Change at the Speed of Trust

Advancing Educational Opportunity
Through Cross-Sector Collaboration in Louisville

Educator Guide

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Overview

This Educator Guide is designed to assist instructors in teaching this case to students and practitioners. It is based on case pedagogy, which invites participants to put themselves in the shoes of the protagonist(s) of the case and imagine how they would respond to the circumstances. Participants should read the teaching case in advance and identify key issues as a preliminary step toward meeting the learning objectives. Instructors may then use the time in the classroom to guide participants in exploring the issues and examining the challenges in the case; to introduce key concepts, tools, and frameworks; and to assist participants in applying their learning to their own environments and challenges.

This guide includes learning objectives, a synopsis, key questions, a roadmap for discussion, and appendices with additional pedagogical information and theoretical applications. The roadmap and appendices are offered to initiate meaningful conversation but are by no means the only way to teach the case. Each educator or facilitator should feel free to design their own teaching plans; both the structure and the time allotted for each component are suggestions.

Learning Objectives

The primary learning objectives of this case are to help participants cultivate:

o   Awareness of conditions and choices that foster and hinder cross-sector collaboration and the ability to recognize and differentiate common challenges.
o   The ability to imagine and understand the potential effects of alternative approaches to a problem.

Case Synopsis

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Louisville, Kentucky, found itself in the middle to the back of the pack among peer cities along a number of key measures of prosperity and quality of life. Since then, two consecutive mayors had advanced collaborative efforts across sectors to increase students' college and career readiness and address the City's significant achievement gap. This case tells the story of how that effort evolved under the leadership of Mayor Greg Fischer into a plan to effect system change in education from "cradle to career," through the implementation of wraparound services and scholarship guarantees.

The case explores cross-sector collaboration and governance in a city-wide context from the mayor's point of view centering the question of whether the process is moving too fast or too slow. It also supports learning about the design and management of cross-sector collaborations, including common challenges and success factors.

Key Questions

1. Was this collaboration moving fast enough?
2. What were the trade-offs between speed, quality, and consensus in collaborative processes?
3. What could the mayor have done? What formal/informal authority could he have exercised?

Roadmap for Discussion (See Appendix 1.)

Introduction (3-10 minutes): Briefly state the goal of the session in reference to the case, cite specific major conflicts facing the protagonist, and foreshadow broader learning objectives.

Exploration (45-60 minutes): Use class discussion, "buzz groups," and board work to examine the issues and options confronting the protagonist.

Diagnosis (15-45 minutes): Introduce key concepts, frameworks, and tools to help participants pinpoint possible solutions to major conflicts in the case.

Application (15 minutes, optional): Ask participants to relate the concepts and frameworks to their own organizations' challenges.

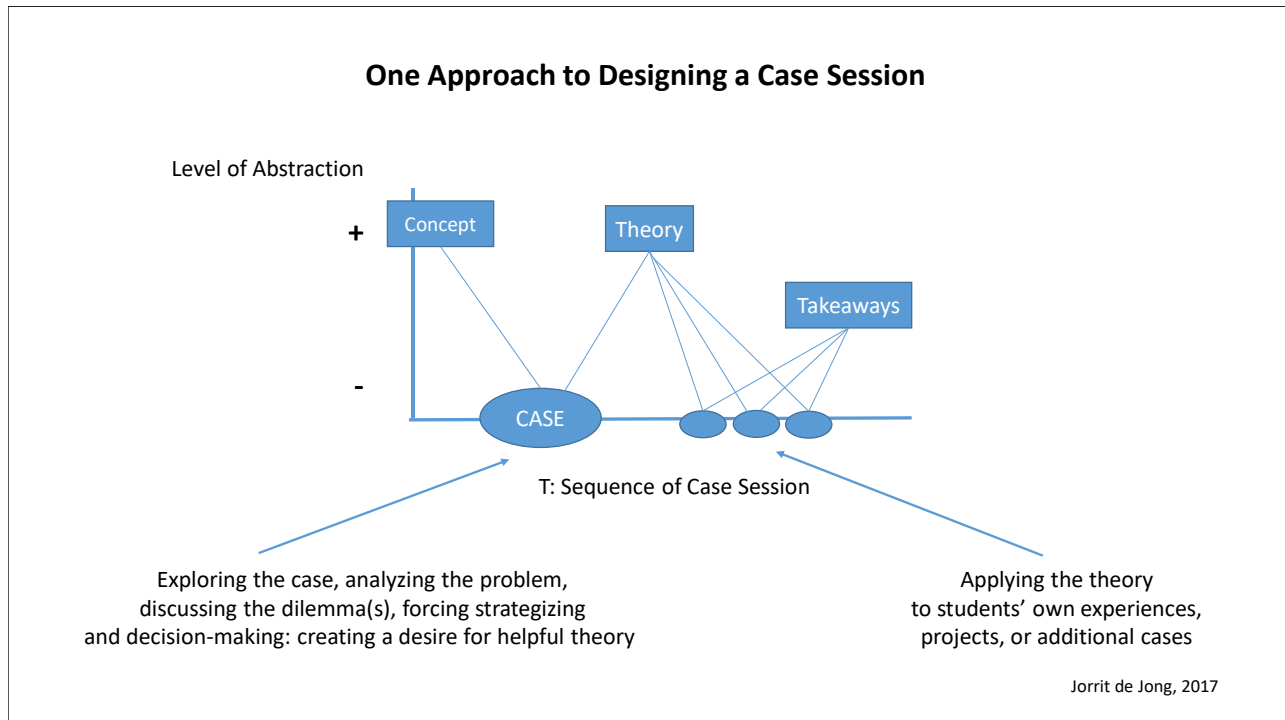**Wrap-Up and Takeaways** (15 minutes): Review the learning objectives and discuss insights most relevant to the participants' organizations' challenges.

Introduction (3-10 minutes):
Briefly review the case and frame the primary subject of the session: understanding the challenges, risks, opportunities, and essential skills associated with orchestrating a collaborative effort across organizations and sectors.

Exploration (45-60 minutes):
- *How do mayors get things done that require resources and authority over which they have little or no control?*

Take a straw poll: *Was the Louisville Promise cabinet moving at the right pace?*
1. No, it should have moved more quickly to produce meaningful results for students.
2. Yes, it was moving at the right speed to balance the many stakeholders' concerns and create results.
3. No, it should have slowed down and ensure all nuances of this complex issue were handled properly.

Solicit reasons for answering 1, 2, or 3 and note them on board. (See Board Plan, Appendix 2.)

Introduce a trade-offs diagram. (See Board Plan, Appendix 2.) In every collaboration, the goal is to achieve a quality outcome, maintain consensus about ends and means, and realize results as quickly as possible. It is a challenge to make this work, and collaborations often sacrifice one for the sake of the other two:

- To get quick results, a collaborative team may reach consensus about an action that addresses low-hanging fruit and fail to act in ways that address the root cause of a problem, applying a Band-Aid rather than offering a cure.
- To ensure consensus around a high-quality approach, a team might spend a long time discussing and thinking about the root causes of the problem and researching best practices, and pay dearly in opportunity costs.
- To attain a quality result quickly, a team might trample some of its members' concerns about process values or representation, creating tension and mistrust among stakeholders.

Ask participants to consider the following in the case.

- *What would a quality outcome have looked like?*
- *What counted as consensus? How much consensus was needed in order to act*?

