



*Approaches to Measuring  
More Collaboration  
in Communities*







# *Approaches to Measuring More Collaboration in Communities*

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*Tamarack exists to build vibrant and engaged communities in Canada.  
Our work will result in more collaborative approaches and less poverty.*



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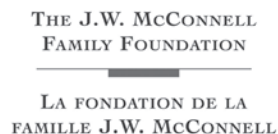
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## About Vibrant Communities

Vibrant Communities is a unique initiative that supports and links collaborations from over a dozen urban centres across Canada who are experimenting with comprehensive and collaborative approaches to reduce poverty.

Started in 2002 by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy and Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement, the network includes community collaboration from Abbotsford, B.C.'s Capital Region, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Saint John, St. John's, Surrey, the Saint Michel neighbourhood in Montreal, Trois Rivières, Waterloo, and Winnipeg.

The Vibrant Communities initiative is generously supported by contributions from The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Maytree, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada as well as a number of other private and community organizations.

## About this Resource

*Approaches to Measuring More Collaboration in Communities* is one of a series of papers that the sponsors of Vibrant Communities have developed with the financial assistance of The Ontario Trillium Foundation.

These papers review measurement tools and techniques used by a variety of organizations across Canada and internationally. This paper is a living document which Tamarack may upgrade periodically based on new learning and feedback from readers.

Please note that this paper can be downloaded free of charge from [www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca).

## About The Ontario Trillium Foundation

A leading grantmaker in Canada, The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) strengthens the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives. An agency of the Government of Ontario, OTF builds healthy and vibrant communities. Learn more about The Ontario Trillium Foundation at: [www.trilliumfoundation.org](http://www.trilliumfoundation.org)

La Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario (FTO), l'une des plus importantes fondations subventionnaires au Canada, renforce les capacités du secteur bénévole en investissant dans des initiatives communautaires. Relevant du gouvernement de l'Ontario, la FTO favorise l'épanouissement de communautés saines et dynamiques dans toute la province.

[www.trilliumfoundation.org](http://www.trilliumfoundation.org)

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DE L'ONTARIO**

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## **Editor: Liz Weaver**

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## **Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement**

The following individuals provided insight and guidance on the development of this paper.

- **Paul Born**, President, Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement
- **Mark Cabaj**, Vice President, Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement and Executive Director, Vibrant Communities
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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Summaries: Approaches to Measuring More Collaboration in Communities</b> .....	7
Vibrant Communities Canada .....	7
The Community Collaboration Project .....	9
Partnership Self-Assessment Tool .....	12
Evaluating Collaboratives .....	14
Evaluating Community Collaborations .....	16
Collaborations Factors Inventory .....	18
Collaborative Learning and Innovation .....	21
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	23





## Introduction

Collaboration is the collective effort of a group of diverse individuals, organizations and/or sectors working together for a common purpose. More than just a working group, collaboration implies that the stakeholders are coming together from different places to accomplish something more significant collectively than that which could be accomplished individually.

Collaboration can occur in a single organization or sector, or may cross many different sectors. In the Vibrant Communities example, collaboration specifically includes multi-sector partners and focuses on the engagement of government agencies, voluntary sector organizations, businesses, and citizens, including individuals living with low income, to work together to reduce poverty. Of course, not all collaboration works to reduce poverty. This paper focuses on researching tools which measure more collaboration through the lens of healthy and vibrant communities.

## Summary

The purpose of this paper is to review and describe different approaches that organizations and governments have used to measure more collaboration in communities. More collaboration in communities can be measured in many different ways. The measurement approaches detailed in this paper did not use a consistent methodology, and instead, developed customized measures versus using a set of easily recognized indicators.

The intended impact of this resource is twofold. First, the summaries and the accompanying annotated lists act as a starting point for exploring the different approaches to measuring more collaboration in communities. Second, these approaches can be used to stimulate conversations about the importance of understanding and measuring more collaboration.

## Background

This report is part of a funded project with The Ontario Trillium Foundation which seeks to research and build on current practices and knowledge regarding four aspects of healthy and vibrant communities and outline metrics that are being used to monitor each aspect. The four aspects are:

- Approaches to Measuring Less Poverty in Communities
- Approaches to Measuring More Vibrant Communities
- Approaches to Measuring More Engaged Communities
- Approaches to Measuring More Collaborative Communities

Ultimately, these papers are a starting point and further dialogue will be required to generate consensus about measuring, monitoring and reporting community progress and change.

As a first step to preparing this document, key informant interviews were held with individuals from Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement and Vibrant Communities Canada. The key informants identified approaches which they believed offered a compelling perspective on more collaboration in communities and/or a practical approach and research tools.

