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Better at working together

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

PART I: LITERATURE REVIEW

Melanie Atkinson Oct 2007

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working together for children and young people with high and complex needs



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review was commissioned by the HCN Unit in Wellington as the first part of a larger project to develop good practice guidelines for collaboration. The aim of the literature review is to discuss the New Zealand and overseas literature since 2002 on collaboration, building on the review *'Integrated Service Delivery and Regional Coordination: a Literature Review'*, conducted by Alison Gray in 2002. The report has five sections:

- **Interagency collaboration** discusses the concepts and definitions related to collaboration.
- **Current collaboration in the New Zealand context** outlines recent collaborative initiatives in New Zealand.
- **Success factors and barriers to interagency collaboration** identifies the keys to achieving effective collaboration and the challenges faced.
- **Evaluating collaboration** examines the outcomes reported from collaborative working and the challenges that arise in evaluating collaboration.
- **Practical strategies for enhancing collaboration** summarises the practical recommendations made in the report to enhance collaboration.

2 INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Concepts and definitions of collaboration can be found across disciplines and service systems. While some common understandings have emerged, the abundance of terms used to describe 'working together' can create confusion. Both Gray (2002) and the Mosaics guide (Ministry of Social Development, 2003) classify various collaborative projects using a continuum that relates to how macro or micro the work or focus of the project is. Gray (2002) has three groupings: overview concepts, location-related concepts and service-related concepts. The Mosaics report uses the term 'regional coordination' to describe the more macro or strategic level of collaboration and 'integrated service delivery' describes collaboration at the operational or micro level.

Much of the collaboration literature is from North America or the United Kingdom. While this body of literature is useful, it is important to remember that New Zealand has cultural, social and economic differences that need to be considered. The centrality of the Treaty of Waitangi and the increasing occurrence of partnerships between Maori and the Crown have a number of implications for collaborative work in New Zealand.

3 CURRENT COLLABORATION IN THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

In the past ten years there has been prolific growth in collaborative activity in New Zealand, particularly in the social sectors. Intersectoral collaboration, 'joining-up' government, regional coordination, local services mapping, local partnerships, and collaborative strategic planning have all become part of the complexity of social service delivery and governance. The emphasis on collaboration is seen to have been in response to the major reforms that took place in the public sector in the late 1980s and the 1990s. These reforms meant agencies tended to focus on careful definitions of their own outputs and exclusive accountabilities. The amount of communication and feedback between government departments, communities and policy staff reduced significantly. Competition between agencies, particularly in the community and voluntary sector, increased. In the late 1990s there was increasing recognition of the negative impacts of this fragmentation. The Review of the Centre in 2001 began a series of initiatives that signalled a strong commitment to working from a collaborative, whole-of-government perspective.

Although the collaborative approach is by no means a new one, since the late 1990s there have been increasing numbers of collaborative initiatives established across all government and non-government sectors. Some of these can be seen as regional coordination and they aim to ensure that strategies and policies have a consistent direction and that planning and resources are aligned. Examples of regional coordination include the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs, the Christchurch Social Policy Interagency Network, Youth Offending Teams and the Funding for Outcomes project.

Other initiatives address integrated service delivery and aim to improve the delivery of services that require the input of more than one agency. There are many different arrangements created between government agencies, non-government organisations, community groups, church groups, and Iwi/Maori organisations that assist in the coordination of services. The Mosaics report (Ministry of Social Development, 2003) lists three main models of integrated service delivery: 'one-stop-shop', joint-funded service provision and case management. The Pulse in Whangarei is an example of a one-stop-shop that provides co-located services to at-risk young people. A joint-funded service provision initiative is the Ranui Action Project in Auckland and examples of coordinated case management activities include Family Safety Teams and the Rock On truancy programme.

4 SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

As the literature in the collaboration field has grown there has been increasing agreement about the key factors for success and the barriers to collaboration. The following are commonly discussed in the literature:

COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS:

A common focus or vision is well recognised in the literature as a key success factor for collaboration. A study from the United States reported that the best predictors of perceived effectiveness of collaborative relationships were found to be consensus, which was the extent to which coalition members agreed on needs, problems, solutions and methods. Other research suggests there should be agreement or clarity on aims, levels of involvement and commitment, and strategy. A lead agency should also be identified, and roles and responsibilities should be determined.

It is also valuable to increase understanding of the roles and responsibilities that the involved organisations and individuals have within the sector.

COLLABORATIVE SKILLS:

An extensive review of the coalition and multiple stakeholder literature reported that collaborative work often places unique demands on participants and that the capacity of a group to collaborate is influenced greatly by both the existing skills/knowledge and attitudes members bring to the table and the efforts that are made to build and develop this capacity. Some of the most common collaborative skills identified were; communication skills, the ability to create and build effective programmes and conflict resolution. Joint training is viewed as an effective strategy to build capability in this area.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING:

The ability to evaluate and monitor progress and performance is regarded as a factor in successful collaboration. There is increasing recognition that while collaboration has become a well established feature of the way government departments and non-government organisations meet their goals, this is not reflected in the way many practitioners are managed. Collaboration is rarely singled out as a separate output or given the significance it deserves.

INTERVENTION CONSISTENT WITH 'BEST PRACTICE':

Collaboration cannot be an end in itself and interagency initiatives must have clear purposes and use appropriate models for achieving these. To achieve success, members of collaborative initiatives need skills and knowledge to create and build effective interventions. A lack of specialist knowledge about best practice or proven intervention strategies decreases the likelihood that the interventions selected will lead to real change. Researchers in many fields advocate utilising an 'evidence-based' approach in combination with good monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that chosen intervention strategies will produce the desired outcomes.

COMMITMENT:

Commitment is often discussed in terms of individual commitment; however, the organisational culture also has a significant impact. When an organisational culture is supportive of collaboration, staff move easily within partner organisations and speak honestly and openly about organisational issues and solutions that impact on individual and collective performance. The necessity of commitment and support from management to reinforce the importance of collaboration and to prioritise collaborative work is also emphasised in the literature.

LEADERSHIP:

The notion of leadership is often played down in the context of collaboration. A number of researchers, however, report leadership to be a predictor of the effectiveness of collaboration. Different styles of leadership may be required at different stages of the partnership. Effective leadership is described as a combination of strategic drive, tenacity and vision. Leaders must be organised, efficient and skilled at encouraging the voices and input of all stakeholders.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION:

A basic principle for collaborative working is that the right people need to be sitting around the table. It must be clear what mandate the group has to make decisions, and the members need appropriate decision making powers for the purposes of the group. Good induction processes are necessary to combat the potentially negative impact of changes in membership. Of equal importance is the need for representation to be consistent and for people to attend regularly.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

Building effective inter-personal relationships is a clear factor for success. As relational capacity within a group is built, commitment and satisfaction increases, access to resources improves, and the viability and sustainability of the collaboration is increased.

COORDINATION SUPPORT:

There is increasing acknowledgment that effective interagency working requires considerable support and adequate resourcing. For success, the organisation and administration of collaborative initiatives must be handled effectively. The role of an interagency facilitator or coordinator is seen to be a possible solution to some of the communication and coordination issues which are barriers to success.

CONFLICT AND POWER:

Issues around power are frequently cited as key influences on collaboration functioning. The varied philosophies, points of view and values held by members of a multi-agency group have been identified as barriers to achieving effective collaboration. Collaborations that operate within a culture of blame and defensiveness struggle

to achieve the desired changes. At times, however, conflict can be a necessary and potentially positive aspect of collaboration, ensuring that a group does not become so insulated that certain ideas become accepted and go unchallenged.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES:

Concerns about funding and resources feature consistently in the collaboration literature. The trust, collaboration, and reciprocity needed for partnerships to work effectively take considerable time to develop, and can be undermined by insecure and short-term funding. For many projects the lack of guaranteed ongoing funding is seen as challenging and threatening to the future of the project. Other resourcing issues, such as workload, are also seen to have implications for collaboration.

PATIENCE FOR PROGRESS AND RESULTS:

A barrier to achieving collaboration is impatience with timeframes. The process of drawing people together and creating a framework for collaborative work always takes longer than one imagines. Understanding this is critical to sustaining the ongoing commitment of participants.

COLLABORATION FATIGUE:

In the past ten years there has been prolific growth in collaborative activity in New Zealand, particularly in the social sector. While the positive effects of increased coordination and collaboration are being observed, concerns have been raised more recently about the negative impact of this influx of collaborative initiatives. While collaborative processes may be effective in the long term, they require a considerable investment in time and resources and there are limits to the capacity of agencies to actively participate in and sustain collaborative activity.

COORDINATED CASE MANAGEMENT

Information sharing is seen to be a key issue that can create challenges amongst agencies because of the different expectations, experiences and views held by individuals about what information should be shared and how it should be shared. Establishing clear protocols for information exchange can overcome this. The literature also suggests formally clarifying roles and responsibilities and the mechanisms for making client referrals, coordinating case management and monitoring plans.

Reducing agency differences can contribute to increased collaborative working and interagency training sessions and work-shadowing opportunities all contribute to further understanding other professionals' roles and responsibilities.

COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Establishing effective collaborative relationships between the state sector and the community and voluntary sector has historically had its challenges and there appear to be ongoing tensions. The literature suggests issues around power and exclusion are prevalent and that non-government agencies are frequently expected to contribute to collaborative work in the same way as government agencies. However, multiple priorities and lack of staff can be barriers to participation. It is important to pay attention to some of the unintended consequences of collaboration and to be aware of the tendency of the more powerful agencies to dictate both the open and hidden agendas of multi-agency business. Government agencies need to consider how to involve and recognise the input of any project members who are not paid to participate. They may be happy to participate on a voluntary basis or they may expect the project to compensate them for their time and expertise.

COLLABORATION WITH IWI/MAORI ORGANISATIONS

The Treaty of Waitangi provides the basis for partnership between iwi/Maori and the Crown. Aside from the recognition of Treaty partnership, another driver for collaboration between government organisations and iwi/Maori has come from concerns about effective service delivery to Maori. There exists a strong mandate for partnerships between iwi/Maori and the Crown, and there is a range of purposes for these partnerships, including building the capacity of government agencies and Maori organisations to deliver responsive services and to create appropriate decision-making, governance, monitoring and evaluation processes. The research describes some of the challenges in engaging Maori appropriately in collaborative initiatives and a number of suggestions were made as to what should be considered by agencies before they engage iwi/Maori in collaboration. The process of partnering with Maori organisations should be guided and influenced by Tikanga. This influence should be led by Maori and should lead to closer partnering with less risk. Prior to establishing a collaborative initiative, careful consideration should be given to the role of Maori and how Maori are represented.

5 EVALUATING COLLABORATION

Benefits of collaboration are generally discussed at two different levels. Gray (2002) distinguishes between 'soft' and 'hard' outcomes. Hard outcomes are identified through outcome or impact evaluation and soft outcomes through process evaluation. The literature discussing the impact of collaboration on client outcomes is mixed. More recent research, however, appears to be positive as researchers develop more sophisticated and appropriate approaches to evaluation.

Throughout the literature there is an assumption that there is something in the process of partnership that is valuable. Both New Zealand and overseas research demonstrates that outcomes from the collaboration process are significant. These include greater efficiency in the use of resources, less overlap between existing services, minimising gaps in services, expanded knowledge of other agencies, increased communication, innovation, the sharing of skills, ideas and approaches, and the delivery of comprehensive and integrated services. It is also important to remember that there are some collaboration goals that appear to be more difficult to achieve. Many of these relate to the experiences of iwi/Maori and community organisations. The collaboration research clearly demonstrates the advantages to be had from working together, however, collaboration is not a panacea and cannot be expected to effectively address the full range of issues that impact on effective service delivery.

The study of collaboration has largely been a 'wisdom literature' consisting of case studies and learning from the field. There are several reasons for this, including the long chain of events between forming a collaborative project and achieving changes in outcomes and the adequacy of current evaluation methods. A number of researchers suggest that collaborative ventures are too complex to be adequately evaluated by the methodology available. Collaborative projects tend to involve multiple actors across multiple systems or sectors, they are flexible and evolving, have broad and imprecise goals and seek changes in an array of domains. To adequately cater for such complexity, researchers have recommended the use of evaluation approaches that draw on ecological frameworks that allow for multiple units of analysis and working out ways to measure or assess progress towards outcomes.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

Over the past ten years, both in New Zealand and throughout the Western world, there has been increasing interest in and demands for collaborative ways of working. Chavis (2001) suggests that, over the past decade, formal collaboration has become the most common element of all social problem-solving efforts. Much of the drive for collaboration has come from concerns that government and other agencies were having limited success in dealing with difficult and complex social problems (Sabel, 1996). The collaborative approach is now an integral element of central and local government policy and most agencies have requirements to work across agencies and key performance indicators require a 'whole of government approach'.

An example of such policy is the High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy, which was agreed to by Ministers in December 2000. The Strategy was designed to enhance collaboration across the sectors and address serious service gaps and shortfalls. In 2001 the High and Complex Needs (HCN) Unit was established to support aspects of the High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy. This literature review was commissioned by the HCN Unit as the first part of a larger project to develop good practice guidelines for collaboration, for use by the staff of the agencies implementing the strategy. It forms Part I of a suite of resources entitled '*Better at Working Together*'. Part II offers advice on good practice for interagency collaboration and Part III comprises a self-assessment tool and a summary of the principles for collaboration.

Despite the popularity of collaborative approaches, achieving desired outcomes is reported to be somewhat elusive (Allen, 2005; Foster-Fishman, Salem, & Allen, 2001; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Gray (2002) reported considerable agreement on the principles that should underlie any successful collaborative or integrated service initiative; however, these principles are usually discussed in conceptual terms. While this report will review and discuss some of these principles it will also examine the more practical aspects of working collaboratively.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The aim of the literature review is to discuss the New Zealand and overseas literature since 2002 on collaboration. The report has five sections:

- **Interagency collaboration** discusses the concepts and definitions related to collaboration, with a particular emphasis on interagency collaboration at the case worker and management levels.
- **Current collaboration in the New Zealand context** outlines recent collaborative initiatives in New Zealand, with a particular emphasis on the social service sector.
- **Success factors and barriers to interagency collaboration** identifies the keys to

achieving effective collaboration and the challenges faced. There is a specific focus on collaboration at the case worker and local management levels. This section also describes the success factors in working collaboratively with Maori and the community sector.

- **Evaluating collaboration** examines the outcomes and impact of collaborative working. The challenges that arise in measuring and evaluating collaboration are discussed.
- **Practical strategies for enhancing collaboration** summarises the recommendations and practical strategies made throughout the report to address the challenges and enhance collaboration.

Appendix 2 provides some examples of tools that assess collaboration processes.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This literature review builds on the review, “Integrated Service Delivery and Regional Coordination: a Literature Review”, conducted by Alison Gray in 2002. Gray’s (2002) review was part of the work carried out by the integrated service delivery workstream of the Review of the Centre. In November 2001 the *Report of the Advisory Group on the Review of the Centre* had highlighted the need to better integrate service delivery to address complex social problems which involve multiple agencies and a Cabinet Directive (CAB MIN (01) 39/14 refers) committed government to a series of initiatives to address the issues raised in the report. The Integrated Service Delivery: Regional Coordination workstream was established and in addition to the literature review, (Gray, 2002) the project produced a Final Workstream Report (State Services Commission & Ministry of Social Development, 2003) and *Mosaics: Whakaahua Papariki: Key Findings and Good Practice Guide for Regional Coordination and Integrated Service Delivery* (Ministry of Social Development, 2003).

The information in this review draws on a range of sources. Some information was provided by the HCN Unit and other government departments and the remainder from a search of the major relevant electronic databases and the internet. The reports from the Integrated Service Delivery Workstream were used along with other government reports that address collaboration, for example, the *Review of Strengthening Families Local Collaboration* (Ministry of Social Development, 2005) and *Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes* (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Te Puni Kokiri, State Services Commission and The Treasury, 2004). Recent international collaboration literature, much of it from North America and the United Kingdom was also examined, particularly the literature that discusses the impact of collaboration and considers the practical aspects of collaboration in the context of coordinated service delivery and

case management. Finally, the understandings gained about collaboration in the New Zealand youth justice context, from my own PhD research (Atkinson, 2006), are also discussed.

Collaboration is a relatively new but growing field of research. Much of the work in this area has focused on the establishment of collaborative initiatives and less attention has been paid to maintaining such initiatives. There is also less literature that relates to front-line case management of young people and families, with greater attention being paid to collaboration at a more strategic 'middle management' level.

2 INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

This chapter discusses the concepts and definitions related to collaboration, with a particular emphasis on Interagency collaboration at the case worker and management levels.

Definitions and concepts of collaboration can be found across disciplines and service systems and in the literature of social services, education, early intervention, mental health and health care. The Latin roots of 'collaboration' simply mean 'working together'; however, a multitude of definitions and models of collaboration have developed in recent years. Collaboration has been characterised as a structure as well as a process, as an attitude and as a relationship involving formal and informal components with varying emphases in either aspect (Walter & Petr, 2000).

The term collaboration is sometimes used interchangeably with other terms such as networking, coordinating, co-operating and partnership. The meaning and functional definitions of collaboration continue to be researched and, while some common conceptual understandings have emerged, universally accepted definitions are yet to be established. The abundance of terms used to describe 'working together' can create confusion.

Walter and Petr (2000) place the different terms on a service-integration continuum beginning with co-operation, through to coordination and then to interagency collaboration. On this continuum the key dimensions of the relationship, such as decision making and structures, become progressively collective. Dovey (2003) suggests collaboration has a broader meaning than coordination, co-operation and integration because it signals a systems approach to change. She defines collaboration for achieving better social outcomes as "the practice of combining and leveraging public and community-based organisational resources and power to address difficult problems in the community (p18)."

In the United States the term coalition is more frequently used and this refers to formal multi-agency collaborations that involve representatives of diverse community institutions working within an organisational structure to improve community conditions (Chavis, 2001, p309). Coalitions have been used to provide direction to comprehensive community initiatives, addressing a wide range of complex social problems and increasing community capacity.

Gray (2002) provided a comprehensive discussion of the definitions around collaboration and this work remains relevant. She divided the terms and concepts related to collaboration into three categories. This grouping relates to how macro or micro the focus of collaboration is.

OVERVIEW CONCEPTS sit at the macro end of the continuum and describe an approach concerned with the overall perspective. These concepts relate to policy, planning and service delivery, for example, 'whole-of-government', joint working, and Interagency action.

LOCATION-RELATED CONCEPTS relate to initiatives focusing on particular locations and include area-based initiatives, regional development and regional partnership programmes. These concepts are concerned with the 'mezzo' level, in the centre of the micro-macro continuum.

SERVICE-RELATED CONCEPTS are more micro and are concerned with service delivery to individuals and/or their families or to particular groups of people. These concepts refer more to structure and operational matters, for example networks, collaboration, partnership, coordination, and integrated service delivery.

The service-related concepts are most applicable to collaboration at the case worker and local management levels. Gray (2002) reported overlaps and differences in the discussions on service-related concepts in the literature. She notes that the terms 'collaboration' and 'partnership' are often used interchangeably. She treats them separately, however, suggesting that collaboration is a somewhat informal process undertaken voluntarily and rarely involving contractual arrangements, whereas partnerships tend to refer to a formal arrangement between groups to carry out a particular task, or to a legal contract between parties to deliver a specific service. Both concepts tend to have similar goals of improving services and outcomes through working across services, agencies and sectors.

