Replicating models of collective impact in developing countries. Does the model work in the context of the Brazilian Amazon?

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Abstract

The Collective Impact Initiative (CII) model is a framework designed to address complex social issues through collaborative efforts and emergent solutions. It emphasizes the interdependence of social problems and solutions and discourages predetermined approaches. The model is based on five fundamental principles that provide a coherent set of recommendations to guide collective impact initiatives: backbone organizations, a shared agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, and ongoing communication. While CII has gained global recognition and increased academic research, its potential in different contexts, such as the Brazilian Amazon, remains uncertain due to varying societal configurations and traditional collaborative models. Critiques of the model highlight its lack of specificity for individual projects, with success depending on historical relationships, differing interests, and participants' perceptions. Some authors also argue that the model oversimplifies the options, focusing primarily on Isolated Impact or Collective Impact, neglecting other community types of coalitions with broader scopes. CII is also criticized for having a top-down approach and failing to prioritize community engagement and incorporate local knowledge. Translating the CII model from the global north to the worldwide south presents challenges, including issues related to institutional capacity, legal frameworks, and governance dynamics. Maintaining long-term collaboration and securing funding in developing countries can be particularly challenging. Despite these challenges, the model's potential for addressing complex social problems remains promising, but it requires careful consideration and adaptation when applied in new contexts, especially those with unique socioeconomic and cultural attributes.

Keywords: Collective Impact, Global South, Development

Replicando modelos de impacto coletivo nos países em desenvolvimento. O modelo funciona no contexto da Amazônia brasileira?

Resumo

O modelo de Iniciativa de Impacto Coletivo (CII) foi projetado para abordar questões sociais complexas através de esforços colaborativos e soluções emergentes, enfatizando a interdependência de problemas e soluções sociais e desencorajando abordagens pré-determinadas. O modelo baseia-se em cinco componentes: organizações integradoras, agenda comum, sistemas de medição compartilhados, atividades de reforço mútuo entre os participantes e comunicação contínua. Embora a CII tenha ganhado reconhecimento global e crescido em referências acadêmicas nos últimos anos, seu potencial de aplicação em diferentes contextos, como a Amazônia brasileira, permanece incerto devido às muitas configurações sociais e modelos colaborativos tradicionais. As críticas ao modelo destacam sua falta de especificidade, com o sucesso dependendo de relações históricas e diferentes interesses e percepções dos participantes. Autores argumentam ainda que o modelo simplifica demais as opções, resumindo-os,

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ou a ações de impacto isolado ou de impacto coletivo, ignorando outros tipos de coalizões comunitárias com escopos mais amplos. As CII também são criticadas por terem uma abordagem de cima para baixo, por não priorizarem o engajamento comunitário e não aproveitarem o conhecimento local. Traduzir o modelo de CII do norte para o sul global apresenta desafios, incluindo questões relacionadas à capacidade institucional, marcos legais e dinâmica de governança. Além disso, manter a colaboração a longo prazo e garantir financiamento nos países em desenvolvimento pode ser desafiador. Apesar disso, o potencial do modelo para lidar com problemas sociais complexos permanece promissor, embora requeira cuidado e adaptação quando aplicado em novos contextos, especialmente aqueles com atributos socioeconômicos e culturais únicos.

Palavras-chave: Impacto coletivo, Sul Global, Desenvolvimento.

1 Introduction

Current challenges posed to modern-day societies, such as healthcare improvements, education, social assistance, and global warming, are complex due to their interconnectedness with various factors and stakeholders. These challenges usually need more precise solutions and are characterized by their resistance to traditional problem-solving approaches and tendency to evolve and change over time. It is a scenario in which there are no effectively proven management models, "the consequences of the proposed actions are unpredictable, and any solution will require the participation of government agencies, private companies, and non-profit organizations, as well as a multitude of individual citizens" (Kania and Kramer, 2013).

Despite increasing research in areas such as knowledge management, collaboration networks, and public and business administration, the results of efforts trying to solve these challenges, particularly in a context where sustainability issues are so relevant, have been superficial at best (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). Kania and Kramer contributed significantly to the ongoing debate on addressing complex social issues by proposing a model to support collective actions and multistakeholder initiatives. Their model, the Collective Impact Initiative (CII), was initially introduced in a 2011 Stanford Social Innovation Review publication.

The CII was specifically designed to tackle wicked problems by establishing a framework of principles that enable effective coordination among diverse stakeholders, fostering collaborative efforts towards a shared goal while avoiding "predetermined approaches" and adopting "emergent solutions" (Kania and Kramer, 2013). The model emphasizes the necessity of coordinated action and shared measurements to achieve meaningful and sustainable change within various social contexts. Over the years, the CII has gained widespread adoption worldwide, as evidenced by a significant increase in articles referencing the model, from 33 in 2016 to 113 in 2021.

