

COLLABORATIVE PATHWAYS

Empowering 10to19



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Foreword



From gender inequality to lack of access to education, sanitation and safe drinking water, the challenges facing India are large and complex. While non-government organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in driving the development agenda in the country, they face challenges in scaling up their capabilities in a significant and sustainable way.

This report, *Collaborative Pathways: Empowering 10to19*, makes a compelling case for developing India's social sector through a collaborative approach. The report's findings reflect what we at Bank of America have learned about helping NGOs build capacity — both in India and around the world.

The case for collaborative efforts becomes stronger, given the sheer size and scale of the challenges faced by NGOs. For example, over 250 million adolescents in India lack access to quality education, nutrition and healthcare, an issue that needs urgent attention. Hence, it is imperative that individuals, businesses, development agencies and government collaborate to develop this cohort.

This report, our third consecutive piece on collaboratives, argues that collective efforts are no longer an option, but a necessity to address such large scale problems. If designed and implemented effectively, such joint efforts can amplify each partner's contributions, produce results beyond what any single organization can deliver, and enable a systemic change.

The report suggests that by focusing on collection of data and evidence, collaboratives enable multiple stakeholders in the sector to continuously learn, adapt and improve outcomes. For a successful collaborative, its participants need to assess risk appetite, ascertain timelines, consider availability of resources and understand local sensitivities.

At Bank of America, we are guided by a common purpose of making financial lives better for communities we serve. In pursuit of this, we continue to make long-term investments in our NGO partners in India to help them shape a sustainable growth plan for themselves, improve their own financial literacy, and frame robust internal governance policies.

We also seek to encourage wider discussion and action on social issues through reports such as this. Other thematic reports supported by us include *Dignity for Her: Empowering India's Adolescent Girls through Improved Sanitation and Hygiene*; *Best Foot Forward: Enhancing the Employability of India's Adolescent Girls*; and *Count Me In: Building an Inclusive Ecosystem for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*.

We hope by reading this report, you will be encouraged to join us and other responsible companies in looking beyond 'chequebook philanthropy'. Together we can help NGOs build strong, sustainable organizations, fit to address the large-scale developmental challenges that lie ahead.

Kaku Nakhate
President and India Country Head
Bank of America



Preface



Standing at a decisive point between youth and adulthood, the needs of India's 253 million adolescents are as diverse as they are urgent, and addressing them requires coordinated, large-scale and long-term action. With a commitment to empower this vulnerable demographic and leverage them as essential agents of change to accelerate India's development, Dasra knew from the start that we could not do this alone.

In 2013, we launched the Dasra Girl Alliance in partnership with USAID, Kiawah Trust and Piramal Foundation. With an initial investment of USD 14 million, the Alliance worked to spotlight critical adolescent issues through research and media partnerships, provide high-impact nonprofits with consistent funding and capacity building support, and mobilize various stakeholders to share, learn and collaborate. Building on the learnings

of these experiences and recognizing the need to push the momentum towards measurable impact, we launched the 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative in 2017 to reach five million adolescents. Once the initial strategies were in place, we were able to begin on ground implementation in 2018, becoming a platform that unites funders, technical experts, government and nonprofits by adopting an outcome-led and cross-sectoral approach to empowering India's adolescents. In many ways, this initiative has signified the start of a bolder vision that Dasra has adopted for itself and for the sector. Most notably perhaps, the Collaborative has marked the first time that Dasra has so directly held itself accountable to achieving specific and measurable outcomes.

Designing and implementing our work towards achieving these outcomes, however, has been far from easy. Since the beginning of our implementation journey along with four nonprofit partners in Jharkhand, we have seen some great successes but also encountered several challenges, made mistakes, and even failed along the way. Through all these experiences, we have learned important lessons. While we share our learnings and insights—which have come to the fore over many months of hard work, small wins, difficulties, disappointments, course-correction and introspection along 10to19's implementation journey—our work is by no means complete. Along the journey, the Collaborative's partners have been clear about one thing: this path may be challenging, but there is no silver bullet; it is the path we need to tread on if we are to see an India where adolescents are educated, healthy, safe and celebrated.

Following the Collaborative's strong principles of documenting and sharing its learnings with the sector at large, this report is the third in a series that aims to encourage greater adoption of multi-stakeholder collaboratives and strengthen the ecosystem towards holistic and collective action. As we continue to gather learnings along the ongoing implementation journey of 10to19, we hope to document more insights on this critical aspect of multi-stakeholder collaboratives. It should be highlighted here that this report leads with the experience of 10to19 simply given the depth of insight Dasra has been able to collect through its proximity to the Collaborative's work. While we have included insights from other multi-stakeholder collaboratives as well, we wish we could have profiled their incredibly rich experiences in more detail in order to do justice to their great work and commitment to the sector.

We are ever so grateful to the partners of the 10to19 Collaborative, all of whom have been critical in our journey of building an ecosystem for adolescents in India. It is their unwavering support and strong resolve in the power of collaborative action that gives us the strength and conviction to make real our vision of a transformed India where millions of adolescents thrive with dignity and equity.

Shailja Mehta
Associate Director
10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative

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CHAPTER 1

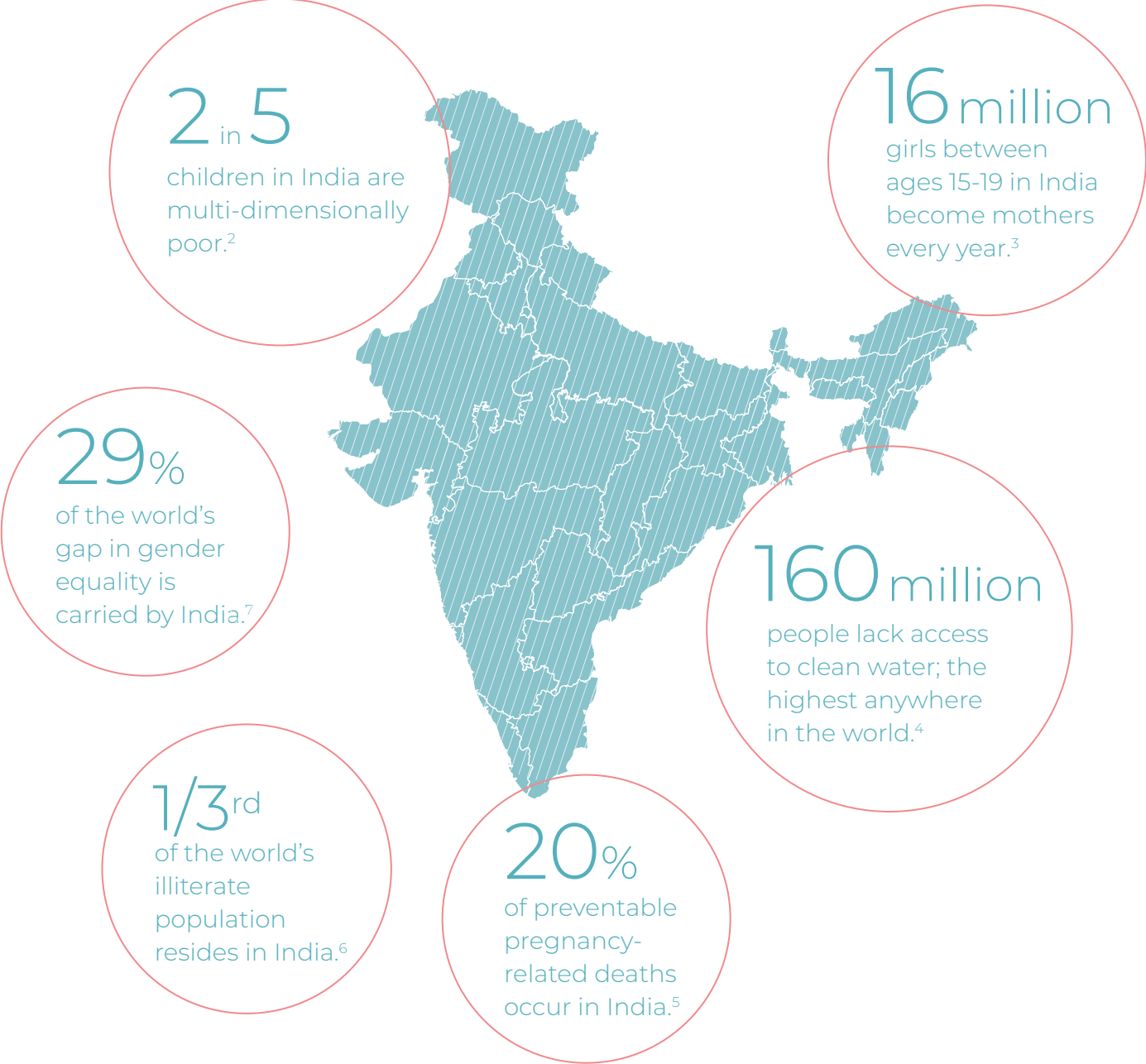
Introduction



COLLABORATIVE ACTION:
AN URGENT NECESSITY

From poor quality education to lack of access to basic sanitation and health services, India suffers from deep-rooted and systemic socio-economic problems. These problems are further compounded by gaps and inefficiencies in India's development ecosystem and infrastructure, a mammoth population, and shortcomings in coordination of efforts between change-makers. The burden of these problems ultimately falls largely on critical vulnerable populations that remain disproportionately disadvantaged with regards to basic human needs.

Most large-scale social problems affecting India have found significance in the global development agenda as well. India alone accounts for 20% of the world's performance gap for 10 out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹ This is evidenced by India's share of the world's key development challenges, as outlined below:



The sheer scale of these problems, their multi-dimensional nature, and the development fraternity's own acknowledgment makes it clear that no single individual, organization, or authority has the resources or influence to deliver change at the required scale and pace. India and the world have set ambitious targets to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The country's thriving philanthropy ecosystem, the rise of innovative solutions and the government's willingness to collaborate, all present incredible scope to make significant movement towards the SDGs. Given this and the scale of problems, our most promising strategy to achieve impact at scale by 2030 seems to be the strategic consolidation of efforts and change-makers towards common agendas and outcomes.



Whether it be collaboration between funders, NGOs, corporates or government bodies—in many possible permutations—countless examples and success stories affirm the value of this collaborative mindset, particularly when championed by the government.

● **Nonprofit organizations**

Health-technology focused nonprofit ARMMAN, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare partnered to deliver the Kilkari program. It uses accessible messaging systems and free mobile voice calling to deliver targeted and preventative life-saving information directly to mothers in hard-to-reach areas. The program was launched in 2019 and currently runs in 13 states to reach over 9 million women across India, making it the single largest maternal messaging program globally.⁸

Similarly, the Government of India partnered with the eGovernments Foundation (eGov), a digital platform established by Indian philanthropists to enable government administrators, to make data-driven operational decisions in response to rapidly growing urban demand. Since the partnership, eGov has helped city governments process over 3 million service requests related to better governance and urban development, and addressed 2 million citizen-logged grievances with a 90% resolution rate.⁹

● **Foundations and institutions**

The first of its kind initiative at this scale, the Transformation of Aspirational Districts Program was launched by the Government of India's NITI Aayog to improve quality of life in 115 of the poorest performing districts across 28 states in India by 2022. Stakeholders including the state and central government; civil society stakeholders came together under this program to trigger equitable growth and development in the districts that need it the most.

● **Private sector**

In Haryana, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) was brought on board to improve management of the public education system and boost learning levels in children. BCG worked on building accountability within the education system, improving access to assessment data, enhancing capacity of government employees, and renewing the focus on quality of teaching. The success of this partnership resulted in an expansion of this program to Rajasthan and Jharkhand.

These are just a few of the many examples that demonstrate how substantially greater progress can be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social challenges if they are tackled through collaborative action. Given the magnitude of issues in India, collaboration among funders, nonprofits and government to affect systemic change is no longer an option, but a necessity.

