

THE
INTERSECTOR
PROJECT

The Intersector Toolkit:
Tools for Cross-Sector Collaboration



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I. INTRODUCTION

The Intersector Project is a New York-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to advancing cross-sector collaboration in the United States. We work to provide practitioners with the tools they need to implement collaborative solutions to complex problems.

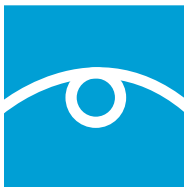
This Toolkit is the cornerstone of The Intersector Project's work. It provides practical knowledge for practitioners in every sector to enact their own intersector initiatives. A problem-solving guide, the Toolkit aims to be: accessible to practitioners across the business, government, and non-profit sectors; relevant to a broad range of issues and types of collaborations; and credible, based on academic research, practitioner experience, and expert feedback.

Our literature reviews, interviews with managers and leaders across sectors, and case studies have shown that the most intractable problems cannot be solved by one sector alone. The tactics described here provide practitioners with the tools needed to work across sectors and create successful collaborative initiatives.

II. 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.





SHARE A VISION OF SUCCESS

The agreement on a set of project 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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What differing priorities will partners have to reconcile to agree on project goals?

Collaboration partners may approach issues with sector-specific priorities. Business sector partners, for example, may prioritize the creation of products and services that optimize profit. Government sector partners may prioritize the implementation of policies that are compliant with law and budgets and benefit citizens. Non-profit sector partners may prioritize the creation of programs and services that focus on non-financial goals and benefits for target populations. By facilitating a process in which partners can communicate and reconcile these priorities, the collaboration increases the likelihood that partners will be able to agree on project goals and ideal outcomes.

How will partners reconcile the collaboration's vision of success with their own organizational missions and goals?

Collaboration partners are more likely to commit to the collaboration if they perceive the collaboration's goals as aligning with their own. In reconciling the collaboration's vision of success with their own organizational mission and goals, partners may: assess 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); consider how successful collaboration outcomes may support their organizations' understanding of the issue; and evaluate whether contributions to the collaboration create tension with other organizational commitments that may be more closely aligned with their mission. 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 may weaken. Partners may also experience challenges in justifying their participation in the collaboration to internal and external stakeholders, increasing the risk that partners disinvest resources from the collaboration or withdraw entirely.

Example:

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. Aware of a public housing development in East Lake, Atlanta that used a holistic community revitalization model to provide residents with safe mixed-income housing and access to quality education and public services, BDF members visited East Lake and saw its successful transformation firsthand. The BDF's five board members had a collective vision for the project that mirrored East Lake's revitalization model. BDF shared renderings with potential partners and the community. Because the model was new, some partners remained skeptical about trying something "unestablished." Committed to their mission, the BDF realized they would need to show their partners firsthand how effective the model could be. BDF organized multiple trips to East Lake for the New Orleans Housing Authority, City Council, and members of the community to see the model in action. The East Lake model gave the BDF the successful example they needed to win over their partners and community.

— "Transforming the Largest Public Housing Development in New Orleans"

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 sector, establishes a forum for consensus-building, and nurtures cross-sector understanding.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What are the 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 and grievances without fear of retaliation. In the absence of an open environment in which partners can address their differing perspectives, partners may feel disenfranchised from the collaboration process, decreasing the likelihood that they will compromise with others.

Example:

Years of wildland fire suppression in the Southwest has left many forests with unnaturally high levels of forest fuels, like 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 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 its 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. This open flow of information creates a better interdisciplinary understanding of forest restoration, fosters mutual respect amongst stakeholders, and encourages comprehensive restoration policies.

— "Reducing the Risks of Catastrophic Wildfires in Flagstaff"



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 plan how their expertise, networks, and assets can be best utilized in the collaboration and to determine what additional resources may be needed.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What are the collaboration's gaps in expertise, networks, and assets?

In assessing existing expertise, assets, and networks, partners may find that the collaboration requires additional resources to effectively implement the initiative. For example, the collaboration may find it lacks sufficient convening power, legal expertise, or access to knowledge or resources that are typically proprietary. The identification of such gaps can guide the collaboration in the selection of additional partners. Without this process, the collaboration exposes itself to higher operating risk because of the lack of needed resources and ultimately limits its capacity.

