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Overview: This Dream Book documents the outcomes of the Dream Session at The Carter Center on April 23–24, 2019.

Focus: The flow of all financial (and programmatic) information throughout the Carter Center.

Approach: A two-day, participatory workshop to build a shared understanding of the issues surrounding the project focus and co-create opportunities worth exploring (i.e. Dreams). This is just the beginning of the D3 Process as outlined below.

Participants: A cross-section of The Carter Center, including nearly 25 participants to represent many of the different programs, departments, offices, and perspectives (see the diagram to the left).

D3 PROCESS

DREAM
Convene a multi-departmental/program workshop To explore possibilities for amplifying impact throughout the organization

DESIGN
Align process, technology, and organizational change management plans into a common, time-phased roadmap

DELIVER
Implement process reengineering, technology solutions, and organizational readiness
PART 1:
BUILDING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING
**PERSONAS**

In order to represent the stakeholders across these journeys and spread throughout the organization and its programs, departments, and teams, these personas are drafted based on functional categories. That is, they are created to reflect key behaviors, mindsets, and challenges throughout the identified journeys. While the functional categories have distinct characteristics, they are by no means mutually exclusive so some stakeholders may share overlap or take on these personas at different times.

**The Collectors:**

Whether in the field or back at HQ, the Collectors gathers budget and project info wherever and however they can. Meticulous, methodical, ad hoc, idiosyncratic are all words that can describe their process as different situations call for different approaches. Many make use of the systems they have at their disposal while some even create their own fixes to particular problems as they crop up. Their collections may at times feel incomplete or eclectic, but often they’ve got what they can get.

**The Analysts:**

With the data and tools collected the Analysts try to spot patterns and find the signal in the noise. While they may want to be proactive in their projections and forecasts, some may feel constrained by the tools they have, the data they don’t, or the delays in access to complete, up to date information. Still they strive to make sense of what they’ve got. Some data in, some data out.

**The Decision Makers:**

With available data collected, possibly analyzed, the Decision Makers use that information to inform their choices. Budgets, program direction, new projects are all up for discussion. However, the confidence in these decisions can only be as strong as the information that backs them. Therefore, the Decision Makers can sometimes feel cornered to make hasty decisions supported solely by what’s worked in the past or what will hopefully work in the future. Fingers crossed.

**The Communicators:**

Numbers don’t tell stories. People do. Often with numbers… That’s the job of the Communicators: use the numbers they have to tell the stories that others want to hear. The only problem is that they have many different audiences that want to hear many different sides of a story or different stories all together. From overall program success down to a play-by-play for project activities the Communicators are expected to deliver all details in whichever format the audience wants. This is no small feat, especially as audiences grow more and more demanding.

**The Implementers:**

Everyone in the organization cares about the overall mission and how it impacts the intended beneficiaries. However, the Implementers are the most closely connected group of all to the day-to-day operations in the field. So much so that they be disconnected from the financial data, analysis, decisions, and reporting taking place. And if they are not, they may wish they were since they see the greatest impact they can have is working with people, not numbers. In many ways, they wish that their job would stop getting in the way of their work.

**The Donors:**

Restricted or unrestricted, time-based or project-focused, the Donors want to support the organization in ways which leverage their gifts for the greatest impact. Some recognize the difficulty in the very work they are supporting and put their faith in the organization and its talent to do what they see fit with their gifts. Others are more involved, believing that while their support is given, trust is earned. But all want to see the same thing, overall success.
Looking at how each persona experiences the flow of financial information throughout The Carter Center can help uncover particular areas worth intervening. Department/program-specific teams selected the personas and identified journeys most relevant to them so as to share their unique perspective of the current issues. They plotted these journeys on a map showing which stages were high points (i.e. enjoyable, easy, effective) and low points (i.e. frustrating, difficult, ineffective) for their selected persona(s).

**IDENTIFIED JOURNEYS:**

- ANNUAL BUDGETING TO FISCAL REPORTING
- PROPOSAL TO DONOR REPORTING
The reporting stage of this journey is the most notable as many different personas struggle to meet particular donor reporting demands (e.g., activity-based expenses) using the information available to them. And while the Collector and Analyst are less affected by the earlier stages, the Communicator bears more of the burden in initially preparing/scoping projects and monitoring them. Still neither of the personas were shown as experiencing any high points throughout their journeys.