Show the cabinet members' range of responses regarding their consensus on problem definition. (See Appendix 2, Board Plan and Appendix 6, survey results.) With answers to these questions in mind, revisit the question of whether the Louisville Promise cabinet was moving fast enough.

Ask in (optional) buzz groups:

- *Are there always trade-offs between speed, quality, and consensus? How do these tensions play out in your own work?*

Diagnosis (15-45 minutes)
Use frameworks to further explore strategic challenges and apply theory to diagnose the issues presented in the case.

- *What made collaborative work so tricky? What frameworks can help us understand the challenges and develop strategy to address them?*

Three possible frames/discussion pastures are included in Appendix 3 (General Evaluative Framework for Cross-Sector Collaboration), Appendix 4 (Public Value/Strategic Triangle), and Appendix 5 (Developing Organizational Capabilities for Collaboration).

Application (optional, 15 minutes)
Have students work together in groups or in plenary to apply the concepts and frameworks to their own collaborative challenges.

Wrap up and takeaways (15 minutes)
Review the learning objectives and discuss insights most relevant to participants' organizations' challenges. Some possible takeaways:

- Collaboration is difficult; it helps to diagnose the particular challenges you encounter along the way—*with* your collaborators.
- The trade-off diagram and other frameworks can serve as diagnostic devices and conversation tools.
- Collaborative governance requires a broad repertoire of leadership behaviors, organizational capabilities, and continuous strategic adjustment.
- It is helpful to reflect on success and struggle across different collaborations.

Appendices

Appendix 1   Designing a Case Session

One Approach to Designing a Case Session

Level of Abstraction

+   Concept   Theory

Takeaways

-            CASE

T: Sequence of Case Session

Exploring the case, analyzing the problem,
discussing the dilemma(s), forcing strategizing
and decision-making: creating a desire for helpful theory

Applying the theory
to students' own experiences,
projects, or additional cases

Jorrit de Jong, 2017

Appendix 2   Board Plan

Board 1: Straw Poll Responses

Speed Up	Stay the Course	Slow Down
Possible responses: Need for quick wins/deliverables to build momentum Need goals narrower, prioritized Need to prioritize results over team building Mistake to pursue such a broad/expensive goal	Possible responses: Need the time to create a baseline level of trust Need the time to create buy-in Need the time to understand the issue	Possible responses: Lack of consensus about the nature of the problem Lack of consensus about the nature of solutions Lack of resources to sustain effort into the future

Board 2: Trade-offs in Collaborative Work

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                  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                  │             QUALITY             │
                  │   Robustness of your collaborative │
                  │   approach to solving the problem  │
                  └─────────────────────────────────┘



  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
  │            CONSENSUS            │      │              SPEED              │
  │ Inclusion of stakeholders needed to │      │  Making progress fast enough to   │
  │   produce desired outcomes      │      │     deliver results in time       │
  └─────────────────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────────────────┘
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Board 3: What Qualifies as Consensus?

Louisville Promise Survey Response

How challenging was agreeing on the exact problem to be addressed? (Horizontal axes represent number of respondents giving each rating.)
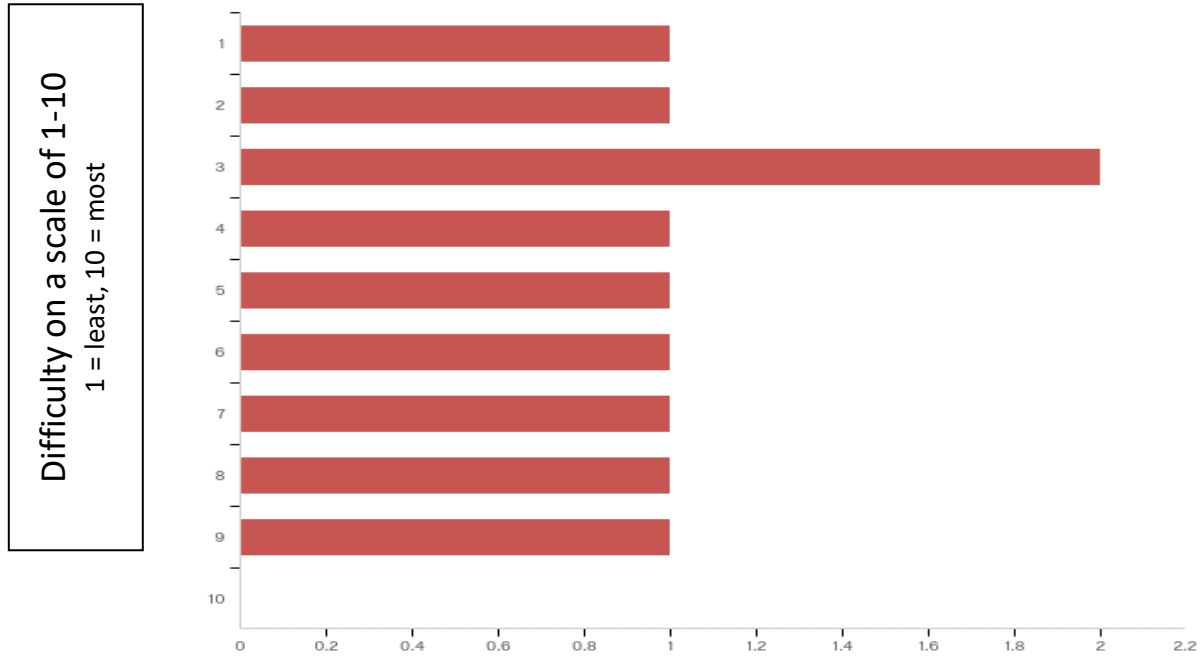
Appendix 3   Evaluative Framework for Cross-sector Collaborations

The three central elements of any cross-sector collaboration are <u>the design, the process and practice, and leadership</u> throughout the process and at key moments. The framework below breaks these central elements into component parts with corresponding discussion questions.

Design	- COMPOSITION: *What was the composition of the collaborative group?* *Who was part of the team, or not, and why?* - PURPOSE(S): *Was it created for one purpose, or multiple purposes?* *Was the group designed for one issue, or for long term, comprehensive collaboration?* - MODE OF GOVERNANCE: *What was the governance structure? How was it organized, and why?* - Backbone organization governance, lead organization governance, or shared governance?
Process	*What did the collaboration practice look like and how did it influence the effectiveness of the collaborative effort?* - LEARNING/INNOVATION PROCESSES *What feedback mechanisms were in place among the collaborators?* *Was the group open to experimentation?* *Did the group have a novel definition of the problem and proposed solutions?* - PROCESS CHALLENGES: *What were the most prominent challenges?* - Substantive problem-solving challenges: defining the problem and naming the goals, developing and measuring a theory of change/action - Accountability challenges: balancing accountability to the collaborative team with accountability to representative organizations - Teaming challenges: Building trust among collaborators, leveraging diversity within team, creating shared norms and behaviors, surfacing hidden information - PROCESS ENABLERS: *What conditions or actions were particularly helpful in making progress? Why?*
Leadership	*How did leadership of the collaborative work contribute to its successes?* *What were critical leadership moments over the course of the collaborative work?* *How did members of the collaboration respond to challenging moments? What were the results of these responses?* *What dilemmas emerged during this work?* *What was the mayor's role?*

Appendix 4   Cross-sector Collaboration Through the Lens of the Strategic Triangle

