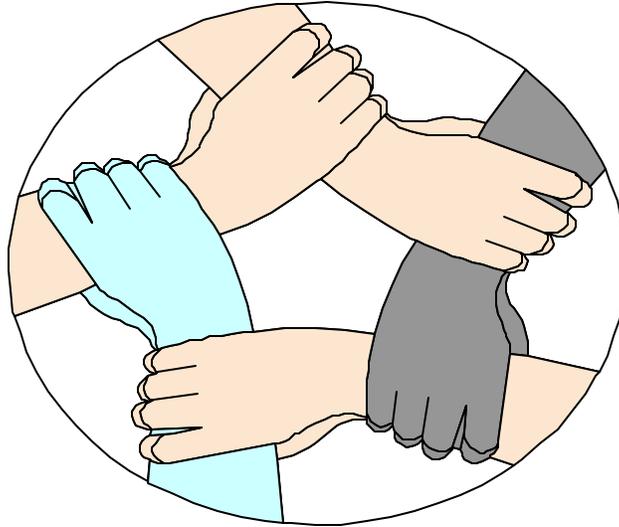


The Collaboration Roundtable

Phase I: *REPORT ON THE FIRST STEP*



Prepared for the Project Ad Hoc Committee:

- *City of Vancouver*
- *Department of Canadian Heritage*
- *The Law Foundation*
- *Nisha Child and Family Services*
- *Community Liaison Division*
- *M.O.S.A.I.C.*
- *Pacific Immigrant Resources Society*
- *Self-Help Resources Association*
- *Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society*
- *Vancouver Foundation*
- *United Way of the Lower Mainland*
- *Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration*

by:

**Kathy Coyne & Eric Kowalski, Vancouver East Community Skills Connection
June 1999**

**Project Funded by the Vancouver Foundation and Ministry Responsible for
Multiculturalism and Immigration, Community Liaison Division**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION	5
2.0 BACKGROUND	6
2.1 Goals and Objectives	7
2.2 Composition of Ad Hoc Committee	7
2.3 Process	8
2.4 Workshop Design	8
3.0 TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING	10
3.1 Collaboration Values	10
3.2 Types of Collaboration	13
3.3 Defining Barriers	14
3.4 Defining Components	16
4.0 WHAT WE DISCOVERED	18
4.1 The Importance of Planning	18
4.2 Management	18
4.3 Communication	19
4.4 Commitment	19
4.5 Risk Management	20
4.6 Evaluation	20
4.7 Reporting	21
5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS	22
6.0 NEXT STEPS	25
7.0 APPENDICES	27
7.1 Project Ad Hoc Committee	27
7.2 Workshop Participants	27
7.3 Partnerships, Sponsorships and Collaboration	30
7.4 Summary of Survey Responses	35
7.5 Workshop Results (Small Groups and Plenary Sessions)	37
7.6 Workshop Evaluations	46
8.0 REFERENCE LIST	49

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community services are increasingly delivered through joint initiatives between community agencies, funders and public institutions such as schools or colleges. There are many, many examples where collaboration, formal or informal, has resulted in enormous benefits to the community.

But community groups and funders have also learned that joint ventures come with their own unique costs. The experience of one collaboration in particular led several of its partner agencies and funders to come together to work on the issues surrounding collaboration itself. The ***Collaboration Roundtable*** is envisioned as a long-term process to develop a 'culture of collaboration' amongst community agencies and funders in the Lower Mainland. The objectives for the first phase of this process were to:

- create an opportunity for community agencies and funders to share knowledge and experience with respect to partnerships, sponsorships and collaborations;
- identify issues to be explored between agencies and funders; and
- collaboratively develop strategies to address these issues.

We identified seven key themes that emerged in the literature, agency surveys, and workshop that together constituted the first phase of the Collaboration Roundtable:

1) The Importance of Planning

It seems that many agencies develop partnerships 'off the corners of their desks'. Very little pre-proposal work is done and the proposal is developed with the assumption that issues will be identified and resolved as they arise.

2) Management

Good management is key to the success of a collaborative arrangement. Commitment to the collaboration must be present at all levels, including the board, management, staff and funding agency/agencies. Clearly defined and credible leadership, agreed to by all the member agencies, must be established in order to keep the relationship running smoothly.

3) Communication

All agencies recognise the centrality of good communication within a collaborative relationship, yet breakdown in communication is perhaps the single most frequently noted problem in collaborative work. Most organizations tend to believe that significant improvements are needed in the way partner organizations communicate with each other and with the people they are serving.

4) Commitment

Getting solid commitment of all members was identified as a key factor in determining the success—or lack of success—of a collaboration. Levels of commitment range from full to 'tokenism'.

5) Risk Management

Because of concerns about personal and agency liability, risk management issues are at the forefront of concerns.

6) Evaluation

Clearly defined goals and desired outcomes must be established before plunging into the collaboration. When credible evaluation can demonstrate that benefits have come both to themselves and to their clients through their participation in a previous joint venture, organizations will be much more likely to continue to engage in and expand their collaborative efforts.

7) Reporting

Engaging in a collaborative effort tends to bring an increase in the time and effort expended to meet both internal and external reporting requirements, for example, when more than one funding body is involved or when two partner organizations have very different methods of maintaining client records.

Recommendations

The following seven recommendations have been made to further the work of the Collaboration Roundtable:

1. It is recommended that specific outreach strategies be developed to involve small, grassroots organizations in the ongoing work of this initiative.
2. It is recommended that ways be found to include community members—the people ultimately being 'served'—in the ongoing process.
3. It is recommended that a workshop series be developed to promote dialogue and consensus on the range of issues impacting collaborative efforts.
4. It is recommended that the possibility of developing a 'collaboration tool kit' be explored.
5. It is recommended that both internal and external assessment models be developed.
6. It is recommended that funders explore the feasibility of establishing an ongoing series of meetings to discuss their particular concerns and responsibilities regarding support for collaborative initiatives.

7. It is recommended that a collaboration roundtable involving representatives of funders and non-profit agencies meet on a scheduled basis to identify and discuss ongoing issues, with an annual workshop to report to all groups on the state of collaboration in the Lower Mainland.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents a summary of what you told us in the first phase of the Collaboration Roundtable.

The Roundtable is envisioned as a long-term process to develop a ‘culture of collaboration’ amongst community agencies and funders in the Lower Mainland. The activities described in this report represent the first steps toward the creation of a comprehensive strategy to build on our strengths and address the issues that inhibit the development of successful collaborations in the non-profit sector. Ultimately, this process will lead to the development of a shared collaboration framework amongst funders and community organizations.

When you review this report, we ask that you consider your organization’s own needs and interests in regard to collaboration, as well as the role you can play in supporting a broader culture of collaboration. Keep in mind that the terms ‘collaboration’ and ‘collaborative initiative’ are used throughout this document as catch-all terms to describe any formal or informal working arrangement between two or more partners. These terms are intended to include partnerships, sponsorships and consortiums.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Over the past ten years, the funding and management environment for non-profit agencies has changed significantly.

In particular, community services are increasingly delivered through joint initiatives between community agencies, funders and public institutions such as schools or colleges. Small agencies may ask a large agency to sponsor them so that they can be eligible for specific programs. A group of agencies may come together as a consortium. An agency with a specific focus may seek a partner with a complementary focus in order to achieve broader goals.

Reasons commonly given for the trend toward increased involvement in collaborative ventures in the non-profit sector include:

- increased efficiency in the use of public resources;
- less competition between agencies;
- increased integration of different groups into broader society;
- an increase in organizational capacity;
- an expansion of the potential funding base for projects; and
- an overall strengthening of the community.

There are many, many examples where collaboration, formal or informal, has resulted in enormous benefits to the community. Key projects that might not fit into any one organization's mandate have been undertaken by two or more groups with a vested interest in different components of the work, and thus brought to completion. Small organizations lacking the capacity to undertake important developmental work have benefited from partnering with other organizations to combine their resources and voices to achieve common goals. Entire sectors (for example, the immigrant-serving community), have joined together to present a strong and consistent message to government and the broader community regarding the unique needs of their clientele. It is no overstatement to say that, in many cases, collaboration has had an enormous positive impact on the way Lower Mainland organizations work and deliver services to their clients.

But community groups have also learned that joint ventures come with their own unique costs. The mechanics of collaboration present challenges that require the use of limited agency resources to address.