Example:

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 East Lake Meadows. A diverse leadership team composed of AHA leaders, developers, and community members coalesced around the East Lake Foundation to support and lead an integrated and holistic community approach that would provide mixed income housing, cradle-to-college education, and community wellness resources through public and private partnerships. As the collaboration progressed and the plan became more complex, so did the resource needs for this holistic approach, which included housing demolition and education reform. It became clear that the federal housing renovation grant would not be sufficient; the Planning Committee for the project began exploring what institutional partners would be needed in order to meet the financial, regulatory, planning, and expertise needs of the project. For example, when demand for early care and education services that prepared children to enter Drew Charter School outgrew the capacity of the Sheltering Arms Early Learning Center, the East Lake YMCA was recruited to house an early learning center. Six higher education partners were also brought in to contribute to the academic success of students in the community. Through additional resource opportunities, students have access to well-rounded enrichment programs in robotics, music, student government, peer mentoring, and support for their transition into high school.

— “Building a Neighborhood of Economic Opportunity in Atlanta”



ASSESS THE HISTORY OF ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

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

WHY IT MATTERS: The successes and failures of other collaborations in similar issue areas can provide valuable information on conditions that are conducive to future success.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What can the collaboration learn from previous intersector efforts in the issue area to be addressed by the collaboration?

Partners can gain insights into the effectiveness of certain collaboration structures and practices in contexts comparable to those anticipated by the current collaboration. Collaborations may review contextual variables such as location, collaboration size, or project timeline, and examine design and implementation structures and practices such as governance structure, allocation of resources, and involvement of sponsors and champions. This can provide a guide for what choices may be appropriate for the collaboration, increasing the likelihood that it will be able to replicate others' success and lowering the risk that the collaboration will repeat the same errors.

Example:

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, representatives from the 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. At least a dozen studies dating as far back as the early 1950s and 1960s had been conducted to evaluate the redevelopment potential of the waterfront. Then Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick authorized a 90-day evaluation of past attempts by a 34-person group of stakeholders. Participants benchmarked other 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 waterfront developments would be adapted to Detroit's climate and culture, and looking at riverfront developments in Saint Paul, Toronto, Chattanooga, and Cincinnati, among others, to gather lessons learned.

— "Redeveloping the Riverfront in Detroit"



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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What are the differences in expertise among collaboration partners?

Collaboration partners, by virtue of working in different sectors, 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 from the collaboration entirely.

What expertise is needed at each stage of the collaboration — diagnosis, design, implementation, and assessment?

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.

Example:

In 2004, experts projected that approximately 70 percent of Seattle's forested parkland trees would be dead within 20 years due to invasive plants. In response, a collaboration among the Department of Parks and Recreation, Forterra, a land conservation and community building organization, and local citizen groups resulted in the Green Seattle Partnership. The initial evaluation of the problem with Seattle's forested areas and the subsequent plan for reforestation was the work of 12 managerial staff members from each of the partnering groups. Their decision making during this process became the foundation of the Green Seattle Partnership's work. The Partnership ultimately established a formal decision-making process that assigned responsibility for various tasks based on which partner held subject matter expertise and appropriate resources. For example, Seattle Public Utilities does not work on forested lands within Seattle, but they maintain control of the creeks near the parks. When the task of monitoring storm water retention in the forested areas arose, Public Utilities had the best resources and was called upon to execute the plan.

— "Reforestation of Parks in Seattle"



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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

How will the collaboration encourage partners to share data?

Partner organizations are likely to possess differing types of data related to the issue addressed by the collaboration. Accessibility to multiple types of data can assist the collaboration in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand. Consequently, if the collaboration does not take measures to encourage partners to share data, it ultimately may limit the capacity of the collaboration. One example of a tactic collaborations may employ to encourage data sharing is establishing confidentiality agreements, which provide assurance that data shared among partners will not be shared with parties external to the collaboration.

How will the collaboration manage shared data?

Partners may be concerned with how proprietary or sensitive data will be managed by the collaboration, thus the collaboration may choose to entrust this task to partner who has a proven track record of successfully managing proprietary information. If the collaboration can instill confidence among partners that the data will be managed with safety and security, partners will be more likely to share information that is relevant to the collaboration's efforts.

