

## TEACHING NOTE

# Change at the Speed of Trust: Advancing Educational Opportunity through Cross-Sector Collaboration in Louisville

BY JORRIT DE JONG AND GAYLEN MOORE

## Case Synopsis

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 have 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 an effort to effect system change in education from "cradle to career" through 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.

## Learning Objectives

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

## Key Questions

1. Is this collaboration moving fast enough?
2. What are the trade-offs between speed, quality, and consensus in collaborative processes?
3. What can the mayor do? What formal/informal authority can he exercise?

## Roadmap for Discussion (see Appendix 1)

Exploration (30 minutes): Is this collaborative work moving fast enough? What are the trade-offs between speed, quality, and consensus?

Diagnosis (45 minutes): What makes collaborative work so tricky? What frameworks can help us understand the challenges and develop strategy to address them?

Application (15 minutes, optional): Can participants apply these frameworks and concepts to their own collaborative challenges?

Wrap Up and Takeaways (15 minutes): What did we learn? How will we use it?

## Discussion Plan

**Exploration** (30 minutes):

How do mayors get things done that require resources and authority over which they have little or no control?

Take a straw poll: *Is the Louisville Promise cabinet moving at the right pace?*

1. No, it should move more quickly to produce meaningful results for students
2. Yes, it is moving at the right speed to balance the many stakeholders' concerns and create results
3. No, it should slow down and ensure all nuances of this complex issue are handled properly

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

Introduce trade-offs diagram (see Board Plan, Appendix 2): In every collaboration, the goal is to get a quality outcome, maintain consensus about ends and means, and achieve results as quickly as possible. Making this work is a challenge, 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 get a quality result quickly, the team might trample some of its members' concerns about process values or representation, creating tension and mistrust among stakeholders.

Ask participants to consider this in terms of the Louisville case.

- What does a quality outcome look like?
- What counts as consensus? How much consensus is needed in order to act? (Show variance in responses on problem definition among cabinet members—see Board Plan, Appendix 2, and survey results, Appendix 6)
- With answers to these questions in mind, revisit the question of whether the Louisville Promise cabinet was moving fast enough.

Optional buzz group: Are there always trade-offs between speed, quality, and consensus? How do these tensions play out in participants' own work?

### **Diagnosis** (45 minutes)

Use this part of class to further explore strategic challenges and use theory to diagnose the issues presented in the case using frameworks. Three possible frames/discussion pastures are included as 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 taught to their own collaborative challenges.

### **Wrap up and takeaways** (15 minutes)

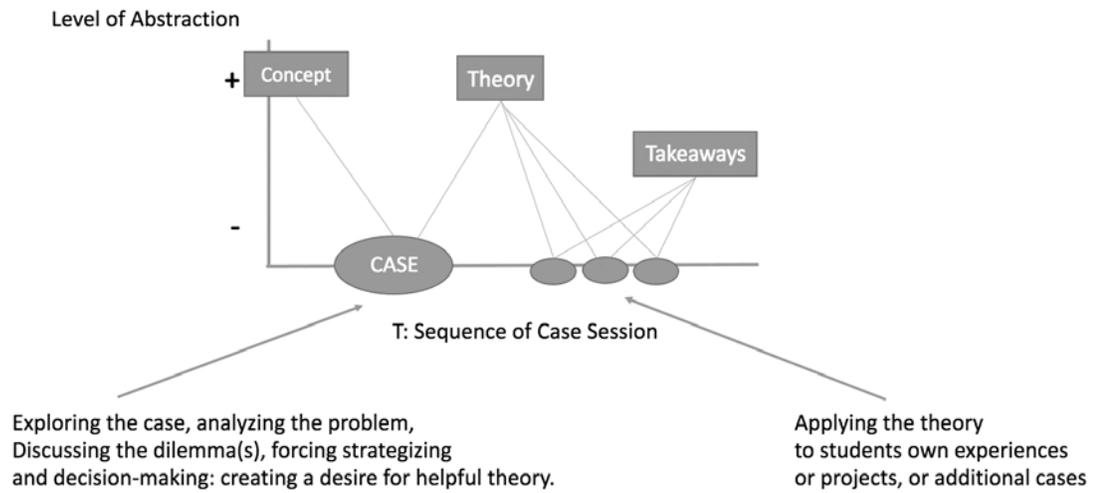
Based on your discussion, take 15 minutes to wrap up and offer takeaways for participants.

### **Suggested reading**

“Cross-Sector Collaboration: An Introduction to Key Concepts” by Mark H. Moore  
ICAT paper  
State capabilities paper

## APPENDIX 1: DESIGNING A CASE SESSION

### One Approach to Designing a Case Session



Jorrit de Jong, 2017

## APPENDIX 2: BOARD PLAN

### BOARD 1: Straw poll responses

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

### BOARD 2: Trade-offs in collaborative work

#### QUALITY

Robustness of your collaborative approach to solving the problem

#### CONSENSUS

Inclusion of stakeholders needed to produce desired outcomes

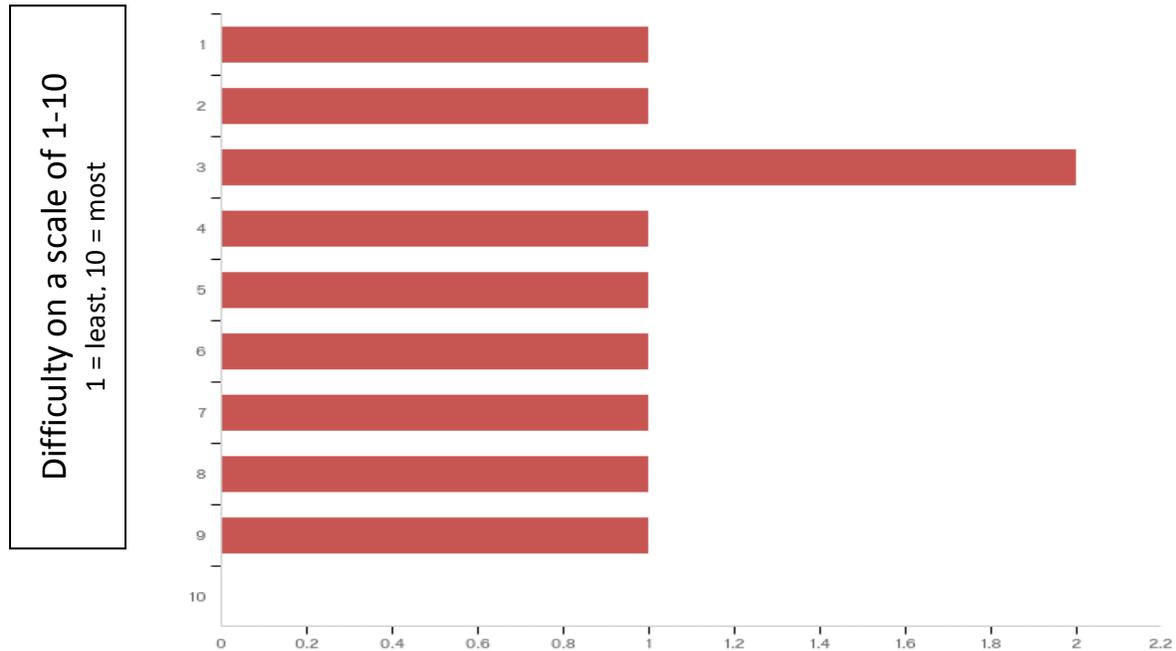
#### SPEED

Making progress fast enough to deliver results in time

### BOARD 3: What qualifies as consensus?

Louisville Promise Survey Response

How challenging was agreeing on what exactly the problem to be addressed is?



