



COLLABORATIVE FORCE

Empowering 10 to 19

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10to19
DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE



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Dasra meaning 'enlightened giving' in Sanskrit, is a pioneering strategic philanthropic organization that aims to transform India where a billion thrive with dignity and equity. Since its inception in 1999, Dasra has accelerated social change by driving collaborative action through powerful partnerships among a trust-based network of stakeholders (corporates, foundations, families, non-profits, social businesses, government and media). Over the years, Dasra has deepened social impact in focused fields that include adolescents, urban sanitation and governance and has built social capital by leading a strategic philanthropy movement in the country. For more information, visit:

www.dasra.org

Foreword



Across the globe, we face big challenges such as climate change, gender parity, access to clean water and affordable housing. These issues impact economic growth and security, and can't be solved just by philanthropy or the public sector alone.

At Bank of America, our business strategy is to connect private capital with the innovative ideas that are seeking to tackle these challenges - all while generating a strong return for our investors. This strategy grows our business responsibly while also helping us drive social and economic progress.

In India, we have focused our advocacy on helping millions of adolescents break the cycle of poverty. Majority of India's 250 million adolescents lack access to basic sanitation, education and skills training. The impact of this on their future - and on their communities - is far-reaching. Research shows 53% of adolescent girls in India do not enroll in secondary schools; the country ranks first in adolescent pregnancies; and 44.7% of males aged 15 to 19 believe wife-beating is justified.

Our latest research project discusses the advantages of and outcomes pursued by 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative, a multi-stakeholder platform that unites donors, the government and nonprofits. The report suggests that if properly structured and adequately resourced, collaboratives have the potential to produce results with a multiplier effect and play a vital role in advancing India's development agenda. This comprehensive approach to partnership and capacity-building puts nonprofits on a stronger footing to deliver well-coordinated and impactful solutions to the challenges facing adolescents, and specifically adolescent girls today.

Previously, we supported two research projects with Dasra focused on the development and economic mobility of adolescent girls. Dignity for Her: Empowering India's adolescent girls through improved sanitation and hygiene, looked at the transformative power of addressing basic needs and featured eight nonprofits doing great work in this space. Best Foot Forward: Enhancing the employability of India's adolescent girls, moved the conversation forward with a look at 10 nonprofits helping adolescent girls acquire technical and soft skills for employability. Both studies laid the groundwork for other donors to collaborate for the benefit of the critical cohort of adolescent girls in India.

We hope, our research driven strategy, will contribute to multi-sector efforts in driving economic and social progress in India, especially for millions of disadvantaged young women.

We invite you to join us in this effort and play a role in helping our communities thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kaku Nakhate'. The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal line underneath the name.

Kaku Nakhate
President and Country Head,
Bank of America, India

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Introduction

Today, India is home to about 120 million adolescent girls, an astounding number of whom are still restrained by poor nutrition and health, lack of complete and quality education, early marriage, early and repeat pregnancies, little agency and a compromised potential. If this picture does not change drastically, India will miss out on the unique opportunity of leveraging its greatest advantage globally – its demographic dividend. This means that the country needs to act urgently, comprehensively and at scale to meaningfully include adolescent girls in its growth narrative.

Needless to say, such a complex and ambitious agenda cannot be addressed alone. It needs urgent and formal collaboration between stakeholders, spanning business, government and civil society. However, bringing about such collaboration is no easy task, and agreeing to work together is no guarantee of success. Highlighting the significance of a collaborative approach to address the issues surrounding India's adolescents, this report goes a step further to share actionable insights on designing and facilitating a large-scale multi-stakeholder collaborative,^a leveraging Dasra's experience of laying the foundation for 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative, with key funders and non-profit partners.

This is not a recipe book – each collaborative will have its own unique agenda and dynamics required to leverage the strengths of each stakeholder and ensure effective, collaborative action. Instead, the report outlines the building blocks that should be considered during the formative stages of a collaborative. It is particularly addressed to anyone responsible for conceptualizing, leading or facilitating a large-scale multi-stakeholder collaborative, but will be equally useful for those funding or implementing within a collaborative, as well as for those who are still at the stage of exploring models and contemplating whether a collaborative is the best way forward.

Chapter 1 discusses the state of adolescents in India, highlighting the urgent need to invest in this population and adopt a collaborative approach in doing so. Chapter 2 traces the journey of Dasra's working model in the adolescent health and development sector, focusing on the evolution of the Dasra Girl Alliance into 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative. Chapter 3 goes on to address the construct and definition of a collaborative, along with its significance in the Indian development landscape. Chapter 4 then outlines four key phases of work involved in designing and founding a collaborative. The final chapter in this report captures key takeaways for core stakeholder groups expected in any collaborative. It brings these insights to life using the case of 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative.

^a This report defines a collaborative as a formal structure that engages multiple stakeholders into joint action towards a well-defined mission and goals. Collaboratives are time-bound initiatives that formally include select partners, with well-defined roles and responsibilities. It is often convened by a host entity that ensures effective participation of multiple partners as well as an independent identity for the collaborative.



THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF PROBLEMS SURROUNDING INDIA'S ADOLESCENTS



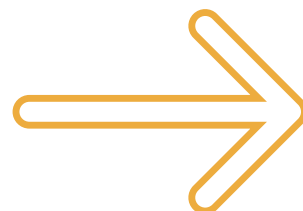
Adolescents comprise one fifth of India's population, yet are characterized as a largely invisible group.³ Girls in particular, experience heightened vulnerability during this transition to adulthood - prevailing parental and community perceptions and stringent social norms leave them powerless to assert control over their own lives and make basic life choices independently. This lack of agency manifests in key ways across the lifespan of adolescent girls:

1. LACK OF EDUCATION

2. GENDER DISCRIMINATION & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

3. EARLY MARRIAGE & PREGNANCY

4. LACK OF PRODUCTIVITY, SKILL & EMPLOYMENT



1.

Lack of education:

The lack of educational opportunities for girls affects not only their learning prospects, but also their health, earning potential and autonomy. Not staying in school is closely related to early marriage and pregnancy for adolescent girls, which has serious health consequences for both girls as well as their children. Low levels of education also means that livelihood opportunities are usually confined to the informal sector, where wages are low and social safety measures such as health insurance are lacking. This leaves them vulnerable to abuse and trafficking and also does little to help them move out of poverty.

Only **47%**
of adolescent girls
are enrolled in
secondary school ⁴

51%
of girls have dropped
out of school by the
age of 15 ⁵

2.

Gender discrimination and domestic violence:

The strongly patriarchal nature of Indian society results in deep gender discrimination, manifested in a widespread preference for sons. With families often choosing not to invest in a girl's health, education or economic wellbeing, adolescent girls face a disproportionate burden of household chores, restricted mobility, limited access to education and constant threat of physical and sexual violence.

22.5%
of ever-married adolescent
girls/women have experienced
spousal violence ⁶

3.

Early marriage & pregnancy:

Societal norms and family pressures often force girls into marriage before they reach the legal age of 18, despite existing laws and policies to prevent it. Far from improving the lives of girls, marriage forces them into situations where they can be significantly worse off than in their parents' home. They have little autonomy, face a higher burden of work both within the home and sometimes outside, and experience an increased threat of violence. Child marriage is particularly debilitating for girls' health - in addition to their psychological immaturity, child brides are not physically ready for child bearing. Adolescent girls are often malnourished, and early pregnancy leads to significant dangers for the life of the mother and child, while also increasing the likelihood of producing malnourished children.

#1
India ranks highest
in adolescent
pregnancies worldwide ⁷

26.8%
of women aged 20-24
years are married
before the age of 18 ⁸

7.9%
of women aged 15-19
years are already
mothers/pregnant ⁹

4.

Lack of productivity, skill and employment:

The limited role of girls in decision making, lack of control over their life choices and restricted mobility, prevent them from exploring their potential, discovering a world outside of their communities and establishing a positive image and sound career perspective. Due to economic pressures faced by families in India, adolescents are pushed to pursue economic activities very early on, and most often land jobs in the informal sector, with low wages, poor conditions and lack of social safety measures.

29%
of Indian women participate in the
workforce, which is far less compared
to economies like China (70%), the US
(66%) or Brazil (65%) ¹⁰

**Adolescent boys are far more
economically active than girls
in their age group ¹¹**

The Case to Invest in Adolescents



Two primary factors underpin the compelling case to direct greater resources towards empowering India's adolescents:

Investing in adolescent girls leads to an exponential return on investment:

Despite there being a disproportionate number of barriers stacked up against adolescent girls, investing in them and their well-being is shown to yield exponential returns on investment. When adolescent girls are empowered, educated and kept healthy, they become successful agents of change, drastically impacting and improving a range of issues such as: maternal mortality, child survival and gender-based violence. Investing in girls translates into better futures for women, children and families, ultimately leading to intergenerational impact.

- Girls with secondary schooling are up to 6 times less likely to be married as children than girls with little or no education ¹²
- Each additional year of schooling for girls reduces infant mortality for their offspring by up to 10%
- Delaying adolescent pregnancy could add 12% to India's GDP or USD 400 billion ¹³
- For every USD 1 spent on key interventions for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH), about USD 20 in benefits could be generated ¹⁴

The ecosystem to support adolescents is fractured:

The reasons include:

- Poor implementation of policies across various government ministries that address the specific needs of adolescents.
- Limited consistent, long-term funding allocated to address the challenges of adolescent girls as a primary beneficiary group.
- Limited focus on adolescents in non-profit program design. Since traditional funding has typically been attached to sectors (such as education or health) rather than a particular demographic group, non-profits align their programs to sectors and do not identify themselves as organizations addressing the needs of adolescents.
- Dearth of coverage in mainstream media about the issues impacting the lives of adolescent girls, and its subsequent impact on the development of the country.



“Young people are the world’s greatest untapped resource. Adolescents can be key driving forces in building a future of dignity for all.”

- Ban Ki-moon, Former UN Secretary-General

Significance of a Collaborative Approach to Address Issues Facing India's Adolescents

The needs of adolescents are extremely diverse and cut across several areas such as education, health and livelihoods. True impact will require addressing all of these needs together while keeping the adolescent at the center of it all. This complexity, coupled with the dearth of data on what works, the urgent need for non-profits to grow their skills and capacity to reach more adolescents, as well as the need for enhanced government involvement to ensure prioritization of adolescents and better implementation of existing schemes, underscores the fundamental idea that no one stakeholder is alone capable of improving the lives of India's adolescents and creating systemic change at the scale and pace that is urgently required.

Now more than ever before, there is a critical need for stakeholders as diverse as government, corporates, philanthropists and non-profits – who are already shaping and witnessing key policy, business, funding and operational shifts – to collaborate and converge on the development of a strong and sustainable ecosystem for adolescents in India.