## Details

Measuring more collaboration in communities is challenging because it is difficult to know exactly how many collaborative planning processes are operating in any community at any given time. The lack of an accurate baseline is the first challenge. The second challenge is measuring the effectiveness of the collaborative process from the perspective of the collaborative group relative to the outcomes achieved.

The third challenge is that there is no standard set of indicators or measures for collaborations. Most often, evaluation of collaborative groups includes a set of measures focused on the success of the work done by the group and the level of achievement of the collaboration/work as assessed by group members. In these cases, evaluators considered the value of the collaboration, how well it worked, and if it was able to accomplish its goals.

Very little information was found that could actually measure the impact in collaboration on a community; instead, most measurement tools focus on numbers of collaborative groups and self-evaluation of these groups. In seeking to understand how to measure more collaboration within a community, there does not appear to be a standard set of measures.

It may be that more collaboration in communities is difficult to measure because many of the evaluation tools look at the *how* of collaboration and do not consider the actual work being done. Cross-collaborative community impacts are also rarely studied.

Many of the approaches in this paper use a framework for developing measures which may be adapted to different collaborative projects. While the framework or design is applicable to the individual project, the specific indicators and measures may need to be contextualized.

In producing this document, a conscious effort was made to bring together a variety of different approaches. Many of the approaches for evaluating collaborations use similar theories and ways of thinking. This paper serves as an overview of some of the different approaches and not a complete list of all approaches used when measuring more collaboration in communities.

To add value to the summaries, web-based resources that provide more in-depth explanations are included. Where possible, examples of programs using the approach are also included. For those of you who would like to obtain more information about a particular approach, the annotated list of resources offers source documents which explain the approach, and in some cases, also provides tools for reproducing evaluations, such as outcome tracking templates.



There are generally two types of measurements: quantitative or numeric (hard data) and qualitative or stories (soft data). Qualitative data is often viewed as being less rigorous and by combining it with quantitative data you get a more comprehensive picture of what is occurring in a community.

## Emerging Evaluation Practice

Many of the evaluation strategies presented in these papers are based on similar theories and ways of thinking about measures and evaluations. Two such examples stand out for further explanation, *Theory of Change*<sup>1</sup> and *Developmental Evaluation*<sup>2</sup>.

Theory of Change is a method or technique that can assist communities to think about, plan and evaluate their work. It involves *backwards mapping* from the goals and desired outcomes of the program to identify what is needed in the program design to accomplish these goals. Theory of Change was more fully developed for community use by the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, and is an integral part of the design of Vibrant Communities, Sustainable Livelihoods, National Indicators and likely many others.

Developmental evaluation is a complete approach to evaluation which is appropriate to situations of shifting context, innovation and complexity. Differing from *formative evaluation* that is focused on refining existing models, programs or strategies, and *summative evaluation* that is focused on judging the worth of those models, programs and strategies, *developmental evaluation* is intended to help people and organizations create and continually adapt interventions. Unlike traditional situations where the emphasis is on ‘think, plan, implement and monitor’, the process of thinking, planning, implementing and evaluation is continuous and simultaneous. This is vastly different from traditional evaluation as shown in the following figure.

