards to self-report the skills and knowledge he is learning from the partnership.

Upon hearing this, Ms. Shuttlesworth quickly pointed out that board engagement *can* be quantitatively measured. She was confident that her work with Mr. Edwards would lead to visible, quantitative improvements in the number of hours that Mr. Edwards' board volunteered with Caritas, as well as the number of dollars that the board donated to the nonprofit. We used these two categories as a foundation for a simple set

of quantitative measurement tools to more robustly evaluate the outcomes of the Caritas-Habitat partnership.

I learned a valuable lesson about grant results-evaluation from Ms. Shuttlesworth at that meeting. Quantitative evaluation is rarely impossible. Even in the context of relationship-based grants, when it comes to generating improvements, results should always be visible. Looking back, my decision to withhold quantitative evaluation was due to a lack of confidence in the degree of impact that InSite's partnerships would affect for our clients. Now, whether it is board engagement or fundraising methodology or mentorship, we go to great lengths to establish a way to measure quantitative improvements in our partnerships. By employing both the qualitative and the quantitative in our survey method, we achieve a significantly more complete data pool for evaluating our partnerships' results.

Evaluative Methods

Each partnership requires a unique set of evaluative methods. We tailor each method of evaluation to the distinctive features of each partnership. Evaluations are done through a series of surveys, and if necessary, phone calls. The latter are not standard modes of evaluation (we try to remove ourselves as much as possible from the partnership once it begins), but are employed when a partnership appear to need correction (such as if a client's survey answers are not providing sufficient evidence of the exchange of skills in a partnership, thus begging for more robust evaluation than can be attained in a survey, or if a client's survey answers indicate need for a more significant change in the partnership). If a a phone call is deemed necessary, we make a great effort to engage our clients through the Socrated method (i.e. through questions rather than

answers). By asking question after question, we avoid becoming too involved in the direction of the partnership. We merely aim to guide our clients towards developing a new strategy to navigate around the issues that led to the intervention.

While phone calls are called in response to red flags, follow-up surveys are the standard way that we hold our partnerships accountable to effective results. Our survey questions (outlined below) can be applied to all of our partnerships' specific sought-after skill, but for the sake of clarity I use the skill of board management as an example.

a. Round 1 – pre-partnership survey questions

- a. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rank your board's present level of engagement?
- b. On a scale of 1-10, how much attention have you given to board management?
- c. How much of your time is invested in strengthening your board?
- d. How confident are you in the guidance that your partner organization will provide?
 - i. Very confident
 - ii. Confident
 - iii. Uncertain
 - iv. Not confident
- e. On a scale of 1-10, how would you like to rank your board's level of engagement six months from now?
- f. Is there any other information that you would like to provide regarding your organization and board management?

- g. What quantitative improvements do you expect to see from your work with your partner organization? For example, do you expect to see your board's meeting attendance and volunteer hours go up? Do you expect an increase in giving rates among board members?
 - h. What is a reasonable deadline for your partnership? That is, on what date do you expect you will have had sufficient time to achieve a solid understanding of your host organization's proven practices with respect to board management?
 - i. How did you like this survey? Feel free to provide any comments or suggestions in the comment box below.
- b. Round 2 – mid-partnership survey questions
- a. What were the three single-most helpful or intriguing points from your last meeting with your partner about board management?
 - b. What changes will you implement at your own organization in light of the new knowledge gained from your last meeting?
 - c. What is the next step in your partnership? Have you established the next date and time to meet with your partner or visit their organization? What is the purpose of this meeting? Are there specific things you expect to learn?
- c. Round 3 – post-partnership
- a. What did you learn from your partnership?
 - b. Where does your board still have room to improve?
 - c. Was there anything you did not learn that you wish you had?
 - i. Three-months post-partnership

- a. How does your partnership benefit your organization today?
 - b. What could the InSite Team have done differently to provide a more robust learning experience for you?
- ii. Six-months post-partnership
 - a. How does your partnership benefit your organization today?
 - b. Where do you see room to improve your organization's board management today?

