Abstract submission

Title
Driving systems change in child and family services at whole community scale: Negotiating a common agenda and coordinating implementation of prevention and early intervention practice to achieve Collective Impact

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Name of group or organisation
youngballymun

Conference theme to which the presentation is aligned
Either Systems Approaches to Developing Family Support or Preventative Family Support Structures, Processes and Practices

Aim
To reflect on and explore the challenges and opportunities of implementing a collective impact strategy with a rigorous focus on practice development to improve child outcomes in areas of concentrated disadvantage.

Contribution to knowledge or new learning that will occur
Achieving measurable, significant and sustained improvements in outcomes for children at whole community level in areas of disadvantage has long been an elusive goal for government policy and the efforts of various organisations. However, comprehensive community change initiatives focused on mobilising multiple partners around a common vision to work collaboratively have the potential to ‘move the needle’ on outcomes at significant levels of scale.

youngballymun is a comprehensive community change initiative that works with 30 active partners to integrate evidence-based prevention and early intervention practice with mainstream child and family service provision. The initiative builds and strengthens an implementation infrastructure that provides supports to children and families from pregnancy and infancy and as children grow. At the core of the strategy is proactive engagement with all families around the birth of their baby. Initiatives to foster parent-child relationships, positive parenting practices and promote engagement in learning are implemented across the children’s age range. youngballymun brings together local expertise with best available evidence ensuring a comprehensive lifecycle strategy that intentionally fills key service gaps and maximises impact.

Drawing on analysis of literature from Collective Impact and Implementation Science fields, and synthesis of youngballymun’s own shared measurement systems and evaluation findings, this paper will describe how a community change initiative can achieve large-scale social impact in child wellbeing and learning, critical protective factors for children. The session will share perspectives on building and maintaining a common vision, shared measurement systems, a programme of mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication processes and a backbone organisation while simultaneously maintaining close attention to practice implementation.
This paper offers insights into how a sharpened focus on practice implementation can add significantly to the growing body of literature on collective impact.