### ADDITIONAL BOARDS

Use for chosen frameworks and takeaways

Suggested takeaways:

- Collaboration is hard for a variety of reasons: it helps to diagnose the particular challenges—**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 and organizational capabilities and continuous strategic adjustment.
- It is helpful to reflect on success and struggle across different collaborations.

## APPENDIX 3: EVALUATE FRAMEWORK FOR CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS

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

<p><b>Design of collaboration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPOSITION: What is the composition of the collaborative group?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who is part of the team, or not, and why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PURPOSE(S): Was it created for one purpose, or multiple purposes?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Was the group designed for one issue, or for long-term, comprehensive collaboration?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• MODE OF GOVERNANCE: What is the governance structure – how is it organized, and why?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Backbone organization governance, lead organization governance, or shared governance?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<p>What does the collaboration practice look like and how does that practice affect the effectiveness of the collaborative effort?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEARNING/INNOVATION PROCESSES             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What feedback mechanisms are in place among the collaborators?</li> <li>○ How open to experimentation is the group?</li> <li>○ How novel is their definition of problem and proposed solutions?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PROCESS CHALLENGES: What are the most prominent challenges?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Substantive problem-solving challenges: defining the problem and what the goals should be, developing and measuring a theory of change/action</li> <li>○ Accountability challenges: balancing accountability to the collaborative team with accountability to representative organizations</li> <li>○ Teaming challenges: Building trust among collaborators, leveraging diversity in team, creating shared norms and behaviors, surfacing hidden information</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PROCESS ENABLERS: What conditions or actions were particularly helpful in making progress? Why?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<p>How has leadership of the collaborative work contributed to its successes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have been critical leadership moments over the course of the collaborative work?</li> <li>• How did members of the collaboration respond to challenging moments? What was the result of this response?</li> <li>• What were/are dilemmas that have emerged during this work?</li> <li>• What was the role of the mayor?</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4: CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION THROUGH THE LENS OF THE STRATEGIC TRIANGLE

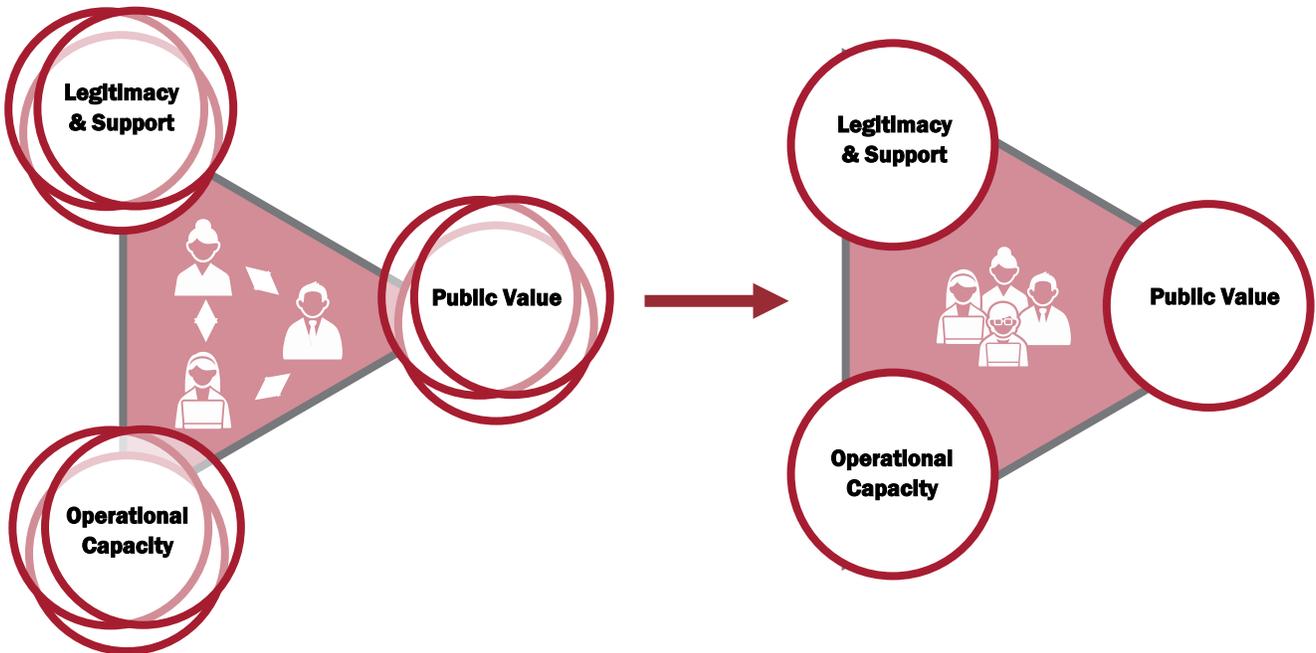
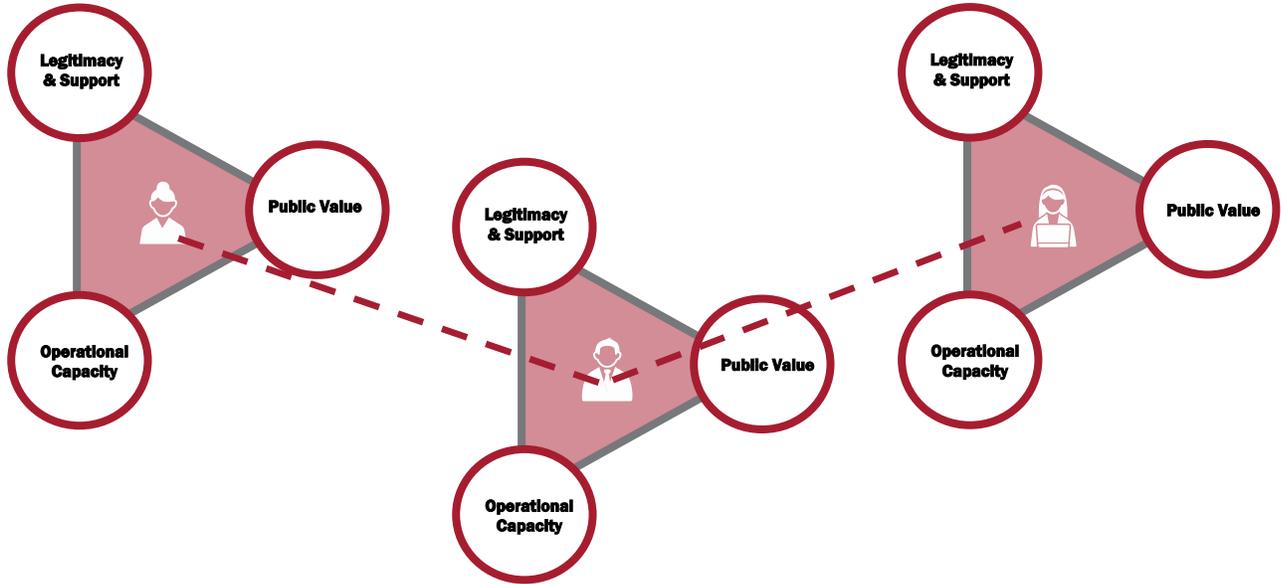
*For those who have a working understanding of the strategic triangle, this teaching plan combines the previous framework with concepts in the public value lexicon:*