The experience of one collaboration in particular led to Lower Mainland community organizations and funders recognizing that there are recurring issues that impair the success of collaborative projects. Several of the agencies and funders involved in that project decided that it was time to come together to work on the issues surrounding collaboration itself. These issues are so profound that they must be addressed in a systemic way.

The group formed an Ad Hoc Committee to explore ways to support funders and community agencies in collaborative initiatives. The committee's aim is not only to promote discussion about the issues, but to recommend a course of action that will ultimately help funders and community agencies to implement collaborative projects in an efficient, effective and responsible way.

This long-term process is referred to as the 'Collaboration Roundtable'.

2.1 Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Collaboration Roundtable is to strengthen the non-profit sector's ability to engage in joint ventures by identifying key issues and then establishing starting points for developing a sector-wide plan to address those issues. The Ad Hoc Committee's objectives for this process are to:

- create an opportunity for community agencies and funders to share knowledge and experience with respect to partnerships, sponsorships and collaborations;
- identify issues to be explored between agencies and funders; and
- collaboratively develop strategies to address these issues.

The terms of reference for the initial stages of this process were established by the Ad Hoc Committee, as contained in Appendix 7.1.

2.2 Composition of Ad Hoc Committee

Experience has shown clearly that the issues that organizations face around collaboration vary with the type of organization. Similarly, funders and community groups need more understanding of each other's interests. In an attempt to capture a broad range of those perspectives, the Ad Hoc Committee guiding this process was in its initial stages was comprised of representatives from:

- large and small community organizations;
- immigrant serving agencies;
- non-immigrant specific groups;
- public sector funders; and
- foundations.

A list of the Ad Hoc Committee members is provided in Appendix 7.2.

2.3 Process

The Ad Hoc Committee wanted to ensure that the outcomes of this initiative were relevant to as broad a cross-section of agencies as possible. Equally important, they recognised that, if the non-profit sector of the Lower Mainland is to adopt any action plan coming out of the initiative, that sector needs to feel real ownership of the process. The committee decided that a best first step toward achieving these two goals would be to bring together a workshop of approximately fifty participants to share accumulated knowledge and expertise.

The Committee was supported by the Vancouver Foundation and the Community Liaison Branch of the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration, with in-kind support from the United Way, the Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, M.O.S.A.I.C. and the Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society. Kathy Coyne and Eric Kowalski (Vancouver East Community Skills Connection Community Consulting Team) were contracted to co-ordinate and facilitate the workshop.

The Consulting Team met with the Ad Hoc Committee on three occasions to develop and review a work-plan to ensure an effective and inclusive workshop. The process included the following activities:

- a review of current reports on collaborative activities (Appendix 7.4);
- development of a survey of agencies to determine interests and concerns to guide the workshop (Appendix 7.5);
- collation of survey results in a summary report (Appendix 7.6);
- the development of the workshop design with the Ad Hoc Committee; and
- the preparation of workshop materials to be mailed to participants in advance.

2.4 Workshop Design

The workshop was designed to ensure a manageable size, while also supporting a range of representation. To achieve this, the Ad Hoc Committee established the following criteria for identifying potential workshop participants:

- the size of the organization ;
- its geographic location;
- the nature of the clients it serves (i.e., primarily immigrant-serving, or non-specific);
- its current level of experience with collaborative efforts; and
- for funders, both their size and impact/influence in the community.

Prior to the workshop, invitees were sent a package that included a pre-workshop survey. A total of 28 agency representatives (out of 45 invitees) and 14 funder representatives (out of 17 invitees) attended the workshop. A list of participants is attached in Appendix 7.3.

This workshop was very much a first stage of what will be an ongoing process. Membership in the Ad Hoc Committee remains open, and efforts will be made to broaden the representation on the Committee as the work proceeds into subsequent phases.

3.0 TOWARD A COMMON UNDERSTANDING

3.1 Collaboration Values

What's so great about collaboration anyway?

It is clear that many individuals and organizations are uncomfortable with the way in which a loosely-defined concept has been assigned an almost sacred value. As numerous people pointed out during this process, collaboration must be seen as only one possible response to addressing needs within a community. In some instances, the work to be done can be achieved much more efficiently and effectively by one organization. This leads the discussion to an exploration of the inherent values of collaboration, and a discussion of whose values those are.

Some of the values that are viewed as forming the foundation for collaboration include:

- co-operation rather than competition;
- community building;
- increased efficiency;
- shared rather than unilateral decision making;
- seamless, integrated services for clients; and
- greater ability to respond to needs of diverse client groups.

These values are shared amongst funders, community agencies, clients and community residents. Yet despite the positive nature of these inherent values, they are not always present or sufficient to make a collaboration work. The potential benefits can only be realised if a careful assessment of a situation indicates that involving two or more organizations in some form of joint initiative really is the best way to proceed.

Clearly, to maximize the potential of collaboration, the sector as a whole needs to step back and take a look at how and why we promote collaborative ventures as a way to improve the network of services available to people in the Lower Mainland. This requires a closer examination of some of the statements that are often accepted as basic tenets of collaboration:

1) Collaboration saves money

Not so, argue many organizations. Or at least, it doesn't save money for the community organizations involved in the collaboration. In fact, the collaborative process often increases the costs to organizations, in terms of staff and other resources they must invest to make a true collaboration happen. This is particularly true for smaller organizations, which are thus burdened with a workload in addition to that of fulfilling their primary mandates.

This raises the fundamental question of, 'Is saving money the primary purpose for promoting collaboration?' Or, should our primary focus be on improving the services available to individuals and the community?

2) Collaboration is *always* the best way

It became clear that this carte blanche approach is not only ineffective but, in some instances, harmful. While every human may need oxygen to breathe, not every project or community need requires a collaborative project to address the issues. In some cases, the desired goals can best be achieved by a single organization with the mandate and capacity to do the required work. Forcing a 'collaboration' in an inappropriate setting does nothing to promote harmony or efficiency in the sector.

3) Organizations can be 'made' to collaborate...and it is the role of the funder to ensure that they do so

It was pointed out during this process that 'shotgun marriages' are notoriously problematical ways to promote 'collaboration'. In such situations, time and care has rarely been taken to look at the range of issues and unique circumstances that might present barriers to successful collaboration. Even more rarely is support then provided to work through those barriers. Further to this, individuals raised the issue of funders and other organizations not recognising 'natural' collaborations. It often seems that those on the 'outside' are only willing to value and support a partnering that seems appropriate to them rather than to those most directly involved in the process.

4) If an organization cannot or will not collaborate in a given situation, then clearly that organization should not receive funding support

Again, this carte blanche approach to insisting on collaboration ignores the very real differences that exist between organizations and between appropriate responses toward addressing community needs. Very small grassroots organizations form in response to unmet community needs. While they may play key roles within their communities, they often do not have the organizational capacity to engage in a full-scale collaboration, even when a collaborative approach is appropriate for a situation. This does not necessarily indicate that the organizations are being resistant, non-integrative, empire builders or other such negative attributes.

There is an inherent irony in the current situation. In many cases organizations are effectively blocked from securing funding support unless they demonstrate their willingness and ability to participate in effective collaborations. Collaboration is often presented as the means by which organizations can increase their overall capacity to meet community needs. However, those small organizations that may be most in need of support are frequently too small and too under-resourced to truly engage in a collaborative effort. They may become token partners, subsumed by

larger and more powerful partners. Or, they may get 'left out of the loop' altogether, and their valuable contribution to their communities is jeopardised.

And what about those many instances where collaboration is an appropriate strategy? An organization's ability to collaborate in a meaningful way is dependent on the values that the organization holds. Those values must be congruent with the values or attributes associated with collaboration, which were listed on page 7 of this report. Those values should be vocalised so that all partners with which the agency is collaborating know what they are.

While the above may seem self-evident the reality remains that, when actually working together on a joint project, a host of problems and non-co-operative behaviours often arises. Why should this be so?

Responses to this question include:

- There is no common language amongst funders, organizations or individuals for talking about 'collaboration'. In many ways it has become a catch phrase, used without truly understanding what it means.
- There are few or no resources available to provide support for the collaborative process itself, as opposed to the services that might be delivered as a result.
- Some funders and community organizations are reluctant to commit themselves in any way that might curb their power for unilateral decision-making.
- Different organizations may fear and mistrust each other.
- Some community organizations and funders lack the training and expertise to plan, support and conduct successful collaborations.
- Funders and community organizations may have very different views about the true value of collaboration. For example, for some the value of collaboration is in saving money, while for others there is a strong belief that the quality of services to clients will be improved.

