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COLLABORATION FOR A CHANGE (revised April 2004)

Definitions, Decision-making models, Roles, and Collaboration Process Guide

By Arthur T. Himmelman

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COLLABORATION DEFINED: A Developmental Continuum of Change Strategies

Public, private, and nonprofit institutions and organizations often work together in a coalition (an organization of organizations working together for a common purpose) with communities, neighborhoods, and constituencies. In this paper, coalition is the term used for a multi-organizational process that is also called a partnership or a collaborative (state-of-the-art resources on coalition building are available at www.tomwolff.com). Usually, coalition strategies for working together are described as networking, coordinating, cooperating, or collaborating, although the use of these terms is often confusing. This paper suggests definitions of these four strategies used by coalitions to help clarify the most appropriate use of each in particular settings. Although the examples that follow the definitions are based in health care, the four strategies are utilized in addressing a wide variety of issues.

Collaborating is defined here in relationship to three other strategies for working together: networking, coordinating, and cooperating that build upon each other along a developmental continuum. It is important to emphasize that each of the four strategies can be appropriate for particular circumstances depending on the degree to which the three most common barriers to working together -- time, trust, and turf -- can be overcome. These strategies are most effective when there is a common vision and purpose, meaningful power-sharing, mutual learning, and mutual accountability for results. The definitions of terms are offered to assist decision-making about appropriate working together relationships as well as in assessing organizational readiness to make internal changes that support external multi-organizational relationships.

(1) **NETWORKING** is defined as exchanging information for mutual benefit.

Networking is the most informal of the inter-organizational linkages and often reflects an initial level of trust, limited time availability, and a reluctance to share turf.

Example: A public health department and neighborhood health center exchange information about how they each support healthy early child development.

(2) **COORDINATING** is defined as exchanging information and altering activities for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.

Coordinating requires more organizational involvement than networking and is a very crucial change strategy. Coordinated services are "user-friendly" and eliminate or reduce barriers for those seeking access to them. Compared to networking, coordinating involves more time, higher levels of trust yet little or no access to each other's turf.

Example: A public health department and neighborhood health center exchange information about how they each support healthy early child development, and decide to alter service schedules so that they can provide their combined support in a more user-friendly manner.

(3) **COOPERATING** is defined as exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing resources for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.

Cooperating requires greater organizational commitments than networking or coordinating and, in some cases, may involve written (perhaps, even legal) agreements. Shared resources can encompass a variety of human, financial, and technical contributions, including knowledge, staffing, physical property, access to people, money, and others. Cooperating can require a substantial amount of time, high levels of trust, and significant access to each other's turf.

Example: A public health department and a neighborhood health center exchange information about how they each support healthy early child development, decide to alter service schedules, and agree to share neighborhood outreach resources to increase the effectiveness of their support.

(4) **COLLABORATING** is defined as exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.

The qualitative difference between collaborating and cooperating in this definition is the willingness of organizations (or individuals) to enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose. In this definition, collaborating is a relationship in which each organization wants to help its partners become the best that they can be at what they do. This definition also assumes that when organizations collaborate they share risks, responsibilities, and rewards, each of which contributes to enhancing each other's capacity to achieve a common purpose. Collaborating is usually characterized by substantial time commitments, very high levels of trust, and extensive areas of common turf. A summary definition of organizational collaboration is a process in which organizations exchange information, alter activities, share resources, and enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities, and rewards.

Example: A public health department and a neighborhood health center exchange information about how they each support healthy early child development, decide to alter service schedules, share neighborhood outreach resources, and provide skill development training for each other's staff to enhance each other's capacity to support healthy early child development.

A matrix on the following page provides a summary of these four working together strategies.

