

New
**The Community
Collaboration Manual**



The National Assembly
of National Voluntary Health
And Social Welfare Organizations

Mission Statement:

The National Assembly, an association of national voluntary health and human service organizations, advances the effectiveness of each member and provides collective leadership in the areas of health and human services.

The National Assembly of National Voluntary Health & Social Welfare Organizations

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Preface

Collaborations have the potential to strengthen communities, remove turf issues, develop relationships among public and private organizations, and improve the quality of services to the community. The purpose of this manual is to demystify the skills and concepts needed to build effective collaborations. The process is not difficult. But it takes patience, sensitivity, and a commitment to achieving the mission of the collaboration.

We all have experience working in groups — with our families, friends, religious organizations, schools, or businesses. Human beings naturally link together in small and large groups to make their lives better. This manual presents a systematic approach to collaboration, to help fine-tune these natural skills and to enable their more effective use.

The New Community Collaboration Manual is an enhancement of the original *Community Collaboration Manual*, first printed in 1991 and reprinted again in 1993. Both are an outgrowth of a project initiated by the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY), an affinity group of the National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations. The National Collaboration is a consortium of 22 of the nation's leading youth development organizations, joined together to develop programs and advocate social policy to respond to the diverse needs of our nation's youth. In 1988, NCY initiated "Making the Grade," a project to educate the public about the critical issues facing many of America's young people. Across the nation, over 350 communities analyzed local needs and made recommendations for how their communities could respond to the problem faced by their young people.

As NCY and the National Assembly analyzed the feedback from communities involved in Making the

Grade, we found that an overwhelming majority — 86 percent — saw the need for more collaborative efforts in their communities.

Collaborations have become an essential tool for community organizations to enhance and coordinate services within their communities, which increasingly face serious problems and a scarcity of resources to solve them. Most social agencies recognize the need to cooperate to create efficiencies, improve client/consumer services, fill critical gaps, and eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort. Government funding has decreased over the past decade and cannot possibly keep pace with our burgeoning social needs. Recognizing this, sophisticated philanthropists have begun looking toward collaborative or community-wide approaches to addressing human need. Likewise, research has shown that community involvement is an important strategy for supplementing other forms of intervention. Therefore, for economic, political, and humane reasons, collaboration is essential.

To respond to this growing need among communities and nonprofit organizations interested in building community collaborations, the National Assembly offers this manual. While many examples are drawn from the Making the Grade experience and other youth service collaborations, we believe its content is applicable to the broad scope of human service concerns. We hope this manual will be used by communities seeking to coordinate service delivery systems, reallocate resources, and expand promising practices, to better serve all of our citizens.

Gordon A. Raley
Executive Director

The National Assembly of National Voluntary
Health and Social Welfare Organizations

Acknowledgments

The New Community Collaboration Manual and its predecessor are both products of collaboration. Many groups and individuals played a role in its development. First and foremost, we would like to thank the communities across the country who collaborated as part of the Making The Grade project. Their input, feedback, and support have been both the impetus and the inspiration for this manual.

We hesitate to mention names for fear of leaving out some who have provided substantial assistance, but the contributions of some individuals have been so notable that the production of this manual would have been unlikely without their help. The best collaborations survive changes in leadership and in staff, and this manual is no exception. It began under the stewardship of **Leonard W. Stern**, former Executive Director of the National

Assembly in 1990. He and **James B. Hickman** compiled an early draft of the first *Community Collaboration Manual*. **Gordon A. Raley** took the helm as Executive Director of the National Assembly in 1990, completed subsequent drafts, and published the manual in 1991. He supervised revisions in 1993, before completing *The New Community Collaboration* in 1997. **Jane Quinn, Sam Halperin, Dagmar McGill, and Ricki Wertz** were tireless in their encouragement and skillful in suggesting needed changes during the initial drafting and the 1993 revision.

David Holmes and **Tiffany Boykin** of the National Assembly aided in research for the 1997 revision. Thanks is also due to Becky Hansen of **Rock Creek Publishing** of Bethesda, Maryland for production and layout.

How to Use this Manual

Since collaborations vary in different communities and for different areas of concern, *The New Community Collaboration Manual* explores options for building and sustaining collaborations. It provides step-by-step guidelines for the initial formation of a collaboration and discusses some pitfalls and barriers. Hopefully, it is not too prescriptive, nor too abbreviated. It was designed to be used by professionals and volunteers alike within any community. The chapters are divided so that more advanced collaborators may turn directly to those topics of greatest interest, perhaps skipping the rudimentary "how to" information.

Do not feel compelled to read every chapter, in sequence. Pick and choose those portions that best fit your particular needs and interests. Use it as your tool. For communities just beginning to explore collaborations, this manual provides guidelines on the basic steps necessary for beginning a collaboration. For communities already experienced with collaboration and for those involved in more mature collaborations, it includes a discussion of more complex issues.

Chapter One — What is a Collaboration gives an overview of collaboration — including definitions and keys to success for anyone involved in collaborations.

Chapter Two — Starting a Collaboration is a primer for individuals who are new to the collaboration process and a convenient review for those with experience.

Chapter Three — Building the Collaboration gives all audiences an introduction to the myriad options available for collaborations and keys to expanding new collaborations.

Chapter Four — Maintaining the Momentum provides help for individuals in existing collaborations and focuses on trouble-shooting and keeping the collaboration energized after the initial formation period.

Chapter Five — Youth Involvement in Collaboration provides information on how to work effectively with youth and explores four options for involving youth in community collaborations.

Chapter Six — Business Involvement in Collaboration describes the business role in collaboration and provides information on how to engage business as an effective partner.

Chapter Seven — The Role of the Media in Contemporary Collaborations acknowledges the enormous power of the media to raise public awareness and mobilize citizens to action. It provides some tips on working with the media as an integral part of the collaboration.

Chapter Eight — Using Information Technology introduces new tools communities can use to facilitate communication and improve research and information sharing in community collaborations.

Chapter Nine — Holding a Community Summit provides a step-by-step guide for organizing a local town meeting or summit.

The Appendices contain resource materials on such topics as youth participation, model bylaws, characteristics of a good chairperson or coordinator, setting measurable objectives, and program evaluation, to provide additional assistance in developing collaborations.

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Chapter One

Understanding Successful Collaborations

"In democratic countries the science of associations is the mother science, the progress of all the rest depends upon the progress it has made."

—Alexis De Tocqueville, Originally published in *Democracy in America* (1835)

The reliance on volunteerism and on the formation of voluntary associations is stronger in America than in any other country in the world. As De Tocqueville points out, volunteerism is a natural outgrowth of a democratic society. Democracy implies a responsibility among its citizens to be involved in the process of shaping society. Americans understand that their voices become stronger when they join with others who share the same values or goals.

Many communities have had experience with different forms of strategic alliances. At a most basic level, individuals in communities develop **communication** links to exchange information and resources. The emphasis is on tapping into other people for contacts, information, and resources location. At a second level, **cooperation** is a logical extension of individual networking. Participation at this level centers on trying to accomplish a specific purpose or goal, with work driven by individuals rather than the organizations they may represent. **Coalition** occurs more typically at the organizational level with more formal participation around an issue or a common set of interrelated issues. The focus of the coalition may be rather broad, but the intent is to address a specific need and then disband. The goal is to amass enough influence and resources to have an impact on an issue beyond what one group could do alone.

A collaboration is different. A smaller but growing number of communities are experiencing the

benefits derived from this highest and most difficult level of strategic alliance. Collaborative efforts among public and especially voluntary, not-for-profit agencies and organizations involve a more formal and sustained commitment than either cooperative agreements or coalitions. Collaboration builds on the conviction that, while retaining uniqueness and autonomy, organizations and agencies that share values and goals can often accomplish more toward a common mission by working together than they can on their own.

What is Collaboration?

Collaboration is the process by which several agencies or organizations make a formal, long-term commitment to work together to accomplish a common mission related to critical and complex social issues of wide concern. Collaboration requires a commitment to participate in shared decision-making and allocation of resources related to activities responding to mutually identified needs. Organizations in collaboration: share resources; develop, implement, and evaluate programs together; establish policy; and jointly conduct educational programs,

Collaboration implies a **structure** by which organization representatives decide how to plan and act together. Generally, by-laws or other written materials or procedures will be helpful.

Collaboration implies a **style of work** in which agencies and organizations deliberately decide to do things together as a whole, rather than as individuals acting on their own initiative.

Collaboration implies a **sense of community** in which members begin to see themselves as complementary and mutually supportive contributors to the whole community and not as competitors.

Each collaboration is unique in its characteristics and structure, but there are some unique characteristics of successful collaborations. They have:

- ▶ a clearly defined **mission or purpose** which is mutually agreed upon by participants;
- ▶ active involvement of participants in the establishment of **goals, objectives, and activities**;
- ▶ clearly defined **operating procedures** and a clear definition of **members' roles**;
- ▶ a **communication system**, which includes regular information sharing and planned discussion of interagency competition, vested interests, and turf issues; and
- ▶ a sense of "**common ground**" where participants find a common agenda and feel the collaboration is their enterprise.

As they work together, collaboration members will make decisions about:

- ▶ what kinds of **services** they will provide;
- ▶ which **organizations** to include in membership;
- ▶ the **structure** of the collaboration;
- ▶ the **focus** of the collaboration — whether to emphasize capacity building for members to enhance their service to the community, or community advocacy, or both; and
- ▶ how to provide **resources** to operate the collaboration.

Why Collaborate?

Collaborations provide opportunities to rethink how organizations within a community relate to

each other and how they can respond to the growing needs of their members and the community, often in the face of scarce resources.

Collaborations Can Help Communities:

- ▶ identify gaps in current services and provide a means to fill the gaps;
- ▶ expand available services by cooperative programming and joint fundraising or grant programs;
- ▶ provide better services to clients through interagency communication about client needs, referral programs, and client case management;
- ▶ develop a greater understanding of client and community needs by seeing the whole picture;
- ▶ share similar concerns, while being enriched by diverse perspectives that different members from varied backgrounds bring to the collaboration;
- ▶ reduce interagency conflicts and tensions by squarely addressing issues of competition and "turf";
- ▶ improve communication with organizations within the community and, through those organizations, with larger segments of the community;
- ▶ mobilize action to effect needed changes through collective advocacy;
- ▶ achieve greater visibility with decision-makers, the media, and the community;
- ▶ enhance staff skill levels by sharing information and organizing joint training programs;
- ▶ conserve resources by avoiding unnecessary duplication of services; and
- ▶ realize management efficiencies through collective buying programs and other collective cost containment opportunities.

Collaboration is not the answer for every situation. An organization, by itself, can often plan and implement an activity more quickly than a group of organizations—that is, an individual action can be more expedient. In many kinds of activities, this separate approach makes sense. But in other instances, individual organizations acting alone may lack the resources and the clout to produce desired results.

Collaborations are more effective at developing an understanding of the community-wide implications of problems and solutions. They are more adept at mobilizing larger segments of the community to effect change. A group effort can bring together diverse opinions and develop a program, an activity, or a campaign that will be supported by many organizations.

For example, a collaboration should be more successful than a single organization in mobilizing a community to eliminate lead poisoning among children living in old housing. By forming a collaboration of health care providers, neighborhood block groups, area schools and day care centers, government housing authorities, businesses that employ local residents, local universities, and environmental organizations, the problem becomes more manageable. Each group can lend its resources to the project:

- ▶ **Health care providers, universities, and environmental organizations** might provide expert advice about the technical issues.
- ▶ **Block Associations** might canvass neighborhoods to give information to residents.
- ▶ **Local businesses** might provide information to their employees.
- ▶ **Schools and day care centers** might cooperate with **health care providers** in setting up testing programs to identify children who have high levels of lead in their systems.
- ▶ **Government housing authorities** might work with volunteers from **neighborhood block associations and environmental organizations** to test old buildings that used paint with high lead content.
- ▶ **Local media** can help rivet the attention of local public officials and instill a sense of advocacy and common concern in the community.

The process of working together can bring benefits in addition to the outcomes of any given project itself. As various sectors begin working together, they learn more about each other. They begin to broaden their understanding of their problems as

they listen to the other members' perspectives and concerns. The synergy created often results in increasing coordination among the groups and in creating solutions to problems that meet all the organizations' needs.

Seven Keys to Successful Collaborations

Before presenting the basics of organizing a collaboration, some key concepts should be discussed. These seven ideas — shared vision, skilled leadership, process orientation, diversity, member-driven agenda, multiple sectors, and accountability — provide a philosophical background for understanding the ingredients of a successful collaboration.

1. Shared Vision

Collaboration means that participants are willing to act together to meet a mutually identified need and that they believe the collaboration is useful. It also implies that participants are willing to trust each other in carrying out the mission of the collaboration, while understanding that each participant may bring a different agenda to the collaboration. Developing a shared vision starts with understanding these different agendas and finding ways to meet the needs of the participants whenever possible. The process continues with participants coming to consensus around the definition of the need or problem, and developing a mission statement that guides the group in its decision-making and activities. The founding participants must collectively discuss and support the final mission statement. New participants must understand the vision of the collaboration and support the mission.

2. Skilled Leadership

Collaborations usually begin with a small group of interested organizational representatives brought together by a catalytic event or by common needs or

values. All participants in this initial group have a stake in leadership and in the outcomes. As the collaboration grows, new participants need to feel a sense of responsibility for the success of the group, even if they choose not to take a leadership role. As the collaboration further evolves, new leaders need to be cultivated to ensure that a few individuals are not over-burdened and are not perceived as too controlling or monopolizing. Continuity and orderly transitions of leadership are essential. Here are some characteristics and skills that good collaboration leaders might possess:

- ▶ ability to guide the group toward the collaboration's goals while seeking to include and explore all points of view;
- ▶ comfort with consensus building, and small group process;
- ▶ respect in the community and knowledge about the issues the collaboration will address;
- ▶ skill in negotiating turf issues;
- ▶ belief in the process of collaboration;
- ▶ knowledge about the community and organizations in the community;
- ▶ skill and persuasiveness in oral and written communication; and
- ▶ time to commit to leadership.

It is also a good idea to find out if any participants have had experience in starting collaborations or other forms of cooperative action and seek to involve them as leaders or advisors.

3. Process Orientation

While collaborations live by their results, the process of collaborating is itself an end worth pursuing. Attention always needs to be focused on the process of including people in the shared decision-making of the collaboration. Many groups strive for consensus. This ensures the opportunity for all participants to have input and gives minority opinions a full hearing. Since participants always "come to the table" with their own agendas, it is important to maintain the focus on the agreed upon mis-

sion, while simultaneously striving to meet participants' needs.

Some form of conflict is natural as various parties engage in collaborative efforts. Change brings about a certain degree of discomfort and disagreements over turf. The key is to manage the conflict and channel it into useful solutions. When conflict occurs, it must be addressed sensitively, using effective communication skills.

4. Diversity

Community collaborations must be open to the richness that comes from including members of different cultural, racial, ethnic, and income groups. It must recognize the commonality of all human beings, while treasuring the unique aspects that various cultures bring. Understanding differences in language, customs, and values is vital.

If there were no differences among groups, life would be less exciting — and there would be little need for collaborations. Members of each culture need to examine their own assumptions about other cultures and act to correct misunderstandings. Collaborations provide the "common ground" for this to occur. Participants need to devote the necessary time and energy to ensuring that they communicate clearly with members of other cultural groups. Often the effort needed to communicate successfully with someone from another culture results in a new perspective on the topic and creative solutions to problems.

5. Membership-Driven Agenda

Groups join collaborations to meet organizational needs. Participants must acknowledge and clarify their needs, to allow as many individual needs to be met as possible. People need to feel important and included. On-going assessment on how well the collaboration is meeting the needs of its members enhances the viability of the group.

All participants should contribute resources to the collaboration. Many successful collaborations, especially at first, receive most of their resources from their members. These resources may be time, space, contacts, in-kind services, or financial resources. When members contribute resources, their sense of ownership in the collaboration is increased. But there should be a balance in the relative level of contributions from various participants. Sometimes, organizations that contribute large amounts of resources accrue a disproportionate amount of power. While this is sometimes unavoidable, it can prevent other members from feeling equal ownership.

6. Multiple Sectors

Successful collaborations seek to include as many segments of the community as are compatible with the mission of the collaboration. Collaborations exist to represent certain viewpoints or stands on issues or to build the capacity of organizations in a particular field of endeavor. They establish the criteria for participation to guide in making the right match between new members and the mission of the group.