A way must be found to encourage funders and community organizations alike to engage in a constructive dialogue regarding the nature and purpose of collaborative efforts. Funders, who so often are partners in providing resources for a single project, must recognise their obligation to come to an agreement on the desired outcomes of that project rather than subjecting organizations to a range of conflicting demands and expectations. Community organizations must recognise their obligation to the spirit of collaboration, rather than a narrowly pragmatic view of how to get more funding. In other words, we all must put our values into action.

Clearly, what we are talking about here is a vast and ongoing process. Yet it is one that is fundamental to developing a true 'culture of collaboration' amongst Lower Mainland funders and community organizations.

Many organizations suggested that a key to improving the level of communication is to develop a 'common language' of collaboration, to be used by funders and agencies in the Lower Mainland. This section of the report proposes a plain language way of looking at types of collaboration, barriers to collaboration, collaboration values and program components. These definitions are intended to promote discussion that will ultimately lead to a finalised list of terms.

3.2 Types of Collaboration

There are many different ways to collaborate but the following represent what are perhaps the most common models.

Partnerships

This approach to collaboration is a partnership that makes 'business sense'. Organizations recognise that they are better able to secure the resources they need to achieve their goal or goals by engaging in joint ventures or strategic alliances.

This model allows organizations to focus on a narrowly defined shared purpose, and is most effective to use resources efficiently and as an alternative to competition. It is less effective as a mechanism for building community or organizational capacity, since decision-making tends not to be broadly-based.

Sponsorships

A sponsorship is a formal arrangement whereby one organization officially supports the work of another organization, usually for the purposes of obtaining funding or accreditation. For example, an organization that does not have charitable status may be sponsored by one that does in order to meet eligibility criteria for funding.

Co-location

Organizations or specific programs come together to share office space and/or administration, and in doing so use resources more efficiently. Client services are often provided from one location.

Information Networks

This approach is used most often when the sole or primary purpose of the collaboration is networking and information sharing. It may take the form of an information technology link such as a 'listserv', a newsletter, shared resource centre or a regular information-sharing meeting.

Information networks are often community or agency driven but almost never mandated. This type of collaboration builds community and organizational capacity but, in the absence of funding support, is often seen as a draw on human and other resources.

Service Networks

In this model, a network is formed as a co-ordinating body for the delivery of a service or services that involve a number of agencies. Ideally, a service network is community driven, agency driven and/or mandated all at the same time. However, because service networks are typically broad-based, they are particularly subject to the many challenges facing collaborative efforts.

Consortiums

A consortium is similar to an information-sharing network, but goes beyond simple information sharing to taking on specific roles assigned to it by its membership. These roles, such as technology sharing or joint research, are generally activities that are needed by each member but that can be done more effectively collaboratively rather than individually.

Consortiums are generally agency driven and are almost never mandated. As a result, resources to support consortia are often tenuous.

Coalitions

Coalitions are an effective way to consolidate and enhance the political strength of individual groups to address a specific issue. They can be community and/or agency-driven.

Coalitions are very effective vehicles for building community and organizational capacity. Again, because they are not mandated and 'efficiency' is not a key objective, resources to support coalitions are often scarce or non-existent.

3.3 Defining Barriers

Any time a group of people works together, there are barriers to full participation. Community service agencies are no exception. These barriers are not specific to collaboration but need to be identified as background information for any discussion about collaboration.

We have defined seven barriers that influence the ability to collaborate:

Size of Organisation

Small organizations may be reluctant to partner with large organizations because they are concerned that they will lose their autonomy. On the other hand, a large organization may not have confidence that a small organization has the appropriate organizational policies and procedures in place to support a collaborative relationship.

Organisational Culture

Community agencies differ not only in their mandates but in the 'way they do business'. Management styles, including modes of decision-making, attitudes toward staff and clients,

and willingness to 'share power' all vary immensely. These differences tend to affect the degree to which an organization may be willing or able to commit to a collaborative effort.

If one organization is fully committed and has a vision for the collaboration and its partner does not have the same commitment and vision, a potentially difficult incompatibility is present from the start.

Power Differences

Power differences manifest in many ways and present serious challenges to successful collaboration, particularly if they are not acknowledged and addressed openly. One or more partners may be left feeling that they do not have an equal voice in the process, and this can give birth to a host of problems. Power differences can arise between, for example:

- organizations of different size and/or structure;
- funders and agencies;
- members of different cultural, socio-economic or other groups; and
- community members and the agencies providing services to them.

It is often difficult for partners in a collaboration to acknowledge, much less address, the issues of power imbalances. It can be particularly difficult for funders to find ways to work in true partnership with community organizations, given the funders financial power over those agencies. Similarly, representatives of small, grassroots organizations may feel completely overwhelmed by larger more 'sophisticated' partners. Community members may feel that, while they are the *raison d'être* for a service, they are unable to get past the service organizations to make their voices heard directly by funding bodies.

Power relates directly to the way in which decision-making happens in the collaboration, for example:

- who takes the lead—and how is this decided?
- who decides how each member's responsibilities are determined?
- who makes decisions regarding financial matters?

Turf Issues

A common issue that arises when discussing collaboration is that of 'turf'. Each organization and funder has its own particular niche, whether that niche is defined geographically, by ethno-cultural group, age, expertise, sphere of influence or by any one or more of a number of other factors. Particularly when questions of funding and/or influence are involved, individuals may be very resistant to engaging in any joint endeavour that they perceive as giving an 'in' to another group.

Turf issues are real, and can be destructive. It is critical that they be addressed in the very early planning stages of any collaborative effort.

Cross-Cultural Differences

When agencies with staff and clients from very different cultural backgrounds partner, cross-cultural differences can lead to communication breakdowns. There is a need to acknowledge, understand, and respond to cultural differences from the outset of any collaboration.

Organisational History

Organizations that have a long history in the community and/or with funders are generally at an advantage when exploring funding opportunities. New organizations may feel that they are left out of the picture. At the same time, organizations that have had a negative experience with other agencies or with funders may find that it takes years to rebuild trust and reputation, effectively blocking them from some potential sources of funding.

Resource Availability

The very process of collaboration requires significant up front and ongoing investment, which very few agencies can afford. Small organizations with few or no staff often do not have the resources to participate in community initiatives that lead to partnerships.

3.4 Defining Components

Our discussion of collaboration focuses on components of organizational and project management. In brief, these components are as follows:

Planning

When we talk about planning, we are referring to the work that should be done before a collaborative initiative is implemented. It involves getting to know the opportunities and constraints involved in working with each other, and developing financial management, staffing, communication, reporting and evaluation plans.

Management

These are the day to day management issues that require that a clear management structure be established at the beginning of the collaboration.

Communication

The term 'communication' is used broadly to describe how the very diverse players in a partnership are kept informed. Examples of communication issues include:

- How will we communicate with funders?
- How will we ensure changing circumstances are communicated to all members?
- How will we ensure clear communication to our boards?
- How will we communicate to the media?

Risk Management

'Risk management' encompasses all the policies and procedures put in place to ensure that any risk to clients, staff, management and boards of directors is minimised. These include but are not limited to:

- personnel policies;
- public safety policies;
- insurance;
- conflict of interest guidelines;
- financial management procedures;
- workers' compensation; and
- security arrangements.

Evaluation

Evaluation refers to determining the degree to which a program or intervention achieves its intended objective. Every organization has its own approach to evaluation, as does each funding body. In a partnership, the issue of how the collaboration will be evaluated must be considered at the outset.

Reporting

All non-profit organizations are concerned with reporting to management, Boards of Directors, the communities in which they operate and to their funders. Consistency in approach coupled with respect for organizational autonomy is required.

4.0 WHAT WE DISCOVERED

The following key themes emerged in the literature, agency surveys, and the workshop.

4.1 The Importance of Planning

It seems that many agencies develop partnerships ‘off the corners of their desks’. The same amount of time that would be given to developing a proposal for an individual agency is assigned to the development of a proposal for a collaborative effort. Very little pre-proposal work is done and the proposal is developed with the assumption that issues will be identified and resolved as they arise.

Yet increasingly, agencies are aware that the development of solid collaborative relationships involves considerable investment by an agency. They recognise that, before any such arrangements are undertaken, a thorough exploration needs to be done of a range of considerations, including:

- Why is a collaborative effort deemed to be appropriate in this case?
- What will be the criteria for deciding which organizations can work together effectively?
- What is the benefit to each partner and its clients from working together?
- How will partners in the collaboration be accountable for their respective roles in the project?
- Who will develop an effective and appropriate communication plan?
- How will conflicts be addressed?