Government

While collaboration can take multiple forms, the last decade has seen a particular interest and rise in number of formal multi-stakeholder collaborative models – the number of such collaborative initiatives in the Indian development sector today is more than four times what it was in 2000.¹⁰ A collaborative, in the development context, can be considered to be a collective platform that aggregates resources across various stakeholders to amplify social impact and offers a cohesive structure for collaborative action, often facilitated by a host or backbone organization. Such collaboratives that exist today offer a gamut of development solutions, strategic approaches, and implementation models to observe and codify learnings from—varying as much in mission and issue-focus as they do in design and operation.¹¹

THE 'COLLABORATIVE' SERIES

Recognizing that effective design, management and facilitation is key to the success of any collaborative initiative, in March 2017, Dasra began a partnership with Bank of America to document the learnings of the 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative through a series of reports that focus on the various building blocks and considerations that enable and fuel a collaborative's effective functioning towards multiplying impact. Launched in March 2018 on the first anniversary of the 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative, the first report, *Collaborative Force: Empowering 10to19*, illustrated the vital role of multi-stakeholder collaboratives in advancing India's development agenda. Based on the 10to19 experiences, it shared actionable insights on foundational elements such as defining a vision and strategy, aligning key partners and gearing for launch.

The second report in this series, *Collaborative Action: Empowering 10to19*, was published in March 2019 and dives deeper into the critical phase of collaboratives that rests at the cusp of planning and implementation. It focuses on learnings across various aspects of this phase such as translating strategy to action, selecting nonprofit partners and introducing practices for effective collaboration among partners.



WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS REPORT

From defining a vision and mission to developing a strategy, bringing multiple partners on board, aligning them towards a shared vision, and building a team with strong leadership, there is much work to be done before a collaborative gets to the point of implementation. However, the success of a collaborative depends on effective implementation of its programs, which requires its partners to devote a great deal of thought, planning and resources as it enters this phase. It is an opportunity to bridge theory, research, strategy and action in ways that have the potential to enable transformative change at scale.¹²

Unfortunately, there is limited literature documenting what it means to undertake implementation in a collaborative and what factors enable such implementation to be effective. This report, the third in the series, aims to bridge this gap by shining light on various forms of implementation in a collaborative, providing frameworks and considerations to evaluate the relevance and applicability of each one. As with prior reports, given Dasra's proximity to the inner workings of the 10to19 Collaborative, this report also leads with the experiences of the Collaborative, while also weaving in important insights from sector experts and other collaboratives.

It is important to acknowledge here that there is no one specific framework guiding what a successful implementation model looks like for all multi-stakeholder collaboratives; it can take on many forms, based on factors such as the collaborative's priorities, agenda, and available resources. However, given the resources, platforms and partnerships that collaboratives often have access to, there is great potential for them to approach implementation in ways that organizations alone often cannot.¹³

We hope that the report will be useful to anyone responsible for facilitating, funding or participating in a large-scale multi-stakeholder collaborative, and will ultimately drive effective collaborative action towards meeting a wide range of development goals for an equitable and prosperous India.

Points to keep in mind

1 There is no singular or one-size-fits-all solution. Each collaborative has its own unique agenda, dynamics, and local solutions required to leverage the strengths of each stakeholder and ensure effective collaborative action. This report does not prescribe or dictate a methodology, but simply outlines the building blocks that should be considered during the implementation stages of a collaborative.

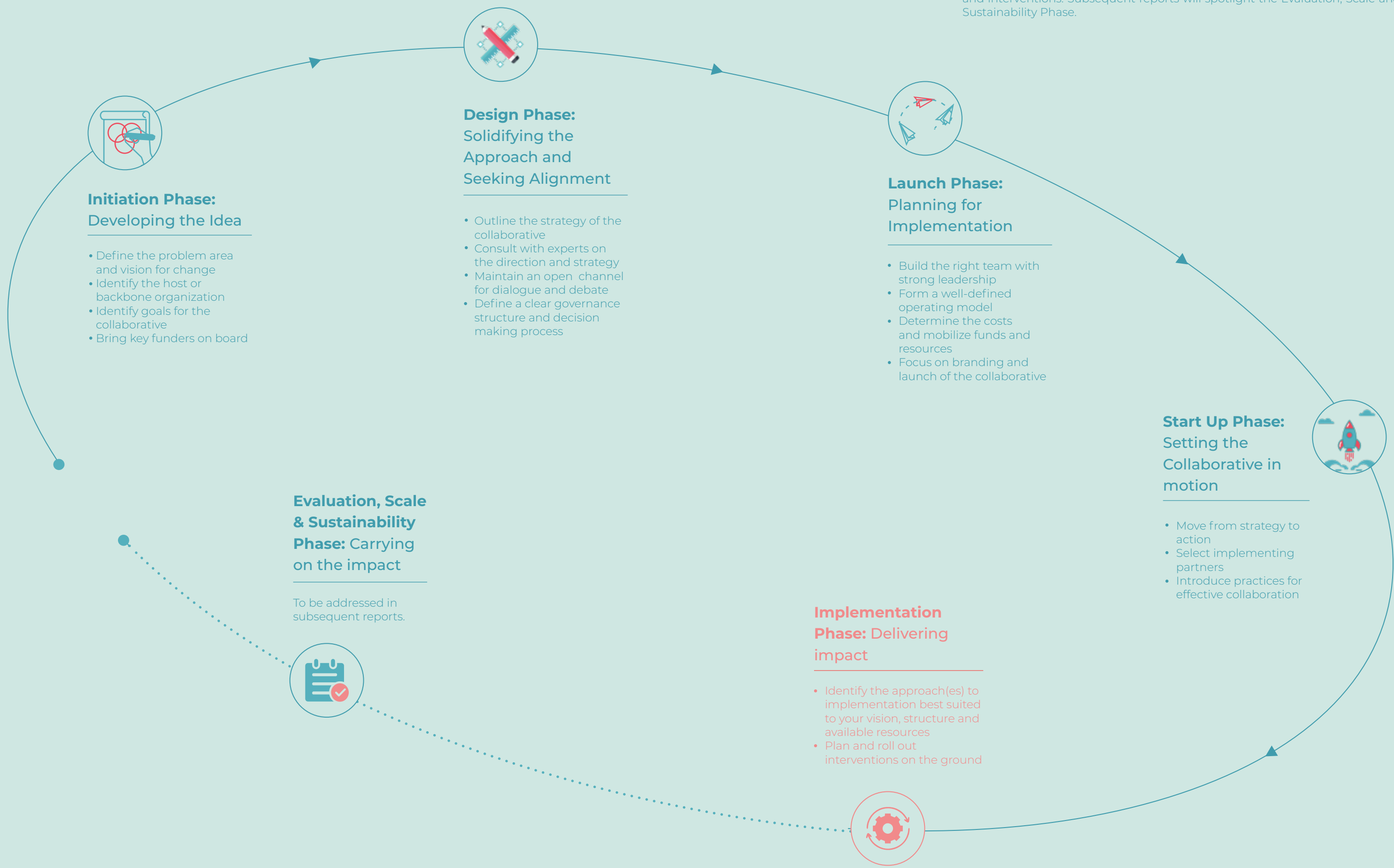
2 The experience of 10to19 is not an indication of a declared success or prescribed best practice. The Collaborative is evolving and learning along with this report series, consistently codifying and documenting its achievements, challenges and failures along the way. Insights offered in this report are based on ongoing learnings from 10to19, as well as perspectives and experiences from a diverse group of experts.

3 10to19 is just one of the many collaboratives whose experience informs the insights in this report. Given the deep proximity that Dasra has had to the thinking behind and inner workings of the 10to19 Collaborative, it was a natural choice to extensively profile the learnings and experience of this Collaborative in the report. While other collaboratives may not be as extensively cited, several of the insights articulated are credited to a collation of others' experiences as well, and Dasra is grateful to all those who lent their time to share their learnings with us.

4 The learnings codified are not exclusive to the field of adolescents. This report aims to be an outline and a guidebook that is usable by anyone attempting to create collaborative impact at scale. While this report draws largely on 10to19's experience of working in the field of adolescent health and well-being, we hope the learnings documented here are useful, adaptable, and transferable between geographies, initiatives, and development issues.

Roadmap to developing multi-stakeholder Collaboratives

Leveraging Dasra's experience and exploration with collaboratives, the framework below serves as a roadmap to designing and developing a large-scale multi-stakeholder collaborative. While *Collaborative Force: Empowering 10to19* introduced the four phases of this framework, and *Collaborative Action: Empowering 10to19* delved deeper into the Start-Up phase, this report explores the next logical step – the Implementation Phase, starting from identifying the most appropriate implementation approach to delivering of effective programs and interventions. Subsequent reports will spotlight the Evaluation, Scale and Sustainability Phase.



EMPOWERING INDIA'S ADOLESCENTS

Supporting India's adolescents in their transition into productive and empowered adulthood has long been one of India's most significant and complex development challenges. This issue is not just one of complexity, but also one of magnitude and of potential. Several issues—with roots in economic, development and social conditions—leave far too many of our adolescent boys and girls powerless, and unable to make informed life choices independently, hindering their ability to reach their full potential and preventing the country's socio-economic progress. For example, by 2030, India's adolescent population will account for more than 200 million individuals added to the workforce, and just preventing adolescent pregnancy could add up to 12% to India's GDP due to more inclusion of girls and women in the workforce.¹⁴

At 253 million, India is home to the world's largest cohort of adolescents and as many as 120 million of these are girls.¹⁵ Despite significant progress over the last 15 years, these adolescent girls continue to face severe disadvantages. They are particularly unsafe, invisible, ignored, and often left behind or forgotten. While the health and agency of adolescent girls needs to be strengthened with concentrated focus, it is also critical to engage adolescent boys in initiating this important transformation. Adolescent boys, when they become adults, have a profound impact on the health and well-being of girls and women around them. Further, empowering adolescents holistically, across all their needs and pathways to development, presents the opportunity to create inter-generational socio-economic change in India. Moreover, given the high burden of the SDG gap weighted in India, impact on this population group presents scope to significantly affect the global achievement of the SDG targets.¹⁶

When it comes to empowering adolescents, efforts have been carried out in siloes for far too long, with most interventions taking an independent outlook and focusing on addressing singular issues such as health or education. However, adolescents' needs are varied and they require a holistic package of interventions in order to build the assets that will enable them to lead productive adulthoods. Collaboration and convergence are necessary in order to support an adolescent not just for singular issues, but rather, through their complete transition to healthy and empowered adulthoods.¹⁷

While efforts to help adolescents in India are abundant, there is limited data to show what works. There is also a scarcity of long-term and outcomes-led funding, and a lack of formal collaborative platforms, resulting in most nonprofits delivering interventions in issue-based siloes. Finally, collaboration between governments and civil society to ensure prioritization of adolescents and effective implementation of schemes is rare.¹⁸

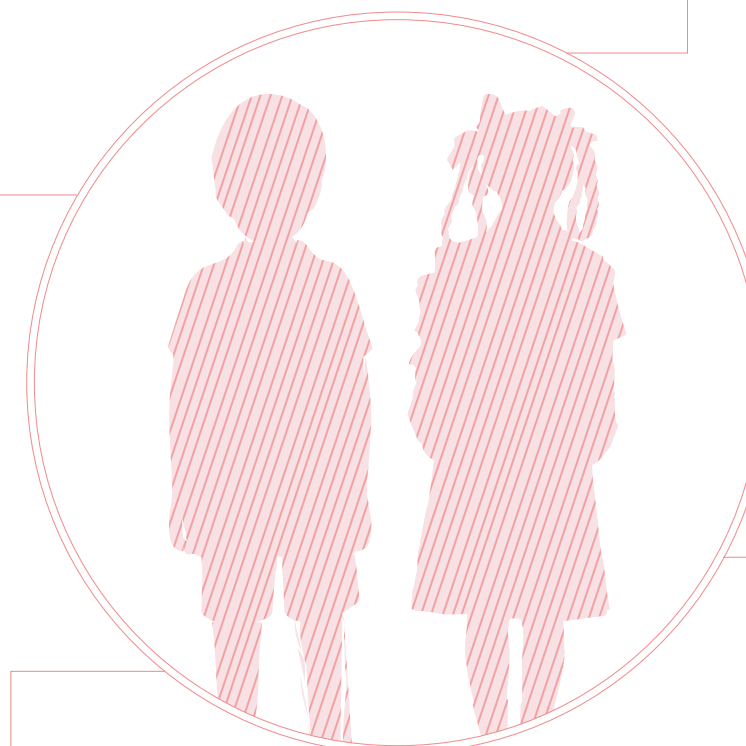
To enable change on the ground and to transform this fractured ecosystem, the 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative is working to deliver a pioneering, outcomes-driven and multi-stakeholder intervention to demonstrate the power of a collaborative approach to convert adolescents' vulnerability into opportunity.