Its success and growing popularity highlight its value and effectiveness in addressing complex social challenges. Despite the widespread adoption of the CII in research and practice globally, there is still a significant limitation in its dissemination process. While its origin in the United States has contributed to its spread, it does not guarantee its applicability in developing countries, where development paths, societal configurations, and institutional capacities differ from those in which the framework was initially designed and are still dominated by "more traditional collaborative models focus on non-profit organizations, government agencies and companies that operate in isolation and often compete with each other for scarce resources and jurisdictions" (Dubow *et al.*, 2018).

There is a need for more, if not a complete absence, of records documenting the implementation of CII models or the utilization of CII frameworks to investigate multistakeholder initiatives in developing countries. This review aims to address this gap by examining the application of various aspects of the CII model within a developing country context, even in cases where the CII model itself has not been explicitly adopted in the design or implementation process in an approach, as suggested by Pedersen *et al.* (2020), "employing a secondary lens that allows for systematic comparisons" by focusing on learnings from well-documented cases. To narrow down the approach, we have limited our research to articles investigating social development initiatives in the specific context of the Brazilian Amazon.

It is worth mentioning that the Amazon basin has 30% of the tropical forests on Earth, and a great potential related to the bioeconomy, even though the companies and local communities account for only 0.2% of the forest product markets (Coslovsky, 2022) mainly because of many of them continue to operate from poorly articulated initiatives, with no structuring effect or proven results, a scenario the reinforce the need to discuss the issue through the perspective that models constructed "from the bottom up" may be much more capable of allowing communities "to effectively incorporate themselves, both for the establishment of public policies and for the definition of business strategies aimed at socio-environmental management and their territories" (Enriquez *et al.*, 2011), through what Leff (1999) called "dialogue of knowledge."

The scope limitation will help determine the extent to which these initiatives align with the principles and conditions set forth by the CII framework. By evaluating the initiatives through this lens, valuable insights can be gained regarding their adherence to the core components of collective impact and whether there are any areas for improvement. Knowledge resulting from

this research effort will contribute to advancing research on CII and set parameters for initiatives addressing complex societal problems effectively.

Reference studies conducted in various regions explore the governance systems of community development projects, shedding light on the paradigms that influence regional development and other crucial aspects related to collaborative models like Collective Impact (CI). These studies also emphasize the importance of power equality among stakeholders, an essential element highlighted by Kania and Kramer (2015). By promoting such equality, actors are empowered to produce their work plans collectively, thereby avoiding potential challenges that may hinder the implementation of CII and similar collaborative models.

2 Theoretical review

2.1 Bibliometric analysis

Interest in the theme "Collective Impact" has grown continuously over the last decade and received a significant contribution from previous research such as Collaborative Solutions by Wolff (2010), among others dealing with intersectoral partnerships, more efficient forms of collaboration, project management community development, building models for grassroots organizations and coalitions (Himmelman *et al.*, 2017). Prange *et al.* (2016) already confirmed this trend. However, the topic has been eventually treated with different terminologies to reach new lines of investigation and give increasingly specific contours to existing studies. In this context, public policies also play a relevant role and influence the growth of these studies.

The growth in producing articles on Collective Impact reflects the increase in practical experiences worldwide, both in the public and private spheres, which have advanced substantially in recent years. In research carried out in the United States, Cabaj & Weaver (2016) recognize that the model has worked well to promote the changes expected by communities and has been adopted by many companies, organizations, and public bodies in various sectors, including health, education, justice, and natural resources. In the case of governments, one of the reasons for this is that the volume of information that public bodies can collect from a CII is more significant, as this reflects the number of stakeholders that can be involved in the process (Koch, 2013).

In a bibliometric analysis carried out in the Web of Science database using the term "Collective Impact", 676 scientific articles were returned, considering publications since 2001,

with 92% of the articles found having been launched after the reference article, by Kania and Kramer, published in 2011. In this paper, the authors present a new structure to address the theme of collaboration-based initiatives, bringing a more specific language with an objective model that pleased project managers and researchers who were already frustrated with the previous methodologies in which entities develop social projects in isolation and competing with each other (Kania *et al.*, 2014).