The table below depicts the vital role of each stakeholder in building this ecosystem, highlighting the significance of collaborative action in bringing about systemic and long-lasting impact for adolescents in India.

Government

- Ensure effective implementation of progressive adolescent policies
- Adopt and scale up effective adolescent-focused models from non-profit organizations
- Create an enabling environment for the private sector to engage on issues pertaining adolescents
- Partner with funders and non-profit organizations to create viable Public Private Partnership (PPP) models

Non-profit Organizations

- Use evidence-based strategies and robust systems to work with adolescents on the ground
- Collect and disseminate data, learnings and insights with the sector at large

Foundations, Corporates, and Philanthropists

- Make decisions to support adolescents based on knowledge and evidence
- Provide long-term and collaborative funding
- Influence others to support adolescents
- Provide strategic resources beyond funding, such as expertise, technology, and managerial guidance

Academia

- Create knowledge that is open-source and integrated with practice

Media

- Provide systematic and sensitive coverage of issues and organizations related to adolescents



With a clear recognition of the need for a collaborative approach to systemically address the complex issues surrounding India's adolescents, the Dasra Adolescents Collaborative was established in 2016. What started off as the Dasra Girl Alliance in 2013 has evolved into 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative to drive outcome-led collaboration to accelerate social change for India's adolescents, and further develop the adolescent health and development sector. The following chapter traces this evolution, which will form the basis for sharing practical insights into what it takes to lay the foundation for building and effectively managing a multi-stakeholder collaborative.

DASRA GIRL ALLIANCE TO DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE: THE JOURNEY

In March 2017, Dasra launched 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative, a multi-stakeholder platform that unites funders, governments, social organizations and technical experts to reach 5 million adolescents, and move the needle on outcomes key to adolescent empowerment – marriage, pregnancy, education and agency. To illustrate the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of building and hosting this collaborative, we use Dasra’s journey in the adolescent health and development sector and a nuanced understanding of the various lessons learned along the way, that ultimately prepared Dasra to pursue a multi-stakeholder collaborative model to address the issues surrounding adolescents in India.

2008

Aiming to support the most vulnerable populations across India, Dasra recognized the need to invest in adolescent girls. Accounting for 21% of the country’s population, India has 250 million adolescents, 120 million of whom are girls.¹⁵ Yet, this population largely finds itself confined to the domestic sphere by parental and community perceptions around chastity and safety, and restricted by stringent social norms. This often translates into a lack of agency, limited control over their own lives and an inability to make their own choices and decisions. If properly invested in, this population has enormous potential to serve as agents of positive social change. However, adolescent girls in India are often unsafe, invisible and ignored.

2010

Dasra published its first research report, in partnership with Godrej Industries, titled *Girl Power: Transforming India through Educating Girls*. The report highlighted the need for philanthropic investment in girls’ education and recommended investing in select non-profits with a demonstrable record and scalable model. It marked Dasra’s first official foray into the adolescent health and development space, connecting the organization with girl-focused non-profits, and allowing it to build interest in the funder community.

Dasra introduced its first ‘giving circle’, an innovative vehicle for collaborative, long-term giving that brings together a group of philanthropists to invest in one high-potential non-profit, providing steady funding, networking and capacity building. The first Dasra Giving Circle supported Educate Girls, an education non-profit that focuses on bridging the gender and literacy gap in Rajasthan. This experience provided critical insight into the key structural factors necessary for an organization to scale effectively, proved the efficacy of a collaborative giving model, and showed that the right organization, given unrestricted funding and capacity building support, can successfully move the needle on key issues.

2008-2012

Dasra went on to research key areas impacting girls such as nutrition, sanitation and employability, and support high-impact organizations such as Magic Bus, SNEHA and Muktangan. These experiences allowed Dasra to build its database of adolescent-focused non-profits, gain expertise in adolescent health and development, and engage with funders and technical experts. They also built Dasra's interest, expertise and networks in the sector and provided two key lessons:

- **The ecosystem to support adolescent girls was fractured:**

Government policies that addressed the specific needs of adolescent girls were limited, and even where they existed, were often not effectively implemented. There was limited consistent, long-term funding allocated to address their unique challenges. Very few non-profits identified themselves as organizations addressing the needs of adolescent girls, and there was almost no coverage in mainstream media about the issues impacting the lives of adolescent girls. There was a need to create a cohesive platform that united the disparate pieces of this field, drove significant resources to adolescent-focused organizations, and motivated all stakeholders to take on a more vested interest in adolescent health and development.

- **No single stakeholder could drive significant impact:**

Moving outcomes for an issue that was neither well-known nor well-understood by stakeholders would need significant financial investment and collaborative action at a greater scale than ever before.

2013

Dasra launched the Dasra Girl Alliance (DGA) in partnership with USAID, Kiawah Trust and the PIRAMAL Foundation. DGA took a lifecycle approach, with the aim of impacting children, adolescent girls and mothers. With an initial investment of USD 14 million, DGA aimed to build a thriving ecosystem that empowered adolescent girls and improved health outcomes for mothers and children. The Alliance set out to build this field through collaborative action by raising awareness on and mainstreaming issues of adolescent girls through media and research, unlocking domestic philanthropy to fund social organizations, building social organizations so they can impact more girls, mothers and children, and fostering collaboration among key players to achieve common goals.



2013-2017

The Alliance made significant impact over the next four years:

- Directed USD 28 million to the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) sector
- Reached 3.5 million adolescent girls, children and mothers
- Published 21 research reports, including those on employability as well as sanitation and hygiene for adolescent girls, supported by Bank of America Merrill Lynch
- Funded 55 organizations
- Engaged with 145 donors
- Provided capacity building support to almost 200 organizations
- Mainstreamed the issue of adolescent girls with over 240 articles in leading Indian and international publications

2016

Through the years of the Alliance, many valuable lessons were learned – both from the field and from the structure of the Alliance – which helped Dasra plan the next phase of the Alliance’s work. Some of these lessons were:

- **The focus needs to be on adolescents** - both girls and boys: Social expectations of how men and boys are supposed to behave, along with rigid gender norms and stereotypes influencing how women are perceived in the context of a patriarchal society, directly impact behaviours and decisions related to girls’ schooling, sexual and reproductive health, marriage, mobility, and violence towards them. This is why it is vital to ensure that stakeholders interested in moving the needle on adolescent girls also include programs that address attitudes of men and boys towards girls and women.
- **Program-specific funding is limiting in its ability to drive impact**; it is essential to support non-profits for comprehensive programming: Traditional funding has been allocated towards specific activities or development areas such as health, education, or sanitation, compelling non-profits to specialize their programming to procure funding. However, the needs of adolescents are diverse and cut across several development sectors. True impact will require an approach addressing all of these needs together while keeping the adolescent at the center of it all, referred to as “comprehensive programming”. Funders should therefore be more deliberate in their funding.
- **Collaboration demands a shared vision**: For an alliance of this scale to be successful, the facilitator needs to do far more than just align efforts – such an initiative demands a shared vision. Dasra and its partners learned that the next phase of this initiative had to begin with clearer and bolder goals, and a stronger shared vision of strategy and desired outcomes, allowing for targeted, powerful impact. In addition, Dasra learned how to manage competing priorities, engage with multiple stakeholders, and align agendas.

The journey through the Alliance also helped build deep and long-term relationships with non-profits, experts and funders in the sector. These experiences helped set Dasra up to embark on the journey of a collaborative model.



2016

Dasra began thinking about the next phase of its work with adolescents. A range of factors influenced this thinking:

- **Shift in the Indian and global landscape:** The 2014 launch of the government's Rashtriya Kishor Sawasthya Karyakram scheme and the focus on youth in the 2016 Sustainable Development Goals were significant pushes to build greater consensus and awareness on the need to invest in adolescents, both within India and globally. Additionally, non-profits were beginning to carve out a specific focus on adolescents.
- **Push to bring the Alliance's discrete pieces of work together:** Through DGA, Dasra was engaged in fundraising, writing research reports focused on adolescents, forming giving circles to fund and build capacity of organizations, engaging in media partnerships, and organizing convenings to mainstream the issue and direct more resources to the field. Increasingly, there was a need to bring these pieces of work together into a cohesive unit, working towards an actionable goal.
- **The need to be more impact-driven:** Dasra recognized that the Alliance had covered significant ground by directing attention to the sector through research and media, building capacity of non-profits to scale, and fostering initial collaboration amongst diverse funders. There was now a need to be more impact-driven and move towards an outcome and evidence-led model, as well as advance knowledge on what works.
- **Realization of the value of including the government from the beginning:** Any group seeking to create large scale systemic change would need to engage with relevant government agencies in a deliberate, direct and strategic manner. To move to the next phase, drive further impact on the ground, and support scalable and sustainable interventions, Dasra saw the need to engage with the government from the beginning, as well as align with SDGs, national goals and ministry agendas.

2017

Dasra launched the 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative in March, a USD 50 million, outcome-led platform to facilitate collaborative action between various stakeholders with the goal of reaching five million adolescents and moving the needle on outcomes key to adolescent empowerment.



10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative

What is 10to19?

Launched in 2017, 10to19 is a high-impact platform that unites funders, technical experts, the government and social organizations to reach 5 million adolescents, and move the needle on outcomes key to adolescent empowerment. With a target of channeling USD 50 million across five years, the Collaborative is supported by key partners including USAID, Kiawah Trust, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Packard Foundation, and Tata Trusts.

