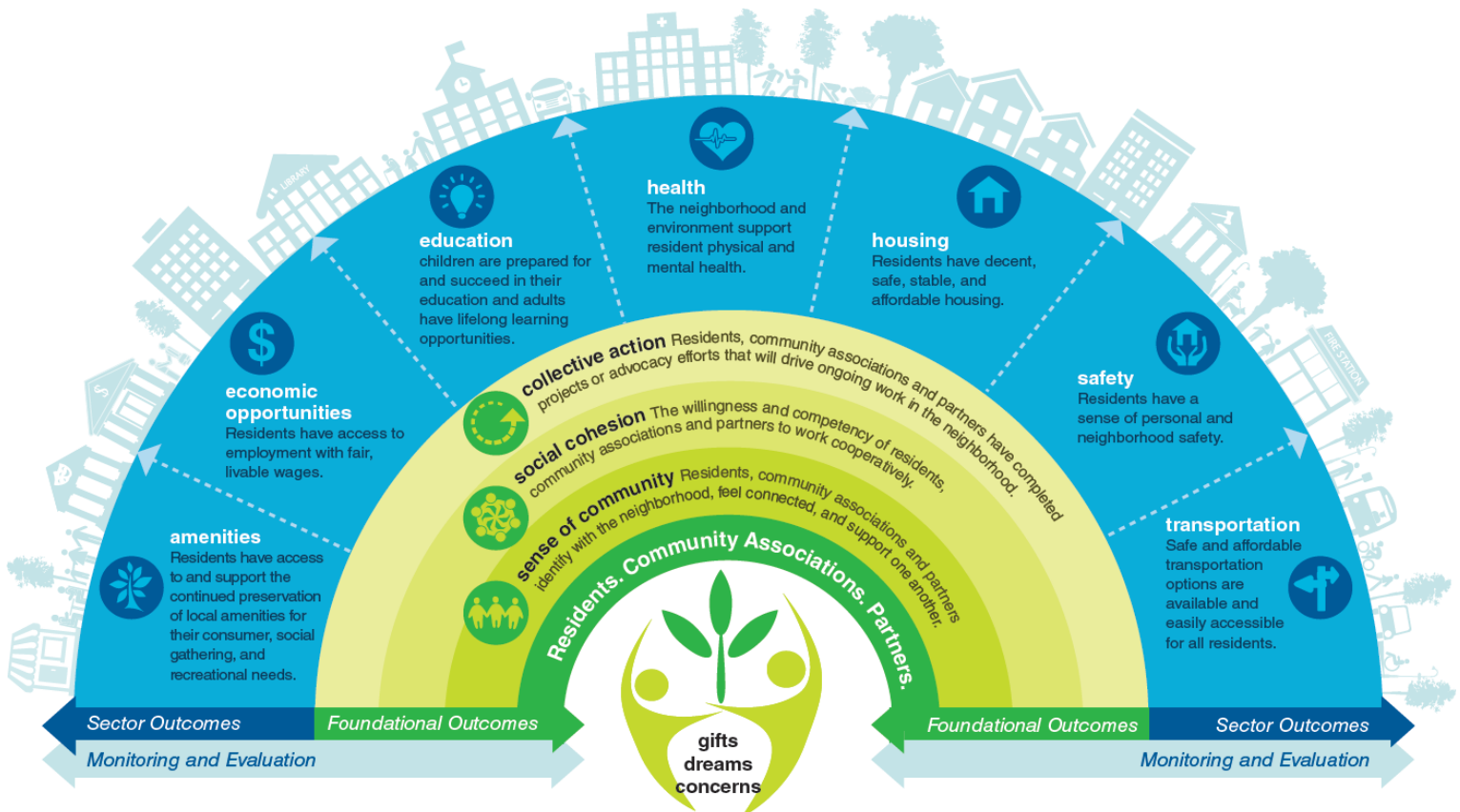


Ultimate Outcome: Improved Quality of Life

Quality of Life is the sense of well-being and happiness experienced by individuals, groups, and communities.



