

The questions in this worksheet are designed to help program staff who believe they are supporting field-building as part of their philanthropic approach, to **think through key assumptions and elements of the work, build team alignment, and strengthen their ability to measure, learn about, and communicate progress.** Questions are designed to prompt reflection; while answers to some questions could certainly be more specifically informed by evaluation and data, surfacing

current understandings within program teams should generate sufficient answers for the purposes identified.

The brief on [Going Deeper: Building a Field](#) (a supplement to [Not Always Movements: Multiple Strategies to Advance Large-Scale Social Change](#)) provides additional resources and related content that might be helpful to teams as they work through the following questions.

▶ What is the network meant to accomplish?

1. Networks aren't created for the sake of having a network. What do you hope is changed in the world due to the network in question's existence or further development?
2. When you think about these outcomes or benefits, how are you thinking about equity and power relative to these results? Who benefits and in what ways? Are there possible adverse impacts to anticipate?



▶ How do you understand the current state of the network?

3. Networks can have many purposes. Looking at the table below, which purposes seem most salient? Why? How do you think the network will realize this purpose?

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Is this purpose relevant to your work? How so?</i>
Innovation	Network's purpose is to generate novelty (new knowledge, products)	
Diffusion	Network's purpose is to promote rapid spread of ideas, products	
Combination	Network's purpose is to assemble new capacities	
Alignment	Network's purpose is to form or promote coalescence around a new identity/brand	
Mobilization	Network's purpose is to reach and activate many people	
Exchange	Network's purpose is to share information widely	
Assessment	Network's purpose is to provide diverse feedback or evaluation	
Advocacy	Network's purpose is to influence existing decision-making structures	
Delivery	Network's purpose is to develop or channel resources and assistance to increase capacity	

How do you understand the current state of the network? (cont)

4. How do you currently conceptualize of the shape and structure of the network (if it exists)? What shape or structure do you hypothesize is most optimal to achieve the goals of the network? [See page 5, Going Deeper: Supporting a Network module]

5. What types of connections among members might the network need to have, given the purpose of the network and what the network hopes to accomplish? In other words, how will the relationships or types of engagement between members of the network change? How does that differ from what exists today?

6. Who is in the network? Who is not included? What does this information reveal about the diversity of membership or the inclusivity of the network? Are there / what are limitations inherent in the perspectives of those that are currently part of the network?

Examples of Networks

Structural Shapes

Network structures make revealing pictures.

- When many nodes connect to a single node, a **Hub-and-Spokes** or **Star** structure is created. Each of the spoke nodes has one link, while the central node is linked to all other nodes.

- When many nodes connect to each other in various configurations, a **Many Channels** structure is created. Each node may have several links through which it can reach other nodes.

- When a number of nodes are all connected to each other, a **Dense Cluster** is created. Each node is connected directly to all of the other nodes.

- When hubs connect to one another, either directly or through spokes, a **Branching** or **Multi-Tiered** structure is created. Nodes may have fairly long paths, through central nodes, to reach each other.



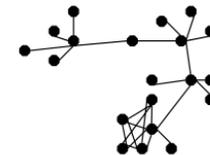
Hub-and-Spokes
(Eureka)



Many Channels
(Lawrence
CommunityWorks)



Dense Cluster
(VT Smart Growth
Collaborative)



Branching
(Boston Parents
Organizing
Network)

Plastrik, P., & Taylor, M. (2003). *Network power for philanthropy and nonprofits*. Boston, MA: The Barr Foundation. <http://www.p-sj.org/files/Network%20Power%20for%20Philanthropy%20and%20Nonprofits.pdf>