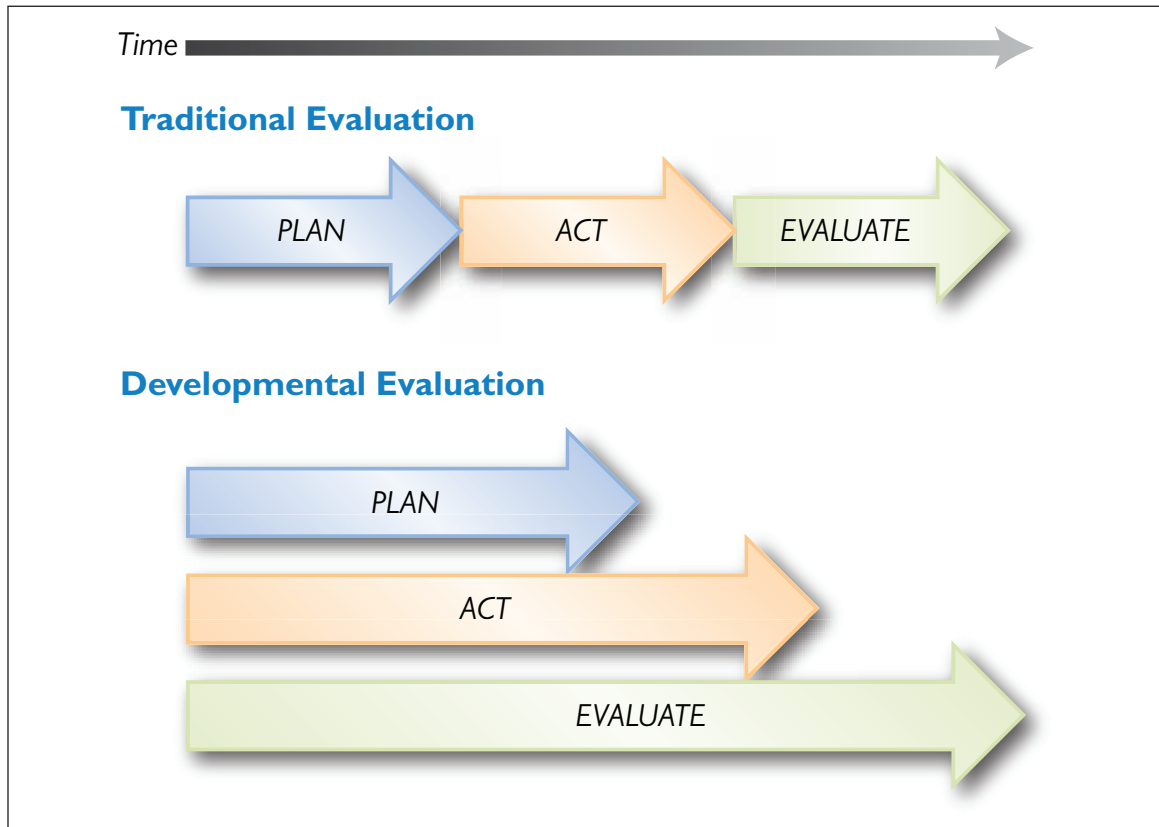
Jamie Gamble explains the theory and approach to developmental evaluation in *A Developmental Evaluation Primer* published by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and can be found on their website. It is worth reviewing these concepts in order to understand how evaluation and measures are used in developmental evaluation processes. Developmental evaluation and theory of change are an emerging part of modern evaluative frameworks used by many of the approaches included in this paper.

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1 For more information, see *Theory of Change* by ActKnowledge: <http://www.theoryofchange.org>

2 For more information see Jamie Gamble, *A Developmental Evaluation Primer*.  
<http://www.mcconnellfoundation.ca/utilisateur/documents/EN/Initiatives/Sustaining%20Social%20Innovation/A%20Developmental%20Evaluation%20Primer%20-%20EN.pdf>

## Traditional versus Developmental Evaluation



(adapted from Gamble, A Developmental Evaluation Primer, p. 30)

The implications for measurement in developmental evaluation are significant. The process of identifying what measures are required, gathering and analyzing data on them, and making decisions is highly adaptive. In developmental evaluation, the emphasis is often on rapid feedback, 'good enough' level of proof, and the refinement, addition and dropping of measures. Developmental evaluation also puts emphasis on casting a wide net in search of outcomes; seeking unintended outcomes as well as intended ones.

### For Further Reading

This paper provides seven different approaches for measuring more collaboration in communities. Each approach contains the following information.

- **Summary** – Provides the essence of the approach and explains why the approach is included in this document
- **Background** – Includes the history of the approach, its current application and information about the organization and partners if applicable
- **Details** – Explains further what and how the approach measures more collaboration in communities
- **For Further Reading** – Provides a resource list of web links and print resources to find more details and examples about the approaches outlined



# Summaries: Approaches to Measuring More Collaboration in Communities

## Vibrant Communities Canada

### Summary

Vibrant Communities are comprehensive, place-based community initiatives focused on poverty reduction. Vibrant Communities uses a framework for change when developing a community plan or strategies focused on poverty reduction. Each framework for change details the economic, social and systems change initiatives meant to reduce poverty in the specific community or neighbourhood. The Vibrant Communities model focuses on poverty reduction, cross-sector community engagement, leveraging community assets, an active action and learning process and on-going evaluation.

### Background

Vibrant Communities began in 2002 as a community-driven initiative for reducing poverty in Canada. Its national sponsors are: The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Caledon Institute of Social Policy and Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement. Vibrant Communities is a network of twelve initiatives across Canada. Vibrant Communities Trail Builders are collaborative, place-based initiatives currently implementing multi-year programs and strategies to reduce poverty.

### Details

Each Vibrant Communities Trail Builder initiative is developed by a local community collaborative planning table. Each community is also encouraged to develop its own indicators for measuring community change and progress around poverty reduction. Vibrant Communities Canada has also developed a number of cross-community or proxy indicators. Since each community approach is unique, Trail Builder Communities report on a variety of indicators including changes in income, education levels, housing and financial assets and changes in the collaborative structure including the engagement of multi-sector partners.

“Vibrant Communities is a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships that make use of our most valuable assets – people, organizations, businesses and governments.”