At present, this ‘stage setting’ tends to be occurring in a haphazard way. Agencies regularly enter into collaborations because proposals for funding require that they show evidence of working together. There is little or no time for, or understanding of, how to establish a solid framework for successful collaboration.

Clearly, if support for partnership development were available, the non-profit sector would be more likely to receive the benefits of collaboration and experience fewer of the problems.

4.2 Management

As in every other kind of working relationship, good management is key to the success of a collaborative arrangement. Commitment to the collaboration must be present at all levels, including the board, management, staff and funding agency/agencies. Clearly defined and credible leadership, agreed to by all the member agencies, must be established in order to keep the relationship running smoothly.

Member organizations' policies—whether they relate to personnel, financial management or other areas—must be consistent with the principles of collaboration. In instances where significant differences exist in organizations' approaches to key management issues, a strategy must be worked out to avoid conflicts that may arise as a result of these differences.

The management structure must be both responsive to the dynamics of the collaboration as well as to external needs, for example, reporting requirements of project funders.

4.3 Communication

The broad topic of 'communication' is one of ongoing concern. All agencies recognise the centrality of good communication within a collaborative relationship, yet breakdown in communication is perhaps the single most frequently noted problem in collaborative work. Most organizations tend to believe that significant improvements are needed in the way partner organizations communicate with each other and with the people they are serving. The need for a clear communication strategy to be established at the beginning of the collaboration is clearly of vital importance to the success of any such venture.

Specific communication issues include:

- Different partners have different definitions of what constitutes 'collaboration'.
- Partner organizations may have conflicting expectations about each other's roles and responsibilities. Assumptions are made about what is or is not 'obvious', rather than being careful to spell things out clearly and openly.
- Funders' definitions of collaboration vary and/or are unclear.
- Conflict resolution mechanisms are often not put in place prior to problems arising.
- Small organizations often feel that they lose their voice when they work with large organizations.
- Agencies will often hesitate to communicate openly about problems that have arisen for fear that if funders hear of the issues the organizations will be 'penalised'.
- The volume of information that needs to be communicated can often be overwhelming. The challenge becomes even more severe when busy schedules prevent different members from attending meetings regularly.

4.4 Commitment

What constitutes true 'commitment' to a collaborative venture, and what can be done to facilitate members making that level of commitment? Getting solid commitment of all members was identified as a key factor in determining the success—or lack of success—of a collaboration. Levels of commitment range from full to 'tokenism'. As one workshop participant pointed out, "Merely attending meetings does not equal collaboration".

Specific issues pertaining to this area include:

- How do you ensure that a collaboration gets support at the board as well as staff level of an organization ?
- How do you reach agreement about the level of resources each partner will contribute to the collaboration?
- What are the ‘consequences’ for partners that fail to give or maintain a solid commitment to the collaborative effort?

4.5 Risk Management

Because of concerns about personal and agency liability, risk management issues are at the forefront of concerns. As one workshop participant put it, ‘liability issues overshadow an organization and its ability to focus on its mandate’.

Specific concerns include:

- Are appropriate financial management systems in place?
- When we talk about issues that have liability considerations, are we talking the same language?
- Do the member agencies maintain client and staff confidentiality?
- Do member agencies recognise human resource legal requirements?
- Do all the member agencies share a common understanding of the structure of the collaborative effort, and of their legal responsibilities within that structure?

It appears that, even while it is recognised to be a key area of concern, the various ramifications of risk management are often poorly understood by both funders and community organizations.

4.6 Evaluation

Central to concerns about evaluation is the question of “What do we hope to achieve by working together rather than individually?” Participants in this process stressed the need for clearly defined goals and desired outcomes to be established before plunging into the collaboration. Hand in hand with this is the need for funding support for developing and supporting an evaluation strategy for the venture.

When credible evaluation demonstrates that benefits have come both to themselves and to their clients through their participation in a previous joint venture, organizations will be much more likely to continue to engage in and expand their collaborative efforts

Specific issues include:

- How do we decide whether collaboration is appropriate to in a particular situation?

- How do the members of the collaboration identify realistic goals?
- How do the members of the collaboration measure whether or not their goals have been achieved?
- Where is there room and/or a mechanism for the community members ostensibly being served to provide their input into an evaluation of a collaborative project?

4.7 Reporting

Reporting falls under the broader heading of ‘structure of a collaboration’, and is reflective of the concerns about the amount of additional work that can be placed upon an organization when it engages in a collaborative effort.

Specific concerns include:

- How can collaborating agencies reach agreement on a consistent method of reporting to meet funder requirements?
- How do organizations balance their internal reporting requirements with the need to remain responsive to the dynamics of the collaborative process they are involved in?
- How does the collaboration ensure that members are fulfilling their reporting obligations?
- How does the collaboration ensure consistent and effective procedures for maintaining the confidentiality of client data?

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The stated goals of this process are to:

- create an opportunity for community agencies and funders to share knowledge and experience with respect to partnerships, sponsorships and collaborations;
- identify issues to be explored between agencies and funders; and
- collaboratively develop strategies to address these issues.

The following recommendations have been generated from this process to date, including the literature review, pre-workshop survey, the workshop and from the Ad Hoc Committee and Consulting Team:

1. It is recommended that specific outreach strategies be developed to involve small, grassroots organizations in the ongoing work of this initiative. This is particularly key for small ethno-specific organizations. At present, language, culture, isolation and lack of resources have combined to prevent the full participation of these groups in the collaboration discussion. It is vital that we get their experience with and ideas about collaboration before rapidly moving ahead with subsequent stages of this process.
2. It is recommended that ways be found to include community members—the people ultimately being ‘served’—in the ongoing process. At present, discussions tend to be limited to funders and community organizations.
3. It is recommended that, in partnership with existing resources such as SPARC, Volunteer Vancouver, Langara College and the Community Development Institute, a workshop series be developed to promote dialogue and consensus on the range of issues impacting collaborative efforts. The series should be comprised of three streams:
 - i) sessions for community organizations;
 - ii) sessions for funders; and
 - iii) combined sessions for both community organizations and funders.

The workshops should contain both training components and a consensus building process so that the groups involved are building skills while developing a shared framework. Topic areas could include:

- terminology;
- method;
- risk management;
- supports required;
- accountability;
- outcomes; and

- power dynamics.

Such training must be designed and delivered so that it is accessible to the grassroots level of community organizations, including community members. Training that becomes too academic or theoretical in nature will not address many of the concerns of such groups and individuals.

4. It is recommended that the possibility of developing a ‘collaboration tool kit’ be explored. The tool kit would be used to support non-profit agencies and funders in planning and implementing collaborative activities. It would include a particular focus on the needs of small non-profit agencies, which tend to have access to fewer resources to assist them with the collaborative process.

The tool kit should include:

- ideas for assessing the appropriateness of potential partnerships and projects;
- a reference paper on legal issues;
- discussion of the ethics of collaboration;
- discussion of effective communication within collaborations;
- an overview of risk management issues;
- descriptions of models for collaboration; and
- a step by step guide to building successful collaborative projects.

The development stage of the tool kit should begin by investigating existing training resources to ensure that we do not duplicate efforts. Suitable pre-existing materials could be collected and incorporated into a more comprehensive training package.

5. It is recommended that collaboration assessment models be developed. These models must address the need for:
 - of that involvement on their own organizations and clients.
6. It is recommended that funders explore the feasibility of establishing an ongoing series of meetings to discuss their particular concerns and responsibilities regarding support for collaborative initiatives. At present, there is little consensus or common understanding amongst various funding bodies regarding the nature, value and mechanics of collaborative processes.

These discussions should follow a defined process that will lead to joint sessions that include funders and community organizations coming together to discuss common concerns.

- external evaluation of a collaboration; and
- organizations involved in one or more collaborations to undertake internal reviews of the impact.

7. It is recommended that a collaboration roundtable involving representatives of funders and non-profit agencies meet on a scheduled basis to identify and discuss ongoing issues, with an annual workshop to report to all groups on the state of collaboration in the Lower Mainland.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

It is worthwhile to build on the energy that was developed through this initial process by beginning to develop an action plan to guide the work over the next year. The following table provides a template to assist the Ad Hoc Committee to develop this plan and communicate it to the participating agencies.

