

**Assembling the Cast and Setting the Stage for Community Transformation:
Key Findings from the Evaluation of the Winston-Salem Community Innovation Lab**

Doug Easterling
dveaster@wakehealth.edu

Lucinda Brogden
lubrogden@gmail.com

Core Path Solutions
790 Ransom Rd.
Winston-Salem, NC 27106

Report to the Kenan Institute, University of North Carolina School of the Arts

April 1, 2018

Introduction

In 2015 Winston-Salem was one selected as one of the first two communities in the United States to carry out a collaborative, arts-based problem-solving approach called the Community Innovation Lab (CIL). Over the course of the 2-year process, more than 80 local residents engaged in community exploration, strategic analysis, intervention design, experimentation and relationship-building -- with the intent of making Winston-Salem a more abundant and equitable community.

The CIL process was designed and facilitated by EmcArts, a New York-based firm that builds the capacity of organizations and communities to respond to complex challenges. The CIL model blends the tools of **social innovation labs** with the principles of **creative placemaking**.¹ A diverse group of residents is recruited to solve a complex, seemingly intractable problem affecting the community. The group engages in a collaborative process of “systemic problem-solving,” which involves multi-perspective analysis, design thinking, experimentation and scaling. In addition, the CIL model incorporates arts-based methodologies in order to foster innovation and break-through thinking.

The Kresge Foundation funded EmcArts to develop and carry out the CIL model in four communities. Within Winston-Salem the process was also funded by a trio of local convening agencies – the Thomas Kenan Institute at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, the Winston-Salem Foundation (WSF), and the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. These groups identified three core questions that would guide the CIL process in Winston-Salem:

- How can we create a more equitable and abundant Winston-Salem?
- How can we move systems of race, class and power to do so?
- How can we, as a community, build enough trust to enable transformative change to happen?

In February 2017, the Kenan Institute (with the concurrence of WSF and the Arts Council) contracted with Core Path Solutions to conduct an evaluation of the CIL model as it has been implemented in Winston-Salem. The purpose of this evaluation (which complements a larger cross-site evaluation conducted by EmcArts) was to examine how well CIL process had met the goals and expectations of the conveners.

Data for the evaluation came from a variety of methods:

- semi-structured interviews with 24 individuals who participated in the CIL process;
- additional semi-structured interviews with the three local facilitators who partnered with EmcArts facilitators in carrying out the process;
- more open-ended conversations with leaders of the three convening organizations;
- observations of CIL meetings and events; and
- review of background reports, meeting notes, products, grant proposals, progress reports and other documents that provide information on how the process was carried out, decision making, products and accomplishments.

This report summarizes key findings from the evaluation, focusing on: a) how participants were affected by the CIL process, b) how individual-level change is beginning to lead to community-level change, and c) strengths and limitations of the CIL model.

¹ Evans, R. & Mangu-Ward, K. (2015). Introducing Community Innovation Labs: A New Approach for Harvesting the Power of the Arts to Unlock Complex Problems in Local Systems. *Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) Reader*, 26 (3), 2-7. <https://emcart.org/articles/gia-reader-article-introducing-community-innovation-labs>

Goals of the Community Innovation Lab

The complex problem that the CIL process addressed in Winston-Salem is the **inequity in opportunity and prosperity** that exists across different racial groups and as a function of class. In addition to being highly segregated by race, Winston-Salem has deeply ingrained social, political and economic structures which create advantages for some groups while excluding and disenfranchising other groups. Against this backdrop, the three convening organizations of the Winston-Salem CIL process established the goal of creating an “equitable and abundant Winston-Salem.”

Inherent in the vision of an equitable and abundant Winston-Salem is a need for systems change, and more specifically a change in who has political and economic power, and how that power is used. Power needs to be more widely distributed throughout the community (especially across lines of race and class) and community decision making needs to advance the well-being of all residents, not just those with power.

During the early stages of the CIL process, the conveners identified four inter-related conditions that need to be in place in order to move Winston-Salem toward this vision of equity and abundance:

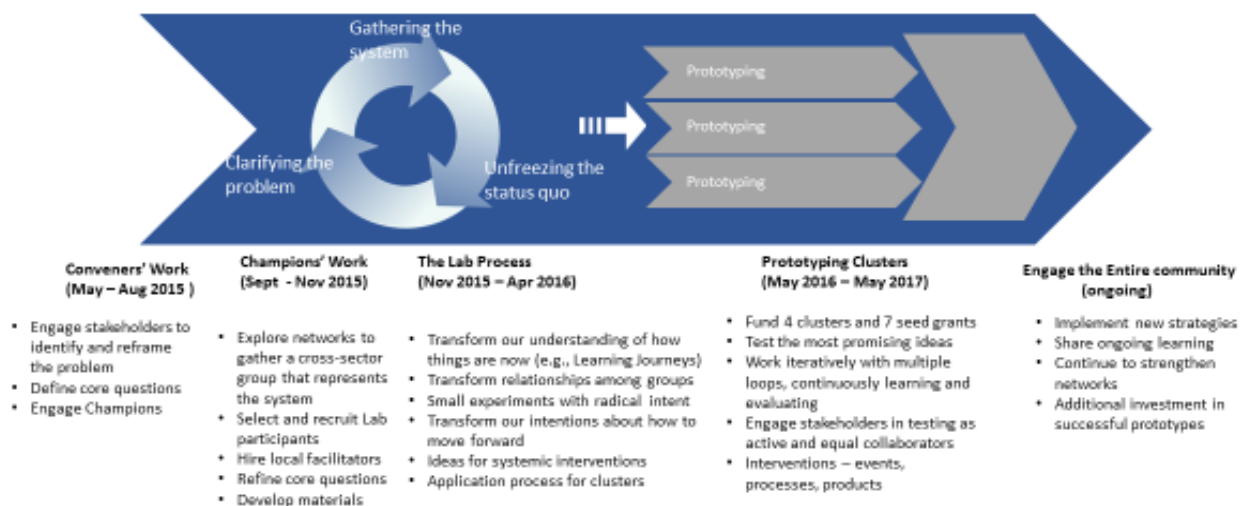
1. **Inclusive, responsive systems** that foster, creativity, innovation, prosperity and equity;
2. **A broad and diverse (by age, race and class) base of leaders** who act to create and sustain an equitable and abundant community;
3. **Engaged residents** who are committed to building a community that supports everyone’s well-being and success; and
4. **High levels of bridging social capital**, defined as trust, respect and connectedness among residents, especially across race and class.

These conditions can be viewed as **drivers** of equity and abundance in Winston-Salem’s transformative journey. They are inter-connected in mutually reinforcing ways; progress on any one of the drivers promotes progress on each of the others.

Highlights of the Process

The CIL process was designed to stimulate movement on all four of the drivers, setting the stage for long-term sustained action leading to a more abundant and equitable Winston-Salem. Key steps in that process are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Overview of the CIL Process in Winston-Salem



Following the notice of the grant award in April 2015, leaders from the three convening organizations met with representatives from EmcArts to clarify and align expectations associated with the initiative (e.g., the nature of the CIL model, underlying assumptions, the roles of the different players). These meetings also provided the opportunity to discuss the problem that the CIL process would tackle, to map out the specific steps of the process, and to identify the people who would be invited to participate in the process.

Recruitment of participants was carried out in two stages, beginning with the identification of 10 “Champions” who have experience with (and an appreciation for) community-building and systems-change initiatives. This group was diverse in terms of race, gender, age and profession, as well as their standing as institutional versus informal leaders. In addition to actively participating in the sequence of four Lab sessions, the Champions were expected to help the conveners identify and recruit approximately 25 additional participants who would represent the diversity of perspectives in the community.

The Champions group was in fact able to recruit a diverse group of 25 community leaders from different sectors of the community and with varying demographics, backgrounds and worldviews. All 25 of these participants, attended the first Lab workshop on November 6-7, 2015, along with 8 of the 10 Champions and all 3 conveners. Of this total group of 38 CIL participants, 27 were still active in the process when the fourth workshop was held on April 22-23, 2016.

Each of the four Lab workshops was an intensive 2-day experience in which facilitators from EmcArts and the local community led the group through individual and group exercises that stretched participants in their understanding of the community and in how they thought about race, power, systems and community change. Many of these exercises were drawn from the creative processes used by writers and by visual and performing artists. Participants engaged in forms of personal sharing that created significant vulnerability and in some cases painful realizations. In addition to these exploratory processes, the facilitators taught the groups about systems thinking, design thinking, and the process of developing and testing interventions through prototyping, experimenting, adapting and scaling.

The Lab process was designed to stimulate participants to design and implement interventions to disrupt systems in a way that would move Winston-Salem closer toward an abundant and equitable community. Initially this was in the form of “small experiments with radical intent,” which were tested and reported back to the group. In the third workshop, the group began developing ideas for larger scale interventions which could be designed and implemented by separate work groups over a longer period of time. Four of these “Cluster” groups were established:

- Inclusive Entrepreneurship (later called “Winston-Salem Hustle”)
- Intersections and Conversations
- One Stop Center for Integrated Human Services (later called “First Stop Service Center”)
- Cook Literacy Model School (later called “Parents as Partners”)

Each Cluster was awarded a grant of \$45,000 (administered by the Kenan Institute) to support the development of large scale interventions. The Clusters began designing their interventions in the spring of 2016 and received their initial grant funding in the fall.

The four Clusters had varied success in realizing their goals, but each one at least reached the point of designing innovative strategies. By the time of the formal closure of the CIL process in May 2017, the Clusters had collectively carried out work to raise public awareness of critical community issues, to build networks to support entrepreneurs and artists, to engage community residents in creative dialogue to build trust, to strengthen relationships between agencies and residents, and to develop models of service delivery that are more inclusive and empowering for clients.

The Cluster process attracted actors who had not participated in the Lab process, roughly doubling the total number of CIL participants. Based on the records available, we identified a total of 35 people who joined the CIL process at the Cluster phase. Combined with the 37 who participated in at least one Lab session, we can point to at least 72 people from all segments of the community who actively engaged in at least some portion of the CIL process. Additional people were involved in seven smaller-scale “Seed Grant Projects” which grew out of ideas developed during Workshop #2.