*(Vibrant Communities Website)*

Vibrant Communities measure progress of collaboration by both the number of connections made and the results-based outcomes of the collaborative. Trail Builder communities submit regular reports to the sponsors of Vibrant Communities.

Trail Builders are asked to examine the contributions their collaborations make to advancing specific strategies or projects. A key element of the Vibrant Communities model is multi-sector

engagement around the issue of poverty and tracking collaborative partnerships is an important part of the evaluation. The table below is a sample partnership tracking tool used by Trail Builder initiatives.

Vibrant communities also have partnership targets which are used to measure and evaluate the program. The partners working with the initiative may be contributing by:

- Serving on the initiative’s governing body
- Providing funding or in-kind support to the convenor group or its partners
- Implementing a poverty reduction initiative
- Providing technical knowledge/expertise
- Using influence to advance the initiative’s work
- Organizing community members to make things happen

### Partnership Tracking Tool

Sector	# of Partners	Breakdown
Government		Federal – Provincial – Regional – Municipal – First Nations –
Business		
Non-profit		
Low-Income		
Interested Citizens		

### For Further Reading:

*Learning and Evaluation for Trail Builder Initiatives in Vibrant Communities*. February 2005  
<http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/TBpackage.pdf>

This resource describes the three streams of evaluation which Vibrant Communities are using for evaluation: Community Approach; Strategies and Projects; and, Reporting and Dissemination. Included is information about the Theory of Change and Developmental Evaluation.

Evaluation and Learning, Vibrant Communities <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s34.html>

The Vibrant Communities website includes Trail Builders Community updates which details progress is being made toward poverty reduction goals in communities across Canada.

Born, Paul (ed.). *Creating Vibrant Communities: How Individuals and Organizations from Diverse Sectors of Society are Coming Together to Reduce Poverty in Canada*. Toronto: BPS Books. 2008

This book thoroughly describes the Vibrant Communities approach to poverty reduction, the evaluation framework, and provides case examples from Trail Builder communities across Canada.



## The Community Collaboration Project

### Summary

The Rural Development Institute and Brandon University in Manitoba developed the Community Collaboration Project (CCP) to increase capacity and governance in rural communities. Measures used to evaluate each collaborative were developed by each group. Indicators were chosen at the beginning of the project based on both quantitative and qualitative measures. These measures were expected to be updated over time. Data was collected from diverse sources and reviewed by the Rural Development Institute and each regional roundtable.

### Background

The Rural Development Institute and Brandon University engaged in the Community Collaboration Project: Empowering Communities and Building Capacity, from 2005 – 2008. This project was funded through the Government of Canada's Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The Community Collaboration Project (CCP) was initiated in 1999 in Manitoba and Nunavut as a collaborative arrangement between communities in four regions of Manitoba and the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, federal, provincial and territorial government departments and agencies, non-government organizations and Rural Development Institute (RDI) of Brandon University. (*Fact Sheet, 2007*)

### Details

The Community Collaboration Project (CCP) focused only on rural collaboration projects, including multi-community collaborations. Because of the lack of resources rural communities face, the collaboration efforts, in many cases, brought together individuals and groups to address diverse planning, economic development and infrastructure issues, among others. CCP provided opportunities for new forms of collaboration and governance.

**With access to the appropriate tools, resources and information, individuals living in rural and northern communities can engage in self-sustaining, informed, local decision-making and meaningful dialogue between and among communities, organizations and governments.**

In evaluating and measuring individual collaboration projects, the Rural Development Institute established a framework for evaluation using a Logic Model and Participatory Evaluation. Each project was also provided with a comprehensive evaluation handbook. The annotated list below provides detailed information about the specific projects.

The handbook stressed the importance of establishing a baseline before the project begins in order to measure progress. Specific indicators were developed by each project. According to the Handbook, the indicators to be selected should be a combination of quantitative measures (have a numerical value) and qualitative measures (reflect perceptions, judgments or attitudes).

The final list of indicators should be a balanced mix of quantitative and qualitative measures so that a more realistic picture of what has happened is described.

When developing indicators, thought should be given to:

- data availability and data collection: what is possible with the resources available;
- attribution: measuring results that can be reasonably attributed to the group's activities;
- usefulness: potential use of evaluation findings while taking into account the importance of ensuring that the captured information is relevant; and
- Simplicity: two-three indicators per outcome (make sure the evaluation process isn't guiding the group instead of the group guiding the evaluation)."

*(Evaluation Handbook, p. 30)*

The Evaluation Handbook also advised that the indicators selected should be of a quantity and type that would be manageable for the number of stakeholders and must also be relevant to at least one stakeholder.