Example:

FosterEd is a non-profit organization that focuses on the academic outcomes of foster children by ensuring they are supported by educational champions and strengthened by education teams. Their collaborative approach is data-driven: FosterEd provides information to stakeholders on the ground, allowing participants such as teachers to identify which children are in foster care. Working with Sundaram LLC, FosterEd developed a case-wide management system. The web interface allowed FosterEd, the Education system, and the courts to track the educational progress of each child. The system allowed the program to be effectively managed, helping FosterEd to design programmatic elements, such as adding more liaisons. It also allowed FosterEd staff to determine if a change in education policy would provide a solution for a certain educational need. Sharing data is essential to ensuring educational progress of each child – a foster child's case is only closed when all of their educational goals have been monitored for a period of time and the issue at hand has been resolved.

— “Improving Educational Outcomes for Foster Children in Marion County”



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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What are the differences in perspective 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, leading to a lack of confidence among the collaboration. 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.

How will the collaboration assess 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.

Example:

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 entire City of Somerville to design and implement Shape Up Somerville (SUS). In the initiative's early stages: collaboration partners 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. Rather than creating a public mandate, involving constituents and community members allowed for greater input from all those affected by the obesity epidemic.

— "Combating Childhood Obesity in Somerville"



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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

How will the collaboration identify the data sources to be used in measuring success?

Cross-sector partners may have differing views of what data sources are suitable to use in identifying success indicators. The collaboration can reach consensus by facilitating a process through which partners agree on the criteria for evaluating and selecting data sources, which may include: How relevant are the indicators available from the data source to the collaboration’s vision of success? How relevant are the indicators available from the data source to the facts that have been agreed are applicable to the issue at hand? Is the data available during the time span of the collaboration? Does the data 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 data sources, the collaboration will be unable to establish indicators of success, which can lead to decreased accountability within the collaboration and limit the collaboration’s ability to make claims about its effect on target outcomes.

How will the collaboration assess 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 the 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 possess these capabilities, it may enlist additional partners. Failure to recognize incapacity in these areas could result in 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.

Example:

Forthcoming



ESTABLISH A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The creation of a formal or informal organizational system for project management

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

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

How will partners determine 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. Varying expectations for governance structure must be reconciled to create a structure in which participants have confidence. If partners do not reconcile their differing expectations and establish a governance structure agreed to be the best fit for the collaboration, they may lack confidence in, and withdraw from, the collaboration. In determining what governance structure is the best fit for the collaboration, partners may consider factors such as: whether the collaboration has multiple outputs (e.g. both programming- and policy-related initiatives); whether the collaboration has goals to “scale up,” which may require increased rigidity in structure to be easily replicated; and whether collaborations partners are familiar or comfortable with particular governance structures.

How will the governance structure nurture equity and inclusivity?

Based on their sector-specific experiences, including the cultural context in which partners have operated, partners may have differing understandings of “inclusivity.” Inclusivity is key to the collaborative process because it encourages investment in the collaboration by nurturing consistent, meaningful engagement, can resolve perceived or actual imbalances in power that may arise, 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 or formalizing voting processes. If partners perceive the governance structure to be exclusive, they may become frustrated, lose confidence in the collaboration, or disinvest from the collaboration.

Example:

In 2001, researchers at the University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH) in Brownsville found that 80 percent of residents were either obese or overweight. A new Community Advisory Board (CAB) unites members across sectors to raise awareness of health issues and promote positive change in Brownsville. CAB has four stated goals: to work with the UTSPH researchers to ensure that health information and research is more accessible and more 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 has 210 members, which divide into subcommittees based on interest and expertise. A five-member leadership team sets the meeting agendas and runs the meetings, while the actions of the CAB are undertaken by its subcommittees.

— “Creating an Environment for Healthy Lifestyles in Brownsville”



IDENTIFY A MANAGER

Selecting 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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What criteria should the collaboration consider in choosing a manager?

Collaboration partners may have differing expectations of managers and of project management practices. If collaboration partners are able to agree on common criteria to select a manager, partners will be more likely to work with the manager and have confidence in his or her 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; or whether the manager is available during the timespan of the collaboration.

