
Research and Evaluation

Funders, [conveners](#), and participants want to know: Are groups collaborating effectively? Can they improve the way they work together? What will it take to produce better results? Similarly, academics and practitioners want to know: Are established [consensus building](#) techniques and institutional arrangements working effectively? Are innovations in the field achieving what was intended?

CBI engages in cutting-edge [research](#) and [evaluation](#) to answer these questions. We work in an interactive, participant-driven, adaptive way. CBI supports practical studies to determine what works — and what doesn't — in the field of dispute resolution and consensus building. We do not conduct outsider-driven, academic studies. Instead, we engage stakeholders in multiple rounds of goal setting, data collection, analysis, reflection and practical problem-solving.

We utilize a range of tools, including Web-based surveys, 360-degree assessment tools, in-depth and confidential interviews, and careful reviews of bylaws and other governance documents. As professional [mediators](#), we know how to ensure confidentiality. We aim not only to compare our findings with initially agreed-upon performance criteria, but also to help our clients consider whether they are measuring the right things, and how our findings can be turned their advantage. Our [Board of Directors](#) includes some of the United States' best-known researchers in the consensus building field. We are also linked to the [MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program](#) at Harvard Law School and the Environmental Policy Group at MIT. We bring our well-tested theory of [mutual gains negotiation](#), as well as decades of [experience](#) in diverse collaborative settings, to bear through rigorous analysis, hard-hitting question-asking, and sensitivity to personalities and politics. We help our clients understand what's working, what's not, and what adjustments ought to be made.