Improving Organizational Sustainability through Collaboration and Communication

March 20, 2013
Presenters

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Disclaimer

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Goals for today

• Describe how strategic communications can support sustainability

• Define “strategic partnership” and identify three potential benefits these partnerships can provide an organization or program

• Name three best practices for cultivating a relationship with a potential funder
But, I don’t have time for this!

Daily Checklist:
- Deal with email inbox!
- Return phone calls
- Meetings and more meetings
- Stay on top of current events, data and trends
- Write grant proposals, reports to funders
- Fill job openings
- Manage daily crises.
- Write *more* grant proposals
- Keep staff morale high

- Oh yeah, send pithy Tweets and form a strategic partnership by COB!
Yes, you do!

• Strategic communications and collaborations can be part of the fabric of your organization.
• Think of these not only as tasks in a “job description” but as part of the culture of an organization.
• The goal? Cultivate the skills and attitudes – and financial support -- to maintain an ongoing and continuous focus on strategic communication & collaborative partnerships throughout the organization.
The Big Picture: Sustainability

• The program capacity to achieve long-term success
• Providing high quality services without the threat or loss of financial support.
• Maintaining and continuing program services with support of diverse funding
• Ensuring that the program becomes an integral and permanent part of community resources.
Sustainable Programs have

• Have solid, strong foundations
• Healthy, realistic, and effective organizational structures
• Solid and continuous financial support
• Adequate and qualified staff
• Effective marketing
• A fund development and sustainability plan
Communications & Collaboration are the Glue in your Sustainability Plan

**Built to Last:** Webinar on Programmatic Sustainability (see OAH website “For Grantees and in the PAF section)

Various approaches, frameworks and definitions of sustainability

Communications & collaborations are key elements across the models
What it can look like

• Community partners are working with you to implement your program’s curriculum.

• A local foundation Tweets about outcome evaluation findings from your recently published program success story published jointly with a local university.

• A statewide coalition invites you to present; a regional grant maker is impressed and asks you to submit a grant proposal.
What do these scenarios have in common?

- They resulted from the program or organization’s strategic communications and collaborations and reflect the work of multiple staff.
- The organization’s mission and programmatic work is communicated to diverse audiences.
- They underscore the value of the program to the local community and/or to the field.
Part 1: Understanding how a communication strategy supports sustainability
Why Communication Matters to Sustainability

• Communicating well supports your project today and in the future
• Not only is your target population more likely to know about you...
• But so are others who have the potential position and influence to help.

We live in a networked society. Communicating well with our network strengthens it and extends our reach.
What’s the difference between a method and a strategy?

• A communications method is a technique or channel to reach an audience with message.
• A communication strategy includes the goal, the audience, the method and the message.

See Chapter 3 of Collaboration Toolkit for tips on communications
Tips for Creating a Communication Strategy for Sustainability

Critical elements

1. Have a goal or set of goals
2. Have a target audience
3. Have a developed message/identified messengers
4. Employ at least one and possibly multiple communication methods or “channels”
5. Include a timeline
6. Include a plan for evaluating success
What we do

Our vision
(What we need)

Why it Matters
(What’s the problem?)

How we are succeeding
(What’s our solution?)

Project Name

Message Box Example
Share, share, share: it takes more than a newsletter

• **Take the stage.** Seek out opportunities to tell your story in person. Present at coalition meetings, conferences, local events.

• **Timing is everything.** Be ready to engage. Op-ed, letters to the editor can elevate your organization’s profile.

• **Personal correspondence.** Be proactive about building a relationship with prospective funders.

• **Social media.** It’s where it’s at.
Social Media: Is it worth our time?

Challenges
• Convincing powers that be that this is a good idea
• Controlling the message
• Time
• Privacy

Opportunities
• Reach reporters, thought leaders, funders, policymakers
• Less expensive than traditional advertising
• Reach audiences more quickly
• Continuous engagement rather than a “one-time shot”
To Tweet or Not to Tweet?

If you want to reach:
  • Media
  • Opinion elites (bloggers, pundits, and the like)
  • Politicians
  • Leading organizations

Then, Twitter should likely be part of your strategy.
Can Facebook help?

If you want to

1) Build awareness of your organization/cause
2) Create a network you can activate when there’s something in play
3) Reach:
   • Families
   • Friends
   • Other organizations
YouTube for nonprofits

Good for:

• Fundraising
• Sharing stories to bring your cause to life
• Free hosting (Can embed the video right on your website)

*Note: To go viral, video needs to be exceptionally clever and you need to just plain get a little lucky.*
Poll on Communications

How many people have a sustainability plan that includes a communication strategy?
Communication and Sustainability Resources

OAH Collaboration Toolkit

• Ch. 2 - Effective Outreach Strategies:

• Ch. 3 - Communicating Clearly:

OAH webinar, April 18, 2012

• Showcasing Program Successes for Multiple Audiences;
  Pregnancy Assistance Fund Grantee Webinar
  http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/paf/training стратегических-communications.html
Five Must Dos of Communicating Effectively for Sustainability