For those who have a working understanding of the strategic triangle, this appendix combines the previous framework with concepts in the public value lexicon:

Public Value I: Problem Definition
Consider the difference between how Mayor Abramson defined the problem (the need to compete in twentieth-century economy) and how Mayor Fischer defined the problem (lifelong learning from "cradle to career").
- *How different were these framings? How might they have affected the direction of the collaboration?*
- *Were there other competing or complementary value propositions or conceptions of the problem? How did the collaboration end up defining the problem?*
- *Did they miss opportunities for creating more value in the short term? Over the long term?*

Public Value II: Theory of Change
Compare the theory of action implicit in the Greater Louisville Educational Commitment (setting benchmarks; calling in business community and higher education as partners; establishing 55,000 Degrees as backbone organization) and the Cradle to Career/Louisville Promise theory of change.
- *How was it different? Did the theory of change evolve according to changes in problem definition/value proposition? Or vice versa?*
- *What did the mayor and his collaborators expect to gain from partnerships with By All Means and Say Yes/Weiss Institute? What were the risks of committing to them? How did the collaboration adapt to these models?*
- *What were the desired social outcomes of this intervention in terms of material wellbeing for individuals and society? In terms of fairness and justice for individuals and society? What were the potential costs in these same terms? How would you measure these effects?*

Operational Capacity I: Design of Collaboration
Review the different iterations of Cradle to Career presented in case appendices (four pillars, inclusive cabinet, refined cabinet plus core team/committees, new backbone).
- *Were the right people at the table? How would various configurations have amplified or muted different voices?*
- *Did BAM and Say Yes/Weiss (and/or their representatives) play a significant role in the design of the collaboration as it evolved?*

Consider the work going forward (fundraising, setting parameters for scholarships, creating and coordinating wraparound services, communication and public awareness, data collection and analysis).
- *Did the proposed structure at the end of the case lend itself to accomplishing this work? If not, why not? What would you propose instead?*

Operational Capacity II: Collaborative Process
Consider what the case suggests about the collaboration's capacity to learn, innovate, and advance its goals.
- *What factors in the collaborative process affected the collective capacity to learn and innovate? How did facilitating/support organizations (BAM, Say Yes/Weiss) help or hinder this capacity?*
- *What did it take to secure trust and a willingness to share information? Was this sufficient for accomplishing the collaboration's goals?*
- *How did the group leverage diversity of background, expertise, organization, etc., for learning? What capacities and insights did various partners bring to the project?*

- *How did norms—helpful (e.g., permission to fail) and unhelpful (e.g., epidemic of artificial harmony)— affect the functioning of the collaboration? What were the processes for internal accountability?*
- *Assuming the collaboration ran like a well-oiled machine into the future, did it have sufficient capacity to effect the change they are after? If not, what was missing and where could it be found?*

Legitimacy and Support I: Organizational Perspectives
To ensure legitimacy and support for the enterprise, the collaboration needed to include key stakeholders in the decision-making processes. Review the details of the case and consider the following questions:
- *Did any stakeholders appear to be absent in the configuration of the collaboration at the end of the case? Did this threaten its legitimacy? How?*
- *Were collaborating organizations in competition for resources? If so, what impact did this have (e.g., scholarships—would there be winners and losers in higher education)?*
- *How did collaborators handle competing allegiances and lines of accountability?*
- *To whom did individual members of the team feel accountable and for what?*

Legitimacy and Support II: Collaboration Perspective
Review the legitimacy and support for the enterprise in terms of its leadership over time, its challenge to the status quo, its efforts to engage the public, and the role of the mayor in steering and supporting the effort.
- *Who was steering the ship? Did leadership remain consistent over time? Did leaders emerge in response to crises (e.g., state takeover, inability to qualify for Say Yes)? Was that leadership effective?*
- *What did the status quo look like? What actors (if any) were protecting the status quo from the challenges the collaboration posed? Were there latent constituencies that could have arisen and organized opposition to these changes? What were they?*
- *How much did the public know about the problem and the collaboration? How much did it need to know? When did it need to know? Why?*
- *Did Mayor Fischer push enough? At the right moments? What do you think would happen to the collaboration if he lost reelection?*

The figures below illustrate a transition from a set of individuals representing particular groups or organizations—each with different yet connected public value propositions, operational capacities, and sources of legitimacy and support—to a well-functioning collaboration with its own integrated value proposition, operational capacity, and sources of legitimacy and support. The challenge of this work is to bring many triangles into alignment with one another without producing major distortions in each collaborator's individual triangle.
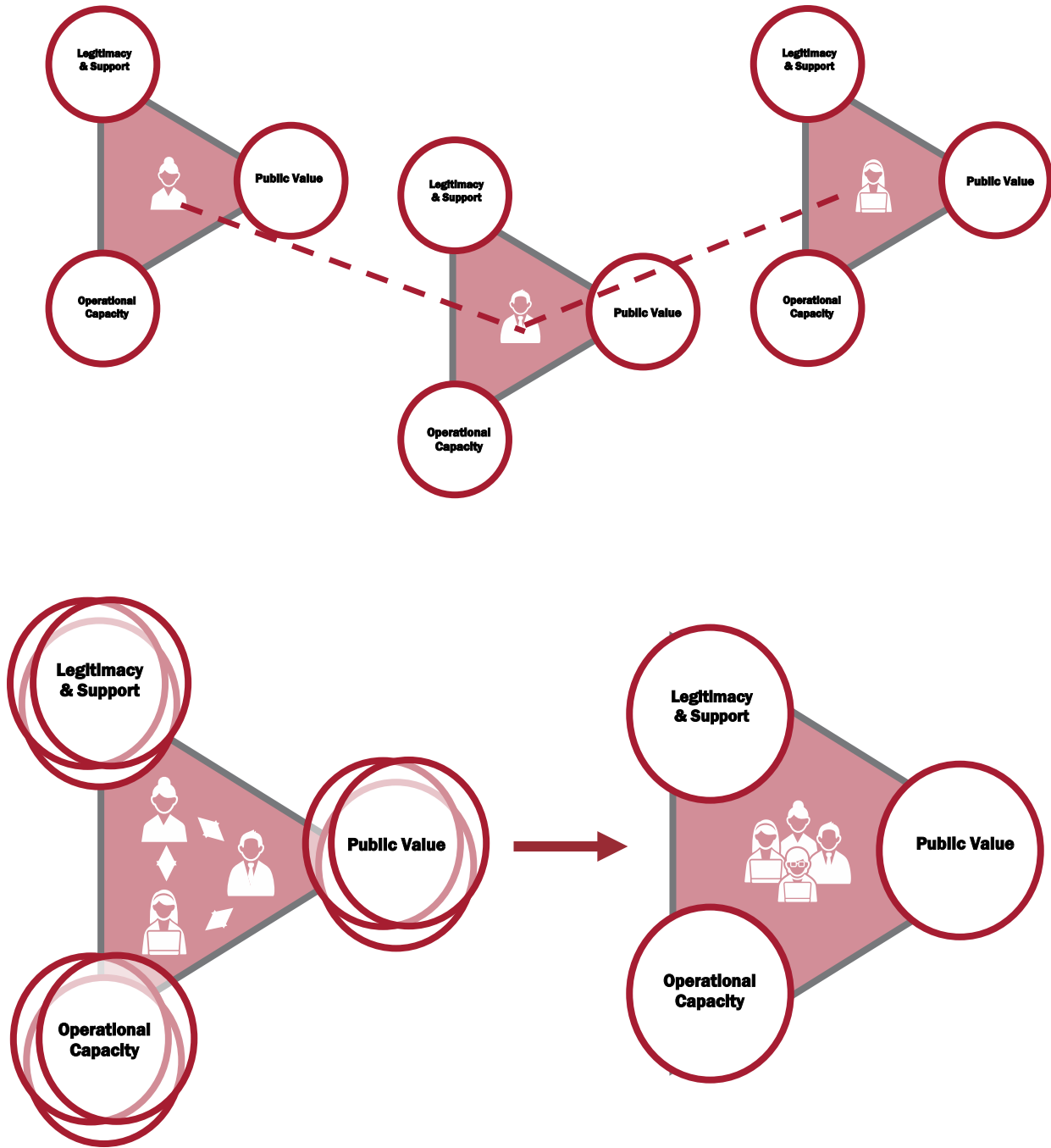
Appendix 5   Building Organizational Capabilities to Drive Collaborative Performance

