THE INTERSECTOR PROJECT

The Intersector Toolkit:

Tools for Cross-Sector Collaboration

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Toolkit provides practical knowledge for practitioners from government, business, and non-profit sectors to diagnose, design, implement, and assess cross-sector collaborations.

While collaboration can refer to a broad range of interactions between multiple parties, The Intersector Project focuses on collaborations characterized by shared decision-making processes among sectors. This type of collaboration is frequently referred to as collaborative governance and can result in joint program or service design and delivery, jointly-conceived policies or policy recommendations, and other activities where the resources and expertise of multiple sectors are leveraged in service of a shared vision and where decision-making authority is shared among partners.

Each sector — and indeed each entity within the sectors — has its own language, culture, and work practices, which can prove challenging to align when pursuing shared goals in a consensus-oriented environment. Our Toolkit is designed to assist practitioners in navigating those differences. In an effort to produce a resource applicable to collaborations on multiple issues, the Toolkit was designed to provide "starting-point" guidance on tactics to consider when working across sectors. For this reason, we recommend this Toolkit for relative beginners to cross-sector collaboration or for those who are working with partners who are new to cross-sector collaboration. Specifically, we recommend practitioners use this Toolkit as a planning guide for collaboration, distributing it to core partners in the early planning stages and using it as a resource to support shared understanding of key elements for their collaborative process and a common language for those elements.

The Toolkit comprises 17 tools organized into four stages: Diagnosis, Design, Implementation, and Assessment. The Toolkit is designed to be process specific, rather than issue or sector specific because we believe there are common elements to all successful cross-sector collaborations and because we want to ensure that our Toolkit is accessible to practitioners working on a broad range of problems in varying types of collaborations. Each tool describes an action that practitioners can take together to help forge successful collaborations. In addition to the tool definition, the Toolkit also provides rationale for the importance of the tool (Why It Matters), questions to guide tool use, an example of the tool in use from our Case Library, and additional resources that we recommend practitioners review for actionable guidance on implementing the tool or related tactics. While the Toolkit suggests four stages to collaboration, collaboration is not a linear process. These tools are not static, and we encourage practitioners to select the tools that are most appropriate for their project stage and partnership structure, and to use them repeatedly at different stages when needed.

To date, this resource is informed by our library of case studies and correlating leadership interviews, literature reviews that address the theories and practices that characterize cross-sector collaboration, and in-depth analysis of similar guiding resources in the fields of collective impact, public-private partnerships, and other collaborative frameworks.

We consider this Toolkit a living document, which we are continually improving based on practitioner feedback. If you have suggestions on how to further enhance this resource, you can share them with us at research@intersector.com.

II. STAGES OF INTERSECTOR COLLABORATION

I. DIAGNOSIS: Can intersector collaboration help to solve our problem?

There is no litmus test to determine whether an intersector approach is an appropriate solution. Whether a cross-sector collaboration is mandated or voluntarily pursued, leaders must first consider the reason(s) a single sector has been unable to solve the problem and determine whether other sectors have an interest or a stake in developing a solution. Understanding the limits of one sector's processes, expertise, and resources can help identify what other sectors can contribute and may shed light on the corporate and public policies that influence the community context in which the collaboration will operate. Potential partners can be identified based on their level of influence on the issue and their proximity to key stakeholders and institutions. Initial engagements among partners should emphasize openness to discuss apprehensions about working across sectors and reaching consensus on the collaboration's goals and outcomes.

II. DESIGN: How do we lay the foundation to operationalize our common intersector vision?

Partners will bring a wealth of sector-specific knowledge and experience to the collaboration and should equally contribute to developing a plan that outlines the collection of activities they will implement to meet their goals. By reaching consensus on the nature of the issue the collaboration will aim to solve and how success will be determined, partners can establish a roadmap to guide them as they put their plan into action. Once partners have a clear understanding of the tasks that need to be completed to reach their goals, individual responsibilities can be assigned based on sector-specific expertise and access to resources, and a project management structure can be put in place to streamline implementation and ensure accountability.

III. IMPLEMENTATION: How does our intersector collaboration achieve its goals?

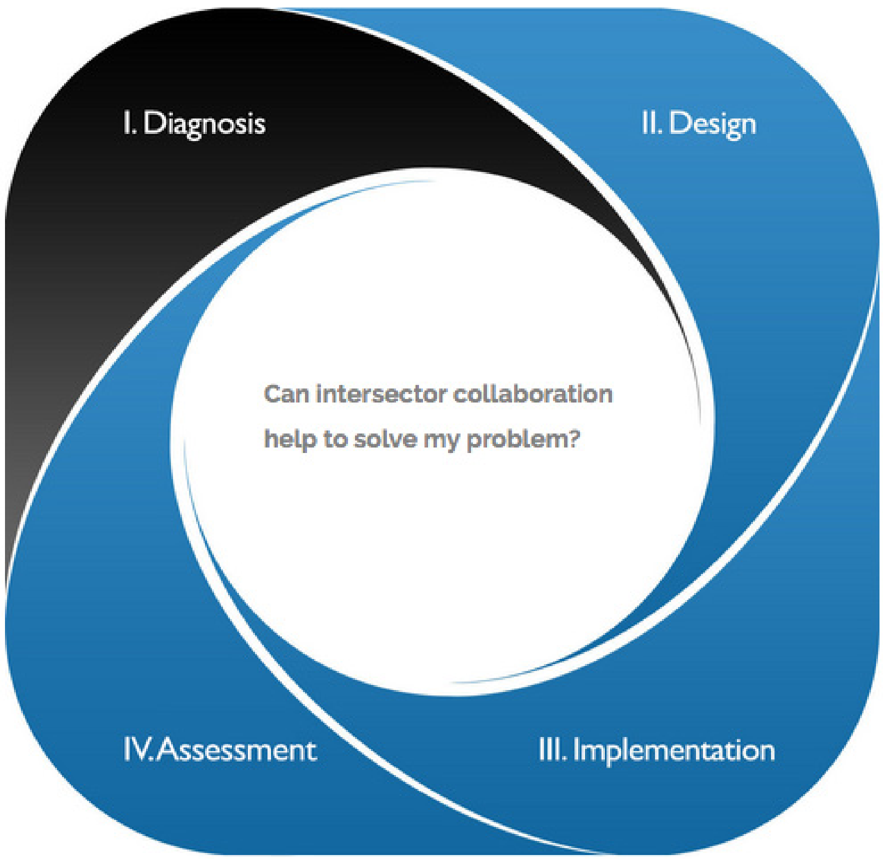
There should be a collective recognition among partners of the need for each sector's abilities and resources during the implementation of an intersector collaboration. When each sector's expertise is valued, partners are more likely to remain engaged and motivated to sustain progress. Implementing an intersector collaboration is a challenging process. It may require a swift change of gears depending on the feedback partners gather throughout the implementation process and creative solutions to issues of capacity and resources that may arise. Establishing clear, achievable interim goals demonstrates to all participants that progress is possible. Celebrating even small successes can promote the vitality of this process. Partners may also consider engaging a sponsor or a champion to attract resources and provide greater access to networks of key stakeholders.

IV. ASSESSMENT: What lessons did we learn from our intersector collaboration?

Ongoing evaluation from the early stages of the collaboration can help partners understand successes and setbacks in real time and point to possible improvements the collaboration can make moving forward. Depending upon the project design, partners have a variety of methodologies from which to choose to best capture their efforts and impact. Evaluation is important in part because it serves to advise other practitioners who might want to pursue a similar partnership structure or tackle a similar issue. Communicating the lessons learned and best practices implemented can inform future projects, allowing others to iterate the successes the collaboration experienced and avoid similar pitfalls.

III. TOOLS FOR INTERSECTOR COLLABORATION

The Toolkit is a guide to help diagnose, design, implement, and assess successful intersector collaborations. While collaborations differ in their goals, scope, and size, practitioners from any sector can use these tools to navigate their challenges.



TOOLS FOR INTERSECTOR COLLABORATION
AT A GLANCE

DIAGNOSIS

DESIGN

ENGAGE POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The identification of and engagement with individuals and organizations that have a stake in the issue the collaboration wishes to address to assess their suitability for and interest in joining the collaboration

WHY IT MATTERS: Carefully considering and selecting partners is crucial to ensuring that the collaboration is aware of related networks and efforts, is not overlooking important partners, builds an effective partnering culture, and has the influence and resources to meet its goals.

Discussion

Building a comprehensive understanding of potential partners. Selecting partners is a pivotal moment in the life of a collaboration. Leaders are best equipped to select partners for their collaboration when they have a comprehensive understanding of the individuals and organizations — working in isolation or together — that are addressing issues related to the problem the collaboration itself will address. If leaders overlook key organizations, they may find it difficult to achieve impact at the desired scale or encounter resistance to their efforts because of a lack of support or buy-in from key stakeholders. A comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise, in which partners seek to identify all parties potentially interested in or affected by their work, can help collaboration leaders avoid this potential pitfall. Network maps are another valuable tool, guiding partners to identify the financial and non-financial influence of potential partners, as well as the strength of relationships between actors, organizations, and institutions within a network. Once leaders have completed a mapping exercise, they may wish to assess whether potential partners are a good fit for the collaboration's goals, needs, and culture. Lastly, collaboration leaders may arrange for exploratory conversations with potential partners to gauge interest in collaborating across sectors and to convey the benefits of sharing ownership of a solution to a complex problem.