Some collaborations purposely limit participation to ensure that members' goals are consistent with the group's mission. Advocacy groups generally include only those organizations that have consistent values or positions on the group's issues. Others limit participation because they focus on a particular problem area, such as increasing communication between schools and government organizations that investigate and prosecute child abuse cases.

Other collaborations attempt to mobilize an entire community around an issue or set of issues. For these

groups it is important to be as inclusive as possible. Organizations not likely to be represented need to be brought into the process. Depending on the traditions of the particular community, these often-forgotten groups may include businesses, grassroots groups, minority and ethnic group representation, government, youth, and service clubs. One of the strengths of collaborations is that they bring together different segments of the community around a particular need or concern and attempt to forge a new style of working together.

Strength comes from the diversity of the collaboration. Encouraging as much diversity as appropriate for the collaboration is important. Diversity can result in creativity, increased understanding, and enhanced political clout. Token representation, however, should be avoided. The group must be open to authentically involving all members in the process.

7. Accountability

Collaborations exist to achieve certain specified results and outcomes. The process of developing a shared mission with appropriate goals and objectives should aim toward these clearly stated results. Accountability means specifying results anticipated at the outset, and then monitoring progress on a continuous basis so mid-course corrections can be made. An evaluation of collaboration efforts and results should be planned from the outset to help collaborators decide how various efforts should be modified, expanded or dropped. Attention to accountability in the early stages of building the collaboration helps avoid the temptation to over promise, and helps to set realistic expectations for the collaborators and those the collaboration seeks to serve.

Chapter Two

Starting A Collaboration

"Our mandate was not to let happen what all too often has happened in the past. That is, each organization scrambling for its own piece of the action, going its own way and tooting its own horn, seeing programs spring up unrelated to each other, continuing piecemeal planning that's not integrated, rather than working from a corporate plan that sees the community and its resources in full perspective, and perpetuating the terrible gaps between public and private sectors with each suspicious of the other."

—Robert Dye, Original Chairperson
National Juvenile Justice Program in Collaboration

Many collaborations begin because of some catalytic event in the community. It might be the death of a teenager in an alcohol related traffic accident; the closing of a major employer in the community and the need for low-cost services to the newly unemployed; or the release of a new study showing the shocking volume of toxic wastes buried in a community. Catalysts affecting community organizations might include cut-backs in government funding, dramatic increases in numbers of clients, or staff lay-offs that cause increased workloads for the remaining staff.

Some of these events cause emotional reactions by members of the community. Professionals and organizations who work in the areas touched by the catalytic event initially may be overwhelmed by public and media response. Other less dramatic events cause organizations to think about how they can better meet the needs of the community. These events can also be the genesis of collaboration.

This chapter explores first steps that can be taken to form a collaboration. It examines a logical sequence of actions that can increase the chances that the collaboration will be successful. Since every community is unique, the order of the steps may vary for some collaborations, or some steps may be unnecessary.

The steps are presented in a series of "go/no-go" decisions. Each "go" decision leads to the next step in the process of forming a collaboration. A "no-go" decision ends or postpones the process or part of the process. That is, collaboration members must ask themselves if there are enough positive factors to warrant proceeding further.

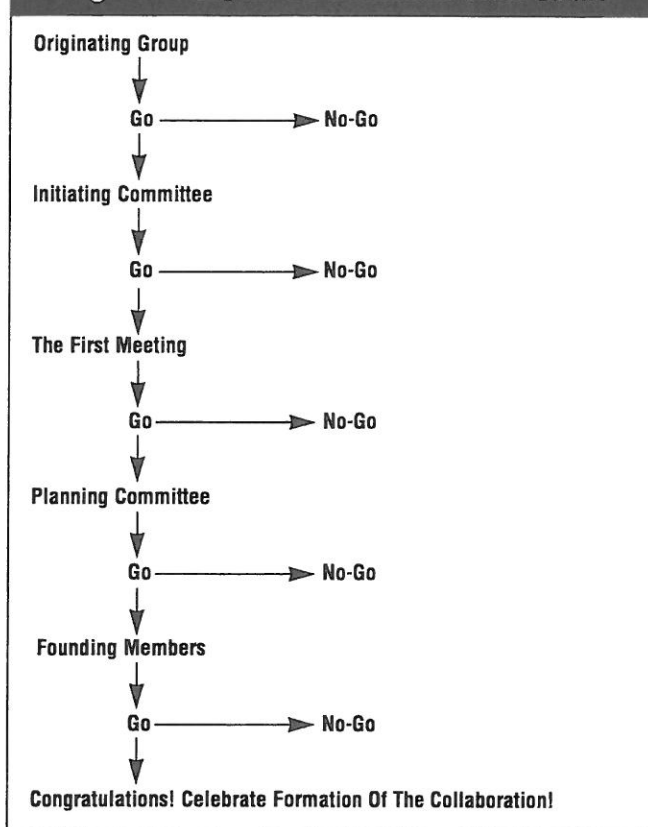
Each group assesses the need for a collaboration and makes a decision to participate in the next step.

The Originating Group

After a catalytic event occurs, a few people may get together and begin discussing how community organizations might work together to respond to the need that caused the event. In other situations, this discussion may not relate to a catalytic event, but may occur because organizations begin to recognize the need to improve coordination and communication among themselves. In any case, it is likely that a small group of individuals will take the lead in exploring the idea of forming a collaboration. This group is the Originating Group. They generally function very informally.

This small group will begin to think about issues such as the goals of the collaboration, who the members might be, and what kinds of activities might be

Figure 1: Go/No-Go Decisions Flow Chart



sponsored by the collaboration. Once they have some level of consensus on these issues, they should explore the community to see if any existing collaboration already addresses these needs.

The first "go/no-go" decision rests with the individuals in the Originating Group. They must assess informally whether a collaboration is feasible and warranted. If this groups makes a "go" decision, the next step is to form an Initiating Committee.

The Initiating Committee

Although members of the Originating Group can be members of the Initiating Committee, it is important to broaden the membership. At the same time, the size of this committee should be limited to take advantage of small group process. In selecting committee members it is useful to consider the characteristics required of skilled leaders.

Typical tasks of the Initiating Committee might be to:

- ▶ determine the goals of the collaboration and draft a written statement of purpose or mission;
- ▶ develop membership criteria and brainstorm a list of possible members;
- ▶ gather data about the needs or problems that will be addressed by the collaboration; and
- ▶ issue invitations to potential members and plan a first meeting.

At the outset, careful thought should be given to whether the focus of the collaboration should be on a single issue, or if the collaboration should try to integrate two or more problem areas. Focus may be on a particular problem (drugs, homelessness, or extended care for the aged) or around organizational issues (the requirement from funders for a joint funding proposal, the need to coordinate services to families from multiple agencies in the community, or the need for better coordinated staff training). Agreement on the focus provides the basis for developing a written mission statement. The focus may be on organizational capacity building, advocacy, policy, service delivery, or any other area mutually agreed upon by the Initiating Committee.

With focus clear, the committee needs to consider what organizations are likely to be interested in joining the collaboration. Some groups will want to keep the membership process open. Others will want to develop a clear set of membership criteria. The following questions can be used to clarify membership criteria.

1. What are the geographic boundaries for the collaboration?
2. What sectors will be involved in the group (business, not-for-profit, government, grass-roots organizations)?
3. Who will be required to represent each organization(CEO, trustee or board member, volunteer, staff)?
4. Must organizations be working actively in the problem areas?

5. What level of commitment will be required for membership? Will a specific amount of financial commitment be required?

Members of the Initiating Committee may then want to conduct some kind of asset and needs assessment related to the purpose of the group. At this point, such assessment should be simple and informal. If recent assessments have already been done by other organizations, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. If the research is for the same population targeted by the collaboration, the committee may want to use it for their assessment. If it is from national studies, the committee may want to extrapolate some local comparisons from the data or look for comparable local data.

Data Sources For Assets/Needs Assessment

1. **United States Bureau of Census**
2. **Federal and state clearinghouses for information such as drug abuse, AIDS, and sudden infant death syndrome**
3. **Bureau of Labor Statistics Reports**
4. **Vital and Health Statistics Series**
5. **Federal, state, county, and city departments such as health and human services, labor, education**
6. **Federations of social and/or health organizations**
7. **Local and regional planning councils**
8. **City, county, and regional planning departments**
9. **City or county health and welfare departments**
10. **Local or national organizations in your field**
11. **Local schools**
12. **Law enforcement and judicial departments**
13. **Chambers of commerce**
14. **Colleges and universities**
15. **Foundations**
16. **Research organizations**
17. **United Ways (national and local offices)**
18. **Television and radio stations**
19. **Large corporations**
20. **National or local trade associations**
21. **Internet**

Another area for committee exploration is whether organizations already exist that could cover the area of concern or broaden their focus to include the committee's identified area of need. If another group exists, the committee may then want to negotiate to join or work with that group. Finally, the committee may want to talk informally with leaders in the community, potential member organizations, and similar collaborations in other parts of the country for information and advice.

At this point the Initiating Committee should make the second Go/No Go decision based on this preliminary research. If they believe a collaboration is warranted, they should begin organizing the initial meeting.

Their first task is to develop a list of potential participants, brainstorming about as many organizational members as possible. It is particularly important to make sure that prospective participants represent the diversity of the community and comprise the major stakeholders in the particular issue area.

Among the groups that should be considered as potential participants in the collaboration are representatives of:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Business & Labor
- ▶ Government
- ▶ Civic Organizations
- ▶ Youth Agencies
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Youth
- ▶ Religious Organizations
- ▶ Funding Agencies
- ▶ Media (Television, Radio, Print)
- ▶ Volunteers
- ▶ Other Interested Citizens

Once every prospective participant is listed, the committee can use its proposed membership criteria to narrow the number down to the final list of invitees.

The first invitation can come from a well-respected Initiating Committee member or jointly from all Initiating Committee members. It should spell out the details of the meeting; include copies of the written purpose and criteria for participation; and stress that all decisions are preliminary and will be open to input from potential members. It may also be helpful to provide a summary of the assessment data gathered by the committee. The Initiating Committee members should make the follow up calls to answer questions and encourage attendance, since they are the ones who can convey a sense of enthusiasm about the meeting.

The First Meeting

Several factors should be considered when making plans for the first meeting. The location and time of the meeting should take into account the schedules of the potential members. Generally, groups that have professionals whose work is consistent with the goals of the collaboration may be able to meet during the day. Grass-roots groups and groups involving youth and parents may prefer evening or weekend meetings. Invitations may include a survey of best days and times for the initial meeting.

It is important that the agenda be structured. It should be clear to potential members that all proposals presented are tentative until all participants have an opportunity for input and the group makes a formal decision.

The agenda needs to be constructed carefully to allow time for:

- ▶ social interaction and team-building experiences;
- ▶ presentation and discussion of the proposed mission, membership criteria and activities;
- ▶ group discussion; and
- ▶ decision-making on the formation of the collaboration.

This is the third Go/No Go decision. The entire group assembled for the meeting will decide if the collaboration is to proceed.

Once the decision is made to proceed, a Planning Committee should be selected. This committee can be larger than the Initiating Committee, but should be kept as small as possible to facilitate discussion. If the group is unavoidably large, consider dividing into subcommittees or task forces.

Participants can also be asked to submit recommendations of others who should be invited to the next meeting. This allows for inclusion of additional organizations that may be unknown to the Initiating Committee.

The Planning Committee

The Planning Committee will be charged with developing collaborative plans in the following areas:

- ▶ structure of the collaboration;
- ▶ defining and/or refining the mission, goals and objectives, and roles and responsibilities of the participants; and
- ▶ recommending possible priority activities for the group.

Essentially, the planning committee has a responsibility to look at what it will take to operationalize the collaboration into a functioning organization. This will involve exploring what resources will be needed and talking with potential members about what they can provide to help support the collaboration.

The planning committee should also develop a short-term project to energize the members of the group and show the effectiveness of the collaboration process. Such a project could be one which has a good chance of success. Many individuals find it easier to commit to a short term project. Additionally, visible evidence of successful collaboration toward a common goal facilitates further collaboration.

The Planning Committee makes the fourth Go/No Go decision. If they believe the support is available to launch the collaboration, they call a second meeting of Founding Members to present their recommendations.

At this meeting, **the Founding Members will make the fifth Go/No Go decision.** Those organizational representatives at the meeting who support the collaboration will make a commitment to proceed with its formation. At this time, as well as at other key

checkpoints, the members should be sensitive that some representatives will have the authority to commit their organization immediately while others will need to obtain board approval or authorization.

After the decision is made to begin the collaboration, the planning committee can continue to function as a transitional leadership team or officers can be elected. The leaders will have many decisions to make about how the ideas spelled out in the initial mission statement will be implemented.

Chapter Three

Building the Collaboration

"With everyone in a community committed to making a difference, we can reverse these unacceptable trends that can lead to an intolerable society for our children and grandchildren."

—Richard F. Schubert,
Chair, Making the Grade (1989)

Once a group of organizations commits to form a collaboration, it is time to develop a structure, agree upon a decision-making process, and formulate the first year's plan. Much of this work will be the responsibility of the leadership and/or planning committee, with the participants having final approval. This chapter addresses the various structural options available to those planning the collaboration.

Some groups may follow this progression, others may stop at one stage, while yet others may skip some stages. Remember that collaborations change

and grow. Often they benefit from starting small and growing over time. As collaborations mature, they are better able to increase the commitment of their members and build credibility in the community.

Options for Structuring a Community Collaboration

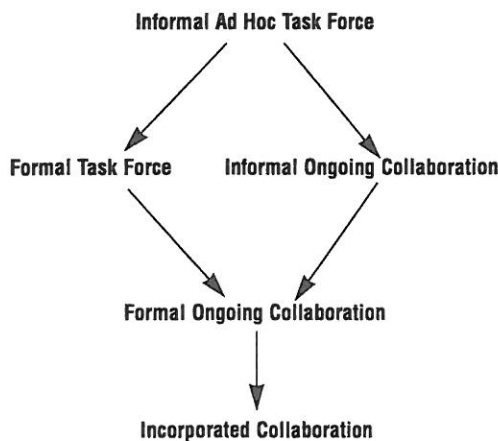
Different stages in collaboration building may require different structures and decision-making processes. The following options may be helpful when thinking about the structure of your collaboration:

- ▶ ad hoc vs. ongoing
- ▶ informal vs. formal
- ▶ unincorporated vs. incorporated
- ▶ open vs. closed membership
- ▶ outward vs. inward directed

These stages of collaboration represent opportunities to make choices about the best match between structure and the needs of the community and the members.

Ad Hoc vs. Ongoing. Many collaborations begin as ad hoc committees, coalitions, or task forces. The **ad hoc** structure provides an opportunity for organizations to commit to a time-limited process. Usually there is a well-defined end product expect-

Typical Changes in the Structure of A Collaboration Over Time



ed from the group, with a time limit on completion. For example, the National Collaboration for Youth's Making the Grade project asked communities to hold a town summit meeting to discuss youth related issues, to measure how well the community was responding to youth problems, and to formulate a plan for improving the status of youth in the community. Although many communities formed ongoing community collaborations, the original commitment was time-limited. **Ongoing** structures, on the other hand, imply a long-term commitment from the participants from the outset. This may be desirable, but is often difficult to achieve at first.

Informal vs. Formal. Collaborations may begin as informal or formal groups. For example, an **informal group** might begin with agencies serving older adults coming together informally to discuss gaps in community services. A **formal group** might come about when a mayor creates a task force on homelessness comprised of business leaders, not-for-profit agency heads, and local government officials. As they mature, collaborations tend to move toward a formal, more permanent structure which adds credibility within the community and stability to the collaboration.

