

# Some perspectives on collaboration within the community and voluntary sector

16th Annual Conference

Multi-Organisational Partnerships, Alliances and Networks (MOPAN)  
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# Agenda

- Outline Not for Profit Sector in Ireland.
- Outline the case for collaboration, the Irish NFP's experience, Himmelmans Matrix
- Discuss factors influencing the success of collaboration
- Discuss three projects –
  - Carers Week
  - Joint Conference
  - Joint Research
- Conclusions and Observations

# The Not-For-Profit Sector in Ireland

- Significant contribution of the not-for-profit (NFP) sector in Ireland
- Many umbrella organisations exist – including Care Alliance Ireland
- Government Policy document on the Voluntary Sector (2000)

# Collaboration – the theoretical case for it

- Grey (1989:8) *“a process through which different parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited view of what is possible .”*
- Chris Huxham (1993:603) *“when something unusually creative is produced - perhaps an objective is met - that no single organisation could have produced and when each organisation through the collaboration is able to achieve its own objectives better than it could alone”*

## *Himmelman's Matrix*

<b>Matrix of Strategies for Working Together - Continuum of Change Strategies</b>				
<b>Definition</b>	<b>Networking</b>	<b>Co-ordinating</b>	<b>Co-operating</b>	<b>Collaborating</b>
	<b>Exchanging information for mutual benefit</b>	<b>Networking</b> + <b>Altering activities to achieve a common purpose</b>	<b>Co-ordinating</b> + <b>Sharing resources to achieve a common purpose</b>	<b>Co-operating</b> + <b>Enhancing the capacity of another to achieve a common purpose</b>

(Himmelman, 1994)

# Government Rationale for Umbrella Groups

- *‘Liaising with Government and undertaking a co-ordinating role for the sector is **time consuming** and resources are required for these tasks.’*
- *‘Umbrella bodies develop **internal cohesion** in the sector’*

# Not for Profit – Umbrella Groups

The main kinds of support service offered include:

- Provision of **information and guidance** for member groups
- Provision of **education and training** programmes for volunteers and staff
- Assistance with **organisational /management/ standards development**
- **Specialist assistance** in areas such as recruitment and legal incorporation.

## Collaboration – the Irish NFP experience

- *“.....harnessing the commitment and capacities of different organisations to address common issues and developing effective forms of inter-organisational working has proved difficult.”*  
(Ronayne, 2007,p2)
- *‘...has not moved much beyond the lowest level of Himmelman’s continuum of collaboration*  
*..(Rourke,2007;p10)*



# Collaboration – in the Third Level Sector in Ireland

Light touch regulation of the sector..

- *“has given us mission creep, inflexible staffing structures and practices and it has given us a fragmented system of institutions which to a very great extent stand apart and aloof from each other.”*

Tom Boland, the CEO of the Irish Higher Education Authority,  
as reported by The Irish Times, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2009

*“greater emphasis on collaboration and consolidation”*

# Factors influencing the success of collaboration

- *Organisational Factors*
  - *Environment*
  - *Membership Characteristics*
  - *Process / Structure*
  - *Communication*
  - *Purpose*
  - *Resources*

*(Mattessich and Monsey (1992) and updated in 2004)*

- *Interpersonal Factors*

# Barriers to Effective Collaboration

- Himmelman(1994)
  - Trust
  - Turf
  - Time
- Huxham and Vangen (2004, 2005)
  - **collaborative inertia** – ‘talking shops’

# Care Alliance Ireland

- *Set up 1995, limited voice of Family Carers within NFP*
- *2009 - 70 members.*
- *2008 -funding secured to enable the following projects*
  - 1)Carers Week*
  - 2)Joint Conference*
  - 3)Joint Research Project*



[www.carersweek.ie](http://www.carersweek.ie)

‘BECAUSE WE'RE WORTH IT’

**Carers Week 8th - 14th June, 2009**

# What is Carers Week?

- Began in Ireland 2007 – 15 events
- Objectives –
  - Events – Awareness - Profile
- Outcomes - 2009 –
  - > 95 events
  - 10 National Partner Organisations
  - > 20 NFP organisations
  - >3,000 Family Carers took part.

# Nature of Collaboration

- Steering group
- Formal partnership
- Financial contribution

# Reflection

- Objectives largely met
  - Events
  - Media
- Depth of collaboration?
- Planning crucial
- Buy In (Out) critical
- Organisational calendars



## 2) Joint Conference

- *The Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) [www.nai.ie](http://www.nai.ie),  
Brain Awareness Week,  
'Always on my mind: Caring for a person with a neurological  
condition' (Dublin, March 10<sup>th</sup> 2009)*
- Objectives – NAI – Care Alliance Ireland – fit with  
strategic objectives
- Outcomes – High Attendance – High Quality Programme

# Reflection

- Good communication
- Clear division of tasks
- Budget agreed in advance
- Pre-existing relationship
- Similar size organisations