Matrix of Coalition Strategies for Working Together

Definition	Networking	Coordinating	Cooperating	Collaborating
	Exchanging information for mutual benefit	Exchanging information for mutual benefit, and altering activities to achieve a common purpose	Exchanging information for mutual benefit, and altering activities and sharing resources to achieve a common purpose	Exchanging information for mutual benefit, and altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing the capacity of another to achieve a common purpose
Relationship	Informal	Formal	Formal	Formal
Characteristics	Minimal time commitments, limited levels of trust, and no necessity to share turf ; information exchange is the primary focus	Moderate time commitments, moderate levels of trust, and no necessity to share turf; making access to services or resources more user-friendly is the primary focus	Substantial time commitments, high levels of trust, and significant access to each other's turf; sharing of resources to achieve a common purpose is the primary focus	Extensive time commitments, very high levels of trust and extensive areas of common turf; enhancing each other's capacity to achieve a common purpose is the primary focus
Resources	No mutual sharing of resources necessary	No or minimal mutual sharing of resources necessary	Moderate to extensive mutual sharing of resources and some sharing of risks, responsibilities, and rewards	Full sharing of resources, and full sharing of risks, responsibilities, and rewards

In reviewing this chart, please keep in mind that these definitions are developmental and, therefore, when moving to the next strategy, the previous strategy is included within it. None is “better” than another is; rather, each may be more or less appropriate.

COLLABORATIVE BETTERMENT AND COLLABORATIVE EMPOWERMENT

The power to make decisions and the ownership of any social change process are among its most important characteristics. Both are often fundamental indicators of whether collaborative initiatives will have sustainable benefits. Decision-making power and ownership are also a reflection of a community's capacity for self-determination and can be enhanced or limited depending upon how collaboration is designed, implemented, and evaluated. In this paper, power relations in collaboration are described in two basic forms: "collaborative betterment" and "collaborative empowerment." Each form has particular effects on community ownership, self-determination, and the long-term sustainability of the coalition's efforts.

COLLABORATIVE BETTERMENT: Definition and Key Principles

Collaborative betterment begins within public, private, or nonprofit institutions outside the community and is brought into the community. Community involvement is invited into a process designed and controlled by larger institutions. This collaborative strategy can produce policy changes and improvements in program delivery and services, but tends not to produce long-term ownership in communities or to significantly increase communities' control over their own destinies.

Most coalitions can be classified as betterment processes. In this way, their processes are similar to those used by large institutions to deliver most human and educational services and community programs. The collaborative betterment model includes a number of key principles.

- Large and influential institutions initiate problem identification and analysis, primarily within institutional language, frameworks, assumptions, and value systems.
- Governance and administration are controlled by institutions, although limited community representation is encouraged in advisory roles. Frequently, groups within the coalition are

intentionally separated to give decision-making roles to those considered in the community's "leadership" and implementation roles to those providing or receiving services.

- Staff is responsible to institutions and, although they seek advice from target communities, staff is not directly accountable to them.
- Action plans are usually designed with some direct community involvement but normally emphasize the ideas of institutionally related professionals and experts.
- Implementation processes include more community representation and require significant community acceptance, but control of decision-making and resource allocation is not transferred to the community during the implementation phase.
- Although advice from the community is considered, the decision to terminate the coalition is made by the institutions that initiated it.

COLLABORATIVE EMPOWERMENT: Definition and Key Principles

In this paper, empowerment is defined as "the capacity to set priorities and control resources that are essential for increasing community self-determination." Collaborative empowerment begins within the community and is brought to public, private, or nonprofit institutions. An empowerment strategy includes two basic activities: (1) organizing a community in support of a collaborative purpose determined by the community; and (2) facilitating a process for integrating outside institutions in support of this community purpose. The empowerment approach can produce policy changes and improvements in program delivery and services. It is also more likely to produce long-term ownership of the coalition's purpose, processes, and products in communities and to enhance communities' capacity for self-determination.

The collaborative empowerment process is initiated by community-based organizations and is assisted by community organizing; early discussions include dialogues about beliefs, motivations and what people want to accomplish as the basis for a community change vision.