Unincorporated vs. Incorporated. Once a formal, more permanent structure evolves, another choice presents itself. Collaborations can decide whether to incorporate as a separate, not-for-profit corporation or to continue as an unincorporated entity. Usually **incorporation** also involves obtaining state and federal tax-exempt status. This allows the group to solicit funds directly, to apply for grants as a collaboration, and to employ staff. Incorporation enables the collaboration to expand its range of services and to lessen the financial burden and work load on individual members. Incorporation also may give the officers or directors of the collaboration protection from some forms of liability (this varies from state-to-state) and allow the group to obtain liability insurance. Becoming incorporated and obtaining tax-exempt status requires a commitment of time, energy, and resources. To reduce the amount of work required, some collaborations find an estab-

Differences Between Informal and Formal Collaborations

Informal	Formal
Verbal understanding of purpose	Written mission statement or formal statement of the group's task by the sponsoring institution
Flexible roles for members	Clearly defined roles for members
Membership open, no defined criteria	Clear membership criteria
Relatively little commitment from organization is required	Formal commitment required, usually with board approval
Can respond more quickly to changes in members' needs	Change in mission of organization often a lengthy process
Leadership often spontaneous times specific	Formal leadership and some-decisionmaking system developed and approved by Membership
Limited access to resources	Often requires a commitment from members to provide or obtain resources
Can move quickly on activities if members are motivated	Can get stuck in the process and lose momentum

lished tax-exempt, not-for-profit organization to act as their fiscal agent. On a cautionary note, this strategy does subliminate some of the collaboration's authority to the board of directors of the fiscal agent.

Open vs. Closed Membership. Next the collaboration will need to decide whether its membership will be open or closed. How will the collaboration accept new members? **Closed membership** restricts new members, often accepting only those whom the collaboration invites to apply. This can be helpful in limiting the size of the group to make it more manageable. It also provides for a greater concentration of members who strongly support the purpose of the collaboration. But closed membership can sometimes be perceived as exclusive or discriminatory. In contrast, **open membership** allows anyone who meets the membership criteria to join. While orga-

nizations are often invited to join, others may initiate contact after learning about the collaboration through word-of-mouth or from publicity. Open collaborations are often more inclusive and viewed more positively by the community. But they also can grow too large to manage effectively and can see their influence diluted from being too broad.

Outward-Directed vs. Inward-Directed. Another choice is whether the primary focus of the collaboration is inward-directed, focused on increasing the capacities of member organizations, or outward-directed, focused on the meeting the needs of the community or of a particular constituency in the community. **Outward-directed**, issue-focused collaborations usually coalesce around an issue, health care for the indigent, for example. Typical activities might include documenting needs, identifying solutions and resources, coordinating services, and advocating policies for community change. **Inward-directed**, management-oriented collaborations, which seek to build the capacity of member organizations, will look for strategies and programs that help their participants improve their own organizations and the services they provide. They often bring together organizations that share a common interest, for example those serving people with disabilities. They may provide common services, such as the monitoring of laws or regulations, training for member management and staff, coordination and communication among members through meetings, newsletters, and seminars, or joint program development. Not all collaborations will choose to concentrate exclusively on internal or external issues. Some may choose a combination of both.

Leadership Options. Numerous leadership options are available to collaborations. The structure of the collaboration, the preferences of the participants, and the natural style of the chosen leaders all affect leadership decisions. The leadership option selected helps to define organizational culture. The initial leaders set a precedent for the group. Moreover, the structure of the organization will sometimes require a certain leadership structure. For example incorporated col-

laborations are required to have a board of directors. There are several basic options for selecting leaders:

- ▶ leadership rotates among the participants
- ▶ members or participants elect the leadership
- ▶ the board of directors appoints the leadership
- ▶ interested members volunteer for leadership positions

A collaboration may decide to use some combination of options listed above. For example the members elect a board of directors, the board committee chairs volunteer, and the meeting chair rotates among all members.

Decision-making models. Once members of the collaboration determine a leadership structure, they should next examine their decision-making process. Again, collaborations can decide the parameters for decision-making and who is empowered to make decisions for the group. Different decision-making options include:

- ▶ decision-making by consensus of participants
- ▶ decision-making by group vote (required quorums or percentages may be negotiated)
- ▶ member decision-making with board ratification

The **consensus** style of decision-making ensures that members come to a shared decision. It requires that all parties in the discussion support the final decision. A common misunderstanding is that consensus is exclusively a matter of compromise. Instead, done properly, consensus decision-making requires that all parties continue working together until they incorporate all points of view into the final decision.

Building consensus can be hard to accomplish, so many groups use some form of **voting** by members to decide issues. Large collaborations may even use a representative form of voting with elected board or committee members making decisions for the members. Groups that use a voting process must be clear about who is entitled to vote, what decisions require a vote, whether a quorum is required, and what percentage of votes is required to approve or defeat a decision.

Collaborations struggle with several important decision-making process questions. The first concerns the level of authority the members have to make decisions for the organization they represent. It is often helpful to document in the membership agreement who represents the organization and what level of decision-making authority they have to represent their organization. Some collaborations require that the board president or executive director be the decision-making representative. Others allow the board president or executive director to delegate decision-making authority.

A second question concerns whether decisions can be approved without the consent of all the members. This is especially true with more formal collaborations, where the member organizations will be identified publicly with the decisions. Some collaborations require that all members consent to any decision. This model promotes the cohesiveness of the group, but may limit options or delay actions.

A third issue is how to handle members who are absent when the vote is taken. If a vote requires unanimous consent, some collaborations will contact absent members for their vote. Others will count absent members as abstentions. A compromise approach allows members who know they will be absent to vote by proxy. Whichever system is used, the consequences of being absent during a vote must be made absolutely clear to the members at the outset.

Some collaborations allow approval of positions if a majority approves the decision. In this case, they may downplay the role of individual members and speak more as a collective body. Another option is to identify only the members that support the specific decision. This allows members some flexibility about the decisions they endorse, but may lead to factionalism.

Dealing With A Lack Of Unanimity. Lack of unanimity can be particularly difficult in advocacy activities. What course does the collaboration take when a member or group of members does not go along with a particular policy statement? The group

must define a method for taking action as a collaboration while honoring the individuality of each member organization. For example, a collaboration may decide to issue a statement to its members requesting support and giving a deadline for negative reaction. After that deadline, it is assumed all members not responding support the statement. Another collaboration may insist that all members be polled individually before their names are attached to the statement. Still others may decide to proceed in the name of the collaboration, without participant signatures, if a majority approves the statement. Whatever the case, procedures should be clearly defined from the outset.

Possible Collaboration Activities

Collaborations can sponsor a wide range of activities. Generally, these can be grouped into those which build members' capacity to better serve the community and those activities which promote community change. Most collaborations will start with a few activities and add others as they grow. Some will decide to concentrate only on a few activities, while others will be more comprehensive. Choose activities to match the purpose of the collaboration and the needs of the members and the community.

Decisions can be made about which services the collaboration wants to provide based on the needs of its community and members. This list is not meant to imply that any one collaboration can offer all or even most of the services on the list. The quality and appropriateness of services is more important than the quantity of services.

A Word About Advocacy

One primary reason that organizations form collaborations is to increase their influence in the community by combining their voices. Advocacy is action taken on behalf of others or in support of a cause aimed at generating systemic change which is enduring and will provide future benefits. **Advocacy**

Possible Collaboration Activities

Capacity Building: Strengthening Members' Ability To Serve

Communication and Coordination

- ▶ improve and increase communication among members
- ▶ negotiate turf differences
- ▶ coordinate services
- ▶ eliminate unnecessary duplication of services
- ▶ develop client coordination, case management, and referral systems
- ▶ provide opportunities for social support
- ▶ sponsor joint projects or services among members
- ▶ publish a newsletter for members
- ▶ establish an Internet website

Training and Consultation

- ▶ offer opportunities to share educational and training resources
- ▶ provide peer consultation and evaluation
- ▶ develop a library or resource center
- ▶ sponsor training workshops, conferences, and seminars
- ▶ provide opportunities to share information and ideas
- ▶ offer peer coaching opportunities
- ▶ develop and monitor a code of professional standards

Resource Development

- ▶ coordinate joint purchasing programs
- ▶ sponsor joint insurance plans
- ▶ manage a shared office building
- ▶ organize efforts to share office equipment
- ▶ coordinate joint grant proposals among members
- ▶ obtain grants or in-kind donations that can be "passed through" to member organizations

Advocacy: Improving The Community's Ability To Serve

Planning and Research

- ▶ conduct research or surveys
- ▶ sponsor community forums
- ▶ coordinate a community-wide needs assessment
- ▶ identify gaps in services

Advocacy

- ▶ monitor legislation and administrative policy
- ▶ advocate for legislative and policy changes
- ▶ promote needed community services to fill identified gaps
- ▶ develop relationships with the media to enhance coverage of issues related to the mission of the collaboration

Communication and Public Education

- ▶ develop a member services directory
- ▶ coordinate a community calendar of events
- ▶ organize a speakers' bureau
- ▶ publish a community newsletter
- ▶ conduct public education events
- ▶ sponsor community awards
- ▶ establish an Internet Website

includes those activities that attempt to influence community attitudes, institutional practices, legislative or governmental actions, and the fair enforcement and implementation of laws.

Advocacy can include lobbying efforts, but needs to be considered carefully in relationship to federal tax-exempt status for collaborations and member organizations which have incorporated. Lobbying usually includes activities aimed at swaying an elected official's vote on any specific piece of legislation. But any political campaign activity on behalf of a partic-

ular candidate for office is strictly forbidden for charitable organizations granted a tax-exemption under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). Publishing supportive articles for a political candidate in newsletters is also prohibited.

Other statutory limits on lobbying or legislative advocacy are set by the federal government and all 50 states. Since these laws are in a constant state of flux, collaborations are advised to consult an attorney who is knowledgeable in this area before implementing advocacy efforts.

Ways to Enhance Visibility in the Community:

- ▶ speak at service club, PTA, and Chamber of Commerce meetings;
- ▶ attend community functions and benefits;
- ▶ develop relationships with elected officials;
- ▶ find out how collaboration members' staff and volunteers are involved in the community and encourage them to become more active by joining clubs, volunteering for boards, commissions, or advisory panels;
- ▶ let media figures and public service directors of TV and radio stations know about the collaboration and volunteer to provide spokes people when topics of concern to the collaboration will be discussed in the news;
- ▶ testify before governmental hearings and community forums;
- ▶ volunteer as a resource to legislators and governmental staff to help with relevant problems faced by their constituents; and
- ▶ provide information to legislators and governmental staff on issues of concern to the collaboration.

While carefully avoiding partisan activities as a collaboration, become aware of the political environment in your community. Have someone in the collaboration stay abreast of developments related to your concerns. Find out who is most open to sponsoring new local legislative initiatives and who can get resolutions through the city or county council or the state legislative process. Encourage members to participate actively, as individual citizens, in local political activities; but remember that political activity can make enemies as well as friends.

Be aware of what politicians and policy makers want and need. Be willing to help if it is consistent with your values and purpose **and** if it does not constitute a violation of any laws or tax codes. Cultivate your contacts and maintain effective working relationships with those in positions to help your collaboration achieve its objectives.

Carefully choose when and how to advocate. Start small and build a successful "track record." Be careful what you promise and always follow-through with commitments.

Remember to focus advocacy around improving services to the community. Even when advocating for changes in laws that affect collaboration members, the ultimate goal is to improve the lives of the people served by the organizations.

Developing A Plan

New collaborations can easily underestimate the importance of planning. New groups may be so small and informal that planning happens almost intuitively. But as a collaboration grows, planning becomes more critical.

Successful collaborations, regardless of the formality of their structure, benefit from a written plan. Many excellent resources provide information and assistance on how to develop a plan. Some of them are listed in the Appendix. The following discussion will give the highlights of a good planning process and will point out some unique aspects of planning a collaboration.

A good planning process operates continuously and links planning with evaluation. The planning process should include the following steps:

1. Assess Community Assets and Needs

A community asset and needs assessment sets the stage for the planning process by identifying needs in the community, resources available to meet the needs, and gaps between needs and resources. For a collaboration, an asset and needs assessment should also look at the issues or problems the group will be addressing, the current organizations that might duplicate the services of the planned collaboration, and the needs of the potential members.

Sample Work Plan

Goal/Objectives

Goal V. Develop a newsletter that will inform community residents about the collaboration and update news about the collaboration's member organizations.

Objective A. By _____ (date), recruit a newsletter editor to manage the newsletter.

Work Plan

Task	Person(s) Responsible	Completion Date
Canvass for candidates for editor (Members, volunteer bureau, university journalism dept., etc.)	J. Jones L. Johnson	March 10
Review resumes	J. Jones L. Johnson	April 1
Interview top candidates	J. Jones L. Johnson	April 15
Make selection	J. Jones L. Johnson	May 1
Notify selected and non-selected candidates	A. Smith	May 5

The following tools can be useful:

- ▶ research or demographic reports by other organizations,
- ▶ individual interviews,
- ▶ focus group interviews,
- ▶ public hearings, and
- ▶ surveys.

Getting bogged down in an asset and needs assessment can be a danger for new collaborations. Sometimes it is more comfortable to study a problem than to take action. Assessment can be a low-risk activity that allows collaboration members to avoid accountability. However, an asset and needs assessment that is well done can give the collaboration information to target their activities on the most needed areas. Finding some middle ground between too much analysis and not enough, especially in a collaboration's early stages, is important.

2. Create a Mission Statement

A mission statement is a clear statement of the reason the collaboration exists. It must be narrow enough to provide direction and broad enough to encompass all relevant, potential activities; brief enough to be published in collaboration materials, and substantive enough to convey purpose and values.

3. Develop Goals

Goals are general statements about what the organization intends to accomplish. They must be consistent with the mission statement. Together, the goals spell out the general intentions for a collaboration's activities, and the results expected.

4. Develop Objectives

Objectives are measurable statements of intentions which refine goal statements. A frequently used acronym—SMAC—gives the essential components of an objective.

S The objective is **specific**.

M It is **measurable**.

A It is **achievable** within the agreed upon time frame and with the allotted resources.

C It is **consistent** with the goal.

5. Creating a Work Plan

A work plan gives life to the goals and objectives. It should include:

- ▶ specific tasks needed to accomplish an objective
- ▶ assignment of responsibilities
- ▶ a timetable with deadlines for each task

The action plan is the actual day-to-day operating plan. It denotes each task clearly so that its deadline for completion can be clearly marked. The person or

persons responsible for accomplishing each task should be specified. One advantage of a work plan is that it clarifies tasks to be done, and their sequence.

It is important that a collaboration define tasks and responsibilities clearly. All aspects of the plan (mission, goals, objectives, and tasks) must be clear to all members. Plans must realistically assess the resources available, for example the time of the members, in-kind contributions, and financial resources.

6. Develop A Budget

Once the collaboration forms its goals and objectives and establishes a workplan, it can develop a budget for accomplishing each goal and objective. Resources available can be compared with the resources needed. If a gap exists between budget needs and available resources, one of two actions is required:

- ▶ Additional resources must be raised to support implementation of goals and objectives; or
- ▶ Goals and objectives must be revised to conform with available resources.

A comprehensive budget integrates the requirements of all goals and objectives. If the collaboration's budget anticipates additional funds being raised in the future, it must analyze cash flow needs carefully to avoid a cash flow crisis which might curtail action toward completing the mission.

7. Monitoring and Adjusting the Plan

Periodic monitoring is necessary to assess how well the plan is working and to make needed adjustments. Monitoring needs to be built into the work plan at regular intervals. Depending on the scope of the work plan, monitoring can occur monthly, quarterly, or as deemed appropriate.

8. Evaluating The Results

On an annual basis, the collaboration needs to evaluate its results. Evaluation results and perhaps an updated asset and needs assessment are useful tools to assist in the next round of planning.

A unique aspect of planning for collaborations is that often plans must gain the support of the entire membership before being implemented. This requires the leadership and planning committee to be open to new ideas and to consult frequently with members to build support. It also means maintaining a realistic attitude about what the collaboration can do, balancing the demands on the members from their own individual organizations.

Collaborations depend on the commitment of their members to their plans and activities. Not all will have the same level of commitment. Leaders need to tailor collaboration activities to ensure that they meet the needs of the membership. Members need to understand how they may benefit from collaboration activities, especially when the link may not be immediately apparent.

One way to maintain the momentum of the collaboration is to celebrate each milestone associated with the plan and recognize all contributions and actions from the membership. Show the members that their efforts were successful and that their membership in the collaboration is valuable. Give recognition in both formal and informal ways. Spread credit around.