Poor access to employment opportunities: Around 32% of adolescent girls are not in education, employment or training, compared to 7% of adolescent boys.¹⁹



Lack of nutrition and healthy lifestyle: Around 27% adolescents are malnourished with low Body Mass Index (BMI) according to the WHO growth reference for school-age children and adolescents.²⁰



Lack of access to quality education: As many as 54% of girls and 48% of boys aged 18-19 do not complete secondary education.²¹ This amounts to over 60 million girls who will not complete school—a number greater than the populations of several prominent countries including France, South Africa or Thailand.²²



Unavailability of health services and information: About 8% of 15-19 year-old girls are pregnant or already have a child, and only 10% of women who want to postpone child birth are actually able to access contraception. In plain numbers, this means India records 16 million teenage pregnancies annually, the highest in the world.²³



Susceptibility to harmful gender and social norms and a lack of agency: As high as 54% of young men and 58% of young women agreed with the statement that wife beating was justified.²⁴ Beliefs such as this have a profound effect on adolescents and their health as well as well-being.

ABOUT 10to19: DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE

10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative is a high-impact platform that unites funders, technical experts, the government and social organizations to reach five million adolescents, and move the needle on four outcomes key to adolescent empowerment.

Launched in 2017, it has aligned four implementing partners, more than 12 funding partners, government officials, researchers and technical experts, and a 180+ organization-strong 'Community of Practice' to together work towards its common vision. The Collaborative follows a two-pronged approach to not only deliver holistic and improved programs and services for adolescents on the ground, but also amplify adolescent voices and build championship among gatekeepers and influencers to ensure this population is prioritized at a national level.

Vision

A transformed India where millions of adolescents thrive with dignity and equity

Mission

Drive collaborative action towards scalable impact to ensure that adolescents are educated, healthy and empowered to make positive life choices

Key outcomes



Completion of secondary education



Delay age at marriage



Increased agency



Delay of first pregnancy/birth

Priority areas

Scale state-level, evidence-based adolescent programming by fostering a network of stakeholders

Accelerating growth of the field by positioning adolescents at the centre of the national health and development agenda



In order to achieve this, 10to19:

1

Implements multi-sectoral and innovative solutions in partnership with credible and scalable implementing partners in high-need states like Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Assam and Chhattisgarh

2

Builds government partnerships at the state and national levels, by making recommendations, collaborating on projects and pilot initiatives, and ensuring learnings are shared at every stage

3

Promotes thought leadership, learning, collaboration, collective advocacy and data sharing among the sector by mobilizing a Community of Practice at a state and national level

4

Amplifying adolescents voices and demands for normative change through a national initiative to build agency, enable accountability among communities and on-ground stakeholders, and provide platforms for adolescent voice to be heard

5

Mobilizes long-term and outcome-led funds towards the adolescent sector in India, by nurturing strategic philanthropy and philanthropic championship among its partners

6

Creates knowledge products and insight guides to spotlight critical issues and share learnings

7

Incrementally builds on evaluation and evidence-building practices by creating frameworks and simplifying data processes that can be customized and used across organizations and programs

The following illustration graphically represents the various components of the 10to19 Dasra Adolescents Collaborative that allow the Collaborative to take a more holistic approach to programming for adolescents.



As of January 2020, 10to19 has completed one year of intensive and rapid implementation at the state level with four implementing partners in Jharkhand. This report will draw references from the journeys and experiences of these implementing partners—namely, Aangan Trust, Centre for Catalyzing Change, Child in Need Institute, and Quest Alliance—who were selected through a rigorous process, as documented in *Collaborative Action: Empowering 10to19* for their alignment to the 10to19 vision; their complimentary nature across pathways of health, employability, education, and agency; and their demonstrated ability to scale and excel.

Aangan Trust



Year Founded | 2000

Aangan Trust works with vulnerable communities to build safe spots for children and to strengthen child protection systems by engaging the community and local governing bodies.

Coverage

Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh & West Bengal

Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3)



Year Founded | 1987

Centre for Catalyzing Change mobilizes girls to achieve gender equality through programs focused on education, sexual and reproductive health, and gender equity.

Coverage

Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat & West Bengal

Child in Need Institute (CINI)



Year Founded | 1974

Child in Need Institute works to activate rights-based convergent systems for improving health, nutrition, education and protection of children and adolescents.

Coverage

Jharkhand, Odisha & West Bengal

Quest Alliance



Year Founded | 2005

Quest Alliance is an innovation and collaboration-focused alliance of governments, NGOs and donors to demonstrate and scale up models that develop 21st century skills in learners and educators, and advocate for research-based issues in the school-to-work transition.

Coverage

25 states including Jharkhand

Guiding Dasra and its implementing partners in this journey of collaborative action are seven key principles, which the Collaborative holds at the center of all its work to give 10to19 the best chance of success in empowering millions of adolescents in India.

1

Scale

Scale for the Collaborative is replicability or sustainability through adoption of the entire model or key components of the model by other civil society organizations, government or the community. For the model or components of the model to be adopted, it needs to have demonstrated impact, should be cost effective and ideally ensure engagement with the government.

2

Demonstrable Impact

Demonstrable impact for the Collaborative is the ability to affect change on its desired outcomes, which leads to positive impact on the life of the adolescent, and considers outcome-level results beyond activities and inputs.

3

Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness for the Collaborative is defined as the maximum impact that is achieved for each rupee spent.

4

Government Engagement

Government engagement for the Collaborative occurs at the national, state and district or local levels.

5

Organization Effectiveness

Organization effectiveness for the Collaborative includes several components such as strategy and planning, partnerships, leadership, organizational structure, talent development, board and governance, program design, fundraising capability and strategy, communications, and financial management. These will be assessed both for the implementing partners and at a Collaborative level.

6

Collaborative Action

Enabling collaborative action for 10to19 includes effective project management that will ultimately support the Collaborative's initiatives at a sector level and help realize Dasra's vision for field building with its partners. This requires high-level strategic planning, clarity on vision and direction, alignment with stakeholders, engagement with the government, and executing several initiatives that ultimately lead to achieving the outcomes of the Collaborative.

7

Community Mobilization and Engagement

It is important that beyond the achievement of its four outcomes, the Collaborative and its implementing partners work to change the narrative around adolescents. This means achieving a shift in attitudes, behaviors and mindsets, and creating a national-level dialogue around the needs and issues surrounding this demographic, which will eventually lead to an increased demand for adolescents' empowerment and push for more action from governments and civil society organizations. Such narrative change can be achieved through thought leadership, online and offline campaigns and media engagement.



CHAPTER 2

Approaches to Implementation in a Collaborative



Designing and managing a large-scale multi-stakeholder collaborative is an ambitious task that involves various complex components. From defining a vision and mission to developing a strategy, bringing diverse partners on board, building alignment among them towards a shared vision, and building a team with strong leadership, it might seem like the most intensive work is completed by the time a collaborative gets to the point of implementation. However, implementation often lies at the heart of a collaborative and achieving impact at scale often hinges on its effectiveness, requiring its partners to devote a great deal of time, thought, planning and resources as it enters this phase.²⁵

That being said, not all collaboratives may choose to undertake implementation themselves and even if they do, it may take varying forms based on factors such as a collaborative's priorities, agenda and available resources. There is no one framework guiding what a successful model looks like for all multi-stakeholder collaboratives. What is important to understand at this point, however, is that program execution is an opportunity to bridge theory, research, strategy and action in ways that have the potential to enable transformative change at scale. Given the resources, platforms and partnerships that collaboratives in particular have access to, they have a unique opportunity to approach implementation with a holistic and audacious outlook in ways that singular organizations often cannot.

Regardless of whether and how a collaborative chooses to engage in implementation however, it is integral that they dedicate an adequate amount resources as they enter this critical phase. This chapter seeks to outline the various approaches to implementation that can be considered by a collaborative, along with some unique features associated with each. It then goes on to provide a guiding framework of key factors that collaboratives should take into account when determining its ideal approach to implementation.²⁶

Everything before implementation is just preparation for this stage, so in some ways, this is the most important phase for collaboratives wherein they are trying to understand what works, what doesn't work, and whether the theory of change holds, before scaling up. It's important to acknowledge that there is no one type of approach because the structure or implementation mechanism has to be driven by what you're trying to achieve. You might also choose a hybrid implementation model that focuses on multiple aspects such as public awareness and advocacy.²⁷

-Rishi Agarwal, FSG

APPROACHES TO IMPLEMENTATION

Collaboratives around the world have taken on various innovative approaches to implementation as a means to achieve bold development outcomes. Below are some such approaches commonly seen in the Indian development sector today, though the list is in no way meant to be a comprehensive compilation. It is only meant to illustrate the diversity and range of possibilities available for collaboratives to consider as they chart their journey to impact.

It is important to reiterate here that every collaborative's unique agenda and priorities should inform the nature of its implementation work. While there is no right or wrong approach to implementation, it is critical for every collaborative to chart its approach in the context of its specific vision and priorities.



Implementation models can focus on upstream or downstream activities. Models where the collaborative aims to inform policy, influence stakeholders, or develop bodies of knowledge can be considered as upstream. Such collaboratives would be very different in terms of their impact goals, funding required, operating model, and scaling plans, from those working closer to the constituents and/ or program implementation.²⁸



-Pritha Venkatachalam, The Bridgespan Group

1 Direct program implementation through partners

One of the most common approaches to implementation for multi-stakeholder collaboratives is leveraging local partner organizations to take on direct program implementation. Bringing in partners that have expertise in implementing programs and are familiar with the realities on the ground, allows collaboratives to deliver context-specific solutions.²⁹

In this type of implementation, the collaborative's backbone organization typically plays the critical role of project manager and facilitator. The implementing partner organizations usually take on the more front facing role of executing the programs on the ground and are able to bring their unique skills and knowledge to the collaborative's work. It is through this approach that collaboratives are able to closely work with the target communities and directly impact the lives of the beneficiaries they are working for.



Benefits of engaging in this approach

- **Enables deep understanding of the target group and problem at hand:** Effective implementing organizations are embedded in the communities they serve. This proximity allows the collaborative to work closely with its target communities, enabling a deep, first-hand understanding of the problem in focus and of the experiences and challenges faced by the target communities.
- **Informs other areas of implementation:** Direct implementation brings with itself an ability to fuel other approaches to implementation, including informing and strengthening efforts such as advocacy and research over a period of time.



Risks of engaging in this approach

- **Takes time:** Direct program implementation is fairly time intensive, with results likely beginning to show only after a long period of time – often years.
- **Requires a great deal of resources:** This approach is resource-intensive, requiring a great deal of human and capital resources both in the planning leading up to, as well as during the program implementation. This resource intensity may continue after the program, for impact assessment and evaluation initiatives.
- **Involves complex stakeholder management:** Managing stakeholders such as implementing partners, government representatives, community members and others, can get complex and time consuming, given the multiple partners involved in carrying out the work.

The Collaborators for Transforming Education

Even as the number of students in schools continued to rise in Maharashtra, problems of retention and quality of education persist. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) reading levels of Class 5 children slipped from 94% to 74% during 2010-15.³⁰

Recognizing the urgent need to improve the quality of elementary education and the potential of creating transformative change by bringing together a diverse group of players, EdelGive kick-started a collaborative multi-stakeholder initiative called *The Collaborators for Transforming Education*, which focuses strongly on direct implementation through on-ground partners. It brings together the Government of Maharashtra, corporate partners and implementing partners to improve learning outcomes and community engagement, and systemically build capacity of implementing organizations.