Vision

A transformed India where adolescents thrive with dignity and equity

Mission

Drive collaborative action and create sustainable models to successfully transition adolescents to adulthood

Goals

- Develop an innovative, results-based approach to impact adolescents
- Foster and accelerate growth of the field related to adolescent health and development

Priority Outcomes

- Delay age of first pregnancy/birth
- Delay age at marriage
- Complete secondary education
- Increase agency

Key Features

- Outcome-led funding
- Innovation for comprehensive programming at scale
- Data and learning
- Normative change
- Collective action through a Community of Practice
- Government support & buy-in
- Prioritizing adolescent voices



COLLABORATIVE ACTION: BEYOND THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

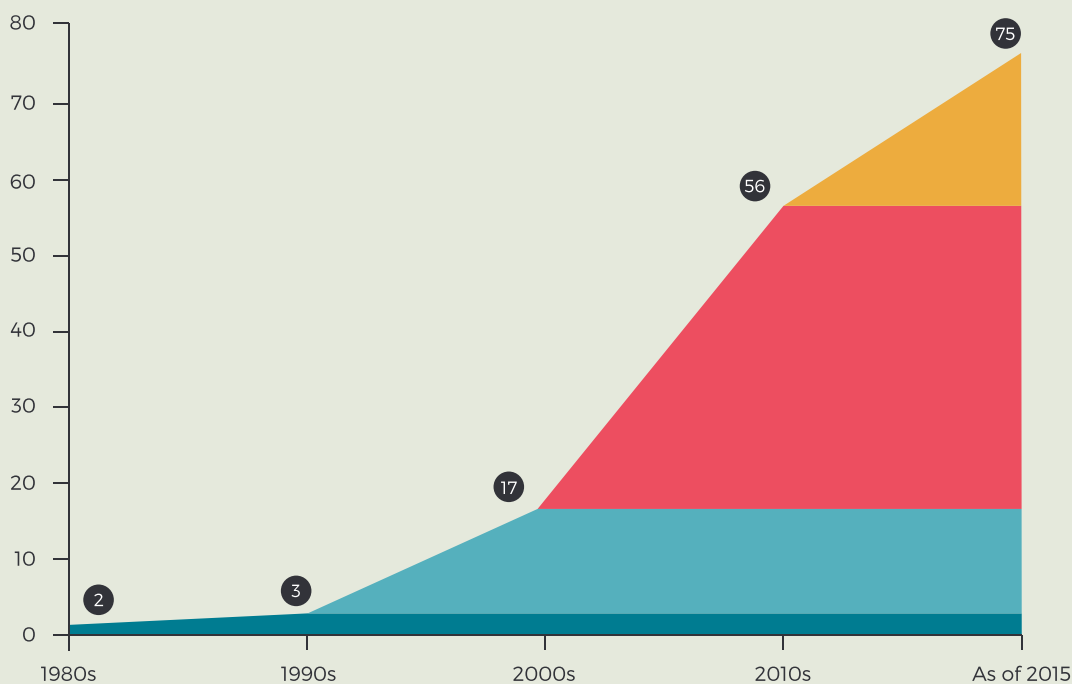
Why collaborate?

For decades, non-profits have tried to invent standalone solutions to complex social problems, in the hope that the most effective of them would grow to extend their impact the widest. This has often led them to work at odds with each other and exponentially increased the perceived resources required to make meaningful progress. The resultant slow pace and frustration have pushed stakeholders to explore collaboration as a means to solve complex development problems quickly, sustainably and at scale. This is evident from the increasing number of multi-stakeholder collaborative efforts that have been initiated globally over the last two decades, as shown to the right. And the trend is intensifying: By a conservative count, the number of such initiatives in 2015 was more than four times what it was in 2000.





→ Collective Action efforts launched by decade ¹⁶



Source: Advisory Committee discussions; World Bank Directory of programs supported by Trust Funds 2011 and 2012; GDI research; "17 Sustainable Development Goals, 17 Partnerships," United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development, 2015.

“Experiments are happening sector-wide; however, organizations do not talk to one another, so what you have are islands of excellence. The question then is – how do we bring actors and sectors together to tackle complex social problems?”

- Peter Smitham, Co-founder, Kiawah Trust

In India, the relevance of collaborative action is particularly significant. Despite rapid socio-economic progress over the last two decades, India ranks 131 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI).¹⁷ Besides poverty and inequity, gender-based inequalities linked to patriarchal social norms continue to impede India's progress on various human development indicators. Women consistently have, on average, a lower HDI value than men.¹⁸ Though sitting on what has been called a 'demographic dividend' with almost half of its population being young, India holds one of the worst records in the developing world across adolescent girls' health, safety and education

parameters.¹⁹ Unless the country can systemically correct the disadvantage girls and women are subject to in their families and communities, it cannot fully leverage its demographic dividend.²⁰ Concerted systemic change is also essential for India to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. More and more Indian organizations and leaders have begun realizing this fact and are orienting their work towards improving developmental outcomes in pursuit of the SDGs. Increasingly, experts suggest that multi-stakeholder collaborative action is imperative given the complexity and scale of India's development challenges.

“In India, individual silo efforts have limited impact. Take food fortification as an example. It involves several ministries – Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health; then there are industries, non-profits, and development agencies. The entire ecosystem needs to come together. You need all kinds of collaborations, and you need to look beyond pilots and think about scalable projects.”

- Surita Sandosham, Vice President, Programs, Synergos^b

Lesson in collaboration

Making India polio-free^c



In 2014, India's official polio-free status made global headlines.²¹ Although other developing countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria continue to be polio-endemic, India has been taken off that list despite its burgeoning population, migratory challenges, contaminated water supply, and poor infrastructure.

The story of polio's eradication in India is more than just one of science and innovation. It is a story of strong partnerships between multiple stakeholders – UN agencies (WHO and UNICEF), a national agency with global reach (US Center for Disease Control and Prevention), an international service organization (Rotary International), and philanthropy (the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) – who spearheaded the formation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) and worked closely with governments and communities towards a polio-free India. While UNICEF worked primarily on communication (posters, coordinating health workers and informing the public), WHO provided medical expertise and diagnostic services, tracked the virus, and maintained conditions for adequate supply of the vaccine. Rotary directed international attention to India's polio campaign to mobilize funds and press public officials in India to make it a national priority. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Indian government supported the collaboration, along with the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which played a key role in scaling in-country technical expertise, improving polio surveillance and helping plan, implement, and evaluate vaccination campaigns.

Additional support came from UNICEF community mobilizers, government-sponsored ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers, local WHO staff and religious leaders. At the micro level, WHO staff and UNICEF workers met regularly to exchange information, coordinate efforts, and identify challenges. These collaborative efforts enabled GPEI to penetrate dense neighbourhoods and remote villages, eradicating from India, one of the most devastating childhood diseases and creating a kind of blueprint for future public health campaigns in the country.

^b Synergos was a member organization of Bhavishya Alliance, a multi-stakeholder partnership to develop a cohesive response to child malnutrition in Maharashtra

^c Adapted from: The End of Polio in India by Esha Chhabra, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer 2012

Besides enabling systemic change, collaborative action models provide the following advantages to donors, non-profits and the overall sector being addressed.²²

 <h2>Donors</h2>	 <h2>Non-profits</h2>	 <h2>Sector</h2>
<p>Offers an effective mechanism to invest for impact at scale</p> <hr/> <p>Provides a platform or community for donors to ideate and invest together in a sector</p> <hr/> <p>Informs the decision and future grant making strategy of donors through the exchange of learnings and best practices</p> <hr/> <p>Emboldens donors to invest in innovation by allowing risk-sharing with other donors</p>	<p>Provides interface with donors and the chance to build and strengthen relationships with them</p> <hr/> <p>Helps non-profits benefit from a multitude of perspectives from donors, policymakers, industry leaders, corporates, and fellow non-profits, represented in a collaborative action model</p> <hr/> <p>Offers regular touchpoints with fellow non-profits and sector experts, allowing for ongoing feedback on programs</p> <hr/> <p>Affords structured or semi-structured capacity building opportunities to participating non-profits</p> <hr/> <p>Improves credibility and likelihood of receiving multi-year grants</p>	<p>Allows for impact to be created at a scale likely impossible for any one stakeholder to create alone</p> <hr/> <p>Helps aggregate learnings by compelling measurement and documentation of best practices and failures</p> <hr/> <p>Enables cohesion in a sector, improving the ability to engage policymakers effectively and hold them accountable against commonly agreed upon goals and targets.</p> <hr/> <p>Provides an opportunity for cross-sector collaboration which may sometimes be essential to make any progress at all</p>

Despite these stated benefits, it is important to note that collaboration is a difficult road to traverse – it needs extensive investments in time, effort and resources, and the diversity of stakeholder needs calls for a readiness to give up control and often dissolve individual agendas. Determining the relevance of a collaborative approach is therefore a vital first step. Below are some key considerations to help determine when this approach makes sense:

1. Complexity of problem

Collaborative action is appropriate for problems that need systemic change that is beyond the capacity of any one organization or sector.^{23 24}

2. Timing

A collaborative model only makes sense if the sector seems ready for collaborative action and is not already teeming with similar initiatives that one can join forces with.

3. Funding

Collaborative action models need significant upfront investment, largely for core costs, with long expected gestation periods. It is worth exploring funder appetite for such an initiative before mobilizing a collaborative action model.

Examples of collaborative action models in the Indian development sector

Collaborative action model	Description
Bhavishya Alliance	<p>The Bhavishya Alliance was launched in 2006 as a multi-stakeholder partnership to address the complex problem of child undernutrition in the state of Maharashtra (India). It was established by Unilever, UNICEF and Synergos, along with a host of local partner organizations and the state government's nutrition mission.²⁵</p>
Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)	<p>Launched in 2002 with initial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and several government bodies, GAIN works to provide financial and technical support to deliver nutritional food and products to populations at risk of malnutrition. In India, GAIN focuses on expanding food fortification initiatives by building partnerships with varied stakeholders to implement programs aimed at tackling micronutrient malnutrition.^{26,27}</p>
GAVI, the Vaccination Alliance	<p>Created in 2000, GAVI brings together public and private sectors with the shared goal of creating equal access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries. It is funded by several governments, the European Commission, as well as corporate partners and foundations including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. GAVI has been supporting the Government of India in strengthening health systems and vaccination since 2001, by providing financial and technical assistance to the country's vaccination and immunization programs.²⁸</p>
Co-Impact	<p>Founded by some of the world's leading philanthropists such as Bill and Melinda Gates, Nandan and Rohini Nilekani, Jeff Skoll, Dr. Romesh and Kathy Wadhvani, and Rockefeller Foundation, Co-Impact was launched in 2017 with the aim of changing underlying systems to deliver sustainable results. With an initial investment of USD 500 million, Co-Impact will support work across health, education, and economic opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people around the world.^{29,30}</p>
The Education Alliance	<p>The Education Alliance is a collaborative effort of the Central Square Foundation, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, Absolute Return for Kids (Ark) and Omidyar Network aimed at improving learning outcomes in India's government schools. The Alliance uses the 'Government-Partnership School' model towards this goal, facilitating partnerships between government and credible non-profit educational organizations to deliver quality education to every child in government schools.^{31,32}</p>
Early Learning Collective (ELC)	<p>Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) launched the Early Learning Collective (ELC) in 2017 with FSG as an implementation partner, given the latter's extensive work through the Program to Improve Private Early Education. The ELC aims to improve the quality of early education in affordable private schools by bringing together philanthropic foundations and CSR funding in a targeted, impactful, and sustainable manner.^{33,34}</p>
EdelGive Coalition for Education (ECE)	<p>Launched in 2016, ECE aims to enhance learning levels in language and mathematics for children in grades 1 to 7, with the goal of helping government officials access and use education data for decision making, improving classroom instruction, and strengthening school-home linkages. It is a collaborative effort between EdelGive Foundation, the Department of School Education and Sports (Government of Maharashtra), and other funding and non-profit partners. With EdelGive serving as the anchor funder, Phase I of this 5-year, USD 7 million project includes Tata Trusts and SDM Trust as funding partners, and Kaivalya Education Foundation and Cyan Prakash Foundation as implementing partners.^{35,36}</p>
National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management Alliance (NFSSM Alliance)	<p>Launched in 2016 with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the NFSSM Alliance currently comprises of 24 organizations across India working towards solutions for faecal sludge and septage management (FSSM) in Indian states and cities. The Alliance closely works with the Ministry of Urban Development in India to support its FSSM strategy.³⁷</p>

The collaborative model

A review of literature suggests that there are many ways for groups to work together to solve a large, complex problem, and collaboration can take on various forms. In general, while a formal multi-stakeholder collaborative model affords more cohesion and alignment between members than a network or alliance, it is typically not as stringent as a merger, and still allows each stakeholder to retain its identity, and explore and leverage individual strengths for the collaborative's shared goals. Based on the inspiring success stories of collaborative action in India, Dasra decided to adopt a multi-stakeholder collaborative model for the second phase of its work in adolescent health and development. Below are key features of a collaborative, as summarized from secondary research and expert interviews:

Key features of a Collaborative



Aims to aggregate social impact

With the realization that large-scale systemic problems require a systemic solution, a collaborative's objective is to aggregate resources across varied stakeholders – government, business, non-profit, philanthropy, and community – to achieve collective impact.