More About Resources

All collaborations need resources to carry out their activities. Even the most informal collaboration needs some place to meet, some way to announce meetings, someone to prepare materials, and of course, do the work required. Initially most collaborations generate their resources internally but it is vital not to overburden members with requests for help. The first concern of member organizations is ensuring that their own

organizations have adequate resources — they may become apprehensive if it appears that the collaboration may drain too many resources. Resources can be divided into three categories:

1. Human Resources

Initially, this will relate primarily to donated time from your members and your leadership. However, you may find organizations that will provide volunteers (like some youth groups, volunteer centers, or service clubs). You also may be able to get loaned executives from corporations or nonprofit organizations. College undergraduate and graduate students can be good resources for research and other tasks. Eventually, you may hire staff for the collaboration. Realize that collaboration staff often feel as if they have as many bosses as the collaboration has members. Careful consideration must be given to how staff are supervised and how the collaboration allocates work between the members and collaboration staff.

2. In-kind Donations

In-kind donations include supplies, equipment, meeting and office space, and services that are donated to the collaboration. These donations can come from member organizations, service groups, religious organizations, government agencies, businesses or individuals. Creativity in identifying needs and possible sponsors is paramount! Copying, postage, supplies, telephone banks, advertising, meeting space, refreshments, awards or prizes are just a few of the things that can be donated. For example, a local business might make its postage meter available for collaboration mailings. Recognize all of these in-kind contributions. Many organizations, especially businesses, see contributions to community organizations as part of their community or public relations programs.

3. Financial resources

Receiving outside funding usually requires incorporating and obtaining tax-exempt status or finding

an organization to work with your collaboration as fiscal agent. Collaborations need to explore all avenues of funding—government, businesses, foundations, community chests, United Ways, religious organizations, and community groups. Dues from members are another funding resource, but they rarely cover all expenses. If the collaboration plans to solicit outside funding, it should not depend upon only one source. By obtaining multiple sources of funding, the collaboration can achieve greater stability.

Remember, regarding all forms of resources, that if care is not taken, the collaboration may come in competition with its members. Be sensitive to the members' concerns and to funding sources with whom members have relationships or applications pending. Be open to possible ways of assisting or enhancing the fundraising efforts of members through joint funding proposals or through a collaboration sponsored grant which passes resources through to the members.

Finally, be aware that some funders especially like to fund collaborative efforts. Others require some demonstration of cooperative agreements with other community organizations as a requirement for funding. In the last decade, due to the success of collaborative efforts in addressing social issues, community-wide projects and collaborations have become "hot" topics. This trend probably will continue for the foreseeable future.

Possible Barriers to Forming a Collaboration

Although forming a collaboration is not difficult, some barriers can be expected. Barriers are negative forces that impede the process of collaboration formation. These barriers may come from:

- ▶ negative past experiences with collaborative efforts in the community;
- ▶ difficult past or current relationships among possible member organizations;

- ▶ competition and turf issues among potential members;
- ▶ personality conflicts between representatives of member organizations;
- ▶ racial or cultural polarization in the community; and
- ▶ differing community norms and values about cooperation.

Barriers also can develop because of the process used in starting the collaboration or in implementing the plans. Potential members often have concerns about loss of identity and autonomy. Participants may have different expectations about the purpose of the collaboration and how it will meet their needs.

Preventive Strategies to Minimize Barriers

- ▶ **Keep the commitment and activities simple at first.** Move through each stage of developing the collaboration only when members are ready.
- ▶ **Make clear communication a priority.** Communicate with all members regularly and avoid assuming that the members are informed on collaboration business.
- ▶ **Spend time getting to know the other members.** If most members do not know each other, schedule time for information sharing and team building at early meetings.
- ▶ **When new members join the collaboration, make an extra effort to include them in the**

social and business activities of the group. People who are new often remember the little acts of courtesy and hospitality that helped them feel welcomed.

- ▶ **Encourage members to be “up front” about their needs.** Set up win/win situations so that members' needs can be met whenever possible.
- ▶ **Don't avoid turf issues and hidden agendas.** Encourage negotiation and communication among member organizations that are in conflict. Bring in outside experts if necessary.
- ▶ **Develop clear roles for members and leaders.** Develop written statements that document commitments expected of participants.
- ▶ **Plan activities that are fun.** Celebrate the accomplishments of the collaboration. Recognize the contributions of the members and reward their accomplishments.

A collaboration that encourages clarity and communication will avoid many pitfalls. Creating an environment where people trust and respect each other enhances the likelihood of success. Of course, problems will occur from time to time. When they do, deal with them as quickly as possible. When a problem is not attended to immediately, it will become worse. People often ignore problems, hoping they will go away by themselves—but they rarely do! Problems often become more apparent after the newness of the collaboration wears off and the group begins to tackle larger and more difficult projects.

Chapter Four

Maintaining the Momentum

"Addressing the issues is just the first step, the easiest one. Now we must do the hard part — acting on the suggestions and following through on the programs."

— Verdia Hayward
Deputy County Executive,
Fairfax County, Virginia

All collaborations reach a stage where they are in danger of getting stuck and losing their momentum. This chapter starts out looking at some likely "sand traps" collaborations may face and some approaches for keeping them strong and vital. It will also explore strategies for managing change. One of the most certain barriers a collaboration will face is the process of change itself.

A brief description of the sandtraps follows, along with a few suggestions for handling each problem. Early intervention is often the key to keeping these problems from getting out of hand.

1. Loss of direction or focus

Collaborations bring together organizations with a common concern. The common concern gives the group a direction for its activities. If the collaboration attempts to add unrelated issues to its focus or handle too many areas, it can lose its focus. This can cause members to lose interest or diffuse their attention.

Suggestions

- ▶ Review the mission statement and use it as a filter for planning activities.

Ten Dangerous Collaboration Sand Traps!

1. Loss of direction or focus
2. Loss of leadership or struggles for leadership
3. The "Founding-Member-Syndrome"
4. Unequal involvement and recognition of members
5. Poor planning efforts
6. Negative publicity
7. Failure of planned projects
8. Burn out or unrealistic demands on members
9. Bureaucratic structure
10. Turf battles and competition

- ▶ Hold a seminar for members to discuss the mission statement and encourage members to suggest ways to bring the group back on track.
- ▶ Select strong leaders who have a clear commitment to the collaboration's mission.
- ▶ Examine whether the collaboration has fulfilled its mission and needs to disband or change focus.

2. Loss of leadership or leadership struggles

Collaborations can depend too strongly on a particular leader and fail to develop new leaders. They can elect leaders who are unqualified, for personal or political reasons. Collaborations also can develop factions and create situations where several potential leaders are trying to gain control of the group. These situations can leave the collaboration without clear leadership.

Suggestions

- ▶ Change the leadership and decision-making system to one that encourages shared leadership and responsibility. Develop a rotation process for leadership. Encourage the use of committees where members have input into decisions. Use consensus decision-making for important decisions.
- ▶ Develop a role description for the leaders and distribute it as a part of the selection process.
- ▶ Develop an orientation program for new leaders and a training program for potential leaders.
- ▶ Look for leaders who are "neutral" and competent, not identified with factions within the collaboration.
- ▶ Hold a collaboration forum to discuss differing viewpoints when they start to split the collaboration into sides. Use an outside consultant or a well respected member to facilitate this session.

3. The "Founding-Member-Syndrome"

Sometimes founding members can gain too much power and begin to block the growth of the collaboration. They can attempt to keep the collaboration from making necessary changes to adapt to new circumstances. They may have difficulty including new

members in decision-making and relinquishing responsibilities to staff. The skills that leaders need as the collaboration grows will change, and the founding members may not have the skills to make the transition.

Please note that not all founding members exhibit the "founding-member-syndrome". Many continue to be wonderful resources, adept leaders and skillful delegators.

Suggestions

- ▶ Enlist other founding members' support to deal with the "problem" founding member and to help shift the leadership to other members.
- ▶ If the collaboration hires staff, clarify roles and responsibilities. Rewrite role descriptions and use responsibility charts to help clarify the changes.
- ▶ Give the "problem" founding member new responsibilities that utilize their particular strengths.
- ▶ Develop bylaws that limit the length of the term for leadership positions.
- ▶ Institute rotating meeting chairs to give the spotlight to other members and to gain control over meetings.
- ▶ Develop a new leadership structure and open all positions to reelection or new selections.

4. Unequal involvement and recognition of members

Involvement and recognition are interdependent. Members who get involved tend to be better informed and gain more power. Uninvolved members may lose interest and eventually leave the collaboration. Sometimes, for political or personal reasons, some members can receive recognition out of proportion with their contributions.

Suggestions

- ▶ Create opportunities for every member to be involved in some way.

- ▶ Clarify the membership agreement to set limits for minimum involvement.
- ▶ Rotate leadership positions, so that others have an opportunity to lead.
- ▶ Provide training sessions or experiences to help people who may be shy or feel they do not have the necessary skills to become more involved.
- ▶ Hold orientation sessions for all new members to establish clear expectations about levels of involvement expected.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for team-building, to increase group cohesiveness and comfort.
- ▶ Recognize member contributions and accomplishments as frequently as possible.
- ▶ Develop a recognition program with clear criteria for awards and use individuals outside the collaboration for the selection panel.

5. Poor planning efforts

Collaborations may find it difficult to plan. They get caught up in day-to-day details. New groups may be small enough that planning occurs intuitively and, as the collaboration grows, it fails to add a planning system when necessary. Planning is especially important to collaborations, because all members must be involved and aware of their part in the activities.

Suggestions

- ▶ Start small and develop a planning process for an upcoming event.
- ▶ Provide training for leaders on how to plan.
- ▶ Provide training for all members on planning.
- ▶ Hold an evaluation session to discuss the last year's activities and discuss how better planning could help avoid problems.
- ▶ Engage an outside consultant to guide the leadership and members through the first annual plan. In six months, have the consultant return to help develop a long-term plan.

6. Negative publicity

If money is the mother's milk of politics, then certainly credibility is the mother's milk of collaboration.

Collaborations gain part of their power by being seen as credible by the community-at-large and by leaders in business, government, and media. Adverse publicity can threaten this credibility. Such publicity can result from failed projects, improperly prepared reports, internal power struggles, and ineffective advocacy campaigns. Of course, negative publicity can also occur when a collaboration is effective. Public criticism of a collaboration championing an unpopular cause can work to a collaboration's credit, especially during an uphill battle when troops may need mobilizing. Regardless of cause, here are a few steps collaborations can take to mitigate the effects of negative publicity:

Suggestions

- ▶ Get accurate information to all members immediately.
- ▶ Appoint one person to act as public spokesperson.
- ▶ If criticism is inaccurate, mount a public relations campaign to correct the inaccuracies.
- ▶ If criticism is accurate, acknowledge it as soon as possible and apologize for the error. Develop a concrete plan for correcting the problem and make it public.
- ▶ Develop a crisis communications plan and a crisis response team. Provide training as needed.
- ▶ Develop a planning and management system to avoid mistakes. Prepare contingency plans for all projects and monitor them carefully.
- ▶ Change leadership if the current leadership has lost credibility.

7. Failure of planned projects

Despite the best intentions, some projects may not be successful. Publicly recognized failure has been discussed in the preceding section. This item deals with failures that are not catastrophic, but may have a demoralizing effect on the membership.

Suggestions

- ▶ Hold a debriefing session for the members involved in the project.

- ▶ Hold a debriefing session for all the members.
- ▶ Study the causes of the failure and apply what is learned to future projects.
- ▶ Recognize any positive aspects of the project.
- ▶ Look at the capacity of the collaboration for accomplishing projects and adjust future projects to an appropriate level.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to salvage the project.
- ▶ Get feedback from outside, objective sources.
- ▶ Organize a small, simple project with a high probability of success to re-energize the group.

8. Burn-out or unrealistic demands on members

Collaborations can demand a lot of time from members, especially leaders. If the responsibilities are not shared among all members, those that do get involved can suffer from burn-out.

Suggestions

- ▶ Slow down the process and postpone plans.
- ▶ Rotate leadership positions.
- ▶ Sponsor member events that are just for fun!
- ▶ Get feedback from members on realistic expectations.
- ▶ Sponsor seminars on burn-out prevention and stress reduction.
- ▶ Focus on expanding membership in order to share responsibilities more widely.

9. Bureaucratic structure

An organization does not have to be governmental to become bureaucratic. Bureaucratic organizations become inflexible and difficult to manage. They may lose touch with the needs of the members and the community. Bureaucracies can take on a life of their own and seek to perpetuate their own existence at the expense of their original mission.

Suggestions

- ▶ Reduce the layers between the top leadership and the members.

- ▶ Hold sessions on trend analysis and managing change. Look at new directions for the collaboration and new ways to involve the membership.
- ▶ Rotate leadership and limit the amount of time that leaders can serve.
- ▶ Eliminate hierarchical leadership structures.
- ▶ Brainstorm alternative strategies for planning and implementing activities.
- ▶ Simplify policy and procedures to a bare minimum.

10. Turf battles and competition

Turf battles can occur when there is actual or even perceived competition among organizations for funding, clients, volunteers, or visibility. Different value systems or professional philosophies, personality conflicts among leaders, and past negative experiences among organizations can set up competitive situations. Competition is natural and a fact of life. The American free market system even values competition. But competitive turf battles which lead to conflict can have adverse consequences for participants in collaborations.

Competition can also become an issue if members of the collaboration begin to perceive the collaboration itself as competition for funding, volunteers, or visibility. This issue can become immediately acute when the collaboration begins to seek funding from sources outside collaboration members. Being sensitive to members' funding needs and seeking grants limited to collaborations or partnerships may ease the situation. Be certain that local public or private funds given to the collaboration are not merely substituting for grants given to individual members in the past. Local funders need to understand the importance of this pivotal issue.

Suggestions

- ▶ Arrange opportunities for the organizations involved to talk about their differences. Sometimes the cause of the conflict is attributable to misunderstandings.

- ▶ Facilitate a session to mediate differences or arrange a compromise. For example, new organizations that work in teenage pregnancy could agree that one would focus on primary prevention with children and the other on secondary prevention with adolescents who have had one pregnancy. Another division of labor might be geographic in nature.
- ▶ Use the opportunity when conflicting organizations change leadership to improve the relationship among the conflicting organizations.
- ▶ Explore possibility of collaborative programming and apply for grants specifically earmarked for such efforts.
- ▶ Look for areas of agreement and opportunities for limited cooperation.
- ▶ Assist groups to focus on "common ground" within the collaboration and on the collaboration's goals. Not all turf battles or competitive issues have to be played out in the collaboration.
- ▶ Bring in a professional facilitator or mediator to hold sessions to build trust and reduce conflict.

These barriers represent some of the most difficult problems that collaborations may face. They can be prevented through careful attention to group process. If these problems do occur, early intervention can prevent minor problems from turning into conflicts that can threaten the stability and effectiveness of the collaboration. But one of the biggest barriers collaborations must face is the process of change itself.

Managing Change

Change is constant and is, of course, one thing collaborations strive to influence. But collaborations, themselves, are also subject to change. As they grow, they naturally change and the community environment changes. In fact, successful change sponsored by the collaboration can, in turn, influence the environment in which the collaboration operates. All solutions breed new problems.

Change can result from a change in the social environment, new members with new priorities, a better

understanding of the problem area, an increase or decrease in outside resources to operate the collaboration, or accomplishment of identified goals.

As the collaboration matures, it will enhance its chance of continuing success by turning its attention toward developing strategies to manage change. It is impossible to foretell the future. The longer range the planning, the greater the possibility for error. The process of planning draws its strength from developing techniques for assessing possible trends and developing several alternative responses.

Environmental Trend Analysis

Environmental Trend Analysis is a useful tool for collaborations to use to stay aware of vital issues that might affect the collaboration or the collaboration's members. It is especially suited to cooperative efforts, because trend analysis is enhanced by an increase in the number and diversity of information sources.

This technique attempts to forecast future trends by looking for cues in the present environment. The environment is broadly interpreted to mean the cultural, social, economic, and political systems that affect the collaboration and its members.

A simple environmental trend analysis can be managed by any collaboration. It starts by gathering information about pertinent areas of concern that give some signal about future trends. Here are some examples of sources for information:

- ▶ government reports
- ▶ general audience newspapers and magazines
- ▶ specialized professional reports or journals
- ▶ service statistics from members
- ▶ public opinion surveys and polls
- ▶ foundation and corporate annual reports and funding priorities
- ▶ research reports
- ▶ opinions about future trends from members and community leaders
- ▶ conferences in the field

Environmental Trend Analysis

An environmental trend analysis can help collaborations and their member organizations plan for and manage change. As one example, let's look at the uses of environmental trend analysis for a collaboration that focuses on AIDS. A trend analysis will gather information about how many individuals will be affected; research transmission patterns, preventive strategies, and treatment approaches; explore the success of experimental medicine; and examine how insurance companies are responding to medical costs. The environmental scan can also provide information on foundation and government funding priorities.