Specific Expectations for the CIL Process

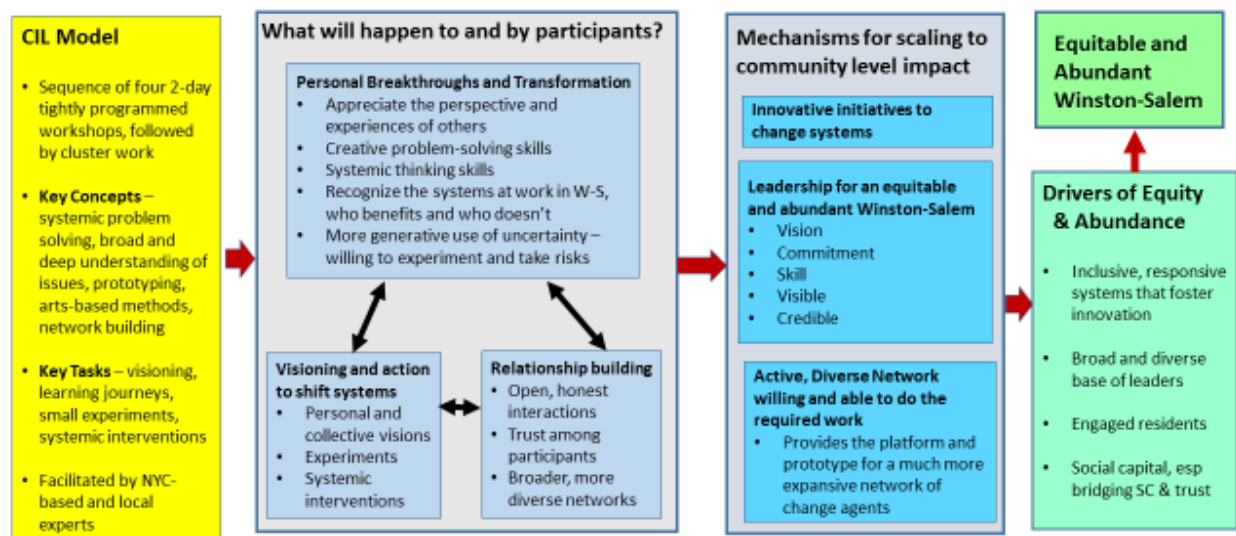
In order to focus the evaluation on the most important questions and hypotheses, we engaged representatives of the three convening organizations in conversations about their expectations for the CIL process. These conversations covered both the specific results the conveners hoped to see during the different phases of the CIL process, as well as the broader impacts that the initiative would stimulate over the longer run.

As mentioned above, the overarching goal of the CIL process is to move Winston-Salem forward toward becoming a more abundant and equitable community. This was presumed to require changes in how power is distributed and used across the community. Four key conditions were identified as necessary pre-conditions and drivers of the community-change process:

- 1) more inclusive and responsive systems,
- 2) a broader and more diverse base of community leaders,
- 3) increased community engagement by residents; and
- 4) higher levels of social capital, especially more trust across lines of race and class.

The logic model shown in Figure 2 provides a road map of how the Community Innovation Lab can advance this ambitious change agenda.