Example:

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. Key government offices, researchers from UC Berkeley, and solar power companies worked collaboratively to create Berkeley FIRST, a program providing homeowners with a cost-effective, long-term financing option to enable them to install solar panels on their houses. Berkeley's Office of Energy and Sustainable Development was the agency primarily responsible for the program. It was chosen as the administrator because it is the agency lead on sustainability efforts related to the Climate Action Plan. It was the link between property owners interested in the solar panel program and contractors who wanted to be considered for installation jobs. It also carried out the evaluation process, in addition to administration.

— "Financing Clean Energy in Berkeley"



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 assist the collaboration in achieving its objectives

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

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

How will the collaboration use a sponsor or champion?

Sponsors, while not usually involved in the day-to-day operations of the collaboration, provide prestige, access to networks, and convening power. They also can mobilize financial and non-financial resources to support the collaboration. Thus, 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 financial and/or non-financial resources that the collaboration does not possess internally. *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. Thus, the collaboration may enlist a champion to provide expertise that is beyond the capacity of internal stakeholders, 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.

Example:

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. The Project knew that without a powerful supporter, the report would be largely ignored. 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 to create GRYD and draw the public's attention to the city's new strategy for addressing gang violence.

— Reducing Gang Violence and Providing Youth Development in Los Angeles



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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

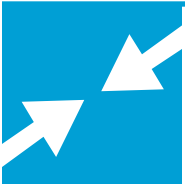
How will the collaboration encourage patience?

Collaborations often take longer than expected because partners are obliged to 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, thereby easing potential pressure from partners' stakeholders.

Example:

Located within minutes of downtown Houston, Buffalo Bayou Park is a 160-acre, 2.3-mile long public space that has been subjected to years of neglect. In 2010, the Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) received a \$30 million grant from the Kinder Foundation, which served as a fundraising catalyst for the park's revitalization. In redeveloping the park: BBP's Organizational and Strategic Plan Committee monitors the organization's five-year plan to ensure goals are met in a timely fashion. The Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) initiated its own plan for the bayou channel's restoration in order to control erosion and reinforce bank stability. The two parties have worked in tandem.

— "Revitalizing Buffalo Bayou Park in Houston"



COMMUNICATE THE INTERDEPENDENCY OF EACH SECTOR

The development of an understanding among partners of each sector's unique contributions, and the recognition of their differing expertise, resources, and networks

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

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What expertise, resources, and networks are unique to each partner?

Partners will possess differing expertise, resources, and networks related to the issue at hand. A business sector partner 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 commit to the collaboration. If the collaboration fails to establish this understanding among partners, partners may withdraw from the process when compromise is required, viewing the issue at hand as solvable without the involvement of other sectors.

Example:

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. This cross-sector partnership required that each sector have a clear understanding of how their participation was necessary to achieve the desired results. Great Bay Community College made it clear to the companies that they needed to be a part of the entire design and planning process. The companies' participation was necessary to learn about the educational opportunities the partnership could offer and to convey to students the benefit of attending the new program. The role of the businesses was not just confined to funding the construction of the Center; they also were active in discussions about logistics and provided technical expertise to assist in the creation of the curriculum. 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 its training. Additionally, DRED helps to advocate for the needs of the companies to the state government.

— "Creating a Technical Training Program in New Hampshire"



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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

How can the collaboration encourage partners to follow through on commitments?

Intersector collaborations oftentimes require partners to work in contexts that differ from their day-to-day operations, which can make it more challenging for them to provide services, expertise, and resources. However, follow-through from partners is key since it leads to others becoming more confident in the collaboration. If partners are unable to fulfill commitments, confidence and commitment may wane, and the collaboration may stall or fail entirely. The collaboration can encourage partners to fulfill their commitments through various accountability mechanisms, including: identifying clear expectations from each partner and establishing timelines for these expectations, ensuring all partners understand and mutually agree to these expectations and timelines (perhaps through a partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding), and consistently communicating the fulfillment of commitments among partners.