Suppose the following trends are identified:

1. Transmission is increasingly the result of the use of contaminated needles and sexual contact with I.V. drug users.
2. There are no promising developments for a medical cure, but some experimental drugs seem to prolong life.
3. Education is beginning to reach middle class educated individuals, but is not reaching the lower income levels or minority individuals.
4. Insurance companies are increasingly requiring blood tests to screen out individuals who test positive for the AIDS virus.
5. Funding from all sources is increasing for prevention and research, but there is a paucity of funding for treatment.

The collaboration could use the results of the trend analysis to:

- ▶ plan an advocacy campaign to create a high risk insurance pool using private and public funds to pay for treatment of uninsured AIDS patients;
- ▶ apply for funding to "pass through" resources to member organizations to create education strategies to reach low income individuals; and
- ▶ recruit new members who have an alcohol and drug prevention or treatment program to strengthen its understanding and knowledge for this route of transmission. It also could encourage cooperative programs between members who focus on AIDS and those who focus on alcohol and drugs.

Member organizations could use this information to:

- ▶ take advantage of growing funding opportunities in prevention and research;
- ▶ develop programs to reach minorities with information and education;
- ▶ increase training for staff on the needs of I.V. drug users; and
- ▶ begin screening drug users and their partners for AIDS.

Sources can be selected to represent local, regional, state, national, or international levels depending on the needs or resources of the collaboration.

Members of the collaboration or of an environmental trend analysis committee can be assigned to review certain publications. Others can be assigned to conduct surveys or to conduct informal conversations with collaboration members and community leaders. These reviewers continuously look for signals of emerging trends in their areas of responsibility.

When they find relevant information, they funnel it to a central committee. This committee collects and analyzes the information and issues periodic reports

on the trends they see emerging and the probability that each trend will occur. The collaboration and its members can use these reports to help plan possible responses to these emerging trends.

Adapting to Change

All collaboration members need to take responsibility for adapting to change. Leaders need to stay in touch with members' needs and seek constant feedback. Collaboration members should take responsibility for actively participating and making their needs known. Feedback helps to keep planning for the collaboration vital.

Since the need to adapt to change seems obvious, why should change be listed as a barrier? Simply put, people are resistant to change. It is more comfortable to stay with familiar ways. Leaders and members need to consciously keep their minds open to new ideas. One useful technique is to encourage regular discussion of new ideas.

Collaboration leadership has a special role in responding to change. As the collaboration grows, the skills and knowledge needed to manage can change. Some leaders will be able to adapt, while others may be particularly skilled in managing only one phase of the growth cycle. It is helpful to anticipate leadership needs for the future and seek leaders who have the skills the collaboration will need as it changes.

Collaborations also can develop training programs to cultivate new leaders. Giving new members the opportunity to learn leadership through committee and task force assignments allows them to grow and others to observe leadership potential.

Reassessing the Mission

Change also can force collaborations to rethink their mission. As the collaboration's membership and the larger social environment change, it needs to assess whether its mission is still relevant.

Conflict can develop between the members who want change and the members who prefer to keep the old focus. These splits can be divisive and every attempt should be made to communicate clearly about the issues, to use consensus decision-making, and to keep the debate from becoming personal. The discussion needs to be supported by the available data and targeted on how the collaboration can best serve its members and the community.

The process of reassessing the mission can lead to:

1. recommitting the group to the original mission;

2. adapting or changing the mission to reflect more accurately the current needs of the members and activities of the collaboration;
3. disbanding the collaboration because the original purpose has been fulfilled and the members decide not to unite around a new mission;
4. creating sub-groups or affinity groups within the collaboration to allow members to specialize in one aspect of the group's mission; or
5. splitting the collaboration into two or more collaborations that allow each group to have a more specific mission.

None of these options is inherently good or bad if the decision is born out of careful consideration, and not out of destructive conflict.

Working with Other Organizations

Collaborations need to be open to working with other organizations. In order to improve their ability to serve, each collaboration should explore links with other regional, state, or national organizations, associations, or collaborations with similar missions. These larger affiliates can provide important resources and information to the local collaboration. They are especially helpful in sharing information about successful strategies used by other local collaborations in monitoring legislative action and in organizing advocacy campaigns on the state or federal level. Because some collaborations may cross several areas of need or involve several professional disciplines, it may be useful to join more than one regional, state, or national collaboration.

A potential problem occurs when two or more collaborations are competing in a local community. This situation can occur because large groups split into smaller collaborations, collaborations expand their area of concern, or conflict within a collaboration causes a fracture of the collaboration into two or more groups.

Multiple collaborations in a community can be reframed as an asset if the groups can develop a positive relationship and explore opportunities to work together or to avoid duplication of efforts. An example might be two collaborations that focus on housing issues agreeing that one group will focus on low income housing and one will focus on homelessness.

Finally, there are times when various collaborations decided that they have a common problem and agree to a short term cooperative program. An example might be that several collaborations with nonprofit organizations as members, agree to help pass a bill that increases revenue for domestic programs even though they focus on different social issues.

Chapter Five

Youth Involvement in Collaboration

"Until we recognize that every child has a gift or talent and we tap into it and make them productive citizens, then we are going to have youth with low self-esteem and lack of motivation, getting into a lot of trouble."

—Jane Hubbell

Executive Director,

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Youth are a considerable, often untapped resource for addressing community problems — especially those aimed at youth. They bring enthusiasm, commitment, and a perspective on youth concerns. In addition, their volunteer spirit is often accompanied by volunteer **time** — a commodity that adult members often find in short supply.

Collaborations need to see youth as resources for the community, not clients or objects to be acted upon. As with other constituencies human service collaborations assist, youth should be planned **with** rather than **for**. This is more than simply well-intended rhetoric. **The most important reason for involving youth, where youth issues are being addressed, is that it enhances the chance of success.** Youth participation works. It promotes ownership by allowing young people to participate in the development of solutions which affect their lives. Without this ownership, the chances of proposed plans working are greatly diminished.

In the 1970s, in seeking to reduce school violence and vandalism, many schools and communities revised school codes of behavior. When students were involved in re-writing the codes, the revised codes succeeded in reducing violence and vandalism. When the codes were imposed by adults, the codes did not succeed. (Interestingly, student suggestions for codes often contained tougher standards than those of adults.)

But involving young people is challenging. Adults often have low expectations for the ability of young people to contribute. They do not expect much, and therefore do not invest much time in preparing themselves or youth for partnership. As a result, adult prophecies of failure are often self-fulfilled.

This chapter explores how to effectively utilize youth participation. It examines four alternatives for gaining youth perspective and promoting youth ownership of proposed community solutions:

- ▶ youth as participants in primarily "adult" collaborations;
- ▶ youth as participants in youth advisory committees to "adult" collaborations;
- ▶ youth as participants in combined youth and adult collaborations; and
- ▶ youth as participants in independent youth collaborations.

Working Effectively With Youth

Adults who want to partner with young people need to respect them as individuals who can contribute to the well-being of the community. While it is important to recognize the differences between adolescents and adults, it is as important to recognize the similarities. The first task that a collaboration needs to undertake when involving youth is to spend some time listening. Ask youth

Ten Tips For Working With Youth

1. **Share the responsibility for leadership. Provide guidance, but avoid total control.**
2. **Listen carefully to youth and try to understand their perspective.**
3. **Provide meaningful roles and assignments for youth.**
4. **Share all work activities, even tedious ones.**
5. **Treat young people as equals and develop a partnership relationship.**
6. **Keep youth informed about activities, even when problems occur.**
7. **Be energetic and excited about activities. Have a positive, open attitude.**
8. **Make activities fun and challenging.**
9. **Be clear about levels of authority for youth and back their decisions when they fall within the agreed upon guidelines.**
10. **Serve as role models for the youths, and be consistent and fair in your actions.**

about their concerns, what they like to do, their suggestions for addressing identified needs, and what kinds of support from adults would be helpful.

Working with young people can sometimes be frustrating. (Working with adults can sometimes be frustrating too.) Their attention spans may seem limited when compared to adults and their turnover can be high. Remember that as young people grow they move through a series of psychological, social, and emotional developmental levels. Activities that are interesting to a young person in one level may not be of interest as they move into a higher level. Youth who stay committed to programs as they mature, do so because the programs provide appropriate stages of increased responsibility and activities that are developmentally appropriate.

When deciding on the age-groups of youth to participate, consider developmental levels. Usually it is

easier to have adolescents from the same developmental levels working together. The group will be more cohesive and the members will share a common frame of reference.

On the other hand, sometimes mixed developmental levels can be advantageous, for example, when an activity requires input from a wide age-range. Extra attention needs to be given to team building and to helping each age-group understand the needs of the other members of the collaboration.

When selecting youth to participate in collaborations, try to go beyond traditional youth leaders, such as student council presidents and "straight-A" students. This does not mean excluding those youth, but rather finding youth who represent the full-range of what it is like to be young in today's world. To help recruit youth, reach out to high-risk youth programs, religious organizations, youth clubs and character building groups, community and neighborhood leaders, inner-city programs, rural programs, and minority organizations.

Young people, like adults, need support and training to understand the complex areas in which collaborations work. They often have had little exposure to technical areas, professional jargon and acronyms, and legislative issues and procedures. Support is especially important when youth are serving on primarily adult committees. Support can include orientation and training sessions, mentors, and debriefing sessions after meetings.

Youth are less likely to stay invested in a project if not supported. They also may be sensitive to hypocrisy from adults. They want to be involved in work that is important and do not want to feel like they are being patronized. Youth are particularly drawn to work where they can try out possible career options. Youth involvement encourages the development of leadership skills, enhances self-esteem, and provides the collaboration with an important source of information and ideas. Youth also are skilled at communicating information back to their peers.

Four Strategies for Promoting Youth Involvement

Youth as Representatives to Primarily Adult Collaborations. Youth can give valuable insight into how programs affect them and their peers. They also can provide a reality check on the appropriateness of activities planned for other youth.

Collaborations should carefully avoid tokenism. Invite youth as representatives only if there is a sincere recognition that they are a valuable resource. Youth often feel intimidated in primarily adult groups. A special advisor should be assigned to help coach youth. All members should make an effort to include and draw youth out. Adults should be sensitive to the use of professional jargon. It is best if several youth are invited to join, so that they have some peer support.

Youth as an Advisory Committee to an Adult Collaboration. Creating a youth advisory committee for your collaboration is an effective way to include more young people. It eliminates the need for changes in meetings that conform to adult schedules (often meeting during school hours). It also allows a more representative perspective by including youth from many different backgrounds. Youth often feel more comfortable in primarily

youth groups. Finally, it offers a better opportunity for youth to assume leadership roles. A representative or two from the advisory committee can sit on the collaboration board and provide input from the whole youth committee.

Combined Youth/Adult Collaborations. This type of youth involvement is especially suited to collaborations made up of youth membership organizations. Adult and youth leaders from each organization can work together representing their organizations. This style offers a unique chance for youth and adults to form mentor relationships. Creating shared positions of leadership at meetings offers a special opportunity to develop youth and adult partnerships. The two groups can meet individually at times and together at times. This allows the best of both worlds.

Independent Youth Collaborations. Recently, youth have increasingly formed their own collaborations. They have become effective spokes people for youth concerns and often carry a great deal of clout among their peers and in the general community. These collaborations are usually sponsored by youth-sensitive organizations and involve some adults as advisors. Adult collaborations should work to develop healthy relationships with these youth collaborations if they are present in the community.

Chapter Six

Engaging Business in Collaboration

"If you're going to change the system, if you want to change policy, rather than simply make a gesture, if you want large scale actions rather than a small demonstration program, many, many, many private sector firms in the community must work together on the effort. No one firm commands the resources needed for such a venture."

— Bill Spring

Vice President, Community Affairs, Federal Reserve Bank

The Business Role

Business can work on a variety of fronts to intensify and fortify collaborations and to keep them focused on the broader tasks of policy reform, advocacy, and system-wide institutional change. Business is one of the few sectors with the interest, the influence, and the resources to match the magnitude of the task. Over the past two decades, business has emerged as an integral partner in the social policy-making process. This trend is likely to continue to grow in the future. Business offers the following resources:

- ▶ people, including executives and employees at all levels;
- ▶ credibility;
- ▶ independence of action, and the ability to act quickly;
- ▶ results orientation, to keep efforts focused on getting the job done;
- ▶ tangible resources, including staff, communications apparatus, facilities for meetings, expertise (in analysis, management, organizational restructuring, and training) and money;
- ▶ political clout; and
- ▶ steadiness of purpose.

Business can become informed about issues of interest to the collaboration, in order to enhance effectiveness. Then, informed businesses can educate others, raise their consciousness, build consensus,

attract new participants to the collaboration, and serve as advocates for the collaboration and its issues within the broader community. Business can assist in staff development, management analysis and improvement, research and development, and application of new technology. And, of course, business can assist in financing new, or expanding and replicating proven initiatives.

Business can also apply its unique area of expertise and comparative advantage, whether it is marketing, financial management, legal services, or management consulting. Every business has something to offer, just by virtue of its market mentality.

Business can help hold the collaboration to the same standards that business holds itself, striving for customer satisfaction, product improvement, higher productivity and lower cost. Businesses that cannot give money can often help realize cost savings in the existing enterprise. Businesses that cannot provide human capital can often help to recruit, retain or motivate available human resources. Business can use its influence to advocate for key issues, or to help replicate successful practices. Business can provide incentives for the collaboration and its participants to accept the risks that accompany real change. Finally, business can provide the marketing and public relations expertise to help you spread the word about collaboration activities and accomplishments.

How to Engage Business as a Partner

The single best way to engage business as a collaboration participant is to ask. But be sure to ask them for commitments that are within their capacities, and consistent with their interests. This implies that good research is essential before you approach the business for help. One way to determine how a business might best become involved with your collaboration is to consider the company's predominant function, overall organization, and general comparative advantage or niche in the marketplace. This way, a business may start in the area it knows best, and has the greatest degree of comfort.

The four major functions which a business performs — production, finance, marketing, and administration — may be a useful framework for considering the nature of involvement. If a business is concerned primarily with the **production** of materials and/or services, its greatest contribution may be in the areas of providing program implementation assistance, critical path time lines, quality control mechanisms, efficiency measures, and other such assistance.

If a business is predominantly concerned with **finance** — generating assets through income on sales, debt, or stock, it may be best equipped to assist by providing matching funds, establishing endowments, providing seed capital, or donations of equipment, instructors, or space.

If a business is primarily involved in **marketing** — making the consumer aware of products and/or services (advertising), selling and distribution, and meeting consumers' needs, it may consider its first area of involvement in helping to provide needs assessments, public relations assistance, preparation and publishing of reports, dissemination services, or recognition and incentive programs.

If a company's primary function is **administration** — personnel management and development, management information systems, accounting, legal, or inventory services, it may be well suited to provide assistance in contracting, monitoring, budgeting, fiscal controls, annual planning, management training and development, the use of technology including computers, and other administrative functions.

The nature of business involvement might also be based on what the business can trade with other partners (for example, jobs, resources, information, recognition, incentives, services), and what it would like to receive in return. What would be of greatest value to the business — additional business allies, enhanced visibility in the community, greater political influence, a reputation for doing good while also doing well?

Certainly, the nature of business involvement in your collaboration is not limited by these factors. However, in considering the best use of a particular company's resources, these factors may provide a starting point.

Chapter Seven

The Role of the Media in Contemporary Collaborations

"If a terrible disease threatened 25 percent of our children, you can bet we'd find a way to cure it. Wake Up America!"
— Ad featured in USA Today, telling readers how they could be a part of the cure
and inviting them to join Barbara Walters for an ABC News Special Report

In today's Information Age, media — television, radio and print — can be a valuable way to heighten public awareness, stimulate action, and keep issues alive. Communities involved in the National Collaboration for Youth's Making The Grade project in the early 1990's reported that the media were instrumental in raising public awareness and facilitating broad-based mobilization toward their mutual collective effort. They provided a powerful means to advance public policy in a responsible and objective way. They also played a critical role in keeping the issues in the public eye and in sustaining momentum.

Collaborations cannot control what the media reports, nor how they portray issues. As we all know, some messages sent through television, advertising, magazines, and other media sometimes glamorize certain behaviors and lifestyles that many believe are undesirable. Nonetheless, our view of the world is shaped largely by the media and they can be a valuable ally.