Of the nine articles using the expression in 2011, the literature grew to 33 in 2016 and 113 in 2021 (Chart 1). The studies were developed mainly in the areas of Public Environmental Health (98), Environmental Sciences (49), Educational Research (37), Engineering (29), Environmental Studies (28), Health Policies (28), Management (25) and Development Studies (21), demonstrating the relevance and need to improve approaches to human development issues.
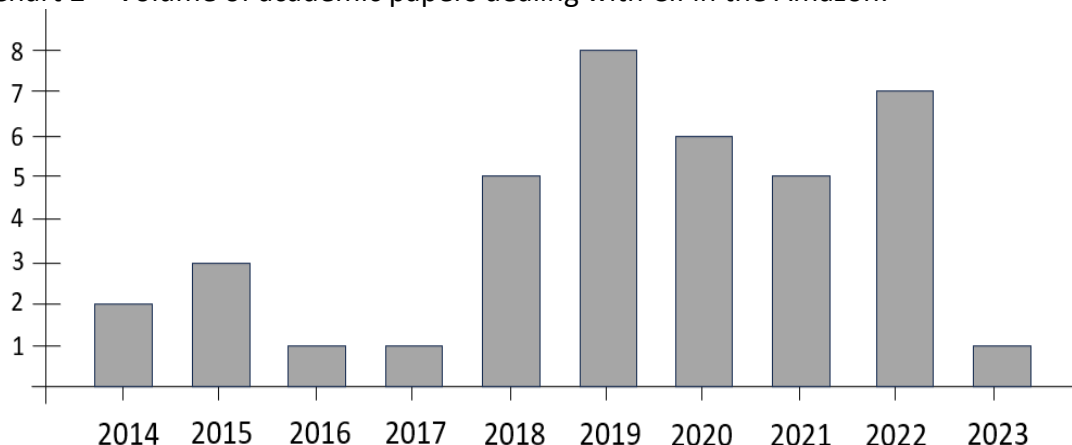
Chart 1 – Volume of academic papers dealing with CII
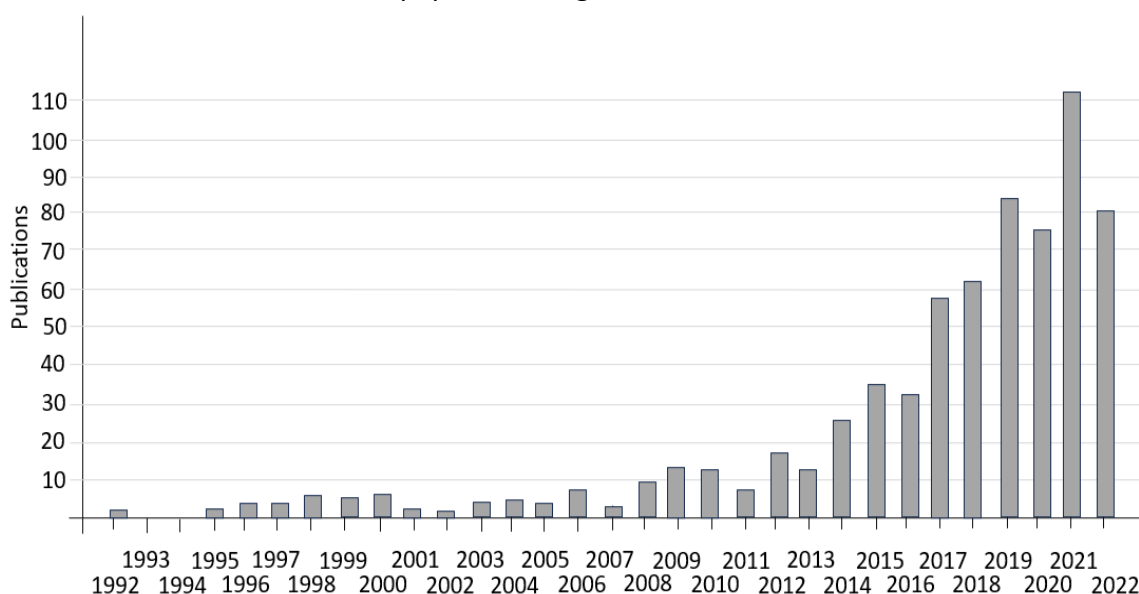
Source: Retrieved from Web of Science platform, 2022.

These trends have also been observed when considering the specific context of studies on collective in the Brazilian Amazon (Chart 2). A search with the terms "Collective," "Impact," and "Amazon" returns 43 entries across 29 different fields of study since 2001, with most of the publications concentrated in the fields of Environmental Studies (13) and Environmental Sciences (11).

Chart 2 – Volume of academic papers dealing with CII in the Amazon.

The number of publications has increased over the most recent years, with 86% (37 articles) concentrated since 2015. 2019 and 2022 present the highest number of essays published, with eight articles each. Despite this recent growth, there is still little academic production on the subject, especially in the northern region of Brazil, which indicates that the collective approach proposal or the ways of understanding collaboration models in the area are still too new to present consistent results, however, given the observed potential and the myriad of projects underway in the Brazilian Amazon, it is essential to continue studying and understanding their execution mechanisms, as well as the associated opportunities.

The growing interest in CII reflects the practical observation of experiences worldwide that show that complex social problems can no longer be solved simply through traditional models of programs based on service provision without a structuring approach and shared power/knowledge. It is reinforced by the massive volume of documentation produced in parallel by companies, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, always trying to build more effective methodologies from the lessons learned in each new experience, gradually improving their management systems in socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental projects. Again, despite the growing usage of both terms, there still needs to be records of the use of the specific CII approach in the region.