Example:

In 2012, California's Marine Life Protection Act created 52 unique protected areas along the Pacific coast where fishing is either prohibited or severely restricted – a source of disagreement in the Crystal Cove area between environmentalists who supported it and fishermen who believed it threatened their livelihoods. Crystal Cove Alliance (CCA), a non-profit organization whose mission includes conservation in the Crystal Cove State Marine Conservation Area, envisioned a cross-sector partnership that would further conservation efforts and provide fishermen with new opportunities for sustainably keeping boats on the water with non-consumptive educational K-12 field trips. Rather than fixating on past grudges between participants: CCA took on the responsibility of marketing to schools, developing lesson plans, recruiting scientists, and serving as project manager. CCA also trained the crews of each boat so that they could act as teaching assistants for the school groups on board. The crews of the boats now play an active role in the educational and scientific programs of the cruises. The fishermen at Newport Landing Sportfishing have the boats, the crews, and the experience on the water to operate the cruises with successful educational and conservation outcomes. In addition, as both a cost-saving and a teaching effectiveness enhancement measure, CCA involved teachers as stakeholders in “teacher learning communities,” resulting in another group of collaborative participants while helping educators meet required science-content standards.

— “Building Commercial and Environmental Partnerships in Crystal Cove”



DEFINE THE INTENT OF THE EVALUATION

A discussion among collaboration partners to arrive at a clear understanding of the purpose of an evaluation

WHY IT MATTERS: Facilitating consensus among partners as to the purpose of the evaluation acknowledges that partners may have differing goals for the evaluative process and enables the evaluation to provide insights mutually agreed to be relevant.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What are partners' 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 sector-specific constituencies; others may propose evaluating both process and outcomes in order to adjust collaboration strategy (assuming the collaboration is ongoing rather than project-specific). It is only through reconciling these and other potential differing perspectives that the collaboration can arrive at a common understanding of the purpose of its evaluation and proceed appropriately. A lack of clarity on the purpose of the evaluation creates confusion as to what information should be collected, how it should be assessed, and ultimately limits the collaboration's ability to undertake an evaluative process.

Example:

In Portland, Oregon the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability wanted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the city while bettering the economic and social development of local residents and businesses. Collaborators came together to create Clean Energy Works Portland (CEWP), an innovative program that used a revolving loan to finance environmentally-friendly energy retrofits, working with local contractors to create high-quality jobs, which resulted in a reduction in energy consumption of 20 percent or more in most participating homes. Mayor Sam Adams appointed an additional CEWP committee, the Stakeholder Evaluation and Implementation Committee, whose members were nominated by Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) stakeholders. The committee was established to help set standards and evaluate progress toward community benefits, to create strategies for non-compliance, to evaluate program participation rates of women and minorities, and to identify ongoing resources needed to move the collaboration forward. Representing a mix of stakeholders involved in the CWA process, the committee's goal was to include at least 50 percent of participants from historically disadvantaged or underrepresented populations.

— "Retrofitting Homes for Energy Efficiency in Portland"



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.

Questions to Guide Tool Use:

What story will the collaboration tell and to whom?

If the collaboration conducts a process-oriented evaluation, the collaboration 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 convey the information collected in a way that will be understood by those both internal to and outside of the collaboration. If “the story” is not accessible across sectors, the value of the collaboration's efforts can be lost, discouraging partners from engaging in future collaborative initiatives. When collaboration partners openly and accurately share their experiences among each other and with external parties, all can learn from successes and challenges experienced by the collaboration, which may influence interest in and effectiveness of future intersector efforts.

Example:

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. SBCTC personnel have conducted outreach for the I-BEST program as well: in 2009, members from SBCTC spoke in Washington D.C. 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).

— “Strengthening Basic Skills Education in Washington State”



III. THE STAGES OF INTERSECTOR COLLABORATION

I. DIAGNOSIS: How can intersector collaboration help to solve my problem?

There is no litmus test to determine whether an intersector approach is an appropriate solution. 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 a collaborative approach requires from the other sectors. Effective intersector solutions emphasize the unique contributions of partners toward achieving their common goal.

II. DESIGN: How can each intersector partner contribute to the process?

Each partners should bring a contextual knowledge of the issue, as well as an understanding of the motivations, prejudices, and abilities of each sector. It is necessary to ensure that each partner knows why the collaboration requires the participation of their own and the other sectors and what each sector hopes to gain from the collaboration. When leaders understand the motivations and expertise of each sector involved, it enables them to anticipate what each organization can contribute to the effort.

