THE THRESHOLD CHALLENGE

Challenge: The threshold for getting out of poverty is very subjective, hard and blurry to assess at the individual level and nearly impossible to cleanly assess at population levels.

Our solution: Collaboratives must be careful in how they communicate progress in reducing poverty at all levels of their efforts, emphasizing that the journey out of poverty is subjective.

Tips include:

* + Communicate the overall number and variety people affected by partners’ efforts to address poverty, and confirm that each person’s journey is unique (give examples where you can).
  + Track and report population level exits out of poverty using LIM/LIM/LICO confirming that they are clumsy proxies only.
  + Use (a) participant narratives that describe the journey and/or (b) impact data from individual evaluations that employed thresholds (e.g. a pilot) to illustrate the journey out of poverty.

Existing poverty reduction impact frameworks that ***have*** thresholds:

* [**Self-sufficiency scales**](http://www.selfsufficiencymatrix.org/zrm-int.aspx) – Multiple thresholds (“levels”) are defined and used to assess how self-sufficient an individual is; ranging from crisis to completely self-sufficient.
* [**Sustainable livelihoods**](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/sustainable-livelihoods-framework) – Assets are the building blocks for achieving a ‘sustainable livelihood’, but collaboratives can self-determine what the threshold for “sustainability” is.
* [**Deprivation indexes**](https://www.cihi.ca/en/deprivation-in-canadian-cities-an-analytical-tool) – Employs quintile scoring on social and material deprivations (20% least deprived to 20% most deprived) and classifies communities or regions into low-, medium- and high- socioeconomic status groups.

GROUP EXERCISE

*Purpose: Define your collaborative’s threshold for determining whether someone is in or out of poverty*

1. How will you cope with the question, “How many people have your collective efforts help lift out of poverty?”?