Case Study Example: "Retrofitting Homes for Energy Efficiency in Portland"

An estimated 40 percent of carbon dioxide pollution in the United States comes from energy used in homes. In Portland, Oregon, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability wanted to provide homeowners an affordable opportunity to retrofit their homes with energy efficient upgrades, while also addressing issues of employment equity among residents and minority-owned businesses. Government, business, and non-profit partners came together to create Clean Energy Works Portland (CEWP), an innovative pilot program designed to provide energy upgrades to 500 Portland homes and cut energy consumption by 10 to 30 percent using an innovative financing model to eliminate steep upfront costs. In 2009, the City of Portland convened nearly 50 diverse stakeholders over a series of meetings to collaboratively draft a proposal for the CEWP financing structure, which Mayor Sam Adams ultimately presented to the City Council. The meetings included a cross section of individuals from a myriad of organizations and businesses that had a stake in the program's proposed outcomes: private utility companies, the energy sector, workers' unions, minority-focused apprenticeship programs, associations of minority contractors, and policy program designers. Facilitated by a mediator, stakeholders also developed a Community Workforce Agreement, which now serves as the City's equity template that promotes better hiring standards to support marginalized communities. A first in the nation and a model for private-sector funded energy upgrades, the CEWP pilot facilitated 584 loans for whole home energy retrofits, resulting in a 20 percent or greater reduction of energy consumption in homes. Employment equity commitments provided employment for more than 400 workers, with their average wages surpassing $20/hour. Half of the hours worked were by minorities, while more than 20 percent of participating construction firms were operated by minority business owners.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ How will we develop a comprehensive picture of the individuals and organizations that have a stake in the issue we wish to address?
- ✓ What criteria will we use to determine who our partners should be?
- ✓ What will we do to ensure that we are not overlooking critical partners?
- ✓ How will we ensure the partners we choose are a good fit for our needs, goals, and culture?
- ✓ How will we reach out to potential partners?
- ✓ What will we communicate as the aim of the collaboration when reaching out to potential partners?
- ✓ Will we ask partners to formalize their participation in the collaboration in any way?

Additional Resources

"The Partnering Toolbook" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see the following sections for engaging, straightforward guidance on choosing and enlisting partners: Tool 1: Partner Assessment Form on p. 41 for a guide to assessing whether potential partners are a good fit with the collaboration's goals, needs, and culture; Tool 2: Stakeholder Mapping on p. 43 for guidance on identifying organizations and individuals that have an interest in the issue the collaboration wishes to address and/or may be able to play a role in the collaboration; Tool 3: Sample Partnering Agreement for a template collaborations may use to formalize their decision to work together toward a common aim; and the Building Partnerships discussion on pp. 11-12, which provides helpful context for all tools. "The Partnering Toolbook" is a comprehensive guide to partnering across sectors.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/

"System Mapping: A Guide to Developing Actor Maps" from FSG

This highly detailed, 17-page resource is well suited for practitioners looking for in-depth guidance on creating an actor map — a resource that provides a picture of the network of individuals and organizations that have a role or a stake in some system or issue. We suggest that partners use their actor map to identify individuals and organizations that have a stake in the issue the collaboration wishes to address, to understand their relationships to each other, and, ultimately, to reach out to potential partners.

Accessible online at fsg.org/tools-and-resources/system-mapping (free registration required)

"The Partnership Toolkit" from Collaboration Roundtable

Especially see pp. 26-29 of Tool 7: Outreach and Identifying Potential Partners and Tool 8: A Partnership Rating Tool on pp. 30-35. These invitingly written resources provide detailed guidance, with accompanying activities, on identifying and evaluating potential partners. "The Partnership Toolkit" is a comprehensive guide to assist organizations in building and sustaining partnerships.

Accessible online at mosaicbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/partnership-Toolkit.pdf

SHARE A VISION OF SUCCESS

The agreement on a set of goals and ideal outcomes that clarify the mission and priorities of the collaboration

WHY IT MATTERS: Defining a common purpose links stakeholders together and creates a mutual understanding of the benefits of success.

Discussion

Differing priorities. Collaboration partners are likely to come to the collaboration with their own organization- and sector-specific priorities and mandates. The most effective collaborations acknowledge and welcome these differences: While they can complicate the process of agreeing on a shared vision, they go hand-in-hand with the complementary resources and capabilities that cross-sector partners bring to the partnership. For example, government's prioritization of the rule of law and providing public services accompanies its unique power of policy, significant reach, and ability to impact public opinion; the market approach of the business sector results in its considerable financial resources and expertise in product and service delivery; the social-benefit-orientation of non-profits contributes to its deep community- and issue-level knowledge, and perceptions of legitimacy. As the collaboration works to develop its shared vision of success, partners should be encouraged to communicate their differing priorities openly and honestly, so that the collaboration can surface areas of shared agreement and mutual benefit, building a solid foundation for its work.

Reconciling collaborative vision with organizational missions and goals. Partners are unlikely to commit to a collaboration unless they perceive the collaboration's goals as aligning with their own. In some cases, this alignment is clear. In other cases, partners may consider more subtle ways that the collaboration's vision is complementary to, or incompatible with, their own work, including assessing how the collaboration's targeted outcomes support their own, even if the alignment is not explicit (e.g. the organization's aim is to decrease childhood obesity, while the collaboration's aim is to build a community farmer's market); considering how successful collaboration outcomes may support their organization's understanding of the issue; and evaluating whether contributions to the collaboration create tension with other organizational commitments. If partners cannot effectively balance the collaboration's vision of success with their own organizational mission and goals, or if they perceive that the collaboration's goals begin to deviate significantly from their own, partners' commitment to the collaboration is likely to weaken.

Case Study Example: "Transforming the Largest Public Housing Development in New Orleans"

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed the St. Bernard Public Housing Development (SBPHD) in New Orleans. In the wake of the storm, a group of civic leaders formed the Bayou District Foundation (BDF) to rebuild the housing development and improve the community. Informed by a public housing development in East Lake, Atlanta, that used a comprehensive community development model to provide residents with safe mixed-income housing and access to quality education, BDF's five board members set their sights on replicating East Lake's revitalization model in New Orleans. BDF began by sharing renderings of a redeveloped SBPHD with potential partners and the community during public meetings. Because the model had never been implemented in Louisiana, some partners remained skeptical about trying something "unestablished" and did not immediately buy in to BDF's vision of a housing redevelopment model that included a strong education component. BDF realized it would need to show partners firsthand how effective this combined housing-education model had been in Atlanta; it organized multiple trips to East Lake for the New Orleans Housing Authority, City Council, and members of the community to see the East Lake Meadows housing complex and the Drew Charter School in action. At the time, East Lake was 12 years into its redevelopment, and the results were evident: the community had seen a dramatic drop in crime, as well as impressive educational and economic achievements. The East Lake model gave BDF the successful example it needed to facilitate consensus among partners and the community to achieve a common vision for the redevelopment of SBPHD.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What will we include in our vision of success (e.g. a description of the current situation, the activity or program we will launch, our target beneficiaries, our expected intermediate and final outcomes, etc.)?
- ✓ What will we do when partners have differing visions of success? What will we do when partners agree on a vision but disagree on the means to achieve that vision?
- ✓ How will we manage tensions between partners' individual organizational goals and the goals of the collaboration?
- ✓ How will we document our shared vision of success?
- ✓ Are we open to shifting our vision of success as the collaboration progresses? If so, what will be our process for revisiting it?

Additional Resources

"Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential" from University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension

Especially see Mapping the Collaborative Journey on pp. 22-30. This resource walks collaboration partners through the process of creating a logic model, a relatively complex but helpful framework that articulates a relationship between the collaboration's work and the results and impact it hopes to achieve. "Evaluating Collaboratives" is a comprehensive resource for evaluating multi-stakeholder processes.

Accessible online at learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-8.PDF

"Partnership Development Toolkit" from the European Commission

Especially see Section 2.2: Problem and Objective Assessment on pp. 17-22. The Objective Assessment, in particular, guides partners through an exercise to jointly identify shared goals. The "Partnership Development Toolkit" is a guide for facilitators of EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) but is easily adaptable to partners in a wide variety of issue areas.

Accessible online at ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/pdtoolkit_en.pdf

"The Partnering Toolbook" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see Tool 5: Guidelines for Partnering Conversations, particularly Conversation for Generating Possibility and Conversation for Generating Opportunity on the first page of the tool. This resource outlines a simple, informal discussion exercise to encourage all partners to imagine potential "break-through" outcomes for their collaboration and ultimately to agree on the collaboration's shared commitment or aim. "The Partnering Toolbook" is a comprehensive guide to partnering across sectors.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/

ASSESS THE HISTORY OF ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

The examination of previous efforts at collaboration in a similar issue area

WHY IT MATTERS: By studying the successes and failures of other collaborations in similar issue areas, partners can gain valuable information to inform their own collaborative choices.

Discussion

Learning from previous cross-sector efforts. By reviewing past efforts at collaboration in a similar issue area, partners can gain insights into how key structures, choices, practices, and processes may have influenced the effectiveness of those efforts. Partners may examine how previous collaborations structured decision-making processes, established open channels of communication, shared information, evaluated their work, and more. When choosing past examples, partners may also wish to consider how contextual variables such as location, collaboration size, or project time line are similar to or different from their own situation and what effect these may have had on the collaboration outcome. This review process can illuminate choices that may increase the collaboration's likelihood of success and lower its risk of repeating past mistakes.

