



# Some perspectives on collaboration within the community and voluntary sector

The Disability Federation of Ireland, Quarterly Regional Forum,  
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# Agenda

- Background to Care Alliance Ireland
- Outline the case for collaboration, Himmelmans Matrix, Irish NFP/NGO experience.
- Discuss factors influencing the success of collaboration
- Discuss three projects –
  - Carers Week
  - Joint Conference
  - Joint Research
- Conclusions and Observations

# Care Alliance Ireland

- *Set up 1995, limited voice of Family Carers within condition specific NGO's*
- *2010 - 70 members.*
- *Membership see*  
<http://www.carealliance.ie/membership.php>

*Activities See* <http://www.carealliance.ie/activities.php>

# Collaboration/Federations/Networks/Alliances in The Not-For-Profit Sector in Ireland

- **Sectoral**- Care Alliance Ireland - Neurological Alliance of Ireland - Disability Federation of Ireland
- **Generic** -The Wheel - The Carmichael Centre
- **Others** - RCNI,EAPN,CRA,One Family

# Collaboration – the theoretical case for it

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

# Himmelman's Matrix

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

(Himmelman, 1994)

## Collaboration – the Irish NFP experience

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

# Alliances in Fashion ? Is this collaboration?

## NGO Sector

- Equality and Rights Alliance
- Voices that Matter Campaign
- Older and Bolder

## Other Sectors

- *TCD / UCD Innovation Alliance to Drive Smart Economy Job Creation (followed by NUI Galway/ UL Limerick)*

# Factors influencing the success of collaboration

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

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

- *Interpersonal Factors*

# Barriers to Effective Collaboration

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

# Care Alliance Ireland

- *In 2008 – secured 3 year National Federation Funding to develop activities*
- *3 Collaborative projects developed;*
  - *National Carers Week*
  - *Joint Conference*
  - *Joint Research Project*



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

**Carers Week 14th - 20th June, 2010**

# What is Carers Week?

- Began in Ireland 2007 – 15 events
- Objectives –
  - Events – Awareness - Profile
- Outputs - 2010 – 115 events - 9 National Partner Organisations - 32 Organisations involved in events- 10 collaborative events - >3,500 Family Carers took part.

# Nature of Collaboration

- Steering Group
- Formal Partnership Contract
- Agreed Financial contribution
- Joint Events

# Reflection

- Objectives largely met/exceeded
  - Events
  - Media
- Depth of collaboration? – progressing and improving yr on yr
- Planning crucial
- Buy in critical
- Organisational calendars

Takes constant work – goodwill- key person to drive it within each organisation

## 2) Joint Conference

- *The Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) [www.nai.ie](http://www.nai.ie), Brain Awareness Week,*  
*‘Always on my mind: Caring for a person with a neurological condition’ (Dublin, March 10<sup>th</sup> 2009)*
- **Objectives** – NAI – Care Alliance Ireland – fit with strategic objectives
- **Outcomes** – High Attendance – High Quality Programme - Extremely high satisfaction levels of participants –
- **Outputs** – wider membership – stronger relationship between both orgs.

# Reflection

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

## 3- Joint Research

- Background - Build on Quantitative research - Family Carers – Reported Health Status(2008), Parkinsons Association
- Objectives – Research Agenda, Inform Policy and Practice,
- Outputs/Outcomes – High quality research – peer reviewed – accepted for publication – widely distributed –

# Reflection

- Progressed Family Carer Research
- Accessing respondents relatively easy
- Both organisations based in same building
- Parkinsons CEO moved on- took time to develop relationship with new CEO

# Critical Components of successful Collaboration – Our experience

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

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

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

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

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

# Thank You

# Questions?

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



# Appendix i

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

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

# Appendix ii - Organisational and Individual Barriers to

## Effective Inter-organisational Working -

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

# Appendix iii - References

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