A key finding from media involvement in the Making The Grade initiative was that the media can be an effective partner to policy makers working on social policy issues. Their responsible portrayal of the issues and their powerful influence in raising public awareness and mobilizing action was essential. Following are some ideas about ways to capture media attention.

Working with the Media

Members of your collaboration with good communication skills can meet with TV news program and public affairs directors to discuss collaboration efforts. Develop a news strategy and supply stations and newspapers with press releases, including what your community is doing, as well as a list of experts who could be interviewed on various topics. Here is a list of activities that might make up a news strategy.

1. **Get to know the media.** Visit media outlets, if possible, before you start sending news releases and making phone calls about specific stories. Take a fact sheet, an annual report, or a brochure that describes your collaboration's goals and objectives. This gives you a chance to ask directly how you can best achieve both organizations' objectives — yours, to get news of your activities out, and theirs, to report events of interest to the community.
 - ▶ Make an appointment at the convenience of the media. The TV or radio editor or producer you want to see will be in charge of community service. At a newspaper, ask for the city editor or features editor.
 - ▶ Be brief and clear.
 - ▶ Ask about deadlines, the slowest "news" day, and what departments might be interested in different stories. Find out who's in charge and take names.

- ▶ Find out procedures for after-hours and weekend stories.
 - ▶ Leave fact sheets and several business cards if you have them.
2. **Share plans with the press.** Issue an advisory as early as possible, outlining your schedule of events and planned activities. As news events are added or confirmed, issue a revised schedule. Your schedule should succinctly show **what** the event is, **who** will take part (and who the audience will be), **where** the event will be held, **when** it will take place (date and time), along with a brief description which tells **why** and **how**.
 3. **Provide story ideas.** These can be descriptions of people or events involved with your collaboration. Be sure to list community experts who could be interviewed on various subjects. Then, just let key editors and reporters know events are happening; you don't even have to write the story.
 4. **Talk with the station manager,** managing editor, or other senior officials about doing a collaboration feature or column periodically.
 5. **Ask a talk radio show to launch a collaboration call-in series.**
 6. **Start a weekly feature in the local newspaper** that features collaboration activities, and have collaboration members author essays on identifying and solving community problems.
 7. **Provide stories and photographs** which meet your press needs. Ask them what their needs are — in advance — if you are not sure. Be sure to include follow-up telephone numbers on all stories and photos in case the press needs last minute clarification.
 8. **Send releases to newspapers, TV and radio stations at least one week before each event planned.** Mail the releases to the calendar of events section of the paper and to the community service director of the radio or TV station, as well as to the regular news editors and directors. Follow up with a call two days before the event. Make sure they received the release and ask if they have any questions.
 9. **Develop a strong news release.** The news release presents your collaboration and its events and activities to the media editors. How long should it be? What should it look like?
 - ▶ Your collaboration's name appears on the top of the page. You can use regular letterhead, special news release letterhead, or the name and address typed onto plain paper.
 - ▶ The release should be as close to one page as possible — and never more than three. If your release is more than one page, put "MORE" at the bottom of each page with a follow on, and the journalist's symbol "30" or "####" at the bottom of the last page of text to signal the end.
 - ▶ The first line on the page gives the release date. If your release is not immediate, give a brief note of explanation, underlined or in all caps.
 - ▶ The second line gives the name or names of those to be contacted for more information. This also gives the media a contact person for future stories or articles.
 - ▶ The third line is your headline — it should be simple and factual.
 - ▶ The first sentence of text is the most important sentence in the release. With the name and address of your collaboration, and the time, date, and place of your event, or the summary of your news, the first paragraph should be able to "stand alone."
 - ▶ Never hand-write your release — most editors won't even read them.
 - ▶ Proofread one last time before having the release copied.

- ▶ Many local resources can help you write your press release — try a high school journalism class, a local university, or local members the Public Relations Society of America.

10. **Generate public involvement and support.**

Generally, the public can be reached through your public relations efforts, which may include conferences (and the publicity before and after), newsletters, and advertising supplements. But the best "public" involvement is developed among those citizens who have a particular interest in or relation to your cause — those who vote a certain way or buy certain periodicals, for example. Targeted lists

are available by various demographic characteristics. Targeted audiences can be reached most successfully by direct marketing. Direct marketing costs vary — the most successful are also the most expensive. Generally, television ads cost about \$.006 per exposure (obviously to a much larger but less targeted audience); print ads average about \$.06 per exposure; marketing by direct mail averages about \$.60 per exposure, and direct mail with phone follow-up averages \$6.00 per exposure.

11. **Keep costs down.** To reach specific target audiences, do not forget to use member's newsletters and dissemination capacities.

Chapter Eight

Using Information Technology to Foster Collaboration

"Within one or two decades, each of us could possess the full power of the worldwide information grid for doing our work. How is that likely to change things?"

— Stan Davis, Author of *2020 Vision*

We all value face-to-face meetings. They help us develop trust and rapport. Breaking bread together and sharing meals together helps create bonds among people from diverse segments of the community and are important to collaborative efforts. But when people in a community live and work miles apart, feelings of separation and isolation can dampen their collaborative spirit. Each partner in a collaboration can begin to feel that they face problems uniquely.

Communication is an important tool for lessening isolation. Happily, most of us have plenty of experience using it. We take phone, radio, and television for granted and understand the importance of the media in getting community messages across. More recently, we have come to depend on faxes, pagers, and cellular telephones. They all represent technological solutions for bringing us closer together. Technology can also be useful in bringing communities together.

The next step for community collaborations is electronic information linkages. Taking the time to learn and apply information technology is often a low priority for human service agencies involved in collaborations. With the increasing pace and complexity of technological change, this is understandable. But there are important ways computers and electronic interconnectivity, for example through the Internet, can facilitate community collaborations by allowing access to shared infor-

mation for planning, coordination, and even collaborative grant writing. These tools can foster a sense of community by involving many agencies in the care and feeding of the collaboration; promoting personal interactions, relationships, and dialogue through the use of e-mail and on-line discussion groups and bulletin boards; and encouraging efficient planning and utilization of information, resources, money, and people.

Here are some ideas for developing and using information technology in your collaboration:

- ▶ Help more people in human service agencies develop the expertise and enthusiasm for the use of computers and the Internet.
- ▶ Develop web pages with useful information. This might include information that one agency can make available to all agencies in the collaboration. The initial stages might involve text files that could be browsed directly. The next step might be to develop a system so that key-word searches could be undertaken and to explore the use of graphics, such as full-graphic publications.
- ▶ Consider surveys and questionnaires to elicit needs, opinions, and other data from agency personnel (or their clients).
- ▶ Develop electronic bulletin boards so that information about meetings, seminars, conferences, requests for help, and offers of resources and volunteers can be shared.

- ▶ Establish e-mail discussion groups around topics of interest and among defined sub-groups or sub-communities within the collaboration.
- ▶ Explore ways to provide hyper-links on the web page to useful census data, studies, or other community web sites.
- ▶ Place papers on collaboration or the use of information technology on the web-site.
- ▶ Provide chat-rooms, allowing for the real time exchange of written messages among participants, around various topics of interest to collaboration members.

Chapter Nine

Holding a Community Summit

"To heal America, one of the first things would be to have a way that we could be a community and be in connection with each other again. We're too separated from each other. We distrust each other. Rich are separated from poor, black from white."

— Sister Helen Prejean

Sooner or later, a community collaboration will likely want to call the community together to focus on the issues the collaboration addresses. It may be for the purpose of planning, strategizing, or celebrating the completion of a collaboration project. In any case, this chapter is intended to provide a guide for organizing a community town meeting or summit.

Community summits are usually called:

- ▶ to explore the current dimensions of a problem or opportunity the community or the collaboration faces;
- ▶ to assess the effectiveness of current programs in addressing a problem or opportunity;
- ▶ to provide an opportunity for committed people to explore new program ideas and improve communication networks; and
- ▶ to encourage members of the community to make or renew a commitment.

The general steps in holding a community summit or town meeting are: 1) to organize a planning committee meeting; 2) to carry out pre-summit activities; 3) to plan the summit; 4) to hold the summit; and 5) to complete post-summit action.

Organizing a Planning Committee

The first step in holding a community summit is to organize a planning committee. The following areas should be considered.

Members of the Planning Committee - With as much lead time as possible, those interested in holding a summit should gather 10 to 15 people from the community to form the planning committee. They should involve members of the community collaboration and represent a variety of sectors within the community. They should be people who are "vested" because they live in, work in, or serve the community. They should include people with access to "decision-makers" in order to ensure broad acceptance of an invitation from the planning committee to attend the summit.

Agenda items for the Planning Committee - First the planning committee needs to discuss whether holding a community summit or a town meeting has something to offer the community. This is the time to consider any down-sides to bringing the community together around a given issue. Suggested discussion questions might include:

- ▶ Do the various sectors within the community already work together well or is there room for improvement?
- ▶ Could the business community play a bigger role in community collaboration?
- ▶ Is there a rising concern about the issue proposed for the summit to focus upon?
- ▶ Could health or human service networks use more community support?
- ▶ Do service deliverers know about each other's services and refer community residents to each other?

- ▶ If some degree of collaboration has already been accomplished, could it use more involvement from decision-makers?
- ▶ Could more attention from the media be useful?

A community summit is usually envisioned as an all-day, four- to six-hour meeting. Should that day be on a weekend or on a week-day? Since the summit is invitational, the planning committee should also discuss the participant list and determine who will issue the invitation.

Tasks for the Planning Committee - At the initial planning committee meeting, accomplishing the following tasks will further the organization of the summit:

- ▶ **Select a lead organization and contact person.** It is usually helpful for one organization, like a local community-based organization, the mayor's office, or United Way to take the lead in summit organization. This organization or person may be the one to issue invitations to the summit so they need to have a high degree of credibility in the community.
- ▶ **Select the site for the community summit.** This should be an area easily accessible to the entire community.
- ▶ **Organize appropriate subcommittees to carry out special tasks.** Small groups with specific tasks may be easier to coordinate. These responsibilities might include: 1) media; 2) participant selection and invitation; 3) logistics, site, and meals; and 4) selection of facilitators and group leaders.

Carrying Out Pre-summit Activities

A community summit can be a great opportunity to improve services and programs by gathering key players in the community and focusing their attention on what citizens in the community need. To maximize everyone's time, the summit should be efficient and action-oriented. The following sequence of activities may help in your planning.

Researching Community Needs and Resources -

The more information you can make available to summit participants before the meeting, the less summit time is needed to bring everyone up to speed on basic information. Since summit time is valuable, most of its focus should be on finding solutions.

The following four activities may help to prepare participants:

1. **Prepare a community report card to establish a working profile of the issue on which the summit is to focus.**
2. **Develop a resource listing of current programs and services in the community that affect the issue focused on by the summit.** This resource list will probably need to be revised after the summit to reflect the discovery of additional programs during the summit. A community collaboration, if it exists, might also consider updating the resources list on a yearly basis.
3. **Conduct a survey of key service providers related to the issue upon which the summit is to focus.** Questions on such a survey might include:
 - ▶ What programs or services do you provide?
 - ▶ What do you see as the greatest unmet need in the community?
 - ▶ What barriers exist that hinder greater success of services or programs you offer?
 - ▶ Are there other service providers or groups with whom you would like closer cooperation?
4. **Conduct a survey of service recipients related to the issue upon which the summit is to focus.** Questions on such a survey might include:
 - ▶ What programs or services do you need?
 - ▶ What do you see as the greatest unmet need in the community?
 - ▶ What barriers hinder you from receiving needed services?
 - ▶ What community services do you find most helpful?

Planning the Community Summit

Several items need to be considered during the planning phase of the summit.

Facilities: Consider holding the community summit in a low-cost or no-cost community facility such as a school, church, or recreation center. A location that is easily accessible to all participants and has adequate space to allow for breakout groups is a minimum requirement.

Number of Summit Participants: Give some thought to how many people you want to attend the summit. The larger the number, the more people you can directly influence. But large numbers are also difficult to orchestrate all the way through to an action plan if that is a goal of the summit.

Most community summits will likely include some combination of general sessions and small group work. Small group breakout discussions are most effective with no more than 12 to 15 people. Large general sessions should generally range between 50 to 250 participants. A larger summit is possible, but it will take longer to carry the group to the point of formulating an action plan.

Format: The chosen format will be partly determined by what the community already knows about the issues on which the summit is to focus. Communities which have already spent time focusing on the issue on the summit's issue will be able to move quickly to discussing resources. Communities meeting around the issue for the first time will need more time to bring everyone up to speed.

Whatever the agenda, the format will need to cover the following basic items:

- ▶ introduce the need for the summit and the summit goals;
- ▶ discuss the specific problem facing the community upon which the summit is focused;
- ▶ review current services and programs which are

addressing the problem or issue;

- ▶ identify unmet needs;
- ▶ identify new resources, possible reconfigurations of current resources, and new partnerships;
- ▶ establish a working view of the kind of environment you wish to create;
- ▶ develop an action plan;
- ▶ create a means of seeing that action or commitments are carried out after the summit; and
- ▶ evaluate the summit.

Holding the Summit

Finding a Moderator - All moderators must possess facilitation skills and credibility.

Facilitation skills - Moderators must be skilled at running meetings and handling groups. The moderator must be a time-keeper, a referee, a sensitive listener, and, at times, an authoritarian. This requires training and experience.

Credibility - The moderator must be seen as a legitimate and fair leader. That means he or she must have a certain level of maturity and must not be seen as having a particular point of view or personal agenda.

While all moderators must possess facilitation skills and credibility, additional qualities might also be considered in the "would-be-nice" category.

Celebrity - A well-known name can attract participants, garner media attention, and give the event our overall sense of importance.

Expertise - Someone well-versed in the issue on which the summit is to focus will have an easier time winning the trust of the participants. He or she might also pick up nuances in the discussion that add to the overall quality of discourse. In considering an expert, however, be careful not to sacrifice credibility. Experts often come their own beliefs and agendas.

Charisma - Someone with "presence" may have an easier time controlling the group and may be more attractive to the media. But this is no substitute for good facilitation skills.

In the best of all worlds, summit planners might hope to find all of the basic and "deluxe" qualities of a good moderator in one individual. Should they fail to do so, then, after choosing a skilled facilitator with community credibility, they might consider inviting a celebrity, expert, or charismatic individual such as a mayor, legislator, TV personality, or other well-known person to **host** or **sponsor** the summit. The host or sponsor might make some opening remarks or an address and then turn things over to **moderator**.

Opening Plenary Session. Most summits begin with an opening session (all participants meeting together) to get a sense of the days' objectives and to look at the present dimension of the issues upon which the summit is focused. Such a session might start with introductory remarks by the host or sponsor and a presentation of the agenda by the moderator.

The first planning discussion which follows the opening remarks and introductions might focus on two broad questions. How severe are the problems the summit is focused on and what are their nature? What efforts are underway to deal with these problems? Answers to these questions could will form the backdrop for the remainder of the day's deliberations.

Small Group Discussions. To involve everyone in the summit and give all participants an opportunity to be heard, small groups discussions are helpful. Working groups of no more than 12 to 15 persons each can effectively explore in detail issues introduced in the opening plenary session. For example, summit organizers might consider two-sessions of small group work. The first might identify underlying causes of problems being addressed and gaps in current efforts to respond to them. The second could

develop a list of proposed reforms to strengthen existing efforts and perhaps launch new ones.

Being a small group leader involves some physical and mental preparation. The physical preparation is simple: make sure the discussion room has ample seating that can be configured so that participants can all face each other. The ideal setting would be around a large conference table. Often this is impossible and a circle of chairs can serve as well. Also make sure there is a good supply of flipchart paper, felt-tip markers, and masking tape.

As far as mental preparation, small group discussion leaders must be prepared to set aside their own feeling about the topics under discussion. It is imperative for them to appear unbiased and fair in the eyes of participants. They should not take sides in any disputes and they should make sure that all sides of various issues get aired. They should keep in mind that they are not expected to be an expert—only manage group process.

Closing Plenary Session. Following small group discussions, all participants should meet together again to present and compare individual group findings. A spokesperson for each group might outline the group's principal recommendations, after which the moderator might note similar recommendation and create a list of priorities which will be the framework of a community strategy.