This approach recommended that the regional round table, advisory group, Rural Development Institute and University partners should decide on the best way to collect information based on the individual group itself and their comfort level with particular tools, resources available, cultural aspects, language, etc. The data was to be collected from a wide variety of sources; from meeting minutes and personal accounts to Statistics Canada data. Data collection for the indicators was the combined responsibility of Rural Development Institute and the Regional Roundtable.

## For Further Reading

Marian Beattie and Robert C. Annis, *The Community Collaboration Story, Community Collaboration Project: Empowering Communities & Building Capacity, 2005–2008* (CCP Model Project). Rural Development Institute, Brandon University. <http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/Publications/CCP/CommCollabModelFinalReport-Nov2008.pdf>

The Community Collaboration Story is the final report of the CCP project including information about participant roundtable groups. The Community Collaboration Story shares lessons learned about the different models and extensive details on several of the actual roundtable projects. For a shorter presentation with the essence of what was learned see the document *Rural Matters! Forging Healthy Canadian Communities*, July 2008 at <http://www2.brandonu.ca/rdi/Publications/CCP/CommCollabStory-RuralMattersPresentation.pdf>



Fact Sheet: Community Collaboration Project (CCP): Empowering Communities and Building Capacity 2005-2008:

[http://www2.brandonu.ca/rdi/Factsheets/CCP\\_ModelsProjectFactsheet-July2007.pdf](http://www2.brandonu.ca/rdi/Factsheets/CCP_ModelsProjectFactsheet-July2007.pdf)

This fact sheet offers a quick overview of the CCP. It explains the collaboration model and provides details of two regional roundtables: Waterwolf Region and Yukon Region.

*CCP Process Handbook*. 2006:

[http://www2.brandonu.ca/rdi/Publications/CCP/CCP\\_ProcessHandbook.pdf](http://www2.brandonu.ca/rdi/Publications/CCP/CCP_ProcessHandbook.pdf)

This handbook was produced for the roundtable groups participating in the CCP. The bulk of this document is a set of useful tools for collecting information and planning projects. Included are a blank Logic Model template and other tools and worksheets for designing, tracking and evaluating each project. This resource provides sample tools which may be adapted for other collaborative initiatives.

Rural Development Institute, Community Collaboration Project Website

<http://www2.brandonu.ca/rdi/ccp.asp>

This website offers links to actual examples of CCP projects and other resources and publications of the Rural Development Institute. Although the project ended in 2008, there are a lot of valuable resources available about this project and others.

## Partnership Self-Assessment Tool

### Summary

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, developed by the Centre for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health, consists of a questionnaire for participants involved in a collaborative planning process which evaluates the collaborative project after it has been completed. It is designed to be completed by participants from within the project to measure the strength of the partnership's level of collaboration and the success of working together.

### Background

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool is a free product of the Centre for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health – The New York Academy of Medicine. In 2001, the Center conducted the National Study of Partnership Functioning, a rigorous, evidence based study of partnerships throughout the United States which led to the development of the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool.

### Details

The National Study of Partnership Functioning looked at 63 partnerships throughout the United States. It was designed to determine the extent to which partnerships achieve synergy. According to the study, partnerships with a high level of synergy have a special kind of leadership. This special kind of leadership relationship promoted productive interactions and the ability to efficiently use resources to achieve change. The National Study of Partnership Functioning called this *partnership efficiency*.

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool can be used to uncover the partnership's strengths and weaknesses in areas that are known to be related to:

- Synergy – leadership
- Efficiency
- Administration and management
- Sufficiency of resources (financial and non-financial)

Synergy is a key indicator of a successful collaborative process because it reflects the extent to which the partnership can do more than any of its individual participants. Put another way, a partnership's level of synergy indicates the extent to which the partnership, as a whole, is greater than the sum of its parts.

*(Tool Report)*

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool also measures the partners' perspectives about the partnership's decision-making process, the benefits and drawbacks of participating in the partnership and their overall satisfaction with the partnership.



## Synergy: The unique advantage of collaboration



(adapted from *Partnership Synergy*, p. 184)

Measuring the collaboration's effectiveness is gathered through of a self-assessment questionnaire which must be completed within 30 days of distribution. The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool suggests that 65% of questionnaires must be completed for a valid result. The Partnership Self Assessment Tool is now only available in a print format. The website provides an evaluation guide for organizations to successfully use the tool.

The primary function of this tool is to assess how well the collaboration worked. It is a self-assessment tool of the collaborative experience rather than an independent evaluation of the collaborative results and, as such, it measures only the value and success of a specific collaborative planning process from the experience of the participants in that process.

## For Further Reading

Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, *Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health*: <http://partnershiptool.net/>

This is the website of the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool. There are instructions provided to guide you through the process and assess results.