The three key organizational capabilities that enable the performance of collaborations—performance review capabilities, collaborative capabilities, and data-analytic capabilities—are detailed below.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW CAPABILITIES
   Theory of Change:
   - *Are there clear goals and is there an idea about how to achieve them?*
   - *What are the assumptions underlying the means and ends?*

   Performance Management:
   - *Does performance review hold people accountable in a constructive way?*
   - *How does the group learn and improve its performance?*

COLLABORATIVE CAPABILITIES
   Breadth of the Collaboration:
   - *Who do you need for capacity or support?*
   - *Cross-silo, cross-sector, cross-level?*

   Depth of the Collaboration:
   - *How strong, reliable, effective is the collaboration?*
   - *What holds the group together?*

DATA-ANALYTIC CAPABILITIES
   Availability of data:
   - *Are data about the <u>problem</u> available?*
   - *Are data about <u>government performance</u> available?*

   Ability to analyze and use data:
   - *Who is involved in collecting, processing, and analyzing the data?*
   - *Are data an integral part of the decision-making process?*

Appendix 6   "Challenges of Cross-Sector Collaboration" Survey Results

The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative surveyed ten members of the Louisville Promise cabinet to understand both the challenges of the work and the level of consensus about the difficulty of the challenges.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Challenges generally viewed as high difficulty
- Setting up governance system
- Coming up with a workable plan
- Securing the resources

Challenges lacking consensus on degree of difficulty
- Agreeing on what the problem is
- Setting up communication channels

Additional notable findings
- 70 percent of respondents said at least one challenge was at a 2 or 3 level of difficulty; only one said challenges were level 1.
- 80 percent of respondents said at least one challenge was at an 8 or 9 level of difficulty; none said any challenges were level 10.
- No one said "Setting up Governance Structure" was LESS than a 6 in terms of difficulty.
- No one said "Learning from Ongoing Work + Adjusting Accordingly" was MORE than a 6 in terms of difficulty.

MOST ALIGNMENT ON: Relative difficulty of setting up governance structure

LEAST ALIGNMENT ON: Relative difficulty of agreeing on the problem to be solved

Least Difficult Challenge Overall
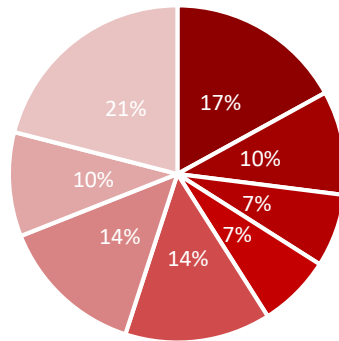
- Getting Right People Involved
- Agreeing Who Will Do What
- Agreeing What the Problem Is
- Learning from Ongoing Work + Adjusting
- Setting up Communications Channels
- Building Trust Among Group
- Other
- Securing Support from Parties who Lend Legitimacy

Most Difficult Challenge Overall
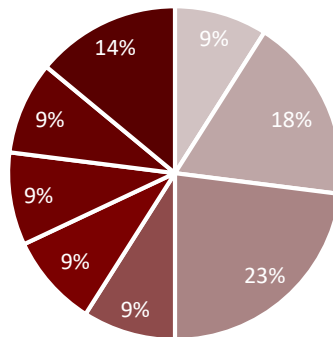
- Setting up Communication Channels
- Setting up Gov. Structure
- Agreeing on What to Accomplish
- Ensuring Parties are Doing What They Agreed
- Other
- Agreeing on the Problem
- Agreeing on How Goal Will Be Accomplished
- Securing Resources to Sustain Effort

RESPONSES (Horizontal axes represent number of respondents giving each difficulty rating.)

Q1.   Getting the right people and organizations involved in the collaborative effort?
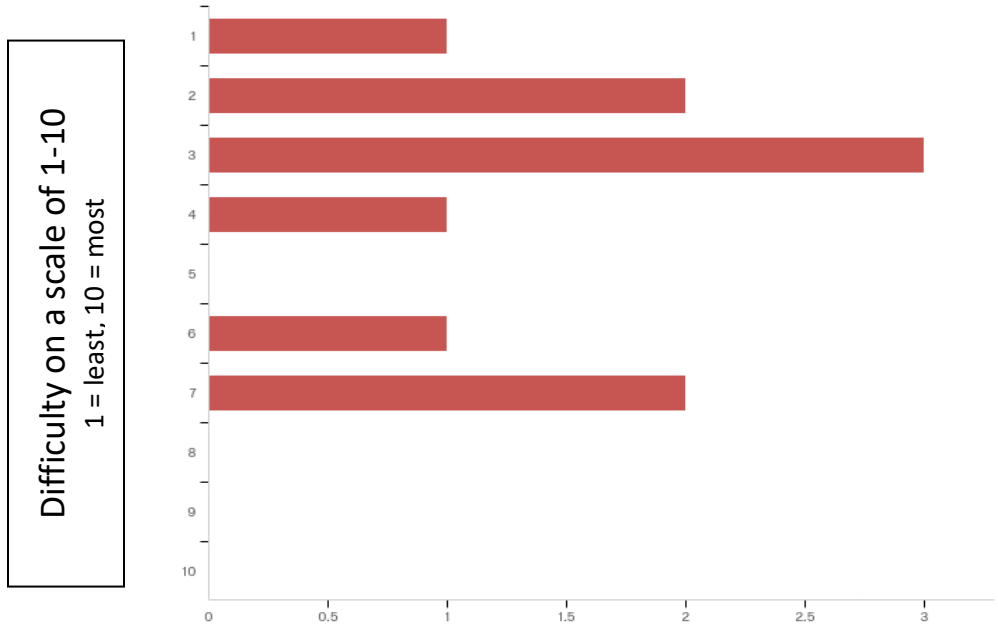
Q2.   Setting up communication channels within the group?
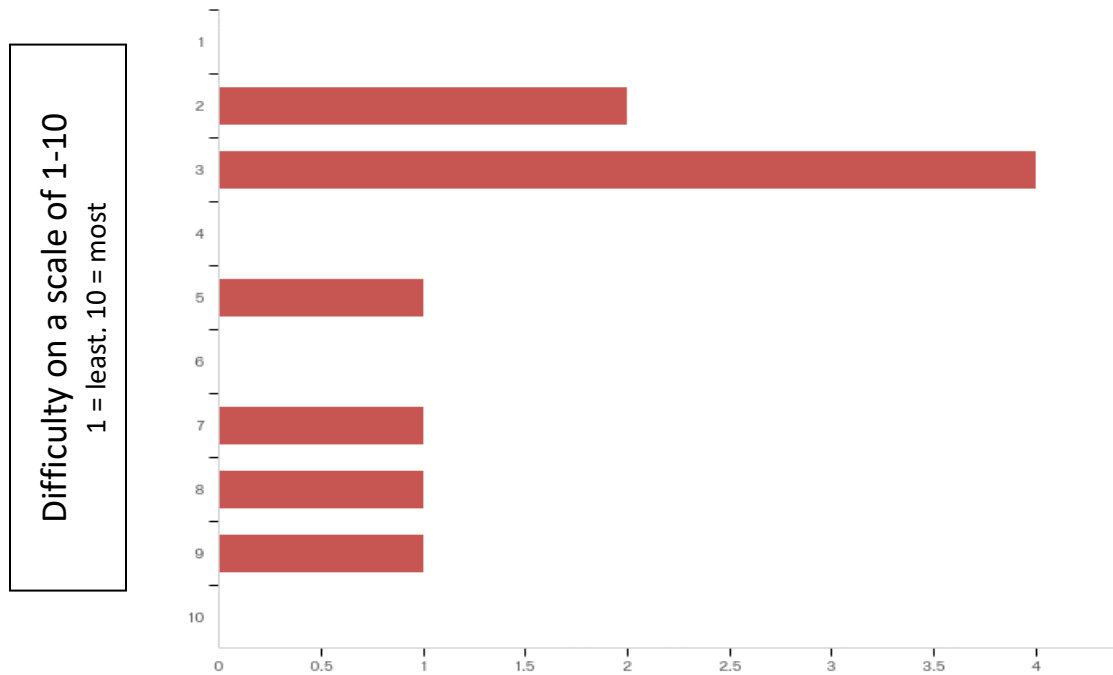
Q3.   Agreeing on how the group will make decisions?