- I. Public value proposition I: Problem definition
  - A. Identification of problem under Mayor Abramson (need to compete in 21<sup>st</sup> century economy) vs. value proposition of Mayor Fischer (lifelong learning from “cradle to career”)...how different are these framings? How might they have affected the direction of the collaboration?
  - B. Are there other competing or complementary value propositions or conceptions of the problem discernable in case? 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?
  
- II. Public value proposition II: Theory of action/change
  - A. Greater Louisville Educational Commitment (exhibit)—setting benchmarks; calling in business community and higher education as partners; establishing 55,000 Degrees as backbone organization vs. Cradle to Career/Louisville Promise theory of change—how is it different? Has the theory of change changed evolved according to changes in problem definition/value proposition? Or vice versa?
  - B. Embracing BAM and Say Yes/Weiss—What do the mayor and his collaborators expect to gain from these partnerships? What are the risks of committing to them? How does the collaboration adapt and adapt to these models?
  - C. Measurement: What are 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 are the potential costs in these same terms? How would you measure these effects?
  
- III. Operational capacity I: Design of collaboration
  - A. Iterations of Cradle to Career: four pillars, inclusive cabinet, refined cabinet plus core team/committees, new backbone. Are the right people at the table? Which voices were or will be amplified or muted in various configurations (see exhibits)?
  - B. Facilitation and external supports: Did BAM and Say Yes/Weiss (and/or their representatives) play a significant role in the design of the collaboration as it evolved?
  - C. The work going forward: fundraising/setting parameters for scholarships, creating/coordinating wraparound services, communication/public awareness, data collection/analysis. Does the proposed structure at the end of the case lend itself to accomplishing this work? If not, why not? What would you propose instead?

- IV. Operational Capacity II: Collaborative process
  - A. Capacity to learn and innovate: what factors in the collaborative process affect the collective capacity to learn and innovate? How did facilitating/support organizations (BAM, Say Yes/Weiss) help or hinder this capacity?
  - B. What did it take to secure trust and a willingness to share information? Was this sufficient for accomplishing the collaboration's goals?
  - C. How did the group leverage diversity of background, expertise, organization, etc. for learning? What capacities and insights do various partners bring to the project?
  - D. How did norms, helpful (e.g., permission to fail) and unhelpful (e.g., epidemic of artificial harmony), affect the functioning of the collaboration? What are the processes for internal accountability?
  - E. Assuming the collaboration runs like a well-oiled machine, do they have sufficient capacity among them to effect the change they are after? If not, what's missing and where could it be found?
  
- V. Legitimacy and support I: Organizational perspectives
  - A. Do any stakeholders appear to be absent in the current configuration of the collaboration? Does this threaten its legitimacy? How?
  - B. Are collaborating organizations in competition for resources? If so, what impact does this have (e.g. scholarships—will there be winners & losers in higher education)?
  - C. How did collaborators handle competing allegiances & lines of accountability?
  - D. External accountability: To whom do individual members of the team feel accountable and for what?
  
- VI. Legitimacy and support II: Collaboration perspective
  - A. Leadership: Who's steering the ship? Does 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?
  - B. What does the status quo look like? What actors (if any) are protecting the status quo against the challenge to the status quo that the collaboration represents? Are there latent constituencies that might arise and organize against this challenge? What are they?
  - C. Engagement with the public: How much does the public know about the problem and the collaboration? How much does it need to know? At what point does it need to know? Why?
  - D. The mayor's role: Did he push enough? At the right moments? What do you think happens to the collaboration if he is not reelected?

*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

*There are three key organizational capabilities that enable the performance of collaborations: performance review capabilities, collaborative capabilities, and data-analytic capabilities. These three 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 *problem* available?  
Are data about *government performance* 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**

### SUMMARY

#### **High difficulty**

Setting up governance system  
Coming up with a workable plan  
Securing the resources

#### **High variance**

Agreeing on what the problem is  
Setting up communication channels

70% of respondents said at least one challenge was 2 or 3 level of ease – only one said challenges were level 1

80% of respondents said at least one challenge was 8 or 9 level of difficulty – none said any challenges were level 10

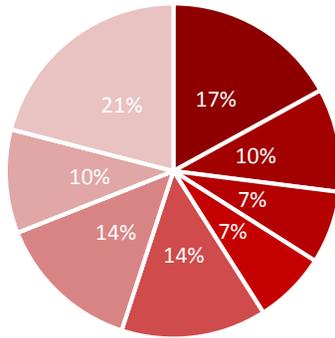
No one said “Setting up Governance Structure” was LESS than a 6 in terms of difficulty

No one said “Learning from Ongoing Work + Adjusting Accordingly” was MORE than a 6 in terms of difficulty

**MOST ALIGNMENT ON:** Setting up Governance Structure – Responses were 5, 6, 6, 6, 8, 8, 8, 8, 9, 9

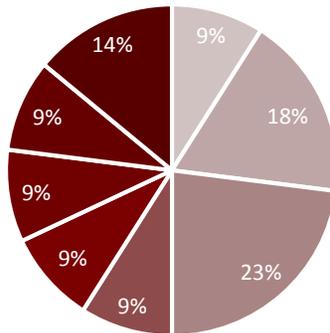
**LEAST ALIGNMENT ON:** Agreeing on the Problem to be Solved – Responses were 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