The two implementing partners—Gyan Prakash Foundation and Kaivalya Education Foundation—have significant experience of working in the education domain, on initiatives that are deeply aligned with state programs aimed at enhancing learning outcomes for children. The government, as the primary partner, provides facilitation support and the corporate partners—Tata Trusts, Sita Devi Malhotra Charitable Trust, and Great Eastern CSR Foundation—provide both funding support and overall guidance.³¹

EdelGive Foundation was clear early on that their expertise in funding could be leveraged best by carrying out implementation through on-ground partners who could bring in their strengths to amplify the impact of their work.³² EdelGive Foundation takes on the role of the anchor funder and assumes responsibility for all the deliverables committed. Implementing partners shoulder the weight of executing the implementation plan at the field level and work towards achieving agreed milestones within specific timelines. Adopting this approach to implementation has been effective for this coalition, allowing every stakeholder to focus on their strengths to catalyze change in the Indian education sector.

2 Advocacy and government partnerships

The Government of India is the single largest contributor to social sector funding in India, using about 6% of the GDP to fund development programs. Progressive government schemes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child), with a budget of USD 92 million, Digital India Programme (with a budget of USD 535 million) and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission, with a budget of USD 1.9 billion), have played a significant role in achieving outcomes across girls' education, eGovernance, and water, sanitation and health.³³

Additionally, countless examples demonstrate the openness of India's government bodies to partnering with private players towards advancing the country's development. Many state governments and central ministries even run fellowship programs for young professionals to work with them on pressing social issues.

For collaboratives particularly, engaging in advocacy efforts and government engagement presents a great opportunity to expand the reach of their program and affect systems-level change at a scale that can create transformative impact. Additional examples of effective government engagement include engaging the government through a collective voice in order to build the government's capacity and capabilities, giving to nonprofits in ways that effectively leverage government funding, and supporting advocacy work to strengthen political and legal processes, among other such initiatives.³⁴



Benefits of engaging in this approach

- **Enables systems-level change:** Focusing on this component of implementation can enable long-term transformation of underlying systems.
- **Allows wider reach:** Working with the government can allow collaboratives to reach more beneficiaries and create impact at an unparalleled scale.



Risks of engaging in this approach

- **Involves high degree of complexity:** Building relationships with government players and sector experts requires focused attention on relationship management and an understanding of how to navigate an often complex government system.
- **Takes Time:** Considering the different perspectives and agendas on the table, creating consensus can be extremely time-consuming. For successful advocacy and government engagement, collaboratives need to be sensitive to the work that is already being done by the government in the sector they are working on, and thoughtfully, find ways to compliment and amplify the governments work.
- **Involves high level of unpredictability and uncertainty:** Often, successful advocacy is highly dependent on political will and the priorities of local decision makers. A shift in political priorities or frequent change in government official postings could potentially change the path of a project.

National Policy on Fecal Sludge and Septage Management Alliance

India generates more than 40 million tons of sewage daily, of which less than 30% is treated. Sewage waste management in India is severely lacking, and only one-third of Indian urban homes are connected to sewer lines.³⁵ Most human waste ends up untreated and back in the environment, forming the largest source of water pollution in India and causing severe health consequences such as cholera, diarrhea, and dysentery, among others. Given the long timespan and high cost of expanding the centralized sewerage network, it is critical to explore alternatives to traditional centralized sewerage systems. Decentralized waste management processes are potentially more affordable and faster to scale.

Recognizing Fecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) as a viable solution to India's sanitation crisis, and the power of advocacy in the sanitation space, a group of 28 organizations came together in mid-2016 to work towards building FSSM solutions and solving India's sanitation crisis quickly and effectively. By working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs as well as state governments, the National Policy on Fecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM) Alliance has been instrumental in drafting and passing the National Policy on FSSM, which was launched in 2017. India is the first country in the world to pass a policy like this, and this has led to 19 out of 36 states and union territories drafting state-specific FSSM guidelines and at least four states making financial commitments to FSSM.³⁶

By banding together to focus on working with the government and making advocacy the most pressing component, the Alliance has been able to create systems-level change, which has impacted the entire nation. Today, states have committed to building more than 400 Fecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs) over the next three years, especially in smaller cities that have greater problems with sewage treatment systems.

3 Evidence building and research

The lack of comprehensive data and evidence is one of the biggest roadblocks that organizations in the development sector face when it comes to prototyping implementation models and pro-actively solving for challenges.³⁷ For example, large sums of money are channeled into social sector programs such as education, health, nutrition and livelihoods, among others. A lack of information on how these investments translate into outcomes on the ground is a major barrier to evaluating their effectiveness.³⁸ Collaboratives might choose to work on this component of implementation particularly in sectors where a gap in data and evidence is making other approaches to implementation like advocacy or direct implementation through partners challenging. By focusing their efforts on the collection of data and evidence, collaboratives can enable other stakeholders in the sector to continuously learn, adapt, and improve pro-actively. This component could involve collaboratives investing in primary research on the ground, or using secondary research and rigorous methods to generate evidence at scale on the outcomes of social sector programs.

Using data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve is critical, and working on this component enables collaboratives to remain aware of changes in context, openly share information and observations with others, and adapt their strategies quickly in response to an evolving environment.³⁹



Benefits of engaging in this approach

- **Strengthens program design:** This approach can play an integral role in highlighting what works and what doesn't, eventually strengthening program design and orienting programs towards greater impact.
- **Encourages investment in the sector:** Engaging in this approach allows collaboratives to influence the kind of investments being made in any particular sector and enable more informed funding decisions.
- **Often requires relatively less time:** Based on the type of research being undertaken, this approach can often show quicker results compared to other forms of implementation work.



Risks of engaging in this approach

- **Requires specialized skills and access:** This component often requires resources with fairly specialized quantitative skills and access to large data-sets in order to produce credible evidence.
- **Produces indirect impact:** Research and evidence building are integral to indirect impact but it is fairly difficult to secure long-term funding from philanthropists, many of who prefer to support initiatives that can show a tangible and direct linkage to their funds.
- **Requires funding and skilled human resources:** For many nonprofits, research and building evidence can be very capital and human resource-intensive.

Research and Analysis for Scientific Transformation and Advancement

Research and Analysis for Scientific Transformation and Advancement (RASTA) is a consortium of development partners and Indian research institutions working together to help India achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through in-depth analysis of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), the National Sample Survey, the Census and other datasets from the government and various stakeholders.⁴⁰

Case study

The SDGs call for capacity building in countries around the world by 2030 to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by various characteristics relevant to national contexts. RASTA brings together a range of partners whose implementation model is centered on building high-quality data analyses and research that can provide analytics support to government and other key stakeholders for effective programming and policy formulation.⁴¹

It also focuses on conducting research to fill existing data gaps and undertakes operations research to pilot test program interventions using rigorous scientific methodologies to provide solutions that can be shared. By engaging in this implementation approach, the collective is able to add value to the ecosystem in a unique way without having to take many great risks, and see the results of its work fairly quickly.

4 Narrative change and amplification

With the great advance of digital technology and increasing penetration of media in our day-to-day lives, it has become easier than ever for organizations to focus on building awareness and spreading information through narrative change strategies and media campaigns. Regardless of which component of implementation an organization is focusing on, amplification can help create large-scale behavior change, which can complement and fuel all other approaches of implementation.⁴²

This can be done by building communities of practice — groups that share knowledge, learn together, and create common practices in sectors that they are involved in. Other methods of amplification could involve building media campaigns that create greater awareness and promote behavior change through participatory research and large-scale media dissemination. Collaboratives can leverage narrative change and amplification strategies to support implementing partners to share their work with a wider network of stakeholders, and also help others in the sector to gain exposure to best practices and model programs. It can also be critical in championing and shaping behaviors with regards to particular social issues.⁴³



Benefits of engaging in this approach

- **Promotes awareness and mass mobilization:** This approach to implementation can be very effective in rapidly mobilizing people and spreading awareness around the collaborative's mission.
- **Enables behavior change:** Engaging in this approach offers collaboratives the opportunity to influence and alter mindsets and behaviors related to key issues, which can help propel its work forward.



Risks of engaging in this approach

- **Requires extensive funding and resources:** Media campaigns can be fairly expensive, and collaboratives need adequate access to resources in order to undertake such an effort.
- **Involves complex stakeholder management:** Amplification strategies such as building communities of practice require intensive stakeholder management to incorporate diverse voices from multiple stakeholders.
- **Takes time to see results:** Changing deep-rooted mindsets and behaviors of communities is difficult and can take a long time.

Global Polio Eradication Initiative

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is a public-private partnership led by national governments with five core partners - the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Its goal is to eradicate polio worldwide, and India's story of eradicating polio is one of the most notable examples. In 2009, India constituted over 60% of all global polio cases but in a remarkable feat, in 2014 it was officially declared polio-free.⁴⁴

Case study

There were a number of obstacles towards polio eradication in India – a vast population, high population density, unsanitary living conditions and, most importantly, the prevalence of diarrhea, which prevented the vaccine from being in the body long enough to have any effect. Yet, the country managed to overcome these challenges and conquer polio through a strong focus on amplification strategies to dispel myths. Along with strong commitment from the government at all levels, a mass media campaign featuring several Bollywood stars and cricketers was used to gain the attention of the public.⁴⁵

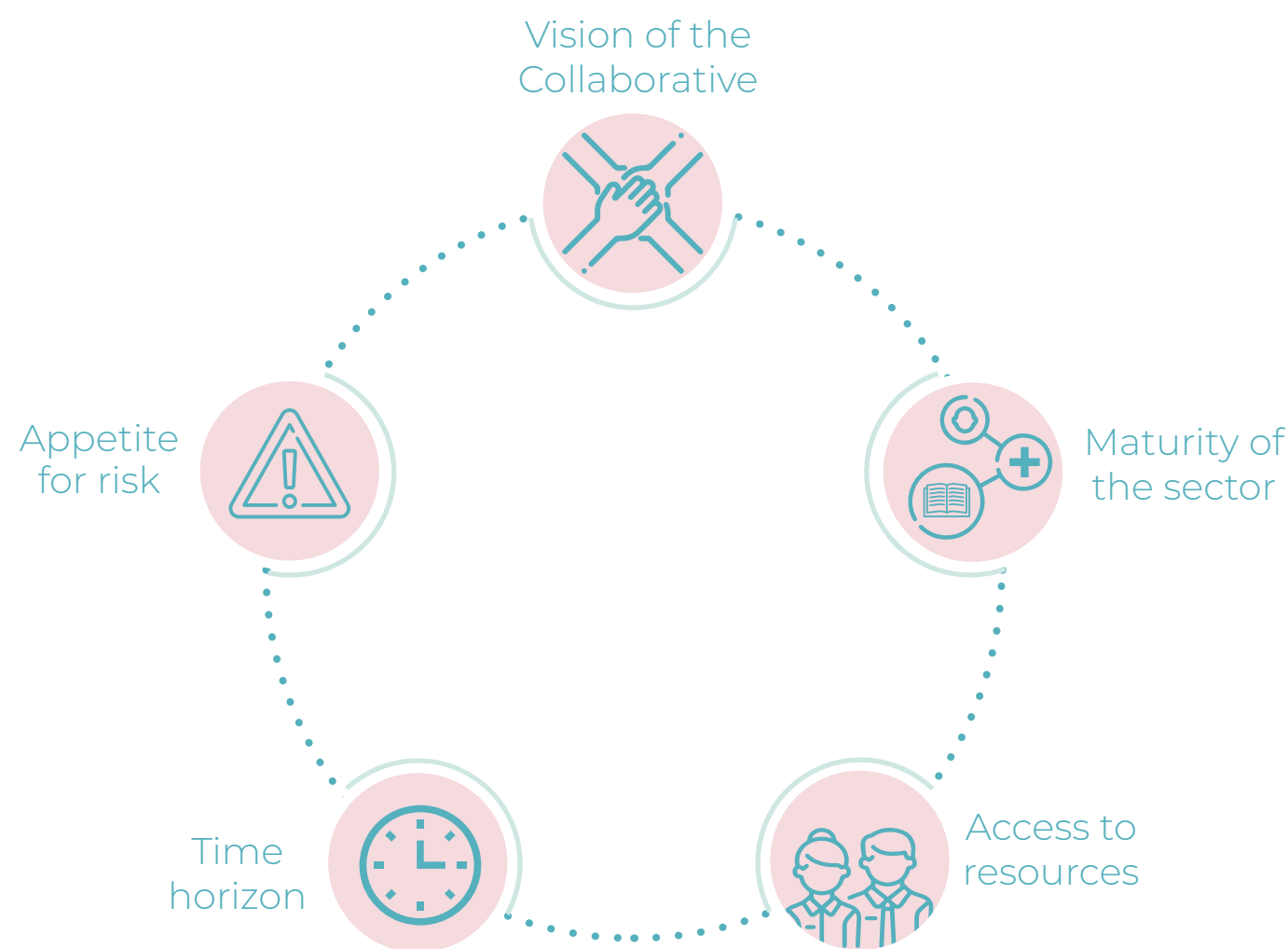
Media and advocacy has been one of the key components of the communication strategy for polio eradication in India, constantly evolving and adapting to the changing needs and the challenges facing the program. The aim has been to build an atmosphere conducive for polio immunization. The media strategy has complemented other efforts to reinforce key program messages and bring about long-term behavior change in the community to accept polio immunization.



FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING A COLLABORATIVE'S IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

When a collaborative steps into the implementation phase, there are several paths it can take. This period can sometimes feel overwhelming given the vast range of possibilities that exist, and it is important to build an understanding of the risks and benefits associated with each one. Eventually, it is up to the collaborative to shape its own approach to implementation based on the context it is operating in.

Regardless of the approach to implementation a collaborative chooses to undertake, below are some key considerations that all collaboratives should keep in mind as they make this decision:



There is obviously a lot of interplay between various models of implementation, but when deciding what approach makes sense for your collaborative, it is important to ask questions such as what is the scale of impact you are hoping to achieve, where is the energy and momentum, what is the quantum of resources available to support the collaborative, and what do people in the collaborative have the expertise and capacity to do.⁴⁶

-Jennifer Juster, Collective Impact Forum

1 VISION OF THE COLLABORATIVE

The vision of any multi-stakeholder initiative is considered its north star. By the time a collaborative reaches the phase where it is thinking about implementation, it is likely that its partners have had many discussions around the vision and have built consensus around it. At this stage, collaboratives must consciously revisit the vision and keep it at the center of its considerations to ensure that the implementation approaches chosen are in alignment with its vision.⁴⁷ Some guiding questions for collaboratives as they assess their approach to implementation in the context of their vision, can include:

- What is the collaborative trying to accomplish and what form of implementation will best enable it to reach this goal?
- Who is the audience that the collaborative is trying to create change for? What form of implementation will allow the collaborative to impact this target audience most deeply?

2 MATURITY OF THE SECTOR

When moving into the implementation phase, every collaborative should customize the design of its implementation plan to respond to the needs of the sector that it is working in. This is critical because the needs of every sector can vary greatly, and effectively solving any problem requires context-specific and relevant solutions.⁴⁸ It is important to reflect on the gaps, strengths and evolution of the sector in order to work towards effective implementation.

In order to actualize the vision of any collaborative in the implementation phase, it is important that all members of the collaborative come together to have an open and honest conversation around the financial, social and human capital available to them.⁴⁹

The implementation phase can often be one of the most expensive stages for collaboratives, and every form of implementation requires a different level of investment. Collaboratives will have had conversations around defining the vision and operational plans in the earlier stages, but at this stage it is critical to ensure that the collaborative has adequate resources to shape the implementation model in accordance with its vision. Collaboratives should keep in mind that some forms of implementation are more resource-heavy than others; for instance working efficiently with direct partners or technology-enabled solutions requires heavy resource investment. Keeping the constraints of the collaborative in mind can enable collaboratives to choose an approach to implementation that it is best suited to carry out.

3 ACCESS TO RESOURCES

4 TIME HORIZON

It is important to consider the time-period of the collaborative to realistically gauge to what extent it makes sense to get involved in implementation, and which approaches to engage in. While a collaborative might be clear about wanting to work closely with communities, or with government partners, it is useful to outline practical timelines that will be required for the chosen implementation approach to assess its suitability for the collaborative.⁵⁰

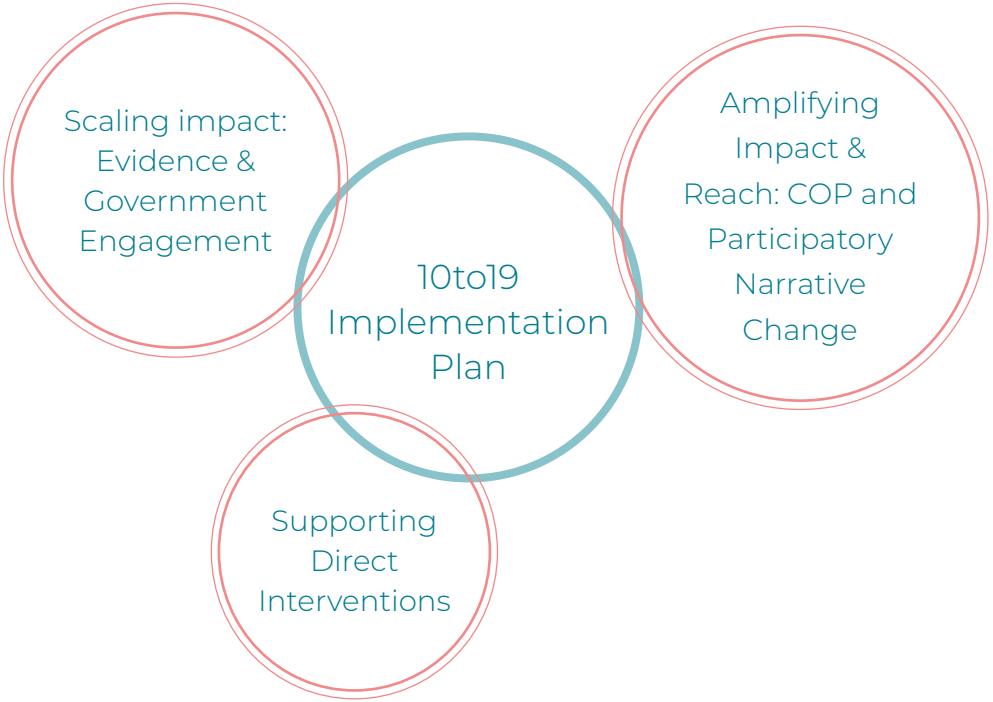
Certain forms of implementation such as amplification through media campaigns as well as evidence building and research can be seen as quicker forms of implementation that can produce more incremental impact compared to approaches such as government engagement and direct implementation, which are more long-term and take time to yield results. At this point, collaboratives may find it valuable to reflect on whether the time they have planned for implementation aligns with the time required to effectively carry out certain implementation forms.

5 APPETITE FOR RISK

The design, leadership, and ultimate goal of each collaborative is unique, and a key consideration that every collaborative should keep in mind is its appetite for risk. Some collaboratives may be willing to invest in bold, high-risk implementation models that may be untested but have the potential to pave the path for high impact, while others may have a lower appetite for risk, choosing to engage in tried-and-tested interventions.⁵¹

Collaboratives that are in a position to make big bets, should strategically reflect on investing in a range of implementation approaches to strengthen their impact, and build a clear view of how each of the implementation approaches link to and fuel each other.

10to19 DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE



When the 10to19 Dasra Adolescents Collaborative was building its own implementing model, it evaluated its options against several of the considerations recommended in the previous section. While other collaborative's experiences and considerations for implementation might take on different paths, below are some of the factors that influenced 10to19's journey into holistic implementation.



Vision of the collaborative

The vision, mission and key outcomes of the 10to19 Collaborative have remained constant since its inception, geared towards ensuring that adolescents in India make a successful transition from childhood to adulthood. The vision of a transformed India where millions of adolescents thrive with dignity and equity has been the guiding force for the collaborative. Constantly going back to this vision and the four key outcomes — delaying the age at marriage, delaying the age of first pregnancy, increasing agency, and ensuring the completion of secondary education — has allowed the collaborative to appreciate the enormity of this challenge and audaciousness of solutions required, ultimately calling for the adoption of multiple implementation approaches, to have the best chance of moving the needle in the field of adolescents.



Appetite for risk

For the 10to19 Collaborative, it was clear from the start that to achieve our vision, taking risks was inevitable and necessary. The very decision to focus on adolescents as a cohort was a risk, given the nascency of this sector and the limited recognition of the need to invest in this important demographic, at the time 10to19 was conceptualized. By embracing the Collaborative's appetite for risk, Dasra was able to build a bold implementation strategy that involves components of direct implementation, amplification strategies, as well as government engagement and advocacy. Consciously cultivating conversations around the risks involved in all of these approaches, enabled the Collaborative to take measured decisions that complimented its ambitious vision to empower millions of adolescents in India.



Maturity of the sector

In the case of 10to19, it was clear very early on that the implementation strategy had to respond to the dynamic needs of adolescents, a sector that was fairly nascent at the time of the Collaborative's official launch. Keeping in mind the nature, evolution and needs of the sector allowed the Collaborative to make strategic and nuanced choices when it came to detailing out the strategy for 10to19. While the Collaborative does work extensively with implementing partners for direct implementation, it was evident that this approach alone was not going to be enough.

Given the lack of state-wide adolescent-focused data, 10to19 saw the value in building evidence to deeply understand the adolescent demographic that it was working for. Additionally, the Collaborative also realized the need to focus on changing the narrative around adolescents in India and to enable greater dialogue amongst organizations working towards empowering adolescents. It has therefore engaged in varied forms of implementation—from building Communities of Practice that comprise players who regularly share learnings with one another, to running large-scale behavior change campaigns and engaging with the government on critical issues. These important choices have allowed the Collaborative to play a unique role in this ecosystem, and to deeply understand and address the needs of the sector.



Time consideration

From the very beginning, the Collaborative's partners knew that to achieve 10to19's ambitious vision, a long-term outlook was required. As the Collaborative shaped its implementation approach, it took into consideration its own time horizon as well as the time-intensity of various implementation forms. For instance, given that Dasra knew it had a period of five years to work towards its vision, it was able to confidently undertake focused government engagement as a core part of its work to ensure scale and sustainability of the collaborative's work. This approach may not have been suitable if the collaborative's time period was significantly shorter.



Access to resources

The 10to19 Collaborative has outcome-driven, pooled, flexible funding that moves beyond traditional grant-making activities, and instead track outputs to measure how the Collaborative is transforming the lives of adolescents. This allows 10to19 to make some bold bets during the implementation phase as it has access to resources that individual organizations may not have. Reflecting on the resources available, and having open and honest conversations with funders, nonprofits, and technical experts who have been involved in the Collaborative has allowed 10to19 to envision its own implementation path. Given the funding and capacity building resources available to Dasra, the Collaborative decided that it could maintain a flexible and nimble strategy to undertake a holistic approach to implementation.