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10
1 = least. 10 = most
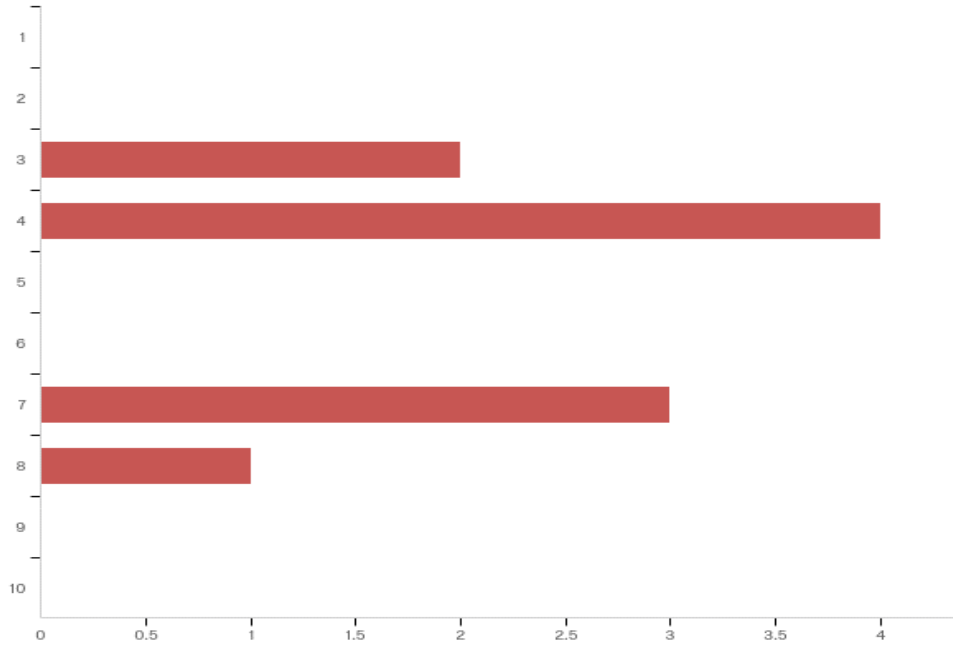
Q4.   Agreeing on who will do what?

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10
1 = least, 10 = most
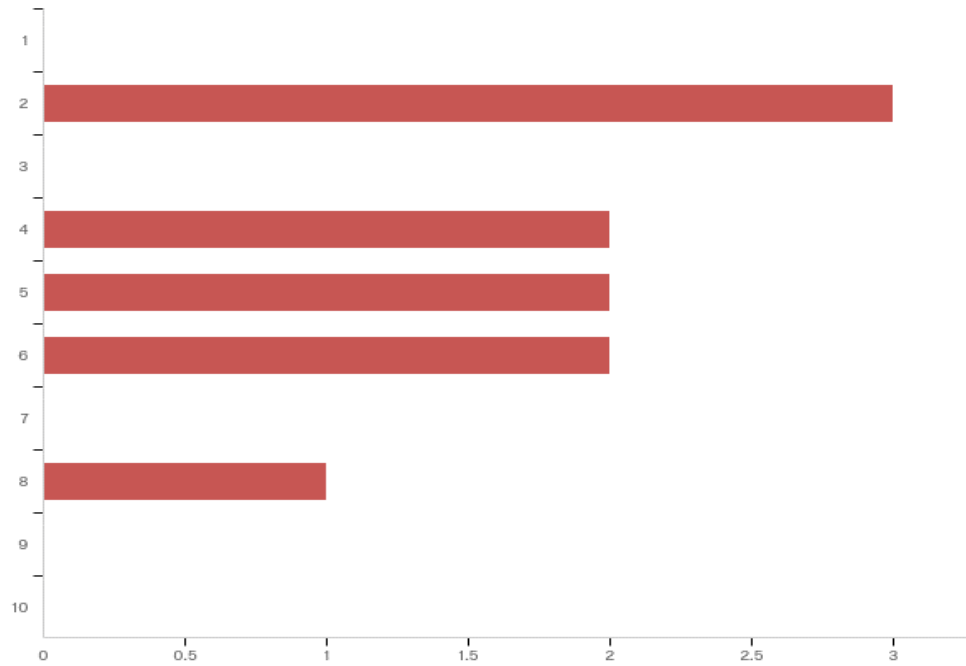
Q5.   Building sufficient trust among members of the group?