Adopts a shared and defined vision

Stakeholders in a collaborative have a definite understanding of why it is worthwhile for them to invest time, energy and resources in the collaborative. They are unified by a concern, adopt a shared vision and strategy to address it, and strive for the same results measured by a common framework.

Offers a cohesive structure for collaborative action

A collaborative offers a cohesive structure to pool together the strengths of stakeholders to execute the agreed upon strategy for change. This structure allows each stakeholder to retain a distinct identity but compels them to rise over power structures and individual agendas to ultimately converge towards the collaborative's own agenda.

Is facilitated by a host or backbone organization

A defining feature of a collaborative is the host or backbone organization.

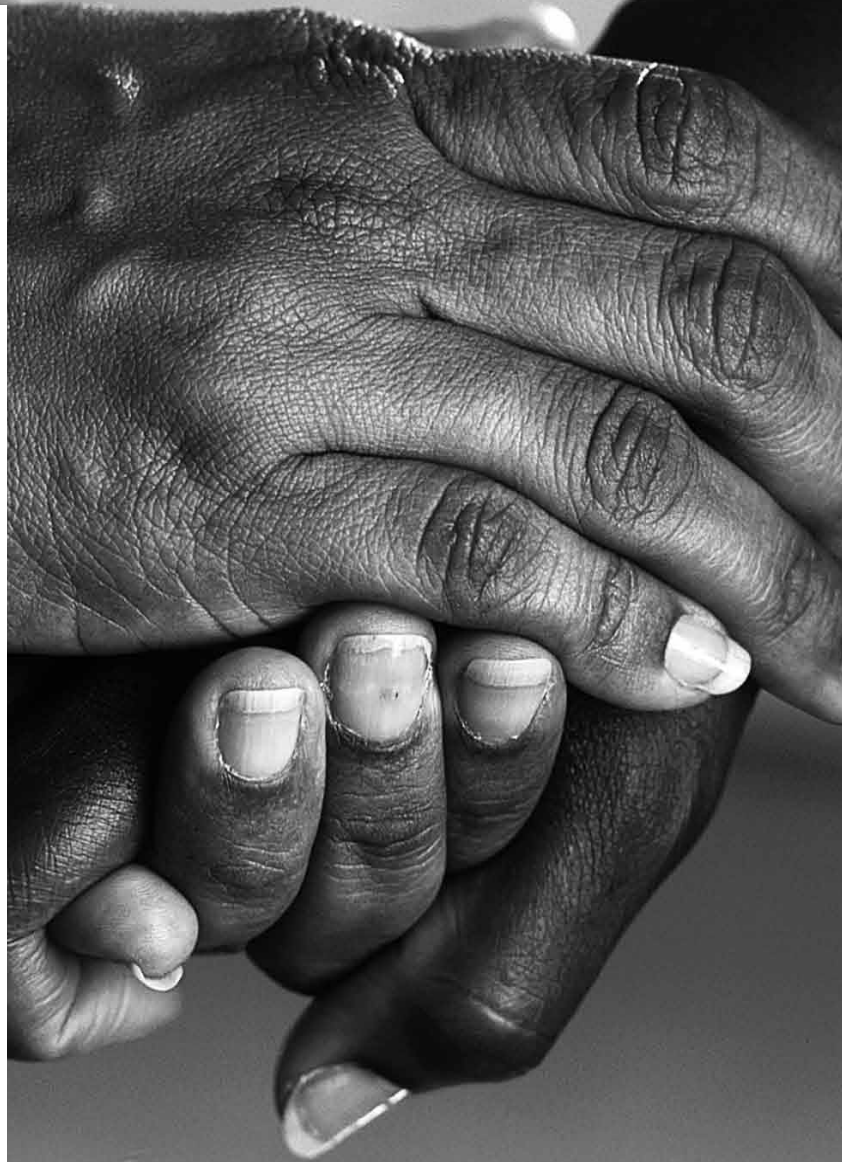
"The backbone organization can be the facilitative nerve centre of a collaboration. Its work entails highly nuanced engineering of consensus, stakeholder management, and selfless credit sharing. It helps make sure everyone knows what they can and cannot do. And it helps makes sure the collaboration's operating model is both clearly understood and put into practice."³⁸

-Rohit Menezes, The Bridgespan Group

SETTING THE STAGE FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Every collaborative is unique and will eventually follow its own path, yet success largely depends on its ability to design a suitable process that includes conceptualization, planning, and continuous adjustment and redesign. Using a model by Global Development Incubator³⁹ that has been adapted based on Dasra's experience, this chapter introduces a process roadmap that can be used to design and develop a large-scale, multi-stakeholder collaborative. The roadmap outlines four key phases involved in setting up collaboratives and key considerations to be taken into account at each step of the way.

It is important to emphasize here that in reality, the work involved in setting up a collaborative most often does not fit neatly into phases as linear or distinct from each other as suggested in this chapter. It is usually an iterative process with several aspects being planned and worked on simultaneously, and has been represented here as four distinct phases to enhance clarity and highlight the significance of each step. This roadmap must therefore be looked at as a guide or a GPS that offers direction along the complex journey of setting up a collaborative, and provides insights into effective practices along the way. It is not a recipe; rather it is a framework that must be contextualized to the environment agenda, and stakeholders that each collaborative is functioning amongst.



PHASE	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
<p>1. →</p> <p>Initiation Phase:</p> <p>Developing the Idea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the problem area and vision for change, while clarifying reasons for adopting a collaborative model • Identify the host or backbone organization • Identify goals for the collaborative • Bring on board key anchor funders
<p>2. →</p> <p>Design Phase:</p> <p>Solidifying the Approach and Seeking Alignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the strategy of the collaborative • Consult with funding and non-profit experts on the direction and strategy • Maintain an open channel for honest dialogue • Define a clear governance structure and decision-making process
<p>3. →</p> <p>Launch Phase:</p> <p>Planning for Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the right team with strong leadership • Form a well-defined operating model • Determine costs and bring on board more funding partners • Focus on branding and launch of the collaborative
<p>4. →</p> <p>Start-Up Phase:</p> <p>Setting the Collaborative in Motion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select implementing partners • Plan for monitoring and evaluation components • Continually engage all partners to grow trust, transparency and buy-in

1.

Initiation Phase:

Developing the Idea

The initiation phase presents the question, “What do you want to achieve?” and focuses on the importance of defining a specific vision and goal(s) for the collaborative. This may begin with identifying a broad area of play, narrowing the focus, and then defining the outcomes the collaborative will aim to achieve. At this stage, clarifying the relevance of a collaborative model to address the problem, and creating a space for collaboration is critical. Below are some key considerations to account for in this phase:

1. Clearly define the problem you are attempting to address, articulate a vision for change, and evaluate the relevance of a collaborative model to address it.

Developing clarity on the problem being addressed and the vision for change is the vital first step in initiating a collaborative. Various factors can help shortlist the focus area, such as an organization’s prior experience in a given sector, increasing interest or momentum in a particular field from stakeholders such as government and donors, or the scale and urgency of an issue. It is important to note that articulating a broad definition of the problem and vision for change is enough to get started; a more specific definition will emerge upon in-depth research and consultation with partners and experts.

Along with identifying the problem area and the vision for change, it is important to carefully consider whether or not a collaborative model is the best way forward. As mentioned previously, collaborative models are most relevant when a challenge is complex, and the results depend on collective action on the part of different stakeholders; not when the problem can be tackled by a single individual or organization.⁴⁰ It is also important to consider whether initiatives already exist on the same issue with similar stakeholder groups, in which case it may make more sense to align with these existing structures. It is also possible that a sector is too nascent or too satiated to garner interest or conviction from stakeholders on the benefit of a long-term, large-scale investment in that sector.⁴¹ Thinking through these criteria and being clear on whether a collaborative model is the best way forward is a critical step in ensuring partner buy-in for collaboration and high impact of the initiative.

“Not all issues are appropriate for a partnership approach. Proper issue analysis is essential to determine if others need to be involved. If you can do it alone, then do it. It is much easier to do that than to work with multiple stakeholders. With the Bhavishya Alliance, the complexity of the malnutrition issue and the need to ensure sustainability and scalability required close participation from government and other stakeholders.”

- Surita Sandosham, Vice President, Programs, Synergos

2. Determine who is best placed to ‘host’ the collaborative, based on a set of well thought-through criteria.

The host – also often called the backbone organization, driver or facilitator – is one of the most important stakeholders in a collaborative. According to FSG, a mission-driven consulting firm for large-scale social change, managing a collaborative “requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative”.⁴² Therefore, deciding which organization will play the role of the host is one of the most critical decisions to take when planning a collaborative.

By adapting FSG’s Backbone Effectiveness framework based on Dasra’s experience we have arrived at a list of six key activities that collaborative hosts are typically responsible for:⁴³

1. Guiding vision and strategy
2. Supporting aligned activities including orchestrating execution plans and ensuring accountability for delivery
3. Establishing shared measurement practices
4. Bringing on board relevant expertise
5. Advancing policy
6. Mobilizing funds

At different points in the lifecycle of a collaborative, a host will pursue a different combination of these activities to respond to internal and external needs.

