



# Community Organizations Collaborations: *Seven Questions & An Invitation*

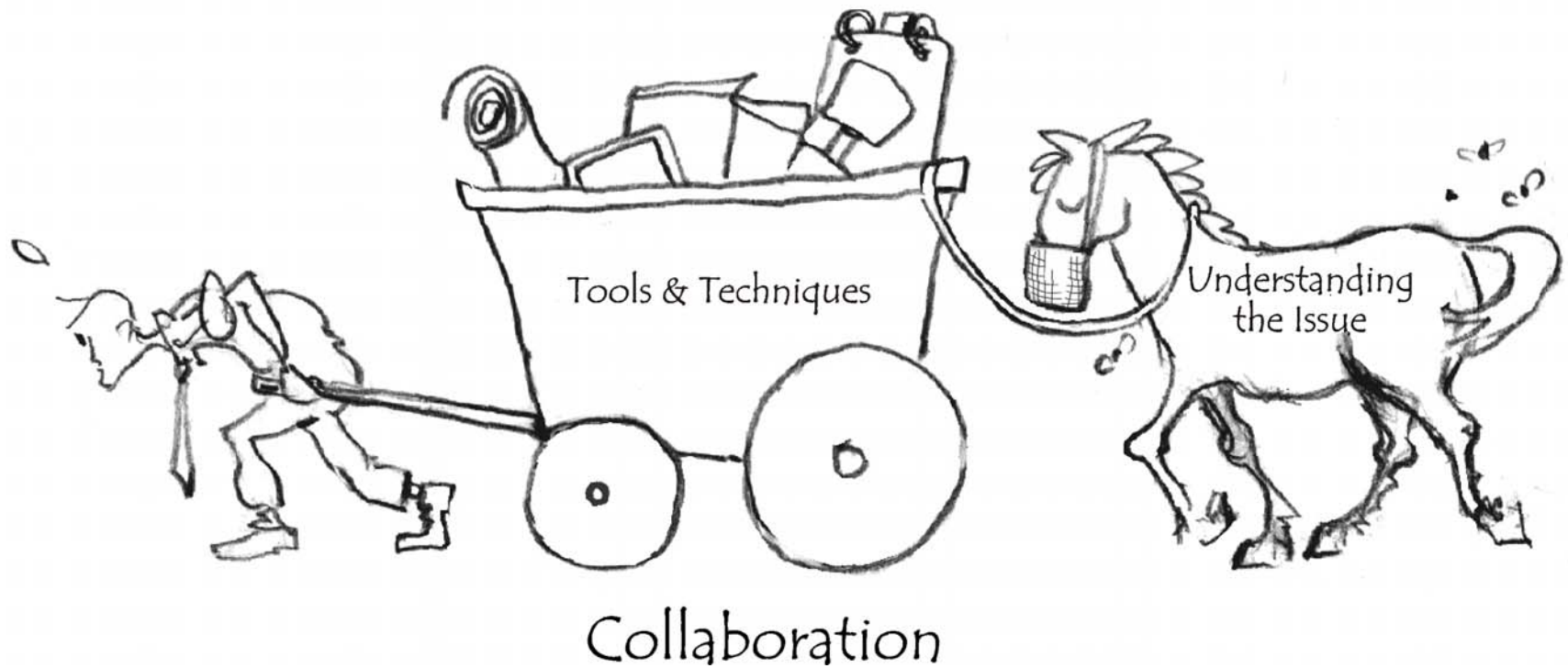
Urban Aboriginal Strategy Community  
Conference

Winnipeg, March 31, 2005



Getting Past Groundhog Day

# Getting Past “Collaboration Groundhog Day”



The first step ...

Getting an understanding of  
the answers to seven basic  
questions.

# What is a Collaboration?

A mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure for shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.

*The Amherst Wilder Foundation*

- Cooperation      Coordination      Collaboration      Merger



Question #1

Why Collaborate?

# The Push & Pull of Collaboration

## The Push

- Funders are increasingly requiring community organizations to collaborate in the hopes that this will reduce duplication, save resource and improve innovation and quality of services.

## The Pull

- Collaboration with other organizations can bring in resources, skills & perspectives, networks and clouts to tackle complex issues that no one community organization can tackle on their own.



## Question #2

Collaborate on what?

# ... On Almost Anything

- Community Organizing
- Building Community Awareness
- Social Marketing
- Joint Research & Development
- Mobilizing Resources
- Delivering Programs & Services
- Shaping Public Policy



# Question #3

With Whom to Collaborate?

# A lot of Different Organizations



**BUSINESS**



**GOVERNMENT**



**LABOUR**



**FOUNDATIONS**



**COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS**



**SEMI-PUBLIC  
ORGANIZATIONS**

## Question #4

What are the ingredients of successful collaboration?

# Ingredients of Successful Collaboration

- Environment
  - History of community collaboration.
  - Group perceived as community leaders.
  - Favorable social & political climate.
- Membership
  - Mutual understanding, respect & trust.
  - Good cross section of members.
  - Members perceive collaboration in their self-interest.
  - Ability to compromise.
- Process & Structure
  - Members share stake in process & outcome.
  - Multiple layers of decision-making.
  - Flexibility.
  - Clear roles and guidelines.
  - Adaptability.
- Communication
  - Open & frequent.
  - Informal and formal links.
- Purpose
  - Unique purpose.
  - Shared vision.
  - Concrete, attainable goals.
- Resources
  - Sufficient resources.
  - Skilled convenor

OR

***Results***

***Resiliency***

***Relationships***

## Question #5

What are the challenges of collaboration?