2.2 The Collective Impact Initiative

2.2.1 First considerations

This section discusses the development of the CII model, illuminating the concepts and models that serve as the primary reference for its application in theoretical and empirical contexts. The rationale departs from collaboration networks and social innovation concepts involving leadership, human behavior, and organizational management.

The discussion sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the dynamics and implications of collaboration, as seen by Kania and Kramer, involving the interaction of entities with different competencies and interests in a symbiotic cooperative regime through a common agenda, shared infrastructure, a dedicated team, and a structured process that fosters shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities.

2.2.2 CII conceptual development based on Collaboration Networks

The term "collaboration," according to the Michaelis dictionary (2022), refers to "work done in common with one or more people; cooperation, help, aid" or even "work, idea, donation, etc. that contributes to the accomplishment of something or to help someone." In the context of the social sciences, collaboration has a more specific meaning and is related to building networks with different entities working towards a common goal. Collaboration and its synonyms have been studied for decades, either for its influence in the field of leadership (Finch, 1977), human behavior (Wood and Gray, 1991), or in the scope of organizational management (Sharfman, Gray, and Yan, 1991).

Within the framework of CII, the concept of Collaboration Networks (CN) is a sophisticated construct "resulting from the interaction between entities with different competencies and interests, acting in a symbiotic cooperation regime" (Chituc and Azevedo, 2005). Such relationship webs may even be geographically separated, but sharing knowledge, resources, markets, and experiences in the pursuit of individual and collective goals in an ecosystem in which the interests and cultural values of the group influence the organizational strategy and the interaction model to be adopted. Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh (2008) identified four different types of interfaces in CN (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Collaboration networks models

a. Networking   b. Coordinated Network   c. Cooperation   d. Collaboration
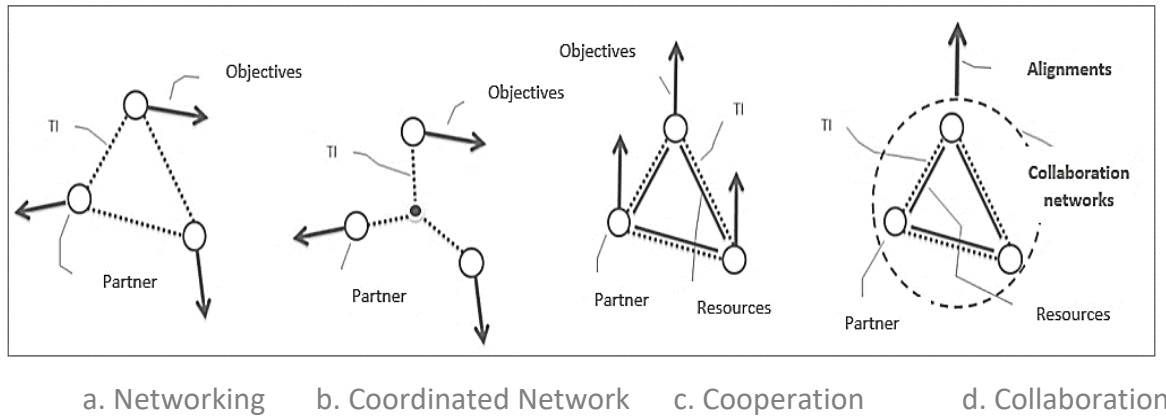
Source: Adapted from Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh, 2008.

Looking into how Collaboration Networks operate helps to understand how these more refined conceptions define the CII model: Basically, (a) Networking relies on interactions and exchanges between actors, even without common objectives. (b) In the Coordinated Network, information sharing occurs without pursuing specific shared goals. The outcomes are individual, although planned. (c) In the Cooperation system, the sharing of information and resources towards the objectives comes from the division of tasks among the participants, which, however, are directed to the interests of each actor.

(d) Finally, in the Collaboration model, theoretically more efficient, particularly from the perspective of the CII, partners collectively define principles and methods to share information and resources in this model. They work on an inter-organizational scale to achieve shared objectives, aligned throughout the process, from planning and implementation to managing and evaluating processes. This model fosters the creation of a shared identity, where risks, resources, objectives, and responsibilities are distributed among all involved parties.

These networks can also be seen according to their degree of flexibility and agility, namely: (a) long-term partnership with a dominant partner, (b) dynamic project-based partnership without a dominant partner, and (c) partnership to explore opportunities in the short term (Camarinha-Matos, Afsarmanesh and Ollus, 2005). All of them can be temporary, ranging from specific actions and windows of opportunity to long-term undertakings, such as processes that require building bonds of trust or long-term investments, for example, those in the infrastructure area. In any case, these structures are constantly striving to achieve specific outcomes.