Organizations must carefully consider several factors to determine if they are ready to serve as the host of a multi-stakeholder collaborative. Specifically, a host organization needs to demonstrate the following:⁴⁴

- **Strong vision:** The ideal host organization is visionary, with a strong passion for the sector and the ability to set audacious goals as well as mobilize action to deliver on these.
- **Sector knowledge and credibility:** A host organization must have an understanding of the sector as a whole, and hold credibility with the range of stakeholders acting in the space.
- **Convening and consensus-building skills:** A host organization must be able to bring together multiple stakeholders to promote dialogue and debate. It must also possess the ability to remain neutral and drive alignment between diverse and sometimes conflicting agendas. This will help build transparency and trust, ultimately increasing the likelihood of the collaborative’s success.
- **Adequate capacity and resources:** Host organizations need to be able to mobilize resources for themselves and be willing to make significant investments of time, people and funds to run the collaborative.
- **Agility and adaptability:** Organizing a multi-stakeholder collaborative is a complex task, requiring a host to be agile and ready to adapt to the changing demands of the initiative, its stakeholders and the sector.

- **Readiness to share control:** The host must be able to leave behind its individual agenda to further the broader goals of the collaborative, as well as drive other partners towards a similar ethos.

An organization must carefully consider these factors before taking on the role of hosting a multi-stakeholder collaborative. While these are some of the core skills a host should ideally possess, experts can be brought on to support or lead specific pieces, such as evaluation, communications, or technology. Nonetheless, the host must play the role of the convener and solution architect, weaving together the external expertise into the broader fabric of the collaborative.

“A host needs a really important set of basic skills – the ability to communicate, the ability to convene, the ability to provide a platform, the ability to handhold people and let them know what’s happening, while at the same time staying in the background. A host must be able to make sense of complex ideas and scenarios, and make it easier to learn from them. These skills are grossly underestimated.”

- Anand Sinha, Country Advisor,
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

3. Identify the collaborative’s goals and determine its area of play by developing a nuanced understanding of the ground realities, needs and life-stage of the sector.

The host organization must then take the broadly identified problem or sector and narrow in on specific priority areas of focus for the collaborative’s work. It must study the field to develop a nuanced understanding of the realities and needs of the sector, emerging challenges and opportunities, and the context within which the collaborative is looking to operate. Given that the needs of any sector are often heavily informed by its overall stage of maturity, it is critical to consider this while mapping the sector’s needs and determining how the collaborative fits in. Doing this will help clarify how the collaborative can add value to the sector. At this stage, determining not only what the collaborative will do, but also what it will not do, is vital. This can be done through a number of ways such as reviewing existing literature and programs, interviewing key stakeholders, conducting field visits, and engaging with experts.

It is also important to have a clear understanding of what success looks like, before being able to measure it. Research shows that in practice, most multi-stakeholder collaboratives end up with very broad, hard-to-measure goals.⁴⁵ Very few set concrete and well-

defined ones, but those that do, seem to benefit from the wide appeal that helps mobilize stakeholders.⁴⁶ However, such goals are more than a powerful marketing tool; they become a powerful mark against which to measure the collaborative’s progress.

4. Bring 1-2 key funders on board early on to support the planning of the collaborative.

Most collaboratives are conceived alongside at least one ‘anchor funder’. This is often a funder who enters early with a significant contribution over a longer period of time, and is willing to support the planning and design stages of the collaborative.⁴⁷ Their support often extends beyond financial contributions, to also providing direction and strategy.

Prospective collaboratives that lack an anchor funder during their formative phase should prioritize finding one. The comfort of having a largely unrestricted seed fund is critical to giving the collaborative time and space to fully conceptualize and build its vision and strategy. Otherwise, it runs the very real risk of continually shifting its core strategy in order to patch together sufficient funding from programmatic funders with varying agendas.⁴⁸

A collaborative’s earliest funding sources are significant for more reasons than just the immediate financial implications. Research suggests that an ideal donor for an early-stage collaborative:⁴⁹

- Structures its grant over a multi-year time period, committing to long-term funding
- Gives unrestricted funding without dominating strategy or decision-making processes
- Provides a healthy amount of seed funding with reasonable expectations
- Has a reputation that helps draw in other donors
- Is involved not only in a financial capacity but also in a strategic one, and is deeply invested in the success of the collaborative

Involving such donors from the very start can give a collaborative a significant headstart.

“You need a funder to fund the backbone and thinking that goes into planning the collaborative. You need an enlightened funder, one that has credibility and is willing to take a risk or big bet on the host organization.”

- Neera Nundy, Co-founder, Dasra

Phase 1

10to19

DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE



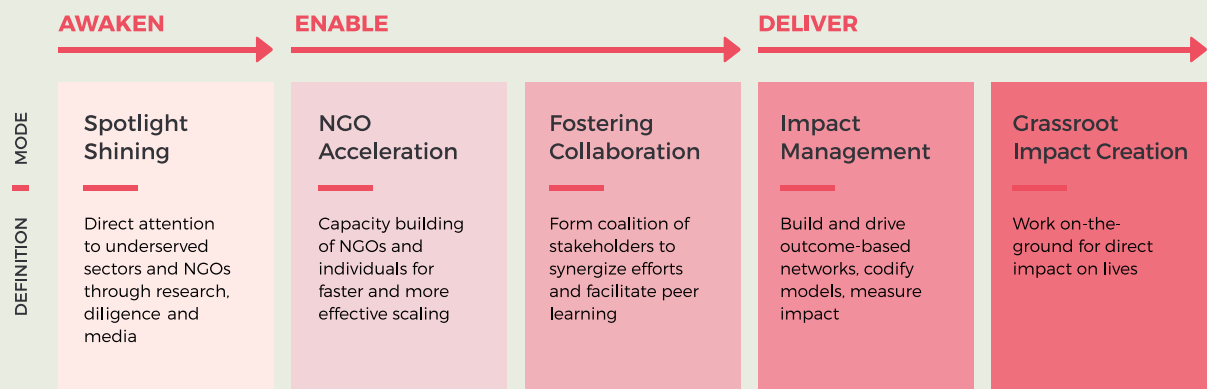
Choosing to focus on adolescents:

Dasra's early experience with the Dasra Girl Alliance provided a strong conviction for selecting India's adolescents as 10to19's area of focus. It became clear that adolescence is a pivotal life stage when educational disadvantage and gender discrimination can force girls into lives of exclusion, child marriage, early pregnancy and domestic violence. On the contrary, if girls grow into educated, healthy and empowered adults, they have tremendous potential to serve as agents of positive change; enabling not only themselves but their family and community to break out of the cycle of poverty. Another key lesson from the Dasra Girl Alliance was that social expectations and rigid gender stereotypes heavily influence how girls are perceived and directly impact behaviours and decisions related to their schooling, sexual and reproductive health, marriage, mobility, and violence. To ensure that stakeholders interested in moving the needle on adolescent girls also include programs that address attitudes of men and boys towards girls and women, 10to19 broadened its focus from adolescent girls to adolescents at large.

Pursuing a collaborative model:

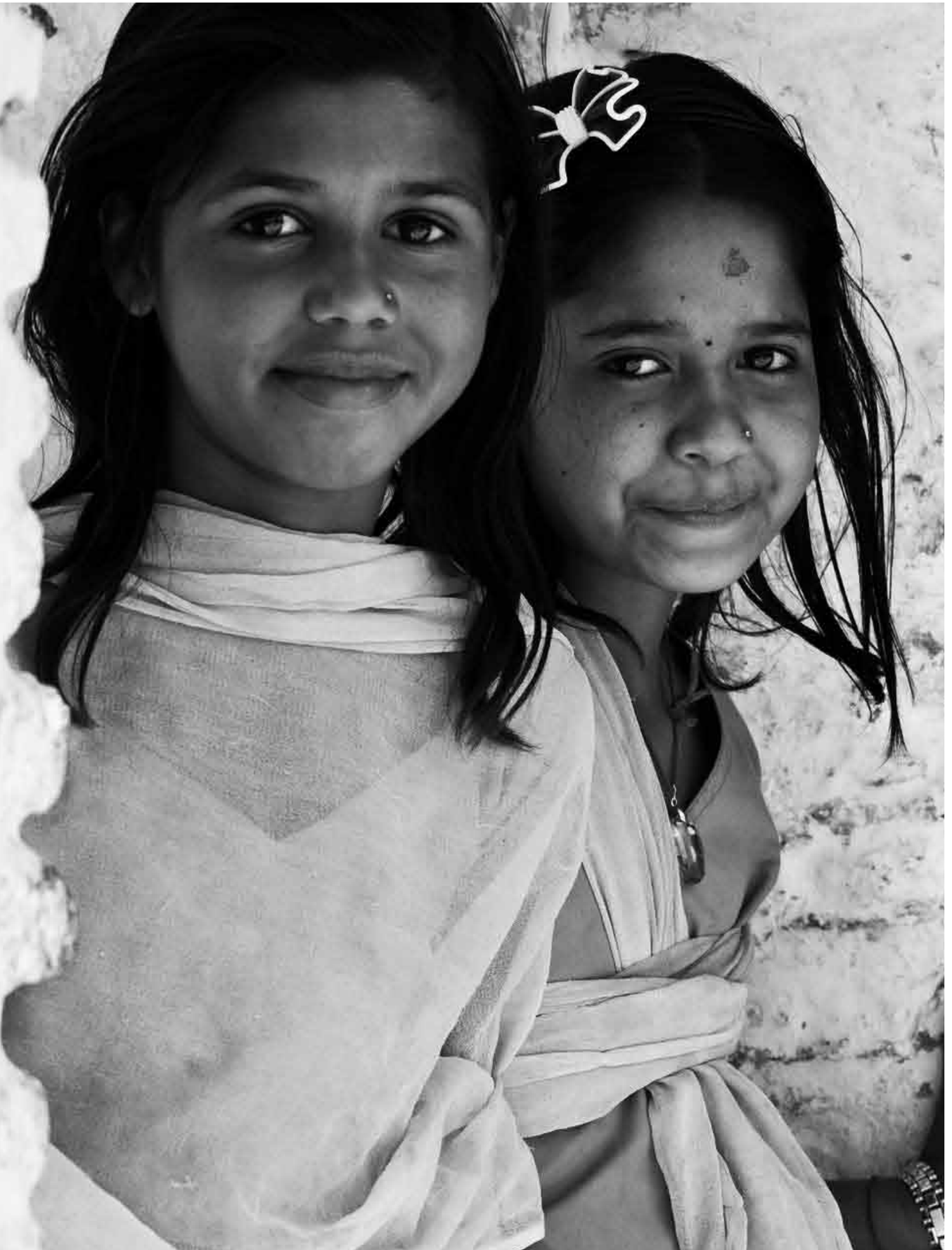
Despite the strong case to invest in adolescents, very few non-profits in India intentionally incorporate elements into their programs that specifically target this population. Long-term and consistent funding aimed at adolescents is also limited. Moreover, improving the rates of school completion, and lowering the soaring rates of early marriage and pregnancy among adolescents in India demands partnership and collaboration between the government, the private sector and development organizations. This magnitude and complexity quickly made it clear that no one organization will be able to tackle this problem alone. Additionally, recent government interest in the sector, and the foundation that the Dasra Girl Alliance had laid in driving initial donor interest in this demographic, further reinforced the relevance and timeliness of a collaborative model to improve the lives of India's adolescents.