The Why and How

As you can see, the first round of surveying (the pre-partnership round) is the most intensive. After that, we try to respect our clients' time by limiting each follow-up survey to three questions. While the first round of survey questions is usually done in person or on the phone, we believe the most time-effective method of surveying our directors *mid*-partnership is through SurveyMonkey, a web-based surveying tool. After each meeting, the skill-learning member of a partnership receives an email linking them to a SurveyMonkey survey, which notifies InSite after it is completed.

Our survey questions serve many purposes for InSite. First, they give us a sense of how well we did in coordinating a partnership. If a partnership seems lopsided (perhaps with one organization doing most of the heavy-lifting) we know that we need to create more structure or clarify the roles of each client. This also reveals an advantage of having a third-party presence. A partner might not be comfortable complaining about their collaborative efforts with another nonprofit. As an impartial third-party, InSite is in a unique position to hold each partner accountable to their side of the bargain without

pointing fingers. As said before, we do this through Socratic questioning in order to help partners create their own strategies to circumvent the issue at hand.

Our surveys also help create a fluid and more lasting exchange of skills for our partners. The questions in our surveys are largely aimed at helping partners flesh out their strategy or reflect on the information they have learned before rushing to the next thing. Two directors can sit down together and have a highly informative conversation filled with stimulating ideas and insights; but unless a concrete plan is put together, it is unlikely to cause change. We seek to maximize the fruits of our partners' meetings by asking our clients to put the products of their time invested in the partnership in writing (e.g. one question we use is "What changes will you implement at your organization in light of the new knowledge gained from your last meeting?"). We believe deeper reflection and detail generates more substantive partnerships and combats a mindset of checking boxes.

Perhaps the most significant purpose of our surveys is pushing nonprofit leaders to take the next step in their partnership. Because nonprofit leaders are bogged down with the requisite day-to-day responsibilities of keeping their organization up and running, providing this push is a necessary role of the InSite team. By asking the simple question "what is the next step in your partnership," we propel our clients to the finish line in a timely fashion. This reflects the basic principle behind InSite's philosophy that everything we do is for our clients. We believe that our surveys, which may seem cumbersome and tedious, make for a more substantive learning experience for our partners. Of course, if an executive director disagrees with that, we give them room to

voice their opinion. Our surveys always give space for our partners to provide their criticism.

In conclusion, the InSite evaluative model takes both the quantitative and qualitative into account, and aims to bolster our clients' partnership experience. Our surveys are designed to adapt to our clients' needs and expectations based on the feedback they provide in their surveys. These surveys, concise and wholly electronic, allow us to keep tabs on our partnerships without becoming a cumbersome presence in our clients' work. Likewise, our surveys provide a quick and seamless way for our clients to contact us, fostering both healthy communication and accountability.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Narrative

This chapter outlines the process that led to InSite Waco's current model and the events that led to the structure of our initial three pilot partnerships. This chapter also details three key changes that were crucial developments in shaping InSite.

The idea for InSite Waco began while I was working at a nonprofit, The House DC, in Southeast Washington, DC. The House serves as a sanctuary where kids who were raised in environments of constant instability could relax, have fun, and participate in healthy community. I worked in the development office at The House and received no formal training for this new job. This was largely due to the fact that no one at The House was specifically assigned to development, which led to my job training occurring chiefly by immersion. I was simply given a list of responsibilities which included strategizing new opportunities for raising revenue, strengthening connections with current donors, reaching out to new donors, and similar tasks that fall loosely under the category of development. Looking back at my first two weeks working for The House, I learned a great deal about development and the inner-workings of a healthy nonprofit such that I left The House equipped with a new set of skills which I could then apply at my next job, overseeing more substantial development work for a church in Waco. By virtue of simply being immersed in a new environment at The House and having a mindset of continuous learning, my day-to-day surroundings became a natural classroom.