### 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

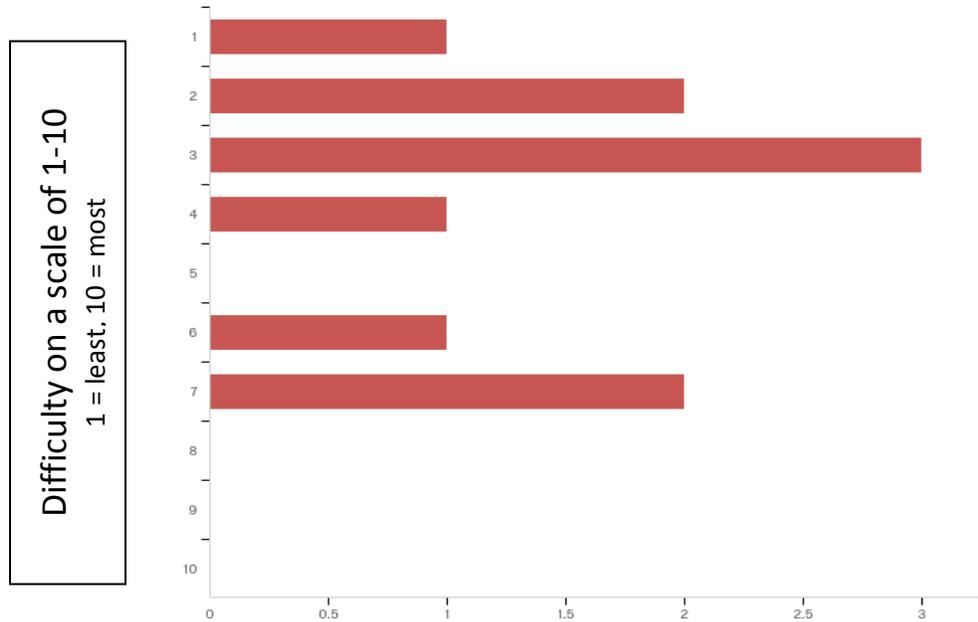
### Most Difficult Challenge Overall



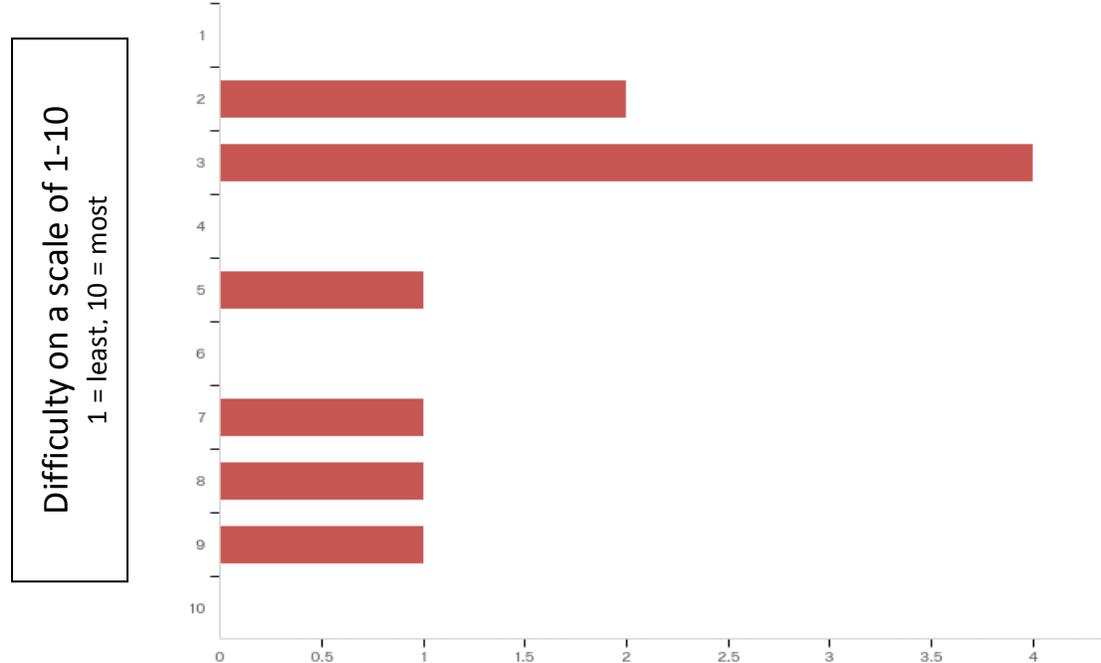
- Setting up Communication Channels
- Setting up Gov. Structure
- Agreeing on What to Accomplish
- Ensuring Parties are Doing What They Agreed
- Other
- Agreeing on the Problem
- Agreeing on How Goal Will Be Accomplished
- Securing Resources to Sustain Effort

## RESPONSES

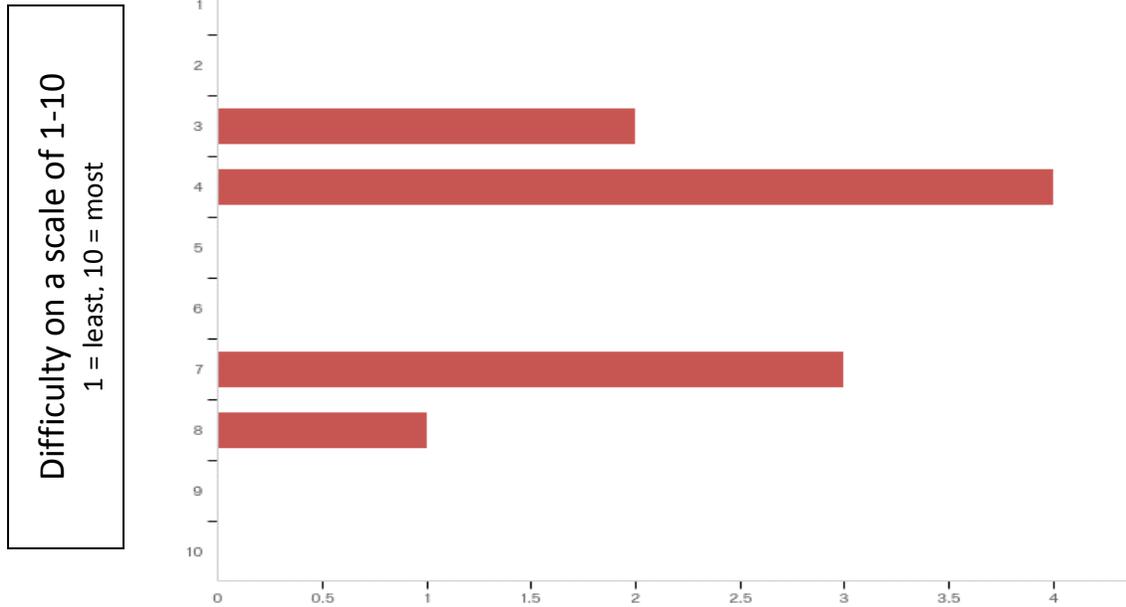
### Q1. Getting the right people and organizations involved in the collaborative effort?