Case Study Example: "Redeveloping the Riverfront in Detroit"

For decades, the riverfront in Detroit was dotted with run-down industrial sites, parking lots, and overgrown shrubbery, rendering it inaccessible to the general public. In 2003, a group of leaders from the Kresge Foundation, City of Detroit, and General Motors saw the potential for positive redevelopment and formed the Detroit RiverFront Conservancy (DRFC), a non-profit organization with plans to collaboratively turn five-and-a-half miles of riverfront property into a pedestrian-friendly walkway that would attract private and public interest in the space. To kick off the planning process, then Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick authorized a 90-day evaluation of past attempts at revitalizing the Detroit Riverfront by a 34-person group of stakeholders. The group reviewed at least a dozen studies dating as far back as the early 1950s and 1960s that had been conducted by real estate firms and prospective businesses to evaluate the redevelopment potential of the waterfront. They found that these plans never materialized and did not involve collaboration among multiple sectors. Participants benchmarked other successful waterfront redevelopments throughout the country and Canada to identify a set of best practices to follow in their elaboration of a revitalization strategy for the Detroit context. Participants wanted to ensure that any waterfront development strategy would be adaptable to Detroit's climate and culture, and visited riverfront developments in Saint Paul, Toronto, Montreal, Chattanooga, and Cincinnati, among others, to gather lessons learned.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What sources will we examine to find past examples of collaborative work in a similar issue area?
- ✓ What contextual factors will we consider (e.g. project time line, community size, types of collaboration partners, funding structure, etc.) when choosing examples from which to learn?
- ✓ What will we do if we find previous efforts in a similar issue area but none involving cross-sector collaboration?
- ✓ How will we ensure that we are extracting meaningful lessons from past examples? What will we be looking for?

Additional Resources

One potential source for practitioners seeking to examine previous efforts is case study libraries, which can provide detailed examples of how a problem has been addressed in the past through collaboration. We recommended the following case libraries:

The Intersector Project Case Study Library, *accessible online at intersector.com/cases*

The Collective Impact Forum, *accessible online at collectiveimpactforum.org/resources (search media type: cases; free registration required)*

Kitchen Table Democracy *(formerly Policy Consensus Initiative), accessible online at kitchentable.org/sites/ktd/files/documents/PCI%20Case%20Studies.pdf*

ACCOUNT FOR RESOURCES

The determination of financial and non-financial resources from existing and potential partners

WHY IT MATTERS: The process of evaluating resources allows partners to assess whether the collaboration has the resources to meet its goals.

Discussion

Assessing gaps in expertise, networks, and assets. In assessing existing expertise, assets, and networks, partners may find that the collaboration requires additional resources to achieve its goals. For example, the collaboration may find it lacks sufficient convening power, legal expertise, or access to information. Identifying such gaps can guide the collaboration in selecting additional partners. If a collaboration neglects to account for resources in its early stages, it exposes itself to higher operating risk and ultimately limits its capacity.

Case Study Example: "Financing Clean Energy in Berkeley"

In 2006, 82 percent of voters in Berkeley, California, approved a measure to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent before 2050. City officials soon began work on an action plan to meet those targets and ultimately worked collaboratively with researchers from UC Berkeley, funding partners, and solar power companies to create Berkeley FIRST — a program that provides homeowners with a cost-effective, long-term financing option to install solar panels on their houses. Cisco DeVries, then Chief of Staff to Mayor Tom Bates, conceived the model for Berkeley FIRST and circulated the idea among the mayor and key city staff. The mayor supported DeVries' plan but told him the program could not "cost the city any money" or "put the city at any risk" — limitations that spurred DeVries to look for cross-sector partners to develop a sustainable and replicable model. The city worked to secure funding partners by submitting two successful grant applications to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Air Quality Management District. DeVries also reached out to solar companies for their expertise and to build commitment to the program model. DeVries also shared the city's proposal with Dan Kammen at University of California, Berkeley's Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory to conduct economic modeling and a cost-benefit analysis. While the City of Berkeley provided the authority to use property tax bills as a vehicle for long-term repayment of installation costs and administered the program, DeVries leveraged existing relationships with partner organizations who brought capacity to provide capital, expertise in feasibility, professional services in solar panel installation, and more.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What financial and non-financial resources are needed for our collaboration to meet its goals?
- ✓ What will we do to develop a comprehensive picture of the financial and non-financial resources that all partners bring to the table?
- ✓ How will we encourage partners to be transparent in communicating their own resources to the group?
- ✓ What will we do if we determine the collaboration does not have the resources it needs to meet its goals?

Additional Resources

"The Partnering Toolbook" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see Box 2: Build a Resource Map on p. 14 and accompanying discussion on p. 13 for guidance and a template to help collaborations identify the financial and non-financial resources partners bring to the collaboration. Also see Tool 4: Partnering Roles and Skills Questionnaire, which partners can use to assess whether the collaboration possesses skills in areas like facilitation, evaluation, and more. "The Partnering Toolbook" is a comprehensive guide to partnering across sectors.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/

"Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships" from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Especially see pp. 1-2 and 7-11 of Section 5 on expertise for discussion and tools related to identifying the resources and expertise the collaboration needs to achieve its goals, as well as the existing resources that partners bring to the table. "Collaboration Toolkit" is designed to help law enforcement and their partners build effective community policing partnerships but is accessible with minimal adaptation across a wide range of issues.

Accessible online at cops.usdoj.gov/html/cd_rom/collaboration_toolkit/pubs/collaborationtoolkit.pdf

ESTABLISH TRANSPARENCY OF VIEWPOINTS

The creation of an environment in which partners can communicate openly, allowing the collaboration to address partners' differing priorities

WHY IT MATTERS: By creating channels to hear and respond to partners' perspectives and concerns, the collaboration acknowledges the conflicting opinions that can arise from the distinct values and goals of each partner, establishes a forum for consensus-building, and nurtures understanding across organizations and sectors.

Discussion

Characteristics of an open environment in intersector collaboration. Open environments are critical to nearly every aspect of collaboration design and implementation, particularly those that require partners to come to consensus concerning issues on which they are likely to have differing perspectives. Building a common fact base, agreeing on measures of success, and establishing a governance structure are just a few examples. In an open environment, partners trust each other, have equal opportunities to express their diverse opinions, and perceive that they are able to raise concerns without fear of retaliation. If the collaboration is not able to create this type of environment, partners may feel disenfranchised from the collaboration process and may be less likely to compromise with others.

Case Study Example: "Reducing the Risks of Catastrophic Wildfires in Flagstaff"

Years of wildland fire suppression in the Southwest has left many forests with unnaturally high levels of forest fuels, such as dense undergrowth and thick litterfall. In 2010, a wildfire north of Flagstaff, Arizona, caused more than $150 million in combined suppression and recovery costs. Recognizing the need for preventative action, a partnership among the city, county, state, and federal governments, with support from local non-profit and for-profit organizations, resulted in the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP) whose goal is to mitigate the risk of potentially devastating wildfires in Flagstaff's critical watershed areas. The ability of FWPP managers to actively acknowledge conflicting viewpoints and incorporate community members' suggestions into the protection plan has been key to the project's community support and cross-sector buy in. For example, one of FWPP's tactics for mitigating risks includes thinning out dense forests. Some environmental groups, however, have raised concerns over tree thinning activities and their effect on habitat availability for endangered Mexican spotted owls. Rather than ignore these groups, the FWPP held meetings to hear and respond to their concerns, and to correct any miscommunication and erroneous information that was shared. This open flow of information created a strong interdisciplinary understanding of forest restoration, fostered mutual respect among stakeholders, and encouraged comprehensive restoration policies.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What characterizes an environment in which partners feel they can communicate openly? How will we create this type of environment?
- ✓ How will we handle dominant partners or other potential disturbances to an open environment?
- ✓ How will we manage a situation in which one or more partners feel they are unable to communicate openly?
- ✓ How will we balance the desire to create an open environment with the reality that we need to make decisions and progress?
- ✓ Will we consider using a third-party facilitator for some or all of our meetings?
- ✓ How will we assess whether we have successfully developed an environment in which partners feel that they can communicate openly?

Additional Resources

"Talking the Walk" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see Section 3: Communicating Within the Partnership on pp. 22-25 for guidance on best practices for promoting open and honest communication within a collaboration. Also see Section 5: Conversation: The Essential Building Block on pp. 37-44 for guidance related to listening, responsiveness, difficult conversations, and more. "Talking the Walk" is a comprehensive guide for communicating within and beyond partnerships.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/talking-the-walk/

"Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships" from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Especially see Section 3 on trust for discussion and exercises related to establishing team norms that encourage an environment of openness and trust. Also see Section 7: Open Communication for guidance on encouraging candidness among partners, managing conflict, and more. "Collaboration Toolkit" is designed to help law enforcement and their partners build effective community policing partnerships but is accessible with minimal adaptation across a wide range of issues.

Accessible online at cops.usdoj.gov/html/cd_rom/collaboration_toolkit/pubs/collaborationtoolkit.pdf

"The Partnership Toolkit" from Collaboration Roundtable

Especially see Tool 14: Effective Internal Communications on pp. 79-87 for simple, straightforward guidelines and exercises to encourage internal communications that create an atmosphere of trust and effectiveness. "The Partnership Toolkit" is a comprehensive guide to assist organizations in building and sustaining partnerships.

Accessible online at mosaicbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/partnership-Toolkit.pdf

BUILD A COMMON FACT BASE

The consensus among collaboration partners as to what facts relating to the issue are most relevant

WHY IT MATTERS: Joint recognition of what data is relevant to the collaboration allows participants to determine how best to proceed.

Discussion

Differences in perspectives among collaboration partners on what facts are relevant to the issue. Collaboration partners may have sector-specific biases that influence their determination of what facts are relevant to the issue to be addressed by the collaboration. For example, a non-profit-sector partner may contend that facts related to accessibility are most relevant to guiding the collaboration's understanding of the issue, while a business-sector partner may argue that facts related to operational efficiency are most relevant. Because agreement on a common fact base is critical to refining the collaboration's understanding of the issue and honing the collaboration's strategy, the collaboration should facilitate a process through which partners arrive at consensus on what facts are relevant. Without a common fact base, partners may perceive that one partner's perception of the issue is dominant. This can leave partners with the perception that the issue is framed and understood by the collaboration in a way that does not accommodate their role in addressing the issue at hand.

