

Questions to Consider

You need to choose a strategy (or set of strategies) that suits your community and your community foundation. Your approach may evolve over time, particularly if you are diligent about evaluating its progress and learning from your experience.

Your strategy will probably have two dimensions: the "what" and the "how."

- The "what" is the focus of your poverty initiative, the part of poverty you decide to tackle. For example improving literacy, or building strong families, or increasing affordable housing
- The "how" is your role, and how you will use the foundation's assets and influence. For example, strategic small granting, or convening a comprehensive community initiative, or investing foundation assets in a social enterprise loan fund. (The Spectrum above lays out a range of possibilities.)

Some "what" questions:

- What do we believe is a "deep driver of change"? For example, do we believe the pathway to prosperity is education/literacy, or job creation, or strengthening neighbourhoods?
- Is there an obvious gap identified by community informants? Can the foundation help the community fill that gap?
- Is there an existing successful model that we can help bring to scale or adapt to our community from elsewhere?

Some "how" questions:

- How can the foundation use its role most strategically to leverage other partner support?
- How much risk are we willing to incur?
- How will we balance this new work with our other areas of interest? Does something else need to fall off the agenda?