- Challenges to be addressed by the community are identified by including both data-based trend analysis and narrative examples from community residents. The latter is given equal credibility in considering options for setting priorities.
- Community priorities are focused in the mission statement of the coalition. Community-based organizations select representatives who strategically invite partners from public, private, and nonprofit institutions outside the community based on the mission statement for the coalition created by the community.
- Negotiations with outside agencies and institutions produce agreements to proceed on a collaborative basis based on the coalition's mission established by the community, and within a governance and administrative process in which power is equally shared by the community and outside organizations.
- The governance and administrative structure includes a steering committee that can serve as an advocate for policy change processes and support coalition operations, action groups for each goal that implement action plans, all supported by staff accountable to coalition partners.
- Substantial attention is given to balancing administration/management continuity with openness to easily accessible community participation. Emphasis is placed on the recruitment and capacity building of all members; ongoing community organizing is a central characteristic.

- Contributions are sought based on broad definitions of capacities, assets, and resources. Non-financial, e.g., providing access to communities based on personal credibility, and financial contributions are equally valued. Goals are implemented through action plans supported by community residents and by representatives from institutions from outside the community.
- Commitments to ongoing assessment and evaluation in user-friendly formats community-based organizations with opportunities for monitoring the progress of the coalition, both in its processes and products (outcomes).
- Community control of resources needed to continue priority efforts beyond the termination of the coalition is agreed upon and implemented.

In practice, betterment and empowerment processes exist along a continuum on which they can be seen as approaching or moving away from the characteristics ascribed to them here. Therefore, the processes described above are best used not as mutually exclusive descriptions, but as guides to the consequences of particular methods of collaboration.

TRANSFORMING BETTERMENT INTO EMPOWERMENT

When attempting to transform a betterment coalition into an empowerment coalition, it is helpful to discuss the relationship of the purposes and power relations in social service (broadly defined) to those in social justice. This is because empowering communities and neighborhoods with the assistance of larger public, private, and nonprofit institutions is not simply a matter of using particular organizational or management techniques. It is a transformation that must encourage and respect a diversity of values and perspectives, strongly promote shared power and mutual learning, as well as accept mutual accountability for results in addressing common purposes. Indeed, when moving from betterment to empowerment, both large institutions and community organizations often find them challenged to change their beliefs and practices.

The transformation of betterment processes into empowerment processes is often quite complicated. This is because institutions transforming a betterment process usually cannot easily secure the confidence and trust of those whom they initially excluded. In addition to overcoming mistrust, the institutions seeking to move toward sharing with community-based organizations also need to redesign their own plans and practices with the meaningful participation of community-based organizations.

ROLES IN THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The following are some common roles played by organizations in collaborative processes. These roles are not mutually exclusive; one often leads to or is integrated into another. All the roles can be played to some extent by any organization engaging in collaborative efforts, although several of them are most often played by larger governmental, philanthropic, or nonprofit institutions. It can be useful to think about these as organizational options when engaging in collaborative processes and, to the degree possible, assess coalitions to determine if some of these roles need to be further developed by particular or all partners to better ensure the overall success of your efforts.

Convener

Organizations often play the role of community convener on significant issues that may, or may not, result in further community action. The convening role usually includes a highly visible public discussion of community issues. These discussions are often related to data gathering or studies which provide information intended to highlight a common understanding of the issues at hand. Such discussions are important prerequisites for collaborative community problem-solving.

Catalyst

Organizations may use the convening role to stimulate discussion with a longer-term strategy in mind. When an organization is catalytic, it makes an early and clear commitment to participate in longer-term community problem-solving that begins with initial discussions of issues. In this way, it uses its influence and resource base to make the collaborative initiative "real" in the minds of various other potential partners who may be waiting for leadership before making commitments to an action agenda.

Conduit

Organizations may serve as conduits for funding that is essential for collaborative action. For example, many federal grants require a particular organization to be the lead agency in providing grants for local collaborative initiatives. A similar situation occurs when foundations make grants with the condition that an agency be a lead partner. This role can be problematic, however, if the conduit dominates a collaborative process through its fiscal role. This can result in conflicts about power and trust that must be addressed and resolved by all partners.