Assessing qualitative and quantitative data related to the problem to be addressed by the collaboration. Partners may have differing levels of familiarity with, and preferences related to, quantitative and qualitative analyses and information. By addressing each partner's experience level and partiality, the collaboration can build a common fact base that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative information, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of an issue. Without such a process, partners may be reluctant to incorporate analyses with which they are not familiar, limiting the collaboration's understanding of the issue and, ultimately, its approach to addressing the issue.

Case Study Example: "Combating Childhood Obesity in Somerville"

In the early 2000s, 46 percent of first and third graders in the city of Somerville, outside of Boston, were overweight or at risk for becoming so. Researchers at Tufts University worked in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Somerville Public School System, the Somerville School Food Services, community-based organizations, and local food providers to design and implement Shape Up Somerville. In the initiative's early stages, collaboration partners agreed that gathering the perspectives of constituents and community members, particularly those affected by the obesity epidemic, would allow them to tailor their initiative to the community's needs. They conducted a series of focus groups and key-informant interviews with children, parents, teachers, and community members, gathering critical feedback on appropriate approaches to combating childhood obesity. The creation of the Shape Up Somerville Advisory Council allowed researchers to meet monthly to provide project updates, coordinate collaborative grants, and measure outcomes. This process brought researchers, school personnel, community and immigrant service providers, and volunteer health advisors onto the same page.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What are the different ways partners perceive the problem we aim to address? What are the differing facts partners think are relevant to defining the problem? How will we address these differences and overcome potential sector-specific biases when it comes to defining the problem?
- ✓ How will we ensure that we consider a balance of quantitative and qualitative data in deciding what facts are most relevant to our understanding of the issue we wish to tackle?
- ✓ Where will we look for data?
- ✓ How will we decide when we have developed a satisfactory understanding of the issue?

Additional Resources

"Partnership Development Toolkit" from the European Commission

Especially see Problem Assessment on pp. 17-19 for step-by-step guidance for partners to complete a problem assessment — an activity wherein partners exhaust their understanding of the problem the collaboration wishes to tackle. The "Partnership Development Toolkit" is a guide for facilitators of EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) but is easily adaptable to partners in a wide variety of issues.

Accessible online at ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/pdtoolkit_en.pdf

"Assessing Community Needs and Resources Toolkit" from Community Tool Box

Especially see points 3, 4, and 5 for guidance on assessing how key stakeholders approach the problem, gathering evidence to indicate whether the problem should be priority for the collaboration, and identifying barriers and resources for addressing the issue. Community Tool Box is an online collection of toolkits and resources for individuals seeking to work collaboratively to bring about social change.

Accessible online at ctb.ku.edu/en/assessing-community-needs-and-resources#node_toolkits_full_group_outline

"Tools for Complex Decision-Making" from Spark Policy Institute

Especially see the Using Information in Multi-Party Decision-Making tab for guidance on navigating the differences in how multi-sector stakeholders value and view information.

Accessible online at sparkpolicy.com/tools/multi-party-decision-making-processes/using-information-in-multi-party-decision-making/

"Tools for Analysing Power in Multi-stakeholder Processes: A Menu" from Centre for Development Innovation

Especially see the Rich Picture exercise on p. 6 and the Problem Tree Analysis exercise on p. 8. Both exercises invite multi-stakeholder partners to visually express their differing viewpoints on the causes, consequences, and context of "the problem." "Tools for Analysing Power in Multi-stakeholder Processes: A Menu" was created for participants of the Thematic Learning Programme on Power in Multi-stakeholder Partnerships and is accessible across a wide variety of issues.

Accessible online at mspguide.org/sites/default/files/resource/menu_of_tools_for_tlp_power_in_msps_v3.pdf

AGREE ON MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The identification of indicators to be used in evaluating the progress and results of the collaboration

WHY IT MATTERS: Consensus among partners on what will define success for the collaboration in the short, mid, and long term creates accountability and helps keep the collaboration on track toward goals.

Discussion

Evaluating potential indicators of success. Cross-sector partners are likely to have differing views of what measures should be used to identify success. Instead of beginning with a discussion of indicators, partners may find it easier to first agree on criteria for evaluating and selecting indicators. Potential criteria the collaboration may want to consider include: How relevant are the indicators to the collaboration's vision of success? How relevant are the indicators to the facts that have been agreed are applicable to the issue at hand? Are the indicators accessible during the time span of the collaboration? Do the indicators provide insight into the "living experiences" of those affected by the issue the collaboration aims to influence? If collaboration partners are unable to agree on indicators of success, the result can be diminished accountability within the collaboration and limited ability to make claims about the collaboration's effect on target outcomes.

Assessing capacity to access, evaluate, and manage data related to measuring success. The collaboration should ensure that it possesses the expertise (e.g. experience using certain methodologies), access (e.g. to data sources or rights to interview), and resources (e.g. human resources or technology) to collect, evaluate, and manage data related to measuring success. If the collaboration determines that it does not have these capabilities, it may enlist additional partners or a third party. If partners fail to assess incapacity in these areas, the result could be delays in data collection, errors in data evaluation, and missteps in data management. Ultimately, this limits the collaboration's ability to measure and report progress and outcomes.

Case Study Example: "Improving Cardiac Arrest Patient Survival in Georgia"

Each year, approximately 300,000 people in the United States suffer a cardiac arrest. Known in the medical community as an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA), survival rates have hovered around 8 percent for the last 30 years. When a group of health leaders in Atlanta considered the possibility of installing public-access automatic defibrillators (AEDs) throughout the city to help improve survival rates in 2003, they quickly recognized that their inability to track the progress of OHCA patient outcomes through the medical system — from the ambulance to the hospital to the moment of discharge — would make it impossible to assess the effectiveness of such an investment. Dr. Bryan McNally, Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine at Emory University, worked with Atlanta hospitals, emergency medical technicians, medical software providers, a network of medical experts, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta to develop the Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (CARES) — the first database to track key details for OHCAs. Dr. McNally and partners worked closely with Dr. Greg Mears, who had led the development of the National EMS Information System (NEMSIS), to select indicators that would allow the team to track the outcomes of their efforts and to ensure that the data they were collecting was compatible with the nationwide NEMSIS system. They agreed to track survival rate, bystander CPR rate, the rate of AED use, and total transition time between 911 dispatchers and EMS responders, among other indicators, to assess the timeliness and quality of care patients were receiving throughout the response pipeline. The first-year results of the CARES pilot program clearly showed Atlanta's poor performance in saving the lives of cardiac arrest victims and provided a baseline from which to make improvements. This data contributed to a greater understanding of the barriers that patients and health professionals encountered that led to OHCA fatalities. It also improved collaboration among citizens, emergency responders, and hospital staff, resulting in increased survival rates and support for future funding considerations.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ In discussing potential measures of success, how will we ensure that we consider both qualitative and quantitative indicators? Financial and non-financial indicators?
- ✓ How will we handle disagreements among partners as to what indicators we should use?
- ✓ How will we collect and manage the data we agree upon? Will one or more collaboration partners be responsible for these tasks? Will we enlist a third party?
- ✓ How often will we review this data? What will be its role in shaping our actions as a collaboration?

Additional Resources

"Working Group Instructions for Developing Shared Metrics" and "Work Group Reporting Template for Developing Shared Metrics" from FSG

These resources are designed to be used together to assist partnerships with identifying indicators or key data points for shared measurement. While the first resource provides instructions to be given to a working group and reported to a backbone organization, it can easily be adapted for partners to use on their own.

Accessible online at collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/working-group-instructions-developing-shared-metrics and collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/work-group-reporting-template-developing-shared-metrics (free registration required)

"Creating Objectives" from Community Tool Box

This section provides detailed guidance and activities that walk practitioners through identifying indicators of success (which Community Tool Box refers to as "objectives"). It includes a discussion of differing types of indicators, collecting baseline data, and more. Community Tool Box is an online collection of toolkits and resources for individuals seeking to work collaboratively to bring about social change.

Accessible online at ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/create-objectives/main

"Partnership Development Toolkit" from the European Commission

Especially see Section 3.5: Indicators Column and Section 3.6: Evidence Column on pp. 29-31 for guidance on identifying indicators and evidence that will be used to monitor the collaboration's progress. The "Partnership Development Toolkit" is a guide for facilitators of EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) but is easily adaptable to partners in a wide variety of issues.

Accessible online at ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/pdtoolkit_en.pdf

COMMIT TO INFORMATION SHARING

The requirement that partners share data relevant to the collaboration's efforts

WHY IT MATTERS: Openly sharing information, including disclosing sensitive facts, gives collaboration partners a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and builds trust among partners and in the collaborative process.

Discussion

Encouraging partners to share data. Partner organizations likely possess differing types of data related to the issue the collaboration aims to address. While some partners may come to the collaboration willing to share data, the collaboration will likely need to actively encourage partners to share information. Collaborations may choose to clearly communicate how information will further or enable the aims of the collaboration, develop information sharing protocols, establish confidentiality agreements, and more.

Managing shared data. Partners will be more likely to share information if the collaboration can instill confidence that the data will be managed safely and securely. The collaboration may choose to entrust this task to partner who has a proven track record of successfully managing proprietary information, to a neutral third party, to a collaboration funder, or consider other possible management structures.