Roz Lasker, Rebecca Miller, and Elisa Weiss, *Partnership Synergy: A Practical Framework for Studying and Strengthening the Collaborative Advantage*. The Milbank Quarterly. June 2001. V: 79, 179-206. <http://cacsh.org/pdf/milq792.pdf>

This paper explains the framework used to determine a successful partnership and how to improve existing partnerships. This article also defines the concept of partnership synergy, its value and how it is achieved. The theory behind the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool is also described in this paper.

The Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health – Website  
<http://cacsh.org/index.html>

This website details the functions of the Center and includes links to other resources. The Center states that they create models which “conceptualize – in a measurable way – how collaboration strengthens the ability of a group to identify, understand, and solve complex problems.”

## Evaluating Collaboratives

### Summary

The University of Wisconsin – Extension, has developed a framework for the evaluation of collaboratives based on their experiences working with groups and group processes for several years. This approach provides guidelines for developing indicators and measures based on identifying the desired outcomes of the project using a logic model approach.

### Background

Evaluating Collaboratives is a manual produced by the University of Wisconsin – Extension, Program Development and Evaluation. A description of the work of the Program Development and Evaluation Unit is to provide training and technical assistance to enable Cooperative Extension campus and community-based faculty and staff to plan, implement and evaluate high quality educational programs.

### Details

The University of Wisconsin – Extension produced the resource *Evaluating Collaboratives, Reaching the Potential* in 1998 which states:

“Readers looking for a ‘cookbook’ or ‘best method’ for evaluating collaboratives will be disappointed. Our purpose is to provide a compendium of ideas and research for you to think about and choose from as you help your collaborative reach its potential”

*(Evaluating Collaboratives, Reaching the Potential, p. 1)*

In this approach, the collaborative group will need to identify the specific outcomes they are trying to achieve. It is through this part of program planning design that the group defines the indicators and measures for those outcomes.

Determining the desired outcome and developing a set of indicators to measure progress and achievement of the outcome can be uncovered through the following questions which can be used as evaluative questions after the program begins:

#### Typical Questions

- Has anything improved as a result of our work? Changed? What? How? For whom?
- To what extent are we achieving desired outcomes? Keeping our promise?
- What difference has resulted from our working as a collaborative?
- Was the collaborative effort worth the time and costs to achieve its results?



Final outcomes or impact refers to the highest level outcome. These results usually take a long time to achieve and have wider socioeconomic and /or environmental benefit. Outcome assessment focuses on two components including changes to individuals, families, groups, organizations, systems, or communities and the value that is added as a result of the collaborative process.

The *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential* resource provides useful information about developing and measuring outcomes.

## For Further Reading

Ellen Taylor-Powell, Boyd Rossing and Jean Geran, *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential*. 1998 <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/G3658-8.PDF>

This paper is the result of several years of group discussion and information gathering about how to evaluate collaboratives aimed at filling the gap left when traditional evaluations were not working well to evaluate them. The document also includes worksheets and tools which may be adapted to many projects.

University of Wisconsin – Extension, Program Development and Evaluation, Evaluation <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/index.html>

The University of Wisconsin – Extension, Program Development and Evaluation website contains a wealth of resources to understand the types of models and tools this program is using for evaluations.

*Evaluating Collaboratives, National Extension Family Life Specialists Conference*. April 2005 [http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/powerpt/05aprilconfcollaboratives.ppt#347,1,Evaluating Collaboration](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/powerpt/05aprilconfcollaboratives.ppt#347,1,Evaluating%20Collaboration)

This is a presentation is an overview of the evaluation process for the collaborations discussed above.

## Evaluating Community Collaboratives

### Summary

Tom Wolff & Associates have developed survey tools which measure and analyze collaborative groups on a variety of attributes including the group's structure, inclusivity effectiveness and communication. This website provides free tools and surveys to assist groups in assessing themselves.

### Background

Tom Wolff is a US-based consultant on coalition building and community development. He has over 30 years of experience training and consulting with diverse groups including communities, individuals and organizations.

### Details

This approach enables the evaluation to be conducted by either the group or an external evaluator. Wolff stresses that the collaborative group will be able to integrate evaluation processes into their regular operations. The collaboration is the primary consumer of the evaluation, and therefore the collaborative group needs to be heavily engaged and invested in the evaluation process.