Funder

Although common, the role of public and private sector funder of collaboration is one that challenges traditional practices. Many grantees find that funders - public and private - fail to fully understand how much more collaboration requires than a proposal with letters of endorsement. Usually, it takes considerable time for organizations to create a well-designed, mutually respectful and trusting coalition. Some funders do not understand the need for the time required for these characteristics to emerge and, as a result, expect substantial results before the coalition has fully formed. Funder expectations need to be balanced between the processes and the products of collaborative efforts and must be appropriate for particular circumstances.

Advocate

Some partners view their primary role as advocacy, either for individuals or groups that are the primary focus of the coalition's activities and/or for policy and systems change proposals that emerge from the coalition. Other partners in a collaborative may view partners that play this role with concern and, therefore, it is helpful to develop frameworks and internal processes within which advocacy efforts can emerge with support from as many partners as possible. In general, it can be argued that all coalitions seeking systems change would have to have commitments from some, if not most, of its partners to play an advocacy role. Without such advocacy, coalitions tend to be limited to data gathering, public education, and program/service innovation/demonstration change strategies.

Community Organizer

Partners may include community organizing among their contributions to coalitions. In this role, partners have a primary interest in paying attention to who is at the decision-making table and, in particular, how those who are traditionally excluded from decision-making are included as full partners. A community organizing role often includes the ongoing recruitment, welcoming, and sustaining of participation by community-based, neighborhood-based, and constituency-based organizations and individuals.

Technical Assistance Provider

Many organizations have substantial human and technical resources that can be made available in creating and sustaining collaborative efforts. These resources include, among others, data retrieval, new research and information gathering, planning expertise, legal opinions, other specific expertise on a wide variety of subjects, access to information and assistance in preparing funding applications, and lobbying assistance. Organizations do not have to be highly visible partners in collaborative efforts to provide many kinds of technical assistance.

Capacity Builder

Capacity building is a strategy to increase the ability of community, neighborhood, and constituency-based organizations to prioritize issues and secure resources relevant for addressing challenges defined and determined by these organizations. Coalitions committed to capacity building often focus on: (1) acknowledging, clarifying, and "mapping" community assets; (2) valuing the contributions each partner can make; (3) being clear that everyone can play a role in enhancing each other's capacities; (4) inquiring about and, whenever possible, providing specifically requested skill-development opportunities in an appropriate manner and setting; (5) being honest about motivations and being realistic about what can and cannot be provided in what amount of time; (6) facilitating user-friendly access to resources that normally may be restricted to those only with power, status, or money; and (7) sharing the risks of other partners who may find themselves in difficult or challenging circumstances.

In a collaborative empowerment strategy, larger public and private institutions are willing to increase the capacities of communities and neighborhoods in relationship to public or private power structures. Indeed, capacity building strategies proclaim that the primary task of the power structure is to increase power sharing and community ownership rather than to maintain the status quo in power relations.

Partner

This is the most obvious role in a coalition but the way that this role is played greatly affects the quality of the collaborative process and the likely outcomes of its activities. When large institutions play a partner role as part of a betterment strategy, they may find the coalition has made progress on key community issues. However, given the limitations of betterment collaboration for fully sharing the ownership of activities and outcomes with smaller organizations, institutional partners also may find playing a betterment partner role produces primarily shorter-term or limited success among those most affected by common initiatives.

Partners playing an empowering role fully share risks, responsibilities, resources, and rewards in collaborative efforts. They establish mutually respectful, trusting relationships, take the time to understand each other's motivations and hopes for accomplishments, and define and address challenges in a manner that provides opportunities for all partners to share in their solutions.

Facilitator

In this role, an organization helps collaborative community problem-solving initiative work more effectively. This can be difficult when an organization is a key partner because the facilitator role may be perceived as another way of adding greater decision-making authority to the organization's partner role. This challenge often is addressed by having non-partner facilitation agreeable to all partners provided by those trained in such work. When done effectively, facilitation is valued as a source of fairness, encouragement, and as a resource to all partners in a collaborative process.