The Mosaics report (Ministry of Social Development, 2003), written as part of the Integrated Service Delivery: Regional Coordination workstream, also groups collaborative working using a micro and macro perspective. In this report the term 'collaboration' is used to cover all the different ways of 'working together' and two levels of collaboration are described.

1. Regional coordination: collaboration at the strategic level,
2. Integrated service delivery: collaboration at the operational level.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION aims to provide an overview of activities of agencies in an area in order for organisations to plan, align their resources and coordinate their activity. Regional collaboration initiatives involve senior regional managers working closely together and with stakeholders. The focus is usually wide, covering large areas and populations, and many activities and services.

INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY is concerned with organisations working together at an operational level with the purpose of improving the delivery of services when multiple agencies are involved. The focus is on specific areas, client groups, communities, families or individuals. Integrated service delivery involves staff at different levels within organisations. For example, managers may be involved in allocating resources and planning, as well as developing performance and accountability arrangements, while front-line staff deliver the services. Initiatives that facilitate integrated service delivery tend to be developed when there is a

serious problem with complex causes that cannot be addressed effectively by any one agency, or when a range of agencies are delivering services to a particular group of people and the access to, and quality of, service delivery could be improved by agencies working together. Sometimes integrated service delivery initiatives arise when services have common outcomes or overlapping activities and concerns and collaboration would make the best use of resources. The three main models of integrated service delivery are: 'one-stop-shop', joint-funded service provision, and case management (Ministry of Social Development, 2003).

Both of the levels of collaboration discussed in *Mosaics* (Ministry of Social Development, 2003) are closely related, with regional coordination potentially generating projects that involve integrated service delivery, and integrated service delivery initiatives needing to fit within the strategic context of collaboration across a region. Specific examples of collaborative projects within the New Zealand context, at both the strategic and the operational level, are discussed in the next chapter.

Much of the collaboration literature relates to North American and British experience and while the findings are largely relevant and useful in guiding the development of effective partnership, New Zealand has cultural, social and economic differences that need to be considered. The centrality of the Treaty of Waitangi and the increasing occurrence of partnerships between Maori and the Crown have a number of implications for collaborative work in New Zealand. The Treaty provides the basis for the partnership relationship between Maori and the Crown. Articles One and Two define the role of Maori as partners with the Crown, with equal authority and accountability for decision making about issues concerning Maori communities. Article Three establishes the rights for Maori to receive appropriate services (Ministry of Social Development, 2003). In the last decade the Treaty has been used as a lever for developing partnerships between some government agencies and iwi. It has also been used as a form of responsibility or accountability for government to ensure that collective and collaborative responses to problems are inclusive of iwi and Maori service providers.

There is very little research examining bicultural partnerships or strategies for producing change in dominant systems or organisations in order to work more effectively with indigenous groups (Atkinson, 2006). Helean, Henderson, Richards-Troon, Woodley & Davis (2005) state that, when the word partnership is used to define the relationship between the Crown and Maori, its meaning is more than a formal collaborative process. In this context the partnership is viewed as the process of realising tino rangatiratanga and the associated devolution of power.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed some of the concepts and terms associated with collaboration. The range of projects that fit under the umbrella of collaborative working is vast and the literature suggests significant variation in collaborative models. These models can be grouped according to many variables. Some researchers place the different approaches to collaboration on a continuum according to the extent of their shared decision making and shared resources.

Both Gray (2002) and the Mosaics guide (Ministry of Social Development, 2003) classify various collaborative projects using a continuum that relates to how macro or micro the work or focus of the project is. Gray (2002) has three groupings; overview concepts, location-related concepts and service-related concepts. The Mosaics report uses the term 'regional coordination' to describe the more macro or strategic level of collaboration and 'integrated service delivery' describes collaboration at the operational or micro level.

The collaboration literature is largely North American and British. While there is much to be taken from this body of research, New Zealand has differences that need to be considered. Particularly relevant are the centrality of the Treaty of Waitangi and the implications of the Treaty for working collaboratively with Maori and Iwi groups.

3 CURRENT COLLABORATION IN THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

This chapter outlines recent collaborative initiatives in New Zealand, with a particular emphasis on the social service sector.

3.1 BACKGROUND TO COLLABORATION IN NEW ZEALAND

In the late 1980s New Zealand went through a major reform of its public management systems in response to a looming fiscal crisis (Dovey, 2003). A number of significant changes were introduced, many of which aimed to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector and reduce public expenditure. Structural reform separated the policy and operational functions of government agencies and government agencies were encouraged to focus on their 'core business'. Such change reduced the amount of communication and feedback between government departments, communities and policy advisors and between operational and policy staff. Issues that were on the periphery or overlapped with other agencies tended to be ignored because of the increased focus on 'outputs' and accountability (Gray, 2002). The Ministry of Youth Affairs, in their briefing for the 1996-1999 Cabinet Record, stated that, since the 1980s, agencies had tended to focus on careful definitions of their own outputs and strict measurement of exclusive accountabilities. Operational policies restricted innovative and integrated ways of assisting young people (Morris, 1999). Competition between agencies also increased. Former Principal Youth Court Judge, Mick Brown, conducted a review of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (2000) and he suggested that the fragmentation in the social service sector was a result of non-statutory agencies being made to tender competitively for limited funding. This competition reduced the amount of co-operation and collaboration and increased the gaps and duplications in services. Brown states that services for and by Maori suffered in particular.

By the late nineties the negative impact of the State Sector Act (1988), the Public Finance Act (1989) and even the Privacy Act (1993) on interagency collaboration and coordination was clearly evident (Brown, 2000; Community & Voluntary Sector Working Party, 2001; Craig, 2004; Petrie, 1999). The frequency of structural change within government agencies and mismatched regional boundaries for different government departments were also seen as having an inhibiting effect on interagency collaboration (Ministry of Social Development, 2003). These ongoing problems concerning coordination and co-operation were particularly salient in the area of social services (Walker, 2004).

One of the first initiatives to address the fragmentation in the social services sector was the Strengthening Families Strategy (1997) which was based on a model of inter-agency co-operation developed by the Waitakere City Council (Te Puni Kokiri, 2001). This strategy involved the then Ministries of Social Policy, Education and Health.

The Review of Centre that was undertaken in 2001 further highlighted the need to better integrate service delivery. A Report of the Advisory Group on the Review of the Centre (State Services Commission, 2001) noted a number of barriers to collaboration. These included the division of financial resources into a large number of small pools, outputs that focus organisations on the delivery of core business at the expense of whole-of-government approaches, and a public service culture that is risk averse. At the end of 2001 Cabinet made significant changes to the way government departments would manage their business. Departments were required to adopt a more strategic and outcome focused approach to planning, management and reporting, while still remaining accountable for the delivery of outputs (Gray, 2002). This signalled a strong commitment to a collaborative, whole-of-government approach. Since that time priority has been given to government departments working together and coordinating policies, services and programmes (Larner and Butler, 2004).

Government and community relationships also began to change. While central government was beginning to emphasise collaborative approaches, community and voluntary agencies were also actively promoting the need for a stronger partnership with government. In contrast to the focus from central and local government on efficiency, cost saving and targeted outcomes, the agenda of community and voluntary agencies focused more strongly on community development, biculturalism and social justice.

The negative impacts of the 'arms-length, outputs-focused, prescriptive contracting environment of the 1990s' were beginning to be recognised (Matheson, Howden-Chapman, & Dew, 2005) and in 2000 a working party was established to consider the relationship between government and Iwi/Maori, community and voluntary organisations. This working party reported that the social and economic reform of the 1990s had left many in community organisations mistrustful of government and feeling undervalued and disempowered in their dealings with the state bureaucracy (Community & Voluntary Sector Working Party, 2001). The Community/Government Relationship Steering Group (2002) stated that improved community-government relationships should lead to: better service delivery, more self-reliant communities, enhanced citizenship and *tino rangatiratanga*¹ (p. 20). Gray (2002) suggests that the momentum for change and devolution was stronger from the community than the government sector. The community sector advocated for such change as a way to incorporate their expertise and experience at the policy development phase rather than having to deliver services about which they have had little input (Community & Voluntary Sector Working Party, 2001).

This increased interest in the quality of relationships was also encouraged by growing international emphasis and acknowledgement of the NGO/community or 'third' sector. The Blair-led Labour Government in the UK promoted the 'third way' as a means of

¹ Tino Rangatiratanga refers to self determination.

explicitly focusing on social inclusion, exclusion and inequality (Craig & Larner, 2002; Matheson, Howden-Chapman, & Dew, 2005).

Another driver for increased collaboration has been the Local Government Act 2002 which required central government agencies to work with local government and communities. It also requires local councils to develop community plans that identify the social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes the community wants (Ministry of Social Development, 2003).

Since the Labour government came into power in 1999 the idea of collaborative work and partnerships have come to the centre stage politically. Reflective of this is the number of policy frameworks recognising the multiple impacts of different sectors upon outcomes that came out in the early part of this decade². In contrast to the neo-liberal influenced approaches of the 1980s and 1990s which were more market-oriented and individualistic, local partnerships were advocated as initiatives that embraced pluralism and inclusivity (Larner & Craig, 2002). Larner and Craig (2002) describe this joined-up approach and the formalising of relationships around shared values as a “new mode of ‘modern’, ‘third way’ governance ‘without enemies’, a broad project in which every organisation ought to be involved, and which will benefit all (p.6)”.

3.2 CURRENT COLLABORATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Since the late 1990s there have been a large number of collaborative initiatives established across all government and non-government sectors. This section discusses a number of these initiatives, with particular attention being paid to the social service context. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list or a stock-take of collaborative activity throughout New Zealand but, rather, a selection of initiatives.

This review focuses on collaboration within the broader context of social services and encompasses work being done in and across the health, education, justice and welfare sectors. It is important to note, however, that the increased focus on collaborative work in New Zealand has been by no means restricted to these areas. For example, a collaborative initiative was established to provide a more coordinated approach to transport management in Auckland. Transit New Zealand and the four cities that make up the greater Auckland area (Auckland, Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere) pooled round-the-clock operational information and decision making (Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group, 2004). Another example outside of the social sector concerns climate change. In 2002 a *Climate Change Office* was established within the Ministry for the Environment. This office coordinates a programme of work that cuts across development issues in the agriculture and forestry, energy and transport sectors. The appropriate agencies take responsibility for different elements of the work programme (Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group, 2004).

² Examples of such policy frameworks are the Youth Development Strategy (Ministry of Youth Development, 2002); the Youth Offending Strategy (Ministry of Justice & Ministry of Social Development, 2002); the Social Development Approach (Ministry of Social Development, 2003); and Towards an Inclusive Economy (The Treasury, 2001).

The *Sustainable Development Programme of Action* provides an overarching framework for thinking about how the social, economic, environmental and cultural spheres interact with each other. The partnerships produced from this initiative encouraged agencies to collaborate with a broader range of agencies and partners from outside their usual sector of activity. The Programme of Action emphasises participation and partnerships as a key means of improving the four key priority areas – quality and allocation of fresh water, energy, sustainable cities and investing in child and youth development (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2003)

Within the social sector, interagency activity is widespread at both strategic and operational levels. As discussed in the previous chapter, both of these levels of collaboration are closely related, and at times some initiatives operate at both levels. Detailed case studies of some interagency initiatives are included in the *Mosaics* guide (Ministry of Social Development, 2003) and the *Final Workstream Report for the Review of the Centre* (Ministry of Social Development and State Services Commission, 2003). This section of the report will summarise some of these initiatives and also provide an update on more recent developments.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION INITIATIVES

A number of government departments and local authorities are leading regional coordination initiatives that involve agencies and stakeholders at a local level. Some regional collaboration work is initiated at a national level but is developed at a regional level. Networks and partnerships are the most common approach to regional coordination. The *Review of the Centre* (State Services Commission, 2001) reported that government policy lacked an overall strategic direction in the regions. At times policies from different agencies were seen to be contradictory. Regional coordination aims to address these issues by ensuring that strategies and policies do have a consistent direction and that planning and resources are aligned.

An example of regional coordination is the '*Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs*', in which mayors lead local collaboration to develop strategies to reduce unemployment. The *Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs* was established in April 2000 and is a nationwide network of Mayors who are taking leadership on unemployment and on the future of income and work in their communities. Sixty-two Mayors from around the country (83% of all Mayors) currently belong to the Taskforce. Since 2000 a range of initiatives has been established through this project in order to meet the goal of all young people between the age of 15 to 24 years being in education, training or employment. Some of the initiatives are now being rolled out nationally, such as the *Youth Transition Service* which contributes to the goal for all young people under 25 years being in paid work, in training or education, or in other useful activities. Others remain local initiatives that are well suited to the needs and opportunities in a specific area.

In Christchurch a key coordinating role is played by the *Christchurch Social Policy Interagency Network (CSPIN)* which works toward ensuring that local government and central government agencies adopt an informed and consistent approach to the planning of services and, where appropriate, share their plans and engage in 'joined-up' planning (Christchurch Social Policy Interagency Network, 2003). The CSPIN brings together senior managers of the main social sector agencies operating in Christchurch. The agencies represented include: Ministry of Education, Department of Corrections, Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Police, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Child Youth and Family, Housing New Zealand Corporation, Canterbury District Health Board and the Christchurch City Council. The CSPIN has been in operation since the early 1990s. In early 2002 the Ministry of Social Development signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Christchurch City Council to work on the development and testing of a central government/local government planning model. This process has been managed through CSPIN.

The *Community Renewal Project* involves the North Shore City Council, Ministry of Social Development and Housing New Zealand Corporation and works in partnership with the Northcote community, children, young people and their families, and a wide range of government and community agencies on a collaborative project. The Northcote Child and Youth Development Project aims to improve social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes for Northcote children and young people by improving services and support for them. It is a demonstration project for Auckland Sustainable Cities.

YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS (YOTs) were established in 2002 and are another example of regional coordination, although there are also clear connections to the operational level. Thirty teams operate around the country and have representation at both a managerial and practitioner level from Police, Child Youth and Family and the Health and Education sectors³. They are responsible for: ensuring coordination and collaboration between key agencies and providers; supporting best practice through joint training, problem solving and information sharing; monitoring overall outcomes and offending trends; and linking with the community to identify service gaps and develop initiatives to solve identified problems.

Since late 2003 the Ministry of Social Development, in consultation with Te Puni Kokiri, has led a three-year action research project called *Funding for Outcomes*. The project ran until August 2005 and aimed to improve the way government funds community and Maori social service providers. Community and Maori organisations receiving funding from several government agencies wanted to simplify their funding relationship with government. Funding for Outcomes brings an organisation's contracts with a number of government agencies into an integrated contract in an attempt to reduce transaction and compliance costs. It also gets funding agencies and community organisations working more closely together to identify the needs of individuals and families,

³ Many YOTs also have representatives from other organisations, for example, local council, community organisations and the Youth Court.

promoting better coordination between government funding agencies and more effective use of resources to improve community wellbeing. Funding for Outcomes followed on from a successful pilot involving the Otago Youth Wellness Trust and its funding agencies: Otago District Health Board, Child Youth and Family, Ministry of Education and NZ Police. The Otago Youth Wellness Trust integrated contract is now operational.

Another example of a regional coordination initiative involved *Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu* taking a lead role in investigating, planning for and responding to the health and social service needs of Maori. Before this initiative was established, methods for purchasing and providing health and other services for Maori were seen to be disorganised and fragmented. Furthermore, Iwi had limited involvement in planning, policy development and resource allocation for Maori well-being. Stage one of the initiative required the establishment of a Treaty-based relationship between Ngai Tahu and the Health Funding Authority. Following this was established as a vehicle for organising and integrating health and social services in a model that includes Maori service providers and Maori community organisations. The primary role of the He Oranga Pounamu trust is to re-organise and re-distribute Crown funding for health and social services to improve access, choice and service quality. Another role is to develop linkages between affiliated groups and with mainstream service providers to encourage integrated service provision. (He Oranga Pounamu website, 2006).

More recently, the Family and Community Services (FACS) was established in the Ministry of Social Development in July 2004. FACS has a mandate to improve the leadership and coordination of services to families by improving families' access to service information, improving the quality of government expenditure on services to families through better coordination of funding decisions, and improving relationships between stakeholders. FACS is also responsible for the coordination and implementation of programmes that build family capacity and development and programmes that prevent family violence. This includes Strengthening Families, SKIP, and a number of family violence initiatives. FACS has a strategic overview and also a regional presence through its four Regional Offices (Ministry of Social Development website, 2006).

INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVES

Integrated service delivery initiatives aim to improve the delivery of services that require the input of more than one agency. They often focus on specific communities, client groups, families or individuals. Some integrated service delivery initiatives are locally developed and led, while others are centrally-led but operate at a local level. There are many different arrangements created between government agencies, non-government organisations, community groups, church groups, and Iwi/Maori organisations that assist in the coordination of services. The Mosaics report (Ministry of Social Development, 2003) lists three main models of integrated service delivery: 'one-stop-shop', joint-funded service provision, and case management.

There are 'one-stop-shops' in various forms in many New Zealand cities. The majority of these are focused on meeting the needs of young people and 'wrap-around' service provision is common to such services. Wrap-around is a philosophy of care based on a planning process that involves the child and family and other key stakeholders in the child's life to identify the necessary community services and supports needed to achieve a positive outcome (Herz & Poland, 1999). One example of a one-stop-shop is *The Pulse* in Whangarei which was established in 2002. It provides health, crime prevention and social services to young people. Based in an 'un-used' primary school it provides a single location for a number of health, crime prevention and social services, including: a health clinic, a truancy project (School Attendance Services), a youth mentoring and family support group (Te Ora Hou Northland), James Family, Nga Puhī Iwi Social Services, Work and Income, a school and crèche services for teenage parents, a drug and alcohol support service for teenagers (Rubicon), Police Youth Development and Child Youth and Family.

Joint-funded service provision involves a number of agencies funding a specialised service to meet a specific need. An example of this is the *Ranui Action Project* which was established in 2001 in Ranui (West Auckland). It was funded by the Ministry of Health and Child, Youth and Family, with the Waitakere City Council as fund-holder and project coordinator. RAP has four broad goals:

1. improve local health and wellbeing
2. expand community capacity
3. increase access to services
4. revitalise the Ranui community.

RAP operates as an incorporated society, with approximately 16 committee members. It has subcommittees on human resources and funding, as well as focus groups for Maori, Pacific peoples, and youth. A paid manager and administrative staff are employed by the project. RAP has a particularly strong emphasis on community engagement. Its activities have included: producing the Ranui Action Plan, with input from local people; holding a Futures Creation Festival; running or funding a range of small-scale projects, some of which were initiated by members of the community; developing partnerships with other community organisations to deliver programmes such as a road safety project; producing a newsletter; creating a website; setting up a radio station; running a School Certificate coaching project; buying a house to use for RAP activities and to generate income; and establishing a health information centre (Adams, 2004).