Communicators are shown to have different experiences depending on their program in the Preparation stage.
Here the experiences of personas differ due to their inclusion (or exclusion) from certain stages in the journey, as well as the effort each stage requires of them. For example, again we see a notable low point around reporting for Collectors, Implementers, and Analysts whereas this stage is more or less neutral for Decision Makers.
PART 2:
REFRAMING KNOWN ISSUES AS OPPORTUNITIES
Through a How might we (HMW) question one can reframe observed problems and painpoints into possibilities. Reassembled into multi-departmental/program groups, team members took turns sharing issues they observed with their selected journey and persona(s) while their other team mates listened attentively, turning the issues they heard into solution-generating questions. The highlighted questions are the ones teams selected to generate their preliminary Dreams.

**TEAM 1**

**Better manage costs, including activities, through better information that helps us do our job better?**

**Structure information with sufficient detail to be able to answer questions consistently and quickly?**

*Improve forecasting expenditures on time?*

*Get monthly financials quicker?*

*Clarify who is responsible for what?*

*Support each other’s work?*

*Tell a story with data?*

*Tie systems together?*

*Get dev/fin/programs to collaborate more efficiently?*

*Make things more transparent?*

*Avoid overburdening field staff but better manage performance?*

*Have more usable dynamic reports + better analytics?*

*Enable financial ownership in all positions?*

*Make TCC + donor budget fit better?*

*Sync systems with each other (GP, QB, Excel)?*

**TEAM 2**

**Disseminate information to implementers concisely, accurately, and in a timely manner?**

**Make the state of collaboration visible?**

*Set expectations?*

*Get info to implementers?*

*Have a more consistent stream of communication/information?*

*Get needed/necessary info to implementers in concise, accurate, and timely ways?*

*Close the gap between information that is lost between the field + HQ?*

*Measure success?*

*Understand the perspective of what is happening in the field?*

*Create an organized structure for making decisions without creating blame?*

*Empower the implementer and marry our financial needs too?*

*Avoid disconnection?*

*Share accountability across roles?*

*Improve financial reporting?*

*Create understanding of the context on the ground?*

*Better align goals between Field + HQ?*

*Define roles and responsibilities?*

*Defend implementers when things are out of control?*

*Put our mission and the person we are trying to help more in the forefront?*

**TEAM 3**

**Create a system that is simple and easy to use, allowing for flexible inputs that provides clear/actionable information, integrated with other systems and sources (e.g. donor reports + budget)?**

**Link Field + HQ financial system, management, goals/metrics in a singular system?**

**Reduce staff burnout and improve the quality of work life?**

**Better stagger/coordinate deadlines?**

**Better prevent burnout?**

**Improve budgeting process (activity reporting) and correct disconnect?**

**Provide a fluid budgeting system to match various donors?**

**Create a more positive/supportive work environment?**

**Better manage workloads?**

**Help project management?**
HOW MIGHT WE...?

TEAM 4

Report in a user friendly dashboard?
Better provide timely actuals + forecasting?
Communicate actuals vs forecasting needs/results between Field Offices + HQ?
Report back the impact made?
Have current/real-time info?
Track how funds are spent + where more is needed?
Clarity efficiency decision process?
Express rationale for specific need?
Provide understanding of who approves/makes decisions?
Eliminate redundant data requests?
Provide clear guidance for budgeting?
Get money to the field efficiently?
Improve communication between programs/people in the field and at HQ?

TEAM 5

Encourage implementers in defining + clarifying outcomes?
Better track the activities, expenses, and outputs?
Support financial info collection in the field?
Include implementers in grant management process?
Communicate challenges better to donors + Atlanta?
Better communicate obstacles and how they problem solve?
Address diverse literacy of participants in reporting requirements?
Balance priorities of ASAP requests from HQ?
Deal with aggressive time limits?
Create realistic reporting timelines?
Explain budget process?
Clearly define reporting requirements?
Create space/understand challenges?
Improve and align financial reporting systems with donors?
PART 3:
EXPLORING PRELIMINARY SOLUTIONS
FIRST ROUND DREAMS

After sorting, categorizing, and eventually voting on their HMW questions, teams whittled their way down to 3 primary questions. Each team then used their own set of three questions to generate potential solutions to the issues they wanted to address.

- **Single source** of reliable, consistent data
- **Integrated financial planning analysis + reporting system** that can provide timely and accurate actuals, as well as better forecasting
- **A way to structure information** with sufficient detail to be able to answer questions consistently and quickly. This would add dimension to coding transactions with the ability to change dimension quickly.
- **Cloud access to information for everyone.** This is a network that incorporates all needs, programs, and departments.
- **A user-specific/personalized dashboard** with a view of integrated program-indicators + performance that allows 2-way input + outputs for data entry and analytics.
- **Focus on human capital through trainings, support, supervision, communication, and policies** to increase knowledge transfer, reduce staff burnout, and improve the quality of work life.
- **An inclusive and iterative process** to engage implementers in program design, as well as a system to capture, report, and share outcomes/success.

