Developing the Ingredients Necessary for Successful Cross-Sector Collaboration: Where Research Meets Practice

2013 Active Living Conference

Presenters
Paul W. Mattessich, PhD
Ela J. Rausch, MPP*

*The views expressed here are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis or the Federal Reserve System.
Workshop
introductions and overview

- Introductions
- Twenty key ingredients that influence success
- Top 8 factors for successful cross-sector collaboration
- Case examples
- Hands-on exercise
- Collaboration Factors Inventory online
Twenty ingredients that influence success

**Environment**
- History of collaboration
- Seen as legitimate community leader
- Favorable political and social climate

**Membership Characteristics**
- Mutual respect, understanding, & trust
- Appropriate cross-section of members
- Members see collaboration in their self-interest
- Ability to compromise

**Communication**
- Open & frequent communication
- Established informal relationships & communication links

**Process & Structure**
- Members share a stake in both process & outcome
- Multiple layers of participation
- Flexibility
- Development of clear roles & policy guidelines
- Adaptability
- Appropriate pace of development

**Purpose**
- Concrete, attainable goals & objectives
- Shared vision
- Unique purpose

**Resources**
- Sufficient funds, staff, materials, & time
- Skilled leadership
Twenty ingredients that influence success

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Environment

#1 A history of collaboration or cooperation in the community

Why is this important?

- Offers an understanding of roles and expectations, enables trust.

Implications for planning

- Goals for collaboration should be set with current level of understanding and acceptance.

- No history — potential partners should be educated about process and potential benefits. “Create history” gradually.

- History of competitiveness — more time may be needed to build trust and other factors required for success.
Membership characteristics

#2 Mutual respect, understanding, and trust

Why is this important?

- Members must share an understanding of how each other operates in order to provide a foundation for communication.

Implications for planning

- Energy should be devoted up front toward understanding each others’ assets, norms, and limitations.
- Members must present their agendas openly and honestly.
- Building trust and understanding takes time.
# Membership characteristics

#3 Members see collaboration as in their own self-interest

Why is this important?

- To sustain involvement, members must believe that the benefits gained from participation will offset costs such as loss of autonomy and turf.

Implications for planning

- It should be very clear up front what members stand to gain from the collaboration.

- Incentives to get involved and stay involved should be built into the effort—should monitor and adjust as needed.
Process and structure
#4 Multiple layers of participation

Why is this important?

- To receive necessary internal buy-in and support, every level of staff (including senior management) within each organization needs to have at least some ongoing involvement in the collaborative initiative.

Implications for planning

- Systems should be developed to link in necessary staff from each organization from the outset.

- It is important for talented, key people – at each level of each partnering organization – to be assigned work on the collaborative project and that they have a genuine interest in its success.
Why is this important?

- To garner and sustain participation, members must clearly understand their roles, rights, and responsibilities, and how to fulfill them.

Implications for planning

- Members need to reach agreement and communicate expectations to all relevant parties—letters of agreement can be helpful.

- Roles should not be so rigid that they inhibit flexibility.

- Member organizations should address competing demands up front.
Process and structure

#6 Appropriate pace of development

Why is this important?

- To be sustainable, any changes in the structure, resources, or activities of the collaborative cannot overwhelm its capacity.

Implications for planning

- The number of members should not exceed what the collaboration requires or can support — additions and exits over time may be necessary.

- Attainment of small, short-term goals early on can help cement commitment.

- Sufficient time and funding may be especially important during certain phases — plan accordingly.
Why is this important?

- To maintain active participation and cohesion, collaborative members should interact regularly, providing frequent updates and opportunities for discussion.

Implications for planning

- At the beginning of a collaborative effort, members should set up a system for communication and identify expectations for communication.

- Selective distribution of oral and written communication should be avoided.

- A staff function for communication may be necessary.
Why is this important?

- To be able to work persistently toward common goals, collaborative members must have the same vision with an agreed upon mission, objectives, and strategy.

Implications for planning

- This shared vision should be developed either when the collaborative is first being planned or soon after it begins to function.
- Members should be active in the vision-building process—outside consultation can be helpful for establishing a common vision.
- Imbalances of power among members must be addressed openly.
Case example #1
Local Partnership for Healthy Kids- New Jersey

Background

- Five local collaboratives aimed at preventing childhood obesity
- Used Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory to identify strengths and weaknesses

New Jersey Healthy Kids Partnership Participants

- Nonprofit service: 21
- Education: 13
- Health & Public health: 7
- Local government: 5
- Business: 2
- Other: 7
Case example #1
Local Partnership for Healthy Kids - New Jersey

Interpreting assessment results

Figure 4: Factors Related to Process and Structure

The Wilder Inventory score

Share stake | Layers of participation | Flexibility | Roles | Adaptability | Pace
---|---|---|---|---|---
3.37 | 3.57 | 3.93 | 4.16 | 4.31 | 4.22
4.30 | 4.38 | 4.62 | 4.61 | 4.36 | 4.16
3.71 | 3.45 | 4.06 | 4.09 | 4.00 | 3.94
Conclusion