Narrowing the focus and articulating goals: Dasra engaged with Bain & Company to outline a framework that captures common needs of any sector over the lifecycle of its development. The following five areas of need emerged as a result:



The above framework helped put the evolution and maturity stage of the adolescent health and development sector into perspective, allowing 10to19 to hone in on the specific area of play. It showed that the Dasra Girl Alliance had covered significant ground by directing attention to the sector through research and media, building capacity of non-profits to scale, and fostered a certain degree of collaboration amongst funders. There was now a need to be more impact-driven and move towards a more outcome- and evidence-led collaborative. Dasra then set out to understand the most critical areas of need for adolescents in India through secondary research, conversations with field experts, and an engagement with The Bridgespan Group. This six-month effort helped identify the four goals that 10to19 will work towards:

1. Completing secondary education
2. Delaying age of first pregnancy/birth
3. Delaying age at marriage
4. Increasing agency (self-esteem and self-efficacy)



2.

Design Phase:

Solidifying the approach and seeking alignment

Once the broad focus area is clear, collaboratives must work towards designing how they plan to go about achieving the articulated vision. This phase centers around developing the collaborative's strategy for fulfilling its mandate, while seeking buy-in, support, and alignment of expectations from stakeholders. Outlining a governance structure and decision-making process should also be made a priority at this stage. Below are some key considerations to account for in this phase:

1. Define the strategy of the collaborative, leaving sufficient room for adaptation and engaging experts along the way.

With a clearly defined area of focus, it is time to develop a clear strategy that reflects how the collaborative will achieve its articulated goals. One way of doing this is by articulating a 'theory of change'. This means answering the question: How do we think change will happen? Doing this involves revisiting the needs and gaps of the sector and understanding existing evidence-based practices and interventions that have or have not worked.

It is useful at this stage to:

- Assess 'what' pathways will lead to the chosen outcomes, and
- Identify options of 'how' these pathways can be executed

Collaboratives may consider engaging sector experts or strategy consultants to bring in additional knowledge or skill sets needed to carry out this exercise effectively. Finally, the strategic plan should leave enough room for changes and adaptations based on conversations and consultations with partners in following stages.

2. Consult with funding and non-profit experts on the direction and approach of the collaborative to ensure early buy-in and alignment.

Research shows that the earlier people are consulted and given a chance to contribute, the more likely they are to be supportive of a collaborative.⁵⁰ A shared vision, direction, and ultimately the infrastructure for a collaborative can be created more organically when core stakeholders are directly engaged through convenings or consultations. In addition, consulting stakeholders can help build trust and reduce any skepticism surrounding the collaborative being guided by the self-interest of a particular organization or individual. These early consultative groups can also feed into the collaborative's initial partner or member base, which helps signal credibility and stir interest from other stakeholders.⁵¹

While anchor funders will almost certainly be part of this consultative process, it is important to recognize that not all those involved in these early conversations will necessarily convert into key partners who become

directly involved in the collaborative's long-term work. Yet, a carefully curated approach is required to identify the right group of stakeholders for the table. It is typically most effective to have senior leaders who are decision-makers of their organization, and to seek stakeholders with a diversity of viewpoints and roles to ensure healthy tension around different perspectives.⁵²

Co-creating the vision and strategy of a collaborative is not always easy given the often differing and sometimes even conflicting interests and priorities of various stakeholders involved. In such cases, developing a sound understanding of each stakeholder's values, perspectives and interests from the outset is critical. Mapping the different issues and opportunities that each stakeholder will likely align with helps anticipate potential areas of commonality and differences between stakeholders. It is also critical to build a significant amount of flexibility into the collaborative's plans at this stage, to accommodate varying perspectives. Finally, because not everyone will be involved in every discussion, regularly updating all stakeholders on outcomes and decisions derived from the consultative process becomes very important.

"Group engagement for a large-scale collaborative can be challenging with one of the most common reasons for failure, of collective impact partnerships, being lack of alignment on the agenda. It is also important to have the right people at the table – the platform at times ends up involving the usual suspects, having the same conversation, who usually end up agreeing. In such cases, important differences regarding what's best for the sector do not surface."

- Rishi Agarwal, Managing Director, FSG

3. Maintain an open channel for honest dialogue between partners.

The criticality of providing a space where each member organization has an opportunity to make its ideas and views known, and of ensuring that such exchanges are respectful and inclusive, cannot be overemphasized. It is not uncommon for collaborative hosts to fall into efficiency traps in which they prioritize the delivery of outputs at the expense of effectively listening to individuals. In order to build trust and openness between all stakeholders involved, it is vital to create joint learning experiences to inspire regular dialogue, sharing of insights, interests, ideas and concerns; in turn building cohesiveness, a common language, and trust among the collaborative's members.⁵⁵

“We need to make each other feel secure, make partners feel welcome, make the ground fertile for others to step in with specific approaches and share knowledge. It will need work but without this, we won’t be getting the most out of the Collaborative.”

- Aparajita Gogoi, Executive Director,
Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3)

4. Establish a clear governance structure that embodies the spirit of collaboration while balancing transparency, neutrality and accountability.

A robust governance structure ensures that there is clarity on roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, transparent and unbiased decision making, and a mechanism for accountability within the collaborative.

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of partners upfront is critical to smooth decision making and functioning of a collaborative. Given that the levels of investment of partners in a collaborative may vary, it is best to be transparent and set expectations at the very outset on what roles each one can and should play, and how these fit into the larger strategy. Further, it can be valuable to identify additional partner resources, expertise and networks that can be leveraged outside the purview of the governance structure. For example, a partner with a strong relationship with the government can help the collaborative gauge the policy landscape and even help secure meetings with government bodies.

The decision making process within a collaborative is in turn closely linked with the roles and responsibilities of

partners. It usually rests on consensus building, which means that there must be alignment and buy-in from partners on key decisions, although it is important to also balance inclusiveness with efficiency.⁵⁴ Here it is helpful to categorize decisions into ‘strategic’ versus ‘tactical’ to help determine the right partners to engage in decision-making, while a larger set of partners may be consulted. In practice, it is not possible to have consensus for all decisions nor should that be necessary. Decision-making rights of partners may vary based on their roles and responsibilities in the collaborative, with some having final say over certain decisions.

Finally, when building a governance structure and plan, it is critical to think about the formation of an advisory body and frequency of convenings where key decisions will be made. In-person attendance is ideal for successful convenings and the host organization must take the lead in setting the discipline around the agenda, making sure priorities do not get derailed and the meeting’s objectives are achieved.⁵⁵ It is recommended that all partners convene at least once a year, though smaller working groups may set up a more frequent communication cadence to discuss and execute on specific pieces of the collaborative’s work.

“By clarifying roles and establishing rules of play, a clear governance structure helps simplify the sheer complexity of having a range of stakeholders executing on different priorities. It is also a way of creating ownership and a shared understanding of how the collaborative will be run as a joint effort, which is critical.”

- Shailja Mehta, Associate Director, Dasra

Phase 2

10to19
DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE



Identifying the collaborative's strategy for change:

In the final year of the Alliance, Dasra worked with strategy experts such as Dalberg Global Development Advisors, The Bridgespan Group, and Bain & Company, and consulted over 80 Indian and global experts in the field of adolescent health and development. The objective was to analyze key learnings of the Alliance and understand how best 10to19 can achieve the four desired outcomes for adolescents mentioned in Phase I.

Insights gained through this research and Dasra's experience in turn led to the identification of the following strategic approaches that 10to19 could undertake to achieve the four outcomes:

- **Placing big bets on local, scalable organizations:** Local non-profits, by virtue of being embedded in communities for years, have developed a deep understanding of their communities' unique needs, challenges and pathways to address them. 10to19 will therefore aim to address the challenges of adolescents holistically by investing in existing non-profits that have the relevant experience and expertise.
- **Aggregating impact in specific geographies:** India is an extremely diverse country – each state has its own unique context of adolescents, challenges, infrastructure and government policies. Because of this profound diversity, solutions that are successful in one state are often not transferrable to other state contexts. In addition, implementation of government schemes is often decentralized at the state level. Identifying and concentrating resources on select geographies will therefore ensure focused collective efforts, opportunities to engage with relevant state governments and ease of measuring impact.
- **Funding comprehensive programming:** Since the issues impacting adolescents are several and interconnected, successfully creating the desired outcomes requires a holistic approach on the part of non-profits. 10to19 will therefore move away from the traditional sector-specific funding approach and instead fund select non-profits to innovate and grow through comprehensive adolescent programming i.e. programming that views the adolescent as a whole, and addresses all of his/her needs across pathways, including education, health, employability and agency.
- **Focusing on outcome-led funding:** By shifting the focus to funding outcomes rather than activities, 10to19 will strive to empower non-profits to be more experimental in their approach and adopt programming that is ultimately the most effective in achieving the agreed-upon outcomes. This gives implementers the flexibility they need to continuously learn and innovate while ensuring alignment between them and their funders.
- **Focusing on measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL):** There is a need for greater evidence to define what does and does not work in the field of adolescent health and development. This needs clearly defined outcomes, strong monitoring and evaluation, and effective dissemination of learnings. MEL activities within 10to19 will be anchored in a rigorous data measurement system to understand aggregated impact, prioritize the relative effectiveness of different interventions, and generate evidence for the sector as a whole.
- **Promoting knowledge sharing and a collective voice:** Dasra will build a Community of Practice of 60+ adolescent-focused non-profits. This platform will allow non-profits to share and learn key insights, evidence, proven strategies and best practices on moving the needle on adolescent issues. It will bring together some of the largest and most influential players across the sector and, using evidence generated by its research, engage policymakers and other stakeholders to improve adolescent programming in India. Evidence-based government engagement has the potential to attract further resources to the field. This, coupled with government buy-in, will ensure long-term support for the sector.