Another joint funded initiative was the *Otara Health and Housing Campaign*. This initiative was funded by the Manukau City Council, Housing New Zealand, and Work and Income. It involved a six-month campaign to provide Otara residents with clear information about housing matters which affect their health and wellbeing (Haigh, 2000). Two teams of mature (previously unemployed) Otara residents from mixed ethnic backgrounds, who were bilingual, were trained as Health and Housing Ambassadors.

Visiting homes in Otara, they talked about health and housing issues with residents and provided them with information. They also made referrals to other agencies including Housing New Zealand, the Fire Service (for the installation of smoke alarms) and Work and Income, and provided a large number of rodent traps.

A number of joint sector response projects have also been funded through the High and Complex Needs Unit. One such project is *Nga Ara Totika (The Right Pathway)* which was designed to address the needs of children and young people aged 10-13 years who were at risk of suspension and exclusion from school in the Rotorua Community. The Rotorua Offices of the Ministry of Education, Child Youth and Family, Lakes District Health Board, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board and mandated Iwi representatives were signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding. Significant additional resources were provided by the locally participating government agencies and the Rotorua District Council. This was a one-year project in which two facilitators were employed to assist students and families/whanau to access appropriate services within existing agencies and to help coordinate Interagency services around the specific needs of each student and their family/whanau. This project has continued in a reduced way with community funding.

Case management initiatives usually involve several agencies and facilitate the provision of coordinated services tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual or family. The Strengthening Families collaborative case management process is an example of such an approach. The process was adopted by the government in 1997 and focuses on bringing together all the agencies involved with an at-risk family to work together in a coordinated manner. Under the 'umbrella' of the Strengthening Families Strategy, Family Start was also established and this was followed by the development of Social Workers in Schools (SWiS) Programmes and the High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy (HCN). These three strategies developed governance and operational management structures separate from Strengthening Families. Agencies involved in such initiatives develop joint outcomes for the client, joint assessment procedures and share accountability and resourcing.

The *High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy* is an example of one of the many initiatives that has been established to enable collaborative action at the operational level but also operates at the strategic level, providing a concept and direction for working across agencies. Policy makers, funders and planners, service managers and practitioners are all involved in its implementation. The Strategy has also funded, for a limited time, the development of interagency responses for children. The Joint Service Response projects have aimed to better integrate existing services, to develop additional service capabilities, or to develop new joint services. Operational level collaboration involves skilled practitioners from different agencies developing interagency plans using HCN funding for individuals with high and complex needs. This process is used for a small number of children and young people who have highly complex needs and challenges that cannot be met through existing services. The High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy also encourages effective local case coordination and service

responses for young people with a low to medium level of needs. This usually takes place in the context of Strengthening Families collaborative case management.

Another nationally led initiative is the *Family Safety Teams*. These were established in 2005 and aim to improve outcomes for families through better collaboration and coordination among justice and social service agencies. This joint initiative between the Ministry of Justice, Police, and Child Youth and Family has established teams in Wairarapa / Hutt Valley, Auckland City/Hamilton City, Christchurch and Counties Manukau. They aim to provide a multi-disciplinary and consistent response to family violence and child protection. The teams consist of three Police investigators, three adult advocates for adult and child victims and a supervisor. The Auckland/Hamilton and Wairarapa/Hutt Valley teams also have a Child Youth and Family representative on their teams. The Family Safety Teams encourage better use of existing services such as protection orders, counseling, health, education, housing and income support services by matching what is known to be needed by a family with services available locally. Each team also works co-operatively with their local community groups to address the particular issues and problems within their district.

There are many examples of government initiatives that have focused on partnership with the community. Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) has begun a partnership programme of '*community renewal*' interventions with people living and working in particular areas to promote safe and healthy communities. HNZC has also instituted a partnership programme involving community groups, iwi and Maori and Pacific organisations and local government. These initiatives involve targeted interventions to eliminate substandard housing in an attempt to address housing need by incorporating input and ownership from the community.

Most of the initiatives described in this section have been driven by central government. There are, however, an abundance of 'grass-roots' projects that are developed by managers or practitioners in local agencies and organisations who believe, often with much enthusiasm and passion, that things can be done better. An example of such a locally developed initiative is the *Rock On truancy programme* in Hamilton. This programme was developed by the North Hamilton Police in 2003. It is an interagency initiative involving local schools, Ministry of Education, Child Youth & Family, Police (Youth Services staff and Community Policing staff), mental health services, NETS⁴, school attendance services and community-based organisations that work with young people. Through the support of the Hamilton Youth Offending Team (YOT), five Rock On programmes have now been established in the Hamilton area. The involved schools identify chronic truants who have not responded to intervention from the school. The names are brought to the Rock On forum and a multi-agency response is planned. With a premise of 'addressing the causes', the response to the young person and their family facilitates the appropriate support to re-engage them in education. Parallel to the Rock On intervention is a system of letters that escalates the formal response if attendance at

⁴ Non-enrolled Truancy Service

school does not improve. This includes a care and protection Family Group Conference and ultimately the prosecution of parents (Ministry of Education, 2006).

CONCLUSION

In the past ten years there has been prolific growth in collaborative activity in New Zealand, particularly in the social sectors. Interagency collaboration, 'joining-up' government, regional coordination, local services mapping, local partnerships, and collaborative strategic planning have all become part of the complexity of social service delivery and governance. This emphasis on collaboration is seen to have been a response to the major reforms that took place in the public sector in the late 1980s and the 1990s. These reforms meant agencies tended to focus on careful definitions of their own outputs and exclusive accountabilities. The amount of communication and feedback between government departments, communities and policy staff reduced significantly. Competition between agencies, particularly in the community and voluntary sector increased. In the late 1990s there was increasing recognition of the negative impacts of this fragmentation. The Review of the Centre in 2001 began a series of initiatives that signalled a strong commitment to working from a collaborative, whole-of-government perspective.

Since the late 1990s there have been a large number of collaborative initiatives established across all government and non-government sectors. The remainder of this chapter discussed a number of these initiatives, with particular attention being paid to the social service context. Examples of regional collaboration were discussed first and these included the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs, the Christchurch Social Policy Interagency Network and the Funding for Outcomes project. This was followed by a description of various integrated service delivery initiatives, for example, The Pulse one-stop-shop in Whangarei, Family Safety Teams and the Rock On truancy programme in Hamilton.

4 SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

This chapter identifies the keys to achieving effective collaboration and the challenges faced. There is a specific focus on collaboration at the case worker and local management levels. This section also describes the success factors in working collaboratively with Maori and the community sector.

4.1 SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO INTERSECTORAL AND INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Key factors for collaboration building have been identified from the study of collaboration successes and failures. As the literature in this field has grown, there has been increasing agreement about the key factors for success and the barriers to collaboration (Gray, 2002, Helean et al, 2005).

Factors identified include:

- Common understandings
- Collaborative skills
- Performance monitoring
- Intervention consistent with 'Best Practice'.
- Commitment
- Leadership
- Group membership and participation
- Relationship building
- Coordination support
- Conflict and power
- Funding and resources
- Patience for progress and results
- Collaboration fatigue

While there is much to be learned from what others have experienced, it is also important to remember that there is no single approach to collaboration that will work in all cases and success is often enhanced by factors that cannot be replicated, for example, the wider political and social environment or the personalities of the key individuals involved.

This section reviews the research findings about these key factors for collaboration. Much of this literature has focused on interagency collaboration in the context of developing and establishing joint projects and this is discussed in the first section. This is followed by a review of the literature that considers how to deliver integrated or

'wrap-around' services in an effective and sustainable manner. The section ends with a consideration of the issues concerning collaboration with iwi/Maori and the community sector.

COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS

COMMON VISION

A common focus or vision is well recognised in the literature as a key success factor for collaboration (Elliot, Gillies, Hill & Irwin, 2000; Walter & Petr, 2000; Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group, 2004; Wolff, 2001). Jackson & Clark (1996) conducted research that examined situational factors and structural characteristics of youth-at-risk coalitions in the United States. Their research aimed to determine if relationships exist between the perceived effectiveness of the collaborative relationships within the coalition and those situational factors and structural characteristics. The best predictor of perceived effectiveness of the collaborative relationships was found to be consensus, which was the extent to which coalition members agreed on needs, problems, solutions and methods.

Larner and Craig (2002) suggest that local partnerships can benefit from good technical knowledge about their community. Population information and public health information based on social epidemiology can be used to provide 'hard evidence' of the maldistribution of services and resources and, perhaps more importantly, of cross cutting issues of social deprivation, health, wellbeing, employment and education.

An important step to achieving agreement is ensuring that all participants have a shared understanding of the history of the project, the agencies and organisations involved and the motivations of individuals. The different experience and knowledge that people have of what has gone before will determine the expectations and agendas that they bring to the table (Atkinson, 2006).

There are times when, historically, relationships between particular agencies have been negative or are associated with conflict, power imbalance and unmet expectations. It is often hoped that through working collaboratively such relationships will be changed and there are activities or strategies that can be used in the group context to actively address the 'myths' or negative beliefs about other agencies. One such activity involves each agency within the group presenting a list of the stereotypes or misconceptions that they believe other agencies have about them. These provide the basis for a discussion within the group about the accuracy of such perceptions. Another activity involves each agency writing down and presenting to the group the benefits or advantages they bring to the project and also the negative dynamics that they could potentially create. Again the points listed provide the basis for a discussion within the group.

Three Auckland-based joint-service-response projects, funded by the HCN Unit and involving Health, Education, Child Youth and Family and (in partnership with) Ngati

Whatua O Orakei were evaluated by Helean and colleagues (2005). Some of the participants in this study felt that the disparate aims and processes among the groups created conflict. The suggestion of using an independent facilitator to overcome this was made. Other collaborative initiatives have used an independent facilitator in such a way to good effect. For example, as part of the capability building project for Youth Offending Teams (Ministry of Justice, 2004) a facilitator was contracted to assist in getting the members of teams 'on the same page'. This involved the development of a shared vision of what the partnership was aiming to achieve, agreement on the right people and agencies to be involved, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and negotiation of a common strategy and agenda for action. Alternatively this role could be carried out by a project coordinator or 'strategic broker'. This is discussed further in the section on coordination support.

COMMON LANGUAGE

Salmon (2004) reported that definitions and operational language were a barrier to successful interagency collaboration. The absence of common definitions can produce different identification criteria and processes across agencies. In response to this concern and as part of their 'Every Child Matters' strategy, the British Government developed a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) which provided a new, standardised approach to assessing children's needs for services. It was designed for practitioners in both universal and specialist agencies to help them assess children's needs earlier and to communicate and work together more effectively. The aim is for this tool to be the main method whereby needs are assessed by agencies, reducing the number and scale of specific assessments. The use of a common assessment tool contributes to an effective multi-agency case management approach; it will be understood across services and will help promote a common language and understanding. (Department for Education & Skills, 2005b).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Vangen & Huxham (2003) suggest that the reality of many collaborations is that there is ambiguity about who the partners are; differences in views about who the central members are and what their roles or membership status are. The smooth running of the latter stages of a collaborative project depends on getting the groundwork right at the start. Many of the participants in the three projects evaluated by Helean and colleagues (2005) were unclear about the roles and responsibilities of the different participants and their agencies in the project. There were also difficulties working out the structure and relationships of the subgroups within the project. Clarifying these roles took time and, because of the difficulties, jobs were not always assigned to the people with the right skills. The participants reported that the process was significantly improved once the group identified a lead agency and clarified the structure of the group and its roles.

Participants noted that clarity at the beginning about the following aspects of the project would have created a smoother process:

- organisational and individual role definition
- the responsibilities of each partner
- identifying a lead agency
- the level of commitment required from participants
- inter-agency and intra-agency guidelines.

As well as defining the role that the various organisations have in the project, it is also important to understand the roles and responsibilities that organisations have in the sector and the roles and responsibilities that individual participants have within their organisation (Helean, 2005). A number of Youth Offending Teams have reported that a useful activity has been for each of the participating agencies to give a presentation on the roles, structure and responsibility of their organisation and where they fit within it (Ministry of Justice, 2006).

COLLABORATIVE SKILLS

It is often assumed that agencies will more effectively address a problem if they work together on it. What is not taken into account is that even if people are committed to the idea of collaboration they may still view problems from a single agency perspective. They have often not had the experience or training to have developed skills to facilitate, or participate in, multi-agency systems-oriented approaches. Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson and Allen (2001) conducted an extensive review of the coalition and multiple stakeholder literature, reporting that collaborative work often places unique demands on participants. They suggest that the capacity of a group to collaborate is influenced greatly by both the existing skills/knowledge and attitudes that members bring to the table and the efforts that are made to build and develop this capacity. Craig (2004 p.11) states that “pulling local collaborative strategy and planning together over the long haul requires a set of skills rarely recognised in official job descriptions”.

Some of the participants interviewed in the Sure Start evaluation in the UK reported that, for some mainstream agencies, the interagency approach was such a new concept that staff were poorly equipped for working in this way. For example, some education respondents felt that staff were not well equipped with the characteristics required to work across professional boundaries (Department for Education & Skills, 2005a, p43). Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2001) identified three core skills that members need in order to collaborate effectively:

1. Being able to work collaboratively with others around the table, for example, being able to co-operate with and respect others, resolve conflict and communicate effectively.

2. The ability to create and build effective programmes, for example, programme planning, design and evaluation, knowledge of content and change processes.
3. Being able to build an effective collaboration infrastructure, for example, having an understanding of collaboration and organisational development processes, and being knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of group members.

Atkinson and colleagues (2002) reported participants' views on the range of different skills they felt were beneficial for multi-agency working. Communication skills, including listening, negotiating and compromising, stood out as most important. Communication skills were also identified by Okamoto (2001) as a critical element of successful collaboration.

Joint training is widely viewed as one of the most effective ways of helping practitioners work more collaboratively, as well as developing the capacity and capability of the service (Toolkit for managers of multi-agency teams 2005). The Sure Start Evaluation reported that training played an enormous part in the building of good professional working relationships. Training can help to mitigate tensions between professionals from health and social services agencies, who had come into the programme having been used to sharing a common language with their colleagues (Department for Education & Skills, 2005a).

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The ability to evaluate and monitor progress and performance is another success factor in collaboration (The evaluation of collaboration processes and outcomes is discussed in the next chapter). Many collaborative initiatives aim to produce positive outcomes through changes to the way services are delivered and professionals interact with each other. There is increasing recognition that, while collaboration has become a well established feature of the way government departments and non-government organisations meet their goals, this is not reflected in the way many practitioners are managed. Collaboration is rarely singled out as a specific output or given the significance it deserves (Walker, 2004).

In the review of Strengthening Families conducted in 2005 (Ministry of Social Development, 2005) a large number of local managers and frontline staff from a range of government agencies noted that the work they do as part of the Strengthening Families process is not formally recognised by their agencies – for example, in job descriptions or performance agreements. Furthermore, familiarisation with Strengthening Families is often not part of the induction of new staff. This hinders the level of local agency engagement in the initiative, both for managers and frontline staff. The Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group (2004) recommended that managers need to reinforce the importance of collaborative approaches and behaviours through performance expectations and appraisals.

INTERVENTION CONSISTENT WITH 'BEST PRACTICE'

Collaboration cannot be an end in itself. Interagency initiatives must have clear purposes and use appropriate models for achieving these (Ministry of Social Development and Social Services Commission, 2003). In an effort to build ownership and foster meaningful participation, multi-agency teams do not always select the most effective strategies; members are given planning and decision-making responsibilities but may not be familiar with best practice or proven intervention strategies for particular social problems (Butterfoss, Cashman, Foster-Fishman, Kegler, & Berkowitz, 2001). Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2001) found that, to achieve success, coalition members need skills and knowledge to create and build effective interventions. A lack of specialist knowledge about best practice or proven intervention strategies decreases the likelihood that the interventions selected will lead to real change. While this issue can be addressed by investing time into research, training and technical assistance, such an approach is often not valued by members who are focused on action and change (Wolff, 2001).

It is perhaps for these reasons that some researchers have suggested selecting simple 'already proven' initiatives first, leaving more innovative and comprehensive initiatives until people have experienced success and have a level of commitment that will sustain a lengthier and more comprehensive planning and implementation process (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001).

Researchers in many fields advocate using an 'evidence-based' approach in combination with good monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that chosen intervention strategies produce the desired outcomes. In the wake of more high-quality research and sophisticated techniques, such as meta analysis, there is now a lot more emphasis being placed on the use of research to guide planning. For example, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales states "a considerable body of research has been identified demonstrating clearly that a firmly evidence-based approach to prevention of youth crime is both a realistic proposition and a strategy that can be confidently expected to be successful" (Youth Justice Board, 2002, p. 1). Advocates of the approach describe it as combining practitioners' expertise and experience with the current 'best' evidence on practice topics and issues (Blackshaw, & Ritchie-Wearn, 2001).

There is, however, some backlash against such a strong emphasis on an 'evidence based approach' with suggestions that it can stifle creativity and local level innovation. Morgan (2004) suggests that "not all decisions have to follow the same process, some are clearly objectively based on fact, but innovation frequently arises out of intuition". He states, "new and individualised insights, which can only arise from creativity and innovation, are essential elements of good practice for 'working with risk' " (p.1).

Researchers also encourage the use of evaluation processes to assist in the development of new initiatives. The assumption is that when innovations are piloted and evaluated they can, in turn, be added to the field of good practice to inform the

implementation and development of policies and practices at local, regional and national levels (Bowes, Hartas, Hughes & Popham, 2001).

COMMITMENT

Researchers have highlighted the high level of personal commitment required to see a collaborative project through (Atkinson, 2006; Atkinson et al, 2002; Craig, 2004; Craig and Courtney, 2004; Elizabeth, 2004; Larnar and Mayow, 2003). Commitment to, and a willingness to be involved in, interagency collaboration was reported as a key success factor in the evaluation thirty multi-agency projects in the United Kingdom (Atkinson et al, 2002). What emerged was the importance of those involved wanting to be involved and having a belief in multi-agency working rather than being directed to engage in it (Atkinson et al, 2002).

COMMITMENT FROM MANAGEMENT

The Sure Start Evaluation underscored the importance of commitment to interagency working. This study also found that organisational commitment to partnership-working is more likely to be sustained where there is individual commitment from the most senior levels of the respective organisations (Department for Education & Skills, 2005a).

The resource for agency leaders developed by the Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group (2004) identified that strong chief executive and senior management commitment was needed to reinforce the importance of effective collaboration, and prioritising activity within a whole-of-government context. Management, whether it is the chief executive or a team leader, needs to demonstrate by their own behaviour a commitment to collaborative approaches. There must be a clear and consistent message that collaborative approaches and behaviours are critical to achieving results.

Commitment is often discussed in terms of individual commitment; however, the organisational culture also has a significant impact. When an organisational culture is supportive of collaboration, staff move easily within partner organisations and speak honestly and openly about organisational issues and solutions that impact on individual and collective performance (Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group, 2004). Recent research findings seem to suggest that, for the most part, there is a good level of organisational support for collaborative working. Helean, Henderson, Richards-Troon, Woodley and Davis (2005) reported that the majority of respondents (84%) felt that there was at least some organisational support for participating in joint agency work. However, while three quarters of the participants involved in this evaluation felt that their participation in the joint agency projects was supported in principle by their managers or supervisors, there was limited practical support in terms of workload and funding.