- Assessment indicated that partnerships were strong and moving in the right direction

Follow-up & next steps

- Organized efforts to address borderline items

- Currently moving from “strategic design” to action - forming additional formal and informal networks to pursue their goals
Case example #2
Collaboration to Build Healthier Communities - National Survey

Background

- Joint effort by Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Wilder Research and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- To better understand collaborative efforts between community development and health organizations working to improve overall community health

- Study findings will be presented to RWJF 2013 Commission to Build A Healthier America (June 2013)
## Case example #2
Collaboration to Build Healthier Communities - National Survey

Factors contributing to successful cross-sector collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Preliminary Survey Results February 2013</em></th>
<th>Very important factor</th>
<th>Moderately important factor</th>
<th>Not an important factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled leadership</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect, understanding and trust</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision and common goals</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate funding and resources</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to be innovative</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-established relationships and communication links</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of collaboration in the community</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an existing model or best practice to follow</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another factor</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case example #2
Collaboration to Build Healthier Communities - National Survey

Collaboration + Active Living initiatives

- Fitworth Healthy City Initiative (Fort Worth, TX)
- DotWell for a Healthy Neighborhood (Boston, MA)

Cross-sector collaboration among those engaged in increasing physical activity and active living (past 12 months)

*Preliminary survey results February 2013
Case example #3
Las Vegas Healthy Communities Coalition - Nevada

Background

- Local collaborative aimed at addressing social determinants of health
- Used Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory to focus discussion on next steps

Las Vegas Healthy Communities Coalition Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; human services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; workforce</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Case example #3
Las Vegas Healthy Communities Coalition - Nevada

#### Average scores for 20 success factors

**Average scores for each of the 20 factors:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Factor Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of collaboration or cooperation in the community</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable political and social climate</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect, understanding, and trust</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate cross section of members</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members see collaboration as in their self-interest</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to compromise</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members share a stake in both process and outcome</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple layers of decision-making</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of clear roles and policy guidelines</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate pace of development</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.8</td>
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</tr>
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Conclusion

- Assessment indicates that the collaborative has a few strengths, but several areas needing improvement

Follow up & next steps

- What actions would YOU recommend?
- We will reveal the coalition’s actual next steps during our large group discussion
Wilder collaboration factors inventory
FREE tool available online

Online version http://wilderresearch.org/tools/cfi/index.php
Contact information
for Workshop Presenters

Paul Mattessich, PhD Executive Director
Wilder Research
Email: paul.mattessich@wilder.org
Web: wilderresearch.org
Twitter: @MattessichPaul

Ela Rausch, MPP Project Manager
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
Email: Ela.Rausch@mpls.frb.org
Web: minneapolisfed.org
Twitter: @elarausch
Do You Have the Ingredients Required for Successful Cross-Sector Collaboration?

Think about a collaborative initiative in which you currently participate (or one that you would like to develop in your community).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Factor</th>
<th>Rating (Circle one)</th>
<th>What specific steps could you take to improve in this area? (OR: If as good as it can be, how could you leverage this strength?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A history of collaboration or cooperation in the community</td>
<td></td>
<td>Great!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Currently missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mutual respect, understanding, and trust</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8. Shared vision</td>
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Below are the assessment results for the Las Vegas Healthy Communities Coalition.

1. Given the results, how would you say this collaboration is performing? What issues stand out for you most?

2. What actions would you recommend for strengthening this collaborative?

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Comments from collaboration members who completed the assessment:

**What is working well in your collaborative?**

*Communication is really good!*

*Resolve to make it work.*

*Strong steering group. Fundamentals in place.*

*The majority of members in the group are truly committed and will put time and available resources toward the success of the project.*

*The majority of the people involved are committed to a collaborative approach to solving problems.*

*The group has great leadership making sure we continue to make progress toward our goals.*

*There is passion for the work.*

*There are some really strong, good people on the collaborative that work well together, have a strong sense of the mission, and are dedicated to seeing it through.*

*Vision and personal commitment.*

**What needs improvement in your collaborative?**

*A stronger, clearer structure and strong leadership. We also need to remove members who are not support of the overall mission and goals and who constantly present a negative attitude.*

*Finish the planning.*

*More engagement with the consultant.*

*Resourcing and staffing the collaboration.*

*Need major CEO’s involvement.*

*Need to hire a full-time person to organize the effort.*

*On-going communication amongst one another and direct reports to higher level leadership for each organization.*

*One member needs to either get on board, or decide to get off the bus. There is communication outside the group that the project is “going nowhere.” When one influential member does that it tears the group apart and can impact its success.*

*We need additional funding and dedicated full-time staff to move the work forward.*