RECOMMENDATION AND ACTION	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME
1. Outreach to Small Organizations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify agencies 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold workshop/forum specifically for small agencies 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
2. Inclusion of Community Members		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
3. Coordinate Training Workshops		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify topics & determine number of workshops 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore training resources & delivery sites 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure funding 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
4. Development of Partnership Toolkit		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research existing resources 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop outline for tool kit 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply for funding 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pilot test the tool kit 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure broad access to the tool kit (e.g. webpage) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop evaluation tools 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate tool kit 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update the tool kit on a regular basis. 		
5. Development of Assessment Models		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

RECOMMENDATION AND ACTION	PRIORITY	TIME-FRAME
6. Coordinate Funder Discussions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate existing forums 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lobby senior management levels 		
7. Collaboration Meetings/Annual Roundtable		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Project Ad Hoc Committee

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Representative</u>
M.O.S.A.I.C.	Holly Whittleton
Nisha	John Coward
Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS)	Jean Maloney
Self-Help Resource Association	Erlene Woollard
Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society	Sherman Chan
Department of Canadian Heritage	Yok Leng Chang
City of Vancouver Social Planning	Baldwin Wong
BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism & Immigration, Community Liaison Division	Ita Margalit
Law Foundation of BC	Pat Pitsula
United Way	Daisy Quon
Vancouver Foundation	Valerie Hunter

7.2 Workshop Participants

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Representative</u>
AMSSA	Vera Radyo
Attorney General	Terry Skarbo
BC Epilepsy	Rick O'Brien
BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre	Richard Gathercole

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Department of Canadian Heritage	Allan Corenblum
City of Vancouver Social Planning	Baldwin Wong
BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism & Immigration, Community Liaison Division	Ita Margalit
Family Services of Greater Vancouver	Elaine Shearer
Health Canada	Susan Stevenson
Human Resources Development Canada (Burnaby)	John Duggan
Immigrant Services Society	Patricia Woroch
Law Foundation of BC	Pat Pitsula
Legal Services Society	Carol McEown
Martin Spigelman Research Association	Aleina Spigelman
Ministry for Children and Families	John Adamick
Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology	Lucy Swib
Ministry of Human Resources	Frances Anderson
M.O.S.A.I.C.	Holly Whittleton
Nisha	John Coward
North Shore Community Services	Kim Collett
North Shore Multicultural Society	Margaret Third
Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS)	Jean Maloney
Parents in Crisis	Julie Norton
People's Law School	Jennifer Fudge

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Ray-Cam Community Association	Carole Brown
Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society	Gordon Partovi
Self-Help Resource Association	Erlene Woollard
SNAP (Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents)	Brad Watson
South Vancouver Neighbourhood House	Karen Larcombe
SUCCESS	Lilian To
Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society	Sherman Chan/Gosia Kawecki
Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society	En-zen Jan
United Way	Daisy Quon
Vancouver Foundation	Valerie Hunter
Vancouver Park Board	Susan Gordon
Vancouver/Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services	Shashi Assanand
West Coast Childcare Resource Centre	Pam Best
West Coast Domestic Workers' Association	Alison Brewin
Youthquest!	Rhamona Vos-Browning
	Angela Julien

7.3 Partnerships, Sponsorships and Collaboration

(Prepared for the Roundtable on Collaboration, Sponsorships and Partnerships)

Purpose

In the fall of 1998, a group of Lower Mainland agencies and funders decided to ask a wide range of community agencies and funders about their experiences with joint initiatives such as partnerships, sponsorships and collaborations. The purpose of the consultation is to strengthen the non-profit sector's ability to engage in joint ventures by identifying key issues and developing a sector-wide plan to address issues.

Consultation Process

The process selected to meet these objectives is to:

- prepare a brief discussion paper;
- develop a glossary of terms;
- conduct a survey of potential participants;
- develop an inclusive workshop format; and
- facilitate a workshop on identified issues.

The aim of this discussion paper is to present ideas that are identified in existing reports that could form the basis of discussion at the workshop.

Encouraging Partnerships

Clearly, working together is a hot topic in the non-profit and government sectors. In the recent *Draft Strategy Promoting the Volunteer and Community Services Sector in British Columbia*, Jan Pullinger, the Minister Responsible for Co-operatives.

Volunteers and the Community Services Sector, describes a plan to encourage networks and partnerships at the cabinet table and at all levels of government.

This paper has been prepared to encourage discussion. The ideas come from current articles on this subject. They do not necessarily represent the views of the advisory committee.

Her expected outcome for such co-operation is an increase in government, business and community joint ventures.

Reasons for Collaboration

Community organizations, government agencies and community-based funders generally recognise that services to communities can be delivered more effectively and responsively if they are implemented in partnership with appropriate organizations. Partnering in the delivery of services can:

- increase efficiency in use of public resources;
- provide an alternative to competition;
- enhanced organizational capacity;
- expand the funding base; and
- contribute to community building.

Characteristics of Collaborative Models

A collaborative venture may be initiated by the community, a group of service

providers or by a funder. In some cases, a joint initiative may demonstrate characteristics of more than one model.

Community-driven

When the driving force for a collaborative project comes from community members with a direct personal interest in the collaboration, it is sometimes referred to as a 'community-driven coalition'. A community-driven model generally has strong ownership and commitment on the part of its members. This is very important for collaborative models aimed at building community-capacity. Unfortunately, many community-driven initiatives lack resources and expertise and may flounder as a result.

Agency or Service Provider Driven

This is the most common type of joint venture in the Lower Mainland. Agency driven models aim to strengthen programs and foster holistic provision of services to clients. While this model has an advantage over community-driven models in that it has staff and resources to dedicate to an initiative, very often participants are doing the work 'off the corners of their desks', leading to fatigue and burnout.

Mandated Coalitions

A mandated coalition is one that is 'forced' on individuals or groups. Organizations are given little choice but to work together in some fashion, often because a funder requires it and/or will look more favourably on a funding application when the 'collaboration' exists. The funder may or may not recognise that working in partnership requires additional support, and thus provide appropriate resources. Mandated coalitions present special challenges.

Members may lack the sense of ownership and control that are essential elements in any successful collaboration.

Successful Collaboration

A key element in building a successful coalition is that its partners share both values and similar philosophies about services and the way they are provided.

A successful project must also have a clear sense of purpose with a common understanding of desired outcomes. The partners must believe that they can achieve more together than they can on their own, and be clear on how they will measure that achievement.

Decision-making must be open and participatory. This can only be achieved when all partners have both a real and perceived equality of authority in the collaboration.

Along with their own self-interest, partners must bring to the table a strong appreciation of the collective interest. There needs to be a strong commitment to a collaborative process and a corresponding willingness to build effective communication systems.

What can Funders do to help ensure the Success of a Joint Venture?

Here are some things funders can do to set the stage for a successful collaboration:

- provide an understandable rationale for the collaboration;
- plan for both negative and positive outcomes;

- recognise the need for significant attention to and resources for the planning process;
- provide an independent facilitator to address coalition-building requirements;
- allow for sufficient time to develop sustainable relationships;
- ensure that geographic areas and service requirements are manageable; and
- consider whether the possibility of coalition building is realistic given the length of the project.

What can Organizations do to help ensure a Successful Collaboration?

- ensure that all partners are clear on the goals and outcomes of a project;
 - be careful to have their involvement agreed to by the appropriate level of authority within their organization (ideally the board);
- ensure that their organization's representatives are given the time and resources they need to participate in the collaborative process;
- be willing to balance what they as individual organizations want to get out of the project, with what they are willing to contribute in terms of time and resources to achieve the project goals;
- establish a solid communication plan for the collaboration, paying particular attention to how all members are included in decision-making; and

Some Reasons why Organizations may hesitate to Collaborate

There are many reasons why organizations may choose not to collaborate. These include:

- previous bad experiences with a collaborative initiative;
- perceptions of competition or 'turf' issues;
- personality conflicts between specific members of the potential collaboration;
- mistrust of the 'driving force' behind the move to collaborate; and
- fear of loss of autonomy.

Diversity issues also impact on an organization's willingness to collaborate. This is particularly the case when there is racial, cultural, gender or sexual orientation polarisation in a community.

An individual's or organizations 'gut feeling' about issues such as these must be addressed openly and completely for joint ventures to succeed.