A GUIDE TO COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES

The following guide is best used as a menu, not a blueprint, and as a tool for thinking about and addressing many issues and activities that are often central to collaborative efforts. The questions and sub-questions are drawn from the experiences of a wide range of coalitions and, therefore, are likely to be relevant for those working together on a variety of issues. It is not necessary to answer the questions in the order that they are provided or answer all or even most of the questions to effectively move forward with particular collaborative efforts. However, in general, coalitions that are in the initial stages of development should consider answering many of the first questions before proceeding with the more complex issues related to the remaining questions in the guide.

Step 1:

(1a) Should your organization participate in a collaborative initiative? (1b) What costs and benefits are involved in this decision? (1c) How well prepared is your organization to be a quality partner in a coalition, including allocating the time and other resources necessary for your organization to fully participate as a contributor to the process?

Step 2:

What is your vision? Before beginning your discussion, interview each other for a few minutes, in teams of two, by asking your partner the following questions and then reversing the interview: (2a) What motivates you to be involved in your collaborative initiative? (2b) What do you most want to accomplish through your involvement?

After the interviews, ask people to volunteer to tell the group the name of the person they interviewed, and what they learned about that person's motivations and about their hoped-for accomplishments. Listen to the reports of these interviews and note significant words and phrases. Using these words and phrases, write initial sentences and paragraphs that begin to reflect the vision of your group based on the interviews. Use this first draft of your vision as the basis for further discussion and refinement.

Step 3:

(3a) Who is currently involved in your coalition? (3b) Are those who will be most affected by your coalition involved at this time? (3c) Who else should be involved? (3d) How will you involve them? (3e) How could community organizing become a central method of ensuring the participation of those traditionally excluded from decision-making?

Step 4:

(4a) What expectations should you have for each other? (4b) What are some basic ground rules you believe should help guide the actions of participating partners?

Step 5:

What is the mission statement of your coalition? A mission statement can be defined as a simple, clear statement of purpose that is also a call to action.

Step 6:

(6a) What are the goals and objectives of your coalition? (6b) If you have not formulated them, please prepare goals related to your mission statement and objectives related to your goals. A goal can be defined as a long-term activity to implement a mission statement and as a measure of progress on achieving a mission statement. An objective can be defined as a short-term activity to implement a goal and as a measure of progress on achieving a goal.

Step 7:

(7a) Who will get the work done? (7b) How can you link specific individuals and organizations to the specific objectives you have identified above to ensure that the objectives will be carried out in a timely manner?

Step 8:

(8a) What do you know about other collaborative efforts that have worked on a similar mission and goals? (8b) What are some key lessons your coalition can learn from these efforts?

Step 9:

What can each partner contribute to the coalition? In making this inventory, please remember that it can include a wide variety of financial and non-financial contributions. For example, a partner who brings credibility with and access to community residents adds something as valuable as any financial contribution.

Step 10:

(10a) How does the coalition identify and encourage new members to participate? (10b) How well are new members informed about the roles, responsibilities, and rewards of participation? (10c) How well do new members reflect the diversity of the communities that the collaborative serves?

Step 11:

(11a) What are some incentives and rewards that can be used to recognize and sustain (11b) partners' contributions to the coalition and (11c) changes they make in their own organization's policies and practices that are consistent with the coalition's vision, mission, and goals?

Step 12: (See also attachment A for notes on structure, organization, and governance)

(12a) How is your coalition governed - who makes decisions and what authority do they have to make them? (12b) How will governing responsibilities be rotated over time? (12c) How will governance reflect and respect the coalition's diversity.

Step 13: (See also attachments B and C for definition and assessment of collaborative leadership)

(13a) How effective is your leadership? (13b) Who is providing leadership for your coalition?
(13c) How adequate is the leadership team? (13d) What might be done to improve it or better support it? (13e) How is new leadership identified and rotated into key positions? (13f) What expectations do you have for the coalition's leadership?