CHAPTER 3

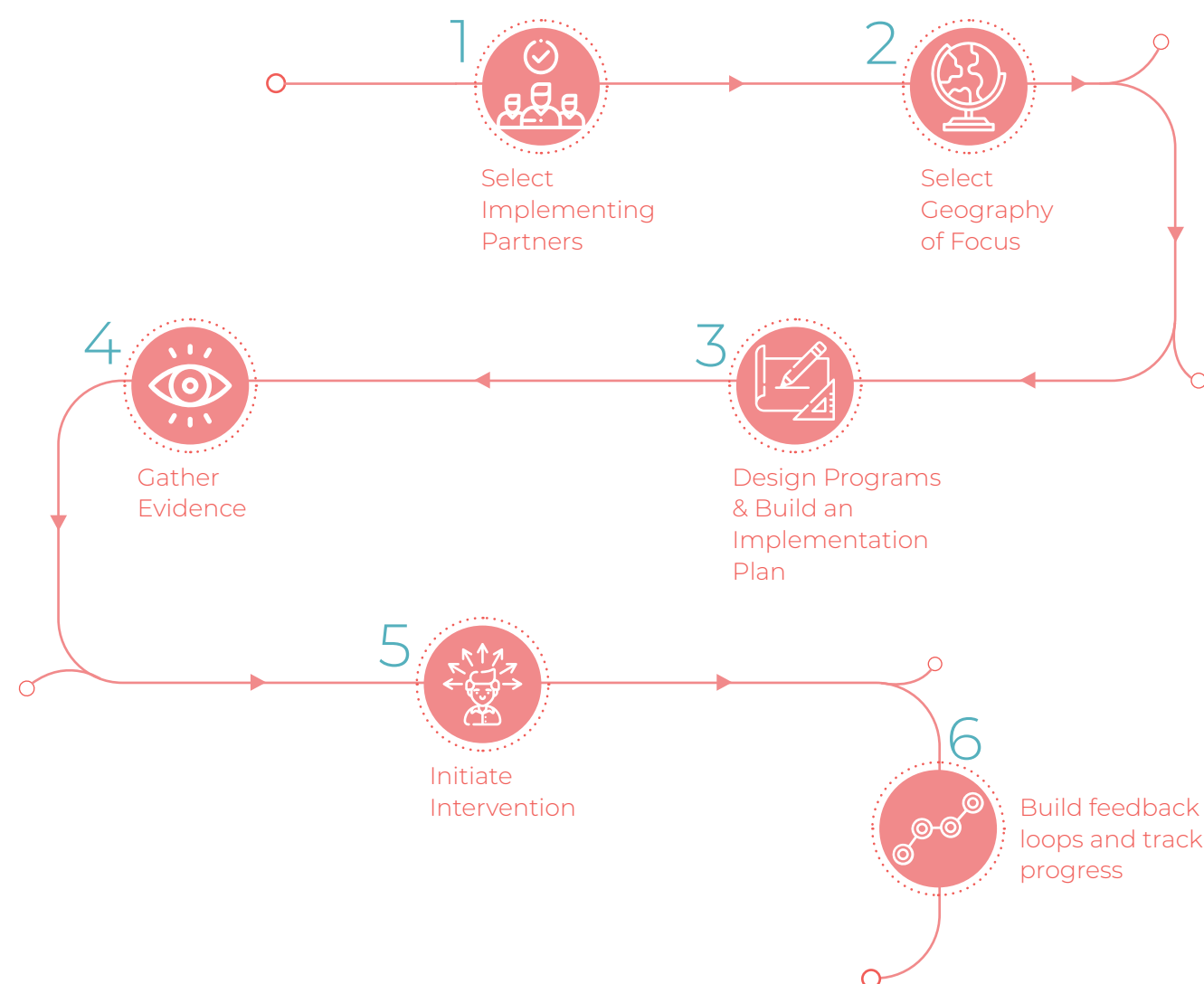
Understanding Direct Program Implementation in a Collaborative



Once a collaborative has determined whether and to what degree it makes sense to get involved in implementation and which approach(es) to choose, it is time to understand how to go about it. This chapter will specifically deep-dive into the “how” of direct program implementation, while sharing learnings from experts and experiences of collaboratives. Direct program implementation is a critical part of a collaborative’s work given that it is often the closest it will get to interacting with and impacting the lives of the target communities. It also brings with itself an ability to fuel other components of implementation, including informing and strengthening efforts such as advocacy and research over a period of time. It is important to keep in mind however, that direct program implementation is a resource-intensive approach and requires deep thought and careful design. It is also worth highlighting that such work takes time to yield results, calling for collaboratives to embrace a long-term mindset and dedicate careful thought regarding to what extent, and in which form it makes sense to undertake this approach.

KEY STAGES OF DIRECT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION IN A COLLABORATIVE

Based on insights from sector experts and collaboratives, the following pages will present key checkpoints or stages that collaboratives may typically encounter as they move through the journey of direct program implementation, highlighting some important learnings and considerations along the way. It is important to highlight here that not all collaboratives may flow through these stages in the currently articulated linear sequence – based on the collaborative's agenda, structure and implementation plan, it may encounter these stages in a varied sequence, or even undertake some components simultaneously.



1 Select implementing partners

Selecting which implementing partners to work with to deliver impact for the targeted communities will be one of the most critical decisions for collaboratives to make at this point. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to selecting implementing partners and not all types of collaboratives will go through an intensive process – the nature, breadth and depth of the approach will depend on factors such as the collaborative's priorities and objectives, nature and size of the grant, required capabilities to carry out the work, and resources available to the collaborative. For example, in cases where there is finite funding or other resources available to be directed to implementing partners, where adoption of a particular approach is needed, or where specific capabilities are required to implement the work, it is important that collaboratives take the time to curate a specific group of partner organizations through a thorough due diligence process.⁵²

When selecting partners, due diligence can be an effective tool for collaboratives to evaluate critical components of an organization's health such as vision, leadership, track record of impact, financial health, fundraising capability and talent management. In a collaborative setting, however, where there are often large pools of funding involved, increased accountability to audacious outcomes and complex dynamics between multiple stakeholders, it is important that the process of selecting implementing partners takes into account an assessment of not only these 'tangible' aspects, but also of softer aspects such as the organization's alignment with the collaborative's mission and values, and its readiness to collaborate in a dynamic environment.

To learn more about effective practices in selecting implementing partners for a collaborative, please refer to *Collaborative Action: Empowering 10to19*, Dasra's second report in this series.

2 Select geography of focus

Like the process of selecting partners, selecting the right geography, too, requires a clear linkage back to the objectives, vision and mission of the collaborative, along with an assessment of what is possible given the available resources. In the Indian context, collaboratives must look to drive clarity on whether to focus its programs at a village, block, city, town, district, state or national level, before identifying the specific geography or geographies to implement its work in. To arrive at these decisions, collaboratives can reflect on the following questions:

- What is the problem that requires intervention and how is it geographically distributed? Where is it most heavily concentrated?
- What are the root causes of the problem and what is the nature of the required interventions? Who is the target of these interventions and at what level (central, state, district, etc.) would these be most effectively carried out?
- How does the problem manifest uniquely across the various geographies and contexts being considered?
- Who are the key stakeholders working on the problem in a given geography, how critical are they to drive change and how open are they to supporting the collaborative's efforts?
- How positive is the public environment and government momentum to drive change within the geography in question?
- What resources are readily available to the collaborative in that geography?
- How ready or geared is the geography to witness impact at scale?

3 Gather evidence

Gathering evidence is an important step for collaboratives to better understand the target community, assess the problem at hand, and identify priority areas of action. A collaborative may consider gathering two forms of evidence at this stage:

- **Community needs assessments:** These help evaluate the current state of the problem, identify the strengths, challenges and needs of the target community, identify key stakeholders within the community, and develop a nuanced understanding of the cultural context within which the program(s) will be implemented. While qualitative information is critical to such assessments, collecting quantitative data can also be helpful in building an understanding of these aspects. Information can be gathered through focused group discussions, individual interactions with key community stakeholders, opinion polls and surveys, among other methods.
- **Baseline studies:** These studies provide data and evidence on the current situation of target communities, before the collaborative's interventions are administered. Data collected then acts as an information base against which to monitor and assess a program's progress and effectiveness during and after its implementation. Sometimes the data needed for a baseline will already exist. In such cases, collaboratives may look at simply collating the data and ensuring that it can be updated, making it important to find out what information is already available. More commonly, however, there will not be any existing data, it will be incomplete or of poor quality, or it will need to be supplemented with additional data that is relevant to the program being implemented. When planning a baseline study, collaboratives must determine what change needs to be assessed and what sort of comparison(s) will need to be made as part of that assessment of change. The backbone organization of a collaborative typically plays a crucial role in determining this and in setting relevant indicators to track. Engaging a third-party expert to conduct the survey can help bring in greater objectivity and credibility.

It is important to note here that gathering evidence is a resource-intensive activity, making it important to allocate a clear budget to it. That being said, not all collaboratives may have the ability or desire to embark on an in-depth primary needs assessment effort.

4 Design programs and build an implementation plan

With a strong contextual understanding of the issues on the ground, it is now time for the collaborative to design its programs and build a detailed implementation plan – an actionable blueprint that describes how each of its implementing partners will go about carrying out the work to ultimately converge towards achieving the desired outcomes. Practically speaking, this means building a plan that outlines:

- **Key programs or interventions to be undertaken** by each implementing partner. This will be guided by the information collected from the community needs assessments, strengths and capabilities of the implementing partners, resources available, as well as an outlined theory of change – a causal analysis that builds a view of how these interventions are expected to ultimately lead to the collaborative's desired change. It is important that these programs are designed based on careful planning and research that demonstrates empirical support for their effectiveness and highlights best practices and model programs.
- **Intermediate outcomes** to be achieved along the pathway towards the collaborative's ultimate goals.
- **The various stakeholders required** to be involved in the implementation work, and the **partnerships needed** to be fostered towards this.
- **Responsible and accountable entities or individuals** for each activity.
- **The nature and degree of collaboration required among the implementing partners** to converge towards the desired outcomes.
- **Timelines and key milestones** to be achieved along the way.
- **Required resources and capabilities** (including people, equipment and finances) to carry out the work.
- **Detailed implementation budget** to gain a granular understanding of the costs associated with each planned activity, set according to realistic expectations to avoid underutilization or overutilization of funds.

5 Initiate intervention

Once the partners are on board, geographies identified, evidence gathered, outcomes finalized, and operational plans drawn, it is time for implementation partners to roll out their programs on the ground. To gear up for this, they will need to build and train a team to carry out the work on the field, foster buy-in from and form partnerships with key local stakeholders, and mobilize community members around their work.

- **Building a team:** Depending on the collaborative's needs and priorities, it may consider hiring for key positions, ranging from program directors to state heads and field coordinators. Hiring local talent with deep understanding of the geography and its context can be particularly helpful in driving partnerships with local stakeholders and enabling effective implementation. Offering regular trainings to the implementing team is another critical consideration in order to ensure that every individual involved in implementation fully understands and is aligned to the collaborative's vision and mission, and is keeping these at the center of his or her work.
- **Fostering buy-in from and partnerships with local stakeholders:** At this stage, implementing partners will need to forge partnerships, where necessary, with stakeholders such as local government officials, community-based organizations (CBOs) and other public institutions (such as panchayats, health centers, schools, aanganwadis, among others) that may play an important role in program implementation. Keeping them aware of and engaged in the implementation, garnering their early-buy in, and even procuring necessary approvals from relevant authorities are important considerations at this stage.
- **Mobilizing communities:** In several cases, implementing partners may be entering a new geography and run the risk of facing resistance from community members who may view them as 'outsiders'. Without community buy-in and support, programs most likely will be unsuccessful and ineffective in achieving their objectives. Building relationships, raising awareness about the value of the collaborative's work, and allowing communities to feel connected and supportive towards it are therefore critical considerations at this stage.

6 Build feedback loops and track progress

Throughout the implementation process, there is a need to maintain strong feedback loops between all stakeholders. This is critical for driving alignment, enabling agility and quick learning, and allowing for course correction in a collaborative. Formally tracking progress towards short-to-long-term goals is also key to any multi-stakeholder collaborative's implementation. Together, regular feedback and measurement of progress serve several important functions.

- They allow assessment of whether or not—and to what extent—the program is achieving its goals.
- They enable evidence-based decision making by providing insights on whether or not—and what kind of—strategic changes need to be made.
- They keep partners informed about the collaborative's progress and serves as a tool to keep them engaged and inspired.