COMMITMENT FROM PRACTITIONERS

Many of the participants involved in the three joint sector projects evaluated by Helean and colleagues (2005) showed exceptional levels of personal commitment. Almost three quarters of the participants in the joint sector projects believed that their actual time commitment to the project was far greater than they expected. For many participants the motivation to stay committed came from the actual experience of working intersectorally and the benefits that were gained from working together. (Helean et al, 2005). The evaluation of the Hamilton YOT identified that one of the strongest contributors to commitment was the development of team-oriented relationships (Atkinson, 2006).

However, there are also situations where the commitment to collaboration from senior management is not replicated by practitioners. A criticism of partnerships led by large government agencies is that they can tend to operate at the margins of the agency's work, having little influence on day-to-day operations. "All too often leaders of partnerships sit in meetings, talking among themselves, not connecting with the frontline personnel who are doing the work. In the worst case they are not even aware of the initiative." (Potapchuk & Potapchuk, 2003, p. 21). Harker, Dobel-Ober, Berridge & Sinclair (2004) found in their study of three collaborative projects in Britain that, despite a strong commitment to interagency work amongst senior managers, there was concern expressed in all three projects that such commitment did not generally permeate out to operational staff. This was believed to be because of the conflicting workload priorities of teachers and social workers.

In many collaborative efforts there is a desire to see impacts that go beyond the people who attend the meetings. A challenge to enabling collaboration beyond the core group members is that the new 'culture' created by the group is not understood, or agreed to. For individuals who participated in the Hamilton YOT, meeting regularly, building relationships, and hearing other agencies' perspectives, all helped to facilitate a change in their values and beliefs. Youth Offending Team members found it difficult, however, to pass these shifts in thinking and practice on to their staff or colleagues (Atkinson, 2006). Researchers have shown that collaboration often breaks down at the practitioner level, suggesting that front line staff are not supported to the same extent to act in a way that reflects the partnership spirit (Ministry of Social Policy, 2000).

LEADERSHIP

The notion of leadership is often played down in the context of collaboration. In the closing remarks for the special issue of the *American Journal of Psychology* on the process of community research and action, Sarason (2004) commented that in all of the articles in this volume of the Journal, leadership variables were merely alluded to or not discussed at all. He, in contrast, believes that integral to process are the skills and characteristics of the people involved, particularly those in leadership positions. He points out that, "not everyone has the interpersonal style and personality characteristics

to initiate and sustain an intervention” (p. 276).

Allen (2005) in her analysis on community coordinating councils found that leadership emerged as the strongest predictor of council effectiveness. She suggested that coordinating councils require “effective leadership that is organised, efficient and skilled at encouraging the voices and input of all stakeholders” (p.58). Participants interviewed in the evaluation of thirty multi-agency projects described two aspects of leadership in the context of collaboration: leadership as a strategic drive and tenacity that could surmount any obstacles to progress; and leadership as a strategic vision that could bring together the team required in order to affect change. Effective leadership was seen to be a combination of the two (Atkinson et al, 2002).

There are seen to be advantages in giving one agency a clear mandate to lead, or coordinate supporting structures. Different styles of leadership may be required at different stages of the partnership. For example, in the early stages agency leaders may need to address entrenched interests and attitudes. As the collaboration develops, leadership may need to focus on the need to consolidate progress and maintain momentum (Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group, 2004). At the same time others (Wolff & Kaye, 1998) have suggested that successful leadership in the collaboration context differs from traditional leaders. “Collaborative leaders share power rather than impose hierarchy; they take a holistic look at the organisation and the community rather than fragment or departmentalise; they focus on facilitation and process; are flexible rather than controlling; proactive rather than reactive and focus on process and product rather than product only”. As stated previously, relationships are a key part of collaboration. Leaders of successful collaboration also build personal relationships, stay in touch, visit, and drop notes (Wolff, 2001).

GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

A basic principle for collaborative working is that the right people need to be sitting around the table. Craig and Courtney (2004) highlight the importance of having representatives who have a right to speak for the group or organisation they represent. It must also be clear what mandate the group has to make decisions, and the membership of the group must include people with the appropriate decision making powers for the purposes of the group (State Services Commission & Ministry of Social Development, 2003).

High staff turnover has also been cited as a barrier to joint agency initiatives functioning effectively (Atkinson et al, 2002; Gray, 2001; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Typically, multi-agency collaborations experience regular changes in group membership, particularly if agencies with high staff turnover are involved. Good induction processes are necessary to combat the potential negative impact of changes in membership. Of equal importance is the need for representation to be consistent and for people to attend regularly. Anecdotal evidence from Youth Offending Teams nationally seems to suggest that some

YOTs struggled with different representatives from the same organisation attending meetings. This approach to meeting attendance created significant barriers to the group establishing shared understandings, building relationships and gaining momentum.

For those projects that have national infrastructure, staff turnover at this level can also have an impact. For example, participants in Helean and colleagues' evaluation (2005) reported that changes in staffing within both the HCN Unit and local project teams meant that the vision and messages were inconsistent or blurred. New people on the advisory group needed to be brought up to speed on the history of the project.

The degree of participation from group members is also seen to be related to whether the project is locally initiated or whether it is part of a government policy or strategy. Some researchers report that a 'bottom-up' approach, in which the identification of the problem and the desire for collaboration comes from the people involved, generates greater participation and commitment (Cameron, Hayes & Wren, 2000; Gavanta & Cornwall, 2001). Other research reports that some people involved in collaborative projects initiated through government policy are resentful about being asked to collaborate and in many cases the projects are only partially implemented. For example, Walker's (2001) review of Strengthening Families reported a perception from some participants that the initiative was Wellington-conceived and driven and lacked buy-in at the local level. Other participants, however, viewed this differently, suggesting that Strengthening Families was very locally owned and driven, highlighting the variation in approaches across the country. The literature also suggests that locally developed initiatives are more likely to target the actual needs of the particular community and do not duplicate the roles or focus of existing forums and projects.

However, there are additional challenges within the 'grass-roots' approach. Local initiatives can struggle to achieve significant change because they lack the macro-level infrastructure which accompanies many government initiatives. With limited mechanism to address structural or systems issues, significant barriers to effective service delivery may remain. Locally-driven initiatives can also struggle to sustain long-term participation as often the initial energy for collaboration comes from specific people, rather than from agency commitment. In such situations turnover in collaboration membership can have a negative impact.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Building effective inter-personal relationships is a clear factor for success and it is a common thread within each of the issues discussed in this section. Relationships are at the core of collaboration and Wolff (2001) suggests that collaboration building is a human process which succeeds by bringing people together and facilitating the building of relationships among them. As relational capacity within a group is built, commitment and satisfaction increases (Butterfoss, Goodman & Wanderman, 1996), access to resources improves (Lin, 1999), and the viability and sustainability of the collaboration is increased (Chavis, 2001).

In the section on commitment it was noted that the development of relationships was clearly linked to increases in commitment. Again and again, successful collaborations illustrate the importance of establishing relationships and strong personal links with the people who are participating. An evaluation of an interagency initiative in Britain made the same point, “The overall experience of developing interagency links strongly supports the view that links between agencies ultimately come down to personal relationships between individuals. Organisations do not make partnerships, people do” (Ogilvie, Lackey, Parish, Bolxham, 2000, p.4).

Huxham (2003) describes a process called ‘nurture, nurture, nurture’. She stresses that people involved in collaborative relationships should be prepared to engage in a continuous and permanent nurturing process. As is the case with all working relationships, the process of collaboration requires ongoing work, continual renegotiation and, above all, commitment from both sides to make it work (Helean et al, 2005).

The evaluation of the Hamilton YOT (Atkinson, 2006) reported that the relational environment was improved through participation in the YOT. In the initial stages YOT members were friendly and interacted positively but there were underlying traces of defensiveness and distrust. Over a three-year period, feelings of trust and camaraderie grew and people became less defensive about their organisations’ weaknesses and were more open to suggestions for improvement. There was also an honesty that existed amongst the group about the problems they were facing. At the same time people seemed to be less critical and more confident of other agencies’ work. Some participants acknowledged there was also increased accountability in having closer relationships with people from other agencies. The increase in collaborative work and the establishment of forums to review and follow up on individual cases meant that individuals’ work practice became more transparent.

Wolff (2001) talks about the ripples caused by collaboration. He suggests that the spin-off benefits from meetings are as important as the interactions that occur within coalition-specific activities. These benefits accrue as people begin to know, trust and work with one another. This may include group members writing grants with other agencies, increasing cross referrals, designing joint projects, and even socialising with one another as a result of sharing the coalition experience.

COORDINATION SUPPORT

There is increasing acknowledgment that effective interagency working requires considerable support and adequate resourcing. In order to succeed, the organisation and administration of collaborative initiatives must be handled effectively. The role of an interagency facilitator or coordinator is seen as a possible solution to some of the communication and coordination issues which create barriers to successful collaboration. Sims (2000, cited in Stead, Lloyd & Kendrick, 2004) discusses the value of ‘specialist interagency workers who have no professional axe to grind’. Such individuals

may, for example, have worked for several agencies, or be someone who represents none of the involved agencies.

The members of the Hamilton YOT also spoke strongly about the value of having a coordinator to direct and manage the change process. While the involvement of all members in decision making and planning is obviously important, having one person with a strategic overview of the process was seen to be valuable (Atkinson, 2006). Another important role that the coordinator of the Hamilton YOT carried out was technical assistance. Other researchers have highlighted the need for collaborative initiatives to have technical support (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001). In the YOT context this included technical assistance with the change process, for example, facilitating action planning, developing planning formats, providing 'best practice' literature, and writing project plans and funding proposals. It also included technical assistance to support the changes in the provision of youth justice services, for example guidelines for information sharing and multi-agency case management forms.

A literature review on community-government partnerships revealed a consistent factor to success was the appointment of a paid coordinator to support the establishment and management of the partnership, programmes, and projects (Ministry of Social Policy, 2000). It is also seen to be useful to have someone with responsibility for identifying problems, facilitating communication between agencies and supporting staff to work in new environments or in different ways (State Services Commission & Ministry of Social Development, 2003). Wolff (2001) reports that un-staffed coalitions are less able to produce the same results as staffed coalitions, suggesting that un-staffed coalitions have a limited capacity to take on numerous issues, keep members engaged, and complete other critical tasks.

Waitakere City's experience with strategic brokers coordinating all the different facets of collaborative work has been positive. Larner and Craig (2004:21) describe strategic brokers as "networked, community activists" who bring people, organisations, agencies and levels of government together and negotiate their way through the minefields of multiple agendas, accountabilities and tasks.

In the absence of funding for a strategic broker, Craig and Courtney (2004:79) recommend a 'project plan' be drawn up which lays out tasks and processes, establishes performance measures and gives guidance on process in the event of any problems. Some respondents in the evaluation of the three intersectoral projects in Auckland commented that the functioning of the joint sectors could be improved by governance and accountability issues being streamlined or developed. The development of terms of reference, Memorandums of Understanding and contracts were seen to take considerable amounts of time, were complex and compromised the progress of the projects (Helean et al, 2005).

CONFLICT AND POWER

Issues around power are frequently cited as key influences on collaboration functioning. Selener (1997) views the type of participation, the participation of people at different stages in the collaborative process and the context in which the participation takes place as each having different implications for power and control.

Challenges in relationships can also be a result of historical issues between agencies (Salmon, 2004). The varied philosophies, points of view and values held by members of a multi-agency group have been identified as barriers to achieving effective collaboration (Ministry of Social Policy, 2000). In addition to the personal philosophies held, there are philosophies and beliefs that belong to an organisation. These are both consciously and subconsciously transmitted to employees via the training they receive, the processes and policies they work within and the wider culture of the organisation.

Darlington, Feeney and Rixon (2005) report that respecting and having a positive view of the role and the workers from other agencies is a fundamental component of collaboration. They also suggest that when there is hostility between agencies, interactions with the other agency are interpreted in a manner that reinforces the negative perceptions about the competency of the agency and the motives of the workers.

Collaborations that operate within a culture of blame and defensiveness are seen to face significant barriers to achieving desired change (Foster-Fishman, Salem & Allen, 2001; Okamoto, 2001; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Eason's (1998) evaluation of a three-year partnership project involving 22 schools and their local communities reported that the conflict between the partners significantly weakened the design and implementation of the project. Eason's conclusion was that success will depend on the personal and interpersonal qualities of the individuals who represent the partnership organisations as much, if not more than, the expertise they bring.

Others see conflict as a necessary and potentially positive aspect of collaboration (Blagg, 2000). If a group becomes so cohesive and insulated that certain ideas become accepted and go unchallenged, for example, distorted assessments of the child and family situation can occur. There is also a danger that innovation will be curbed by a need to please all players. The rigour involved in creative inter-disciplinary discussion and dialogue over differences in approaches can help to ensure that actions are taken for well-grounded reasons (Toolkit for managers of Multi-Agency Teams, 2005).

Gaventa and Cornwall (2001) suggest the issue of consensus, while often masquerading as common vision, can suffocate difference and with it the possibility of more pluralist and equitable solutions. Less powerful groups may simply echo the voices of the more powerful participants, either as a way of appearing to comply or as a result of the internalisation of dominant views.

Martin (2001) highlights the importance of preparing for power imbalance within the participant group. She proposes the use of questionnaires or other forms of anonymous

communication to ensure that voices that may be less dominant are heard. This is likely to be appropriate when the group is making important or contentious decisions.

An alternative perspective on conflict is provided by Allen (2005) who challenges the assertion that conflict and the ability of groups to transform conflict productively is central to the success of collaborative work. In her research on coordinating council effectiveness, she reported that conflict resolution was not related to perceived council effectiveness. She suggests that maybe conflict within collaboration does not actually arise as often as it is thought, or that perhaps collaborative groups work to avoid conflict. Directly challenging certain issues or group members could result in their withdrawal from group activities or distract from broader areas of agreement. Conflict is avoided to achieve short-term gains.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

FUNDING

Concerns about funding and resources feature consistently in the collaboration literature. In a review of collaboration literature by the Ministry of Social Policy (2000) a key finding was that the trust, collaboration, and reciprocity needed for partnerships to work effectively took considerable time to develop, and could be undermined by insecure and short-term funding. Short term funding for collaboration (usually three to five years) often represented a poor or wasted use of resources by governments. In the evaluation of thirty multi-agency initiatives involving education, health and social services in Britain, issues around funding were the most often cited challenges (Atkinson et al, 2002). Challenges involved conflicts over funding within and between agencies, a general lack of funding for multi-agency work and concerns about sustainability. 'Inadequate resources' was the issue endorsed most strongly by respondents as a barrier to collaboration in a study of interagency collaboration between child protection and mental health services (Darlington et al 2005).

For three interagency initiatives in Auckland the lack of guaranteed ongoing funding was seen as challenging and threatening to the future of the projects. It was also seen as devaluing the project. The allocation of funding was considered to be tied to "short-term output-focused" goals and this was also seen as a barrier to the project. While there was initial development funding for the projects in this evaluation, guaranteed ongoing funding for implementation was not available, which placed a considerable amount of pressure on the participants to reduce the resources dedicated to each of the projects. The availability of funding for only the initial stages of a project also fails to recognise that building successful collaborative relationships takes time (Helean et al, 2005). Rawsthorne and Eardley (2004) also report that a lack of funding can pose a significant barrier to collaborative projects, and recommends that governments consider funding aimed at facilitating formalised relationships and community development activities that create greater collaboration. Intersectoral work can be very resource intensive and

funding is a critical issue. Many of the costs are borne locally and voluntarily by agencies and less well-resourced community groups contributing their time and expertise (Craig, 2004).

WORKLOAD

Researchers also describe other resourcing issues as having implications for collaboration. Workload was regarded as having an impact on the three interagency projects evaluated by Harker and colleagues (2004), with participants stating they rarely had sufficient time to devote to interagency practice. Staff shortages further compounded problems associated with workload. There was, however, also a perception that, over time, joint working practice became a matter of course and the level of effort and input required lessened. Helean and colleagues (2005) also reported that workload was a major issue for the participants in the joint sector projects. Of those interviewed about their involvement in the project, most said that the hours spent on the project were in addition to their normal workload. The majority of participants reported spending ten to twenty hours a month completing project work in addition to full time workloads.

While there is strong acknowledgment of the need for collaboration to be adequately resourced, it is also important to note that, although insufficient resources can make collaboration more difficult, plentiful resources will not necessarily make effective collaboration occur. Blaming inadequate resourcing can mask other issues of individual commitment and skills, or failures of the system (Darlington et al, 2005).

PATIENCE FOR PROGRESS AND RESULTS

A barrier to achieving collaboration is impatience with timeframes. The process of drawing people together and creating a framework for collaborative work always takes longer than one imagines. Working in collaboration is more difficult and time-consuming than working alone since time is needed to develop effective new ways to work in partnership. In some collaborative initiatives a key contributor to failure is the anticipated positive outcomes not appearing soon enough. Understanding this is critical to sustaining the ongoing commitment of participants.

Goodman, Wheeler, and Lee (1995) view collaboration as developmental and suggest that certain challenges need to be resolved at certain times in order to proceed to the next phase of development. They also discuss the negative consequences of rushing timelines and setting ambitious agendas that pre-empt a collaborative from developing sufficiently in each phase. There is clear agreement that collaboration can be a time-consuming and lengthy process and allowances need to be made for the time it takes to build and sustain them.

COLLABORATION FATIGUE

In the past ten years there has been prolific growth in collaborative activity in New Zealand, particularly in the social sectors. Intersectoral collaboration, 'joining-up' government, regional coordination, local services mapping, local partnerships, and collaborative strategic planning have all become part of the complexity of social services delivery and governance. While the positive effects of increased coordination and collaboration are being observed, (Atkinson, 2006; Craig & Courtney, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2004; Helean et al, 2005; Potapchuk & Potapchuk, 2003) it is worth noting that, more recently, concerns have been raised about the negative impact of this proliferation of collaborative initiatives.

While collaborative processes may be effective in the long term, they require a considerable investment in time and resources (Walker, 2004). There is a limit to the capacity of agencies to actively participate and sustain their involvement in collaboration. Helean and colleagues (2005) discussed signs of 'coordination-meeting' fatigue in their evaluation of three intersectoral projects in Auckland. Some participants in this research raised concerns that the costs (time and resources) involved in the projects were far in excess of the benefits (resources) received and spoke of the need to work smarter so organisational and personal resources are not dissipated through 'ill-defined' or 'unfocused' projects or projects which did not meet the priorities of those involved. The Final Workstream Report for the Review of the Centre (State Services Commission & Ministry of Social Development, 2003) recommended building collaboration into departmental accountabilities including Statements of Intent, key performance indicators and performance objectives to encourage interagency collaboration.

Wolff (2001) also points out that creating communication and coordination in a community that is home to multiple collaborations becomes a significant challenge. Craig (2004), speaking specifically about the New Zealand context, identifies a need to make better sense of the current state of affairs. He describes multiple agencies all with overlapping mandates to address interrelated problems, but with different consultation, planning and funding cycles; and different sectors and multiple levels of government contributing in different ways to the delivery and management of services and the policy and legislation that guides service provision. Managers are often required to attend numerous meetings with very similar, but unco-ordinated goals. For example, there are a number of initiatives that address service delivery to at-risk youth: Strengthening Families, Safer Community Councils, High and Complex Needs, Family Safety Teams, Care and Protection Resource Panels, and Youth Offending Teams. These initiatives have overlapping goals, participants and approaches. The review of Strengthening Families reported that there are many more family-related intersectoral initiatives operating than when Strengthening Families was introduced in 1997 and many of these programmes tend to be established and administered under different regimes. The review also reported a lack of clarity about how these initiatives fit together, and an increasing risk

of duplication and overlaps in their implementation at a local level (Ministry of Social Development, 2005).