Step 14:

(14a) How is your coalition administered and managed? (14b) Are the arrangements adequate?
(14c) If not, what could you do to improve the administration and management of your coalition?

Step 15:

(15a) How is staff provided for your coalition? (15b) How is the staff accountable to the coalition?
(15c) If staff is being donated by a partner or partners, what, if any, challenges does this arrangement present?

Step 16:

(16a) What barriers or conflicts make progress difficult? (16b) How can such barriers and conflicts be resolved or overcome?

Step 17:

(17a) How does the coalition offer training for its members in areas such as group process, conflict resolution, and cultural diversity and inclusiveness? (17b) How can this training be most helpful in addressing and resolving important issues?

Step 18:

(18a) How will people find out about your activities? (18b) How will you publicize your activities and provide effective community education and information about the work of the coalition? (18c) How well can you inform and engage people, organizations, and communities that represent diverse cultural and ethnic interests or for whom English is not their first language? (18d) Do you communicate well and regularly with grass-roots groups and organizations?

Step 19:

(19a) How much money do you need and how will you secure it in a timely manner? (19b) What kinds of funding sources will be necessary if you are to be successful? (19c) Is there a written financial plan linked to a clear strategy with identified responsibilities for implementing it? (19d) Has the coalition made certain that the organization through which funding flows does not have greater decision-making authority in the coalition simply because of this fiscal management role?

Step 20:

(20a) How will you monitor progress and evaluate the overall success of your coalition? (20b) How can you monitor and evaluate both the products/results and the processes of your coalition? (20c) How can your evaluations be used to make changes in the coalition's processes based on the findings of such evaluations?

Please Note: This paper is based upon Arthur T. Himmelman's "Communities Working Collaboratively for a Change," an edited version of which is in Resolving Conflict: Strategies for Local Government Margaret Herrman, ed. Washington, D.C.: International City/County Management Association, 1994, pp. 27-47.

ATTACHMENT A

NOTES ON COALITION STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, AND GOVERNANCE

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1. A coalition greatly benefits from spending the time necessary to clearly formulate its mission and goals and reaching agreement on them by all stakeholders. Once this is done, a coalition can create Action Groups for each of its goals to formulate, implement and assess action plans that can achieve the coalition's goals.
2. Action Groups are wise to only create action plans for which there are specific people and organizations to carry them out. If this is not the case, is it prudent not to include such action plans/activities in the coalition's overall work plan. Doing so can raise expectations that cannot be met and, thereby, damages trust among partners.
3. It is helpful if all Action Groups in a coalition use the same format for creating action plans. An example of such a format is as follows: (a) what is the issue? (b) what should be done about it? (c) who should be involved in doing it? (d) what resources are needed? (e) when should the activities begin and conclude? (f) how will success be measured?
4. To ensure that Action Groups have necessary facilitation and guidance, it is helpful to have two people serve as co-conveners to call meetings and keep them on task. Meeting notes, other communications and follow-up on specific plans can be done by partners in the coalition or with coalition staff support if it is available.
5. To ensure necessary coordination of and communication about coalition action plans, all conveners of Action Groups should meet on a periodic basis. This group of conveners can also provide a Steering Committee/decision-making group for the coalition, thereby, taking on a governing role as well. Others, as appropriate, can be added to this group of conveners to share in these roles and responsibilities.
6. This form of coalition structure and organization suggests that two kinds of memberships are useful to distinguish: a convening membership and a participating membership. The first allows a smaller group from the coalition to provide ongoing coordination, communications and decision-making while the second encourages active, working participation in activities reflecting a partner's specific interest.
7. These two kinds of coalition membership allow a coalition to benefit from shared decision-making supporting Action Group activities while being open to anyone at any time who wants to join the coalition without making the ongoing governance of the coalition very difficult. A participating membership partner who may want to become a convener/governing member can volunteer for this role as the coalition rotates responsibilities for those who serve in this capacity.