“The Development Impact Bond (DIB) pioneered by Educate Girls, is a testament to the fact that it is possible to achieve tangible social impact through a results-based funding model. With this payment-by-results contract came a razor-sharp focus on outcomes, data-driven decision making and the flexibility to dynamically manage resources and make course-corrections in program delivery, to yield best results.”

- Safeena Husain, Founder and Executive Director, Educate Girls



Co-creating a shared approach:

Over several months, Dasra consulted key funders and non-profit leaders – through phone calls, one-on-one meetings, convenings, and workshops – with the goal of both validating 10to19’s strategy, as well as seeking additional ideas and feedback. These engagements not only helped give insight into funders’ and non-profits’ interests and priorities, but also brought clarity to the practicalities of implementing the suggested approaches on the ground. For example, a roundtable discussion with non-profits in the early stages of 10to19 helped clarify what it really means to administer a comprehensive programming approach, what the practicalities are of being able to deliver programs that contribute to all four outcome areas, and how organizations would need to gear themselves for rigorous evaluation procedures. Co-creating the approach of 10to19 with these stakeholders was therefore not only helpful – it was a vital aspect of laying its foundation.

3.

Launch Phase:

Planning for initial implementation

The launch phase begins when a collaborative is ready to publicly go live, and entails preparatory steps leading up to this milestone, including growing a team, developing an operating model, forecasting costs and building a brand. Below are some key considerations to account for in this phase:

1. Build a core team and appoint a leader who has the right skill set, believes strongly in the mission of the collaborative and is comfortable navigating ambiguity.

To lay the foundation for a collaborative's success, it is a prerequisite to identify a core team and strong leadership to champion the collaborative.⁵⁶ While a small team may already be in place to support the initiation and design phases, it is important to invest in growing this team by bringing in the right capabilities at this stage.

The leader must be an individual who strongly believes in the collaborative's mission and is ambitious enough to propose and deliver on audacious goals for the collaborative. For day-to-day success, the leader needs a combination of the following critical soft and hard skills:⁵⁷

- Entrepreneurial management including fundraising skills, project management and coordination skills
- Technical leadership including some amount of technical understanding of the sector and the experience of speaking a common language with implementing partners
- Diplomacy including public speaking skills and the ability to negotiate and drive alignment without alienating stakeholders

It is also critical that the leader cultivates a core team that is motivated to serve as the collaborative's powerhouse and complements the above skill set, with additional expertise in areas such as program management, operations, communications and monitoring and evaluation. Most importantly, the team should be able to embrace the collaborative's iterative process and be able to navigate ambiguity to endure and steer the collaborative ahead while bringing partners along.

"It is critical to have a dedicated team because you need a set of people whose priority is to make sure all the moving parts of the collaborative run smoothly. This team drives the collaborative towards its true north, constantly reiterating goals and aligning all partners towards them."

- Shailja Mehta, Associate Director, Dasra

2. Form a well-defined operating model that can help guide execution of the collaborative's strategy in a structured and result-oriented manner.

An operating model is an actionable blueprint that describes where and how the most critical work gets done in the collaborative.⁵⁸ The first step is to define the operating structure of the collaborative by mapping each relevant stakeholder and how they interact with one another to achieve functional priorities. This structure will help identify touchpoints of collaboration which are helpful in guiding stakeholder management and subsequent operational planning.

Next, collaborative partners must revisit the agreed upon strategy and determine key milestones for each year. Once milestones for the upcoming year have been decided, they should ideally remain firm, even as additional funding partners are brought on. In contrast, it is advised that multi-year milestones be revisited annually, based on the evolving position of the collaborative in the field.⁵⁹

Setting milestones is followed by sequentially listing down activities and decisions leading up to each milestone for the upcoming year. In practice, sometimes critical aspects may take precedence over planned activities, which may entail deviating from the operating plan. In such a case, the operating plan becomes a very useful tool to reorient action to the planned trajectory. Finally, as with most other significant aspects of the collaborative, the operating plan should be vetted with implementing partners to get their buy-in early on.

"Running a collaborative is a learning process. Operationally, it becomes vital for the host organization to not be too cautious, and to be nimble enough to respond quickly."

- Grethe Petersen, Director, Policy and Advocacy, "Children's" Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)

3. Forecast the costs of running a collaborative and bring on board more funding partners, leveraging existing relationships and remaining open to diverse forms of support.

While initial funding may have been sufficient to sustain the collaborative until this stage, there is a need to develop a sustainable funding strategy to cover the increasing costs of the collaborative and its work over the coming years. More often than not, member organizations have pre-existing relationships. In other instances, the host organization will need to establish new relationships. When designing a fundraising plan and approaching organizations for funding, it is

important to be wary of working with a single donor who sees the collaborative as an extension of its own programmatic arm. Having multiple donors around the table who are aligned with the vision of the collaborative and see it as bigger than what any one organization can set out to do, often helps create a balanced conversation that is less likely to be steered by the agenda of any single organization.⁶⁰

Moreover, given the often varied interests and mandates of funders, there may be diverse forms of funding support on the table – for example, support towards the costs of running the collaborative, sub grants to non-profit organizations, or funding for specific programs or initiatives of the collaborative. Being open to these diverse funding approaches can be valuable for a collaborative by helping broaden its base of work, bring on a diverse set of donors, and engage meaningfully with each of them.

A financial plan that details planned income and expenditure over the life cycle of the collaborative can be an important tool to identify the collaborative's financial needs, gaps and sustainability. It is advised to begin creating a detailed one only after having surmised through initial discussions, which funders are bought into the collaborative, and approximately how much funding they are willing to commit. Financial planning typically entails determining the various components required for the effective running of the collaborative and creating an informed, year-on-year estimate of the funds required for successful execution of these components. It is important to note that financial plans are not static and often need to evolve based on interests of newly added funding partners, or the addition or removal of budget line items as per emerging program needs.

4. Invest in creating a unique brand identity for the collaborative and launching the collaborative by means of a galvanizing event.⁶¹

While branding is constantly leveraged in the for-profit world, its use is not nearly as prevalent in the social sector. Yet it has a significant and tangible impact in:

- (i) Strengthening a collaborative's marketability and fundraising efforts by reinforcing consistent communication⁶²
- (ii) Differentiating it from other players in the sector⁶³
- (iii) Creatively engaging stakeholders and enhancing recall⁶⁴
- (iv) Ensuring a collaborative has its own voice and agency, greater than the sum of its parts.

Designing a brand identity includes elements such as developing a brand name, logo, tagline, typeface, colors, tone and vocabulary, that make up the visual

look-and-feel as well as the messaging of the brand.⁶⁵ While this can be done in-house, collaboratives may also consider engaging a specialized agency to help design the brand identity and messaging.

In addition to branding, planning for the launch of the collaborative is an important milestone. According to a report by Global Development Incubator, "leveraging or creating a galvanizing event that will help raise awareness and confer political legitimacy is critical for new multi-stakeholder initiatives."⁶⁶ A launch event not only builds credibility for the collaborative, but also creates momentum for its goals within the sector at large.



Phase 3

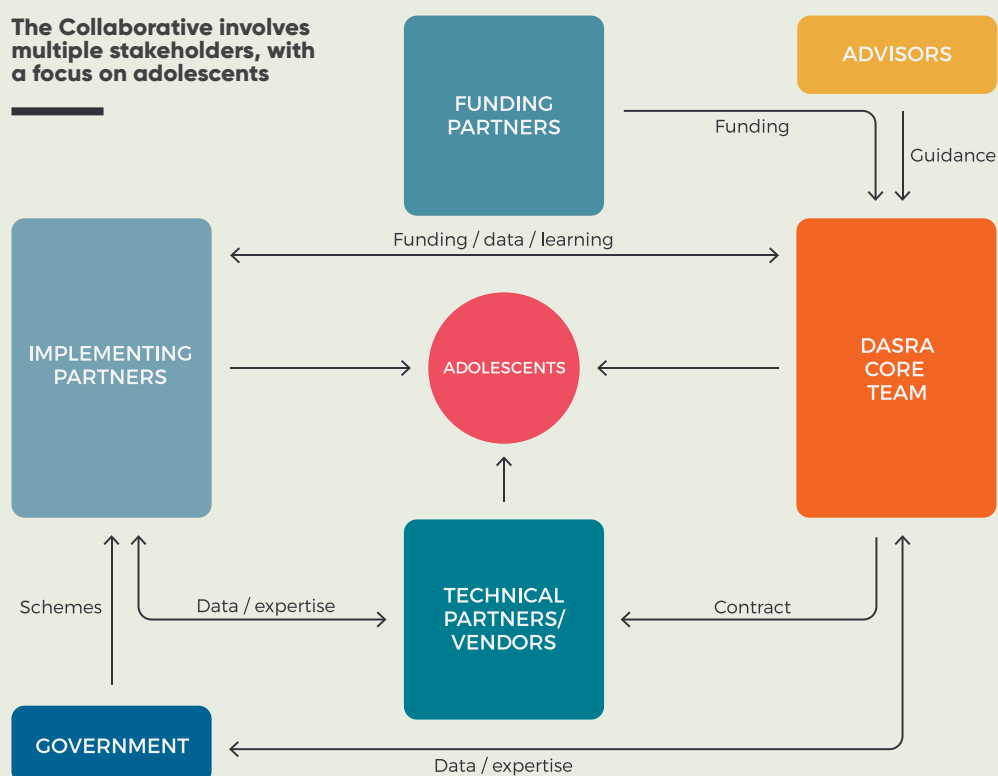
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Building an operational model:

10to19 engaged with The Bridgespan Group and Dalberg Global Development Advisors to help outline an operational model and execution plan. This involved creating a map of the various stakeholders involved in the Collaborative – including implementing partners, funders, technical partners, the host organization, and the government – defining the relationship between each one, and outlining their respective roles and responsibilities.

The first step towards this was creating a map of the various stakeholders and defining how they interact within the 10to19 ecosystem. Below is a diagrammatic representation of this map:



Additionally, the consultants helped identify key milestones for the first year of the Collaborative. These included:

- Engaging the right funding partners to cover 10to19's costs over five years.
- Bringing on board a monitoring and evaluation partner to ensure robust execution of 10to19's measurement, evaluation and learning activities.
- Selecting a non-profit portfolio that is capable of comprehensive programming to deliver on outcomes.
- Initiating building of the Community of Practice by assessing its need and role within the sector, understanding expectations of potential members, and preparing to launch it by end of the first year.

During 10to19's first year, there were several instances of deviation from the operating plan, and goals had to be revised as the Collaborative's role began emerging beyond what was originally envisioned. In many of these cases, the Collaborative had to reorient quickly to stay on track. It was therefore critical that partners were not rigid or wary of adapting along the way.