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

There should be a clear definition of the responsibilities of the partners and an appropriate use of each sector's abilities and resources during the implementation of an intersector collaboration. Ambiguous authority in decision making can delay action and stall progress. Imprecise responsibility can cause confusion and lead to the misuse of resources and skills. Respecting the expertise of each sector creates motivation to sustain process, and recognizing and valuing the proficiency of a sector encourages everyone to participate to the best of their ability.

Implementing an intersector collaboration is a challenging process. It is important that each partners honor their commitments and fulfill their responsibilities to the collaboration. Therefore, establishing clear, achievable interim goals demonstrates to all participants that progress is possible. Celebrating even small successes can promote the vitality of this process.

IV. ASSESSMENT: What were the outcomes of my intersector collaboration?

Ongoing evaluation can help partners answer questions about success and setbacks, and point to possible modifications for the collaboration moving forward. While considering initial goals, it is critical for all parties to recognize the importance of measuring the results of their collaborative efforts to guide the evaluation process.

IV. ELEMENTS OF INTERSECTOR COLLABORATION

In the early stages of an intersector collaboration, making certain distinctions will help frame the structure of the collaborative process. These decisions will also guide the types of assessments and considerations that must be made.

I. GOAL

Identify the problem that collaboration partners wish to solve. Problems, although specific, often fall under larger issue areas:

Community Revitalization

- Economic opportunity
- Housing
- Arts, culture, and leisure

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure production
- Safety
- Efficiency and access

Health and Wellbeing

- Illness prevention
- Treatment and intervention
- Emergency preparedness

Environmental Conservation

- Environmental contamination
- Renewal
- Saving resources

Education

- Foundational education
- Quality and achievement
- Workforce training

2. SCOPE

Establish the targeted area that the collaboration's output will impact.

Types of scope include:

- Municipal
- Regional
- National
- Global

3. SIZE

Determine the number of organizations involved in the intersector collaboration.

Options include:

- Involving one partner from each sector: government, business and non-profit
- Involving multiple partners from each sector

4. COMMITTED RESOURCES

Understand each partner's specific, unique contribution to supporting the collaboration's outputs and goals. Types of committed resources include:

- Funding
- Staff
- Space
- Goods
- Expertise and guidance in issue or output
- Professional support services

5. TYPE OF OUTPUT

Identify the tangible results of the partnership. Outputs are generally linked to the outcomes and goals of the collaboration. Types of outputs include:

- Legislative
- Product
- Service
- Program
- Report
- Physical structure

6. LENGTH OF TIME

Determine the expected timeframe for delivering outputs of the collaboration, encompassing the time needed for implementing a project. Types of collaboration time length:

- Short-term (fixed end date)
- Long-term (fixed end date)
- Ongoing (with periodic review)
- Existing until initial resources are exhausted (non-fixed end date)

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Determine whether there are aspects of a collaboration that require an agreement to be made before the onset of the collaboration to protect all parties involved and reduce risk. Types of legal considerations to be made are:

- Confidentiality agreements: Establishes what shared information must be kept only among partners and cannot be used externally.
- Rights to proprietary information: Makes clear rules as to how trademarked products or technology are used for the purposes of the collaboration.

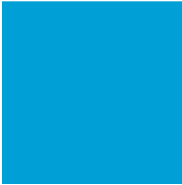
8. DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOL

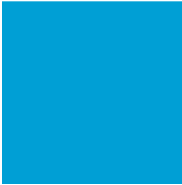
Identify the process by which decisions are made. Types of protocol include:

- Hierarchical decision making: One member or group holds power over the final decision for the entire collaboration.
- Majority voting: Each member receives a vote and the majority decision determines process.
- Group consensus: All members agree on decisions.
- Mediator: An individual brokers the decision making for the collaboration.

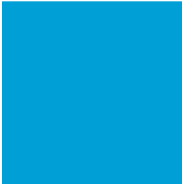
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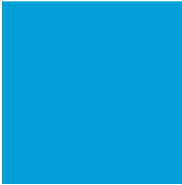
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