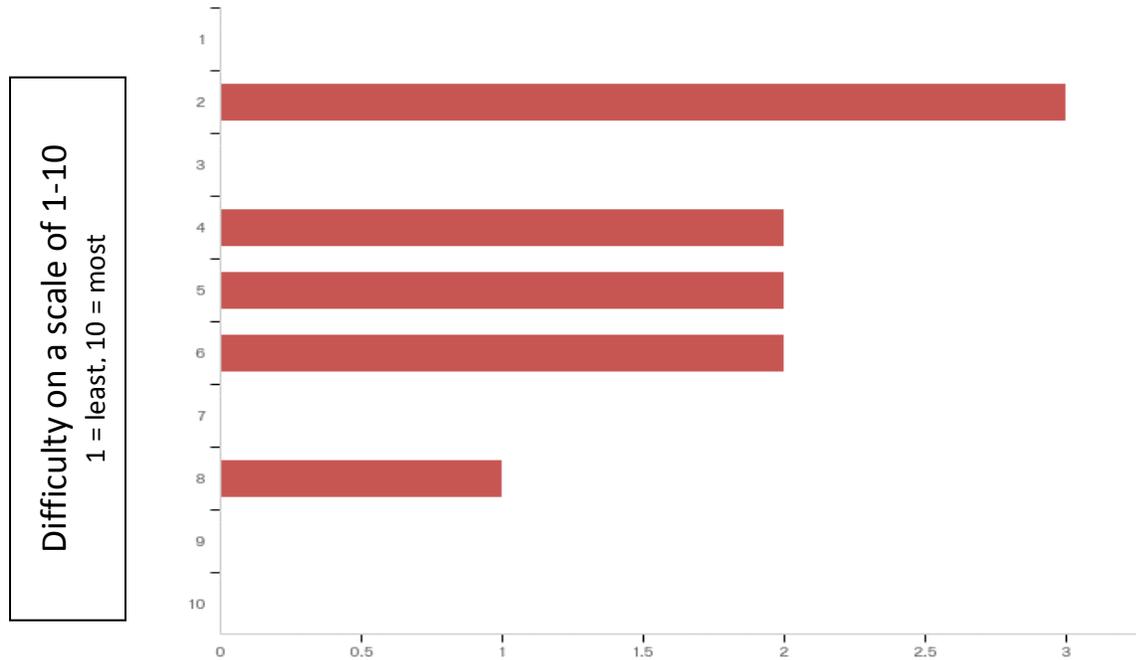
### Q2. Setting up communication channels within the group?



### Q3. Agreeing on how the group will make decisions?

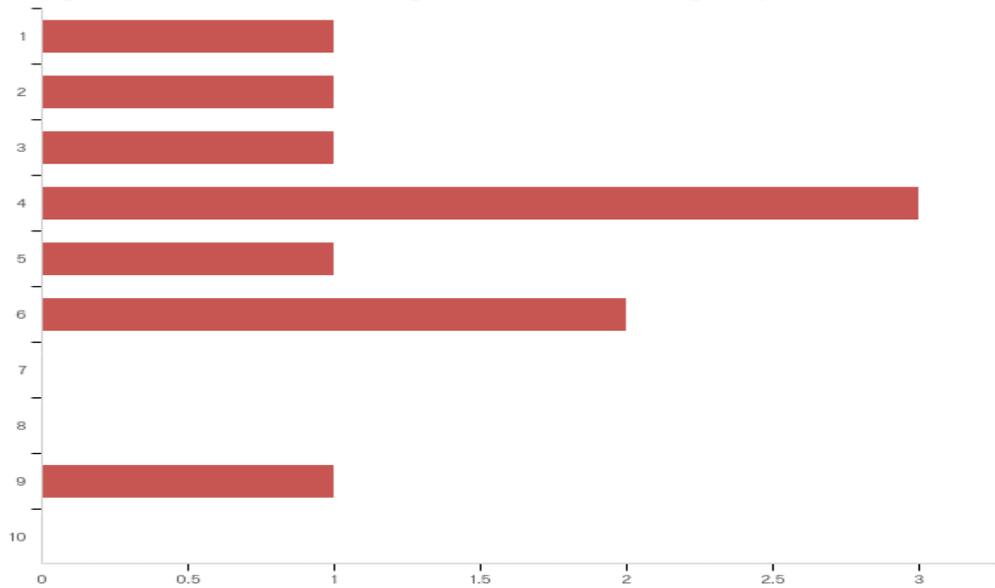


### Q4. Agreeing on who will do what?



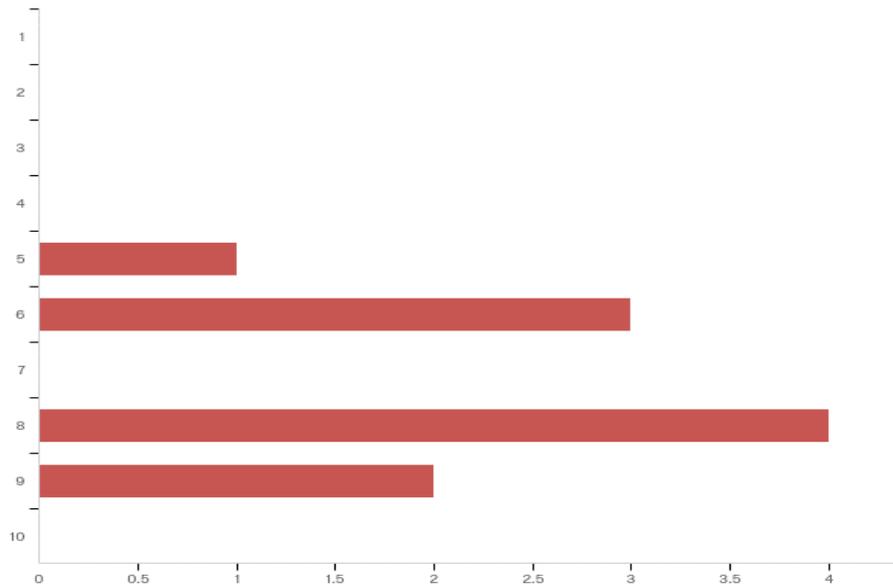
**Q5. Building sufficient trust among members of the group?**