The 2005 review of Strengthening Families (Ministry of Social Development, 2005) advocated that, in order to address these issues, the governance of Strengthening Families be restructured and Regional Governance Groups be created. This new structure would aim to strengthen the strategic leadership of Strengthening Families, and improve the alignment and coordination of Strengthening Families with other family-based policies and programmes.

CONCLUSION

This section has discussed some of the key challenges and success factors for collaboration generally. The first issue to be discussed was the importance of project members developing common understandings about the project. This includes having a shared vision and a general consensus on needs, problems, solutions and methods. The roles and responsibilities within the project were also a potential source of confusion and the literature emphasises the need for clarity in this area. The next success factor for collaboration was seen to be collaborative skills. Participants who are relatively new to joint work may not necessarily possess the relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes to contribute positively to the collaboration process. Joint training was viewed as an effective strategy to build capability in this area.

Performance monitoring and the selection of strategies that are consistent with 'best practice' are success factors that are both concerned with ensuring that quality initiatives are implemented in the best possible way. It was also acknowledged that there is a lack of formal recognition of collaborative skills and activities in performance agreements for staff.

One of the most influential factors for collaboration success appears to be commitment. Many studies have highlighted the high levels of commitment found in participants involved in successful initiatives and two key contributors to such commitment were positive attitudes toward collaboration and the nurturing of positive relationships. The importance of having support and commitment at a management level and organisational level was also discussed.

The next five issues discussed all concerned the 'people factors' in collaboration. They were: leadership; building relationships, group membership and participation; coordination support; and conflict and power. Recent research suggests that individual personality characteristics and interpersonal style may impact on successful collaboration more than is often recognised. The discussion around coordination support suggested that there was much to be gained by funding a specialist coordinator or strategic broker to support the establishment of the partnership, programmes and projects.

In most evaluations of collaborative work, participants report concerns about funding and resources. This includes workload, staff shortages, and funding. In particular, the short term or 'start-up' funding given to collaborative initiatives represented a poor understanding of the timeframes required for collaboration to work effectively. This relates to the next success factor discussed, which is patience for results. Collaboration can be challenging and time intensive and so it is important that expectations and timeframes appropriately reflect this. The final issue discussed related to recent concerns about 'collaboration fatigue', with the proliferation of interagency and joint sector work over the past ten years having implications for managers and practitioners' capacity to participate effectively.

While the factors discussed shed some light on the collaboration process and the strategies for encouraging success, there is no clear-cut method for developing collaboration. Different processes and approaches will be needed to address the various issues which arise at different stages of the collaborative process. The issues discussed have been treated as distinct factors; however, the research also suggests that these factors tend to be inextricably linked in a complex and interdependent manner (Harker et al, 2004).

4.2 SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS FOR COORDINATED CASE MANAGEMENT

Many of the issues discussed in the previous section are also relevant for the case level context; however, there are some additional factors that can impact on the effectiveness of collaboration and service integration at this level. This section discusses some of the success factors and barriers that more specifically concern case-level collaboration, 'wrap-around' service delivery and multi-disciplinary teams.

INFORMATION SHARING

In the health, education, justice and social service sectors the sharing of background information, risk levels and knowledge of previous interventions between practitioners working with a particular client is regarded as vital to the development of appropriate plans and interventions (Anders, 2000; Hagell, 2002; McLaren, 2000; Wasserman, Miller & Cothorn, 2000). Many studies report that sharing information and confidentiality policies are often seen as factors mitigating against interagency working (Atkinson et al, 2002; Darlington et al, 2005; Helean et al, 2005). The Sure Start Evaluation identified information sharing, referrals and working patterns as challenges to multi-disciplinary working. Staff from different professional backgrounds came to the programme with different professional codes of practice, and with requirements to follow different procedures, including sharing information and referrals. Workers had different experience and practices in dealing with confidentiality and a key task was finding common ground between different staff and agreeing on a way of sharing information (Department for Education & Skills, 2005a).

Helean and colleagues (2005) also reported that working together required agreement on the sharing of information. This was difficult, as organisations had different ways of collecting data. It was also felt by some that the Privacy Act 1989 was not always interpreted correctly. Confidentiality issues were seen as inhibiting the way organisations could work together. There is a tension between clients' rights to privacy and the need for workers to have thorough understanding of the situation. Atkinson and colleagues (2002) suggest that strict limits on information sharing were often being enforced specifically to protect agency responsibilities and defend boundaries, rather than to comply with confidentiality policies.

There are many suggestions in the literature for overcoming this barrier, for example, formalising consent processes and establishing clear protocols for information exchange (Johnson, Zorn, Kai Yung Tam, LaMontagne, & Johnson, 2003, cited in Darlington et al, 2005). The solutions found to be most helpful include clearly defined processes and structures that are developed jointly, are well documented and are supported by training (Darlington et al, 2005). An example of this approach was the dissemination of an information sharing guide for members of Youth Offending Teams by the Ministry of Justice (Ministry of Justice, 2005). This guide outlined what information

can legally be shared across agencies and in what contexts, helping to clarify some of the misconceptions that individuals held about the Privacy Act and to establish a common understanding of how information would be shared.

As well as sharing client background information there needs to be effective communication about the plans and interventions being delivered by the different agencies involved. Without this there are risks of service duplication and the likelihood of bombarding individual families with uncoordinated visits (Atkinson et al, 2002).

CLARITY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In a study of 140 staff involved in 30 multi-agency health, education and social service projects in the United Kingdom, participants identified as having a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different professionals and agencies, the second most important factor for effective interagency working. This included understanding what was expected of them as multi-agency workers as well as understanding and respecting the constraints of other organisations. Without clear roles and responsibilities it was considered easy for agencies to work to different agendas, to assume that a piece of work was somebody else's responsibility, for misunderstandings to develop or for clients to receive conflicting information (Atkinson et al, 2002).

FORMAL MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

A study on the interagency response to child protection in Australia revealed that the formal mechanisms to coordinate the response to shared clients, such as case conferences and referral protocols, appeared to have been circumvented in a large proportion of the cases. It appeared that the informal contacts developed between workers supplemented and/or supplanted the more formalised communication pathways (Tomison, 1999). While informal professional relationships and communication can benefit and strengthen the formal child protection system, it is seen as important for informal linkages to operate in conjunction with more formal communication structures (Morrison, 1998). Tomison (1999) suggests that reliance on informal communication methods may lead to increases in inter-professional and interagency conflicts or disputes. The practitioners in this study reported problems with what they perceived as other workers' non-co-operation and disputes with other workers. Running a child protection network on an ad hoc basis appeared to result in poor information sharing and, at times, the loss of cases through gaps in the system.

MONITORING PLANS

A common monitoring plan or jointly agreed operational objectives and actions are key to effectively implementing a multi-agency project. Agencies need to ensure that collaborative or joint case management activities, as well as the activities undertaken by individual agencies towards the joint goal, are producing the planned outputs.

Monitoring or evaluation should identify: outputs produced, resources consumed, procedures and processes followed, data and information generated, response from target group(s), and any changes.

A well thought out monitoring plan should ensure that interventions are being implemented as planned, co-operative arrangements are functioning smoothly and that there is adequate knowledge about how things are going in order for improvements or corrections to be made (Managing for Shared Outcomes Development Group, 2004).

REDUCING AGENCY DIFFERENCES

The differences in professional paradigms, and the varying assumptions and expectations that these can create, are frequently cited as challenges to collaborative working. British Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are multi-agency co-located teams that were established in 2000. Responsible for delivering youth justice services they include a police officer, a probation officer, a social worker, and representatives of education and health services. Williams (2000), in reflecting on some of the initial challenges faced in establishing these teams, noted that many of the problems were symptomatic of the cultural difference between agencies.

Easen, Atkins and Dyson (2000) identified a number of barriers to interagency collaboration between professionals working with children and families in areas of high social need. One barrier was the different perspectives held by practitioners from different agencies. This included the nature of the required intervention, who should be responsible for carrying out the intervention, and different views on what constitutes a crisis. Another was related to poor communication and the different services prioritising collaboration differently. Different time-frames for action were another challenge to the collaborative process.

Developing a clear understanding of the role and function of different agencies and individuals appears to contribute to ensuring effective working relationships (Harker et al, 2004). A number of activities in the three projects studied by Harker and colleagues (2004) had aimed to create an improved understanding of the working of different agencies. Interagency training sessions and work-shadowing opportunities were seen to have contributed to further understanding other professionals' roles and responsibilities. The 'myth-busting' activity discussed in an earlier section (p30) is another activity that could help increase understandings of other agencies.

INVOLVEMENT OF ALL KEY PLAYERS

There are often multiple agencies working with young people and their families. It is important to acknowledge that for iwi, community and voluntary organisations, participating in lengthy meetings to coordinate case management can be difficult. In the evaluation of Strengthening Families (Ministry of Social Development, 2005) it was

identified that the most appropriate agencies are not always able to participate as initiating agencies and lead agencies in case management. This problem is especially relevant for non-government organisations. These organisations in many cases have formed strong relationships with the participating families and are often keen to participate in the family case management process but they are generally not funded to participate in collaborative activities. This particular issue is discussed in greater detail in the next section but it is also a relevant consideration in the context of case management.

If the case coordination relates to a Maori child or young person then the involvement of a knowledge/subject matter expert from the hapu or iwi can support the collaborative process (for example the appointment of a Cultural Advisor to the Interagency team). The collaboration process is enhanced when culture is embedded in the overall process from the beginning, rather than being left out or added at a later stage.

GROUP SIZE

A study by Bell (2001) focused on the group dynamics evident in multi-disciplinary child protection teams. The findings indicate that there is a considerable degree of inequality and influence among professionals in these teams. The study found a positive correlation between increasing team size and decreasing levels of participation. As well, the discrepancy between the most communicative group member and his/her peers increases with the size of the group and large groups are more likely to be dominated by a single individual. They recommended that more equitable participation in teams might be encouraged if the membership is kept to no more than eight members by inviting only those professionals with direct experience of the case under discussion. If the number of cases discussed is relatively small, there should be no more than five members. They also suggested that 'lower status' professionals could be trained and encouraged to participate and those who chair meetings could be trained to understand group dynamics and develop skills in encouraging equal participation.

GENERAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS

Interviews with practitioners working with high-risk gang youth revealed five negative interactional patterns associated with collaboration. These were: diffusion of responsibility or 'passing the buck,' blaming other agencies for the failures of youth, withholding information from other agencies, agencies 'covering up' mistakes made in assessment or treatment, and prematurely terminating collaborative arrangements (Okamoto, 2001). Okamoto explores why these negative behaviours were occurring and suggests that despite an overall belief in the benefits of collaborative working, 'agency fear' is the key driver. Agency fear is broadly defined as the fear that managers and practitioners have in committing resources to high-risk youth. This may include concerns about their physical safety, financial cost, and responsibility to the community.

An evaluation of a project which aimed to address the barriers that had prevented government and non-government agencies successfully working with an extended family with high needs reported the following success factors:

- The length of time the service was available was reflected in the sustainability of changes.
- Consistency of key worker was instrumental in sustaining positive, trusting relationships.
- Flexibility and tailoring a suite of services around the needs of the families overcame rigid guidelines and practices.
- Lead agency clarity of responsibility for case management and interagency coordination made possible the numerous interventions, services and programmes harnessed to support the families.
- Programmes and services offered were meaningful and relevant.
- Family members defined their needs, discussed solutions and their respective roles.
- Knowledge and skills of the key project worker were matched to the job role expectations.
- A focus on family strengths and abilities supported the development, self-esteem and confidence of family members.
- The whole family system and the whole range of circumstances were acknowledged.
- Authority and willingness of agency leaders to contribute resources, collaborate with case planning and solutions.

(Crearie, 2003).

CONCLUSION

This section focused more specifically on 'front-line' collaboration. This involves the efforts made by agencies and organisations to coordinate and collaboratively manage interventions and service delivery to individuals and families. Information sharing was seen to be a key issue that can create challenges amongst agencies because of the different views, expectations and experience of individuals about what information should be shared and how it should be shared. A number of researchers have suggested establishing clear protocols for information exchange to overcome this barrier. In addition to information sharing protocols, the research also highlighted the value of more formally clarifying roles and responsibilities and the mechanisms for making client referrals, coordinating case management and monitoring plans.

Multi-agency groups work together in order to achieve positive outcomes for an individual or their family. While there is generally agreement on this common goal there are often significant differences between agencies that create problems. The literature suggests dispelling the culture of blame and defensiveness that is often apparent in collaborative work by increasing the team members' knowledge of the roles, functions and the limitations of the agencies involved. This includes understanding the different pressures and limitations faced by iwi, community, and voluntary organisations.

Research on the interactional patterns and processes associated with collaborative case management reveals that a range of issues can impact on the effectiveness of collaboration. The size of the group was said to have an impact on the way people participate and agency fear was described as a contributor to negative behaviours from collaboration partners.

4.3 COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND IWI/MAORI ORGANISATIONS

This section discusses some of the issues concerning collaboration and the community sector. This is followed by a consideration of the collaboration issues for iwi/Maori organisations.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Establishing effective collaborative relationships between the state sector and the community and voluntary sector has historically had its challenges and there still appear to be ongoing tensions. Over the past ten years, the devolution of service provision by government organisations to community organisations has increased. The idea that communities themselves are integral to finding solutions to complex social issues has been strongly promoted, particularly when dealing with social and health inequalities. There is also the view that if government 'partners' with communities the solution will be more valid and long-lasting and will be more likely to meet local need (State Services Commission & Ministry of Social Development, 2003).

Much of the New Zealand literature concerning the community and voluntary sector has focused on the relationship between government agencies and community. In 2000 a working party was established to consider the relationship between government and Iwi/Maori and community and voluntary organisations. This working party reported that the social and economic reform of the 1990s had left many in community organisations mistrustful of government and feeling undervalued and disempowered in their dealings with the state bureaucracy (Community & Voluntary Sector Working Party, 2001, p16). In response to this report, the Community/Government Relationship Steering Group (2002) stated a clear intention to improve community-government relationships in order to achieve: better service delivery, more self-reliant communities, enhanced citizenship and tino rangatiratanga.⁵ The work on improving community-government relationships

⁵ Tino Rangatiratanga refers to self determination.

has led to a comprehensive set of recommendations for developing collaboration and joint working, and produced guidance on improving participatory processes, improving resourcing and accountability arrangements, and the review and monitoring of government community relationships (State Services Commission & Ministry of Social Development, 2003).

Power sharing and joint accountability are critical to the success of any collaborative venture. In New Zealand, however, top-down contracting mechanisms have reinforced 'power at the top' because the purchase paradigm requires the top to be the place where the decision making occurs about how much and what services to purchase (Dovey, 2003). Issues around power and exclusion are certainly prevalent in collaborative work and some of the literature suggests that the rhetoric of multi-agency work may not always stack up in reality. Nor do all agencies, all client groups and all communities benefit equally from the process (Blagg, 2000). As key partners in working with families and young people, non-government agencies are frequently expected to contribute to collaborative work in the same way that government agencies do, but multiple priorities, lack of staff and power disparities have all been cited as barriers to participation (Atkinson, 2006).

Multi-agency coalitions are frequently held up as vehicles for community empowerment (Himmelman, 1994; McMillan, Florin, Stevenson, Kerman, & Mitchell, 1995), yet the ability of grass-roots community organisations to obtain greater power, control, participation and leadership has been limited (Chavis, 2001). Chavis (2001) suggests that the 'culture of collaboration' is often used to quash conflict that may arise in the advocacy process and coalitions are most often dominated by government agency and human service leaders, not only numerically but also in status, funding and power.

Blagg (2000) highlights the importance of paying attention to some of the unintended consequences of collaboration. He believes power differences that exist prior to collaboration will not disappear with the development of integrated or coordinated activity. Powerful agencies may tend to dictate both the open and hidden agendas of multi-agency business. Speaking from an Australian perspective, Blagg (2000) discusses the involvement of indigenous people in crime prevention initiatives, highlighting the need to work according to the Aboriginal Terms of Reference. Blagg states that, "usually we see intervention in indigenous communities as involving expanding the resource and power base of non-indigenous agencies rather than indigenous people" (2000, p.6).

In the evaluation of three joint sector projects in Auckland (Helean et al, 2005), each of the projects experienced ongoing tensions between the joint agencies and community organisations. Issues such as different expectations concerning cultural matters and commitment (time and resources and meeting attendance) proved to be an ongoing source of frustration. Some community representatives reported feeling 'unheard' and frustrated at the time-consuming nature of the work (Helean, 2001). Gray (2002) suggests that government and non-government organisations may have different

motivations for participating in collaborative activities, with government being more focused on efficiency and cost effectiveness and the community being more concerned about social justice and community development.

Chavis (2001) suggests that “in most cases, coalitions are good management techniques for the implementation of social welfare activities but not necessarily for actively promoting greater control and participation by the leadership of disenfranchised members of the community” (p.313). A major paradox facing government and non-government collaborative initiatives is that they demand time and resources from people who can least afford it. In most cases, non-government participants are feeling over-extended before they join the collaboration, and then they are expected to contribute more to the collaboration.

This is not to say that government agencies should not seek to partner with non-government organisations or involve them in multi-agency work. Dovey (2003) writes that community organisations, including non-profit organisations, are usually better at understanding community issues, relating to and supporting at-risk groups, and delivering actual services and support, than public organisations. Public organisations dealing with complex social issues therefore need to be open to grass-roots innovation, learning and collaborative opportunities in the community. Information, knowledge and experience from the community shared through formal and informal collaboration will enhance social outcomes. Clearly there is much to be gained from working collaboratively with community organisations and voluntary groups, but careful consideration needs to be given to ways of ensuring such organisations can participate in a meaningful and mutually beneficial way.

Helean and colleagues (2005) propose that working in a meaningful and collaborative way with community groups means acknowledging the importance of their contribution and proactively engaging them in planning and delivery. While there is often a desire to partner with the community, there is also neglect of the additional support necessary to ensure meaningful community participation in interagency effort. Interagency work can place a considerable burden on people and organisations, and involvement in projects can also raise expectations that may not be met. Government agencies need to consider how to involve and recognise the input of project members who are not paid to participate. They may be happy to participate on a voluntary basis or they may expect the project to compensate them for their time and expertise (Helean et al, 2005).

There may be times when participation by community-based organisations is not appropriate. Helean and colleagues (2005) suggest considering at the outset whether or not the objectives of the project require community involvement or whether they are more concerned with work between sectors or more internally-focused quality improvements. If participation is sought, it is important to be clear about what is being sought – participation in the whole project or consultation on a particular aspect of it.

When the collaboration is an operational one, there are a number of relevant strategies that could be implemented to facilitate the inclusion of all participants. Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2001) suggest promoting members' ability to participate by fostering the skills necessary for collaboration (see Chapter Four p 17) through technical assistance, training or orientation. They also recommend incorporating structures to facilitate the inclusion of all participants. This may include logistical support to attend meetings (e.g. financial reimbursement), social support during meetings to facilitate active involvement (e.g. translation services), and contextual supports (e.g. organisational backing of participation).