**Create a system that is flexible, simple, and easy to use** that provides clear/actionable info and is integrated with other systems/sources.

- **A system where we can track indicators + outputs against activities + input costs** to provide a more efficient process of connecting expenses/activities to program outcomes.
- **Utilize technology (where available) to communicate between Field Offices + HQ for real-time info, projections, and needs.**
- **A collaboration dashboard** to make the perceptions of collaboration visible by highlighting challenges and driving new behaviors.
- **Collective ownership of both financial management + project outcomes** to build transparency + trust through a more collaborative, supportive work culture where duties are divided fairly and efficiently.

**Link Field + HQ financial systems, management, goals/metrics in a singular system.**
Ranking preliminary Dreams by effort and impact revealed just how big teams were thinking. Going after the highest impact projects resulted mainly in mid-to-high effort solutions. Still, this meant we were on the right track to begin filtering down and grounding these Dreams in reality.
PART 4:
DREAMING TOGETHER
With 5 teams, we came up with 5 dreams, but don’t let the math fool you. There was far more alignment around the need for an integrated system. These distinct dreams allowed some teams to explore that system as a whole and other teams to explore particularities of that system, such as how it might affect the people, processes, and technology necessary.

When teams talked about systems, they meant the combination of people, processes, and technology organized around certain goals. These are the people necessary to make the system function. These are processes which support defining, refining, and achieving specified outcomes. These are the capabilities that are required to support people and their processes in achieving their goals.
The Dream

Our dream is to have a flexible, responsive, timely system that facilitates decision-making + change management based on accurate and sufficient information.

Value Proposition

“Our vision for a people, process, and technology solution helps implementers + analysts who want to take advantage of opportunities/manage change by comparing real spending budgets/donor obligations and understanding trade-offs in different scenarios”

Benefit for The Carter Center

With this, we can make fact-based, real-time discussions that increase the effectiveness + efficiency of our work.
SEIZE THE MOMENT
A FLEXIBLE, RESPONSIVE, TIMELY SYSTEM

Who’s necessary for the success of this dream?

Development
Finance (HQ + Field)
Program (HQ + Field)
Senior Management

Which processes exist /are needed to support this dream?

Existing
• Budgeting
• Forecasting
• Donor “mapping”
• Some categories
• Financial reports

Needed:
• Integrating forecasts, Budgets
• Integrating acct. systems
• Smart categories
• Spending according to activities/locations

BENEFITS
• Everyone sees the same data
• Programs save time + can get to decision making quicker
• We can measure donor funding
• We can manage costs
• Fact-based, real-time decision making

OPPORTUNITIES
• Programs can react to opportunities
• Possibly reduce need for organization’s funds
• Become more attractive to donors
• Possibly automate approvals “kill the memo”

RISKS
• Requires staff training to get data right the first time

WHY MIGHT IT FAIL
• How can we align approvals and decision making + ability for success?
• Requires culture change + trust
• Big changes required – How do we break the project into manageable chunks?

What features would need to exist to support this dream?

• Understanding existing obligations
• Enables scenario planning
• Shared (cloud) w/Offline capabilities
• Clarity on final v. draft
• Flexible architecture
• “Time-aware”
• Sensitive to activity
• Accessible, usable for everyone
The Dream

United for Impact is a multi-pronged approach that better aligns staff capabilities, program policies, and available technologies to define, track, and evolve organizational roles and responsibilities.

Value Proposition

“Our dream, United for Impact, helps all staff who want to maximize program impact by clarifying roles, responsibilities, and processes in a way that reduces staff suffering and building hope so that we may increase morale + program effectiveness throughout The Carter Center.”

Benefit for The Carter Center

TCC will experience an overall boost to the effectiveness of its employees. The people that come to TCC for its mission, will stay (reduce turnover) because their job responsibilities reflect, grow, and change with the work that must be done to make an impact.
Everyone is necessary for success
Defined roles for human resources

Needed:
- Training
- Resources + time reallocation,
- Human resources inventory
- Structure to track + monitor success
- Ability to track human resources, programs, and finances

Who’s necessary for the success of this dream?
Everyone is necessary for success
Defined roles for human resources

Which processes exist /are needed to support this dream?
Needed:
- Training
- Resources + time reallocation,
- Human resources inventory

What features would need to exist to support this dream?
- Structure to track + monitor success
- Ability to track human resources, programs, and finances

BENEFITS
• Planning with focus on resources needed ($, staff/technical)
• Inventory of current roles + responsibilities (expertise, think outside of current team structure)

OPPORTUNITIES
• Training
• Overload problem
• Less stress
• Reduce manual process

RISKS
• Consistent titles
• Defined Roles

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER
UNITED FOR IMPACT
COMMUNICATION FLOWS RIGHT
COORDINATION & COOPERATION
GREAT OUTCOME
The Dream

Our dream is to use KPI dashboards to measure the people, technology, and process that impacts TCC’s mission.