Case Study Example: "Improving Educational Outcomes for Foster Children in Marion County"

Children and youth in foster care face a unique set of educational challenges, including frequent school transfers, a lack of communication between public schools and child welfare agencies, and a lack of stable academic support and guidance. FosterEd is a non-profit organization that aims to improve the academic outcomes of foster children by ensuring they are adequately supported by educational champions and strengthened by education teams. Jesse Hahnel, FosterEd's founder and Executive Director, witnessed how on-the-ground stakeholders such as teachers, school guidance counselors, foster care agency social workers, foster parents, and court staff worked hard to coordinate students' day-to-day activities but often operated in isolation from one another. FosterEd sought to address the challenges that foster children face by enhancing coordination among these individuals and agencies. Working with Sundaram LLC, FosterEd developed an educational case management system that served as a mechanism for stakeholders to track the educational strengths and needs of individual foster children. The partners involved agreed that sharing information about student performance and educational barriers would enhance understanding among the professionals working with the children and reduce duplication of services. The case management system also allowed stakeholders to review student data longitudinally and pinpoint what kind of support individual students needed. The system also allowed the program to be effectively managed by tracking student demographics and educational attainment, which helped organizations to allocate staff resources and train staff appropriately. Critically, the web interface brought these agencies and institutions into greater communication with each other and ensured collective ownership of students' educational plans.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What are the different types of data that we might consider sharing with one another?
- ✓ How will we determine what data each partner possesses and could potentially share with the collaboration? How will we encourage partners to share that data?
- ✓ How will we ensure that the data we share is securely stored and managed? Will we consider confidentiality agreements among partners? Will we identify a partner or third party to manage the data? What other measures will we take?
- ✓ What will happen to shared data at the end of our collaboration (assuming our collaboration is not ongoing)?

Additional Resources

Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing

This comprehensive resource provides detailed guidance, including explanatory text and several tools and templates, related to many aspects of information sharing, including risks, governance, agreements, storage, and more. The Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing works to inspire and improve data sharing across the public sector in the United Kingdom.

Accessible online at informationsharing.org.uk/isp/

"Data Governance Checklist" from the U.S Department of Education's Privacy Technical Assistance Center

While this resource is not designed for cross-sector collaborations in particular, it provides a comprehensive checklist to assist organizations with establishing and maintaining data governance programs and provides considerations that may be helpful for collaborations, such as assigning decision-making authority over data, conducting data inventories, generating policies and procedures, and more.

Accessible online at ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Data%20Governance%20Checklist%20%281%29.pdf

SHARE DISCRETION

The deliberate allocation of decision-making authority according to area of expertise

WHY IT MATTERS: Assigning authority based on partners' sector- or issue-specific knowledge allows the collaboration to benefit from the unique expertise of each partner and gives each partner a distinct stake in the collaboration.

Discussion

Differences in expertise among collaboration partners. By virtue of working in different sectors, collaboration partners will possess differing levels of expertise in the design, delivery, and assessment of products, programs, and services related to the issue to be addressed by the collaboration. By facilitating a process through which each partner can develop an understanding of other partners' strengths and recognize the importance of their contributions, the collaboration increases the likelihood that partners will be willing to share decision-making authority. This process also decreases the risk that partners will perceive that others in the collaboration do not recognize the importance of their own contributions, a mindset that may lead partners to disinvest resources or withdraw entirely.

Expertise needed at each stage of the collaboration. A collaboration will require different expertise at each stage. Examples might include surveying expertise required from a non-profit-sector partner during the diagnosis stage, legal expertise required from a business-sector partner during the design stage, or logistical expertise required from a government-sector partner during the implementation stage. By assessing and communicating the distinct collaboration stages during which each partner's expertise will be needed, the collaboration allows partners to plan for the efficient use of their time and resources and helps partners avoid stretching resources between collaboration commitments and their own standard operating activities. If the collaboration fails to communicate its needs to partners, the risk that partners will be unable to fulfill their commitments to the collaboration increases.

Case Study Example: "Preparing Students for STEM Jobs in New York City"

In 2010, the unemployment rate in the United States was 9.6 percent, with almost 15 million people out of work. At the same time, companies like IBM observed a lack of qualified candidates for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) positions. Stanley Litow, IBM's Vice President of Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs and President of the IBM International Foundation, recognized the skills mismatch in the labor market for STEM-driven companies. He worked across sectors with the New York City Department of Education (DOE) and The City University of New York (CUNY) to create the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH), a six-year, grades 9-14 school program with the goal to graduate students with a high school degree, an Associate's in Applied Science, and workplace experience to put them on track to enter jobs in the STEM field upon graduation. This innovative model called for close coordination among partners and effective allocation of decision-making authority to ensure that the school was up and running by the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. Due to its expertise in district regulations for the acquisition of school space and the hiring of qualified school staff, the DOE took responsibility for identifying a location for the school, hiring key, qualified staff such as the principal and teachers, and also outlined requirements for passing New York State high school diploma qualifying exams. As a leader in information management and technology, IBM was responsible for the mapping of industry-specific hard and soft skills that students needed to develop and for ensuring the seamless integration of workplace experiences within the school curriculum by providing students with IBM mentors and access to paid summer internships. CUNY provided key expertise during the curriculum development phase on what standards constituted college readiness, opened up their curriculum to high school students for them to access college-level courses on campus, and provided City Tech professors to teach college-level classes at P-TECH.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What are the different types of expertise we should consider when assigning authority?
- ✓ What different expertise does each partner bring to the collaboration? And how will we ensure that we consider this when assigning decision-making authority?
- ✓ What will we do when there is overlap in expertise among partners?
- ✓ How will we handle disagreements among partners over how to assign decision-making authority?
- ✓ How will we handle disagreements that may arise on decisions after our decision-making model is in place?

Additional Resources

"Tools for Complex Decision-Making" from Spark Policy Institute

Especially see the Designing a Decision-Making Process tab for guidance on how to thoughtfully construct a decision-making structure that is the best fit for a collaboration's context and needs. This resource provides options that collaboration partners may consider for decision-making — ranging from absolute consensus to majority rule to gradients of agreement — and provides troubleshooting advice for gridlock situations.

Accessible online at sparkpolicy.com/tools/multi-party-decision-making-processes/designing-a-decision-making-process/

"A Short Guide to Consensus Building" from *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*

This methodical, detailed resource offers guidance for consensus-oriented decision-making in multi-stakeholder contexts. This resource presents itself as an alternative to Robert's Rules of Order/parliamentary procedure because of its emphasis on cooperation and consensus. It offers helpful instructions for deliberating, deciding, recording decisions, handling conflict, and more.

Accessible online at web.mit.edu/publicdisputes/practice/cbh_ch1.html

ESTABLISH A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The creation of a formal or informal organizational system for decision-making and project management

WHY IT MATTERS: Clear governance structures, such as committees, workgroups, or facilitated discussions, provide direction while nurturing equity and inclusivity to resolve actual or perceived power imbalances that can arise during collaboration.

Discussion

Determining what governance structure is the best fit for the collaboration. Collaboration partners may be accustomed to differing governance structures that vary in formality, mechanisms for checks and balances, and hierarchy. Partners will have to reconcile their varying expectations to agree upon a structure that is well-suited to the collaboration's aims, and in which all partners are likely to have confidence throughout the collaboration. In determining what governance structure is the best fit, the collaboration may wish to consider whether partners are familiar or comfortable with particular structures, as well as a number of other factors such as: number of partners (more partners may necessitate a more hierarchical structure); project time line (longer time lines may benefit from increased formality to mitigate the potential loss of partners over the course of the collaboration); whether the collaboration has multiple outputs (e.g. both programming- and policy-related initiatives, as this may call for a system of independent working groups); whether the collaboration has goals to "scale up" (which may require increased rigidity in structure to be easily replicated); and more.

Nurturing equity and inclusivity. Based on their organization- and sector-specific experiences, as well as the cultural context in which they have operated, partners may have differing understandings of "inclusivity." Inclusivity is key to the collaborative process—It encourages investment in the collaboration by nurturing consistent, meaningful engagement, can lay the groundwork for resolution of perceived or actual power imbalances, and can ease partners' acceptance of collaboration decisions that may not align with their interests. The collaboration can nurture equity and inclusivity through its governance structure in many ways, including providing for the equal allocation of speaking time during meetings, formalizing voting processes, and more. If partners perceive the governance structure to be exclusive, they may become frustrated, lose confidence in the collaboration, and disinvest.

Case Study Example: "Creating an Environment for Healthy Lifestyles in Brownsville"

In 2001, the University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH) in Brownsville began clinical research to identify health risks in the community and found that 80 percent of Brownsville residents were either obese or overweight, one in three were diabetic, and 70 percent of residents had no healthcare coverage. Motivated by these indicators, UTSPH launched a media campaign and formed a Community Advisory Board to leverage the voices of community members to raise awareness of health issues and promote positive change in Brownsville. CAB has four stated goals: to work with UTSPH researchers to ensure that health information and research is accessible and fully understood by Brownsville residents; to share information, collaborate, and participate in forming networks and pursuing potential funding opportunities; to provide feedback on outreach and recruitment strategies; and to lead policy and environmental change interventions in partnership with local government and community entities. CAB began with 35 members and now comprises 210 members from the health field, business community, and a number of government, education, social service, and non-profit organizations. Members divide into subcommittees based on expertise, organizational affiliation, and jurisdictional or departmental authority. A five-member leadership team led by Belinda Reininger DrPH, Associate Professor at UTSPH, sets meeting agendas and runs the meetings, while the actions of the CAB are undertaken by its subcommittees. CAB members also approach the City Commission in their individual capacity to lobby for project funding or zoning requests. Although each initiative is managed individually, CAB creates a network that connects individuals from different programs and serves as a voice for a unified culture of health in the community.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What different governance structures will we consider?
- ✓ How will we determine what type of governance structure is a best fit for our collaboration?
- ✓ How will we handle disagreements among partners when establishing a governance structure?
- ✓ How will our governance structure ensure equity and inclusivity?
- ✓ How will our governance structure address power imbalances?
- ✓ What is the relationship between our governance structure and how we have decided to share decision-making authority?
- ✓ Will we formalize our governance structure? If so, how?