Implementing partners and program staff rely on a wealth of information to assess progress on a day-to-day basis. To facilitate this, it is critical to establish specific, time-bound and meaningful indicators, and objectively measure progress against these through rigorous monitoring and evaluation tools. To do this effectively, collaboratives must have a clear idea of where their work currently stands, what success would look like on a short, medium and long-term basis, and how and at what frequency information will be collected. This information can be qualitative or quantitative in nature, with a combination of both typically providing the most powerful insights. Collaboratives should start early to identify resources required for monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L), and distinguish those available in-house from those that need to be procured. When planning for ME&L, the backbone organization should anticipate the learning curve of implementing organizations to provide them with opportunities for consultation, training and on-site technical assistance. While every evaluation process is going to be unique to each collaborative, there are various digital tools available to help make the process more efficient. These tools facilitate end-to-end management solutions for M&E needs, enabling practitioners to house and manage data, present it on a common dashboard, analyze it, create reports, and share it with stakeholders involved.



CONSIDERATIONS WHILE MOVING THROUGH DIRECT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

1

Spend time building trust and alignment between the collaborative's partners

The implementation phase of a collaborative typically raises questions and issues around responsibilities, accountabilities, rules of engagement, and mechanisms for decision-making. While it is critical to put in place clear structures and processes that address these aspects, the collaborative will not function effectively without a strong foundation of trust between its partners. Balancing the softer aspects of trust building, expectation setting and consensus building with core project activities, is therefore a vital consideration throughout the collaborative's life cycle, but especially in the implementation phase. 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.

Formal meetings can serve as a platform to discuss updates regarding the collaborative's ongoing work, achievements, challenges, concerns and future plans. In addition to facilitating meetings between all the partners, it is particularly helpful to create separate spaces for interaction among the implementing partner cohort, to enable the exchange of learnings and best practices regarding the execution of their respective programs on the ground. Facilitating interactions through more informal gatherings is also a critical means of building trust and camaraderie, and fostering a community of purpose among partners at an individual level. Finally, since in-person meetings are not always feasible to organize, collaboratives can consider leveraging technology as an effective tool to ensure regular and open communication between meetings.⁵³



There are no shortcuts to aligning partners on an implementation model for a collaborative! It is a very detailed and a long-term process. We need to put ourselves out there with complete transparency and trust; ensuring that a fair amount of discussion, introspection, learning and observation takes place between all the partners. Field visits can also enhance the process of understanding the implementation model better.⁵⁴



-Naghma Mulla, EdelGive Foundation

2

Invest in building capacity of implementing partners

Capacity building has shown to have a clear link to improved organization performance and, thereby, greater impact. At its core, it is important to recognize that every organization has its unique strengths and weaknesses. In a collaborative setting, which most often requires implementing partners to demonstrate a specific and shared set of capabilities, it is worth recognizing that variances may exist – not all partners may possess all the required skills, and even if they do, the way they apply these may not be fully aligned to the collaborative's context and needs. By focusing on building capacity of implementing organizations, the collaborative's partners can improve the chances of achieving their shared goals if they collaboratively commit to prioritizing and strengthening critical elements within these organizations, such as leadership and talent, monitoring and evaluation, communication strategy, partnership development and others.

Capacity can be built directly by the collaborative's backbone organization or through external capacity building experts where relevant. Determining what to focus on and why, identifying solutions, resourcing those solutions, executing with excellence, and gauging success are all important aspects of the capacity building lifecycle.⁵⁵ It is critical to highlight here that there is no one type of capacity building support that collaboratives should engage in; the extent and nature of this support should depend on a detailed assessment of the implementing organizations' capabilities, strengths and challenges, along with the specific needs of the collaborative.

3

Develop a deep understanding of the local context and include voices from the community

For any implementing partner to function effectively in a geography, it is necessary for them to have deep understanding of the local context and tailor their approach to this context. This not only means being aware of the socio-economic aspects of the given geography, but also includes knowing who the key local stakeholders are, what cultural practices and beliefs exist within the given geography, and other such critical information. A deep understanding of local context builds trust between the implementing partners and the local community gatekeepers, enabling greater participation and smoother implementation of the work. It also ensures greater relevance and therefore effectiveness of the programs themselves, highlighting its significance in the implementation phase.



Bringing the voice of the consumer to the table is critical for collaboratives in the implementation stage. There is this normal tendency of "I am the expert," and a lot gets watered down when you don't involve the end-user in the picture, because guess what, the end-user is always more knowledgeable about the problem.⁵⁶



-Rishi Agarwal, FSC

4

Ensure early buy-in from local government bodies

Whether at the national, state, city or district level, the government in India plays an important role in enabling effective implementation of programs and driving impact through collaboratives. Securing the government's support can mean propelling a program's impact to a scale not achievable otherwise. It can also help in allowing smoother implementation and garnering quicker adoption of the work among communities. Implementing organizations are advised to start early in identifying and building relationships with government officials who will be critical along the collaborative's implementation journey. Even once the program activities kick off, regularly engaging them through meetings and events can help nurture them into champions of the collaborative's work.

5

Be nimble and open to changes

As collaboratives delve into implementation, it is important to acknowledge that there is no such thing as a perfect plan. With the global development sector continuing to be especially dynamic, no plan can accurately predict every shift or opportunity. Collaboratives that are agile and begin execution while continuing to adapt their strategies can establish a cycle of quick wins and consistent momentum that keeps the partners aligned to the vision and energized by the possibilities. As collaboratives start building a deeper understanding of their intervention landscapes, it is likely that most will need to course correct along the way. Maintaining flexibility and space to allow for such course correction, and adopting an approach that is nimble while continuing the forward movement is a critical consideration for any collaborative. At the same time, it is also important that collaboratives do not sacrifice strategic priorities in pursuit of this agility. Here, the shared vision, mission and goals of the collaborative can continue to be a valuable tool to drive alignment, and a constant north star by which to evaluate new information or opportunities.



Patient funding, trust amongst partners, and a strong learning orientation are especially key in the implementation phase, where collaboratives deal with complex issues around the optimal models to translate goals to impact, what is working and what is not. They most often learn these by doing and by embracing the feedback and learning loop to progress and where required, course-correct their implementation approaches. It is also critical to not compromise on values and the "non-negotiables" on which the partners have aligned, whilst having the humility and agility to improve your model to achieve impact.⁵⁷



-Pritha Venkatachalam, The Bridgespan Group

6

Share knowledge and disseminate learnings

For any multi-stakeholder collaborative, the importance of placing learning and sharing at the center of its work cannot be overstated. Speaking to sector experts and reading about latest trends and innovations in the given sector of interest can be valuable means of incorporating new ideas and ensuring that the collaborative continues to operate at the forefront of that sector. As collaboratives move forward in their journey, documenting these learnings along the way and sharing them with members of the collaborative as well as with the sector at large, can help prevent replication of mistakes, ensure continuity of institutional learnings in case of key personnel transitions, accelerate progress of the work, and allow for cumulative learning within the sector. Such exchange of learnings can be achieved through multiple ways such as seminars and conferences, field visits, communities of practice, publication of research reports and case studies, and dissemination through social media, among others.

7

Invest adequate time and resources into project management

The backbone organization has a critical role to play in project management, and should consider dedicating enough resources — staff, time and effort — to this. Often in complex and fast moving collaboratives, the backbone organization is responsible for managing the moving pieces, keeping all stakeholders on track and updated on what is happening, ensuring reporting milestones and standards are met. While this role kick-starts soon after the partners are on board, it becomes even more crucial once activities are rolled out on the ground by implementing partners.

10to19 DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE

The journey of program implementation for the 10to19 Collaborative (DAC) began in early 2017, when it set out to select its implementing partners and geographies of focus. Over the next 18 months, the Collaborative carried out community assessments, designed its programs and eventually rolled out its interventions in late 2018. This is an ongoing journey and the Collaborative continues to learn through its experiences every day.

Following are the key milestones that the Collaborative encountered along its journey of program implementation:

1. Selected implementing partners

Given the audaciousness of its vision, the 10to19 Collaborative strongly believed that its success relies heavily on the execution capabilities of its implementing partners. The size of the Collaborative's grants and length of commitment further reiterated the responsibility that the Collaborative had to dedicate adequate time, effort and resources to selecting implementing partners that aligned strongly with its goals and values and had the capabilities to deliver the desired impact. Leveraging its five years of research and due diligence work in the adolescents sector through Dasra's earlier mainstreaming programs, Dasra undertook a detailed process in 2017 to identify four local, scalable and high impact organizations for the Collaborative to invest in.

Based on information gathered through primary research, organization records, conversations with nonprofit leaders and field visits, the selection process focused on evaluating organizations across a few key aspects such as:



For further detail on how 10to19 went about selecting its implementing partners, please refer to the second report in this series, *Collaborative Action: Empowering 10to19*.⁴³

Today, 10to19 works with its four identified partners – Aangan Trust, Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3), Child in Need Institute (CINI) and Quest Alliance – to implement its state-based approach to empowering India's adolescents.



In Jharkhand, Aangan is working to integrate safety practices within schools and build schools as safe spots within the community to increase agency and combat early marriage for girls.

In Jharkhand, Quest Alliance is working to strengthen the education system and mainstream adolescents, who have dropped out of schools, into formal or informal education and vocational programs.

In Jharkhand, CINI is providing training and technical assistance to the Jharkhand State Department of Health and Family Welfare.

In Jharkhand, C3 is building the agency of adolescent girls and combating school dropout, early marriage and early pregnancy by providing technical assistance and capacity building support to the state government programs.

2. Identified geographies of focus

The decision to pilot 10to19 in the Indian state of Jharkhand was arrived upon based on secondary research and various conversations with partner organizations. Both these processes showed extremely poor development indicators for adolescents in Jharkhand, particularly related to literacy, school drop-out, child marriage, health and sanitation. While indicators had long marked Jharkhand as a state in need of immediate action, the internal state conflict had kept several civil society organizations and donors at bay from entering or scaling their implementation plans in Jharkhand. However, recent developments in the state highlight three key factors, which helped 10to19 arrive at its decision to pilot its work in Jharkhand.⁵⁸

The state government had shown signs of openness, promising a conducive environment to drive change




Several multilateral bodies had extended support in the state to empower adolescent girls

The state had become home to strong enabling nonprofits that had a willingness to scale

Within Jharkhand, the Collaborative opted for a saturation model that delivered the intervention to every adolescent in a given program area. In this case, the organizations used a block-level saturation model. A block is a district sub-division in rural India and is generally accepted as the minimum scale required to demonstrate the success and scalability of an intervention.



This table indicates the annual targets set by the Collaborative for the first three years.

Indicators	Program Targets		
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
 Number of adolescents reached	298,902	465,221	488,482
 Number of community members and parents reached	48,140	71,300	74,195
 Number of government frontline workers reached	7,930	11,461	11,902

A region-wise breakup of the geographical focus of the four implementing partners under the 10to19 Collaborative:



3. Gathered evidence

The next step was to create implementing plans for the partner organizations. While each of the Collaborative's implementing partners identified specific geographies in which to carry out their work, they simultaneously aligned on designing their programs in a way that converged towards achieving the four outcomes of the Collaborative. The Collaborative established a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprising internal and external experts, which led the design of the survey and provided advisory support to the baseline survey process. The TAC worked extensively with 10to19 partner organizations to ensure the baseline questionnaire was relevant to their program design and to ensure the process included inputs of all relevant stakeholders. The execution of the survey, however, was carried out by an external agency that surveyed 15,963 adolescents (8,383 of them girls) across 41,393 households in Jharkhand over a period of six months.

It was a long and resource-intensive process. However, by the end of it, the data gathered was able to highlight the need for interventions across health, education and agency, focusing on the situation of adolescents prior to their exposure to the intervention programs. The baseline data furnishes important indicators against which the longer-term impact of programs will be measured. In addition to serving as a point of reference against which to measure the Collaborative's progress over a period of time, the survey was seen as a tool to engage the local government on the topic of adolescents in Jharkhand and demonstrate the intent and credibility of the Collaborative. In the process of designing the baseline, inputs from partner organizations, too, were taken to include questions that particularly related to each of their work within the Collaborative.

