



REIMAGINING SOCIAL CHANGE

# Collective Impact Feasibility Framework

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# Collective impact is not the solution to every social problem

The Collective Impact Feasibility framework offers a **guide to help a group of stakeholders assess whether or not collective impact is the right approach** to address the specific social problem in their community\*. This framework is most helpful **before** you invest in a collective impact effort by assessing the landscape of actors, the scale and complexity of the social problem you want to address, and the readiness of local stakeholders for collaboration.

## *Instructions*

- If considering a collective impact approach, **convene a diverse group of local stakeholders** to conduct this feasibility assessment.
- **Facilitate discussions** with local stakeholders using the four (4) questions as guides. Use data, stakeholder perspectives, system maps, and other tools to help local stakeholders assess each question.
- **Communicate** the results of your assessment to the wider community when possible to rally support for future initiatives.

## *Key Considerations*

- The **individual community context** should be taken into consideration when assessing each of the questions. Rarely will answers be as easy as “yes and no.” However, this framework helps you to understand opportunity areas for investment to support a collaborative process like collective impact.
- If a community finds that collective impact is **not appropriate**, it means the nature of the problem best lends itself to **an alternative solution or approach**. By better understanding the nature of the problem you want to solve, you can make better use of the community’s resources.
- If a community finds that the local stakeholders are **not ready** for collective impact, the framework offers tips on how to build readiness for cross-sector collaboration over time.

\* This could apply to different geographic boundaries (e.g., neighborhood, city, county, state, province, national, or international).

# Collective Impact Feasibility Framework

## 1 Which specific social problem should we focus on in this community?

Assess the specific social problem you want to address by selecting the social problem that allows you to...

- ...dramatically improve social outcomes
- ...take advantage of recent changes in the landscape (e.g., policy changes)
- ...urgently respond to a community need.

Select social problem to focus on.

## 2 Are there multiple actors in the system who can influence this social problem?

If yes, consider collaborative approach to solve social problem.

If no, consider programmatic solution and/or capacity building.

## 3 If yes, is collective impact the most appropriate solution for solving this social problem in this community?

Complexity of the social problem

Scale of the social problem

Is the system fragmented, disconnected, and broken?

If yes, do multiple sectors need to work together to address the issue?

Are the majority of end-users in that system affected by this social problem?

If no, consider a programmatic solution.

In complex problems,...

- ...no one actor alone can solve the problem.
- ...there are gaps and silos in the system.
- ...there is lack of coordination among actors.
- ...there is a need for new policies or significant policy change.
- ...there is need for innovation or new solutions.

## 4 If yes, is this community ready for cross-sector collaboration?

Are there influential champions who can provide local leadership?

+

Do financial resources exist to support **collaboration** for at least 12 months?

+

Is there a history of collaboration in the local community?

+

Is there urgency for change on this issue?

If no, focus on recruiting local champions who are passionate about the issue.

If no, focus on building new resources or realigning current resources to support a collaborative effort.

If no, support efforts that build relationships and trust between local stakeholders over time.

If no, work with local champions to bring visibility to the issue over time.

# Glossary of terms

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**A community** is a group of people living in the same place. You can define communities at different geographic scales: neighborhood, city, county, province, state, nation, or international.

**Stakeholders** are individuals or organizations with the ability to influence the social issue. They may represent the public, private, nonprofit, or philanthropic sectors, or the population targeted for change.

**A system** is the group of interdependent actors and factors, both formal and informal, forming a complex social problem. No one person or organization has the ability to influence the entire system, but working together, the group can move toward systems change.

**A sector** is a group of organizational actors that are similar in a society, e.g., philanthropy, business, government, nonprofits, etc.

# Contact information

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For more information on FSG's collective impact services, visit [www.fsg.org](http://www.fsg.org) or contact Fay Hanleybrown at [fay.hanleybrown@fsg.org](mailto:fay.hanleybrown@fsg.org).