The moderator might then call for volunteers from among the participants to serve on a "drafting committee". This committee, which should meet shortly after the summit, could be charged with synthesizing a polished community plan for submission to the full group of participants at a later date.

Finally, all participants should have an opportunity to establish — or reaffirm — their commitment to be part of the solution to the issue addressed by the summit. They should be invited to articulate the commitment as concretely as possible.

Completing Post-Summit Action

If a final action plan is developed by a committee after the summit, it will be important to circulate the plan to all the participants. It may also be important that some group or entity be charged with promoting the implementation of the action plan. An on-going

community collaboration can be an excellent means to accomplish this end. The purpose of the summit is not to create a large, expensive, short-term wish list which may be impossible to fulfil. Rather, it is to find ways to make better use of current public and private resources and to create sustained community will to tackle community problems cooperatively.

Conclusion

Collaborations offer opportunities and challenges. They give communities and member organizations the chance to work together for constructive social change. They open new possibilities for reducing high risk behaviors and solving community problems. Scarce resources can be used more effectively. Collaborations offer the opportunity to bring the community closer together.

Whenever individuals or organizations join together, they will have challenges to overcome. It is important to remember that collaborations all over this country have faced similar problems and have resolved challenges in ways that helped strengthen the group. Working together, using a preventive approach, and dealing with problems as soon as they occur will encourage success.

Collaborations empower. They join single voices into a chorus that can be strong enough to effect change. This power also brings a responsibility to work together and to share both the decisions to use this power and the benefits of its use.

Organizations benefit when they join collaborations. They find new resources, opportunities for shared programming and training, a stronger com-

munity presence, and support for the work they are doing.

People who represent the organizational members can grow as a result of their experiences. They learn new ways of thinking about their work and their community. Opportunities for sharing problems and getting both support and advice can make their jobs easier. They can see that the results of their involvement in collaborative projects bring positive changes in their communities.

Collaborations are an extremely effective tool for mobilizing the community around complicated and pressing problems. They allow an interchange of ideas and promote cooperation and coordination of services. They are cost effective in these times of shrinking resources.

This manual has illuminated some of the skills and concepts necessary to form a successful collaboration. Options have been given for building a collaboration that addresses the needs of your community. Each community is unique and therefore, each collaboration is unique. However, universally, the most important resources for collaboration formation are the individuals and organizations in your community.

Appendix A

Youth Participation

Identification and Recruitment
Collaboration Board Orientation
Confidentiality
Collaboration Board Structure

Youth Participation

Identification and Recruitment of Youth for Participation on a Collaboration Board

For many adults, including those who work or volunteer in youth-serving organizations, identifying and recruiting youth to participate in a collaboration can be a difficult problem. Although many organizations work with large numbers of youth on a daily basis, they are often not accustomed to working with youth in the roles that are called for on a collaboration board. The overall experience with youth participation suggests that this is a new area for most agencies, one about which there is a lot to learn.

One first step in recruiting youth would be to identify potential youth participants in the natural settings in which youth gather. This includes schools and the various organized groups and activities that are operated by community agencies, including churches. Meeting with such groups and talking with youth, teachers, group workers, counselors, and adult volunteer leaders can identify the individual youth who may be interested in participating in a collaboration.

Another method is to make a presentation to a group of youth. Such a presentation should clearly describe the nature of the developing collaboration and how their participation will affect them. The agenda for the presentation should include the following items:

1. A description of the community issue on which the collaboration will focus. This description should not preclude the contribution of youth to further defining the issue.
2. An explanation of and rationale for a collaboration structure to respond to the issue.
3. A description of the proposed makeup of the collaboration, including a description of the role of youth participants. Again, this should not pre-

clude youth from defining the contributions they can make. Both males and females should participate. Sex-role stereotypes should be avoided, as well as roles that are clearly beyond the ability of youth participants. At the same time, it should be recognized that, although responsive to challenge, youth quite often lack confidence in their ability to meet these challenges adequately.

4. A description of the next steps in the collaboration development process. Youth participation should be sought sufficiently early in the process to allow youth the opportunity to have a real voice in developing the collaboration. The collaboration should not be perceived by the youth as an adult structure that is being opened to "few kinds."
5. A description of the potential benefits of youth participation to the community and to youth themselves, based on the assumption that they want to become involved in something that is significant. The idealism of youth should be recognized without being exploitative. The potential benefits for future career exploration should also be mentioned.
6. A description of how interested youth can get involved with the opportunity for them to observe the collaboration before they become involved.

In addition to working with organized groups, recruitment of youth participants should also take place in unorganized settings. Youth and outreach workers should be utilized to involve other youth with whom they work or have contact. For informal talks about the collaboration, youth workers may want to adapt the above presentation. It is important that this form of recruitment not be overlooked by the people involved in the collaboration development process. Many youth today are "turned off" to organized programs and traditional agencies. Youth participation would be seriously biased if it were limited to only those youth who are already involved in community agencies.

In recruiting youth, care should be taken to include "youth at risk." This would include youth who have

had contact with the police or the juvenile justice system, either for delinquent offenses or status offenses; youth referred from schools and social service agencies; youth from areas with high crime and unemployment rates; and youth from families that are experiencing problems. Since many of these youth are or have been clients of the systems to which the collaboration will address itself, it will be important to have their active involvement.

Recruitment of youth participants should also be conducted in such a manner to maximize the extent to which the youth who become involved reflect the racial, ethnic, and economic profile of the community.

Youth who decide to participate in the collaboration should not be burdened with the responsibility to represent all youth in the community, just as adults in the collaboration are not expected to speak for all adults in the community. Finally, adult members should be sensitive to treat youth members as the individuals they are.

Collaboration Board Orientation

An orientation program is designed to provide information needed by all new board members to participate on a board. Although different members may perform different tasks, some information is pertinent to all. This is true for youth participants. Like any other training, orientation will be determined by the specific organization. In general terms, it may include a discussion of:

1. The purpose, function, and responsibility of a board of a collaboration.
2. The role and responsibility of individual board members.
3. The goals, objectives and purpose of the collaboration.
4. Definition of basic terms and jargon.
5. The collaboration structure and operating procedures or boards, committees, and task forces.
6. The connection and relationship with other

agencies, groups, organizations, particularly in relation to funding sources.

7. The overall juvenile justice system and how the collaboration relates to it.
8. The role of volunteers.
9. Reporting requirements and why they are important.

Packets of written materials are increasingly used in orientation programs. They can be used as an outline for the orientation program and also as a continuing reference for board members throughout their involvement. In addition to including some of the information already listed, the orientation packet might include:

- ▶ an organizational chart
- ▶ a flow chart describing the action plan
- ▶ a list of board members
- ▶ a list of key terms and definitions
- ▶ a copy of a current newsletter
- ▶ by-laws or rules of procedures for the collaboration

Each board member should be given a copy of the orientation packet to keep. Using looseleaf binders allows easy updating and the easy addition of new material and notes to the orientation packet. Successfully orienting youth to their role on a board is vital if the youth are to become active participants. Although special orientation for youth may be desirable, especially if they have not had prior board experience or worked with adults as peers, the orientation should not make the youth feel singled out. At the same time, adult board members may feel somewhat uncomfortable about relating to youth as peers and may need to be sensitized to youth participation.

A three-part orientation program is recommended as the best way to deal with these issues. The program should be flexible. It may be conducted in a one-day session, or over a period of weeks in two or three separate meetings. Part One of the program consists of a general presentation for all new board members, coordinated by the board chair and covering the

topics mentioned above. Part Two of the orientation program should include current as well as new board members, with youth and adults broken into separate groups, with each focusing discussion on:

1. The importance of youth participation on a board.
2. Youth as equal members of a board.
3. The possible problems that may be encountered when youth and adults work together.

The group session for youth may also include special technical assistance and support if needed.

In Part Three of the orientation, all board members should be included. In this session, adults and youth discuss together the issues they discussed separately in Part Two. When possible, an outside facilitator should coordinate parts two and three of the orientation program using group exercises designed to encourage integration of new members into the board. The facilitator should have specific training in group process and have knowledge of group dynamics. He/she should also be knowledgeable of the role and function of a board.

Confidentiality

One of the concerns to be addressed during the orientation is confidentiality. Youth may often have access to confidential records and other forms of disclosure. Although youth can be expected to honor confidentiality as rigorously as their adult counterparts, the usual precautions should be taken.

- ▶ Explain the nature of confidential information and the necessity to keep it confidential.
- ▶ Point out some ways one can betray confidentiality.
- ▶ Describe the consequences of breaking confidentiality without meaning to do so; for example, acting on information obtained confidentially.
- ▶ Periodically remind participants that there is no reason to believe they have broken confidentiality.

Collaboration Board Structure

In developing a permanent structure for the collaboration, the Planning Committee needs to take particular care to avoid barriers to youth participation. The collaboration structure should be designed, as much as possible, to enhance youth participation. In its work, the Planning Committee should consider the following:

1. The size of the collaboration should allow for a meaningful number of youth members. This meaningful number should be such to prevent youth members from feeling isolated and overwhelmed by the adult members. One option is to have a set percentage of youth members. All small groups, such as task forces and subcommittees, should have a minimum number of youth members.
2. Roles of youth and adult members should be clearly defined. This does not mean that an "adult role" and "youth role" are needed. All members, either as individuals or as agency representatives, should know why they are there and what is expected of them.
3. The possible need for a youth subcommittee, in which youth are a majority. Such a subcommittee may be necessary if there is little previous experience with youth participation. A youth subcommittee could enable youth to speak out in a setting in which they are more comfortable. Such a formal mechanism could also lessen any adult anxiety about working with youth for the first time. If such a subcommittee is formed, however, it is important that it not be viewed or treated as a minor appendage to the collaboration. A youth subcommittee should have as much legitimacy and status as any other standing committees of the collaboration. As such, the youth subcommittee should have a clearly defined purpose and function.
4. Youth participation in the leadership of the collaboration. Depending on their age, skills, and experience, youth should be given the opportunity to assume leadership roles in the collaboration.

Leadership roles for youth, for example, should be challenging without exceeding the potential of youth, thus putting them in a situation that is doomed to failure.

5. Meeting times should not pose an artificial barrier to youth participation. Youth who are in school may not always be able to be released to attend meetings held during "regular business hours." Late afternoon, early evening, and occasional weekend meetings should be considered. In addition, the agenda should be carefully pre-

pared to prevent meetings from going longer than necessary. Of course, this would benefit everyone, not just youth members. The location of the meetings should also take into consideration the needs of the youth members. The youth may not have the transportation means available to the adults. The youth may not have the transportation means available to the adults. Meeting locations should be as convenient to everyone as possible. This concern is especially important in communities with limited public transportation.

Appendix B

Characteristics of a "Good" Chairperson and Coordinator

Characteristics of a "Good" Chairperson and Coordinator

Chairperson

Some specific characteristics which a collaboration should look for when trying to decide whom to appoint as chairperson are that the person express the desire and willingness to be chairperson and that he/she be "community wise," i.e., knowledgeable of the community, resources, agencies and organizations. However, while a person's willingness to be chair and knowledge of the community are necessary characteristics, they are *not* sufficient to insure the success of the collaboration.

Obviously, the most important characteristic which a collaboration should look for when appointing its chairperson is the characteristic of *good leadership*. While the term leadership is extremely difficult to define, it includes the ability:

- ▶ to give to and help create direction for the collaboration;
- ▶ to assign responsibilities to the members;
- ▶ to be a liaison between the board and the staff;
- ▶ to manage the board and facilitate the development of policies; and
- ▶ to be a motivator to the board.

The characteristics of a good chairperson should also include the ability to identify and effectively solve the many unique problems associated with a collaboration. Collaboration, by its inherent nature as a group of both similar and dissimilar agencies and individuals who are also quite independent and autonomous, creates problems and barriers to its own success. The chairperson should enable the collaboration to address these differences and similarities and resolve to the satisfaction of the member any glaring problems which might act as barriers to its success.

The chairperson should actively seek out reasons why members have come together to collaborate and what they see as the benefits and drawbacks of collaboration. The chairperson should encourage the members to avoid hidden agendas. But when hidden agendas loom over the group, he or she should actively require the group to address and eliminate or incorporate those agendas.

In terms of relationships between the chairperson and the coordinator, the ability to work closely with the coordinator is important. The chairperson should be a liaison between the Board and the coordinator. As such, the chairperson carries out the wishes of the Board.

But the specific characteristics of the chairperson necessary to make one type of collaboration a success may be quite different for another type of collaboration. If the members of the collaboration are strong, vocal, and active, the chairperson may be less of a leader and more of an organizer and, also, less of a facilitator or input and more of a reflector of group consensus. If the collaboration is passive, quiet and restrained, then the chairperson must prod, motivate, and encourage the members of the collaboration.

The characteristics of a chairperson or coordinator can dramatically affect a collaboration in one of the above two general directions. A very strong chairperson can become a barrier to the collaboration by dominating and forcing the member into his or her concept of a collaboration, by ignoring the goals and motivation of the members, or by failing to allow the members to openly discuss and initiate their own ideas.

A chairperson is one who should be able to help the collaboration agree upon its purpose. Its mission, and goals. The establishment of a clearly defined mission and the agreement of the members to that mission are essential to the success of a collaboration. The chairperson must have the ability to enable the group to define its mission and move to action.

Coordinator

The characteristics of a good collaboration are somewhat more difficult to identify than those of a good chairperson. One reason is that there are often quite disparate views as the appropriate *role* of the coordinator. At times, he or she may function very much like a traditional **coordinator**, while at other times more like a **director**.

The coordinator needs to carry out the policies of the Collaboration, provide information to the Collaboration, and carry out or organize action to implement Collaboration decisions. The coordinator also must facilitate the Collaboration's involvement in issues and activities.

The delineation of the role of the coordinator is crucial to the establishment of the necessary characteristics of the person who can fulfill this responsibility. Following is a list of behavioral characteristics of a good coordinator.

- ▶ sensitivity to the affiliates or members of the collaboration;
- ▶ willingness to work with collaboration members;
- ▶ desire *not* to make the collaboration "his or her" collaboration;
- ▶ ability to keep members informed and up to date on issues and happenings;
- ▶ ability to be a mediator and negotiator;
- ▶ willingness to carry out collaboration directives;
- ▶ initiative to do what must be done to accomplish the task; and
- ▶ ability to facilitate member involvement.

Appendix C

Model By-Laws/Rules of Procedures

Model By-Laws/Rules of Procedure

Name, Jurisdiction, Purpose:

This organization shall be known as the (Name of Corporation) is committed to the improvement of the quality of (Type of Service) services. The intent is to provide services and encourage programs which reduce barriers precluding (Type of Service) in society.

The area of service shall be the (Geographical Area) .

Responsibilities and Functions of the Local Collaboration

The Local Collaboration will have the following basic functions:

- A. Further organize the resources of the participating voluntary agencies and develop community support for services on behalf of Target Population. Identify and prioritize needs within the voluntary sector regarding (Target Population) .
- B. To improve the public awareness of the services and programs provided by member agencies through collaborative media campaigns and events.
- C. To serve as an advocate for (Target Population) regarding specific areas of concern identified by the collaboration plus methods developed for resolving these problems.
- D. Serve as a vehicle for developing and implementing joint program efforts and more effective utilization of existing resources.
- E. Increase communication among participating agencies.
- F. To establish functioning task forces to develop collaborative programs.
- G. To develop a data bank for member agencies regarding laws, public policies, statistics and

available funding sources affecting (Target Population) .

- H. To identify gaps in (Target Population) services and assist in determining how agencies can respond to these individually and collaboratively.
- I. To facilitate the understanding and to develop a process for the interchange of agency resources.
- J. To seek funding to support the collaboration and its programs.

Criteria for Membership

- A. Direct (Target Population) service delivery agencies/groups.
- B. Agencies and/or groups who advocate for (Target Population) . For continued affiliation, the agencies and/or groups shall abide by the purpose and policies of the collaboration.

Membership will be contingent upon receipt of a dated letter of commitment from an authorized governing body or board of the organization, to be accepted by the Collaboration. Each member organization or agency will have one vote. Individuals not representing voluntary, nonprofit agencies or organizations may participate in the collaboration as non-voting members.

The Collaboration Will include:

1. One staff person from each participating organization either the Executive Director or the Director of Programs within the respective organizations.
2. One volunteer from each participating organization who is knowledgeable in the programming area.
3. The above described organizational representatives shall be the decision makers of the collaboration. Other staff and volunteers may be invited as planning members.