Dovey (2003) has proposed some strategies at the contracting level that may encourage more effective collaboration between government agencies and the community sector. One of these is to establish longer term, relational contracting. Relational contracting acknowledges that relationships between governments and communities are central to achieving better social outcomes. The idea would be to integrate key aspects of relationship building, such as building trust and honesty, into a contract through a shared values statement. Her plan for contracting for longer periods of time than one or two years is intended to ensure that the mixed strategies required for more holistic projects and programmes are continuous over several years.

CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, as government policies have promoted greater devolution and decentralisation of services, agencies in the community and voluntary sector have become even more involved in the delivery of social services. This has been accompanied by a growing recognition that communities are integral to finding solutions to complex social problems. There has been a strong focus on improving the relationship between the state and community sectors over the last five years following a report (Community & Voluntary Sector Working Party, 2001) that revealed many in community organisations were mistrustful of government and felt undervalued and disempowered.

The characteristics of this relationship have implications for building effective collaborative projects with community and voluntary groups. The literature suggests issues around power and exclusion are prevalent and that non-government agencies are frequently expected to contribute to collaborative work in the same way that government agencies do, but that multiple priorities and lack of staff are other barriers to participation.

In light of this, government agencies need to consider how to structure collaborations and provide environments which enable community and voluntary agencies to participate in a meaningful and mutually beneficial way. A number of suggestions from the literature were discussed that may help achieve this.

IWI/MAORI ORGANISATIONS

Many of the issues discussed in the previous section on collaboration with community and voluntary organisations are equally relevant considerations for working with iwi/Maori organisations. The issues discussed below will therefore focus primarily on matters unique to iwi/Maori organisations. The Treaty of Waitangi provides the basis for partnership between iwi/Maori⁶ and the Crown. In many cases this has contributed to improved partnerships between some government agencies and iwi/Maori. Aside from the recognition of Treaty partnership and accountability issues, another driver for collaboration with iwi/Maori has come from concerns about the ability of government departments to deliver services effectively to iwi/Maori. The Review of the Centre identified a number of weaknesses in the existing public management system, and one of these was that many agencies were struggling to understand and meet the needs of iwi/Maori (State Services Commission, 2003). Walker's review of Strengthening Families (2001) reported an inability to attract a wider representation from third sector organisations and from iwi/Maori and Pacific organisations.

There is now a strong mandate for government agencies to develop robust partnership arrangements with iwi and Maori groups. The fieldwork participants in the Mosaics guide (Ministry of Social Development, 2003 p.53) identified six purposes for building strong partnerships between iwi/Maori and government agencies. These were as follows:

- Identify the aspirations and needs of Maori, and identify where these needs are not being met
- Build the capacity of government agencies and iwi/Maori organisations to deliver responsive services
- Ensure that resources are available to support Maori communities
- Create appropriate decision-making, governance, monitoring, and evaluation processes
- Make services accountable to Maori as well as government
- Address issues for Maori that affect collaboration, such as contested boundaries, different priorities and different stages of Treaty settlement.

Building these relationships, however, appears to have its challenges. For example, an audit of Strengthening Families carried out by Te Puni Kokiri (2001) recommended that more effort be made to involve iwi and Maori service providers in Strengthening Families at a management level. Following this audit, Local Management Groups were required to improve their engagement with iwi and Maori service providers. However, the widely-held view is that progress on this recommendation has been limited. A number of practitioners commented that iwi often had limited capacity to engage with

⁶ The Ministry of Social Development (website, 2006) states that iwi groups or organisations refers to groups that are kin based and can trace genealogy to an ancestor. Where as a Maori organisation refers more generally to those who identify as Maori: Maori organisations may be multi-tribal. Activities in both iwi and Maori organisations may range from economic development, to the preservation and promotion of language and culture, to social service delivery, to the governance of iwi organisations.

Strengthening Families given their participation in a wide range of other government initiatives.

In the evaluation of the three Auckland joint sector projects, participants reported difficulties in establishing the necessary relationships with Maori due to different understandings of Treaty responsibilities. There was an incomplete understanding of who to consult with first and – with pan tribal groups – who to connect with (Helean et al, 2005). In many New Zealand cities and regions, iwi boundaries do not match up with the boundaries of other organisations and there can be confusion when there is more than one iwi in an area. Although almost two-thirds of participants stated they had experience working with iwi, some participants were particularly concerned at what was seen to be a lack of respect towards the Maori representatives taking part in the project. This was compounded by what they saw as poor treatment of Kaumatua. (Helean et al, 2005).

Helean and colleagues suggest that, prior to establishing a collaborative initiative, people consider the role of Maori and how Maori are represented on the project. This can include:

- How relationships are structured within the project and whether Maori acting in a partnership role are representing the interests of other Maori.
- The role of Maori staff; recognising that some Maori staff may perceive they have dual accountabilities to their agencies and to Maori communities (Helean et al, 2005 p.54).

One of the key questions asked as a result of the government's Regional Coordination project was how to accommodate the aspirations of some iwi/Maori for recognition of Treaty of Waitangi principles within a service delivery model that is based on partnership. Some iwi/Maori groups involved in the projects expressed the view that agreeing appropriate constitutional arrangements based on the Treaty was a pre-condition to collaboration and coordination around regional service delivery (State Services Commission, 2003). Consideration of the role of the Treaty of Waitangi is key to positive partnerships with Maori. A goal of any Treaty-based partnership should be to achieve a balanced power relationship.

Knox (2004) carried out a number of interviews with a range of Maori partnerships in Waitakere and he suggests that the issues around Treaty-based partnerships are complex, particularly with regard to power balance. Knox (2004) believes that this particular issue will take a long time to resolve but lists a number of things that both Pakeha and Maori organisations can do in the meantime.

Pakeha organisations, for example, can:

- Continue to implement Treaty and tikanga training
- Continue to refine Treaty and tikanga policies and work on their implementation

- Continue to implement te reo Maori development within the work place
- Employ Maori in senior management positions
- Develop and implement a strategy for consulting with Maori
- Develop relationships and networks within the Maori community
- Openly discuss the issue of power distribution within appropriate frameworks.

Maori organisations, for example, can:

- Build robust governance and management systems
- Maintain high levels of professionalism
- Ensure that everyone involved in the delivery of partnership outcomes is adequately trained
- Seek to educate non-Maori organisations in a constructive manner about how the Treaty can influence partnerships
- Be sensitive to the position of non-Maori partners regarding their awareness of Maori issues (Knox, 2004 p21&22).

The process of partnering with Maori organisations should be guided and influenced by tikanga. This influence should be led by Maori and measurable outcomes of the benefits of incorporating tikanga should not be expected. In spite of this, Knox (2004) suggests that it is virtually guaranteed, at least from a Maori perspective, that observation of tikanga in an appropriate manner will lead to closer partnering with less risk. Values such as whanaungatanga⁷ and manaakitanga⁸ are of particular relevance in understanding the Maori perspective of partnership. The advice of kaumatua or recognised experts should be sought by all partners to endorse the appropriateness of the use of tikanga.

It is also important to note that there is considerable variety in the range of traditional and contemporary Maori organisational structures. Different processes for engagement may need to be used depending on the type of organisation. Furthermore the definition of partnership has many connotations for Maori; therefore, the nature of a partnership should be considered, discussed and negotiated by all partners and its formal or informal nature should be explicit (Knox, 2004).

CONCLUSION

This section discussed collaboration issues that related specifically to iwi/Maori groups and organisations. The Treaty of Waitangi was highlighted as the basis for much of the collaborative work that takes place between iwi/Maori and government agencies. There is a range of purposes for partnerships between iwi/Maori and the crown, including

⁷ Whanaungatanga means the bond or feeling of family that influences the way Maori people live and react to one another in their kinship group. It is based on ancestral, historical, traditional, and spiritual ties.

⁸ Manaakitanga: to express caring and hospitality to another person.

building the capacity of government agencies and Maori organisations to deliver responsive services and to create appropriate decision-making, governance, monitoring and evaluation processes.

The research discussed described some of the challenges for government agencies in engaging Maori appropriately in collaborative initiatives. A number of suggestions were made as to what should be considered prior to engaging iwi/Maori in collaboration and what both Maori and Pakeha organisations can do to improve their ability to work collaboratively.

5 EVALUATING COLLABORATION

This chapter examines the outcomes and impact of collaborative working. The challenges that arise in measuring and evaluating collaboration are also discussed.

5.1 OUTCOMES OF INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Recommendations for collaboration have dominated the social service sector over the last decade. Despite this, there is still much to be known about how service delivery integration and attempts to improve interagency collaboration contribute to improved outcomes (Foster-Fishman, Salem & Allen, 2001). Benefits of collaboration are generally discussed at two different levels: Gray (2002) refers to 'soft' outcomes and 'hard' outcomes, where 'soft' outcomes relate to process evaluation and 'hard' outcomes relate to impact evaluation. 'Soft' outcomes include changes in behaviour or attitudes of collaboration members, improved relationships between service providers, more information-sharing and greater trust amongst agencies. 'Hard' outcomes may include increased employment, reduced offending, and better educational achievement.

'HARD' OUTCOMES

Attributing 'hard' outcomes to collaborative initiatives is difficult, requiring lengthy and complex evaluation methodologies. This is discussed further in the next section. Perhaps due to the challenges in evaluating collaboration, few evaluations have focused on 'hard' outcomes for clients. Those researchers who have examined the impact of collaboration on client outcomes have made conflicting findings. Many studies do report positive client outcomes: for example, case-level collaboration between agencies was identified as the most important factor contributing to the success of individualised services for youth (MacFarquhar, Dowrick, & Risley, 1993), and this has been found to contribute to decreased placement changes and decreased probability of incarceration (Clark, Lee, Prange, & McDonald, 1996). The use of coordinated interagency systems of support for youth with emotional or behavioural disabilities resulted in improved levels of high school completion and enrolment in post-secondary education programmes (Malloy, Cheney, & Cormier, 1998).

In the United Kingdom, school staff working with child and adolescent mental health services identified that the joint work had led to an increase in children's happiness and well-being. They identified a measurable improvement in children's behaviour in two of the services reviewed and better peer relationships were reported by workers (Pettit, 2003). An evaluation of another British service, the Darnell and Tinsley On Track service also reports positive outcomes from collaboration. In its first two years of operation, this service reported a 50% reduction in offending among 10-12 year olds and a 50% reduction in the number of referrals to social services of children and young people aged 0-17, in contrast to a city-wide drop of just over 25% (Children's Fund Programme Managers Network, 2004).

An evaluation of a service coalition in New Orleans reported a positive impact on the clients served by the member agencies. A survey indicated that, over four years, the clientele of participating agencies experienced a 35 percent decrease in truancy, a 38 percent decrease in pregnancy rate and a 45 percent decrease in alcohol/drug abuse. Parenting skills increased by 60 percent, knowledge of nutrition increased by 63 percent and feelings about personal appearance and self worth improved by 60 percent (Johnson, Richard, & Gambel, 1996).

Recent evaluations of some New Zealand initiatives provide valuable data on final outcomes that may be attributable to interagency working. For example, evaluations of the Healthy Housing Programme reported the following changes among the households covered by the intervention (Auckland UniServices 2003; Martin, Gifford, Huriwai et al 2004):

- A 9 percent increase in visits to GPs over 12 months (and a 6 percent increase for selected infectious conditions related to overcrowding)
- A 55 percent increase in GP visits for immunisations over 12 months
- A 55 percent increase in GP visits for diabetes
- A 39 percent success rate for referring people who wished to join smoking cessation programmes
- A 56 percent increase in the use of emergency departments, a 10 percent increase in the use of outpatient clinics
- A 21 percent drop in hospital admissions over 12 months, which equated to a 33 percent drop (statistically significant) compared to a matched control group
- A 9 percent drop over 12 months in potentially avoidable hospital admissions for selected infectious diseases (such as rheumatic fever, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, meningococcal disease, cellulitis, gastroenteritis)
- A reduction in the overcrowding ratio (number of people in each bedroom), with the caveat that new space was not always used in the intended way.

The Early Start evaluation is one of the few New Zealand interagency initiatives that has used a randomised controlled trial design. Controlled studies tend to produce credible and useful information, but they are relatively expensive and difficult to set up (Ministry of Health, 2005). The three-year evaluation of Early Start included 220 children and their families who were receiving Early Start services and 220 children and their families who were not (Fergusson 2003).

After one year, there were few differences between these groups in the areas of well child care, home safety, maternal mental health and family economic circumstances. However, some (statistically) significant results were:

- Children in the Early Start group were more likely to be attending preschool education and they attended for longer hours
- Children in the Early Start group were less likely to have had contact with welfare agencies because of abuse or neglect (Fergusson 2003).

After two years (for 60 percent of the sample), there were increasingly significant differences between the groups:

- Children in the Early Start group were still more likely to be attending preschool education
- Early Start children's homes had a higher average number of safety features
- Higher proportions of Early Start mothers with depression had consulted a doctor and were taking medication (Fergusson 2003).

While recent research seems to provide increasing evidence of the positive impact of collaborative initiatives, there are other studies that report finding no relationship between collaboration and positive client outcomes (e.g. Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998). It is possible that improvements in interagency collaboration, systems and service coordination do not always translate into direct benefits to service users. However, it is also likely that inadequacies in evaluation methods can be attributed to such research findings. It is also worth noting that while collaboration may be the means through which the service or intervention is developed or delivered, the quality of the intervention and the skills of the staff also have a significant impact on client outcomes.

'SOFT' OUTCOMES

Throughout the literature there is a strong assumption that there is something in the process of partnership that is valuable (Hastings, 1996). The various process outcomes that have been achieved through increased collaboration and coordination include greater efficiency in the use of resources, less duplication and overlap between existing services, minimising gaps in services, clarifying agency or professional roles and responsibilities and the delivery of more comprehensive and integrated services (Hallet, & Birchall, 1992; Tapper & Kleinman, 1997; Armitage, 2000).

In the United States the development of 'community coalitions' has produced a body of literature that explores some of the process issues in collaboration, for example, empowerment, power dynamics and creating change. Coalitions have been used to provide direction to comprehensive community initiatives, addressing a wide range of complex social problems and increasing community capacity. Berkowitz (2001) concludes that community coalitions can achieve positive outcomes. However, he is unsure what proportion of coalitions enjoy success, what degree of success is most typical, or what factors were responsible for success when it occurred.

Other US research examining collaboration strongly indicates that collaboration produces secondary outcomes of expanded knowledge of other agencies and the

sharing of skills, ideas and approaches. Practitioners with backgrounds in single, traditional agencies report high levels of satisfaction with multi-agency working. In particular, they feel liberated from the narrow bureaucratic and cultural constraints of their parent organisation. Where the initial bedding-down phase is well-managed, they find the potential for cross-fertilisation between the different agencies stimulating; and many value the opportunity to take a more holistic approach to the needs of children (Fitzgerald, 2004). For some researchers this is seen to be as important as achieving the primary outcomes (Rawsthorne, 2004).

The Sure Start Evaluation (Department for Education & Skills, 2005a) reported almost universal recognition that no single profession had all the answers, and that bringing a range of skills to bear on the problems facing families and communities was beneficial for the families themselves, as well as for the staff, who benefited from the sharing of expertise. There was seen to be a sense of overall achievement that the difficulties of working collaboratively had been faced and worked through. Those involved in the projects were committed to working together and passionate about the group, representatives were willing to share information and the right people were involved.

A number of benefits of working in a multi-agency way were identified for children and their families in the evaluation of the thirty multi-agency projects (Atkinson et al, 2002). The benefits centred on three main areas: improved services, direct outcomes and prevention. For the agencies involved, the advantages of multi-agency work included being offered a broader perspective, a better understanding of the issues, and increased understanding of, and improved interactions with, other agencies. For the individual professionals involved, on the one hand, working with professionals from other backgrounds was rewarding and stimulating, but, on the other, it often led to increased work and pressure. Simply meeting with other professionals was reported to provide an opportunity to discuss issues and gain understanding (Atkinson et al, 2002).

In New Zealand, recent evaluation work of collaborative initiatives also identifies a range of positive process-related outcomes. The evaluation of the Hamilton YOT reports a significant impact (Atkinson, 2006). In the first instance it created a group of agencies to provide oversight and leadership for the youth justice sector. The group managed to negotiate a common direction amongst multiple interests to produce a more effective and coherent approach to tackling problems. This growth in capacity for analysing problems, devising solutions and mobilising the required resources, allowed for ten different initiatives to be implemented. Some of these initiatives established new ways of communicating, sharing information and coordinating the case management of young people, contributing to the coordination and integration of services at a system wide level. Two of the initiatives generated improvements to the way statutory Youth Justice services were delivered and the remaining initiatives increased the knowledge and access to support services and established new services to fill critical gaps.

The members of the YOT spoke positively about the changes that had been made and believed that the quality of service delivery had increased. Toward the end of the project,

evidence from the outcome evaluations carried out tended to support the assumption that increased communication and coordination of services, aligning service delivery with good practice, and increasing the capacity of services would lead to improved outcomes for young people and their families. As well as the positive impacts on Youth Justice 'clients', the introduction of norms and practices that focused on co-operation – and the increased opportunities for joint work, connectedness and mutual support – appeared to produce significant changes in the relational environment. The formal involvement of agencies from the education, health and community sectors in addressing Youth Justice issues initially broadened YOT members' networks. As the group continued to meet and work together the levels of trust grew and the quality of the inter-relationships improved. Improved relationships and the changes that were made to improve Youth Justice service delivery resulted in some subtle changes to the culture within the Hamilton Youth Justice sector. A 'can-do' approach to innovation and change within the sector was observed and this was accompanied by a strong belief in the benefits of a collaborative approach (Atkinson, 2006).

A 2003 review of integrated service delivery featured a case study of the High and Complex Needs Interagency Strategy. It reported achievements that included:

- Some children and young people receiving services that had been developed as individualised packages tailored to meet their specific needs.
- Increased understanding of the nature of this group and of the services they require. Skilled practitioners, from different disciplines, had found ways to work together, sometimes at a case level and sometimes at a service development level.
- Three large and complex sectors are working together (Ministry of Social Development, 2003, p34.)

Participants from the different sectors who participated in the three projects evaluated by Helean and colleagues (2005) felt that the level of expertise in each of the sectors ensured a more thorough perspective and allowed them to work in a more innovative way. It also appeared that the projects led to changes in some organisations, particularly in the area of service delivery. This was attributed to increased collaboration, strengthening of the community knowledge base, and an increased understanding of the planning processes. Participation in the process appeared also to have created co-operative relationships and the ongoing sharing of information. The level of trust that developed in the group was reported to be good. Some participants felt that the relationships spilled over into other parts of their work and they had developed valuable networks and friendships.

The overall consensus from the agencies was that collaboration improves outcomes but that there needed to be improvements in staffing and organisational support, funding and broader sector involvement. While not all agencies that could have been were involved and there were some skill gaps, working intersectorally and combining

the expertise of participants was seen as being far more effective than a single-agency approach (Helean et al, 2005).