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ATTACHMENT B

WHAT IS COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP?

Facilitating mutual enhancement among those working together for a common purpose
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*SOME COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS **

1. A commitment to improve common circumstances based on values, beliefs, and a vision for change that is communicated both by talking it and walking it.
2. An ability to persuade people to conduct themselves within ground rules that provide the basis for mutual trust, respect, and accountability.
3. An ability to respectfully educate others about the relationship of processes to products/outcomes and organizational structure to effective action.
4. An ability to draw out ideas and information in ways that contributes to effective problem-solving rather than ineffective restatements of problems.
5. A willingness to actively encourage partners to share risks, responsibilities, resources, and rewards and to offer acknowledgments of those making contributions.
6. An ability to balance the need for discussion, information sharing, and story telling with timely problem-solving and keeping focused on responding to action-oriented expectations of those engaged in common efforts.
7. An understanding of the role of community organizing as the basis for developing and expanding collaborative power.
8. A commitment to and active engagement in leadership development activities, both informal and formal, that can take the collaborative process to higher levels of inclusiveness and effectiveness.
9. An ability to communicate in ways that invite comments and suggestions that address problems without attacking people and, when appropriate, draws upon conflict resolution and win-win negotiating to resolve differences.
10. A very good sense of humor, especially whenever collaborative processes get ugly or boring or both.

* This summary can be photocopied and distributed without contacting the author.

ATTACHMENT C
COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

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REVISED NOVEMBER 2002

Please note: The Collaborative Leadership Self-Assessment was called the Partnership Quotient (PQ), thereby, unknowingly violating a copyrighted term and assessment by Stephen M. Dent and his company Partnership Continuum, Inc. For information about the PQ and its assessment instrument, refer to www.partneringintelligence.com.

PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

The Collaborative Leadership Self-Assessment (CLSA) provides a self-assessment of your knowledge and capacity to engage in collaborative leadership as a partner in organizational and community change processes. Your own scoring of your CLSA will allow you to focus upon aspects of collaborative leadership that you believe may need further development or refinement. Two definitions drawn from my work on community and systems change collaboration may be useful to keep in mind as you complete the CLSA assessment:

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Facilitating mutual enhancement among those working for a common purpose

COALITION

An organization of organizations working together for a common purpose

SURVEY FORMAT AND QUESTIONS

Please review the following statements and circle the responses that best reflect your assessment of your knowledge or capacity. After completing the survey, refer to page six to assist you in considering what aspects of collaborative leadership reflect your strengths and which reflect areas in which you might improve your capacity to engage in collaborative leadership.

Scoring

4 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 2 = Somewhat Disagree 1 = Disagree 0 = Not sure

1. I am committed to improving common circumstances based on values, beliefs and a vision for change that I communicate both by "talking it and by walking it."
4 3 2 1 0

2. I am able to conduct myself within ground rules that provide the basis for mutual trust, respect, and accountability in organizational/coalition processes.
4 3 2 1 0

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

Page Two

3. I am able to persuade others to conduct themselves within ground rules that provide the basis for mutual trust, respect, and accountability in organizational/coalition processes.

4 3 2 1 0

4. I am able to design organizational/coalition processes that effectively lead to organizational/coalition products/outcomes.

4 3 2 1 0

5. I am able to educate others about how to design organizational/coalition processes that effectively lead to organizational/coalition products/outcomes.

4 3 2 1 0

6. I am able to design organizational/coalition structures that effectively facilitate organizational/coalition action.

4 3 2 1 0

7. I am able to educate others about how to design organizational/coalition structures that effectively facilitate organizational/coalition action.

4 3 2 1 0

8. I am able to design/create an effective group problem-solving process.

4 3 2 1 0

9. I am able to educate others about how to design/create an effective group problem-solving process.

4 3 2 1 0

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

Page Three

10. I am able to provide ideas and information in ways that allow me to move from problem stating discussions to problem solving processes.