The Collaboration shall employ such staff personnel as are needed for its functions based on job descriptions written by the Personnel Committee and approved by the full Collaboration.

Other Participants

Individuals who are not members of the Collaboration but who have needed expertise should be involved in the planning process as consultants.

Steering Committee

- A. The Steering Committee shall consist of _____ members.
- B. Officers of the Steering Committee. There shall be a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer of the Permanent Steering Committee.
- C. Urgent decisions may be made by the officers of the Steering Committee to be ratified at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

Each member of this committee shall be either chairperson, vice-chairperson, or executive director of a Collaboration member agency.

Purpose of the Steering Committee

A temporary Steering Committee has been established for the purpose of setting up the initial phases and guidelines for the program collaboration. The Steering Committee is temporary in nature, and pending the will of the full Collaboration, it is expected that a permanent Steering Committee will be established within ninety days.

The Steering committee will establish a framework and organizational structure to include:

1. Policy Setting
2. Meeting Times
3. Voting Procedures
4. Steering Committee Officers
5. Representation
6. Membership
7. Officers of the Collaboration
8. Other Necessary Details

The Steering Committee will have the following functions:

- A. Coordinate the activities of the various committees and review their results to assure productivity.
- B. Review matters that are brought to the Collaboration and, as appropriate, refer to the appropriate committees or the full Collaboration for consideration.
- C. Assure that the Collaboration, assembled, has the opportunity to vote on all matters of interest to the Collaboration.
- D. Assure the proper communication of all matters related to Collaboration activities to the members of the Collaboration.
- E. Develop and maintain formal and informal relationships with all segments of the community concerned with (Target Population) service planning and programming.
- F. Assure effective day-to-day management of the activities of the local program Collaboration within policy and budgeting frameworks established by the full Collaboration.

Officers of the Collaboration

- A. Officers of the Steering Committee shall act as officers of the Collaboration.
- B. The secretary shall be responsible for recording minutes of all meetings and shall send out meeting notices to all members of the Collaboration.
- C. The treasurer shall act on behalf of the Collaboration to assure that funds are disbursed and recorded in accordance with guidelines established by the Collaboration.

The entire Collaboration shall act in the capacity of an advisory committee.

The Collaboration will require a number of key committees e.g., Program Development, Personnel, Nomination, Budget and Finance, and Membership.

The Collaboration and/or Steering Committee may appoint temporary subcommittees for various projects.

Meetings

- A. Regular meetings of the Collaboration shall be held at least _____ times a year.
- B. Special meetings may be called by the Chair of if requested in writing to the secretary by three or more members of the Board.

Quorum

- A. A quorum shall exist when one-third of the Collaboration membership is present and voting.
- B. A simple majority vote of those present shall validate Collaboration action. In case of an amendment to the By-Laws a two-thirds vote shall be required.
- C. Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed when not in conflict with these By- Laws.

Appendix D

Setting Measurable Objectives

Setting Measurable Objectives

Objectives are specific measurable outcomes that enable the collaboration to chart its progress in alleviating specific community needs.

Because of their lack of ambiguity, objectives can serve as excellent management tools in the planning phases of a program. Later, they will be helpful in the implementation and assessment phases. For example, meeting well-defined objectives can often be the best method documenting the success of the collaboration. As such, objectives can be used to support important fund raising-efforts and public education.

There are three categories of objectives. Each category is important and refers to a different aspect of managing a collaboration.

1. Management Objectives are generally associated with the timetable for implementing services. For example, the board would determine when staff should be hired, when equipment should be available, the day services should begin, and when reports should be completed. Dates will be set for each of these objectives. Specific examples might be:
 - ▶ By September 1, 1998, a coordinator will be hired.
 - ▶ By October 1, 1998, the coordinator will have been oriented to the rules and operating procedures of the collaboration.
 - ▶ By October 5, 1998, the coordinator will assume full responsibilities for position.
2. Systems Objectives refer to changes that are projected to take place in the human service system on the basis of effort by the collaboration. These objectives generally fall into one of three categories:
 - ▶ networking or service integration;
 - ▶ advocacy, such as attempting to secure needed legislation at the local or state levels; or
 - ▶ development of new services in the community. A specific example might be: By September 1, 1998, there will be a fully functioning community-wide information, referral, and follow-up service for youth in the community.
3. Behavioral and Attitudinal Objectives refer to projected changes that will occur because of the program. These objectives must be closely linked to the needs or problems identified in the needs assessment. Since these objectives are the most important of the three in program planning, a more detailed analysis of them will be presented. A valid definition of behavioral objectives will contain a description of behavior at the end of the program. Behavior should be measurable and realistic in terms of available resources. The following are examples of appropriately worded objectives:
 - ▶ By June 30, 1997, the percentage of single, teenage girls from the project who become pregnant will have dropped by 25%.
 - ▶ By December 31, 1997, over 50% of the pre-teen children of the working mothers of the community will be attending activities between school closing and early evening.
 - ▶ By April 30, 1998, 200 of the senior adult participants at the Great Brook Valley Senior Center will demonstrate improved coping skills as measured through staff reports.
 - ▶ By June 1, 1998, all teenagers in the activity club will have passed a test designed to assess how well they know the functions of their bodies.

Note that management objectives and system objectives are very similar. The only difference is that management objectives refer to projected changes in the collaboration, while system objectives refer to projected changes in the human service system of which collaboration members are only a part.

- ▶ By December 31, 1998, the local health department will report that individuals with major nutritional deficiencies will have dropped by 10% in the northeast quadrant of the city.

Each of the above examples contains a time deadline, is clearly measurable, and relates to previously identified problems. The only condition not determined by the above examples is how realistic each is. For example, reducing teenage pregnancies by 25% may be too ambitious an undertaking when compared with other programs that have been able to reduce the rate by only a few percentage points.

As with the definition of needs, the collaboration should avoid defining behavioral objectives in terms of the provision of services. Program staff are inclined to define behavioral objectives in terms of what they intend to do, not what they hope to accomplish. None of the examples above makes any reference to the program strategy or method for achieving the outcomes desired. Yet, the recurring theme of most behavioral objectives in program plans is an emphasis on program activities and services. It is not atypical to see behavioral objectives written as follows:

- ▶ By June 30, 1997, 2,000 hours of athletic instruction will have been provided to the youth in the activities club.
- ▶ By December 31, 1998, a job skills training program will be presented to 200 youth.

Neither of the above examples is a behavioral objective. They are more closely related to the management objectives discussed previously. The fact that 2,000 hours of instruction have been provided does not indicate that youth have learned a sport. Knowing that a job skills training program has been presented does not help determine if any of the youth got a job because of the training. A better way of expressing the first objective might be:

- ▶ By June 30, 1997, 50 out of the 60 youth in the athletics class will demonstrate adequate proficiency in one sport.

All three sets of objectives should be agreed upon by the entire collaboration. If a consensus can be reached, the remaining phases of program planning will progress more smoothly.

The proper definition of objectives can have several rewards:

- ▶ Objectives can serve as a basis for coordinating the activities of diverse program units within a collaboration or in the community.
- ▶ They can establish guidelines for more specific planning efforts at the individual program levels.
- ▶ They can become a set of criteria for the assessment and evaluation of the program's impact on meeting needs.
- ▶ They can be an important part of fund-raising efforts, especially proposal writing.
- ▶ They can serve as a motivating force for the staff since staff accomplishments can be assessed in terms of well-defined, measurable objectives.

Appendix E

Program Evaluation

An Overview Informative Evaluation Model

Program Evaluation

An Overview

Early in its life as a formal structure, a collaboration should consider how it will determine both the effectiveness of its operations as a collaboration and the effectiveness of specific programs and activities that it sponsors or operates. This appendix serves to alert the reader to possible resources to aid the development and implementation of an evaluative process. A total "primer" on evaluation could well be a manual unto itself, thus it is beyond the scope of this appendix.

The term "evaluation" is used by many people, in many contexts, and for many different purposes, so that it is difficult to know exactly what the term means when it is being used. To avoid this confusion, it may be helpful to set the term aside for a moment to consider the primary purpose of evaluation efforts.

The major point to be made is that there are certain essential information gathering procedures in which a collaboration would be involved. These information gathering procedures focus on the collaborative process itself, as well as the programs and activities sponsored by the collaboration or its member agencies.

The purpose of gathering information is to amass and analyze the data needed by key decision makers, to assess the operation, and to determine the accomplishments of programs relative to the programs' objectives. Analysis of such data enables decisions to be made regarding:

- ▶ the efficiency of programs;
- ▶ the impact of the programs on the targeted population;
- ▶ the impact of the programs on the total community including the collaboration itself and its member agencies;
- ▶ the impact of the program on the overall problem being addressed; and

- ▶ the cost-effectiveness of the programs, the "bottom line" being a decision as to whether a program should be continued, modified, redesigned, or discontinued.

In order to make the decisions noted above, two types of information gathering procedures can be used. They are monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring compares a project's plans with what actually happened. It entails collecting specific information on events associated with the operation of a project. In general, a monitoring system obtains data on both the project and its activities, allows for the analysis necessary to determine whether activities are acceptable, and provides for feeding back this information to management. Monitoring activities are associated with reporting systems and cost analysis techniques.

Evaluation refers to judging the merit of something by comparing it against some yardstick. Evaluation studies are done to measure the effects of a program or project against the objectives it set out to accomplish and thus aid subsequent decisions about the projects' future or structure. In the strictest sense, evaluation studies using systematic methods are designed to verify whether a certain effect occurred and to suggest conclusions about the extent to which this effect can be directly attributed to the project rather than to outside forces.

As noted above, the term "evaluation" is used by program operators to refer either to generic information gathering procedures, to "monitoring" procedures, or to a systematic study of the effects of a program and relating those effects to the program itself. In a strict sense, and in the professional literature, the term "evaluation" refers only to the latter, i.e., a systematic study of a program's effect. One of the first decisions for a collaboration to make, therefore, is whether it wants to conduct an actual evaluation. However, it is suggested that at a minimum, all collaborative processes and programs should be monitored to insure that they have occurred as planned.

Although a monitoring process can be quite sophisticated and complex, generally monitoring is less costly and requires less skill than an evaluation. Evaluations are usually conducted by a trained and experienced researcher. Agencies that do not have such expertise "in house" will need to locate an "outside" evaluator.

Following is an outline of one approach to evaluation planning, design and implementation known as the Informative Evaluation Model.

Informative Evaluation Model: An Overview of the Process

- Step 1 Establish a Program-Evaluation team
- Step 2 Clarify Program Goals and Objectives
- Step 3 Identify Key Information Users and Decision Makers
- Step 4 Identify Information Needs
- Step 5 Prioritize Information Need Areas
- Step 6 Generate Evaluation Questions
- Step 7 Establish Procedures for the Evaluation
 - The Data Base
 - The Instrumentation
 - The Population
 - The Design
 - The Analysis
- Step 8 Determine Constraints and Resistances to the Operationalizing of the Evaluation Plan
- Step 9 Develop Evaluation Schedule and Implement Evaluation Plan
- Step 10 Disseminate and/or Use the Information

Step 1: Establishing a Program-Team

The first step in the INFORMATIVE EVALUATION MODEL is to establish a Program-evaluation Team. Unfortunately, this step is not often taken or not taken soon enough because program directors and administrators are unaware that evaluators have skills which are helpful in both the development as

well as evaluation of programs. The program-evaluation team should be composed of program administrators, project directors and evaluators. The team should be formed as early as possible so that it can participate in the development of clear and realistic program goals and objectives.

Step 2: Clarifying Program Goals and Objectives

The first activity of the program-evaluation team is to review the overall goals and objectives of the program. The objectives should be stated clearly and be amenable to measurement. They should also relate directly to the program goals. The team should review the program procedures and delivery system and any activities which are non-specific should be clarified.

Step 3: Identifying Key Information Users and Decision Makers

Since the purpose of an evaluation is to provide information to people, two things must be accomplished before a successful evaluation can be performed. First, all the relevant people who need information must be identified (Step 3). Second, the kind of information they need must be determined (Step 4).

Careful consideration is given at this point by the program-evaluation team to the identification of key information users and decision-makers, both within and outside the organization who should be included in the process of defining information needs and evaluation questions. The most common key information users and decision-makers are:

- ▶ Executive directors
- ▶ Organizational administrators
- ▶ Project directors
- ▶ Program development directors
- ▶ Funding representatives
- ▶ Teachers, group leaders or facilitators
- ▶ Representatives of advisory boards.

These individuals should be encouraged to participate in the process of identifying their information and decision-making needs and assigning priorities to them.

Step 4: Identifying Information Needs

Information needs are general areas of interest. No attempt should be made to become too specific at this time. The purpose of this activity is to list as many need areas as possible. To accomplish this goal, the program-evaluation team brainstorms to generate the information areas and then categorizes them into broad domains.

A few commonly mentioned areas are:

- ▶ Program effects
- ▶ Cost benefits
- ▶ Content of program
- ▶ Demographic characteristics of participants

Step 5: Assigning Priorities to Information Need Areas

Establishing priorities among the information need areas generated during the previous activity is the next step in the evaluation process. Priorities need to be set in order to rule out evaluation activities which would provide interesting but unessential information to the program decision-makers. Because of time, financial, and other resource limitations, program evaluations seldom meet everyone's information needs. It is almost impossible for an agency or organization to completely analyze any program or activity within its structure; nor is this necessarily a desirable approach to program evaluation. Thus, setting priorities becomes very important.

Step 6: Generating Evaluation Questions

In this step each person within the program-evaluation team generates specific evaluation questions for the priority areas identified. More questions are normally written for the higher priority areas than for

the lower ones. The importance of clearly defined evaluation questions cannot be overstated. The evaluation questions are the determining force behind the direction of the design, development and implementation of the evaluation. Vague and ambiguous evaluation questions should be avoided at all costs.

The role of the evaluators in this activity is to facilitate the development of evaluation questions which are capable of being measured. Although the evaluation persons may suggest a variety of evaluation questions, it should be the program decision-makers primarily who actually generate the questions for which evaluation data will be needed. By writing the evaluation questions prior to the commencement of the evaluation, confusion and uncertainty about that the evaluation will accomplish is eliminated. Decision-makers know exactly what to expect from the evaluation, and the evaluators know the kinds of information they will have to provide.

Step 7: Establishing Procedures for the Evaluation

Once evaluation questions have been clearly formulated, procedures for answering the questions must be established. Because the development of evaluation procedures can be rather difficult, the role of evaluators, whether internal or external, becomes increasingly important during this step. In most social action programs, administrators and staff do not have the expertise to develop effective evaluation procedures, but often desire and need a working knowledge of the evaluation "system" to be used in evaluating their program. To this end we offer some general information about some frequently encountered evaluation procedures.

The evaluation procedures encompass five major closely related components:

- ▶ Data Base
- ▶ The Instrumentation
- ▶ The Population
- ▶ The Design
- ▶ The Analysis

Step 8: Determining Constraints and Resistances to the Evaluation Plan

Every program evaluation operates within a milieu of internal and external resistances and barriers. The degree to which the program-evaluation team anticipates and copes with these constraints will determine the degree to which the evaluation plan can be successfully completed. Typically encountered constraints include: certain individuals within the organization, the amount of financial resources, the time line in which the evaluation activities must be completed, the individuals who must perform the evaluation activities, and the materials and facilities which are available. In addition to these potentially controllable variables, the evaluation team must deal with the political arena both within and outside the organization. In general, the evaluation team must be sensitive to the organizational structure and the manner in which it operates.

Step 9: Developing an Evaluation Schedule and Implementing the Evaluation Plan

The program-evaluation team should make every effort to clearly establish the activities which must

be engaged in by the evaluators as well as by the program staff. A variety of scheduling procedures are available. In general, a simple but clearly stated scheduling procedure is most desirable. The first step in establishing the schedule of evaluation activities is to list the primary milestones which are to be accomplished and to indicate who will accomplish the activity.

Step 10: Disseminating and/or Using the Information

The ultimate goal of the evaluation is to provide information to the information users. Evaluation questions which were generated before the program began will be of prime interest at this time. Hopefully, most of the evaluation questions will be answered so that the information can be successfully used. More than likely, only a portion of the questions will be answered to the satisfaction of the information users. Many answers will be qualified and will require additional expertise in order to use the information for making decisions. In addition, further evaluation questions will be generated. These should be addressed by the evaluators if the programs are to be continued.

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