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10
1 = least, 10 = most
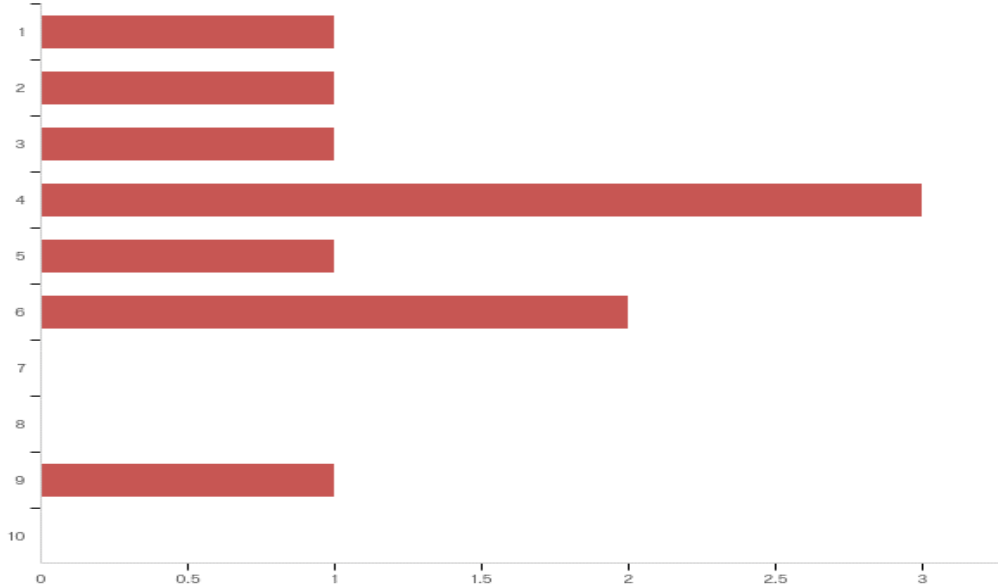
Q6.   Setting up a governance structure of the collaborative effort that encourages parties to do what they agreed to do?