At the same time, the process of gathering evidence also brought out some key nuances around the communities where implementation would take place, which helped partner organizations build a better understanding of the ground scenario and tailor their program activities accordingly. For example, Aangan Trust's understanding that community members in its chosen district spoke three different languages was validated by this process, and helped the organization translate the curriculum into more languages than they had originally planned. Similarly, Quest Alliance's original model of operations involved working with schools alone, however, community assessment brought about the urgency to work with out-of-school students and other community gatekeepers too.

4. Designed programs and built implementation plan

The next step was to create implementing plans for the partner organizations. While each implementing partner of the Collaborative identified its respective geographies to impact adolescent lives through a commitment to their respective outcomes, they all have aligned to the four priority outcomes of the Collaborative. Adopting a multi-sectoral approach, implementing partners chose to work towards one or more outcomes through a combination of pathways—education, health, employability or agency—each of which have been shown to be effective in impacting the Collaborative's four end goals.

- The Education Pathway includes strategies to enhance school retention/re-enrolment and academic success as the central component of the program.
- The Health Pathway includes strategies to build adolescents' skills to make informed choices around reproductive health, fertility and sexuality.
- The Agency Pathway is seen as a cross-cutting pathway that can be achieved within the other two pathways by integrating a holistic approach that accounts for the structural and power inequities that women and girls face while challenging rigid norms that dictate their roles and behaviors.

Further, to assist implementing partners in achieving these outcomes, the implementation plans took a multi-sectoral approach, and identified other stakeholders—such as community-based organizations, public institutions and government bodies—that they could partner with. Clearly outlining these partnerships in the implementation plan ensured accountability while maintaining a manageable distribution of the work and playing to each stakeholder's unique strengths.

Below are models of the 10to19 implementing partners, shedding light on the nature of their interventions on the ground, the stakeholders engaged, the focus of their approach, and their commitments towards the Collaborative's mission and vision.



Measures of success



C3's Model under 10to19

C3 creates an empowering ecosystem to impact the lives of disadvantaged adolescent girls in Gumla and Lohardaga districts of Jharkhand. It follows a comprehensive approach to improve outcomes by leveraging available scalable platforms to ensure adolescents receive all the relevant support and services that they need. Its approach accounts for agency, health, education and employability, for which the organization has set in motion an integrated district level model to support the civil society and government ecosystem to deliver impact for adolescents.

To achieve this, its approach focuses on

Extending the in-school Udaan program (currently run in high schools) to middle schools, conducting life skills sessions imparted by trained teachers to build agency in adolescents, and supporting the government to deliver Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram(RKSK) program to out-of-school adolescent girls, mentoring them on issues such as sexual & reproductive health (SRH), and providing vocational training

Strengthening government to implement the evidence-based district-level RKSK model and use the platform to provide access to information and services around SRH

Building upon the agency and health pathway to identify girls at risk of dropout before they reach adolescence and follow them till they complete school education

The program aims to



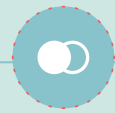
Increase completion of secondary education

- Increased percentage of adolescent girls who are retained in the schools / reduction in school drop out.
- Increase among adolescent girls enrolled/re-enrolled in schools.
- Increased percentage of adolescents with intention to complete Class XII.
- Increased percentage of adolescent girls attending educational camps.



Increase agency

- Increased percentage of adolescents reporting positive efficacy.
- Increase in number of adolescents who are aware of legal age for marriage.
- Increased percentage of adolescents who believe that the household work should be shared.
- Increased percentage of adolescents using the livelihood/vocational training opportunities.



Delay age at marriage

- Increased SRH knowledge among adolescents who are aware of three or more pubertal changes.
- Increased percentage of adolescents who are aware of family planning methods.
- Increased percentage of adolescents who know that a girl can get pregnant the first time.
- Increased percentage of adolescents with knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS.
- Increased percentage of frontline health workers providing family planning information and services during the year.



Delay age at first pregnancy/birth

CINI's Model under 10to19

CINI implements its program centered on adolescent-focused systems, strengthening of key government health functionaries in the districts of Simdega and Saraikela in Jharkhand. It works to improve access to social networks and safe spaces, and educational and employment opportunities for adolescents. Leveraging innovative practices in service delivery and adolescent engagement, the organization's focus is on strengthening state-wide systems for effective implementation in the various fields it operates in, including maternal and child nutrition, child rights and protection, and adolescent health.

To achieve this, its approach focuses on

Developing a model of adolescent empowerment program by actively engaging multiple stakeholders including government, civil society, local elected representatives and communities

Working closely with the local, district and state level governments and building capacity of the ecosystem to run programs like RKSK more effectively and efficiently

Innovating best practices, generating evidence and documenting them to strengthen local state and national level alliances in the adolescents space

The program aims to



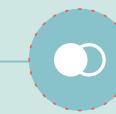
Increase completion of secondary education

- Increased aspiration among girls to pursue higher education.
- Improved school enrollment among girls.
- Improved school attendance among girls.



Increase agency

- Increased self-esteem, self-efficacy, confidence and decision making in girls.
- Girls are aware of their legal age for marriage.
- Adolescents have positive gender attitudes.
- Girls lead and participate in community activities.
- Girls have access to safe spaces.



Delay age at marriage



Delay age at first pregnancy/birth

- Improved health seeking behavior among adolescents.
- Improved health awareness to access services.
- Improved health services.
- Improved awareness about contraceptives.

5. Initiated intervention

With the evidence gathered and implementing plans set in action, it was time to roll out the Collaborative's programs. The first step was to get approvals or permissions from the government at the state and district levels in Jharkhand, wherever necessary. These included permissions for activities such as carrying out the needs assessment, introducing program interventions, and engaging with public institutions such as schools, panchayats, health centers, aanganwadis and ASHA workers for supporting the program's implementation. The second was to recruit local staff and set up block and district office spaces. The third was to organize orientation and training workshops for the program staff, right from leadership to the field staff.

Throughout this process, the backbone organization provided customized capacity building support to the partner organizations to strengthen their internal support teams and processes, and to facilitate network building. The capacity building support provided to each organization was tailor made, depending on the need and ask from each organization. For example, Quest Alliance received support to determine and operationalize scaling pathways for success; Centre for Catalyzing Change received support to diversify and strengthen its fundraising capabilities; and Child in Need Institute received support to document its program methodologies, and assess the needs, appetite and status of its talent resources.

The Collaborative did hit a few barriers over the course of this journey—such as delays in getting government approvals, frequent attrition of human resource on the ground and change in public institution leadership—however, the implementation organizations adapted to these challenges and offered solutions, while Dasra as a backbone organization provided support wherever it could, which could range from leveraging its contacts to reach out to government authorities to negotiating with external stakeholders or mediating with donors on delays.

It was at this stage that the implementation organizations, too, came to provide support to each other. Organizations like C3 and CINI, which had already been working in Jharkhand, were able to share their experiences of working in the state government with Aangan Trust and Quest Alliance, who were new to the state.

6. Built feedback loops and initiated tracking of progress

Regular touch points were established with the stakeholders, and transparency in communication was maintained at all stages. This allowed implementation partners, donors and even Dasra to exchange feedback in a healthy and enabling environment, both formally and informally. This constant feedback loop created space for respecting and understanding each other's challenges, and be more open to delays or changes in programmatic activities. Plans were also put in place, as soon as the project was rolled on the ground, to measure the progress towards the four outcomes against a certain set of indicators or intermediate outcomes. Leveraging technical expertise, Dasra helped design and build a dashboard where each implementing partner was expected to update its progress on a quarterly basis. The dashboard is designed such that it tracks progress of each implementation organization's activities, timelines and outcomes on ground, as well as highlights the progress of the broader collaborative towards its larger milestones and four outcomes. This dashboard was a critical medium for Dasra—in its role as a backbone organization—as well as for the donors to track the programs' progress and evaluate success for each individual organization as well as collectively as a collaborative.

It is worth reiterating here that with each passing day, the 10to19 Collaborative is evolving and learning through its successes, challenges and failures. The insights offered here in no way reflect the entirety of what it takes for collaboratives to successfully engage in implementation – they serve only as initial recommendations based on Dasra's experience with implementation in the 10to19 Collaborative. As we continue to learn from others' experiences as well as our own, we hope to document even more insights on this critical aspect of what enables multi-stakeholder collaboratives to drive transformative impact.



Conclusion



At a time when some of India's most pressing and complex social problems are too big to tackle alone, it is clear that collaborative action is no longer an option, but a necessity. Collaboratives, if designed and implemented effectively, have the potential to magnify the sum of each partner's contributions, demonstrate measurable results beyond what any single organization or individual can deliver, and enable the systemic change at the scale required to achieve India's SDGs.

However despite several examples of impact-driven collaboratives at play, there is little codification and documentation of what drives the effectiveness of such initiatives. Arising from the 10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative's strong principle of sharing learnings with the sector at large, this report series is an effort to shine light on key factors underlying the effective design, management and facilitation of multi-stakeholder collaboratives.

This report in particular focuses on what it means to undertake implementation in a collaborative and what enables such implementation to be effective. Through the many successes, challenges, mistakes and failures along 10to19's journey, we have learned many important lessons towards this, including the importance of understanding and integrating local sensitivities into the implementation plan, the criticality of driving alignment and buy-in among all partners during this phase, the value of investing time and resources into project management, the need to take a long-term view of implementation in a collaborative, and finally the significance of maintaining agility to embrace the circle of regular feedback, learning and course-correction.

Some of these learnings are echoed below by 10to19's implementing partners, based on their first-hand experience of carrying out the Collaborative's work in Jharkhand:

“ At the ground level, getting the right people and partners at the right place, engaging communities, getting necessary approvals from government departments, getting all stakeholders oriented and working towards a common purpose is challenging, and it affects the project financially and qualitatively. But if the collaborative's vision and mission are aligned on and considered the North Star among all those associated, everything will eventually fall into place.⁵⁹ ”

-Amit Kumar Ghosh, Child in Need Institute

“ We need to be able to learn from other models that are being implemented – whether they are models of healthcare or community engagement– in order to take a more holistic approach to the same problems. It is important to recognize that you're not the only one facing these challenges, and others could have solutions to the same challenges. ⁶⁰ ”

-Aakash Sethi, Quest Alliance

“ The harms we seek to prevent—early marriage, child labour, child trafficking—are driven by socio-economic needs and cultural norms that are very specific to a location. Our solutions therefore need to be equally specific. This means two things for our practice – having a really granular understanding of ground realities through strong local partnerships, and programming that has the flexibility to be adapted based on what the ground reality is.⁶¹ ”

-Chaitali Sheth, Aangan Trust

“ You have to work with the system to achieve impact at scale, and you have to share and work together. There should be frequent meetings, more opportunities to work together, and more sharing learnings among one other. We all have some strengths to share, and we have some opportunities to seize. Even though our target is the same, the geographies we are in are vastly different and require special attention and solutions.⁶² ”

-Sanjay Paul, Centre for Catalyzing Change

What Next?

As we continue to collect learnings along the ongoing journey of 10to19, we hope to document even more insights on critical aspects of multi-stakeholder collaboratives. While this report focused on detailing key considerations and insights along the implementation phase of a collaborative's journey, subsequent reports will address aspects such as achieving scale and sustainability in multi-stakeholder collaboratives and critical approaches pathways to get there, such as data and evidence, government partnerships and community mobilization.

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Dasra

Dasra meaning 'enlightened giving' in Sanskrit, is a pioneering strategic philanthropy organization that aims to transform India into a nation 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, it has deepened social impact in focused fields that include Adolescents, Urban Sanitation and Democracy and Governance, and has built social capital by leading a strategic philanthropy movement in the country. For additional information, please visit:

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10to19

10to19: Dasra Adolescents Collaborative is a high-impact platform that unites funders, technical experts, the government and social organizations to reach five million adolescents, and move the needle on four outcomes key to adolescent empowerment. Launched in 2017, it has aligned four implementing partners, more than 12 funding partners, government officials, researchers and technical experts, and a 180+ organization-strong 'Community of Practice' to together work towards its common vision. The Collaborative follows a two-pronged approach to not only deliver holistic and improved programs and services for adolescents on the ground, but also amplify adolescent voices and build championship among gatekeepers and influencers to ensure this population is prioritized at a national level.

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