4 3 2 1 0

11. I am able to persuade others to provide ideas and information in ways that help them to move from problem stating discussions to problem solving processes.

4 3 2 1 0

12. I am able to engage in active and respectful listening.

4 3 2 1 0

13. I am able to persuade others to engage in active and respectful listening.

4 3 2 1 0

14. I understand the principles of dialogue and how dialogue differs from debate.

4 3 2 1 0

15. I am able to educate others about the principles of dialogue and how dialogue differs from debate.

4 3 2 1 0

16. I am able to engage in dialogue in organizational/coalition processes.

4 3 2 1 0

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

Page Four

17. I am able to persuade others to engage in dialogue in organizational/coalition processes.

4 3 2 1 0

18. I am able to share risks, responsibilities, resources, and rewards in organizational/coalition change initiatives.

4 3 2 1 0

19. I am able to persuade others to share risks, responsibilities, resources, and rewards in organizational/coalition change initiatives.

4 3 2 1 0

20. I am able to share decision-making and power in organizational/coalition processes.

4 3 2 1 0

21. I am able to persuade others to share decision-making and power in organizational/coalition processes.

4 3 2 1 0

22. I offer acknowledgments of those making contributions to common efforts.

4 3 2 1 0

23. I am able to balance time for dialogue, story telling, and information sharing with timely problem-solving and taking action in organizational/coalition initiatives.

4 3 2 1 0

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

Page Five

24. I have an understanding of the roles of community building and community organizing as a basis for developing and expanding collaborative power sharing.
- 4 3 2 1 0
25. I am able to educate others about the roles of community building and community organizing as a basis for developing and expanding collaborative power sharing
- 4 3 2 1 0
26. I engage in and support leadership development activities, both informal and formal, that can move organizational/coalition processes to higher levels of inclusiveness and effectiveness
- 4 3 2 1 0
27. I am able to persuade others to engage in and support leadership development activities, both informal and formal, that can move organizational/coalition processes to higher levels of inclusiveness and effectiveness
- 4 3 2 1 0
28. I am able to communicate strong differences of opinion in ways that are compatible with resolving differences with others in a productive manner.
- 4 3 2 1 0
29. I am able to persuade others to communicate strong differences of opinion in ways that are compatible with resolving differences with others in a productive manner.
- 4 3 2 1 0
30. I am able to draw on humor, especially when collaborative processes get ugly or boring or both, to help organizations/coalitions move through difficult circumstances.
- 4 3 2 1 0

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

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MAKING USE OF YOUR CLSA RESULTS

- (1) Review your responses to the 30 CLSA questions and note all the questions for which you answered Not Sure (0). These questions should be viewed as opportunities to seek out further clarification, either in a discussion immediately following the CLS exercise, or at a later date.
- (2) Add the total score for all the questions that you did answer. This is your CLSA at this time. You may want to take the CLSA again to see if your score has improved based on what you have learned and practiced.
- (3) Review your CLSA for responses indicating that your knowledge and skills are satisfactory (scores of 3 or 4 are strengths) and those indicating that you could benefit from further knowledge or skills (scores of 1 or 2 are weaknesses). Note your CLSA strengths and weaknesses for discussion with other members of your group, team, or coalition.
- (4) Once each person notes their strengths and weaknesses, each person takes a turn asking others for ideas/suggestions about how they can enhance their knowledge or skill based on particular CLSA questions. For example, if you believe that you could use more information about how to design an effective group problem-solving process (CLSA question 8), you would ask others for ideas/suggestions on that topic.
- (5) After each person has taken a turn, the same process can be repeated.
- (6) After your group, team, or coalition concludes its discussion, it can assess its collective knowledge and skills in collaborative leadership, noting weaknesses, e.g., conflict resolution, that can be addressed by capacity-building opportunities for all members of your group, team, or coalition.

PLEASE NOTE: PERMISSION TO PHOTOCOPY THE CLSA IS GRANTED BY THE AUTHOR FOR NON-COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.