My experience at The House made me wonder: what if this same concept of learning by immersion could work for executive directors in other nonprofits just as it did for a nonprofit rookie like myself? After running the idea by friends and mentors (Dr.

Andrew Hogue, who directed this thesis, being the first of them), I explored the systems that were already in place for knowledge-sharing between executive directors and found them wanting. The only systems in place were designed for large groups of nonprofit professionals rather than one-on-one settings and lacked the depth and time-investment necessary for the degree of knowledge-sharing that I experienced in DC. The initial model of what I began to call InSite Waco resembled that of an externship program for executive directors, in which two executive directors would take turns hosting each other at their organization, giving the other free reign to observe the methodologies of their host's organization and learn a specific set of targeted skills. That model has been tweaked in three significant ways: one, operating as a grant program rather than merely a connector for nonprofit directors; two, deemphasizing learning by immersion in favor of a wider plurality of learning methods; and three, coordinating one-way partnerships rather than exclusively swaps.

When executive directors hear the word “grant award” their ears perk up. By pitching InSite Waco as a grant program, rather than simply a professional development program, we draw greater interest and gain the trust of executive directors. This is especially important when reaching out to organizations with whom there is no current working relationship. However, only the skill-sharing organization is compensated for their time. If an organization learns a skill from the partnership, but does not share a skill, their award does not go beyond the knowledge received from the partnership.

Immersive learning is one way to learn a great deal with minimal effort. When immersed in the environment of a new organization, knowledge is absorbed naturally if one has a mindset of intentional learning. However, this is only one of many ways that

skills can be effectively exchanged between organizations. When given full access to another nonprofit's skills and proven practices, executive directors come up with various ways to glean knowledge that goes beyond simply immersion. While we encourage nonprofit leaders to spend time breathing the air of their host organization, whether that be something as simple as taking a tour or sitting in on executive meetings, we allow our partners to spend their time as they choose.

Initially, we envisioned partnerships taking the form of swaps with one organization hosting another organization for an allotted period of time, and then vice versa. Not only was this an unnecessary constraint, it was also largely impossible. In our first site visits, we found that most organizations were only open to partnering with one or two other particular organizations, typically ones with whom they already knew quite well. Hence, unless one of the organizations that our client wanted to partner with also happened to have a skill that they would like to learn from our client, a mutual exchange partnership was difficult to coordinate. By allowing one-way partnerships (i.e. partnerships between only one skill-learning organization and one skill-sharing organization) we were able to navigate this issue at no cost.

When the InSite team first began combing Waco's social sector for the right organizations to be invited to participate in InSite's first round of pilot partnerships, we decided to aim for diversity. Rather than confining our first round to one sector of the nonprofit world in Waco (e.g. the health sector, education, etc.), we reached out to the best organizations in a wide range of fields, determined in part by GuideStar data, as well as reputation. We debated using a set criteria for those invited to participate in InSite Waco (e.g. annual budget size, staff size, years established, etc.), but our first site-visits

taught us that there are countless ways for partnerships to be formed and sometimes the most diverse organizations are the ones that have the most valuable knowledge.

Through a series of interviews and site visits, we decided on the Talitha Koum Institute, Habitat for Humanity, and Texas Hunger Initiative as the three organizations most suited for our first round of partnerships. We chose these three for three reasons. First, Talitha Koum's executive director, Ms. Cowley, was a formative advisor for the InSite model from day one. We valued her perspective and wanted to integrate her into the model as a participant so she could continue tweaking our model with first-person experience. She also had a specific skill and individual in mind for her partnership, namely, learning fundraising methodology from Kathy Reid, the executive director of Family Abuse Center. Second, Habitat for Humanity's executive director, Brenda Shuttlesworth, also played a formative role in the conceptual form of InSite Waco. We designed her partnership as the prototype for a one-way partnership, with her sharing her expertise in board management with Buddy Edwards, the executive director of Caritas. The third partnership was with Texas Hunger Initiative. This partnership was intended as a trial run to see how the InSite model worked for larger organizations (Texas Hunger Initiative has a significantly larger budget and geographic spread). However, this partnership proved to be a tremendous learning experience. More on that below.