Additional Resources

"Developing an Organizational Structure for the Initiative" from Community Tool Box

Especially see Section 1: Organizational Structure: An Overview for helpful guidance on choosing the best governance structure type for a collaborative initiative. (Other sections in this chapter may also be useful for detailed guidance on particular types of governance structures.) Community Tool Box is an online collection of toolkits and resources for individuals seeking to work collaboratively to bring about social change.

Accessible online at ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/organizational-structure

"The Partnering Toolbook" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see Tool 3: Sample Partnering Agreement on p. 45 for a simple template for initial partnering agreements. A partnering agreement is developed between parties as an agreement to collaborate and often includes details on how the collaboration will be governed and decisions will be made. "The Partnering Toolbook" is a comprehensive guide to partnering across sectors.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/

"Building an Accountability Structure" from StriveTogether

Especially see pp. 23-26 for a discussion of how partnership agreements, MOUs, and bylaws can be helpful in formally capturing the governance structure ("accountability structure") upon which partners have agreed.

Accessible online at strivetogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/AccountabilityStructureToolkit_Final_2015_1.pdf

IDENTIFY A MANAGER

The selection of an individual or organization that is responsible for coordinating tasks that allow the collaboration to progress

WHY IT MATTERS: Establishing a single person, a body of managers, or an organization as a single point of accountability can ensure structure and instill confidence in the collaborative process.

Discussion

Choosing a manager. Collaboration partners may have differing expectations of managers and of project management practices. If partners are involved in determining criteria to select a manager, they will be more likely to work with the manager and have confidence in the manager's capacity to coordinate the collaboration's activities. Considerations for choosing a manager may include: whether the expertise and experience of the manager align with the collaboration's needs; whether the manager has experience working with collaborations with similar outputs, goals, and types of partners; whether the manager's cost is within the collaboration's budget; and whether the manager is available during the timespan of the collaboration.

Case Study Example: "Building a Neighborhood of Economic Opportunity in Atlanta"

In 1993, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) a $35 million grant to renovate the crumbling housing stock of the East Lake Meadows public housing complex located four miles from downtown Atlanta. Renee Glover, who had recently joined AHA as President, realized that merely renovating housing would not create a safer, more prosperous community. By 1995, only four percent of East Lake Meadows residents earned incomes above the poverty line. The unemployment rate was 86.5 percent, and the crime rate was 18 times higher than the national average. Renee assembled a diverse team composed of AHA leaders, developers, and community members to implement a holistic community approach that would provide mixed income housing, cradle-to-college education, and community wellness resources through public and private partnerships. As the revitalization process evolved, partners recognized the need for an organization focused on bringing in new partners and resources and on coordinating, integrating, and overseeing the many efforts in education, housing construction, and wellness programs that were part of the collaboration's work. Having been a key participant in the collaboration's planning and project launch, and with the resource capacity to focus on the Villages of East Lake, the East Lake Foundation naturally took on these responsibilities, serving as the "community quarterback." The East Lake Foundation served as the lead organization, key convener, accountability partner, and facilitator in the collaboration. It supervised implementation by providing strategic planning, keeping the group on task, raising and contributing funding, and working to partner with organizations to ensure service quality and integration.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What type of manager — an individual, an organization, a team — is the best fit for our collaboration?
- ✓ Does an existing partner have the capacity to act as manager? Or do we need to engage a third party to manage the collaboration?
- ✓ If we choose a third party manager, how will we approach and engage them?
- ✓ What will the role of the manager be? Will they have decision-making power and a place in our governance structure?
- ✓ How will we manage differing opinions and priorities of partners when choosing a manager?

Additional Resources

"The Partnering Toolbook" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see Tool 4: Partnering Roles and Skills Questionnaire. This tool is intended for collaboration partners to assess their skills in areas like project planning and management, communications, facilitation, and more. We suggest this tool can be used by partners to identify whether one or more partners possesses the skills needed to act as collaboration manager, or whether the collaboration has gaps in these areas and should enlist a third party. "The Partnering Toolbook" is a comprehensive guide to partnering across sectors.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/

"Strategic Backbone Toolkit" from Spark Policy Institute

This toolkit is not related to identifying a manager but is a valuable resource for the individual(s) or organization(s) that the collaboration has chosen to act as manager — here referred to as the "backbone organization." It includes resources related to governance, decision-making, scaling change, mobilizing and managing funding, and more.

Accessible online at sparkpolicy.com/tools/overview-2/

COMMUNICATE THE INTERDEPENDENCY OF EACH SECTOR

The development of an understanding among partners of how the differing expertise, resources, and networks of each partner enable the collaboration to achieve its aims

WHY IT MATTERS: Conveying the benefit of working with other sectors fosters continued participation in the collaboration and commitment to results.

Discussion

Partners' unique expertise, resources, and networks. Partners will possess differing expertise, resources, and networks related to the issue the collaboration aims to address. A business-sector partner, for example, may have access to proprietary information or financial resources not readily available to other partners; a non-profit partner may have singular policy- or community-related expertise; a government partner may have unique authority to exercise means to design or implement the initiative. By facilitating processes through which partners come to clearly understand how the resources of other partners directly influence the collaboration's capacity to achieve its goals, the collaboration increases the likelihood that partners will value others' contributions and remain committed to the collaboration. Without this understanding, partners may withdraw from the process when challenges arise, viewing the issue at hand as solvable without the involvement of other sectors.

Case Study Example: "Creating a Technical Training Program in New Hampshire"

In 2012, Safran USA and Albany Engineered Composites found themselves in need of a manufacturing site and a sizable workforce to produce a new type of fan blade. In partnership with Great Bay Community College, city officials in Rochester, New Hampshire, proposed that the companies build their manufacturing site in a state industrial park. In turn, they would provide a certified workforce by training Great Bay Community College students through an industry-specific training program. This cross-sector partnership required that each sector have a clear understanding of how their joint participation was necessary to achieve the desired results. Great Bay Community College made it clear to the companies that they needed to play a role in the design and planning of the training curriculum to ensure that the partnership was mutually enriching to its students and the companies. The businesses provided specialized equipment and funding for the construction of Great Bay's Advanced Technology and Academic Center (ATAC) and were active in discussions about logistics, providing technical expertise to assist in the creation of the curriculum to ensure students were trained in the necessary manufacturing skills. New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) was essential in negotiations both to secure Rochester as the prime location for the center and to ensure continued long-term financial support for training. Additionally, DRED continues to advocate for the needs of the companies to the state government.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What unique contributions does each partner bring to the collaboration?
- ✓ How will we communicate the contributions and value of each partner to all partners?
- ✓ What will we do if one or more partners believe that their contribution to the collaboration is not valued by other partners?
- ✓ What will we do if one or more partners behave in ways that illustrate they do not value the contributions of other partners?

Additional Resources

"Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships" from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Especially see Tool 11: Let's String Along on p. 5 of Section 6: Teamwork Strategies. This interactive team-building exercise aims to demonstrate and reinforce the interdependency of partners. Partners complete an activity through which they are prompted to identify points of reliance on others and then reflect on a set of closing questions. "Collaboration Toolkit" is designed to help law enforcement and their partners build effective community policing partnerships but is accessible with minimal adaptation across a wide range of issues.

Accessible online at cops.usdoj.gov/html/cd_rom/collaboration_toolkit/pubs/collaborationtoolkit.pdf

"The Good Collaboration Toolkit" from The Good Project

Especially see the "Is This Collaboration Feasible" exercise on p. 6, which prompts partners to write brief mock proposals that address a series of questions related to the rationale for collaboration. While this exercise is intended for partners to complete in the early stages of a collaboration, it can easily be adapted to use throughout the course of the collaboration to reinforce the interdependency of sectors and revisit the motivations that initially brought partners together. "The Good Collaboration Toolkit" is a series of activities that guides collaboration partners to consider critical aspects of collaboration, including readiness for partnering, nurturing relationships, reflecting on collaboration results, and more.

Accessible online at thegoodproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Good-Collaboration-Tlkt-v3_Edited-2.pdf

DEMONSTRATE ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCY AND ABILITY TO EXECUTE

The ability of collaboration partners to follow through on commitments that enhance the likelihood of collaborative success

WHY IT MATTERS: When partners fulfill their promises to the collaboration, they inspire trust among each other and among external stakeholders, building confidence in the collaboration and in the likelihood of a positive outcome.

Discussion

Encouraging partners to follow through on their commitments. Intersector collaborations often require partners to work in contexts that differ from their day-to-day operating environment, which can be a challenge. If partners are unable to fulfill commitments, however, progress may stall, and confidence and commitment may wane. The collaboration can hold partners accountable for their commitments by: identifying clear expectations from each partner and establishing time lines for these expectations, ensuring all partners understand and mutually agree to these expectations and time lines (perhaps through a partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding), and consistently communicating the fulfillment of commitments among partners.