### Evaluation Breakdown

Type of Evaluation	Main Question	Focus	Methodology
Process	What activities took place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>day-to-day activities of your collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activity logs</li> <li>surveys</li> <li>interviews</li> </ul>
Outcome	What was accomplished?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accomplishments</li> <li>number and type of changes in policies or practices in the community</li> <li>development of new services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>surveys of self-reported behaviour changes</li> <li>surveys rating significance of outcomes</li> <li>number of objectives met</li> </ul>
Impact	What were the long-term effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>impacts on the community</li> <li>over and above specific outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistical Indicators</li> </ul>

*(Information used from Evaluating Community Collaboratives, p. 5)*



Information is gathered using a variety of surveys, charts and checklists by the group. A sample of the surveys and attributes measured appear below:

- Group Satisfaction Survey
- Assessing the Group including:
  - Clarity of coalition’s vision and goals
  - Effectiveness of outreach & communication
  - Opportunities for responsibility/growth for members
  - Effectiveness in doing projects
  - Use of research and external sources
  - Sense of community within group
  - Relationship of group with elected officials, and other external leaders
- Climate Diagnostic Tool: The Six R’s of Participation (recognition, respect, role, relationship, reward, results)
- Inclusivity Checklist
- Sustainability Benchmarks

### For Further Reading

Tom Wolff, *A Practical Approach to Evaluating Coalitions*. T. Backer (Ed.), *Evaluating Community Collaborations*. Springer Publishing, 2002 <http://www.tomwolff.com/resources/backer.pdf>

This is the fourth chapter in the book entitled *Evaluating Community Collaborations*. This chapter is available online with the extensive worksheets and surveys which makes this an extremely useful tool.

Tom Wolff – Website <http://www.tomwolff.com/>

The Tom Wolff and Associates website provides an overview of their work on building collaborations and coalitions, plus access to resources and research publications. Also accessible from this website are bi-annual newsletters, and under the tools tab, are assessment tools for groups.

## Collaboration Factors Inventory

### Summary

The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation Collaboration Factors Inventory is an online tool which evaluates collaborative efforts through a questionnaire which is completed by participants. The tool automatically calculates a score based on the responses by a group or individuals in the group. This score can be used to guide the collaborative understanding of the process they are/were involved in. This is a free and easy to use tool.

### Background

The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation is a non-profit health and human services organization founded by Amherst H. Wilder and family. Wilder Research is a non-profit research and evaluation group dedicated to practical research in the field of human services and part of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

### Details

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory is an online questionnaire which measures collaboration at the following levels:

- The effectiveness of a group, including leadership, decision-making ability and ability to achieve goals
- The level of collaboration achieved within the group
- The group members belief in the credibility and image of the collaborative within the greater community

The questionnaire can be completed at any stage of the collaboration, although some questions may seem less applicable at the onset because no opinion or data may be available yet. After completing the questions, a report is generated with a score for each of the 20 factors.

The report generated by the online tool can then be used in dialogue with the group to build on strengths and develop weaker areas. Although this tool may be used by an individual, a better result will be found when a good portion of the group members complete the assessment. The following figure provides a sample of a completed report with the factors and scores listed.

For the best interpretation of the scores, the creators recommend purchasing the book, *Collaboration: What Makes It Work* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.).



## Sample Report

### Collaboration Factors Inventory

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**Thank you for completing the inventory!**

The figures below show your average score on each of 20 factors. Averages can range from 1 to 5. To better interpret your scores, refer to [Collaboration: What Makes It Work, Second Edition](#). If you do not own this publication, you may purchase it online by clicking on the link.

**Bookmark this page to return to these scores later** (please note that old scores may occasionally be cleared from this database). You may also print these summary scores or [your individual item responses](#), if you prefer.

Factor	Factor Average
History of collaboration or cooperation in the community	4.0
Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community	2.5
Favorable political and social climate	5.0
Mutual respect, understanding, and trust	4.5
Appropriate cross section of members	3.5
Members see collaboration as in their self-interest	4.0
Ability to compromise	2.0
Members share a stake in both process and outcome	4.7
Multiple layers of decision-making	2.0
Flexibility	4.0
Development of clear roles and policy guidelines	2.5
Adaptability	2.5
Appropriate pace of development	3.5
Open and frequent communication	3.7
Established informal relationships and communications links	4.0
Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	4.3
Shared vision	4.0
Unique purpose	5.0
Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time	3.0
Skilled leadership	4.0
What is working well in your collaborative? (optional)	
<i>communication, dedication</i>	
What needs improvement in your collaborative? (optional)	
<i>clear leadership, more connections</i>	
<i>As a general rule...</i>	
<i>Scores of 4.0 to 5.0 - strengths, don't need attention</i>	
<i>Scores of 3.0 to 3.9 - borderline, deserve discussion</i>	
<i>Scores of 1.0 to 2.9 - concerns that should be addressed</i>	

*Other helpful Wilder sites:*

[Twin Cities Compass](#) | [Wilder Research](#) | [Amherst H. Wilder Foundation](#) | [Executive Summary blog](#) | [Community DataWorks](#)

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## For Further Reading

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory <http://wilderresearch.org/tools/cfi/index.php>

This is an online tool for assessing a collaborative group. Groups can register for this assessment, then members can complete the online questions, and when finished, the tool will generate a report with scores on different attributes within group work. There are 42 questions to be completed which rate the collaboration.