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10  
1 = least, 10 = most



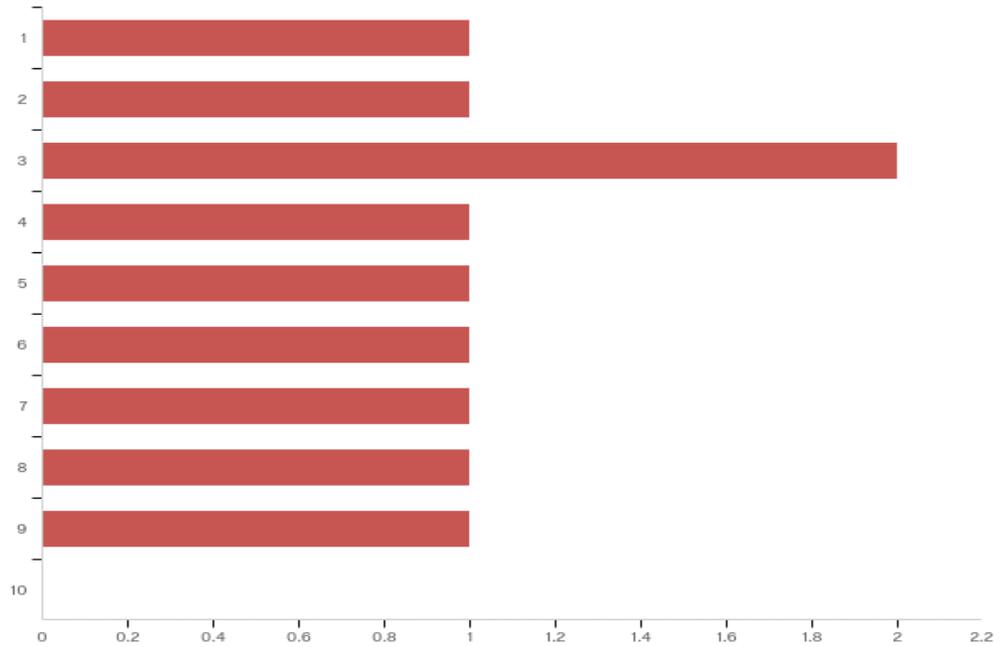
**Q6. Setting up a governance structure of the collaborative effort that encourages parties to do what they agreed to do?**

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10  
1 = least, 10 = most



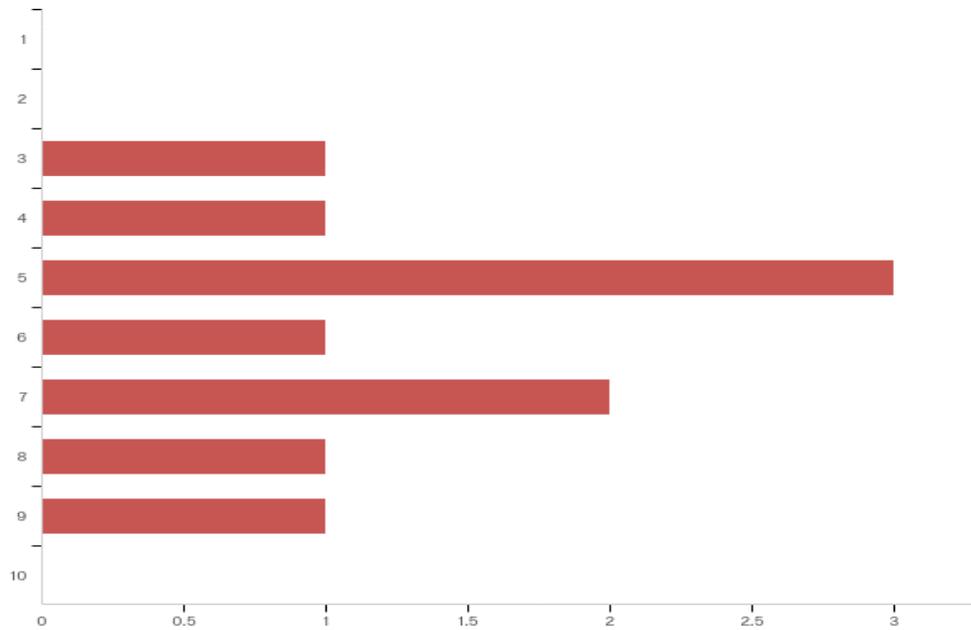
**Q7. Agreeing on what exactly the problem to be addressed is?**