Case Study Example: "Providing Public School Bus GPS Information to Parents in Boston"

In the winter of 2010, severe snowstorms in Boston resulted in adverse road conditions and traffic delays, leaving parents worried about their children riding home on public school buses. During the blizzards, Chris Osgood, Co-Chair of the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics (MONUM), was at the Boston Public Schools Call Center relaying the GPS locations of school buses to concerned parents. Chris and his colleagues soon realized that allowing parents and caretakers to view this information on a smartphone or computer would be a key improvement to the system, especially in critical weather situations. A year after the precipitating snowstorm, MONUM _ which pilots experiments in the areas of civic engagement, education, and improved service delivery in Boston, using cross-sector collaboration to solve issues within cities – partnered with Boston Public Schools, the GPS Provider Zonar, Code for America, and, later, Vermonster to create a free app that delivered needed information to parents in a safe and expedited way. Once it initiated the collaboration, MONUM provided critical support, such as coordinating beta testing and overseeing logistics for proposals, which alleviated some of the responsibilities faced by BPS representatives who were busy managing daily transportation issues, eventually ensuring continued collaborative success. After the first version of the app had been developed by Code for America, MONUM worked with Boston Public Schools to identify testing groups composed of BPS parents and took charge of writing proposals and providing feedback on each round of testing. After several rounds of testing, when seeking to scale the project to the entire city, MONUM managed the Request for Quotation process to find a developer to build a more robust platform. Today, "Where's My School Bus?" provides Boston parents with real-time public school bus locations of their children, and city officials report that the app is used by parents 1,000 times a day.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

✓ How will we encourage partners to follow through on their commitments?

✓ How will the collaboration track the commitments of partners and report on their progress?

✓ Will we use partnership agreements, MOUs, or similar agreements to formalize the commitments each partner has made to the collaboration?

✓ How will we ensure partners understand the relationship of their commitments to the collaboration's success?

✓ What will we do if one or more partners are not following through on their commitments to the collaboration?

✓ What will we do to ensure that partners do not overcommit themselves?

✓ What will partners do if they find they cannot fulfill the promise(s) they have made to the collaboration?

✓ How will we communicate the commitments and follow through of partners to stakeholders external to the collaboration?

Additional Resources

"Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential" from University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension

Especially see the Minutes of Meeting template on p. 100, the example Collaborative Monitoring Chart on p. 101, and the example Collaborative Management and Responsibility Chart on p. 102. The first resource provides a template for meeting minutes that focuses on recording tasks, the responsible party for those tasks, and the time line. The second resource provides a template for capturing collaboration activities, including number of tasks completed on time, and could easily be adapted to allow for greater specificity in listing types of tasks or commitments completed each month. The third resource provides a template for recording partner commitments and tracking follow through. "Evaluating Collaboratives" is a comprehensive resource for evaluating multi-stakeholder processes.

Accessible online at learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-8.PDF

"The Partnership Toolkit" from Collaboration Roundtable

Especially see Tool 11: Ensuring Accountability on pp. 58-62. This resource guides partners in processes that encourage them to take responsibility for their commitments, both as partners and as a collaborative team. It includes helpful discussion of the importance of accountability, exercises guiding partners to embed principles that encourage accountability into their partnership, and discusses options for reporting accountability. While some of the exercises are aimed at assessing the ability of the collaboration to follow through on its commitments, they could easily be adapted for individual partners, as well. "The Partnership Toolkit" is a comprehensive guide to assist organizations in building and sustaining partnerships.

Accessible online at mosaicbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/partnership-Toolkit.pdf

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS OF PROCESS AND RESULTS

The capacity to communicate progress, celebrate success, encourage patience when needed, and allow for flexibility as the collaboration progresses

WHY IT MATTERS: Communicating progress toward goals, as well as recognizing when to adapt to changing circumstances, new information, and shifting priorities, allows the collaboration to maintain engagement and momentum.

Discussion

Encouraging patience among collaboration partners. Collaborations often take longer than expected, in part because partners must work in ways that take into account the practices and priorities of other sectors. The collaboration can encourage patience among partners by communicating progress and celebrating success, which instills confidence and commitment. Partners can do this by beginning meetings with progress updates, by sending reports of progress to partners on a regular basis, by organizing an event to celebrate the achievement of a milestone, or by seeking external opportunities (e.g. via media outlets, external stakeholder meetings, etc.) to share interim achievements.

Adapting to change. Maintaining a willingness to shift strategy is crucial in cross-sector collaboration, as collaborations must grapple with changing priorities of partners, funders, and other key stakeholders; wrestle with changing political environments; and more. The most effective collaborations are also open to new, unexpected information that gives them a more accurate picture of the issue they aim to address; and are periodically evaluating interim indicators to assess whether they are on track to accomplish their goals—both activities that may suggest the need for a strategy shift. If the collaboration is overly rigid in pursuing a previously agreed upon strategy, it may risk losing key partners, resources, or influence, or may ultimately pursue a project, program, or policy that new information suggests will not be effective. To create an environment in which partners and their stakeholders are flexible to changes in strategy, the collaboration should focus on clearly communicating how the change influences the collaboration's ability to achieve its goals. If the collaboration has effectively communicated past progress and worked to inspire confidence in its practices, structure, and past choices, partners will be more likely to trust the need to shift course, rather than seeing such a shift as a failure of planning.

Case Study Example: "Transforming the Largest Public Housing Development in New Orleans"

The Bayou District Foundation (BDF) located in New Orleans has overseen the construction of more than 685 mixed-income housing units, early childhood education facilities, a K-8 charter school, recreational facilities, and a mobile health clinic. Because the redevelopment project was at such a large scale and primarily dependent upon government funding, progress was slow at times. Turnover at government agencies also caused delays and frustration. But the BDF worked to build patience among partners and the community through open communication. The board was responsive and constructive, employing a two-pronged approach to keeping residents updated on the progress of the redevelopment and to ensuring that disagreements would not derail progress: group meetings to bring all stakeholders together in an open, transparent environment and individual meetings to address issues that arose throughout the process. BDF also held monthly meetings with the New Orleans Housing Authority and Columbia Residential, the property developer, and regular meetings with community support service organizations and other partners. Board members held 60 public meetings that covered important issues related to the project, offered detailed explanations to the community about their work with government agencies and partners to redevelop the St. Bernard's Public Housing Development, established community rules within the housing development, and served as a way to openly share ideas and discuss issues. Each public meeting included a project update and presentation by one of the project partners to address a specific area of redevelopment. The BDF collaborated with partners in preparing for these presentations, setting aside ample time for meaningful feedback and to address specific concerns. Through patience and open communication, the BDF maintained a high level of engagement among its partners and was able to garner strong community support by keeping residents informed of all project developments.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

✓ How will we communicate the collaboration's progress to all partners?

✓ What will we do to ensure that progress is communicated in a way that is meaningful to the differing stakeholder groups of each partner?

✓ When will we communicate progress not just to partners but to external parties, as well?

✓ What are the different ways we will celebrate success?

✓ What will we do to ensure that we are not being overly rigid or reactive, but flexible as the collaboration progresses?

Additional Resources

"Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential" from University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension

Especially see discussion of Milestones and Critical Events on pp. 31-33, which provides helpful guidance and checklists for identifying milestones to be celebrated as signs of progress. Also see discussion of Levels of Outcomes on pp. 113-117, which includes a helpful explanation of interim or precursor outcomes and the role of these in communicating progress and ensuring the collaboration is on track. "Evaluating Collaboratives" is a comprehensive resource for evaluating multi-stakeholder processes.

Accessible online at learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-8.PDF

"Adaptive Planning Toolkit" from Spark Policy Institute

This resource provides helpful discussion of the differences between traditional planning processes and planning processes that are appropriate for complicated problems. Adaptive planning encourages continuous learning and an openness to shifting strategy over the course of a project based on changing circumstances, new information, and shifting priorities.

Accessible online at sparkpolicy.com/tools/overview/

"Partnership Development Toolkit" from the European Commission

Especially see pp. 43-47 for discussion of monitoring the gap between the partnership's intentions and its accomplishments — both to keep the partnership on track and to communicate progress or the need to change course to partners and stakeholders. While not all templates in this section are relevant to all collaborations, Template 7: Quarterly Monitoring Record on p. 45 provides a useful framework for assessing progress. The "Partnership Development Toolkit" is a guide for facilitators of EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) but is easily adaptable to partners in a wide variety of issues.

Accessible online at ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/pdtoolkit_en.pdf

"Talking the Walk" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see Tool 3: Needs Analysis for Individual Partners on p. 74 for guidance on assessing partnering organizations' communications practices and needs, as well as those of its internal and external stakeholders. We suggest partners use this information to guide them in communicating progress in a way that is valuable to the differing stakeholder groups of each partner.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/talking-the-walk/

RECRUIT A POWERFUL SPONSOR OR CHAMPION

The engagement of a person, a group of persons, or an organization committed to leveraging their influence, resources, and skills to help the collaboration achieve its objectives

WHY IT MATTERS: Well-respected, influential individuals or organizations can provide access to resources, lend legitimacy and prestige, and attract public attention to a collaboration.

Discussion

The work of sponsors and champions. Sponsors and champions are distinct roles, each bringing unique benefits to a collaboration. Sponsors, while not usually involved in the day-to-day operations of the collaboration, provide prestige, access to networks, convening power, and can mobilize financial and non-financial resources to support the collaboration. The collaboration may enlist a sponsor to build perceptions of legitimacy and prestige, to develop relationships with constituencies or stakeholders that are key to the collaboration's goals, or to gain access to additional financial and/or non-financial resources. Champions, who often are involved in the day-to-day operations of the collaboration, typically offer expertise on the issue targeted by the collaboration and/or processes that are critical to the collaboration's effort. The collaboration may enlist a champion to provide needed expertise, increasing perceptions of credibility among partners and external stakeholders. If the collaboration does not involve sponsors or champions, it misses the opportunity to benefit from the unique influence, resources, and skills that these individuals and organizations provide, ultimately limiting its capacity.