However, as discussed in the section on collaboration with community and iwi/Maori organisations, there are some collaboration goals that appear to be more difficult to achieve. The ability of non-government organisations to obtain greater power, control, participation and leadership has been limited (Chavis, 2001) and it is often the case that the more powerful agencies tend to dictate both the open and hidden agendas of multi-agency business (Blagg, 2001). While there are evident benefits to be gained from greater coordination, it is important to acknowledge that collaboration is not a panacea. There are clear messages, both from the literature and from practitioners, that collaboration can improve the use of existing resources but coordination in itself cannot counter the effect of constrained funding, legislative limitations on agencies activities or a lack of skilled practitioners in a particular area.

The Final Workstream Report also acknowledged that collaboration is both time and resource intensive and decisions therefore need to be made about when collaboration is appropriate. Some of the trade-offs around collaboration will need to be considered at a central government level. Departments will need to determine an appropriate balance between the responsiveness of services developed through collaboration at the local level, and the potential inequalities of provision which may arise between localities from the approach (Ministry of Social Development & Social Services Commission, 2003, p.11).

5.2 EVALUATING INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Veno and Thomas (1996) state that, “evaluation of social action is an essential element of social change and social innovation” (p. 27). When evaluation is incorporated into our practice it not only provides some degree of accountability to the people who are affected by social change but it also promotes efficiency, effectiveness and reflection amongst the people responsible for the change.

The study of collaboration has largely been a ‘wisdom literature’ consisting of case studies and learning from the field (Feinberg, Greenberg & Osgood, 2004). As identified in the previous section, there is less evidence supporting ‘hard’ outcomes from collaboration, such as increased employment, reduced offending, or better educational achievement. Gray (2002) attributes this to several factors: initiatives are usually evaluated before outcomes can realistically be achieved; the views of recipients of services on the value of having an integrated service are rarely sought; and there are difficulties in attributing ‘hard’ outcomes to collaborative processes. Kegler (2001) suggests that the long chain of events between forming a coalition and achieving changes in outcome indicators is a significant challenge in evaluating outcomes. In addition to the mobilisation of members and formation of structures and operating procedures, coalitions must select and implement activities that logically lead to outcomes.

Other researchers have expressed frustration over the adequacy of current evaluation methods (Dewar, 1997; Schorr & Yankelovich, 2000; Berkowitz, 2001; Foster-Fishman, 2001). Berkowitz (2001) suggests that traditional evaluation methodology is poorly suited for capturing what he refers to as 'fine-grained' coalition outcomes. He also believes that collaborative ventures are too complex to be adequately evaluated by the methodology available. The lack of quantitative and experimental methodologies has been attributed to a number of research obstacles. Berkowitz (2001) discusses how random assignment of communities to coalition versus non-coalition treatments is difficult or impossible to achieve. The ability to identify extraneous variables that impact on outcomes is also difficult given that they would potentially be very large in number and also non-uniform across communities. In retrospective studies, control over such variables would be impossible. Interactions among the variables may occur and are likely to be complex, multiple, frequent and difficult to identify or control. With regard to the dependent variable or the outcomes measured, both what to measure and how to reliably measure them is fraught with challenges. The outcomes from coalitions may vary over time and may also not be apparent for some length of time.

While these research obstacles are seen as significant barriers to collecting strong positive evidence about the effectiveness of collaboration, there are researchers who have suggested that the nature of collaboration means that traditional positivist approaches to evaluation will fail to adequately capture impacts (Dewar, 1997; Schorr & Yankelovich, 2000). Conventional intervention programmes tend to have easily identifiable and specific objectives. Expected behavioural changes are identified, the programme is delivered and measures taken before and after are usually used to demonstrate change resulting from the programme. Taylor-Powell and Rossing (2001) contrast this with collaborative working relationships which involve multiple actors across multiple systems or sectors, are flexible and evolving, have broad and imprecise goals and seek changes in an array of domains (individuals, groups, organisations, systems, communities and policies). Collaboration is a fluid or dynamic process where implementation is ongoing and not predetermined, and where changing local circumstances demand adaptation.

One of the significant challenges in evaluating outcomes in such a context is moving beyond simple evaluation approaches and developing ecological frameworks, indicators and end measures that are appropriate for higher level units of analysis i.e. organisations, systems, communities. Okamoto (2001) examined change in a youth justice system from a macro, mezzo and micro perspective. Another multi-level approach for analysis included outcomes for clients, outcomes for members of the collaborative, and outcomes for the community (Taylor-Powell & Rossing, 2001). Taylor-Powell and Rossing (2000) suggest that an evaluation based on an ecological approach serves as a mechanism that engages and sustains participation and guides the change process. Specific questions that may deal with process or outcomes are interconnected and the emphasis is on ensuring the successful movement through all phases of the

project's development. This involves the triangulation of assessment (methods, sources, time, and location) over the course of collaboration's life – not separate and distinct evaluations.

The evaluation conducted on the Hamilton YOT utilised an ecological and systems approach (Atkinson, 2006). Such an approach encourages problems to be viewed as multi-causal and to look beyond individual intervention to larger units of analysis that support intervention at the levels of organisational, institutional and community systems (Veno & Thomas, 1996). Drawing on Maton's (2001) ecological framework, the impact of the YOT for each of the four levels of the environment; instrumental, structural, relational and cultural, was discussed. The framework is grounded in an ecologically-based social transformation theory which emphasises fundamental changes occurring at each level of the environment as opposed to change in individuals alone, transient change in settings and interventions that do not ultimately impact on community and societal environments.

There is a strong emphasis in the collaboration and evaluation literature on the importance of understanding process issues (Taylor-Powell & Rossing, 1996) and the use of more contextualist approaches are increasingly promoted. For example, Foster-Fishman (2001) encouraged the use of qualitative research to counteract many of the limitations raised by Berkowitz (2001). And Dewar (1997) argues that evaluation should be 'appropriate' rather than 'scientific'. He states, "The other approach – what we're calling 'appropriate' evaluation – isn't really trying to prove anything, or even to establish final judgments. Rather it seeks to understand how things work, what is changing and what might be done next" (Dewar, 1997, p. 5).

Despite the acknowledged importance of understanding and reporting on process aspects of collaboration and the challenges in effectively measuring 'hard' outcomes, there is an ongoing emphasis on the need to identify direct and tangible outcomes for clients as a result of collaboration (Taylor-Powell & Rossing, 1996). In this era of accountability, funders, managers and government are increasingly concerned with what collaboration achieves, rather than how to achieve it (Taylor-Powell & Rossing, 1996).

Dovey (2003) believes that in collaboration it is important to work out ways to measure or assess progress towards outcomes and not just measure activity or outputs. She points out that performance needs to be measured in order to manage it, reward it, contract for it, or even identify the bottom lines for which public organisations will be held accountable. To organise what it is that needs measuring and how to measure it. Page (2004) suggests that effective measurement systems feature quantifiable goals that reflect medium-term outputs and outcomes of critical elements of missions and strategic plans. These are broken down into lower-level indicators and are linked to a responsible actor or actors. This is essentially a logic model approach to evaluation, which is discussed in greater detail in Appendix A. Osborne and Plastrik (2000) advise that it takes about three years to develop an adequate set of performance measures

and that outputs and outcomes are the most difficult to measure. Measuring social outcomes are particularly difficult because of the complexity inherent in them.

These challenges are reflected in the issues discussed concerning the current evaluation approach for Strengthening Families (Ministry of Social Development, 2005). Overall, the information collected is seen to be patchy, and largely focuses on process rather than impacts. It tends to be gathered and reported in slightly different ways, and is subject to lack of interpretation.

The monitoring of information for Strengthening Families currently focuses on several levels:

- How well agencies are collaborating
- Identification of gaps and overlaps in local programmes and services
- Case management information, which generally falls into two categories
 - Quantitative (how many families are referred, how many complete the process)
 - Qualitative – the views of agencies, organisations, and families who take part in each case management process (feedback form)

The Strengthening Families review (Ministry of Social Development, 2005) identified an opportunity to upgrade the current IT system for collecting data. This would allow for more consistent and in-depth impact analysis of the outcomes of Strengthening Families. It was also recommended that MSD provide national leadership in developing and implementing a standardised outcomes monitoring framework for Strengthening Families for use at local, regional and national levels.

Some of the barriers to monitoring and evaluating collaborative work are concerned with data collection and analysis. Access to the necessary data is a frequently cited barrier, particularly when the various pieces of data are held by different organisations (Atkinson, 2006). In the youth justice sector, for example, a number of different organisations hold different bits of information about the same young person. Maxwell, Robertson and Anderson (2002) also identify a lack of consistency in recording systems across agencies. The type of information recorded on agency databases is often concerned with client demographics and there is less about outputs (what was actually done with a young person), and outcomes (that demonstrate whether a young person was any better off as a result of the response). Establishing shared data sets and shared indicators is seen to be a necessary step in improving our ability to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative approaches.

The appendices provide more practical information to assist in the evaluation of collaboration. This includes examples of evaluation frameworks and tools.

CONCLUSION

This section has reviewed the evaluation literature on collaboration. The outcomes reported from collaborative work were discussed and this was followed by a discussion of the issues concerning the approaches and methods used to evaluate collaboration. Benefits of collaboration are generally discussed at two different levels. Gray (2002) distinguishes between 'soft' and 'hard' outcomes. The literature that has reported on the impact of collaboration on client outcomes is mixed. More recent research, however, appears to be positive as researchers develop more sophisticated and appropriate approaches to evaluation.

Throughout the literature there is an assumption that there is something in the process of partnership that is valuable. Both New Zealand and overseas research demonstrates that outcomes from the collaboration process are significant. These include: greater efficiency in the use of resources, less overlap between existing services, minimisation of gaps in services, expanded knowledge of other agencies, increased communication, innovation, the sharing of skills, ideas and approaches, and the delivery of comprehensive and integrated services. It is also important to remember that there are some collaboration goals that appear to be more difficult to achieve. Many of these relate to the experiences of iwi/Maori and community organisations. The collaboration research clearly demonstrates the advantages to be had from working together but collaboration is not a panacea and cannot be expected to effectively address the full range of issues that impact on effective service delivery.

The study of collaboration has largely been a 'wisdom literature' consisting of case studies and learning from the field. There is a range of reasons for this, including the long chain of events between forming a collaborative project and achieving changes in outcomes and the adequacy of current evaluation methods. A number of researchers suggest that collaborative ventures are too complex to be adequately evaluated by the methodology available. Collaborative projects tend to involve multiple actors across multiple systems or sectors, they are flexible and evolving, have broad and imprecise goals and seek changes in an array of domains. To adequately cater for such complexity, researchers have recommended the use of evaluation approaches that draw on ecological frameworks that allow for multiple units of analysis and working out ways to measure or assess progress towards outcomes.

6 PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING COLLABORATION

This chapter summarises the recommendations and practical strategies throughout the report that are intended to address the challenges and enhance collaboration.

6.1 GENERAL COLLABORATION

COMMON UNDERSTANDING

Facilitate agreement or clarity on

- What the partnership is aiming to achieve.
- What agencies and organisations should be involved and what level of representation is required.
- The strategy and agenda for action.
- Standardised definitions and operational language.
- Organisational and role definition within the project.
- The responsibilities of each partner.
- Identifying a lead agency.
- The level of commitment required from participants.
- Inter-agency and intra-agency guidelines.
- The role of Maori organisations and representatives.

It is also valuable to increase understanding of the roles and responsibilities that the involved organisations and individuals have within the sector.

COLLABORATIVE SKILLS

Joint training is viewed as a particularly effective way to help practitioners work more collaboratively. As well as addressing practice issues, training sessions could provide opportunities to enhance the skill-set necessary for effective collaboration.

These skills include:

- Being able to work collaboratively with others around the table, for example, being able to co-operate with and respect others, and resolve conflict.
- The ability to create and build effective programmes, for example, programme planning, design and evaluation, knowledge of content and change processes.
- Being able to build an effective collaboration infrastructure, for example, collaboration and organisational development processes, knowledge about member roles and responsibilities.
- Effective communication including listening, negotiating and compromising.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- Managers need to reinforce the importance of collaborative approaches and behaviours by formally recognising them in job descriptions and performance monitoring agreements for staff.

INTERVENTIONS BASED ON 'BEST PRACTICE'

- Collaboration members need appropriate skills and knowledge to plan and build effective interventions.
- Combine practitioner expertise and experience with the current 'best practice' and research on practice topics and issues.
- Invest time in research, training and technical assistance.
- If the initiative aims to produce a range of strategies, consider selecting more simple 'already proven' initiatives first, leaving more innovative and comprehensive initiatives until some success has been experienced.

COMMITMENT

- Establish a group culture that supports a strong belief in interagency working and emphasises commitment to the project.
- Ensure there is individual commitment from senior management and find ways to make this support apparent.
- All levels of management need to demonstrate by their own behaviour a commitment to collaborative approaches.
- If the collaborative initiative is one that involves senior management, establish mutual communication channels with staff. For example, find ways to share the findings and progress of the project with practitioners and ways for practitioners to provide feedback to the project.
- Build strong personal links and team-oriented relationships amongst the project participants.
- Emphasise that participants in collaborative relationships need to be prepared to engage in a continuous and permanent nurturing process.

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

There are seen to be advantages in giving one agency a clear mandate to lead or coordinate supporting structures. Positive qualities for collaboration leadership include:

- Being organised, efficient and skilled at encouraging all voices and the input of all stakeholders.
- Strategic drive and tenacity that can surmount obstacles to progress.
- Strategic vision that can bring together the team required in order to effect change.
- Sharing power rather than imposing hierarchy.
- Taking a holistic rather than a fragmentary view of the organisation and the community.
- Focus on facilitation and process.
- Be flexible rather than controlling.
- Be proactive rather than reactive.
- Focus on process and product rather than product only.
- Build personal relationships.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

- Ensure representatives have a right to speak for the group or organisation they represent.
- Be clear what mandate the joint group has to make decisions.
- The membership of the group must include people with the appropriate decision-making powers for the purposes of the group.
- Have good induction processes to counteract the negative effects of membership turnover.
- Set expectations that representation from agencies be consistent.
- Set expectations of 'mandatory' meeting attendance.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Create a culture that values the establishment of relationships and strong personal links between participants.
- Incorporate an ongoing nurturing process.

COORDINATION SUPPORT

- Establish structures that ensure the organisation and administration of the initiative can be handled effectively. This may involve using existing administration support within partner agencies or employing a part-time administrator.

- Staff the collaboration with a coordinator or 'strategic broker'. This person should have no professional 'axe to grind', help maintain a strategic overview of the process and manage the partnership programmes and projects.
- The role may also assist in bringing together people, organisations, sectors and levels of government and help negotiate the way through minefields of multiple agendas, accountabilities and tasks.
- The coordination role may also include technical assistance such as facilitating action planning, developing planning formats, providing 'best practice' literature, writing project plans and funding proposals. Alternatively such specialist support could be contracted in when required.

CONFLICT AND POWER

- Create a culture that encourages respecting and having a positive view of the role and the workers of other agencies.
- Allow an openness to 'robust discussion' to ensure that the group does not become too insulated and cohesive.
- Cater for the inevitable imbalance of power by using questionnaires or other forms of anonymous communication to ensure that voices that may be less dominant are heard. This is particularly relevant if the group is making important or contentious decisions.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

- The allocation of short-term funding for collaboration projects represents a poor or wasted use of resources.
- Collaboration is time-consuming and can create a considerable work-load for participants. Managers who are committing staff to collaborative work should be mindful of this.

PATIENCE FOR PROGRESS AND RESULTS

- Create clear expectations within the group that collaboration is slow-moving and evidence of outcomes takes time to emerge.
- Avoid rushing timelines and setting ambitious agendas that pre-empt a collaboration from developing sufficiently in each phase.

COLLABORATION FATIGUE

- Ensure that the collaboration is clear about its purpose and role in the wider sector, especially with regard to other collaborative initiatives in the same area.

6.2 SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO COORDINATED CASE MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION SHARING

- Formalise consent processes and establish clear protocols for information exchange.
- As well as sharing client background information, ensure effective communication about the plans and interventions being delivered by the different agencies involved.

CLARITY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure practitioners understand what is expected of them as multi-agency workers.
- Ensure good understanding and clear delegation of roles and responsibilities of different professionals and different agencies, including the constraints faced.
- Establish processes for monitoring the completion of actions.

FORMAL MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

- Avoid relying on informal and ad hoc coordination of case management.
- Establish formal communication pathways and formal mechanisms to coordinate the response to shared clients, such as case conferences and referral protocols.

MONITORING PLANS

- Use common monitoring plans (master plan) with jointly agreed objectives and actions.
- Monitoring should identify: outputs produced, resources consumed, procedures and processes followed, data and information generated, response from target group(s), and any changes.

REDUCING AGENCY DIFFERENCES

- Interagency training sessions and work-shadowing opportunities contribute to further understanding other professionals; role and responsibilities.

GROUP SIZE

- Consider the size of the group and the implications it may have for participation (no more than eight was suggested by one study).
- Those who chair meetings could be trained to understand group dynamics and develop skills in encouraging equal participation.

COORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY TO AT-RISK FAMILIES

- The length of time the service is available is instrumental in the sustainability of changes.
- Consistency of key worker is instrumental in sustaining positive, trusting relationships.
- Be flexible and tailor a suite of services around the needs of the families.
- Appoint a lead agency responsible for interagency coordination of case management.
- Offer meaningful and relevant programmes and services.
- Encourage family members to define their needs, discuss solutions and their respective roles.
- Match the knowledge and skills of the key project worker to the job role expectations.
- Focus on family strengths and abilities.
- Acknowledge the whole family system and the whole range of circumstances.
- Gain authority and the willingness of agency leaders to contribute resources, and collaborate with case planning and solutions.

6.3 COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

- Power sharing and joint accountability are critical.
- Pay attention to the unintended consequences of collaboration.
- Be aware of the tendency of the more powerful agencies to dictate both the open and hidden agendas of multi-agency business.
- Acknowledge the importance of the contribution of community groups and proactively engage them in planning and delivery.
- Recognise that interagency work can place a considerable burden on people and organisations, and involvement in projects can also raise expectations that may not be met.

- Government agencies need to consider how to involve and recognise the input of any project members who are not paid to participate. They may be happy to participate on a voluntary basis or they may expect the project to compensate them for their time and expertise.
- Consider at the outset whether or not the objectives of the project require community involvement. If participation is sought it is important to be clear about what is being sought – participation in the whole project or consultation on a particular aspect of it.

6.4 COLLABORATION WITH IWI/MAORI

Before establishing a collaborative initiative, consider the role of Maori and how Maori are represented on the project. This can include:

- How Treaty based partnerships are structured within the project and whether Maori acting in a partnership role are representing the interests of other Maori.
- It is important to clarify whether Maori are involved in this partnership role in order to reduce possible confusion or ambiguity about working together. Clarify who Maori on the project represent if they are not acting in a partnership role.
- The role of Maori staff – recognising that some Maori staff may have dual accountabilities to their agencies and to Maori communities, and they may also have Treaty-based rights and responsibilities that go beyond their work-based responsibilities.
- Consider how to accommodate the aspirations of some iwi/Maori for recognition of Treaty of Waitangi principles within a service delivery model that is based on partnership.
- A goal of any Treaty based partnership should be to achieve a balanced power relationship.

