

SECTION FOUR:

Coordination, Collaboration, Collective Impact



Why It's Important

Larger problems facing constituents and communities are rarely solved by one organization. That is why so many organizations are involved in coalitions, networks, collaborations and alliances. This reflects how critical it is to understand that social change requires that individual organizations work together to achieve long-term impact.

The different ways groups work together may lead to different results. Some groups' work together is very formal with anchor organizations steering the activities and decisions, while others are more loosely formed. No matter what the type or level of coordination, these formations should pay attention to participation, especially constituent involvement. Efforts aimed at changing outcomes for constituents should be especially attentive to power and influence, including who speaks for the group and how constituents views are included in these efforts.

This section includes resources that reflect a variety of approaches including networks, collaboration and "Collective Impact" which is defined by five specific elements and approach. The "Continuum of Collaboration" provides a range of ways for organizations to work together.

RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

This article focuses on cross-sector collaboration that is required to remedy complex public problems. Based on an extensive review of the literature on collaboration, the article presents an inventory organized around the initial conditions affecting collaboration formation, process, structural and governance components, constraints and contingencies, outcomes, and accountability issues.

The Design and Implementation of Cross-Sector Collaboration

While focused on philanthropy, this paper provides a good foundation for understanding the character of movements, stages of movements and outcomes and examples of successful movements.

Social Movements and Philanthropy





RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

The Continuum of Collaboration can be used in an activity to further the understanding of the different types of organizing and when each is most effective.

Divide into small groups and assign each group a different type of collaboration to discuss. Propose the following questions:

- What about this group is unique?
- What can it accomplish?
- Who might be involved?
- How would they make decisions?

Report out by each group and capture similarities and differences

The Continuum of Collaboration

Breaking down the silos between service providers, and the barriers between providers, advocates, and organizers is critical to knitting together and protecting a strong social safety net that helps build community. Furthermore, fostering collaboration between organizations (and often even within organizations) can help better identify community level issues that a strong ecosystem of organizations can address together. This report explores partnerships initiated in two cities that are facing similar social and economic struggles.

Crossing Organizational Boundaries to Build New Partnerships

This checklist assessment is designed for collaboratives that:

1) have just begun planning, or are in the early stages of rolling out operations; 2) may be facing some challenges; or 3) are willing to revisit basic principles to maximize chances for success. It is very comprehensive and an organization might want to focus on only one or two parts.

Community Collaborative Assessment

Initial Assessment

The simple assessment shown here is meant to (1) help the organization determine readiness to explore this topic, and (2) spark thinking about where to begin and what goals to develop. The tool consists of statements that describe the constituent experience in collaboration efforts and how the organization partners with other groups or organizations. It can be best used if the organization:

1. Carefully considers when and with whom to conduct the assessment. Will you use it in a staff meeting, at a board meeting, with leadership, with other partners?
2. Is clear about what to do with the results. Will they be shared broadly? How will the results impact planning and goal setting?
3. Uses the results to think through operations, programs and process as it relates to constituent engagement.
4. Enhances discussion about trends, patterns and current practice

When giving directions, emphasize that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and for respondents to check “all that apply”. Determine who will compile the responses and how they will be presented.

Constituent	Organization
A. We refer constituents to other organizations if they have needs we can't meet	A. Our organization acts independently
B. We work with other organizations where we refer constituents and follow-up on referrals to advocate for constituents	B. Our organization works with other organizations on the larger goals of helping constituents succeed
C. We train constituents on how to advocate for getting their needs met from other groups and build partner relationships that are receptive to this process	C. Our organization includes constituent voice in formal partnerships
D. We include constituents in case meetings with other organizations to discuss how they can be best supported	D. We have joint policy goals with other organizations that involve integrating constituent voices
E. We work with constituents and other organizations to identify common problems and how to address them	E. Constituent voice is an integral part of all our partnerships and collaborations

Goals and Theory of Change

The general goal of collaboration is to bring together individuals, agencies, organizations and community members in an atmosphere of support to systematically solve existing and emerging problems that could not easily be solved by one group alone. Collaboration should focus on increasing capacity, communication and efficiency while improving outcomes.

As a result of the previous assessment(s), goals will begin to emerge about collaboration that will set the stage for determining strategic direction and the action necessary to accomplish those goals. The Theory of Change (TOC) is a method or technique that can assist communities to think about, plan and evaluate their work. Resources for TOC are found in the Introduction Section.

This section includes suggestions for specific goals and outcomes relating to collaboration. Preparation for either approach requires several things:

1. Agreement about when to embark on the process and who to involve
2. A clear understanding of the time and resources required
3. An individual or small group that will work with the consultant in between large group process to integrate ideas and shape the final document



RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

When deciding who to involve in the process of goal setting, it may be useful to ask the following questions about a broad range of stakeholders:

1. What viewpoints and expertise are necessary to make informed decisions?
2. Who can effectively participate in the discussion (are there any barriers in terms of language, substantive knowledge of the programming area, hierarchy, or politics?)
3. What they will get out of participating in the TOC design?
4. Is this the best way to gather information from them?
5. Do they have the time and resources to participate?

RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

Resources for Learning: Collaboration

This resource describes the elements in collaboration and includes links to information, fact sheets and articles about collaboration.

Sample Goals and Outcomes:

It may be helpful to have sample goals and outcomes for collaboration in mind prior to the meeting to help guide the discussion and formulate questions.

- Advocate to include constituent voice when making referrals to other organizations
- Engage constituents in collaborative efforts
- Establish forums to share with constituents and communities public knowledge
- Effective communication systems between and among collaborative partners.