Case Study Example: "Reducing Gang Violence and Providing Youth Development in Los Angeles"

In 2007, Los Angeles had more than 700 individual gangs with 40,000 members. Nearly 75 percent of all youth gang homicides in California occurred in Los Angeles County. In response to the city's gang crisis, the Advancement Project, a public policy change organization focused on civil rights issues, wrote a report providing a framework for how the city should approach gang reduction. Connie Rice, one of the founding directors, knew that without a powerful supporter, the report would be largely ignored by the city officials and residents. The Advancement Project sought and found an ally within the police department, Los Angeles Police Chief Bill Bratton. Bratton called a press conference to endorse the Advancement Project's "A Call to Action" report. His support and the flurry of media attention it created helped the Advancement Project appeal to L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to begin supporting the issue. He eventually championed the creation of a Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) office, helping to remove governmental roadblocks and draw the public's attention to the city's new strategy for addressing gang violence.

Questions to Guide Tool Use

- ✓ What are our gaps in influence, resources, and skills — areas where a sponsor or champion could assist?
- ✓ Do we need both a sponsor and a champion? One or the other?
- ✓ How will we identify individuals who are well-suited to act as a sponsor or champion for our collaboration?
- ✓ How will we approach individuals we wish to ask to join the collaboration as a sponsor or champion?
- ✓ What will the role of our sponsor and/or champion be? Will they have decision-making power and a place in our governance structure?

Additional Resources

"The Partnering Toolbook" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see Tool 2: Stakeholder Mapping on p. 43. This tool, intended for use in the early partnership phases, leads partners to map potential stakeholders according to their influence over partnership objectives — a useful framework for identifying sponsors and champions that can easily be adapted for this use. "The Partnering Toolbook" is a comprehensive guide to partnering across sectors.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/

"Involving Key Influentials in the Work" from Community Tool Box

"Involving Key Influentials in the Work" provides guidance and activities to assist collaboration partners in identifying and approaching influential sponsors or champions. Community Tool Box is an online collection of toolkits and resources for individuals seeking to work collaboratively to bring about social change.

Accessible online at ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/encouraging-involvement/key-influentials/main

DEFINE THE INTENT OF THE EVALUATION

The agreement among collaboration partners on the purpose of an evaluation

WHY IT MATTERS: Facilitating consensus among partners as to the purpose of the evaluation allows the collaboration to move forward with generating insights that are mutually agreed to be relevant to all partners, while acknowledging that partners may have differing goals for the evaluative process.

Discussion

Differing perspectives on the purpose of the evaluation. Influenced by sector- and organization-specific practices, norms, and interests, partners may have differing goals for the evaluation. Some partners may propose an evaluation that focuses on collaborative process so that others can replicate the collaboration's efforts; others may propose evaluating outcomes to report success to their constituencies; others may propose evaluating both process and outcomes in order to adjust collaboration strategy (assuming the collaboration is ongoing rather than project-specific). Partners must reconcile these and other potential differing perspectives; a lack of clarity on the purpose of the evaluation creates confusion as to what information should be collected and how it should be assessed, ultimately limiting the collaboration's ability to complete an evaluative process.

Case Study Example: "Financing Clean Energy in Berkeley"

Launched in 2008, Berkeley FIRST allowed property owners to borrow money from the City's Sustainable Energy Financing District to install solar paneling and repay the costs through their property tax bills over a period of 20 years. From the onset of the cross-sector collaboration that gave rise to Berkeley FIRST, the City of Berkeley and its partners sought to create a standardized and scalable financing model that other cities could easily adopt if it proved successful. They agreed that conducting interim and final evaluations of a pilot program operating at a modest scale would help them determine if this type of solar paneling installation was feasible. To this end, the Office of Energy and Sustainable Development and University of California, Berkeley's Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory conducted initial and final reviews of the program. The initial evaluation in 2009 highlights program achievements and pitfalls, and the motivations and opinions of participants and residents who were not in the pilot group. It also described why some participants withdrew and decided to finance their solar panels through home equity loans instead, suggesting that the pilot program interested them but that they found home equity loans less expensive. The final evaluation conducted in 2010 was focused on assessing the feasibility of scaling Berkeley FIRST to a statewide Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE) program. The lessons learned included "adding energy and water efficiency measures to reduce paybacks, increasing the scale of programs to attract new and cheaper sources of capital, and developing uniform rules for first position liens to ensure that the projects result in a reduction in overall housing costs."

Questions to Guide Tool Use

✓ What are partners' differing goals for the evaluation? How will we reconcile those differences to arrive at a clear understanding of the purpose of the evaluation?

✓ Do we have internal capacity to conduct the evaluation(s) partners have agreed upon? Or will we enlist a third party to conduct the evaluation(s)?

Additional Resources

"Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential" from the University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension

This comprehensive resource is valuable for all stages of assessment processes. For guidance in defining the intent of an evaluation, see pp. 35-39 of Section 3: Evaluation Practice, which provides helpful explanations and templates for considering the range of questions, uses, and audiences for a potential evaluation. Also see Sources of Information and Methods of Data Collection on p. 43 for potential sources of information and methods of data collection for the evaluation, as well as the example Evaluation Worksheet on p. 44 for a template to record what partners want to evaluate and how they will evaluate it.

Accessible online at learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-8.PDF

"The Partnership Toolkit" from Collaboration Roundtable

Especially see Tool 18: Evaluation on pp. 108-112 for step-by-step guidance and activities for developing an evaluation that is focused on assessing the partnership process rather than outcomes. "The Partnership Toolkit" is a comprehensive guide to assist organizations in building and sustaining partnerships.

Accessible online at mosaicbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/partnership-Toolkit.pdf

TELL THE STORY

The documentation and communication of the collaboration's outcomes and lessons learned, shared internally and externally

WHY IT MATTERS: Sharing results and insights into the collaboration's process creates transparency, enables partners to communicate the value and legitimacy of intersector collaboration, and allows others to learn from, and potentially replicate, the initiative.

Discussion

What story the collaboration will tell and to whom. If the collaboration conducts a process-oriented evaluation, it may choose to tell the story of how collaboration design choices — its governance structure or method of sharing discretion, for example — were critical to its success. If the collaboration conducted an outcomes-oriented evaluation, the collaboration may choose to tell the story of its impact on a targeted population or issue, or of the indirect influence of the initiative on other, related factors (e.g. the impact of a transportation accessibility initiative on economic development). Given the increasing interest in intersector initiatives, it is important for the collaboration to decide how it will tell its story in a way that will be understood by those both internal to and outside of the collaboration. If its story is not accessible to a broad range of individuals in each sector, the potential value of the collaboration's efforts may not be fully realized. When collaboration partners openly and accurately share their experiences among each other and with external parties, all can learn from the collaboration's successes and challenges, which may influence interest in and effectiveness of future intersector efforts.

Case Study Example: "Strengthening Basic Skills Education in Washington State"

In the early 2000s, community and technical colleges in Washington State began to observe a troubling trend: Many students enrolled in basic skills programs were not acquiring the credentials necessary to advance to college-level programs or secure employment. A collaboration across sectors resulted in the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program, which allows students to benefit from a combined educational stream incorporating technical and professional content into basic skills and education courses. The I-BEST program has made use of multiple channels to tell its story, which has helped it to become a model for community colleges and technical schools nationwide. The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) website shares research on I-BEST, including external reviews of the program from the Community College Research Center at Teachers College at Columbia University. In 2009, members from SBCTC spoke in Washington about I-BEST as part of governmental hearings supporting the renewal of the Workforce Investment ACT. Additionally, many news outlets have covered I-BEST, including The Atlantic (March 2014).

Questions to Guide Tool Use

✓ How will we tell our story in a way that is helpful to future collaborations? What do we think is the most important information to share?

✓ How will we communicate our challenges or failures?

✓ How will we tell our story if partners disagree on whether the collaboration was successful?

✓ To whom will we tell our story? Who is/are our intended audience(s)?

✓ What are the different ways we want to consider telling our story, and which format makes sense for us?

✓ When will we tell our story? Throughout the course of the collaboration? Upon its completion? At certain intervals?

Additional Resources

"Talking the Walk" from The Partnering Initiative

Especially see these detailed exercises: Tool 1: Preparation Activities, Communication Planning on p. 72 (highlights key areas to consider in communications planning); Tool 2: Content and Coverage on p. 73 (a detailed worksheet for drafting a communications plan); Tool 5: Key Questions and Considerations on p. 76 (guidance for preparing to communicate externally); Tool 7: Document Checklist on p. 78 (checklist for developing effective communications); Tool 8: Options and Considerations on p. 79 (details different methods/formats for communicating); and Tool 9: Communication Assessment Tool on p. 80 (guidance for monitoring/assessing your communications). Also see Communicating Beyond the Partnership on pp. 27-35 for helpful context for these tools. "Talking the Walk" is a comprehensive guide for communicating within and beyond partnerships.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/talking-the-walk/

"Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential" from University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension

Especially see Interpreting and Using Evaluating Information on pp. 45-52 for detailed guidance on communicating the evaluation to internal and external constituencies. "Evaluating Collaboratives" is a comprehensive resource for evaluating multi-stakeholder processes.

Accessible online at learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-8.PDF

"The Case Study Toolbook" from The Partnering Initiative

This resource provides comprehensive, actionable guidance — complete with detailed, broadly adaptable tools — for collaborations seeking to tell their story via a case study. According to its description, the guide can be used both by individuals internal and external to the collaboration.

Accessible online at thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-case-study-toolbook/

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