Value Proposition

“Our dream, Carter United helps everyone that does business w/TCC who want to assist in waging peace, fighting disease, and building hope by not duplicating the effective effort of others.”

Benefit for The Carter Center

TCC will have the capacity to provide qualitative indicators of success that can be shared internally + externally to increase employee morale and attractiveness to outside partners.
Who's necessary for the success of this dream?
- Internal parties
- External parties

Which processes exist / are needed to support this dream?

**Existing**
There are no uniform processes currently in place

**Needed:**
Define key performance questions in order to diagnose the symptoms of sickness in the organization

What features would need to exist to support this dream?

Interviews with staff through pen/paper, apps, surveys, etc.
The Dream
A system that provides a user-specific view of the information that users need to know where they currently stand in order to inform decision-making. The dashboard includes financial as well as programmatic information.

Value Proposition
“Our Dashboard Day Planner (DDP) helps implementers primarily and all TCC staff who want to have access to timely, dynamic, and accurate info by decreasing duplication of effort and increasing our ability to make informed decisions.”

Benefit for The Carter Center
Our dream will enable adaptive management, provide a detailed view of projects for those focused on that area and high-level view for decision-makers.
Who's necessary for the success of this dream?

- Data collectors
- Program + finance staff to provide raw data
- Managers at each level to determine the most important measures + enforce these measures / create accountability
- Quality control mechanism (ensure good data)

Which processes exist / are needed to support this dream?

Existing:
- Health + some Peace have KPIs
- Programs have Quickbooks (current $ info) + GP
- ELMO/NEMO
- Raiser’s Edge

Needed:
- Activity-based budgeting
- Performance management structure
- Collaboration between different functions and levels

What features would need to exist to support this dream?

- Display only the most essential information on the main dashboard, but have the ability to run queries for more specific information, or for historical data
- Dynamic views that you can adapt and customize
- Trend surfacing (“Did you know you’re over budget on X?”)
- Ability to add in committed expenses
- Scenario planning/draft mode to explore potential changes w/o altering current info
The Dream
A system that works for all where collective work results in collective impact + where people have info to make authorized decisions.

Value Proposition
"Our collective impact system helps all roles and personas at TCC who want to gather information, share data, and make informed decisions by democratizing data and reducing barriers to communication and allow collaboration through all phases of programming from design to reviewing outcomes."

Benefit for The Carter Center
Program ownership, transparency, timely relevant decisions that lead to + amplify impact.
COLLECTIVE IMPACT
A SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Who’s necessary for the success of this dream?

- Senior Leadership
- Program Leadership
- Finance, Development, DM+E
- Field Voice

Which processes exist /are needed to support this dream?

**Existing**
- Some people/positions within the chain
- Some policies
- Some feedback processes
- The laser effect

**Needed:**
- Accountability
- Uniform practices
- Democratization of info
- Changes in practices like receipts
- Clear Roles + Responsibilities

What features would need to exist to support this dream?

- Unified/linked system to store key info (both financial + programmatic)
- Real time access
- Mobile inputs
- On + Offline access with auto-update

BENEFITS

- More timely access to financial and programmatic info
- Visualize progress towards program indicators
- Clear image of budget vs. actuals, remaining balance
- Enable adaptive management

OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore cost-effectiveness metrics—not just looking at how much we’ve spent or how much we’ve achieved, but how cost-effective our efforts are
- Establish a COE in one of the field offices that can pilot system and initiate improvements

RISKS

- Data overload + burden of data collection (need to focus on “must-haves” vs. “nice to know’s”
- Assumimg more information is better information
- Too expensive (in terms of time + money)

WHY MIGHT IT FAIL

- Assuming more information is better information
- Too expensive (in terms of time + money)
ONE DREAM

AND NEXT STEPS
Parts of the Whole: An integrated system was at the foundation of every Dream that participants co-created. While individual teams focused on different facets of those Dreams, each represented parts of a greater whole. An integrated system at The Carter Center will certainly require a holistic approach that considers the people, processes, and technology involved.
NEXT STEPS

June '19
ADVANCE TO DESIGN PHASE DECISION

August '19
BEGIN DESIGN PHASE

November '19
DESIGN APPROVED

January '20
IMPLEMENTATION DECISION

February '20
IMPLEMENTATION KICK OFF