1. Have a plan. What are you trying to accomplish?
2. Single message, all staff know it: who you are and what you are trying to do.
3. Reciprocal sharing. Communicating today is multi-directional.
4. Be present where conversations are happening. (Don’t ignore social media.)
5. Engage stakeholders as messengers.
Part 2: Developing collaborations that also support sustainability
Why Collaboration Matters to Sustainability

• Builds capacity, more effective program delivery
• Pool resources
• Creates platforms for communication among groups
• Build networks/relationships
• Develop and use political clout to gain services/other benefits for the community
• To create long-term social change.
• Effective partnerships attract funding.
Continuum of Collaboration

From the OAH PAF Resource and Training Center: Collaboration Toolkit

http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/learning/coll-tk/index.html#chapter-0/
Chapter 1: Building Strategic Partnerships

Worksheets
- Organizational Readiness Assessment
- Barriers and Challenges to Partnerships
- Evaluating Potential Partners Worksheet
- Collaborative Practices Inventory
- Developing a Partnership Agreement – The Partnership Agreement Development Tool
What is a Strategic Partner?

A partnership is a group of organizations with a common interest who agree to work together toward a common goal.

A partnership is strategic when it provides your organization with the means and methods for advancing your mission.
Benefits of Strategic Partnerships

• Expand your reach;
• Increased awareness of the services offered by your organization;
• Expanded access to a wider range of resources for adolescents and their families; and
• Enhanced support for vulnerable adolescents.
Poll on Partnerships

How many of us have developed partnerships to support sustainability?
5 Must Dos for Building Collaborations

1. Identify a goal that you think a collaboration could help you reach.
2. Assess your organizational strengths and identify strategic partnerships.
3. Establish personal relationships and build trust.
4. Develop a partnership agreement for more intensive partnerships.
5. Assess partnership.

http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/learning/coll-tk/index.html#chapter-1/section-1-0/
Resources on collaboration as a strategy for sustainability

- OAH Collaboration Toolkit

- OPA Collaboration and Sustainability E-Learning

- OAH webinars
  - August 23, 2012: Built to Last: A Webinar of Programmatic Sustainability
  - April 26, 2012: Building and Sustaining Stakeholder Support

- Grant Space
Part 3: Grantee sharing on their sustainability efforts
Grantee Sharing on Collaboration

• SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

• *Keep It Real among Middle School Youth* project

• Replicate *It’s Your Game, Keep it Real! (IYG)* in 24 middle schools across SC

• ETR outside evaluators

• AIM 1) Implement IYG with fidelity

• AIM 2) Sustain the IYG curriculum in partnering schools after the grant funding ends (2015)
IYG tools used to identify factors related to sustainability

• Fidelity tracking / implementation logs
• Classroom observation
• IYG Teacher survey
• Student satisfaction survey
• Technical Assistance (TA) notes
• Principal interviews
• IYG teacher and Site Coordinator surveys
• Focus groups with parents
Implementation Survey

How likely is your school to continue implementing It’s Your Game, Keep It Real! after the grant project has ended?

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<th>2012</th>
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<td>Very likely</td>
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A Perfect Pair: Fidelity and Sustainability

• Monitoring the degree to which fidelity is maintained in a program is important when assessing whether a program will be sustained
  – Ideally, fidelity is monitored in “real time”
  – Allows for issues to be addressed immediately that may impact continuation of the project (lack of resources, lack of time, etc.)
  – Allows for TA and training efforts to target specific areas of weakness and highlight areas of success
The FIT Model: Fidelity through Informed Technical Assistance

Teacher observations
Teacher completed fidelity logs

Weekly review of data and identification of implementation issues

Notification of TA Request

CQI meetings
Webinars
Planning meetings
Multi-site trainings
Tips & Tricks emails
Materials provided
Check-in calls
Email
Online learning modules
On-site trainings

TA Methods

TA time and strategies tracked in FileMaker Pro

Increase fidelity of implementation

SOUTH CAROLINA CAMPAIGN FOR PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Method of Contact / TA</th>
<th>TOTAL TA Time</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>BARNWELL 29 WILLISTON SCHOOL DISTRICT</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT</td>
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<td>9,375 mins</td>
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<td>CALHOUN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT</td>
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<tr>
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Total TA Time Across All: 568 hours
It's Your Game: Tips and Tricks

Only 14 more days till holiday break... but who’s counting?! As the semester comes to a close, we wanted to share some of the great tips from teachers implementing IYG:

- Teachers often struggle with finishing the “wrap-up” discussions at the end of computer lessons because of time constraints. Remember to use the “parking lot” or “question box” for questions/comments that you can’t discuss during the lesson. You can then go back and cover these questions/comments during the next lesson.