Figure 2. Logic Model for the CIL Process

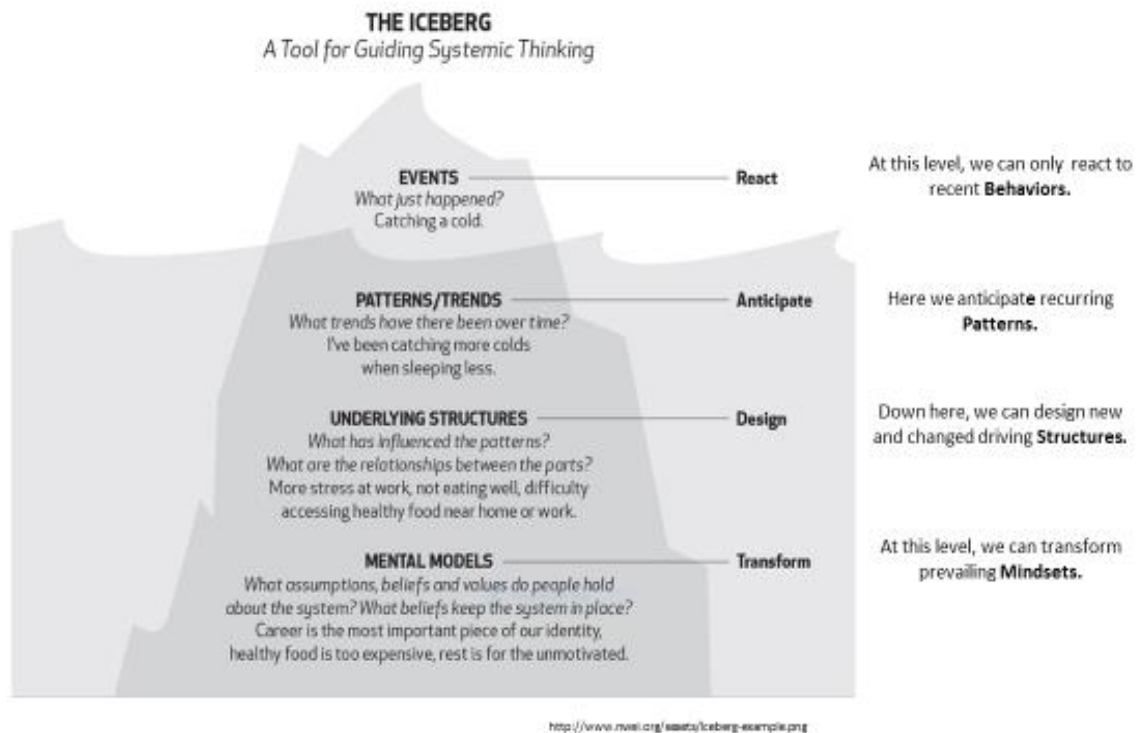


The key elements of the CIL model are listed in the yellow box at the left side of Figure 2. The overarching intent of the program – an equitable and abundant Winston-Salem – is shown in the green box at the top right, accompanied by the four drivers of this outcome. The two large gray boxes in the middle describe what should happen as a result of implementing the CIL model, first the immediate effects among participants and then later as those early effects set other work in motion.

Based on our conversations with the conveners and our review of CIL-related materials (generated both by the conveners and by EmcArts), we identified three major types of outcomes that are expected to occur while the CIL process is underway:

- The development and implementation of small and large interventions to disrupt systems;
- New and stronger relationships among participants, leading to new and expanded networks that can be mobilized for action; and
- Expanded awareness, increased knowledge and new skills among participants.

The developers of the CIL model at EmcArts had very specific expectations for the types of knowledge and skills that participants would develop in going through the four Lab workshops. They focused especially on *systemic thinking*, which they defined as “slowing down to see the system and discovering leverage.” Systemic thinking requires seeing beneath the concrete *behaviors and events* that play out in front of us – in order to discern the larger *patterns and trends*, along with the underlying *structures* that give rise to those patterns. Intervening on those structures is the key to disrupting old patterns that don’t serve the community and creating new, healthier, more adaptive patterns. In order to find those structures, we first need to examine our own beliefs and assumptions to identify the *mental models* we use when seeing and interpreting the world. This hierarchy of seeing is reflected in the iceberg metaphor (shown below) which was a major focus of attention during the Lab workshops.



In addition to systemic thinking, EmcArts sought to build participants’ proficiency in the following domains:

- Weaving networks across boundaries,
- Making generative use of sustained uncertainty (by getting comfortable with questioning and experimenting),
- Letting go of linear planning in favor of experimentation and discovery (embrace “learning by doing”), and

- Integrating artistic practices (artists bring their unique ways of seeing and knowing to enrich participants' experiences).

If participants increase their skills, knowledge and understanding along these lines, they are better prepared to develop and implement systems-change interventions. Both effects are facilitated by the stronger relationships and networks that the CIL process cultivates.

To the extent that participants build their capacity for systems change, form stronger relationships with one another and experiment with interventions, the groundwork is laid for the more significant, community-wide effects shown in the next gray box of Figure 2. Individual changes lead to larger changes as participants take initiative on specific projects, form partnerships and networks focused on community change, and diffuse the thinking that took root during the Lab process. In particular, we should see more initiatives (and more innovative initiatives) to change systems, as well as the emergence of new community leaders who are committed to systems-change work and who work together in an aligned and co-creative manner.

The concepts and outcomes shown in Figure 2 guided the design of the evaluation. Because the pathway to community change extends well into the future, we focused the evaluation the shorter term outcomes and expectations represented in the first gray box. In particular, we assessed:

- How the process was experienced among participants;
- Changes in participants' understanding, knowledge and skills;
- New networks and expanded leadership base; and
- Perceptions as to whether the work to date is leading to larger efforts to create a more equitable and abundant Winston-Salem.

Sample

Our answers to these questions are based in large part on the semi-structured interviews we conducted with 24 individuals who participated in different aspects of the CIL process. These interviews, conducted either in person or by phone, ranged between 30 minutes and 3 hours. The interviewees had the following characteristics:

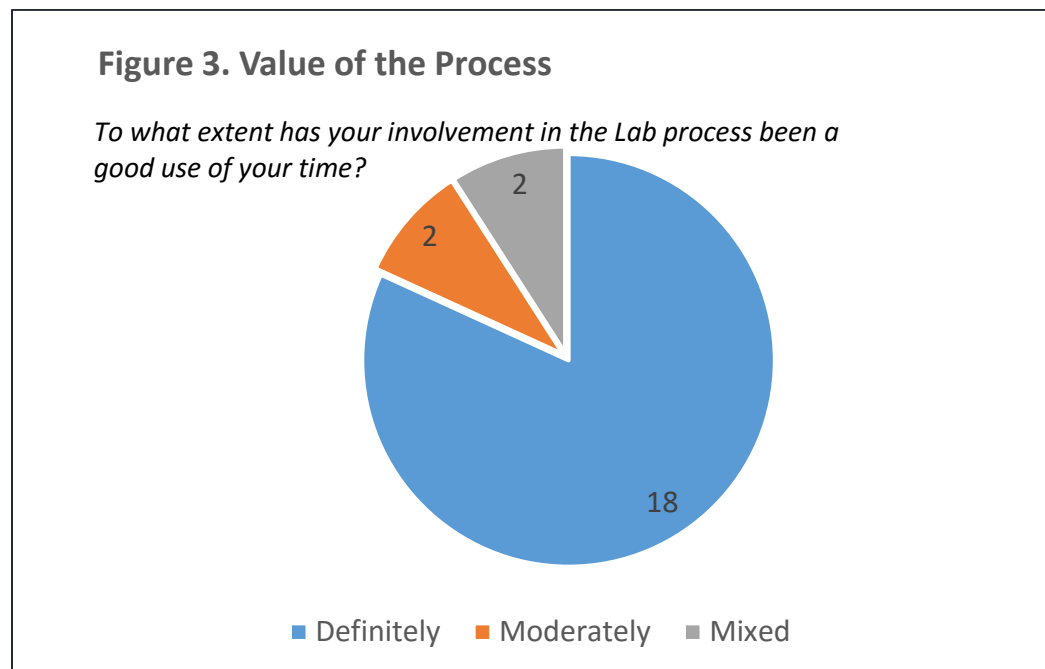
- 8 Champions
 - All 8 of these participated in the Lab process – to varying degrees
 - 5 of these actively participated in a Cluster process
- 10 additional individuals who actively participated in the Lab process
 - 5 of these actively participated in a Cluster process
- 6 individuals who did not participate in the Lab process, but played a critical role in a Cluster

In selecting the sample, we ensured that we included at least three informants for each of the four Clusters. We also interviewed at least one person involved in each of the seven Seed Grant projects.

In addition to interviewing these 24 participants, we also conducted somewhat less structured interviews with the three local facilitators and with the leaders of the three convening organizations. We also reviewed a large set of program-related materials and selectively observed a number of key CIL events.

How was the CIL Process Experienced?

In order to gain an overall sense of whether the Community Innovation Lab had been a productive experience from the standpoint of participants, the interview included the question, *“To what extent has your involvement in the Lab process been a good use of your time?”* As shown in Figure 3, the vast majority (82%) of the 22 interviewees who were asked this question responded with “definitely.” The remaining 4 responses were split between “moderately” and “mixed.”



The following sampling of comments provides a more qualitative sense of interviewees’ sentiments and the reasons for their responses:

- *It was invaluable. A unique, powerful and amazing process*
- *Great use of time*
- *Could not have picked a better way to spend my free time. I’ve never been busier but loved every minute of it*
- *It let me see how creative and innovative people can be when they operate outside of the box with everyday people, rather than working with a top down approach*
- *Standing back from a 50,000-foot view, it was definitely a good use of time. But at some points I would have said moderately.*
- *The experience was too complicated for me to parse at the moment.*

We gained further insights as to what participants had experienced by asking about the strengths and weaknesses of the Lab process. Most of the **strengths** responses fell into the following five categories:

- The Lab process provided the means (activities, time, space, language) for open conversation, deep exploration, recognizing differences, finding common ground and building relationships
- Breaking into clusters allowed us to dive deeply into action-oriented, hands-on work
- We were able to experiment and try things
- The sessions were organized and led by skilled facilitators
- The use of arts-based methods aided in learning about each other, finding a shared purpose and developing innovative approaches.

With regard to this last point, participants pointed specifically to poetry, personal storytelling, arts and dialogue, and the visual mapping of Winton-Salem. The following comments indicate how these arts-based methods were helpful to the process:

- *Great means to get to know one another without it feeling artificial.*
- *Poetry helped you think more deeply, touched the soul, made it human.*
- *Art is gentle and it softens things and takes the edge of the discussions. Art brings people together when they have different perspectives.*
- *Arts are vital. They unify people and bring everyone to the same level – because they are all experiencing the same thing.*
- *Promotes design thinking.*
- *Artists have always been important players and have brought an important voice in dealing with the politics associated with difficult issues. ... helps to move past politics to practical solutions.*

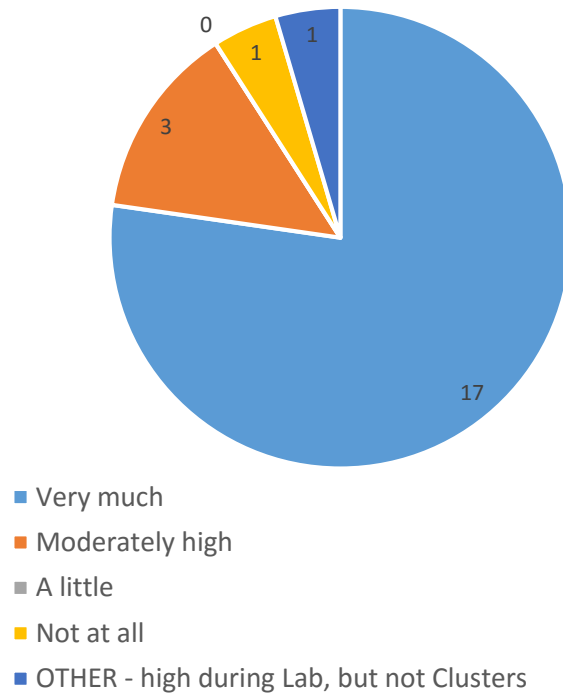
On the **weakness** side of the ledger, the most frequently cited issue related to a *lack of clarity and insufficient communication* regarding the purpose, structure and logistics surrounding the process. At the outset of the process (when participants were asked to commit to 8 days of their time), the CIL model was described in only general terms. The specific nature of the work only became clear as the process unfolded. This lack of clarity was exacerbated by the complexity of the process and the highly theoretical concepts that EmcArts used to frame the work.