Building and Maintaining Collaboration

There are significant barriers to success in collaboration. These include:

- loss of direction and focus;
- loss of leadership or struggles for leadership;
- the 'founding-member-syndrome';
- unequal involvement and recognition of members;
- poor planning efforts;
- negative publicity;
- failure of planned projects;
- burn out or unrealistic demands on members;
- an overly bureaucratic structure;

- turf battles and competition; and
- inability to address cross cultural issues.

These barriers can be overcome if they are anticipated and planned for. The commitment of all parties to a common direction must be reflected in the mission statement *and* at all levels of activity.

The partners must be supported by strong, collaborative leadership and appropriate funding. An ability **to adapt** to change coupled with equality of participation in decision-making is critical for all partners. Adequate time and resources must be given to day to day planning, with solid information-sharing processes built into the day to day activities.

Models To Be Examined

The literature identifies several broad models of organizational structures to support collaboration. Each has an appropriate purpose, strengths and drawbacks.

Pragmatic Partnerships

This approach to collaboration is a partnership that makes business sense. Organizations recognize that they are better able to secure the resources needed by engaging in joint ventures, strategic alliances or consortia. This model is most effective to use resources efficiently and as an alternative to competition as it is easy to focus on a shared purpose and decision-making is not broadly-based. It is less effective as a mechanism for building community or organizational capacity.

Sponsorship

A sponsorship is when one organization supports the work of another organization, usually for the purposes of obtaining funding or accreditation.

Collaboration

This is a catch-all term to describe the process by which several agencies or organizations make a formal, sustained commitment to work together to accomplish a common mission.

Co-location

Organizations or specific programs may come together to share office space and/or administration and in doing so use resources more efficiently and provide services from one location.

Information Network

This approach is used most often when the sole or primary purpose of the collaboration is networking and information sharing. It may take the form of an information technology link such as a 'listserv', a newsletter, shared resource centre or a regular information-sharing meeting.

Information networks are often community or agency driven but almost never mandated. This type of collaboration builds community and organizational capacity but is often seen as a draw on human resources.

Service Network

In this model, a network is formed as a co-ordinating body for the delivery of a service or services that involve a number of agencies. Ideally, they are community driven, agency driven or mandated all at the same time and can achieve all of the benefits described above. However, because service networks are typically

broad-based, they can also experience all of the pitfalls of collaboration.

Consortiums

A consortium is similar to an information-sharing network, but goes beyond simple information sharing to taking on specific roles assigned to it by its membership. These roles, such as technology sharing or joint research, are generally activities that are needed by each member but that can be done more effectively collaboratively rather than individually.

Consortiums are generally agency driven and are almost never mandated. As a result resources to support consortia are often tenuous.

Coalition

Coalitions are an effective way to consolidate and enhance the political strength of individual groups to address a specific issue of concern. They can be community-and/or agency driven.

Coalitions are very effective vehicles for building community and organization al capacity. Again because they are not mandated and efficiency is not an

objective, resources to support coalitions are often tenuous.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- Is professional development training and co-ordinated information sharing about joint ventures needed?
- How can we ensure liability and financial accountability procedures are in place?
- Is research about best practices in joint ventures needed?
- How can organizations and funders determine when a joint venture is appropriate to achieve a given goal?
- How should funders support joint ventures?
- If partnership and collaboration is to be mandated by government agencies, how can agencies provide input into and guide the process?

7.4 Summary of Survey Responses

The following is a summary of the responses we received to the survey we sent out on April 7th, 1999. A total of 22 individuals/organizations responded to the survey, two by telephone and the rest in writing. Respondents included representatives from the range of organizations—large and small, immigrant and non-immigrant specific, funder and community agency—which will be participating in the workshop.

Please note that a more complete list of the individual responses will be included with the final report to be produced following the completion of the May 12th workshop.

1. Think of times when you have successfully worked with another organization or a group of organizations. What do you think made those situations work so well?

There was a broad range of responses to this question, but several common themes recurred throughout. The ability to establish and maintain clear and consistent communication was seen as key to the success of any joint effort. Articulating a clear vision and ensuring that all partners understood and shared that vision is also key. It is also apparent that careful attention to the structuring of the joint effort—including leadership, timeframes and administrative aspects— will facilitate success.

2. What problems did you have to overcome to make the arrangement work well?

Again, communication ranks as one of the key themes in this response. It was stressed that establishing a 'common language' and knowledge base, and ensuring that all partners understand their roles and responsibilities is key to supporting a joint effort. Challenges to getting agencies to fully commit to a venture include time constraints, lack of trust in the leadership, 'turf' issues and previous bad experiences with other partners involved in the project.

3. What *themes* do you think should be discussed in a roundtable on partnerships, sponsorships and collaborations? An example of a theme is ‘Legal Issues for Organizational Partnerships’.

Five key themes, each encompassing two or more sub-themes, were identified as follows:

Communication: External, decision-making, relationship building, operational style, developing a common language.

Risk Management: Financial accountability, legal structure, legal liability, Human Resources issues.

Resources: Financial, staffing.

Commitment: Vision, operational style, structure.

Models: Structure, trends, strengths and weaknesses.

4. If you were responsible for getting a group of organizations to work together on a project, what do you think would be the most important things to consider?

Again, while responses varied, a number of recurrent themes ran through the answers. Many respondents emphasized the importance of the structure of the working relationship, e.g., the reporting structure, the role of the steering committee, scheduling meetings and determining whether the work is to be done as a whole or broken down into component parts to be worked on by individual group members. The challenges to establishing solid commitment to a joint venture also ranked prominently in the responses. Being clear on desired outcomes, establishing needs of partner organizations, ensuring Board level support and securing appropriate resources were all mentioned. Many responses referred to the importance of choosing the appropriate blend of agencies to work together on a project, e.g., considerations of belief systems and values, recognition of strengths and weaknesses and the past history between organizations.

5. People from different community organizations may not always feel able to speak openly in a group. How do you think we should organize the workshop so that all people feel safe in speaking out?

Many respondents suggested incorporating anonymous written responses into the workshop in order to allow people to provide input they might otherwise feel too intimidated to offer. The importance of sensitive facilitation of the afternoon was

also stressed. It was suggested that at the outset the group establish 'norms' for the day which focus on issues of confidentiality and speaking freely on issues.

7.5 Workshop Results (Small Groups and Plenary Sessions)

Information recorded on flipcharts during plenary and small group sessions.

SMALL GROUP SESSION I—AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Risk Management

Issues

- creating relationships which create legal liability;
- board member understanding of liability issues;
- lack of core funding;
- knowing what budget costs are;
- project funding;
- too many strings attached;
- too much reporting;
- no help from funding agencies;
- lack of connection between what needs to be done, and what *funders* believe needs to be done;
- funders pick groups to work together which may not be suitable to work together;
- funders look at the 'surface', which doesn't reflect the real needs—what funders fund does not always reflect the needs of the community;
- funders 'Funding Flavour of the Month'—funding models often miss the point;
- need to find a way for funders to communicate their priorities to agencies;
- organizations are created or exist to meet a need—this is often not recognized by funders;
- pleasing the funder versus staying true to your clients.

Challenge

- staying true to your clients;
- previously, participation in collaborations has been minimal for some groups—lack of tradition of collaboration has led to no appropriate accountability model being developed;
- partners are not clear about their responsibilities—who has responsibility for what;
- imbalance of power between organizations in a collaboration;
- differences between funders and agencies in expectations of how things should work;
- agencies getting together and things don't happen;
- funders expectations not clear—can be 'hit and miss';
- use of 'buzz words' which are okay one year but not the next;

- keeping staff;
- large agencies ‘suck up the project’ because they can maintain it—they have more stability;
- staff consistency;
- board understanding of issues;
- maintaining a viable board;
- trust and feeling of safety amongst groups;
- clash of corporate cultures.

Successes

- steering committee;
- agency lead role;
- articulate who does what at first meeting;
- establish what is the role of committee members, and write down who has what role;
- establish a casual advisory group;
- the Law Foundation is developing a mechanism of communication between the funder and agencies to learn how the Foundation can help the agency, e.g., by providing board development.