Therefore, it becomes crucial to comprehend how each network operates, its objectives, the expertise and interests of its members, and the performance evaluation methods utilized by

the group. Understanding these aspects will lead to better solutions in alignment with the overall project objectives.

2.2.3 CII conceptual development based on Social Innovation

Social Innovation (SI) is defined by Malhotra *et al.* (2022) as "the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social and environmental issues in support of social progress (...) which requires the active collaboration of constituents from government, business and the world nonprofits" and is based on three fundamental aspects: "(a) the theory of change, (b) the impact measurement and (c) the design thinking."

In publications that precede Kania and Kramer's work on the pillars of CI, Mulgan *et al.* (2007) present SI as "innovative activities and services that are motivated by the objective of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and disseminated through organizations whose primary purposes are social". Westley & Antadze (2010) systemically see them, as being a "complex process through which new products, processes or programs are introduced, leading to a profound change in daily routines, resource flows, power relations or values within the system affected by innovation".

The OECD (2009) proposes an economical approach to SI, classifying it as the result of "a conceptual, process or product, or organizational change, or changes in the financing system related with the relationships with stakeholders and territories". Compared to other models, Murray *et al.* (2010) perceive SI as "differentiated both in its results and in its relationships, in the new forms of cooperation and collaboration it brings", but warn that such processes, metrics, models, and methods used in the commercial or technological areas, for example, will not always easily apply to the social economy.

The concept is also incorporated by large corporations seeking to act as drivers of social change and by non-profit organizations that have explored new ways of implementing and managing such projects, adopting innovative business models focused on income generation (Malhotra *et al.*, 2022). However, some issues still need to be solved, and others arise with each new experience, given the need for coordinated interaction between social organizations, companies, governments, and science and technology entities.

2.3 Kania and Kramer's model for Collective Impact Initiatives

Authors defined "collective impact" as "the commitment of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda to solve a specific social problem". Their proposition (Figure 2) attests to the importance of fundamental elements that ensure the success of the collective initiatives, known as pillars of "Collective Success", namely: (1) Backbone organizations; (2) Common agenda; (3) Shared measurement mechanisms; (4) Mutually reinforcing activities; and (5) Ongoing communication (Kania and Kramer, 2011).

Figure 2 – The five components of Collective Impact

Source: Adapted from Kania and Kramer, 2011.

A) **Backbone organizations**: Conceptually, it is "a team with a quite specific set of skills that aims to create and manage Collective Impact through ongoing facilitation, technology, and communication support, data collection and reporting, and handling a myriad of logistical and administrative details fundamental for the functioning of the initiative" (Kania and Kramer, 2011), after all, the field coordination process in a project consumes much time, and the participating organizations usually do not have it, which is why the absence of a "backbone" entity has become one of the most frequent reasons for the failure of many CII.

Turner *et al.* (2012) highlight the typical characteristics of influential backbone representatives: (a) they have visionary leadership, which, in addition to defining the main objectives, has a clear vision of where to focus and how to direct the focus; (b) they are results-oriented and are constantly supervising and demanding that the participating actors not only

identify the problems but also act on them; (c) are collaborative entities that work to seek consensus and build relationships, making everyone feel relevant; (d) are, above all, adaptive and willing to listen to all ideas, without losing focus on the final objective; (e) present a communicative and charismatic leadership with political capital, capable of understanding the mentality of these environments to influence and articulate actions that promote goodwill; (f) are humble and willing to serve.

Cabaj & Weaver (2016) endorse the need for a "backbone" to guide the vision and strategy, mobilize resources, support the improvement of public policies, and enable participants to continuously suggest new ideas for solving problems. It is a process that favors the transfer of capabilities, making the participating entities more able to act directly in governance and, consequently, more effective in their internal decision-making process.

B) **Common agenda**: "The CII requires that all participants have a shared vision for change, which includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to resolving it through agreed actions" (Kania and Kramer, 2011). When stakeholders have slightly different views of the same problem and the main objective of a project, the differences are easily forgotten and end up fragmenting the efforts, harming the result. Thus, although not all participants must agree on everything, differences must be discussed in advance to align interests that lead to achieving collective goals.

Turner *et al.* (2012) emphasize that a common agenda creates an environment where "all participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to resolving it through agreed actions". This alignment process will require building solid relationships of trust, and it can be streamlined by influential, empathetic leadership that allows itself to learn continuously.

Koch (2013) reinforces that, when building an agenda, gathering an extensive range of actors is essential to obtain more effective community participation. It increases the effectiveness of the resulting decisions, reduces the possibility of positions against the central objective arising during the process, and minimizes the chances of only the demands of the most influential actors being included in the strategic plan.

C) **Shared measurement systems**: Participating members of a CII must be constantly aligned with the project. For this, it is essential that the management and monitoring model can be discussed among the group, agreed and consolidated into a plan that is understandable at the community level. Goals and indicators must be widely known and accessible, either in person or through digital tools, so that everyone can monitor the initiative at any time.