While the issues of lack of clarity and excess complexity were reported by respondents across the board, two of the limitations depended on the perspective of the participant. By design, the Lab included participants with varying inclinations for analysis and action. Not surprisingly, some interviewees criticized the process for *not allowing time to fully address deep issues related to race and class*, while others complained that the *process didn't move quickly enough to action*.

Regardless of orientation, participants generally found the *inter-personal interactions* that occurred in the Lab workshops to be valuable. More than three-fourths of the interviewees responded “very much” when asked if their interactions were personally meaningful. Most of the remainder reported that this was true to a “moderately high” degree (see Figure 4). Similar patterns of response were observed when we asked if the interactions had been “open and honest,” “creative and innovate,” and “likely to lead to action.”

Figure 4. Meaningful interactions

To what extent were your interactions "personally meaningful or impactful"?



Although the conversations were widely regarded as open and honest, interviewees also reported that challenges arose with regard to trust among the group. The general sense was that participants were civil and respectful with one another, but not highly trusting, especially across race. As one interviewee reported, *"there was enough trust that people could be in the room together."* Another observed that *"the dynamics change depending on who you are dealing with."*

There was also a sense among interviewees that trust generally increased over time as the group engaged in episode after episode of honest, high-stakes conversation. The following three comments provide a sense of the ebb and flow of trust over the course of the four Labs.

- *Through conversations and debates people found ways to love each other's truth and trust each other.*
- *Half was horrible and half was the best experience I ever had*
- *It grew, people felt a sense of comradery, and you could see that they were excited to see each other when they would get back together.*

How were Participants Affected?

The logic model for the Community Innovation Lab hypothesizes that the people who participate in the Lab process will carry out a set of work that launches small and large interventions to change systems, and in the process will expand their networks and undergo personal transformation. To test whether this in fact occurred, we asked interviewees an open-ended question, *“In what ways have you been personally affected by your involvement in the Lab process?”*

The most frequently reported effect involved **new and/or deeper relationships**, along with the associated benefits. Of the 21 participants who were asked this question, 18 (or 86%) offered a response along these lines.

Three additional effects were reported by at least 8 of the 21 respondents:

- Learned more about Winston-Salem and how it operates (13)
- Gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of other people’s perspective (13)
- Developed new skills (8)

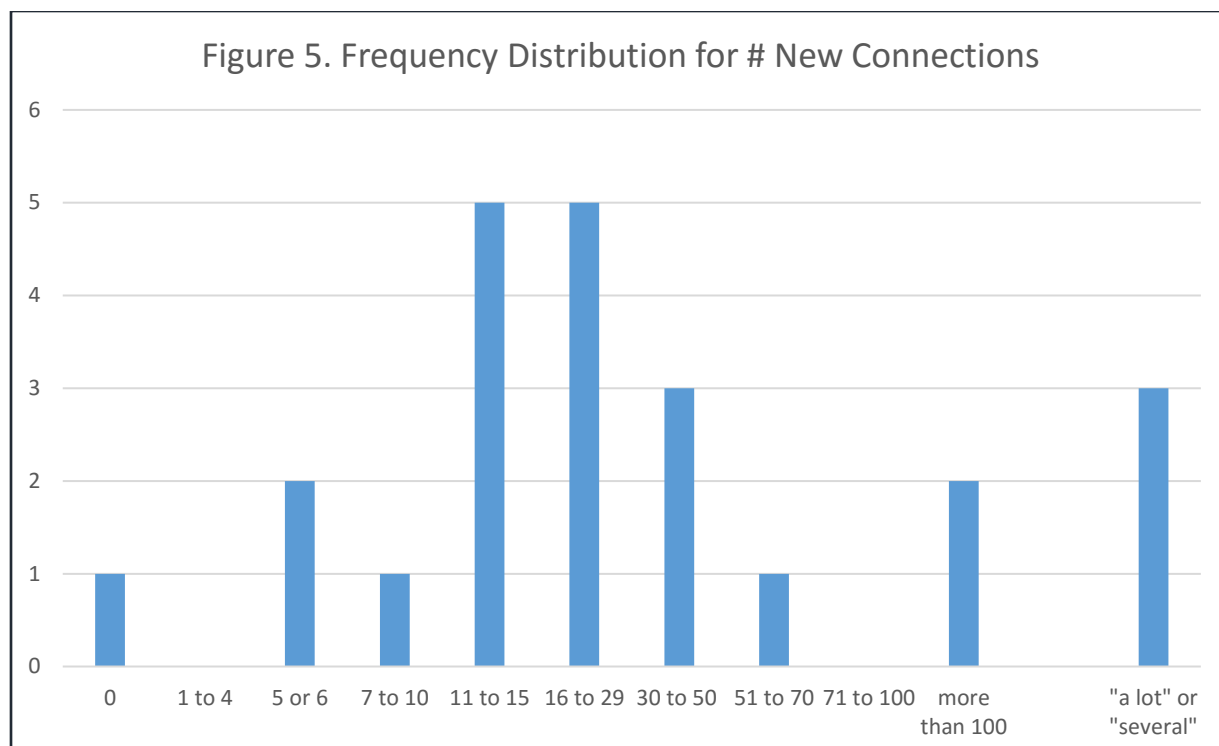
We also heard isolated reports of a deepened personal commitment to equity work (2 responses), clearer life direction (2), and gaining more patience (1).