- If you are having issues with the IYG computer activities during a lesson, use the website to access the IYG lessons in “teacher mode” to go directly to each activity in a lesson without having to start over. [http://bit.ly/lyg-rr](http://bit.ly/lyg-rr)

- Assign responsibilities to the active students in the class to keep them engaged, such as passing out handouts or helping to “direct” the IYG skits.

Please let us know about any helpful tips that you have for the IYG lessons by including them in your logs or telling your TA Specialist. We want to make sure that your helpful hints are shared with others! As always, thank you for your continued support of the IYG project!

The SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (SC Campaign) has 17 years of experience supporting teen pregnancy prevention programs to implement programs with fidelity. This document describes what fidelity is, why it is important and how to maintain it.

**What is fidelity?**
Fidelity: faithfully implementing an evidence-based program without compromising its core content, pedagogical, and implementation components which are essential for the program’s effectiveness.

**Why is fidelity important?**
Teen pregnancy prevention programs are developed to have an impact on specific behavioral outcomes. Programs that are grounded in scientific research are more likely to be successful than programs that are not. Consider the curriculum the “recipe” for your program; if you do not follow the recipe as outlined then you will likely produce significantly different results than was intended. Similarly, when teen pregnancy prevention programs are implemented, it is important that the programs be delivered to youth in the same way the developers intended. Leaving out important

The SC Campaign encourages teen pregnancy prevention program facilitators to complete facilitator logs after each session (please contact the SC Campaign for examples of these forms). These forms are specific to the program being implemented and allow the facilitators to keep track of the number of participants, the amount of time spent on the session, the topics covered, and any problems or issues that arise during the session. Essentially, these forms let the program evaluators know who received the program, what information they received, and how they received it.

**How is fidelity tracking information shared and used?**
The SC Campaign uses fidelity tracking information to identify areas where the facilitator may need

To view more fact sheets, visit: [www.teenpregnancysc.org](http://www.teenpregnancysc.org) and click on “fact sheets”
Sustainability Plans

Creation of SC Campaign Sustainability Plan

→ Added to the existing Implementation Plan
  – Documents how we will support schools outside of funded project
  – Monitored with existing workplan
  – Includes standard “menu of services”

School-Specific Sustainability Plans

  – Tailored to Address the individual needs of schools
    • Address self-identified barriers to sustainability
    • Address their needs moving forward
Interested in learning more??

OAH Grantee Conference May 20

“Taming the Monster: Developing Tangible Sustainability Plans” (Lesley Craft and Mary Prince)

“Using Process Data to Improve Program Delivery” panel presentation

- Using Process Evaluation Data to Promote Program Improvement and Sustainability (Lesley Craft and Mary Prince)
- In the Know: Providing Informed Technical Assistance to Increase Fidelity (Sarah Kershner and Chris Rollison)
Part 4: Cultivating Funder Relationships
The Funding Dance

• **Finding the right partner:** Everyone is looking for the next dance partner AKA revenue source.

• **Changing Tunes?** Funders are often reassessing their funding priorities

• **Keeping in step:** Making sure you’re in sync with the funder.

• **Fill your dance card.** Diversify your funding partners

• **Find new partner when the time is right.**

Communication and Collaboration are activities that can help you do the Funding Dance beautifully.
Tips for Cultivating Funders: Getting to Know All About You (and Them)

• Stay abreast of funder priorities. Unique approaches to grant making; circles of trusted contacts. Act on what you learn.

• Form a personal relationship. Connect. Share information, ask for feedback, invite.

• Form an organizational relationship. Connect via social media platforms, retweet their messages!

• Ask. Seek support to advance common goals.
Tips for Cultivating Funder Support (Cont)

• Look beyond “the grant.” As funding partnership come to a close, ask for introductions to other funders.

• Leverage your collaborating partners. Show funders the results of high impact collaborations, work together to seek funding for collaboration.

• Talk it up. Never stop communicating your successes, your value add.
Top 5 ways to build a relationship with a funder

1. Know their funding priorities (don’t waste their time).
2. Invite to events, activities. Let them see what you do.
3. Share your successes with them regularly (quick emails, phone calls). Go beyond the annual report.
4. Brainstorm TOGETHER with them about new ideas, new directions.
5. Thank them, directly and indirectly through acknowledgment on reports, press releases, etc.
Learning about funders

• The Foundation Center - Foundation Finder - http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/foundfinder/
• Grantmakers in Children, Youth and Families - http://www.gcyf.org/
• Grantmakers in Health - http://www.gih.org/
• Youth Today (see Grants Database) - http://www.youthtoday.org
• Corporations (Walmart/Target/Staples; Banks (PNC))
• Grants.gov
Funder Poll

What are some approaches for identifying funders that have worked for you and/or your organization?
Questions

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Register! Setting-Specific Calls

Talk with other OAH grantees about using communications and collaborations in sustainability planning at calls scheduled for:

Non-school-based TPP Discussion
• March 26 3-4 PM
• March 27 1-2 PM

School-based TPP Discussion
• March 26 1-2 PM
• March 27 3-4 PM