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10
1 = least, 10 = most
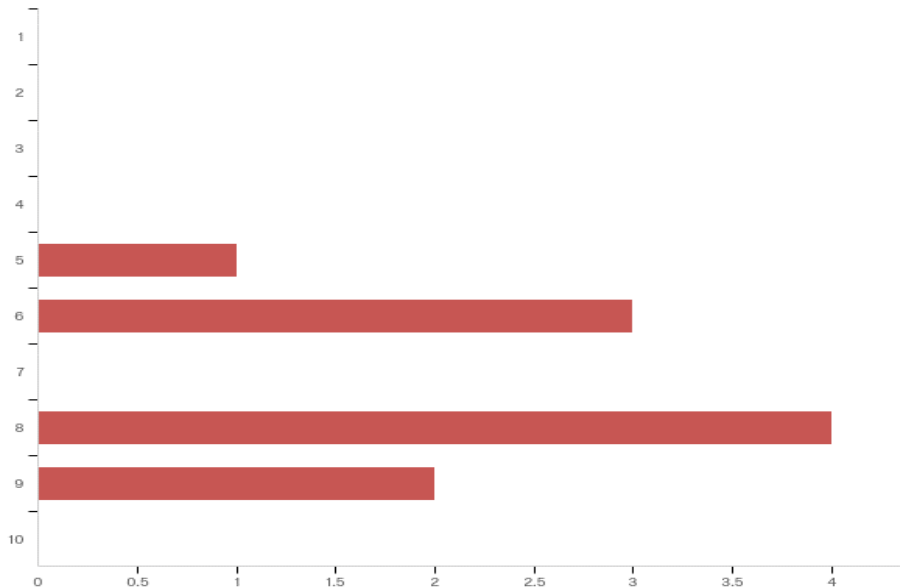
Q7.   Agreeing on the problem to be addressed?
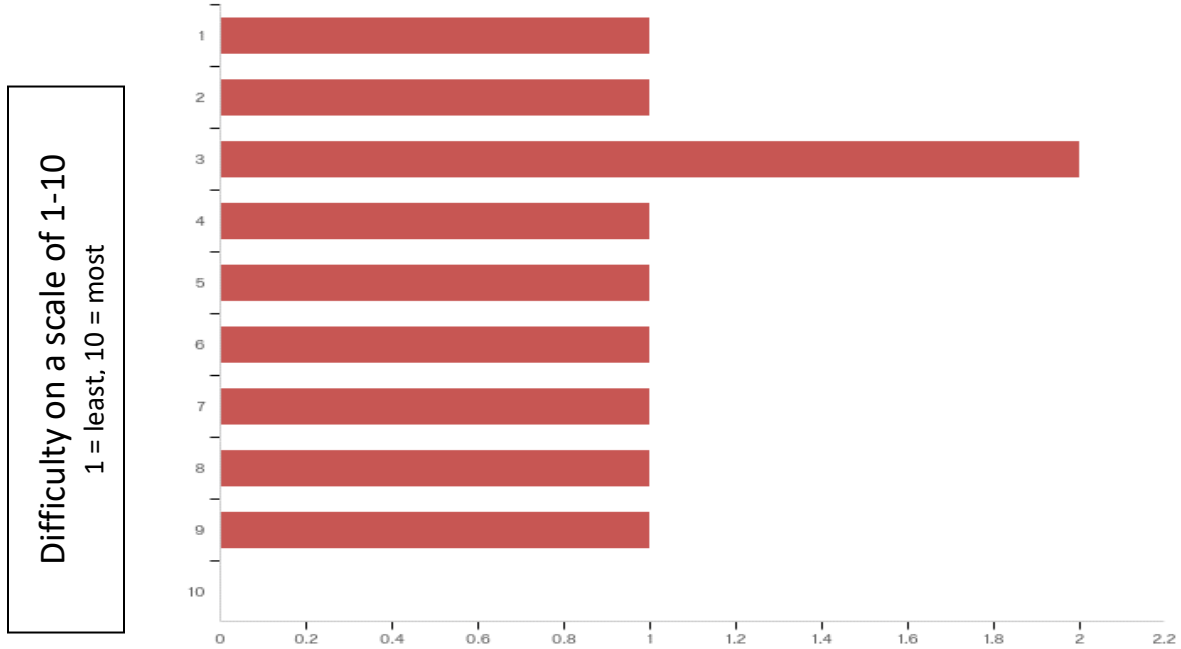
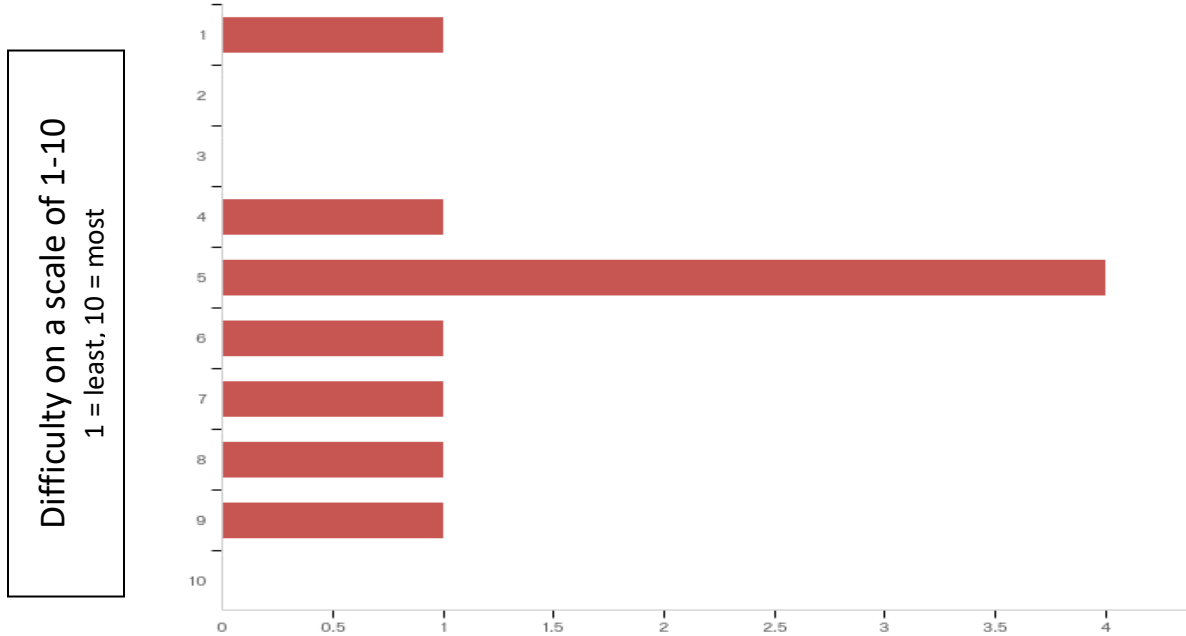**Q8.   Agreeing on what the collaborative group should try to accomplish?**
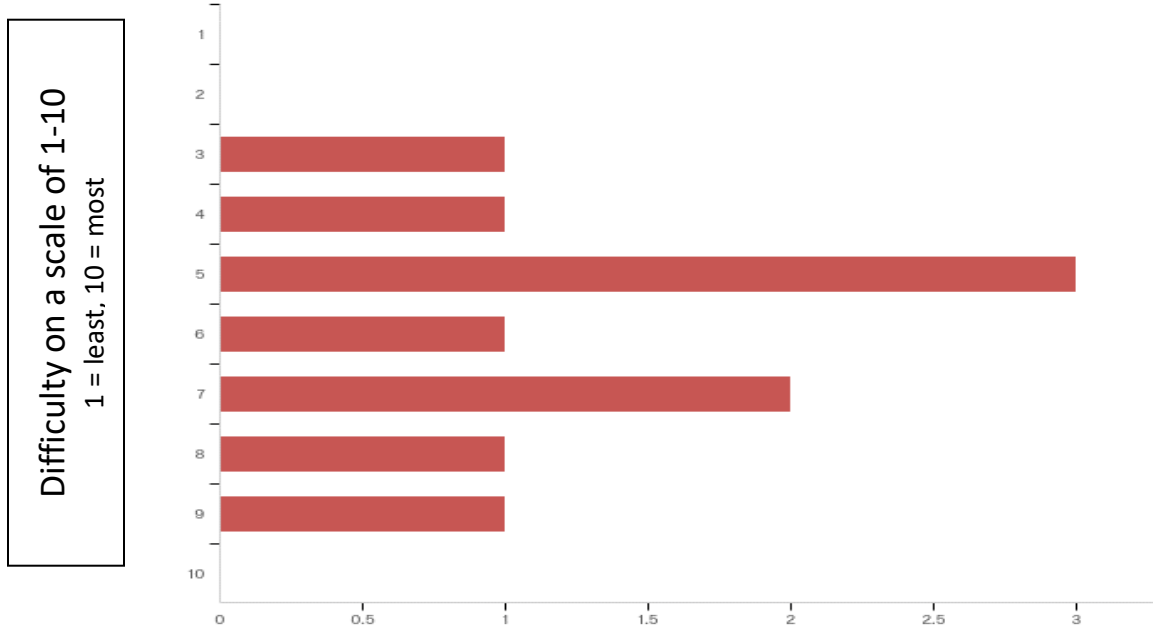
Q9.   Agreeing on how–through what interventions, programs, or policies–the goal(s) will be accomplished?
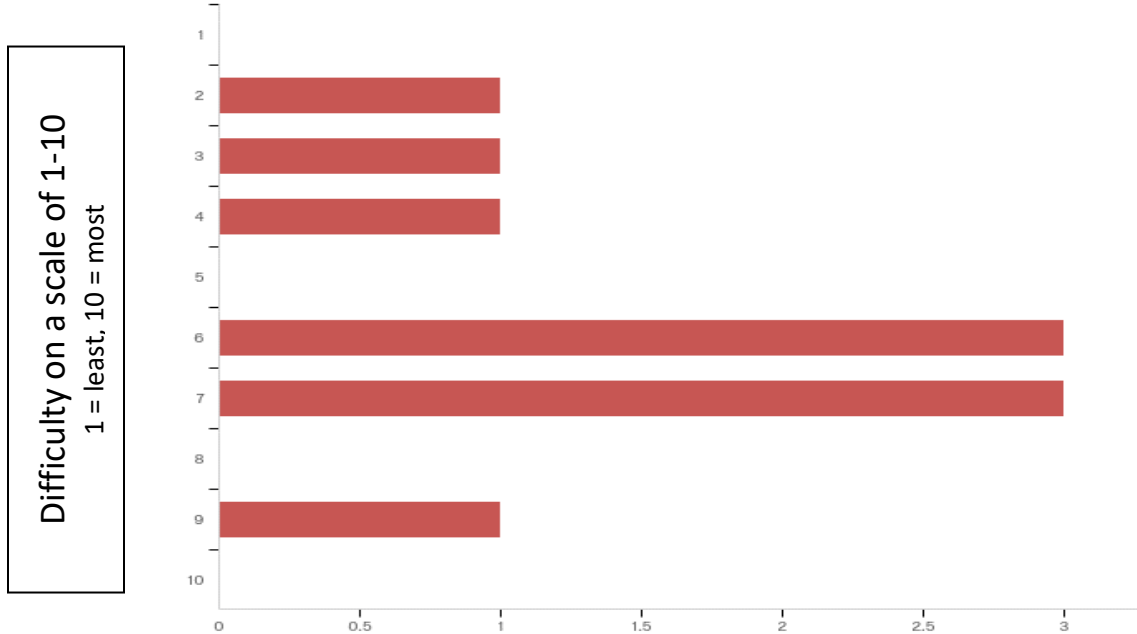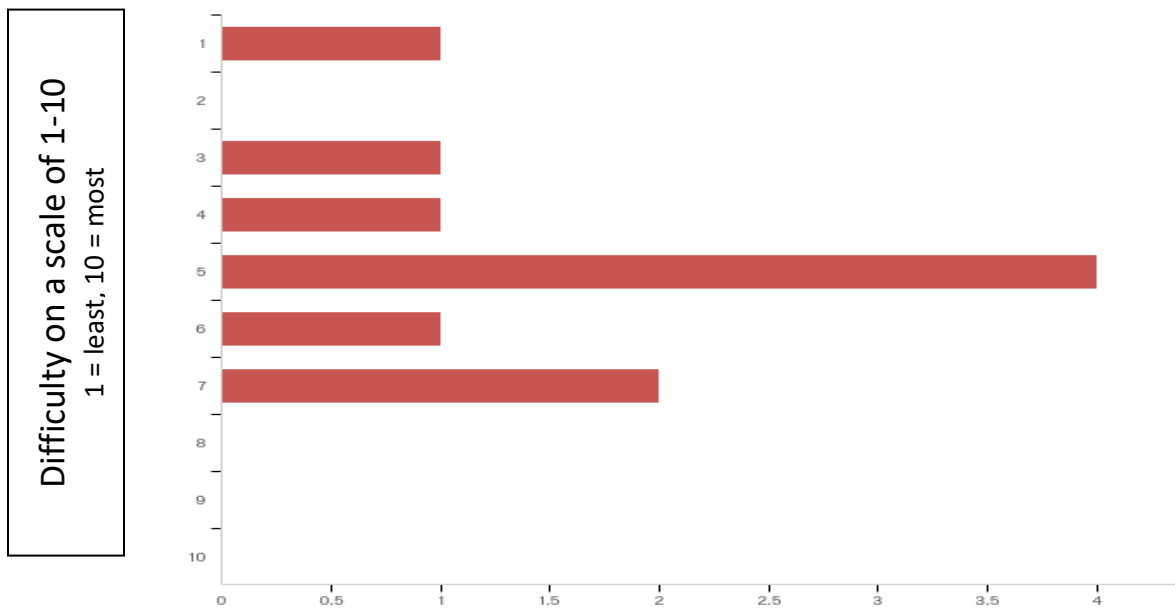