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10  
1 = least, 10 = most

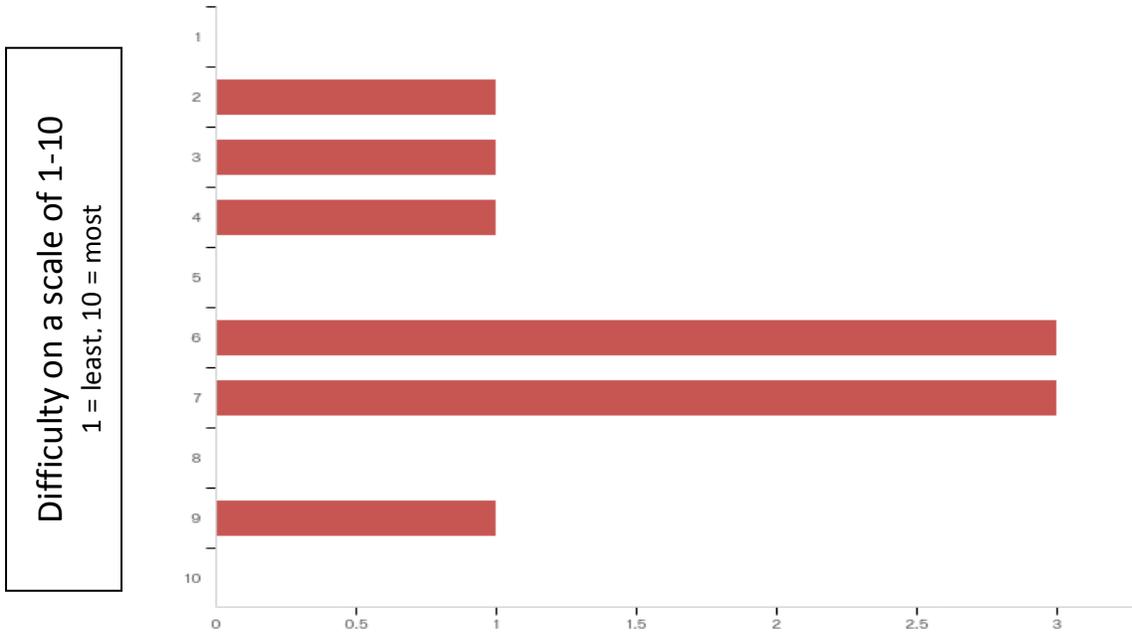


**Q8. Agreeing on what the collaborative group should try to accomplish?**

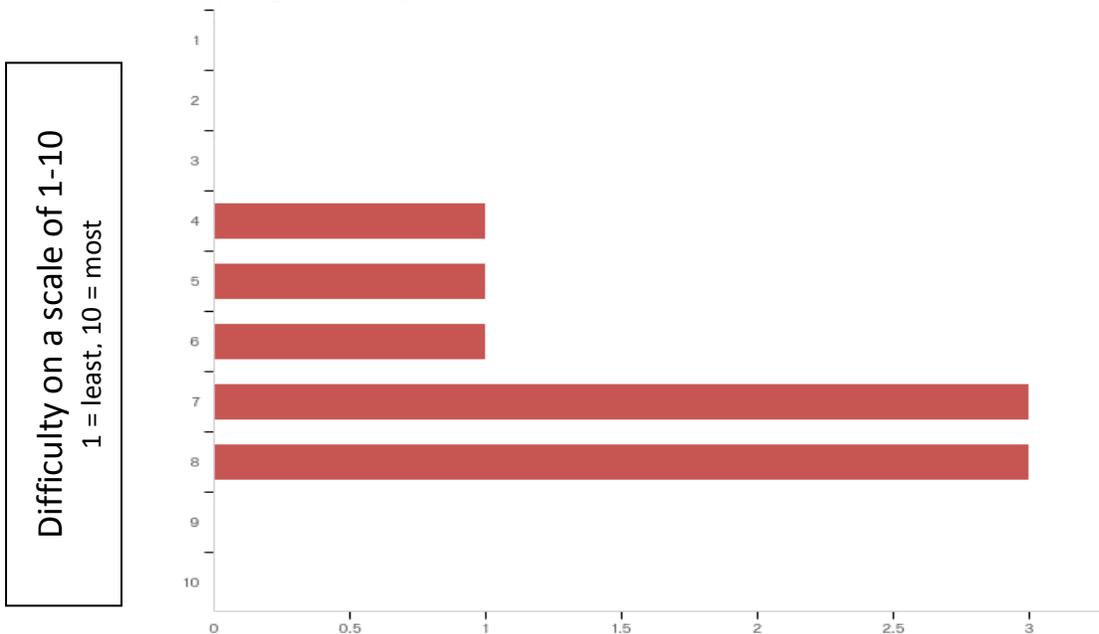
Difficulty on a scale of 1-10  
1 = least, 10 = most



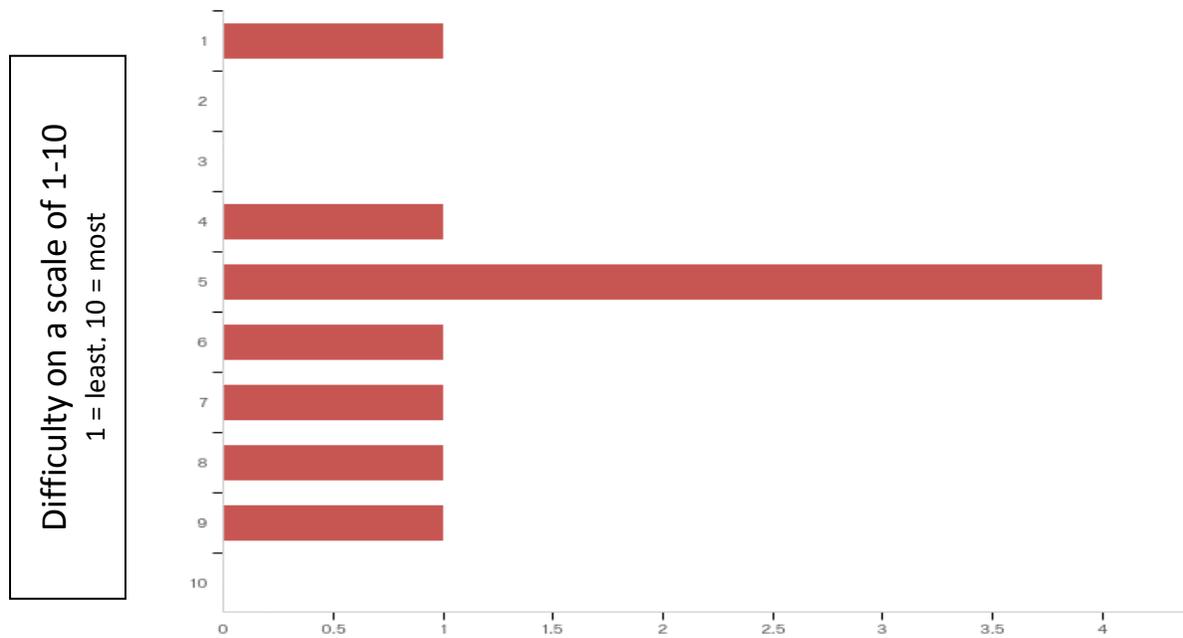
**Q9. Agreeing on how – through what interventions, programs, or policies - the goal(s) will be accomplished?**



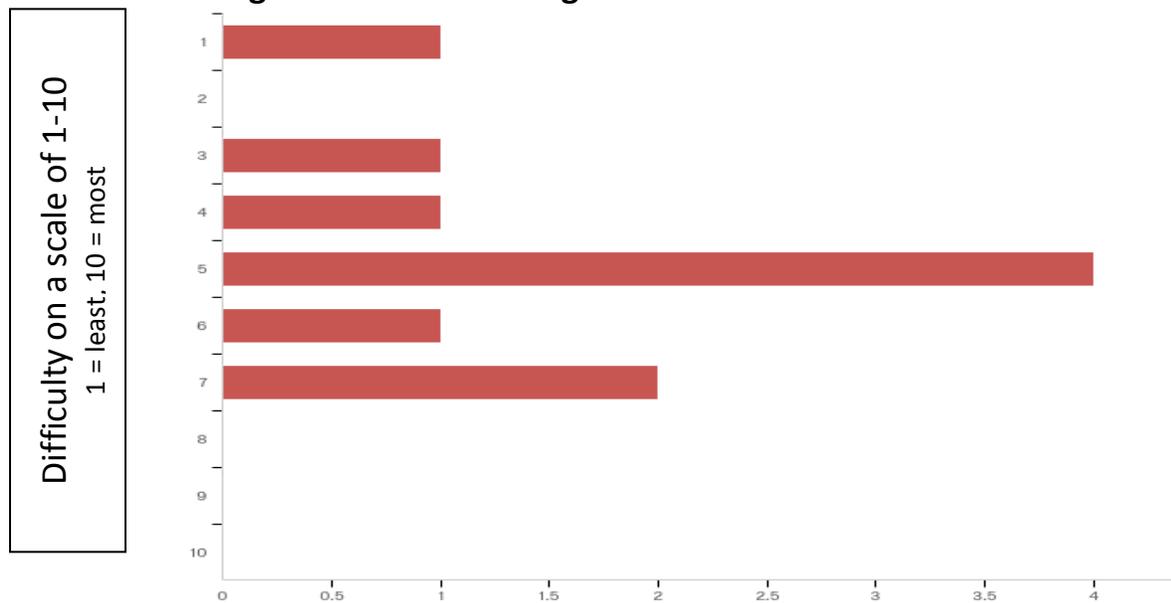
**Q10. Coming up with a workable plan to develop and implement the intervention, program or policies?**