There are also a range of things both government and Maori organisations can do in the meantime. Government organisations, for example, can:

- Continue to implement Treaty and tikanga training.
- Continue to refine Treaty and tikanga policies and work on their implementation.
- Employ Maori in senior management positions.
- Develop and implement a strategy for consulting with Maori.
- Develop relationships and networks within the Maori community.
- Openly discuss the issue of power distribution within appropriate frameworks.

Maori organisations can, for example:

- Build robust governance and management systems.
- Maintain high levels of professionalism.
- Ensure that everyone involved in delivery of partnership outcomes is adequately trained.
- Seek to educate non-Maori organisations in a constructive manner about how the Treaty can influence partnerships.
- Be sensitive to the position of non-Maori partners regarding their awareness of Maori issues.

APPENDICES: TOOLS AND CHECKLISTS FOR EVALUATING COLLABORATION

Evaluation and monitoring is regarded as vital throughout the collaboration process. This Appendix details some practical strategies to support this task. The first section discusses the practicalities of evaluating collaboration, including design and methods. The next section provides details of specific tools and checklists for assessing collaboration. Chapter Six discussed some of the challenges in evaluating collaboration and emphasised the complex nature of collaboration. The tools discussed in this section provide some ideas for basic monitoring of the collaboration progress. They could also be used to shape the development of an evaluation plan, for a group discussion, or as individual questionnaires or checklists for participants to respond to.

1. WHAT SHOULD THE EVALUATION FIND OUT?

- **Impact evaluation: *what were the long-range effects?***

This kind of evaluation focuses on the ultimate impacts the collaboration is having. The focus here is often on statistical indicators. For example, a collaboration aiming to prevent substance abuse may collect data on alcohol related offences or road accidents.

- **Outcome evaluation: *what was accomplished?***

This kind of evaluation focuses on the coalition's accomplishments. It can include the number and type of change in policies or practices in the community, as well as the development of new services. The number of objectives met over time is a useful outcome evaluation tool. Interviews with coalition members on critical accomplishments and surveys of client self-report behaviour change are also able to show what the collaboration has achieved. As discussed in Chapter Six, Taylor-Powell and Rossing (1996) emphasise, consistent with ecological and systems thinking, that outcomes occur at a number of different levels. Using their levels, a range of possible collaborative outcomes are listed over page:

Outcomes for	Type of Outcome
Individuals (intrapersonal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – clients, community residents, member of collaborative 	Changes in . . . Attitude, knowledge, skills, behaviours, self-concept, perceptions, competence, actions, life styles.
Groups (interpersonal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – families, workgroups, networks 	Changes in . . . Relationships, integration, practices, interactions, behaviours, values, culture.
Organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – agencies, departments 	Changes in . . . Organisational culture, services provided, resource use, rules and regulations, types of services, programme delivered, access, practices, resource generation, policies, relationships.
Systems (intra-organisational) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cluster of agencies, sector, related organisations. 	Changes in . . . System functioning, delivery of services, resource use/generation, relationships, interaction patterns, linkages, networks, policies, institutionalisation of changes.
Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – geographical unit, political unit 	Changes in . . . Cohesion/identity, civic action, social norms, policies, social-economic-environmental conditions, values, attitudes, support systems, empowerment, civic action, social norms, policies, laws, practices, conditions, social capital.
Public Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – local, state, national 	Changes in . . . Regulations, laws, ordinances.

– **Process evaluation: what activities took place?**

Process evaluation focuses on how an initiative operates – the internal dynamics and the contributors and barriers to success. Process evaluation is often used to guide improvements to the operation of the collaboration. Collecting data on milestones, critical events, process indicators and monitoring outcomes is fundamental (Taylor-Powell & Rossing, 1996). Methodologies may include activity logs, observation, surveys, interviews and focus groups. Surveys or interviews can also rate perceptions

of collaboration and strength of relationships (Francisco & Wolff, 1994). Taylor-Powell and Rossing, (1996) suggest that process evaluation encompasses formative evaluation, evaluability assessment, application of programme theory, implementation analysis, and monitoring outcomes.

LOGIC MODELS FOR EVALUATING COLLABORATION

Logic models have been used since the 1980s but in recent years have become very popular. Logic models provide a visual representation of a particular programme or project. The benefits of using the logic model include building a common understanding of the programme and expectations, understanding the linkages among programme elements and possible problems, and improved programme evaluation (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999, cited in Betts & Stuart, 2002). Cooksey, Gill & Kelly (2001) describe logic models as flow charts that display a sequence of logical steps in programme implementation and the anticipated outcomes.

The logic model presented by Betts and Stuart (2002) depicts the resources (inputs: time, expertise, skill and funding) which are used for activities that result in outputs (e.g. meetings, proposals, reports, programmes delivered, training, assessment) for clients to achieve short, medium and long-term outcomes (e.g. change in specific behaviours and attitudes, securing more funding). There is also a box for assumptions and environment. Assumptions may include the key principles the programme operates by or the values of the group. The environment section requires an identification of the characteristics of the setting and the approach. It may also include the background factors of people involved that may affect the relationship between the programme and outcomes. A more basic approach involves specifying programme components, outputs, immediate objectives/effects, intermediate objectives/effects and ultimate objectives/ effects (Rutman, 1984, cited in Adler, 2002).

Adler (2002) believes that the analysis of the process between inputs, short-term objectives and long-term goals provides a way to assess the gap between stated outcomes and actual resource allocation and activities. She also suggests that the step beyond creating a model of how a programme should operate is to compare this model to its actual operation. This would enable an evaluation approach that can be used for a system-level process evaluation. She does, however, note that the task of modelling an entire system involved in an area of service provision is a monumental and time-consuming task (Adler, 2002).

2. TOOLS TO ASSESS COLLABORATION

THE NUFFIELD INSTITUTE PARTNERSHIP ASSESSMENT TOOL

Part III of the 'Better at Working Together' collaborative resources is a self-assessment tool which is based on this one, developed by the Nuffield Institute for Health for the Strategic Partnering Taskforce at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the United Kingdom. It draws on an extensive programme of research carried out by the Nuffield Institute.

The partnership assessment tool:

- provides material (rapid collaboration profile sheets) to conduct an assessment of the current effectiveness of your interagency process
- with repeated use, allows you to track changes in the collaborative process over time
- when used at different organisational levels, highlights a range, and possible diversity, of perspectives
- provides a common framework (and vocabulary) for agencies and members of groups to develop a jointly owned approach to tackling barriers to effective collaboration
- can help newly formed groups to explore the views and aspirations of those embarking on a new venture. It provides a developmental framework for establishing a healthy and effective collaboration by, among other things, highlighting what to avoid.
- can help established collaborations to take stock on a routine basis of how effective their interagency process is – that is, it provides an opportunity for a periodic review or 'health check'
- can help interagency groups that are experiencing difficulties to systematically identify the areas of conflict (and consensus) and to develop an action plan for improved interagency working. In such instances, the value of the tool is diagnostic.

The assessment tool is based on the six principles which research and fieldwork have shown to be the building blocks for successful collaboration:

Principle 1 Recognise and accept the need for collaboration

Principle 2 Be clear and realistic about the purpose

Principle 3 Ensure commitment

Principle 4 Develop and maintain trust

Principle 5 Create clear and robust arrangements to support collaboration

Principle 6 Monitor, measure and learn.

The tool ascertains from the people involved the degree to which they feel that these building blocks are in place. Because the principles that the tool is based on are generic, the tool can be used in a wide range of contexts.

The tool is available in published form – *'Better at Working Together'* Interagency Collaboration: Part III Self-Assessment Tool, or on the HCN website <http://www.hcn.govt.publications.htm>

PARTNERSHIPS ANALYSIS TOOL

This tool was developed to help organisations involved in health promotion projects to reflect on the partnerships they have established and monitor their effectiveness. The tool is divided into three activities and is designed to provide a focus for discussion between agencies. The tool can be used at different times in the partnership. Early on, it will provide some information on how the partnership has been established and identify areas in which there is a need for further work. A year or so into the partnership, it provides a basis for structured reflection on how the partnership is developing and how inter-partner relationships are forming. With longer term partnerships, it may be worth revisiting the tool every 12-18 months as a method for continuing to monitor progress and the ways in which relationships are evolving.

A summary of each of the three activities is provided below. For further detail, visit the following address on the Vic Health website:

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/rhadmin/articles/files/Partnerships.pdf

ACTIVITY 1:

HOW TO ASSESS THE PURPOSE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

1. Have each participant write five answers to each of the following questions on a piece of paper and rank them in order of importance:
 - Why is the partnership necessary in this particular project?
 - What value is it trying to add to the project?
2. Compare individual lists by starting with the reasons that are most important and following through to those that are least important.
3. Look for the points of consensus, but also be aware of any differences.
4. Do organisations have a clear understanding of what each one can contribute to the partnership?

ACTIVITY 2:

A MAP OF THE PARTNERSHIP

This exercise is designed to place all of the partners in relation to each other. Lines are drawn between them to show the strength and nature of the relationship. Mapping is a way to clarifying the roles and the level of commitment to the partnership. The suggested approach is as follows:

1. List all the agencies involved in the partnership. The lead agency (if there is one) can be placed in the centre.
2. Create a legend that shows a line style (e.g. dotted, dashed, etc) to depict the four categories of networking, coordinating, co-operating and collaborating. Draw lines between the agencies indicating the nature of the relationship between them.

3. The strength of the links between partners should be based on evidence of how the partnership actually works rather than how people might like it to work or how it may work in the future. Where possible, cite concrete examples as evidence of the relationship between the partners.

Definitions for the four categories (networking, coordinating, co-operating and collaborating) are provided in the full version of the tool from the website. There is also a partnership mapping example.

ACTIVITY 3:

PROVIDING FEEDBACK USING A CHECKLIST

In this activity, partners rank themselves against each of the items in a checklist describing the key features of a successful partnership. The checklist is designed to provide feedback on the current status of the partnership and suggest areas that need further support and work. The questions address seven major issues of forming and sustaining meaningful partnerships:

1. Determining the need for the partnership.
2. Choosing partners.
3. Making sure partnerships work.
4. Planning collaborative action.
5. Implementing collaborative action.
6. Minimising the barriers to partnerships.
7. Reflecting on and continuing the partnership.

For a copy of the checklist, visit the website.

ON-LINE PARTNERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

This is a free web-based tool provided by the Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health at the New York Academy of Medicine. This tool helps partnerships to:

1. Understand how collaboration works and what it means to create a successful collaborative process.
2. Assess how well the collaborative process is working.
3. Identify specific areas they can focus on to make the collaborative process work better.

The tool measures the partnership's level of synergy. It identifies the partnership's strengths and weaknesses in areas that are known to be related to synergy – leadership, efficiency, administration and management, and sufficiency of resources. The tool also measures partners' perspectives about the decision making process, the benefits and drawbacks they experience as a result of participating in the partnership, and their overall satisfaction in the partnership.

The developers suggest that partnerships who use the tool should have been in existence at least six months, have begun to take action to implement its plans and have at least five active partners. It is also important that the questionnaire is filled out by participants who are knowledgeable about the partnership.

To use the tool, go to www.PartnershipTool.net/registration.htm (or see www.PartnershipTool.net to obtain additional information. The person who coordinates the activities of the partnership fills out a short questionnaire and is then sent a return "registration email". The coordinator will then assign each participant a unique partner ID, which will give them access to the on-line questionnaire and enable them to provide information anonymously. The participants of the partnership then have 30 days to log onto the website and complete the anonymous questionnaire – which should only take ten minutes.

After 30 days the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool analyses the data from the questionnaires automatically, and generates a tailored, action-oriented report that documents and explains the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership. There is a sample questionnaire which can be printed off and filled in but this will mean you will not be able to have your results analysed nor will you receive a report.

3. ASSESSING PERCEPTIONS OF INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

QUINN & CUMBLAD (1994)

This study examined how direct service providers across the various childcare agencies in the United States perceive current collaborative processes in general to determine whether the different agencies' specific opinions regarding collaboration converged and diverged. The findings supported a consensus of opinion regarding collaboration across the various service-provider groups. The participants responded to the following statements using a 7 point Likert scale:

1. The youth and family services in this community are comprehensive.
2. The youth and family services in this community create opportunities for joint planning across agencies, which leads to singleness of direction in planning and activities.
3. Youth with behavioural and emotional disorders in this community receive care tailored to their special needs.
4. The youth and family services in this community are characterized by good feed-back and follow-up mechanisms that allow for constant evaluation of goal attainment.
5. Great efforts are made by all of the service agencies dealing with youth with behavioural and emotional disorders in this community to eliminate ineffective programmes.
6. Regardless of the agency that first makes contact with a youth or family in need of services, clients usually are referred to the appropriate service provider without unnecessary delay.
7. If any one agency is providing services for a child or family, service needs in other areas usually are communicated to the appropriate agency.
8. A major goal of service agencies is developing agreements among agencies at the direct service level to avoid needless duplication of effort.
9. The system of care in this community is designed to prevent children with behavioural and emotional disorders and their families who require multiple services from 'falling through the cracks' between agencies.
10. In this community, all relevant constituency groups are involved in the decision-making process regarding services for children with behavioural and emotional disorders.
11. The system of services in this community for youth with behavioural and emotional disorders has historically been well coordinated and has shown evidence of collaboration among agencies.
12. The system of service for youth with behavioural and emotional disorders and their families has become better coordinated and shows greater collaboration over the past few months.

MALLOY, CHENEY & CORMIER, (1998)

This study evaluated an interagency project to improve transition outcomes for students with emotional or behavioural disabilities. Interagency collaboration was measured using the Interagency Collaboration Checklist from Froelich (1993, cited in Malloy, Cheney & Cormier, 1998). This checklist was administered once prior to the project beginning and again 18 months later. The items related to the following dimensions of collaboration:

1. Extent to which interagency coordination has improved services.
2. Value of Interagency Councils in helping agencies work together more effectively.
3. Value of state level assistance when difficult cases are encountered.
4. Extent to which the advantages of interagency collaboration outweigh the disadvantages.
5. Extent to which providers make joint decisions.
6. Extent to which providers of services function together as a unit to achieve common goals.
7. Extent to which interagency planning has led to better coordination of services.
8. Opportunities for families and service providers to learn about one another's resources and capabilities.
9. Level of collaboration among providers of services.
10. Conflicts over which services should be provided.
11. Degree of conflict over agency responsibility to serve a given client.
12. Level of input by families in service plans.
13. Extent to which agencies ignore the concerns of one another.
14. Concurrent service coordination when multiple services are required.
15. Sequential service coordination when one service is needed when another service ends.
16. Extent to which service providers seek the counsel of one another in decision making.
17. Degree of conflict over responsibility for providing or paying for a given service.
18. Level of agreement on most appropriate types of service.
19. Use of established procedures for interagency tasks.

The findings from this study indicated that perceptions of interagency collaboration improved (based on the questionnaire). Also, the youth and young adults participating in the programme improved in high school completion, enrolment in post-secondary education programmes, hours worked per week, and in their hourly wages.

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP (NOT DATED)

As part of a toolkit to assist in the building of effective community partnerships, a checklist helps collaboration members understand where the partnership is thriving and where it may need attention. It is also able to be used with partners to focus on, assess, and improve the quality of their collaborative efforts. The questionnaire uses a five point Likert scale with disagree at one end and agree at the other. The items are as follows:

1. Our partnership has developed a shared vision and a set of goals.
2. Our partnership has successfully engaged a broad base of partners from a range of individuals and organisations representing all the key stakeholders.
3. Our partnership has the right mix of partners so that our representation is inclusive and effective.
4. Families and consumers are involved in our community partnership in a meaningful way.
5. Our partnership has established a clear organisational structure. Our partnership has agreed upon the roles that individual partners will play, and ensured that all partners understand and accept the responsibilities of those roles.
6. All partners involved in our community partnership have an understanding of who the other partners are, what organisations they come from, and what those organisations do.
7. Our community partnership regularly communicates with all partners to keep them informed about its work.
8. Our partnership engages in activities to create awareness about and increase support for the work of the partnership.
9. Our community partnership has effective meetings and is able to work through tough issues.
10. Every partner has a clear understanding of how we make decisions and resolve conflict.
11. Our community partnership has a clear plan of action.
12. Our partnership is effectively moving on that plan of action.
13. Our community partnership has clear measures of success and we are measuring our progress toward success.
14. Our partnership has identified and mobilised resources (financial and other) from partner organisations and other entities throughout the community.

HAMILTON YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM (YOT) QUESTIONNAIRE (ATKINSON, 2006)

The questionnaire was given to Hamilton YOT members 18 months into the project (April 2003). The questionnaire was web-based to enable anonymous responses and it uses a five point Likert scale with 'strongly disagree' at one end and 'strongly agree' at the other.

1. I have a good understanding of what the YOT is trying to achieve.
2. I support and agree with what the YOT is trying to achieve.
3. I feel I have had adequate involvement in deciding the focus and goals of the YOT.
4. I feel the other agencies have had more input than me in deciding the focus and goals of the YOT.
5. I feel the researcher (Mel) has had too much input in guiding the focus and goals of the YOT
6. I believe the direction the YOT is heading in is supported by research evidence
7. I have a strong personal commitment to working to achieve the YOT goals.
8. I believe the YOT has adequate leadership.
9. I believe my organisation has a strong commitment to working to achieve the YOT goals.
10. I believe the other organisations represented on the YOT have a strong commitment to working to achieve the YOT goals.
11. I think the YOT will develop projects which will result in positive change in the Youth Justice sector.
12. I struggle to see how the YOT will be able to make any real difference in the Youth Justice sector.
13. I feel the YOT meetings are productive.
14. I feel I have a good understanding of how the Hamilton youth justice sector operates.
15. My involvement in the YOT has helped improve my understanding of the Hamilton youth justice sector.
16. I feel I have not had the opportunity to adequately share my perspective on the issues the YOT is looking at.

Tick the one statement that best describes you:

17. The information and literature that the researcher sends out to us is:

- Very useful and I read it all
- Very useful and I read most of it
- Very useful but I don't always get to read it
- Not very useful and I read very little of it
- Not very useful and I don't read any of it.

18. So far being involved in the YOT has been for me:

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative

19. I believe the YOT meetings could be improved by . . .

20. The impact/s I believe the YOT has already had are . . .

21. What concerns do you have about the way the YOT is progressing? . . .

22. Something valuable the researcher could do to support the effective functioning of the YOT is?

23. Something valuable I could do to support the effective functioning of the YOT is?

24. Something valuable other YOT members could do to support the effective functioning of the YOT is?

INTERSECTORAL COMMUNITY ACTION FOR HEALTH

In New Zealand, Duignan et al (2003, cited in Ministry of Health, 2005) have developed the Community Project Indicators Framework, which can also be applied to intersectoral initiatives for improving the health of local communities. This framework comprises two parts:

- (1) **A list of project activities** – which describes what the initiative is planning to complete within a certain timeframe, and reports on what was achieved
- (2) **A description of intended results and impacts** – which describes what processes and outcomes are planned and reports on what was achieved under 11 headings: project planning and regular reassessment; project infrastructure and sustainability; community participation; enhanced community voices; leadership/key players upskilled; collaboration; conflict managed; resources increased; changed organisations; Treaty of Waitangi obligations; Pacific people's involvement.

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