The InSite team's first meeting with Susan Cowley from the Talitha Koum Institute set the gold standard for the remainder of our meetings throughout the year. We had a three-item agenda: take a tour of the facility to gain a deeper understanding of the inner-workings of the organization, ask in which areas the organization believes they have room to grow, and in which areas they feel especially proficient, such that they can

share their mastered practices with other organizations. While Jess Schurz, Daisy Mills, and I toured Talitha Koum with Ms. Cowley, we learned that Talitha Koum's long-term vision is implementing their child-development techniques in school systems, a key piece of information that led to us trying to coordinate a partnership with one of Waco's school districts. Ms. Cowley also proposed several organizations in the Waco area that could benefit from their child-development techniques, as well as organizations that she believed could teach Talitha Koum a great deal; however, the ideal organization for Ms. Cowley was Family Abuse Center. Family Abuse Center's targeted skills for the partnership focused on a better understanding of the neuroscience related to childhood trauma and development, in return for Ms. Reid walking Ms. Cowley through the proven practices of fundraising that she employs at Family Abuse Center.

The second of our pilot partnerships is between Buddy Edwards, executive director of Caritas, a multi-purpose food pantry, and Brenda Shuttlesworth, executive director of Habitat for Humanity. This partnership was initially designed as a one-way partnership with Ms. Shuttlesworth learning how to build a healthy endowment from Mr. Edwards; however, in our preliminary meetings with each director we realized that a better partnership for both organizations would be Mr. Edwards learning Ms. Shuttlesworth's unique approach to board management. Ms. Shuttlesworth considers board management one of her greatest skills as an executive director and Mr. Edwards wanted to glean some of her knowledge in this area. This partnership will have a longer timespan due to the timing of several key events (board meetings, volunteer events for board members, etc.) that each partner deemed it important to attend in order for Mr. Edwards to achieve a more holistic understanding of board management.

The third pilot partnership was intended for Texas Hunger Initiative. Like Ms. Cowley, Jeremy Everett, the executive director of Texas Hunger Initiative, played a tremendous formative role as InSite was first developing its model. Mr. Everett encouraged us to expand our pool of clients to the for-profit world. He believed that the knowledge these executives from corporations possess could be more valuable to leaders in the nonprofit world than the knowledge of their fellow executive directors. We made note and worked this into the second round of partnerships but were ultimately unable to find an organization of equal scope and size to partner with Texas Hunger Initiative.

As we struggled to match Texas Hunger Initiative with a fitting partner, we discovered one of InSite's major pitfalls. When dealing with organizations of a certain size (anywhere above a three-million-dollar annual budget), cold-call emails and Baylor affiliations were not enough to get their interest. We had to look beyond Waco to find a partner for Mr. Everett (City Square in Dallas and Catholic Charities of Fort Worth were our primary targets, each significantly larger than any nonprofit in Waco); but without a relationship with either of these organizations, nor any other organization of equal caliber, we were unable to coordinate a suitable partnership for Texas Hunger Initiative.

While the Family Abuse Center-Talitha Koum partnership and the Caritas-Habitat for Humanity partnership remain active and have over one month remaining before their scheduled termination date, both have already realized tangible results. For example, the first sit-down meeting with Susan Cowley and Kathy Reid generated insights and ideas simply by taking a tour of Family Abuse Center's facilities. Similarly, while sitting in on Ms. Shuttlesworth and Mr. Edwards' first meeting at Caritas, I witnessed a significant exchange of ideas that led to Mr. Edwards revamping his board meeting structure and a

clear set of goals for their partnership. While these preliminary results are noteworthy and signal favorable outcomes, we cannot make final judgments of our partnerships until the final evaluation. Until then, the structure of the next round of partnerships is largely undecided. However, thanks to grants from Baylor's Philanthropy and Public Service Program and the Donum Dei Foundation, we have the funds to sponsor a second round of partnerships and are confident that they will be even stronger than our pilot round.