Neighborhood Revitalization and the Quality of Life Framework

The ultimate goal of neighborhood revitalization is improved quality of life in a focus neighborhood. Over the last six years, Habitat for Humanity has produced extensive insights for how this goal can be achieved. The quality of life framework is a compilation of this understanding and maps how multiple elements work together to achieve improved quality of life in the neighborhood. The map and outcome pathways contained in the framework help Habitat affiliates, residents, and coalition members better understand how change happens in a neighborhood and where they are in this process. At the core of the framework are resident aspirations, which guide neighborhood revitalization work, inspire actualization of dreams, and sustain and nurture hope.

Reading the Map

Habitat for Humanity has learned that the greatest change happens in a neighborhood when people work together—residents, community associations, and partners. It starts first by understanding everyone’s gifts, dreams, and concerns about the neighborhood (see Figure 1, center of map); then building a strong foundation around sense of community and social cohesion (green section), and; finally utilizing this base to collectively act and implement projects that contribute to sector outcomes (movements from green to blue). Arrows at the bottom of the map represent an iterative process, guiding users to continue to build social capital (green) in a neighborhood throughout the revitalization process.

Foundational Outcomes—Build foundational outcomes by partnering with and working alongside residents, community associations, and partners in the neighborhood (green section of map). This entails seeking to understand different perspectives and aspirations; bringing people together and finding opportunities to engage residents; formulating a comprehensive plan with all stakeholders that tackles common goals; and then implementing and taking collective action on this plan. Habitat has found that without taking these steps, sustainable and systemic change in the neighborhood is difficult to achieve.

Sector Outcomes— Seven sector outcomes are important to holistic quality of life change. The seven sectors include amenities, economic opportunities, education, health, housing, safety, and transportation. These sectors are inter-related and influence each other. For example, several studies point to the extent to which housing solutions contribute to improved safety, health, education, and economic well-being. Each neighborhood will determine which areas are most important to improve their quality of life. Active partners are needed to work in each of the priority sector areas.

Benefits to Neighborhood Coalitions for using the Quality of Life Framework

- Increases ability to make a greater impact through collaboration with partners, such as government agencies, schools, residents, associations, organizations, etc.
- Expands opportunities to attract and diversify investments in the neighborhood.
- Assists in understanding and articulating how and why change happens in a neighborhood.
- Leads to more sustainable results and helps address root causes of disinvestment and distress in neighborhoods, due to strong focus on three foundational outcomes (sense of community, social cohesion, and collective action).

Neighborhood Coalition Members and their Roles

Coalitions are made up of many members -- residents, community associations and partners – all serving as participants in the process of improving quality of life. The quality of life framework assumes that one of these entities must serve as a convener of the coalition, depending on the capacity and willingness of the partner organizations. In some cases it will be the Habitat affiliate who convenes the coalition, and in others, it will be another community association or partner organization.

Residents – Individuals who live within the boundaries of the focus neighborhood.

Community Associations – Small informal groups of people, such as clubs and faith and spiritual organizations working with a common interest as volunteers are called associations and are critical to community mobilization.

Partners – Professionals structurally organized are called partner institutions, or partners for short. They include government agencies, private businesses, non-profit organizations, as well as schools, faith and spiritual communities, etc. The assets of these partner institutions help the community capture valuable resources and establish a sense of civic responsibility.

Role of Participants in a Coalition:

- Join an existing coalition in a focus neighborhood.
- Advocate for the importance of connecting, organizing and empowering residents, so that they lead the revitalization process.
- Take a humble listening posture to hear the aspirations of the neighborhood residents
- Develop a comprehensive sector response with other sector partners, in line with neighborhood aspirations.

Role of the Coalition Convener:

- Be a reputable, fair and committed contributor to the neighborhood's well-being.
- Have the capacity to assemble and explore the gifts, dreams and concerns of residents, community associations and partners, and place these at the center of the work.
- Coalesce neighborhood assets, discover resident leaders and direct conditions for a strong coalition
- Secure an exit plan to transition from convener to participant, as is appropriate.

For more information contact:

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<http://v.ht/bulletin>