This participation process, not only in building goals and indicators but the plan as a whole, facilitates a general understanding of the stages, objectives, and responsibilities. Moore *et al.* (2016) warn that without this involvement, "actions and solutions to problems may not be appropriate, acceptable, or compatible with community needs or effective in the local context". Understanding and considering this need, in addition to increasing the willingness of main actors to overcome longstanding disagreements and trust the other members of the group, makes it possible to create ambassadors of the idea beyond the walls of the initiative.

D) **Mutually reinforcing activities**: For Kania and Kramer, the multiple causes of social problems and their solutions are interdependent, which requires that CII operate with a diverse group of stakeholders working together. However, each one of them needs to play a complementary role to the others, according to their vocations, skills, and institutional mission; that is, the formula for success would be in complementarity, through the coordination of tasks between the different entities which serve for the group to reinforce each other.

In teams with different types of knowledge, this process favors the transfer of skills, positively impacting succession plans because, as stated by Bradley *et al.* (2017), the CII model enhances traditional collaboration practices within communities while encouraging a culture of deeper community involvement, through sharing a vision of the future and leadership activities, reinforcing a sense of responsibility of each entity in the mission to ensure that other partners can also properly develop their functions.

E) **Ongoing communication**: Building trust between social organizations, businesses, and government bodies is the most significant challenge, so Kania and Kramer warn that participants may need several years of experience with each other to recognize and consider different efforts, as well as to understand that their interests are being treated fairly and that decisions are made based on objective evidence seeking the best solution to the problem (Kania and Kramer, 2011). Given this, there must be a systematic dialogue process between the official members - those with the legitimacy of power, both by formal and informal channels.

In this environment, the group must know the internal rituals and be accustomed to the vocabulary, an essential requirement for developing collaborative projects. It contributes to the initiatives that can be built and implemented through a "dialogical management process where the decision-making authority is shared among the action participants" (Tenório, 2008). It is a space where clear and accessible information facilitates understanding of how mistakes happen and how to avoid them based on the history of lessons learned.

In addition to the five factors, Kania *et al.* (2014) reinforced the need to make three mindset changes during the execution of CII in an attempt to maximize the effectiveness of these approaches: (1) the need to involve the right people to help with a specific problem, often from other institutions; (2) change in the way actors work, seeking to create environments that favor the construction of trusting relationships; (3) the participation of executors able to see and track social changes throughout the project, continually reviewing the strategy to adapt solutions, unlike previous models - more rigid - which focused on implementing theoretically replicable solutions.

2.4 Counterpoints to CII model

Some authors question the CII model's conceptions and assumptions despite the interest of entities from different sectors. Christens and Inzeo (2015) consider it essential that the CII model emphasizes direct community involvement and other possible forms of intersectoral collaboration. Another warning came from Millesen (2015) that the model does not provide a precise lens for specific projects, which will depend decisively on other factors such as the history of relationships between key actors, the difference between the multiple interests involved, and a clear notion of the participants about the gains of being part of collective action.

The most forceful position came from Wolff (2016), who criticized the approach for understanding that it treated the Isolated Impact and CI models "as if they were the only two options, omitting the numerous examples of community coalitions that went beyond the Isolated Impact, but neither were explicitly perceived as Collective Impact actions". At this point, the author cited several works on "Healthy Communities", among which Norris (2013), where these gradations of results can be seen in contexts that would not be precisely a CII.

Related to Kania and Kramer's ideas about the factors for the failure in CII, namely, (a) the creation of "top-down" agendas, (b) the execution of the project from backbone organizations without "a broader mission, vision, and values", (c) the lack of community involvement and the absence of policies that ensure access to rights, Wolff brought a set of criticisms (Table 1) in points in which Kania and Kramer "do not recognize, do not understand, and do not adequately address" the subject (Wolff, 2016).

Table 1 - Wolff's ten criticisms of Kania and Kramer's CI model

(1) The model presented in the article needs to provide detailed methodologies to help coalitions create common agendas and the necessary ongoing communication.;
(2) Kania and Kramer's proposal would also be a "top-down" model and not a multistakeholder proposal for community development, as it results only from consulting experiences;
(3) The essay is not based on scientific literature and diverse experiences; after all, it is necessary to continue learning from previous cases;
(4) The authors analyzed only a few successful projects but never designed and implemented an initiative to evaluate the coalition;
(5) The different types of multistakeholder collaboration existent cannot be reduced in the five conditions suggested in the model;
(6) The model does not prioritize the engagement of those most affected by the problem and ignores community knowledge;
(7) The results do not reach the political scope, considering that the change in public systems has been recognized as a fundamental factor;
(8) The model does not address the debate or address critical social justice issues such as income inequality, structural racism, sexism, and homophobia;
(9) The model assumes that most coalitions will find funds capable of providing the backbone organization with all the resources it needs;
(10) In this model, the role of the backbone organization resembles that of traditional organizational leadership, not efficiently serving to build capabilities within the ecosystem.

