



**COALITION BUILDING  
FOR DELIVERY:**  
Tools and Frameworks for Leaders

**Coalitions are one of the most common, and most misunderstood, tools in global development and the public sector.**

They are often launched with urgency and optimism: a shared commitment, a high-profile convening, a belief that “working together” must be the answer to complex problems.

Governments form them to coordinate action. Funders encourage them to reduce fragmentation. Multilateral institutions rely on them to mobilize scale. And yet many struggle to move from ambition to action.

This guide outlines a practical approach to coalition building, drawing on Delivery Associates’ experience supporting partners across multiple projects. It provides a simple model for coalition delivery, five principles that underpin effective collaboration, and a checklist leaders can use when establishing or strengthening a coalition.

# The Coalition Delivery Model

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The term “coalition” is often used loosely to describe any group of organizations or institutions working towards a shared goal. In practice, effective coalitions are structured mechanisms that enable institutions with different mandates and incentives to coordinate action around a shared outcome.

There are three roles that are particularly important:



Clarity about these roles is essential. Participants need to understand how they contribute to the wider effort and who is ultimately responsible for decisions. Without this clarity, accountability breaks down and responsibility becomes diffused.

A photograph of four women sitting around a dark table in a meeting. They are looking at a laptop and talking. The image is dimmed and serves as a background for the title.

# Five Principles for Successful Coalitions

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While coalitions operate in many different contexts, experience shows that effective partnerships tend to follow a consistent set of principles:

## CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Start with a clearly defined problem that all partners understand and agree on. Coalitions work best when the challenge genuinely requires collaboration and the consequences of inaction are clear.

## ALIGN INCENTIVES

Partners rarely participate for the same reasons. Effective coalitions recognize these differences early and align partners around a shared outcome while acknowledging their motivations.

## CLARIFY GOVERNANCE

Define roles, decision-making and accountability from the outset. Participants should understand who leads, who manages delivery, and how disagreements or trade-offs will be resolved.

## ANCHOR IN DELIVERY

Keep the coalition focused on outcomes rather than coordination alone. Clear actions, measurable goals and regular attention to progress help translate collaboration into results.

## BUILD ROUTINES

Sustained progress requires consistent ways of working. Regular check-ins, progress tracking and structured problem-solving help maintain momentum during implementation.

# The Coalition Building Checklist

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Leaders establishing or strengthening a coalition can use the following questions to assess whether the foundations for delivery are in place:

- The coalition has a clearly defined problem that all partners understand and agree on.
- The problem being addressed genuinely requires collaboration across multiple organizations.
- The coalition has defined measurable outcomes for the next 12–24 months.
- It is clear what will change because the coalition exists that would not happen otherwise.
- The coalition includes organizations with the authority and capacity to deliver the intended outcomes.
- The motivations and incentives of each partner are understood.
- A senior leader is visibly championing the coalition and can remove barriers when needed.
- A dedicated delivery function is responsible for coordination and day-to-day progress.
- Decision-making authority and escalation processes are clearly defined.
- The coalition has agreed on specific actions or interventions to deliver in the first year.
- There are regular routines for tracking progress and addressing implementation challenges.
- There is a clear plan for how outcomes will be sustained once the coalition achieves its goals.

# Case Study

## Cities for Better Health Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative

### The Cities for Better Health Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative (CBH COPI) illustrates how coalitions can help deliver change in complex systems.

Childhood obesity is influenced by multiple factors, including school environments, urban design, food access and public health services. Addressing it therefore requires coordinated action across government, civil society and the private sector.

In partnership with local stakeholders, coalitions were established across six cities to address the challenge. From the outset, each coalition conducted landscape analysis and stakeholder engagement to define the local problem and identify the most effective interventions. Governance structures and decision-making pathways were clarified early to ensure that partners could support implementation.

Across the six cities, coalitions have designed 29 interventions aimed at improving access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity. Baseline data collection has involved more than 8,000 children, creating a stronger evidence base for understanding local drivers of childhood obesity.

The initiative demonstrates how coalitions can move beyond coordination to structure delivery, enabling partners to test interventions and build evidence about what works in different contexts.

**“A key insight that has emerged from this work is that systems change doesn’t happen through standalone initiatives. It happens when coalitions — across government, civil society and the private sector — align around a shared goal and put the structures in place to deliver it.”**

— KATE EPSTEIN

*Partner and Head of Government Market Practice at Delivery Associates*





# PARTNER WITH DELIVERY ASSOCIATES

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Delivery Associates works with governments, international organizations and partners to turn shared ambition into measurable progress. We help leaders design coalitions that focus on outcomes, establish the routines needed for delivery, and build the capability to sustain results over time.

If you are building or strengthening a coalition and want to ensure it delivers real change, we would welcome the opportunity to work with you.