**Q11. Ensuring that the collaborating parties are doing what they agreed they would do?**

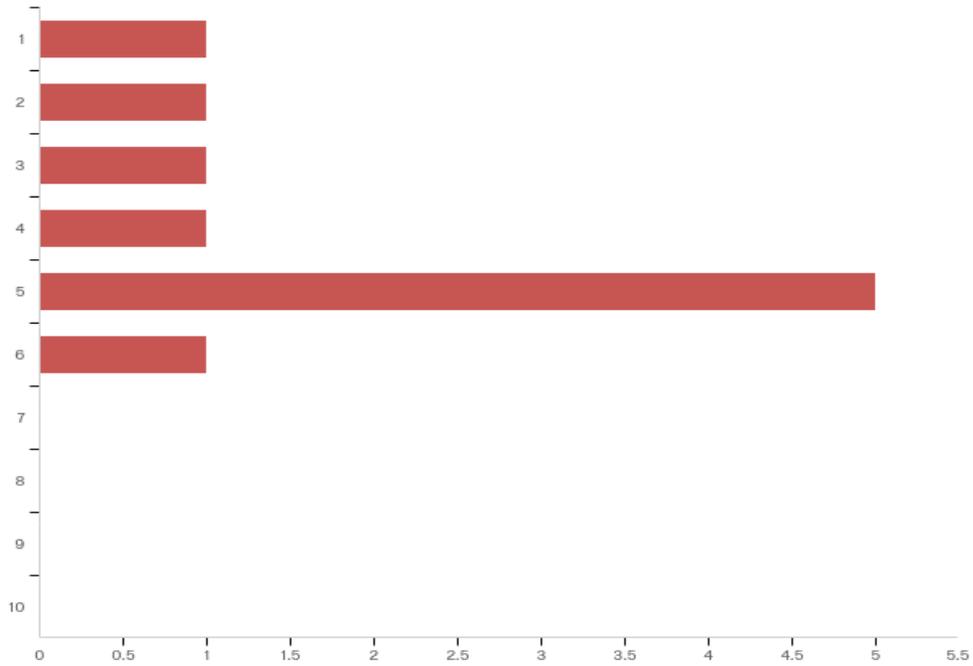


**Q12. Monitoring and measuring the progress the collaborative group is making towards its stated goals?**



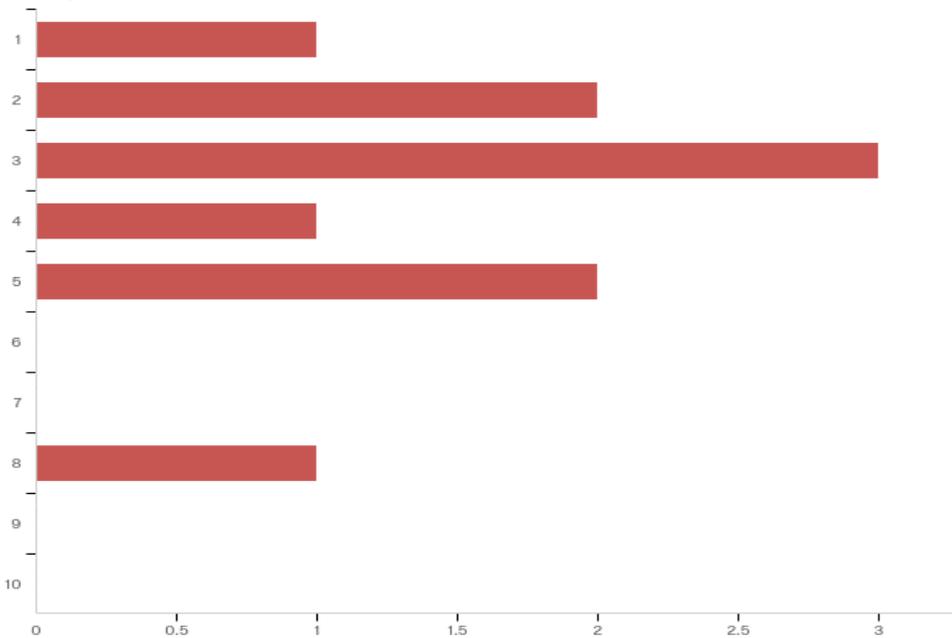
**Q13. Learning from ongoing work and adjusting accordingly?**

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10  
1 = least, 10 = most

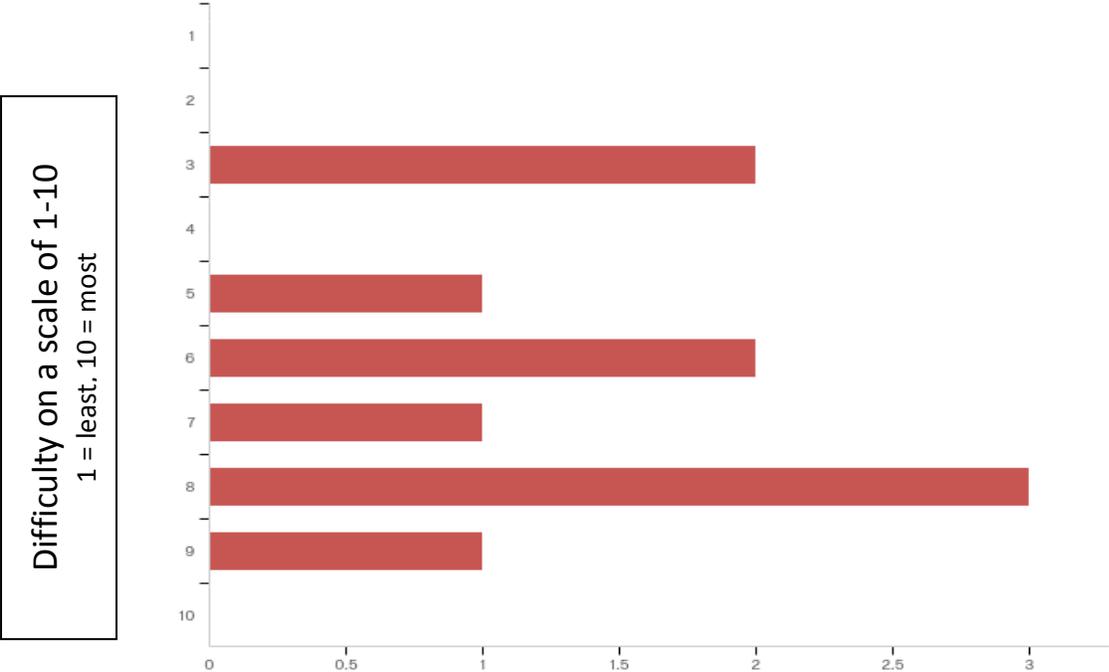


**Q14. Securing support from parties who lend legitimacy to what the group is trying to accomplish?**

Difficulty on a scale of 1-10  
1 = least, 10 = most



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



Difficulty on a scale of 1-10  
1 = least, 10 = most