

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](#) – Multiple thresholds (“levels”) are defined and used to assess how self-sufficient an individual is; ranging from crisis to completely self-sufficient.
- [Sustainable livelihoods](#) – Assets are the building blocks for achieving a ‘sustainable livelihood’, but collaboratives can self-determine what the threshold for “sustainability” is.
- [Deprivation indexes](#) – 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?"?