Questions for Reflection:

There are several questions to pose for reflection as the organization moves toward goal setting:

- What is the readiness level of the organization to collaborate with others?
- Why forces are moving the organization towards collaboration?
- What exists within the organization that supports collaboration? What factors are barriers to collaboration?
- What staff commitments are necessary? Are organizational structures in place that support collaborative efforts (e.g. staff job descriptions that identify tasks involved in collaborating)
- What coordinating mechanisms does the organization need to ensure that collaboration is effective? This might include shared intake, shared information, regular meeting technology, systems for share data.

[Community Democracy Workshop](#) The Kettering Foundation hosted the Community Democracy Workshop that explored issues relating to community collaboration. Included were: assumptions and beliefs about learning and knowledge building; the various approaches to community engagement; and, the relative value and effectiveness of these approaches to advancing community democracy. These notes from the meeting provide a structure for delving into these issues and can be adapted for working with any organization.

[Putting Community in Collective Impact](#) The Harwood Institute makes the case for including community in cross-sector, high impact efforts from the perspective of Collective Impact. This paper includes questions for consideration and could be used to spark a goal setting session.



Culture

In order to take on community change goals that, by their nature, must include those who live the experience as well as a broad array of community partners, the organization's leaders need to possess qualities to be adaptive, inclusive, curious and collaborative. In addition, the organizational culture might need to be shaped to value and deepen trust and openness.

Setting goals to fully engage constituents and work across organizations often means exploring the organization's culture of power dynamics. Every organization, team, and community experiences elements of power which can be seen in the light of relational power, or power with someone or over someone, as well as the kind of power which comes from having influence in a situation.

CULTURE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

[The Culture of Collective Impact](#)

This article from the Collective Impact Forum identifies five core values that help leaders at all levels work better together. By using these values as a guide, practice follows that deepens the culture needed to be successful at cross-sector efforts.

PRATICE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

[A Framework for Collaboration among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders](#)

This guide focuses on understanding community change, who to involve and how to engage them. It explains seven key factors for community change and how to develop a plan. In addition, it provides a checklist for roles and responsibilities for various players at different points of the process and a power point that summarizes the main points in the section.

[The Collective Impact Forum](#)

[Road Map Project](#)

The Road Map Project is a collective impact initiative focused on closing the student achievement gap and increasing the number of students acquiring a post-secondary degree or credential. This case study can be useful to understand the elements of a collective impact approach including structure, results, conditions required for success and lessons learned from the Road Map Project. Download the case study from the link to the Collective Impact Forum and find many other resources on the Forum site.

Discussions about power may lead to an exploration of cultural proficiency, or how we value others, especially others who are different from us. One way we demonstrate how much we value others is in how we share power with them. How does power operate within the organization? What are the organization's assumptions about getting to goals? How do staff and leadership see their current culture and practice?



[HANDOUT | Sources of Power](#)

This handout can be used with organizations working in partnerships. It is helpful to understand the different ways that participation and communication styles can be perceived in groups and encourages users to consider how to share power in order to establish trust.



RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

[Sharing Values](#) This exercise is designed for working with partners to explore where values are aligned and where there might be differences. There is a discussion guide that focuses on both the alignment and possibilities where values differ.

Practice

There are many tools that can be used to overcome challenges and address real barriers to success in any stage of development. Intentionally addressing elements like levels of commitment by participating organizations (through a membership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding), membership, decision-making processes, governance (organizational structure) and strategic direction (vision, mission, values, goals), can provide the tools to achieve outcomes beyond what a single organization can do alone.



RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

This concise guide, from United We Serve, provides information, tools, examples and resources for collaboratives to succeed at any stage from planning and development, through roll-out and course-correcting, and on to deciding its



next steps. The first two sections focus on establishing a working structure and selecting goals. The last three sections will help to stay on track to create the kind of outcomes that are inherently community-changing.

Toolbox for Building Needle-moving Collaboratives

Different groups will emerge by different paths and require activities that reflect the local conditions and players. However, this checklist can be useful, regardless of the stage of development, to identify the implementation activity that can fill a gap or move the group forward.

Collective Impact Implementation Activity Checklist

While this manual was last revised in 1997, it provides information, tools and examples for collaboratives across developmental stages. Newer groups can benefit from the “how-to” sections and more established collaboratives will benefit from learning through more complex discussions.

The New Community Collaborative Manual

Impact

A central feature for evaluation in collaborative efforts is the engagement of stakeholders in developing and implementing plans. This requires establishing a value in the process of evaluation as well as ensuring that a plan is in place to inform continuous improvement.

Some organizations experience evaluation as way to prove whether or not results have been achieved. However, evaluation takes on a different feel if it's seen as a process that is integrated into change efforts (rather than something that happens after) and provides a way to reflect on what works. In this scenario, data from evaluation efforts informs decisions rather than makes a judgement about efforts.

Creating an evaluation plan includes identifying outcome measures and indicators that describe progress towards those measures. Conducting evaluation in a collaborative environment requires a look at the impact of the group's activities on all member organizations and whether or not they change the way they do business as appropriate to the information they receive.



RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

The Road Map Project - Measuring Success

This overview from the Road Map Project might be used as a case study when preparing for an evaluation plan. Organization or collaborative members might read through the overview and identify the processes and indicators and match them to the goals of the project. Then, the group might discuss how to apply this learning to their situation. The overview describes two kinds of indicators: on-track and contributing that allow for setting long-term and interim targets.

Evaluating Collective Impact: Five Simple Rules

Download the article to learn the five simple rules that that can assist participants, funders, and evaluators of collective impact initiatives to track their progress and make sense of their efforts.

Evaluating Collective Impact

Follow this link to find the “Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact” report and a supplement with sample questions, outcomes and indicators.



IMPACT | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

Model for Evaluating a Community Program

This example is a model for evaluating a community program or initiative. It walks through phases of evaluation, types of stakeholders, and steps to developing an evaluation plan.