Source: Wolff, 2016

2.5 Adaptation and development of the CII model

Besides outlining the limitations of the CII model, some authors have identified potential ways to improve the approach. Salpeteur *et al.* (2017) emphasize the importance of identifying and mapping the characteristics of critical actors to take advantage of their skills, responsibilities, and institutional missions in implementing and managing a CII. This permeates understanding of how to balance political and economic power and how works the decision-making architecture.

Karp and Ludyn-Wagner (2016) discuss risks associated with the confusion among participants about the meaning of "collaboration". In many cases, say the authors, the failure of

local development projects is because executors do not adopt "intervention methods that recognize the plurality of interests involved," focusing only on the objective of funders; after all, it is not a matter of simply agreeing on a common goal but, above all, knowing how to achieve it in an objective and feasible way. This idea is corroborated by Austin and Seitanidi (2012) when they state that "the growing magnitude and complexity of the socioeconomic problems faced by societies around the world transcend the capacities of organizations and individual sectors to deal with them adequately".

For Karp and Lundy-Wagner, initiatives inspired by the CII would need to (a) develop a shared understanding of the collective work, (b) maintain organizational competencies in a coordinated system, (c) use data to support the work, (d) bring together people who have never worked collaboratively, (e) work to overcome competition and mistrust between funders and executors, (f) promote consensus on the adopted metrics, and (g) prevent support organizations from acting in overlapping (Karp and Lundy-Wagner, 2016), objectively contributing to the improvement of current models.

Mendis and Decker (2022) agree that CII can be very efficient in creating the necessary environment to favor both intersectoral cooperation and effective public participation in complex decision-making processes; however, this model still generates controversy, especially about its ability to bring about change and the distance between what is the concept on the table and what is usually seen in the field.

Hanleybrown *et al.* (2012) also agree with this sentence by stating that in isolated impact initiatives, funders select entities - usually NGOs and consulting companies - that offer the most promising solutions but prefer to work autonomously, competing with other entities to produce the greatest possible isolated result. On the other hand, the understanding in the CII is that solutions to social problems need the interaction of many organizations within a more extensive system in a context where progress will depend on everyone working towards the same goal and measuring the same things.

Still, according to Hanleybrown *et al.*, when a large-scale change is sought based on the leverage of a single organization, the corporate and government sectors often need to be more connected to the efforts of the coordinating instances. Therefore, this would be an advantage of the CII, whose large-scale results depend on intersectoral alignment and on taking advantage of lessons learned in the various organizations involved to create an environment in which the business sector and governments, in particular, see themselves as essential partners who must coordinate their actions and actively share their learnings.

However, the CII model proposes that the coming together of multiple actors and their services to solve a problem can be applied to a wide range of issues. For example, from the local level to the global scale, it is to be expected that it will only work well for some situations. About this question, Brown *et al.* (2012) warn of three fundamental preconditions for its implementation: (a) a leader who brings the necessary respect and credibility and keeps the team together in an active environment. (b) adequate financial resources for two or three years, with a primary funder responsible for supporting project initiation and coordinating the application of resources. (c) an enabling environment for organizations and community groups, including those who have never worked together, to engage and collaborate towards the change's goals.

Another critical point is the information because it raises the issue of predictability (Keser & Van Winden, 2000). This high sensitivity point is intimately related to the behavior and the possibility of joining the actors in a project. For members to be proactive, their expectations about ways to contribute and the benefits received must be fully understood and met (Kocher *et al.*, 2008).

3 Discussion

3.1 CII in an Amazon context

The Amazon is an essential locus for scientific research in several areas, such as biology, ecology, climatology, nutrition, materials engineering, and medicine. The region's conservation initiatives allow scientists to study its natural processes and develop innovative solutions to global challenges to solve a current problem and leave a legacy for future generations. In this environment, collective impact initiatives, that is, those with the "full participation of the Amazonian population in decisions that impact their way of life", are the ones that best present themselves as a promising path for the execution of projects in the face of local complexities (Amazon Dialogues, 2023).

For example, many initiatives are underway to implement sustainable agricultural solutions and other economic alternatives, such as ecological tourism, responsible forest management, and other controlled activities that may cause minor damage (Sustainable Territories Program, 2021). However, finding detailed reports on collective impact initiatives in the Amazon has proven to be difficult, firstly because initiatives in the Amazon are implemented

by different organizations (governmental, non-governmental, community, and international), causing dispersion of information and difficulty in finding centralized repositories.