CONCLUSION

InSite Waco Looking Ahead

Reflecting on InSite Waco's first year of activity, it is still too soon to determine the final model for the organization. Likewise, it is difficult to tease apart the successes and the failures in our pilot phase. While certain aspects of InSite's initial structure fell short of expectations, these errors ultimately led to significant improvements. With a mindset of constant adaptation and minimal initial structure, we have been able to quickly identify mistakes and respond with the needed readjustments. After our pilot round concludes, we will assess the results of each partnership, relying heavily on the post-partnership evaluations, and then begin the second round, correcting the glitches of the first round. Already, our mid-partnership evaluations have revealed several necessary changes when coordinating round two, but until we sit down with our current executive directors after the due date, the breadth of those changes are not yet fully identifiable.

One improvement for the second round of partnerships is more robust attention to one-way partnerships, particularly between nonprofits of highly divergent sizes and degrees of experience, but working in the same field. This will broaden the number of organizations with which a client can partner, in turn creating more opportunity for our clients to participate in InSite. While executive directors often have relationships with their fellow executive directors of organizations of similar size, absent InSite, executive directors are less likely to interact with organizations of a dissimilar size and scope as their own nonprofit.

Additional plans for InSite's second round of partnerships include inviting executives to mentor a nonprofit professional of their choosing. We believe that private

sector executives might be willing to invest in such a partnership out of a sense of social responsibility and will not expect financial compensation for their time. Such an investment would be the equivalent of a private sector executive serving on a nonprofit board.¹⁹ However, there are two unique advantages to exercising social responsibility through an InSite partnership rather than serving on a board. By working through InSite, we give participants the freedom to plan meetings based on their own schedules and enabling participants to make a more significant impact on an organization by working more intimately with the organization's executive director.

An additional perk of incorporating executives from the private sector into the InSite model is accessing the more thorough resources that are usually lacking in the private sector. If you recall the statistics of chapter one, the nonprofit sector is severely lagging behind the private sector in professional development investments among other things. Much of this has less to do with the intentions of nonprofit professionals as much as the generally more lacking resources in the social sector. By bringing private sector professionals into the work of our clients' development as organization leaders, we can bridge the gap to those resources. For example, most corporations have employee training programs, or sometimes even entire campuses devoted to employee training. It costs corporations almost nothing to open up these programs to guests (in fact it is a common way for companies to do gift-giving to nonprofits) and the benefits of accessing these resources, which are otherwise out of the typical nonprofits' price range, are tremendous.

¹⁹ Unlike large nonprofits and foundations, medium-size nonprofits typically do not compensate board members. In fact, board members of Waco's nonprofits usually are expected to donate a certain amount to the nonprofit to retain their board membership.

Chapter four outlines several of the errors in planning InSite that led to key pivotal moves that has shaped InSite into its current model. However, the largest hurdle for InSite Waco looking forward is sustainable funding. Incidentally, this is usually the single-most crucial factor for InSite's clients as well. I was able to fundraise \$6,000 in grants for InSite's initial two rounds of partnerships; however, it is not clear how to secure future funds. Given the amount of time these initial grants required, it is not feasible for me to attempt to fundraise with the same method. In response to this issue in funding, InSite's third round of partnerships will test the viability of coordinating partnerships without grant awards. We believe that if InSite Waco truly makes significant improvements for its clients, organizations will participate in its partnerships purely for the skills their partnership teaches them without expectation of a monetary award.

In light of the troubling statistics regarding the lack of professional development in the social sector referenced in chapter one, designing InSite's third round of partnerships without grant awards is not guaranteed to work. It will be a true test of the benefits that InSite's partnerships bring to nonprofit leaders in directing their organizations. However, because InSite's principal service is sharing a non-scarce good, namely the knowledge possessed by executive directors, I am confident that Waco's nonprofit leaders will continue to utilize InSite's model, even without the monetary stipend.