# Key Challenges

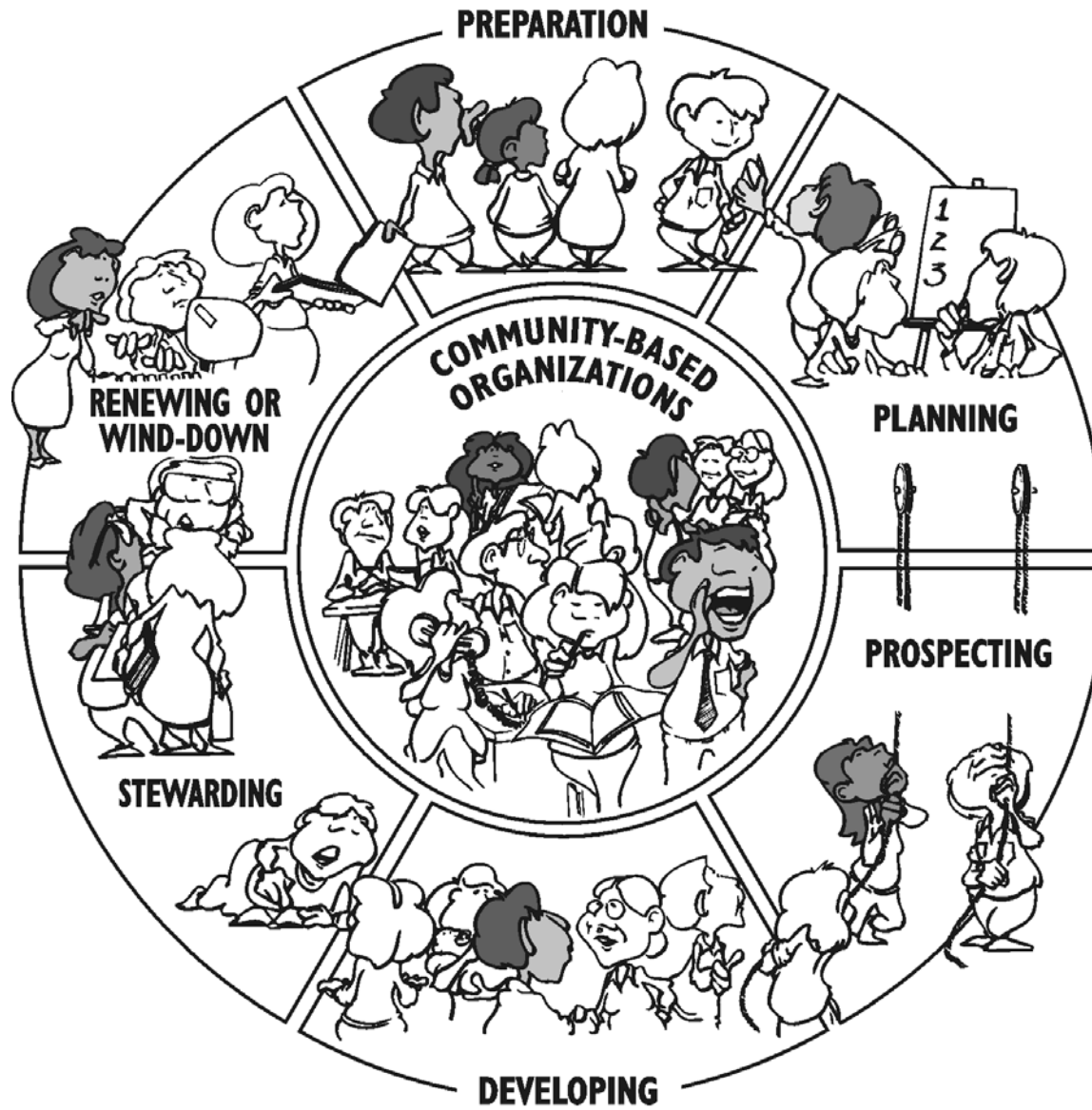
- Building - and sustaining - good personal relationships.
  - Clarifying accountabilities.
  - Ensuring & securing sufficient resources.
  - Managing transition and change.
  - Making good “win-win” deals.
  - Good communication.
  - Dealing with conflict.
  - People burn-out.
  - Knowing when collaboration is - and is not - worth the energy.
  - Being clear about motivation.
- “Bridging Cultures”



## Question #6

What are the stages of collaboration?

# Developing & Sustaining Partnerships



# Question #7

Is collaboration worth it?

# It depends!

## The Good

- Resources, skills and knowledge, networks and clout

## The Costs

- Time and resources
- Possible power imbalances
- Risk of “mission drift”
- Danger of “co-opting”

## The Uncertain

- Unclear accountabilities
- Unpredictable results
- Resources required.

***The benefits, costs and uncertainty of collaboration is different for each organization and changes over time.***

Getting past groundhog day -  
another step...

Consider participating in a  
Learning Community on  
Collaboration



# The Learning Community on Collaboration

- A list of helpful collaborative resources.
- Telephone-based Peer Learning opportunities with other people from across Canada - including people involved in UAS related initiatives in other cities - on a variety of topics (e.g. collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations).
- Engage Newsletter updates on new resources, stories and tools related to collaboration.



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