

# Some perspectives on collaboration within the community and voluntary sector

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## Agenda

- Outline Not for Profit Sector in Ireland.
- Outline the case for collaboration, the Irish NFP's experience, Himmelmans Matrix
- Discuss factors influencing the success of collaboration
- Discuss three projects –
  - Carers Week
  - Joint Conference
  - Joint Research
- Conclusions and Observations

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## The Not-For-Profit Sector in Ireland

- Significant contribution of the not-for-profit (NFP) sector in Ireland
- Many umbrella organisations exist – including Care Alliance Ireland
- Government Policy document on the Voluntary Sector (2000)

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## Collaboration – the theoretical case for it

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

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## Himmelman's Matrix

Matrix of Strategies for Working Together - Continuum of Change Strategies

Definition	Networking	Co-ordinating	Co-operating	Collaborating
Exchanging information for mutual benefit	Networking +	Co-ordinating +	Co-operating +	Collaborating +
		Altering activities to achieve a common purpose	Sharing resources to achieve a common purpose	Enhancing the capacity of another to achieve a common purpose

(Himmelman, 1994)

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## Government Rationale for Umbrella Groups

- ‘Liaising with Government and undertaking a co-ordinating role for the sector is **time consuming** and resources are required for these tasks.’
- ‘Umbrella bodies develop **internal cohesion** in the sector’

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## Not for Profit – Umbrella Groups

The main kinds of support service offered include:

- Provision of **information and guidance** for member groups
- Provision of **education and training** programmes for volunteers and staff
- Assistance with **organisational /management/ standards development**
- **Specialist assistance** in areas such as recruitment and legal incorporation.

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## Collaboration – the Irish NFP experience

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

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## Collaboration – in the Third Level Sector in Ireland

Light touch regulation of the sector..

- *“has given us mission creep, inflexible staffing structures and practices and it has given us a fragmented system of institutions which to a very great extent stand apart and aloof from each other.”*

Tom Boland, the CEO of the Irish Higher Education Authority,  
as reported by The Irish Times, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2009

*“greater emphasis on collaboration and consolidation”.*

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## Factors influencing the success of collaboration

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

(Mattessich and Monsey (1992) and updated in 2004)
- **Interpersonal Factors**

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## Barriers to Effective Collaboration

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

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## Care Alliance Ireland

- Set up 1995, limited voice of Family Carers within NFP
- 2009 - 70 members.
- 2008 -funding secured to enable the following projects
  - 1)Carers Week
  - 2)Joint Conference
  - 3)Joint Research Project

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**www.carersweek.ie**

**'BECAUSE WE'RE WORTH IT'**

**Carers Week 8th - 14th June, 2009**

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### What is Carers Week?

- Began in Ireland 2007 – 15 events
- Objectives –
  - Events – Awareness - Profile
- Outcomes - 2009 –
  - > 95 events
  - 10 National Partner Organisations
  - > 20 NFP organisations
  - >3,000 Family Carers took part.

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### Nature of Collaboration

- Steering group
- Formal partnership
- Financial contribution

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### Reflection

- Objectives largely met
  - Events
  - Media
- Depth of collaboration?
- Planning crucial
- Buy In (Out) critical
- Organisational calendars

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### 2) Joint Conference

- *The Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) [www.nai.ie](http://www.nai.ie), Brain Awareness Week, 'Always on my mind: Caring for a person with a neurological condition' (Dublin, March 10<sup>th</sup> 2009)*
- Objectives – NAI – Care Alliance Ireland – fit with strategic objectives
- Outcomes – High Attendance – High Quality Programme

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### Reflection

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

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### 3- Joint Research

- Background - Build on Quantitative research - Family Carers – Reported Health Status(2008), Parkinsons Association
- Objectives – Research Agenda, Inform Policy and Practice,
- Outcomes – Too early to say

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### Reflection

- Progressed Family Carer Research
- Accessing respondents relatively easy
- Both organisations based in same building
- Parkinsons link person has moved on
  
- Win-Win

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### Use of Theoretical Models to Review Collaborative Work

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

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### Critical Components of successful Collaboration – Our experience

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

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

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

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

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

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# Thank You Questions?

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

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

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## Appendix ii - Organisational and Individual Barriers to

### Effective Inter-organisational Working -

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

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## Appendix iii - References

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