Q10.   Coming up with a workable plan to develop and implement the intervention, program or policies?
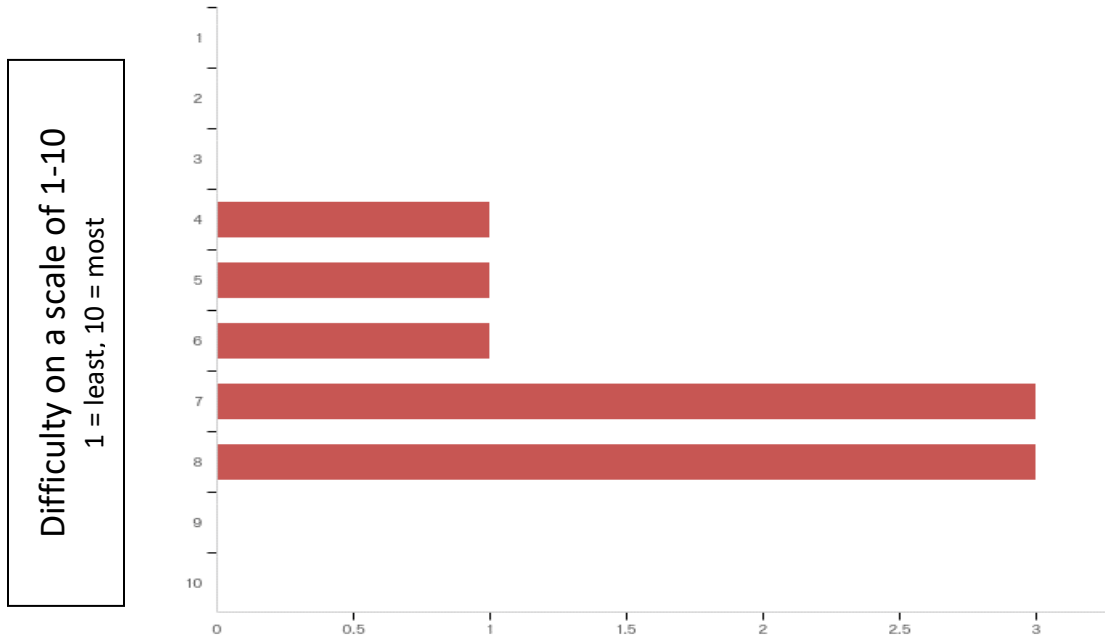
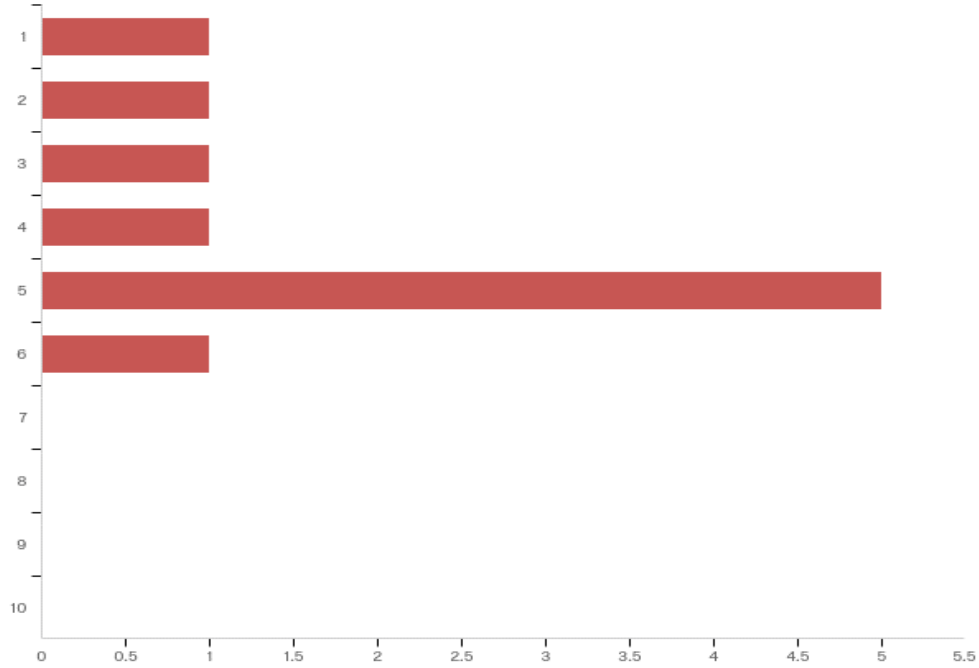**Q11. Ensuring that the collaborating parties are doing what they agreed to do?**

Q12. Monitoring and measuring the progress the collaborative group is making towards its stated goals?
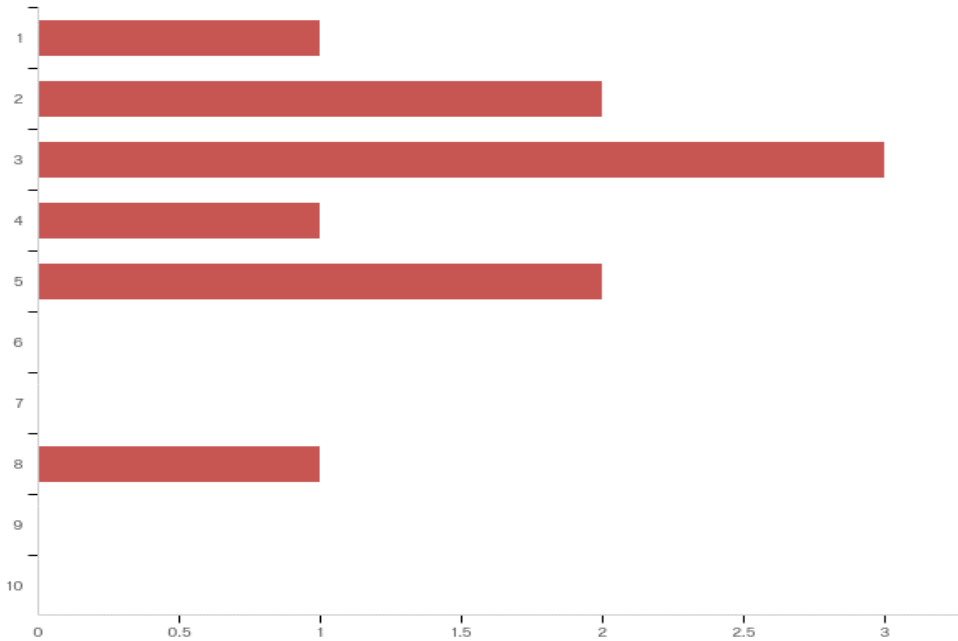
Q13.   Learning from ongoing work and adjusting accordingly?

Q14.   Securing support from parties who lend legitimacy to the group's goals?

Q15. **Securing the required resources to sustain the collaborative effort?**