SMALL GROUP SESSION II—AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Communication

Issues

- differences in organizational cultures, e.g., staff is involved in decision making versus a top down management style;
- differences in communication styles and in expectations—levels of inclusiveness, models of decision making, authority issues may differ from agency to agency;
- how to effectively deal with different boards;
- different commitment levels to partnership at different levels in the organization;
- being on the ‘same page’—people have different ideas about issues;
- volume of communication is large, which leads to large amounts of work—requires great dedication from everyone involved;
- issues of attendance- these are often very challenging given the voluntary nature of the planning process. Attendance can be a problem leading to miscommunication and trust issues;
- issues of trust—committing resources underlies all of the above;
- there is a human resources and monetary cost to collaboration which is not always carefully considered;
- differences in views between funders and community regarding collaborative projects;
- need more clarity from funders in terms of the ‘definition’ of partnerships—it is often too loose;

- who are agencies supposed to link with? Should this be determined by funders, or should we really look at forming natural partnerships, not just funding-induced ones?
- be more clear about why you are collaborating—ask whether or not it is the best way of doing something/providing a service;
- differences in power between lead agency and supporting agencies;
- communication—is there a process in place to deal with conflict? A strategy for conflict resolution should be in place;
- collaboration becomes more effective over time when working with partners you have worked with before;
- structure of communications is quite formalized in a collaboration—requires trust, time and resources;
- expectations of different people involved— reporting, details, small issues;
- the need for a clear communication strategy at the outset, which everybody can be clear on and help to implement.

Risk Management

- risk to the participating agencies;
- financial accountability;
- legal liability;
- reputation in the community;
- strategy—have a check list;
- the importance of monitoring;
- the issues need to be dealt with in the open;
- human resources issues may differ from agency to agency:
 - wages;
 - level of benefits;
 - union vs. non-union (strike);
 - who reports to whom?
- who is going to carry the liability?
- collaboration—increasing cost for agencies and decreasing cost for funders...how do we balance this?
- institutional systems are entrenched;
- differences in definition of risks—importance of having a checklist;
- cross-cultural differences come into play—recipients of collaborative services may be different from the clients you currently serve. There is a need to be very aware of this, and to be sensitive to differences. Not necessarily 'business as usual'. At the same time, collaboration creates opportunities for learning and growth, but we need to remain conscious of the issues that impact our collaborative work;
- strategies—establishing principles ahead of time. These principles should reflect the diversity of the group in an efficient manner;
- bureaucratization of this whole process has a cost to it;
- funders may have an unrealistic view of what is possible in a collaboration—
REALITY IS OFTEN DIFFERENT!

- do funders understand what partnerships are? Are funders participants, managers or monitors?

Resources

- funders should recognize:
 - increasing costs for partners agencies. There should be funds for planning and development;
 - increased demands have cost attached to them;
 - human resources issues;
 - evaluation and monitoring costs (may be omitted because of the lack of funds). Money should be made available to do an effective, quality evaluation;
- funders differ in their reporting requirements, making it very time consuming;
- funders should develop a common application form and process;
- commitment from funders for longer periods of time.

SMALL GROUP SESSION III—AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

This group selected risk management and commitment as the two most pressing issues that they would like to talk about.

Risk Management

- This issue overshadows the organization and its ability to focus on its overall mandate.
- Organizations feel vulnerable, concerned with trust and turf issues and the potential for being subsumed.
- Organizations need to develop basic trust, which takes time.
- There is a need for a reference paper and ways of mitigating liability.
- The reference paper should include audit requirements, submitting invoices, mechanisms for tracking, employee liability, payouts, legal bills.
- Reporting and accountability to community, boards, staff as a way of managing risk must be explored.
- Partnerships need a shared understanding of structure and responsibility.
- Agreement on outcomes such as what and who is needed.
- Particular emphasis on human resources issues such as liabilities, employment standards, unionization is suggested.
- There is a need for money for solid advice cost of protection and money to do the work.
- In partnership work we must recognize that partnerships are not a bargain.
- Funders see it as a cheaper way, for organization, more expensive.
- Government has shown itself to not be trustworthy—how do we deal with this? They don't hold to priorities, they are insensitive to community issues and they are

governed by political versus community agendas. In the end, responsibility lies with community.

- Government ensures it does not have significant liability in that it has 30 day opt out clause and the community takes all the risks.
- There is a risk of losing the overall vision when there is micro-management by funders. Funders do this by wanting to make decisions on staff and training.
- Small organizations not getting Ministry funding get lost in agency bureaucracy, losing vision, and/or becoming albatrosses around the necks of larger organization.
- Issues between small organizations and large include: the small organizations feel like they become nobodies; equality in work; they have to have ways of articulating needs and having their work recognized.
- In our work and particularly in partnerships, the nature of relationships is most important, there is a need for high and clear ethical standards.
- In sponsorships and subcontracting, there is a need for recognition that subcontractor is in a legal relationship to address risk management issues.
- In partnerships, we need to continue to address personnel issues such as wage equity, staffing standards, underpaid/unsupported work in a way that we advocate employee needs.
- There is a need to discuss models that are not funder driven such as volunteers, informal structures that work.
- Large organizations need to be focused on capacity building—less leading, more coalition.
- We are always defined in our deficits rather than capacity.
- Many models, many layers, different assistance we can provide each other.
- We need to talk about how to manage subcontracting.
- Recognition that communication is a cost to organizations but is also key to partnerships.
- We don't seem to recognize different kinds of collaboration nor do we acknowledge that collaboration isn't a purpose but a vehicle.
- There is a need for funder education. They want innovative projects, less appetite for tried and true.
- The cost of partnership is more than government is prepared to pay.
- There needs to be recognition that funders are part of the partnership.
- Funders distance themselves to maintain integrity yet if you discuss warts, you are penalized.
- There needs to be an ongoing vision of partnership that offers consistency and continuity.
- There is a need for common language.
- Risk Management is becoming more and more complex—both funders and agencies don't know enough. It is constantly changing.

COMMITMENT

- Operational style is an issue, it seems that government and funders assume we are all the same.

- People are concerned that we are set up for imposed partnerships rather than genuine ones. They feel it only works if it is genuine.
- Collaboration is politically trendy.
- We feel we are being driven into it for the wrong reasons specifically to achieve funder goals rather than to support collaboration at a community level.
- There is always a rush to get proposal in and the necessary community development work has not been done. There is a need for resources to do this work.
- Commitment comes out of creativity. If it is forced, it is a different kind of relationship.
- We need a shared understanding of what people bring and we need to build strength for this.
- We need to define and clarify commitment at the beginning.

SMALL GROUP SESSION—FUNDER REPRESENTATIVES

Why should we collaborate?

- make best use of limited resources;
- maximize the use of people's specialized skills by sharing expertise;
- provide a continuum of services/more comprehensive services.

If the above are 'good' things, what then are the challenges to funders forming and/or supporting effective collaborations?

- a project may have multiple funders that work separately from each other, unless they are *mandated* to collaborate;
- different funders have different 'power bases' within a community;
- different funders have different organizational cultures;
- there is a big difference in the need of government and community-based funders need to collaborate, e.g., differences in the amount of resources they have, the scope of their mandates, etc.;
- tokenism—attending meetings does not equal 'collaboration';
- one needs time and resources to figure out how to best use limited time and resources! Can be very difficult for anyone to find the time to put into forging effective collaborations;
- funders lack the resources to follow-up with and support organizations once they have been funded;
- funders could use guidelines to help them support collaboration;
- it is generally unclear what are the 'consequences' (if any) for agencies when they fail to collaborate;
- how does a funder identify those instances where collaboration is appropriate and to what level? And how does the funder then support that process?

- funders need to recognize that there is a ‘continuum’ of collaboration, rather than just one model;
- there needs to be a lot more learning/understanding amongst funders of what collaboration is, and how it is defined. At present, there is a lack of shared language to describe collaboration;
- it can be very difficult to know what an ‘appropriate’ level of collaboration is within a given community, particularly if the funder is not very familiar with that community;
- organizations may not have the capacity to support collaboration in the way funders expect...and funders don’t have the mechanisms in place to help those organizations do so;
- new or emerging small organizations often don’t yet have the capacity to undertake a collaboration and, thus, often are ‘disqualified’ from funding on that basis. Yet, how can funders remain ‘responsive’ if they don’t have the capacity to support these agencies in undertaking collaborative efforts?

PLENARY SESSION: STRATEGIES

The top 10 priorities, as selected by workshop participants, are:

1. Reference paper on legal liabilities and implications of collaboration.
2. Tool kit giving, for example, legal advice, tips for starting up and sustaining a collaboration (a checklist), glossary of terms.
3. Principles and ethics of collaboration—development of and training on a ‘code of ethics’.
4. Looking at collaboration for the planning process, involving *all* ‘partners’, i.e., funders, agencies and community members).
5. Need to support small agencies that are doing valuable/unique work in the community.
6. Must be responsive to self-created collaborations, rather than only to those that ‘seem to make sense’.
7. Develop a framework for collaboration that guides both funders and agencies.
8. Develop an analysis of when ‘collaboration’ is appropriate, and when it is not.
9. Development of a written document outlining roles and responsibilities, and day to day working practices that lead to collaborative outcomes.
10. Long term funding in all partner arrangements, to provide the support they need.