Branding the Collaborative and planning for launch:

Creating a unique name and brand identity for the Dasra Adolescents Collaborative was an important first step in catapulting the effort into a movement, and laying the ground for its impact to be greater than the sum of its parts. Dasra engaged an external agency to create a brand identity for the Collaborative, which was ultimately named 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative.

The name '10to19' and its logo are designed to express the Collaborative's spirit, purpose and determination. The name helps in immediately recognizing it as an initiative for adolescents in the 10-19 age group. The language used is gender-neutral, to convey that the Collaborative is focused on both adolescent boys and girls.

10to19 was launched in a day-long convening during the Dasra Philanthropy Week, an annual philanthropy event held in March 2017. The launch was aimed at garnering interest for this first-of-its-kind initiative in India, which brings multiple stakeholders into a collaborative to address the comprehensive needs of adolescents at scale by way of outcome-led programming. It also served as a platform to bring to the fore 10to19's key funding partners, whose endorsement of the Collaborative played a key role in building its credibility and mobilizing greater interest from the audience. Dr. Ajay Khara, Deputy Commissioner I/C (Child and Adolescent Health), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, launched the Collaborative and reinforced the need for this initiative, further legitimizing it and demonstrating buy-in of a crucial stakeholder – the government.

4.

Start-Up Phase:

Setting the collaborative in motion

The start-up phase begins when a collaborative shifts into day-to-day operations, with key projects taking off.⁶⁷ While a collaborative may undertake multiple projects in the first year based on its nature and objectives, this chapter focuses on some common priorities – including selecting non-profit partners, planning for monitoring and evaluation, and strengthening engagement with partners – that collaboratives typically execute at this stage. Below are some key considerations to account for in this phase:

1. Select implementing partners through a rigorous process, carefully setting and managing expectations along the way.

Selection of implementing partners is one of the first major activities a collaborative should undertake once it begins formal operations.^d It starts with developing a robust selection criteria and diligence methodology, followed by getting signoff from funding partners. This selection process will involve:

- (i) Gathering extensive information about organizations' programs and institutional health
- (ii) Preparing evaluation criteria to shortlist non-profits
- (iii) Visiting program sites and conducting interviews with their leadership and teams, to arrive at a final portfolio of implementing organizations for the collaborative.

While this is a lengthy and demanding process, it is critical to ensure that the implementing partners brought on board are aligned to the mission of the collaborative, and have the potential to deliver maximum impact on the ground. Both the host organization and the non-profits being evaluated should be prepared to invest a significant amount of time, and the non-profit must be prepared to receive multiple requests for documents and revised proposals. Additionally, the host organization should be prepared to provide finalist non-profits monetary or capacity building support to help them submit strong proposals. It must also keep funding partners informed at every stage of the diligence process, ensuring timely buy-in and alignment.

2. Plan the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process from the beginning, engaging the right technical partners and leveraging existing measurement systems.

As noted in FSG's Collective Impact Framework, shared measurement is the cornerstone of any collaborative effort, and is defined as "the use of a common set of measures to monitor performance, track progress towards outcomes and learn what is and is not working in the group's collective approach".⁶⁸ The report Making Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs) Work explains, "While a single organization can fund or conduct impact evaluation that speaks for a sector, an MSI can often do so in a more objective and cost-effective way that enjoys external credibility and buy-in across the industry."⁶⁹ Collaboratives should start early to identify resources required for M&E, and distinguish resources available

in-house from those that will need to be procured. They should also anticipate the learning curve of implementing organizations to engage in an intensive M&E process, and provide them with opportunities for consultation, training and on-site technical assistance.⁷⁰ In practice, it is important that the M&E framework not be prescriptive – instead, it must be co-created with implementing partners of the collaborative. This not only helps gain a deeper understanding of their programs but is also an opportunity to assess possibilities for integration with their existing measurement systems.

Finally, M&E is an evolving process, and it is key to share learnings with the collaborative partners on a regular basis, calibrating the process if needed, to make it more effective. If done well, a robust M&E process can not only support evidence-based decision-making,⁷¹ it also enables course correction and improves performance of all partners. Finally, it serves as a tool to keep partners informed, engaged and inspired about the work of the collaborative.

"We work on the issue of adolescent health, but don't know how our beneficiaries are faring on other outcomes like higher education, employability etc. It would be interesting to see how a comprehensive measurement and evaluation system can allow organizations to see the full potential of their programs and test the effect of different interventions on desired outcomes."

- Vanessa D'Souza, CEO, SNEHA

3. Continually engage all partners to grow trust, transparency and buy-in.

The host organization must appreciate the time and capabilities needed to balance the softer aspects of trust building, expectation setting and consensus building with core project activities, throughout the collaborative's lifecycle. Ensuring that all partners remain effectively engaged through well-planned and open communication, enables more productive participation and ultimately creates greater value for the collaborative as a whole. Some strategies a host organization can adopt to achieve this include:

- (i) Assign a relationship manager from the core team for every partner. This individual serves as the primary touchpoint for the partner to approach when facing challenges, seeking context or relaying feedback. Having team members develop a deep understanding of each partner's priorities, motivations, challenges and behaviours is also helpful when maneuvering diverse agendas to seek alignment.
- (ii) Constitute monthly or weekly email updates to partners, to share progress on the collaborative's activities.
- (iii) Set up periodic calls with partners to maintain a constant feedback loop to understand challenges or concerns, and help them mitigate risks early on.

Phase 4

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Selecting implementing partners:

The process of selecting implementing organizations for 10to19 spanned approximately eight months. It started with a masterlist of 1000+ organizations across India, which was shortlisted to four implementing partners in Jharkhand.

In the first stage, 1000+ non-profits were assessed on their degree of focus on the target beneficiary group – adolescents – and basic credibility. This step led to the shortlisting of close to 100 organizations. In the next stage, organizations were filtered based on statutory registrations, organizational budget and three additional criteria:

- Focus on at least one of the four outcomes targeted by 10to19
- Capability and vision of its leadership
- Demonstrated impact on the ground

The 30 shortlisted organizations were then evaluated on their institutional and programmatic strength based on:

- Strength of the organization's leadership, second-line management and management board
- Demonstrated ability to work with partners, advocate with government, scale programs, and deliver impact on the ground

Dasra then prepared assessment documents capturing details across several of the above parameters – on 14 selected organizations, and shortlisted seven that were asked to outline their organization's three-year growth plan. Using this and the above criteria, 10to19 selected four organizations to submit detailed operational plans, based on which they were selected as 10to19's first four implementing partners in the state of Jharkhand, the first state identified for implementation of 10to19's work.

Planning for monitoring and evaluation:

Early on, 10to19 saw the need to invest in developing greater evidence in the field of adolescent programming, to identify what works in helping adolescents make a successful transition to adulthood.

An early step taken towards generating and documenting this evidence was identifying a technical partner for 10to19's evaluation activities. Given that the evaluation of comprehensive programming under 10to19 is a complex exercise, the partner needed to have a significant degree of expertise in adolescent programming. To this end, Dasra engaged Shireen Jejeebhoy, a leading expert on adolescent and young people's health and development to guide the Collaborative's evaluation activities. 10to19 further constituted a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of leading evaluation experts to advise on its evaluation design and methodology.

10to19's core team, its M&E partner and its Technical Advisory Committee are currently engaged in co-creating an evaluation framework with implementing partners. The evaluation not only aims to identify the most vulnerable adolescent populations, but also to shed light on which interventions are the most effective, replicable and scalable at the state and national levels.



“It's really important to understand that if you're creating a partnership with people who have diverse interests and priorities, you have to spend a lot of time building trust. Ultimately it's about finding ways of having a shared experience where people understand each other and build a common language. If you don't spend time on this, the collaborative will not move forward.”

- Surita Sandosham, Vice President, Programs, Synergos

^d This process merits greater detailing, and Dasra aims to elaborate further on it in subsequent reports. It is summarized here as the process of laying a foundation for a collaborative cannot be complete without speaking of this step.

CONCLUSION

At a time when some of India's most pressing and complex social problems are too big to tackle alone, the promise of multi-stakeholder collaboratives is simple and powerful. If well-designed in line with the principles outlined in this report, and if adequately resourced to achieve sustainable impact at scale, collaboratives have the potential to magnify the sum of each partner's contributions, produce results beyond the reach of any single stakeholder, and play a vital role in advancing India's development agenda.⁷²

Arising from the Dasra Adolescents Collaborative's strong belief in the value of documenting and sharing its learnings with the sector at large, this report is an initial step towards not only encouraging greater adoption of and participation in multi-stakeholder collaboratives, but also towards developing a discipline around their effective set-up and management.⁷³ To this end, it captures insights for anyone responsible for leading or facilitating a large-scale, multi-stakeholder collaborative, as well as those involved in funding and participating in such an initiative. The lessons offered to each stakeholder for the founding stage of a collaborative, are several:



1.

For host organizations

- Set audacious goals for the collaborative.
- Invest time in consulting with partners and experts on the direction and strategy of the collaborative.
- Define roles, expectations and clear milestones with partners upfront.
- Take the time to build trust and cohesion among all partners, ensuring early buy-in and alignment.
- Balance inclusiveness with efficiency.
- Prepare to move forward despite ambiguity.
- Look to build a platform whose impact is more than the sum of its parts.

2.

For anchor donors

- Invest unrestricted funds to support the planning stages of the collaborative.
- Appreciate that collaboratives are expensive to run, and need long term investment of resources to strive for sustainable impact.
- Champion the collaborative, playing a strategic role and leveraging your networks, expertise, experience and other non-financial resources to enhance the success of the collaborative.
- Acknowledge the significance of non-profit partners and model an optimum equation with them for other donors to follow.

3.

For other donors

- Be prepared for long-term investment and engagement.
- Be prepared to embrace the collaborative's mission and agenda which may be distinct from your those of your institution.
- Acknowledge the collaborative as an independent entity and enable it to have agency.
- Remain flexible and open to new ideas from partners.

4.

For non-profits

- Engage with the collaborative during initial planning stages, contributing insights from the ground to help shape its direction.
- Be prepared to devote time and resources during the due diligence process.
- Leverage meetings and discussions with funders and other experts as opportunities to build and strengthen relationships within the sector.
- Account for some flexibility in programming and be open to innovative ideas from collaborative partners.
- Prepare your institution to support rigorous M&E processes of the collaborative.



WHAT NEXT ?

While the focus of this report is limited to reinforcing the significance of a collaborative model and providing a blueprint for its effective design and foundation, the key activities that are typically executed later on in the life cycle of a collaborative, such as engaging with the government and evaluating impact on the ground, will be addressed in subsequent reports.

APPENDIX

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