New and Deeper Relationships

In describing the new and deeper relationships they had built, interviewees offered comments such as the following:

- *Best thing is the new friends and colleagues that have resulted from the process.*
- *The personal relationships I developed were vitally important.*
- *I met people outside my previous circle of influence, but now I see how they are influential to the work I do.*
- *Got to know people in a different way.*
- *Knew a lot of them before but got to know them better - more intimately, and saw them as real people.*
- *I saw [name] not just as a political figure, but as a real person.*
- *I got to see them in another light and deepened her understanding of their work.*
- *Feel that I can now call on anyone in the lab professionally if I need to.*
- *A person in lab offered services to clients of my organization.*
- *I now know who to call at different service agencies. I know who has a like mindset and who will come to bat for you.*

In a follow-up question, we asked interviewees how many new relationships they had built as a result of their participation in the Lab. Their responses ranged from 0 to “more than 100.” The median number of new relationships was 16, but the number varies considerably across participants (see Figure 5).



We also asked whether the new relationships were “different from the circle of people that the interviewee normally interacts with.” Approximately half the interviewees (9 of 19) reported that the new relationships are *qualitative different*. The remaining 10 interviewees were evenly split between those who reported that *only some of the new connections were different* and those that indicated that *the new connections are similar to current circle, but that circle is diverse*.

Deeper Understanding of Winston-Salem and Other People’s Perspective

The second most frequently reported personal effect resulting from the CIL process was a deeper understanding of Winston-Salem, including its history, the institutional dynamics, and the critical issues that face the community – both the obvious issues and the underlying determinants. Much of this learning focused on inequities in wealth and well-being that exist across race and class, and how those inequities have come to take root in Winston-Salem through policies and behaviors that promote segregation in housing, education and social interaction. The Lab workshops examined the various systems that operate across the community and explicitly brought to the surface the question of who benefits from these systems and who doesn’t benefit.

Interviewees reported that the presentations, conversations, learning journeys and other exercises that occurred in the Lab brought greater awareness and sometimes a profound recognition of community dynamics that had long been hidden from their view. The following comments are representative:

- *I learned a lot more about the systems in Winston-Salem. This was huge for me and I have become passionate about opening up these systems.*
- *I got a crash course in the way that things work in WS. It was not that I was unaware, but the Lab added statistics and organization to things I thought I knew. I gained a deeper level of awareness.*

- *I saw that the political figures in the Lab also had to work through their issues and saw them come to the realization that all the issues are systemic and require new solutions.*
- *Some people who have power don't participate fully in difficult conversations or let others exercise their power.*
- *It has been an eye opener.*

At the same time that participants were learning about community systems, structures and dynamics, they were also learning about colleagues' lives, experiences and perspectives. The Lab process provided multiple opportunities for deep sharing and listening. Interviewees reported that these experiences expanded their understanding of how the world looks to people from different races and different positions of power and privilege. In the process, some interviewees reported that they were now more empathetic of other people. The following comments illustrate these changes:

- *I was able to put myself in others' shoes and appreciate their truth.*
- *The process gave me perspective on how different people think. It was a mindset shift. I learned a lot from hearing the perspectives of [name] - people who have lived these problems.*
- *Seeing political figures come to the realization that issues are systemic. That helped me to be more open minded towards people that do not hold the same values that I do.*

Skills Development

As participants stretched themselves into new forms of learning, interacting and doing, many of them built one or more skills that are valuable in community-change work. Building off the comments above related to learning about other people's perspective, we heard some reports from interviewees of increased openness and ability to listen to others, especially people from different backgrounds. This was reflected in comments such as the following:

- *The Lab changed me personally. I am more open to other perspectives.*
- *I expanded my perception. The lab allowed me to see how psychologically we project and defend.*

The designers of the CIL model emphasized systemic thinking as a key skill for development. We heard references to systemic thinking when interviewees talked about their deeper understanding of community dynamics, structures and systems. However, none of the interviewees told us explicitly that they had built their competency in systemic thinking. Our sense is that participants became familiar with the concept, what it involves and why it is important, but it would be a stretch to conclude that participants are now able to fully and independently analyze situations according to the principles of systemic thinking.