Recommendations that received at least one ‘vote’:

1. Develop a common application form amongst funders.
2. Recognize and acknowledge different types of partnerships, e.g., non-monetary ones.
3. Provide specific outreach and education/information to small, grassroots organizations.
4. Provide analysis of costs involved in a collaborative process.
5. Establish the principle that collaboration = citizenship.
6. Support and acknowledge equality.
7. Provide formal support for relationship building.
8. Establish a ‘risk management accreditation process’ for agencies, paid for by funders.
9. Develop strategies (e.g., training and tools) to get *all* levels of an organization to buy in to the process.

Other recommendations:

1. Develop a good, shared evaluation form.
2. Provide training to help people explore what they might encounter in collaborations.
3. Annual multi-funder consultations with organizations.
4. Build a database of mission statements of different organizations—this could be used to help identify possible collaborations.
5. More ‘genuine’ site visits.
6. More discussion around how to involve community members—recognize that different approaches are needed.
7. Development of communication tools, e.g., listserv, internet.
8. Develop a statement of purpose for collaboration:
 - community perspective;
 - agency perspective.
9. Share information on collaborative work that *is* happening, e.g., via websites.

10. Ongoing community involvement into these processes to foster sense of ownership and eliminate the 'we/them' attitude.
11. Circulate list of organizational mandates.
12. No cookie-cutter approaches to collaboration.

PLENARY SESSION: DIRECTIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TOOL KIT

Include

- reference paper on legal issues;
- principles of ethics;
- when collaboration is worthwhile, and when it is not;
- framework for collaboration;
- focus on small agencies;

Short term steps

- apply for funding;
- research re: what already exists;
- develop terms of reference;
- define timeline;
- ensure all groups are represented or given voice.

Medium term steps

- pilot test the tool kit;
- provide training workshops on how to use the kit;
- put the kit on a webpage;
- ensure broad access to the tool kit.

Long term steps

- evaluate tool kit;
- develop evaluation tools;
- update the tool kit on a regular basis.

PLANNING COLLABORATION

- funders, community, agency;
- looking ahead—coordinated planning:
 - looking for names;
 - focused on immigrant population;
 - labour force attachment.
- ask funders to fund the process;

- highlight where it's happening and share the information;
- standing mechanisms for identifying needs and strategies to meet those needs;
- look at existing vehicles, such as the Community Development Institute.

Longer term funding

- include in framework to guide funders and agencies;
- communicate to funders re: their responsiveness to proposals.

7.6 Workshop Evaluations

a) You did a great job organizing this workshop. This was the best workshop I have attended because...

- You finished on time!
- The small breakout sessions were fantastic. Highly effective.
- Red dot method quick and effective tool for prioritising.
- Charts neat and easy to read.
- Good location.
- Risk level on part of the audience well managed. I did not feel uncomfortable personally, nor did I notice any on the part of the other participants.
- Food was great!
- Breakout session facilitator did a wonderful job.
- Liked the fast pace.
- A place to talk.
- Find people/organizations interested.
- Well planned and organized.
- Good attendance.
- Well versed facilitation.
- Everyone had an opportunity to speak.
- Good representation from agencies and funders.
- Action plan was developed.
- Good common sense practical plans to be developed.
- Good overview of what this was about.
- Preliminary work was good in terms of the discussion paper.
- Focused and on task.
- Respectful of contributions of individuals.
- Recording on flipcharts concise—good/accurate summary of what was said.
- It was both structured (we accomplished work) and informal (everyone felt included).
- It helped bring some clarity to funders and agencies re collaboration—but also stimulated discussion re place of community. Too much time is spent on worry about agency, not community.
- A lot was covered in short time.
- Pre-reading was very well done.
- Well organized.
- 'It' worked as a workshop.

- It was well paced, well focused.
- Dealt with important things.
- It is well organized, planned. Everything went smoothly.
- Staying focused.
- Get strategies → action plan.
- Food.
- Small group work.
- The cross-section of attendees—interesting perspectives. Good facilitation.
- Well organized and facilitated.
- Productive, effective in clarifying issues and actions.
- The plenary session was great.
- Agenda flows well.
- Good facilitation, Kathy and Eric.
- Participants seemed well engaged.
- Good issues identified.
- You accomplished a lot!
- Time efficient.
- Task focused with action.
- Location appropriate.
- Very well facilitated and organized.
- Comprehensive identification of issues facing agencies, funders.
- Interesting mix of people.
- Topics appropriate.
- I appreciated the prioritization of strategies at the end—perhaps a clear elaboration of designated tasks for funders would have helped.

b) This was one of the worst workshops I have ever attended because...

- Breakout groups a bit too large (funders group).
- Too many issues within short timeframe.
- Plenary session room not ideal.
- I wonder about the outcome—it looks very ambitious.
- Dialogue with funders and organizations could be greater.
- The community—the ‘real’ people—were not here.
- Funders and agencies should have been permitted to be in the same workshops to ‘promote’ collaboration and trust.
- More discussion time, different coloured markers (I can't read black).
- Given timing with people travelling during lunch hour to get here, perhaps a few more non-heavy sweet snacks available at the beginning—cheese, more fruit, some crackers?
- Pressure to accomplish too much—could have circulated results, ask people to respond to set priorities—it felt a bit forced at the end.
- Dissent (by small agency) was disregarded—we could have taken a minute to have Holly or someone explain value of workshop re: tool kit.

- Funders seemed to be observers, not participants—what did they think about some of these ideas?
- A more extensive literature review to get more prep time foundation.
- More opportunity to talk about experiences and needs re: collaboration.
- A time factor—future discussion perhaps.
- The original invitation made the workshop seem totally *multicultural* in focus—in reality, it impacts on all funder/collaboration issues, therefore, some potential ‘invitees’ were absent.
- Very disappointed in the low turnout of ethno-specific groups.
- Ran out of tea!
- Too broad a focus for me—we all need to get more realistic about outcomes and take personal responsibility to make this happen—not say others should. We have done this before in other groups.
- Need to be careful of speaking too fast.
- Rephrase as opposed to putting words into people's mouths.
- The room was very ‘busy’. Flip charts not being used might perhaps be turned and anything on the wall removed once addressed.
- Doors might be shut while session in progress to cut down on distraction.
- Perhaps an icebreaker to encourage everyone to meet one another rather than sticking to the people they know well and work with already.
- On one hand not enough time, on the other hand the pace was fast and stimulating, i.e., discussions were not drawn out.
- Maybe a 9:00 am to 3:00 p.m. format?
- Lots of good work—I am concerned about *action* not taking place, because the original ‘ad hoc’ committee is disbanding. Someone must take the lead to coordinate action to completion.

8. REFERENCE LIST

Cox, Philip. 1999. 'Interorganizational Collaboration for Community Development Backgrounder'. Paper prepared for Sustainable Calgary.

Gray, Barbara. 1997. 'Conditions Facilitating Interorganizational Collaboration'. *Human Relations*, Vol. 38, No 10, 911-936.

Funk, Arnie and Rick Kubo. 1996. *A Checklist to Guide the Planning, Development, Implementation and Review of Partnership Programs for Children and Youth*. Vancouver Regional Child and Youth Committee.

Hutchinson, Kylie. 1999. *Getting it Together Collaboration Models for Community Groups*. Community Agency Partnership Project.

Lundy, Cindy. (Undated). *Coalition Building and Maintenance A Guide for Community Agencies Based on a Review of the BC CAPC Experience*. BC Association of Indian Friendship Centres.

Ministry of Human Resources. 1999. *Draft Strategy Promoting the Volunteer and Community Services Sector in British Columbia*. Victoria.

National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations. 1991. *Community Collaboration Manual*.

Nelson, Patricia, Lorraine McCulloch and Michael Clague. 1995. *Making Partnerships Work: A Review of the Management Models of the 14 Interministerial Programs in Vancouver*. Vancouver Regional Child and Youth Committee.

Torjman, Sherri. 1998. 'Strategies for a Caring Society'. Paper presented at the Conference 'Investing in the Whole Community: Strategies for a Caring Society'. Toronto: Trillium Foundation.