## 3- Joint Research

- Background - Build on Quantitative research - Family Carers – Reported Health Status(2008), Parkinsons Association
- Objectives – Research Agenda, Inform Policy and Practice,
- Outcomes – Too early to say

# Reflection

- Progressed Family Carer Research
  - Accessing respondents relatively easy
  - Both organisations based in same building
  - Parkinsons link person has moved on
- 
- Win-Win

# Use of Theoretical Models to Review Collaborative Work

- *Organisational Factors*
  - *Environment*
  - *Membership Characteristics*
  - *Purpose*
  - *Process / Structure*
  - *Resources*
  - *Communication*
- *Interpersonal Factors*

# Critical Components of successful Collaboration – Our experience

- Communication
- Patience
- Organisations of similar sizes
- Individual relationship building
- Clarity on objectives, scope, division of tasks is important

# So how do we know that these ventures have delivered collaborative advantage?

- Outputs higher
  - Synergies and financial savings
  - Projects may not have been run at all
- 
- Bright future for productive collaborative ventures.

# 2010-2020 – The Decade of Mergers and Alliances?

- Case for merging of NFP's
- What needs to be done?
  - Shared services
  - Collaboration (towards merging?)



# Thank You

# Questions?

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[www.carealliance.ie](http://www.carealliance.ie) [www.carersweek.ie](http://www.carersweek.ie)



# Appendix i

## Matrix of Factors Influencing the Likely Success of Inter-organisational Working

<b>Environment</b>	Political Support for inter-organisational working.		The presence of a "crisis" (and a perceived need to respond inter-organisationally rather than intra-organisationally).		Public pressure / pressure from service users for "better" / "integrated" services.		Funding environment oriented to inter-organisational working.	
<b>Membership Characteristics</b>	Credibility of organisations to be members / partners.	Extent of mutual understanding, respect and trust between organisations.		Appropriateness of individual members to role / task in terms of seniority and expertise.	Member organisations see collaboration as in their self interest.		Previous experience of inter-organisational working.	Ability to compromise.
<b>Purpose</b>	Inter-organisational work is a response to issues that are seen and agreed to be beyond resolution by individual member organisations acting on their own. A response to "wicked problems".		There is a unique purpose for inter-organisational working (i.e., it differs at least in part from that of each of the member / partner organisations).		Shared vision and common goal.		Clarity in respect of objectives and agreement on achievability of objectives.	
<b>Process / Structure</b>	Members are actual stakeholders in process and outcome – members feel ownership of process.	Clarity and agreement on roles and responsibilities.		Consensus approach to decision-making.	Flexibility in respect of organising activities to achieve objectives.	Collective approach to assessing successes and failures and mutual responsibility for same.		Capacity to adapt to changing conditions.
<b>Communication</b>	Content: the five Cs - clear, complete, concise, concrete, and correct.			Structure: established informal and formal communication channels.		Frequency: regular and consistent.		
<b>Resources</b>	Funding commensurate with actions required to secure goal and objectives.			Timescales appropriate to achieve goals and objectives.		Mutual agreement and appointment of skilled convenor / effective leader.		

# Appendix ii - Organisational and Individual Barriers to

## Effective Inter-organisational Working -

	<b>Organisational</b>
<b>Trust</b>	<p>Lack of inter-organisational trust is a well documented barrier to effective inter-organisational working. There are many definitions of trust though a common feature is reference to vulnerability or risk. Inter-organisational trust arises when an organisation is <b>willing to make itself vulnerable</b> to the actions of another organisation. Effectively, without trust there is no possibility that an organisation will take risks and risk taking is a feature of effective inter-organisational working. Without risk taking organisations behave within their organisational boundaries and stick to tested and respected intra-organisational ways of working.</p>
<b>Turf</b>	<p>Turf barriers typically concern the perception (real or otherwise) of an imbalance in the benefits of collaboration between the collaborating organisations. In practice they can arise when an:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisation perceives another organisation as a <b>competitor for resources</b>;</li> <li>• organisation considers the <b>costs of working with other organisations as greater than the benefits</b> it is likely to receive; and,</li> <li>• organisation perceives another organisation as threatening its <b>raison d'etre / trying to take over its functions</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources: Time, Finance, Human Resources</b>	<p>Time as a barrier to inter-organisational working essentially arises when <b>insufficient time is allowed</b> for establishing an effective inter-organisational process (e.g., developing collaborative relationships) and when the timescales for achieving the objectives of inter-organisational working are too short. Financial and human resources are also common barriers to inter-organisational working. They arise when there is <b>insufficient recognition of the costs of working together</b> and of the specific costs associated with inter-organisational working (e.g., joint investigations, planning and review meetings, collective evaluation etc). It should also be noted that while generating economic efficiencies is often seen as a goal or benefit of inter-organisational working, there are costs arising in supporting the processes that may generate such efficiencies.</p>

# Appendix iii - References

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