In addition, many organizations working in the region, especially smaller ones, complain that they have limited financial and human resources to collect, compile, and disseminate detailed information about their initiatives, which makes it challenging to produce accessible reports. Another relevant aspect is that the Amazonian context is constantly changing due to factors such as deforestation, climate change, government policies, and others, making the few existing reports outdated in a short period.

It should be added that the Amazon is a vast region with difficult access, making it complex to collect information and disseminate reports. The limited technology and communication infrastructure itself is a determinant factor in some areas, aggravated by linguistic and cultural barriers, leading to the construction of reports only in the local language, which limits their reach and accessibility for people who do not speak these languages, not to mention that in many cases this is sensitive information, as it involves territorial disputes, ideological conflicts, and commercial interests, which can lead the parties involved to be selective in disclosing detailed information.

Despite the difficulties, these experiences must be registered, cataloged, and disseminated, as they bring together the set of lessons learned about various regional initiatives, from actions that cover environmental conservation (the Amazon is home to one of the most incredible biodiversity on the planet, with an enormous variety species of plants, animals, and microorganisms); going through the well-being of local communities (many indigenous and local communities depend directly on forest resources for their subsistence and culture); to its contribution to the global balance (the Amazon plays an essential role in the Earth's climate system).

4 Final remarks

The Collective Impact Initiative (CII) model is a framework designed to address complex social problems through collaborative efforts and emergent solutions. Its strengths are in the recognition that social problems and their solutions are interdependent, the outlining of principles that are necessary for the success of collective impact initiatives, and the discouragement of predetermined approaches in favor of emergent solutions.

CII has modeled five key principles: (1) Backbone organizations - a team with a pretty specific set of skills that aims to create and manage Collective Impact through ongoing facilitation; (2) Common agenda, a shared vision for change; (3) Shared measurement systems, a management and monitoring model aligned among the group, (4) Mutually reinforcing activities, a diverse group of stakeholders working together, and (5) Ongoing communication, as building trust between social organizations, businesses, and government bodies. These principles are easily understandable by different stakeholder groups and constitute a coherent set of recommendations to strategize and monitor collective impact initiatives over time, leveraging the capacity of the model to disseminate in initiatives of social development.

Despite gaining global recognition with increased uptake in academic research over the years, little is known about the potential of implementing CII model principles in developing countries with different societal configurations and traditional collaborative models. To support the potential uptake of these initiatives in new contexts, such as the Brazilian Amazon, this article has reviewed the main critiques on the model, discussing authors that acknowledge and engage with the attributes of the CII model and those that critique it from different perspectives.

On the engagement with the CII principles, Turner et al. (2012) highlight several critical characteristics of effective "backbones", including visionary leadership with a clear focus, a results-oriented approach that demands action from participating actors, collaboration to seek consensus and build relationships, and adaptability with a willingness to listen to all ideas. Cabaj & Weaver (2016) emphasize the importance of a backbone organization to guide vision, strategy, and resource mobilization.

Koch (2013) underscores the necessity of involving a broad range of actors when building an agenda for effective community participation. This participatory process not only aids in defining goals and indicators but also fosters a general understanding of stages, objectives, and responsibilities, as highlighted by Moore et al. (2016), ensuring that actions and solutions align with community needs. Additionally, in teams with diverse knowledge, this process facilitates skill transfer and succession planning, enhancing traditional collaboration practices and deepening community involvement, according to Bradley et al. (2017).

Furthermore, the authors recognize that the CII Model promotes a dialogical management process where decision-making authority is shared among the participants, as suggested by Tenório (2008). It provides a space for clear and accessible information to improve understanding, learn from mistakes, and avoid their recurrence based on lessons learned from history. In summary, effective backbones and participatory processes are essential to successful

community initiatives, fostering collaboration, adaptability, and shared decision-making, ultimately leading to solutions that align with local needs and lessons from past experiences.

Regarding research that challenges the model's effectiveness, the CII has been criticized for not offering a precise lens for specific projects, as their success depends on factors like historical relationships between critical actors, differing interests, and participants' perceptions of collective action benefits. Critics also argue that the model treats Isolated Impact and Collective Impact as the only options, overlooking community coalitions that go beyond these categories. Moreover, some view CII as a top-down rather than a multistakeholder proposal for community development, resulting mainly from consulting experiences. The model's five suggested conditions may not capture the diversity of multistakeholder collaborations, and it doesn't prioritize engaging those most affected by the problem or incorporating community knowledge.

These contributions to refining the CII model must be considered when translating the approach from the global north to the global south. If, on the one hand, there is the possibility that implementation contexts share similar attributes, it is also true that implementers and partners must be prepared to face a new set of challenges. Institutional capacity issues, weak legal frameworks, and governance dynamics are among a few factors that may limit the capacity of actors to act together towards a unified goal, particularly in cases where challenges require continued interaction and collaboration over extended periods. The challenge of securing funds to maintain these initiatives for many years is even more pronounced in the context of development in the global South.

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