Arguably the most important skills that interviewees reported developing involve *leadership*. These include facilitating group processes, diagnosing situations, resolving conflict, finding consensus and mobilizing others around an agenda. Participants built these skills through the Lab exercises and even more so when they found themselves in the position of leading a Cluster or Seed Grant project. The following quotes are illustrative:

- *My team leadership skills most definitely grew. I had never led a group that were not employees. I learned a lot about how to galvanize people and keep them empowered and engaged.*
- *Facilitating a team was growth for me. Realizing what it looks like in an experiment was a growth. I don't like it. I like likes structure and balance. Working with group dynamics is hard. I am learning to let go and watch the result, even when it has fallout.*

Especially for participants who played leadership roles in the Clusters and Seed Grant projects, the experience provided an opportunity to develop more skills in the more concrete work of *managing projects*. The following comments provide examples of this form of personal growth:

- *I gained organization skills -- communications and writing skills. I am seeing how people use their writing skill in grants reports, write-ups of events, etc.*
- *I had never been a fiscal agent before. Learned a lot new processes.*
- *I learned about grantee-grantor dynamic and how it works. Learned fiscal agency issues.*

Only about a quarter of the interviewees explicitly reported an increase in leadership and management skills, but many others pointed to personal changes that prepare them for leadership roles. For example, one interview reported that, *“being able to address taboo subject matter in an open and honest way has made me less afraid to do that in other settings.”*

How much Progress?

The data reported in the previous sections build a strong case for the conclusion that the CIL process generated meaningful experiences for participants, leading to a deeper understanding of the community, increased awareness of others’ perspective, new leadership skills, stronger inter-personal relationships, expanded networks and innovative experiments in systems change. The critical question is whether these impacts among CIL participants will translate into broader, more profound and sustained forms of community change.

Interviewees had a mixed answer to this question. When asked whether the CIL process had been valuable in moving Winston-Salem forward toward an equitable and abundant community, 11 of the 24 interviewees said “yes.” They provided responses such as, *“it was very valuable because at first it put a lot of people together to show reality and connect with funders, and also gave a purpose to the arts in Winston-Salem beyond what has been done.”* These interviewees also pointed to particular forms of progress which they believed provided a foundation for larger scale change, especially the work that the Clusters had carried out and the development of new networks of motivated change agents.

Another 10 interviewees indicated that it might be valuable but it was too soon to know if it would actually pay off. For example, *“it was a good beginning, but...you would have to come back together in 6 months to a year for a check in.”*

The remaining 3 interviewees had a more skeptical opinion of the longer term prospects, providing comments such as, *“an isolated lab experiment will not do much unless there is a way to keep it going and keep up the momentum. People were affected, but there were not enough to see community-wide change.”*

Our view is that the CIL process did in fact set the stage for Winston-Salem to transform itself into a more equitable and abundant community. We would point to the following accomplishments as indicators that a longer term change process is underway.

1. The conveners, with support from a planning committee of “Champions,” recruited a diverse group of established and less recognized community leaders, including leaders with varying degrees of power and privilege. This included some individuals who were already highly engaged in community problem-solving and decision making, along with others who were engaged at more modest levels (but still “known in the community”). As the process shifted from the Lab sequence to the Clusters, the number of CIL participants roughly doubled to at least 72. The additional 35 participants were

recruited by the cluster leaders and included many individuals who were engaging in community problem-solving for the first time. Some of these “new faces” played leadership roles within the clusters and have continued to maintain active in the community.

2. The CIL process engaged these change-oriented leaders in an intensive experience full of creative challenges. It also introduced participants to a variety of innovative tools and methodologies to promote systems change, including systems thinking, design thinking, prototyping and arts-based tools for exploring differences in perspective. By exposing 37 strategically selected individuals in a process of adaptive, co-creative problem solving, CIL helped develop a more diverse base of community leaders with the capacity and commitment to create a more equitable and abundant Winston-Salem.
3. During both the Lab phase and the Cluster phase of the CIL process, participants engaged in a deep analysis of the systems that determine how things are done in Winston-Salem, and then developed and tested innovative interventions for disrupting the system. This began with “small experiments with radical intent,” and then moved to larger scale projects developed by the four Clusters. Both the short-term experiments and the longer term interventions have the potential to impact different community systems in ways that they become more inclusive and responsive. Because the CIL process has cultivated a more diverse, capable and committed base of community leaders, there is a greater potential for these interventions to be sustained and to transition into deeper levels of work.

While the CIL process did not, in and of itself, develop the large-scale impactful interventions needed to transform the entrenched systems and structures that have created generations of inequity in Winston-Salem, the process has built a foundation on which these change strategies can be developed and implemented. Karina Mangu-Ward, one of the designers of the CIL model, was clear that this was the intent of the process:

The Lab isn't about “solving” the problem at hand. It's about bringing people together to use a set of tools they hadn't had available to them before. We hope to make significant progress, but it's a fight that never ends.²

Moving forward, we would encourage the conveners and other community leaders to heed the recommendations that interviewees provided when asked about next steps. These include:

- Continue to nurture and sustain the work that was developed in the Clusters
- Extend and expand these projects beyond the Clusters more broadly into the community.
- Replicate the Lab process to bring in additional residents of the community, possibly focusing on more specific equity-related issues and/or specific geographic segments of Winston-Salem.
- Extend the honest conversation, deep analysis and creative problem-solving that occurred in the Lab so that it become more the norm in Winston-Salem.
- Intervene with those community leaders who are resistant to honest, direct conversations about equity, racism and power – in order to bring them along to a point where they can be open to these issues, listen non-defensively to different perspectives, and contribute to collaborative initiatives to create more equitable systems.

² <http://www.uncsa.edu/kenan/projects/arts-society/community-innovation-labs-feature.aspx>