Wilder Research <http://www.wilder.org/research.0.html>

This is the Wilder Research section of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation website. There are a number of articles and publications available on topics such as collaboration, engagement and evaluation.

Can This Collaboration Be Saved? <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/129/savecollab.html>

In *Collaboration: What Makes It Work*, twenty factors proven to make or break a group effort are identified. Those factors fall into six categories including general environment, membership, structure and process, communication, purpose and resources.



## Collaborative Learning and Innovation

### Summary

Collaborative Learning and Innovation determines the level of social capital within groups as a measure of more collaboration. This approach offers a unique perspective on collaboration. This study may serve as an example to help build collaborative efforts.

### Background

Ann Svendsen is the executive director of Collaborative Learning and Innovation Group (CLI) of the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at Simon Fraser University.

### Details

Svendsen and Boutilier developed metrics used to evaluate a particular collaboration in Clayoquot Sound. These metrics provide a useful continuum:

Confrontation → Power → Struggle → Exploration → Cooperation Collaboration<sup>3</sup>

Svendsen and Boutilier documented the journey from conflict to collaboration among multiple groups in Clayoquot, including environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), First Nations, and the logging industry, and evaluated the process using a series of surveys, meetings and interviews. Among their findings were measures of more collaboration in the community including:

- Increased social capital – more specifically building/developing trust between the groups
- Increased networks between the groups through bridging and bonding relationships
- Shared meaning, norms and values

This approach offers another way to look at more collaboration from the perspective of building networks and social capital between groups. The source document in the reading list provides comprehensive information about the study.

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<sup>3</sup> See tables 1 and 2 on p.47-48 of *From Conflict to Collaboration* from the reading list.

## For Further Reading

Collaborative Learning and Innovation, Simon Fraser University:

<http://www.sfu.ca/cscd/cli/default.htm>

The CLI website provides several publications and resources on topics such as collaborative processes, engagement, building social capital and co-creative engagement.

Robert G. Boutilier and Ann C. Svendsen, *From Conflict to Collaboration: Stakeholder Bridging and Bonding in Clayoquot Sound*. 2000

<http://www.cim.sfu.ca/folders/research/8%20-%20Conflict%20to%20Collab%20Jan%2016.pdf>

This document details the study completed by Boutilier and Svendsen. The authors explain the concepts of bridging and bonding in relationships between groups that are useful for building collaborative relationships between conflicting groups. The authors break down the stages into manageable parts detailing the process which took place between the main stakeholders.



## Conclusions

There are significant challenges in measuring more collaboration in communities. Most examples provided measure the impact of the collaborative effort from the perspective of the individuals involved but often don't measure the overall impact on communities of multiple collaborative efforts. Most approaches to evaluating collaboratives measure the value and success rather than measuring:

- Increasing collaboration in communities or groups
- Numbers of pre-existing collaborations or collaborative projects
- The collective community impact of multiple collaborative efforts

Self-assessment tools seem to be the approach used most often for measuring collaboration. The Collaboration Factors Inventory and Partnership Self-Assessment attempts to capture the amount of collaboration and level of cooperation occurring within a single collaborative group. The Vibrant Communities example measures collaboration in terms of numerical data; quantifying both the collaborative effort and impact on individuals.

Other significant themes from the examples provided include:

- More than half of these approaches use subjective questions like thoughts, feelings and opinions, to evaluate through feedback either in self-evaluation or external evaluation
- More than half also used standardized measures (measures all projects with same criteria)
- More than half used community specific measures (developed by initiative) either with standardized measures or exclusive to other measures
- All the examples used at least some of their own data with only one including national statistical data (The most common approach to measuring collaborations involves an internal versus external or community perspective)
- Only two of the approaches attempted to measure the impact or long-term effects of their collaboration
- Only two approaches were specifically multi-sector

## Final Thoughts and Questions:

There are a number of questions which have emerged from this research. These include:

1. Are there communities measuring the collective efforts and impacts of multiple collaborative planning processes and the effectiveness of the community's ability to solve social problems?
2. Why are there so few examples using quantitative data for measuring collaboration or greater collaboration?
3. Are there benchmarking tools which determine where and what collaborations are occurring in communities and how they can be tracked?

Collaboration is increasingly important in community work as community planning attempts to draw more stakeholders into decision-making. The questions above provide an opportunity to identify key elements of emerging practices for measuring more collaboration in communities.



