TIP SHEET: Building Effective Partnerships – Partnership Models, Resources and Case Studies
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Purpose
The purpose of this resource is to provide learners links to current partnership models, resources and example case studies to support the development and maintenance of community, government and business partnerships.

The case studies included in this resource provide examples of effective partnerships across the primary health care and community service sector in Australia. Partnership activities, benefits, outcomes and challenges are clearly documented in each case study.

Trainers can use the case studies as best-practice examples of an effective health partnership in Australia.

Trainers may choose to provide this resource as additional supplementary information to support learners understanding and completion of relevant assessments.

Units of competency
This resource supports learning and completion of assessments for the following units of competency:

- HLTPOP503C Plan a population health project
- CHCCD619B Establish and maintain community, government and business partnerships
Introduction

Partnerships are an important mechanism for community services and health organisations. Partnerships:

- allow diverse thinking and values to lead to better outcomes
- provides opportunities to share workloads and resources builds capacity
- creates environments for taking risks in developing new service models
- creates the motivation for people to pull together which in turn drives and sustains partnerships.

There is no one size fits all model or framework for developing an effective partnership however there are a number of existing resources and models that can support a partnership development process.

Partnership Case Studies

Case Study 1 – SHINE: Aboriginal Girls Making a Difference

John Willcock College and Uniting Church Homes Hillcrest

SHINE is a one-of-a-kind experiential, values-based program for teenage Indigenous ‘at risk’ girls. SHINE fosters partnerships within the community to develop valuable connections, build trust, to raise awareness and to create accountability. Key partnerships in SHINE’s success include Uniting Church Homes Hillcrest, Geraldton City Council and the Women’s Health Resource Centre.

The School

John Willcock College is a government middle school in regional Western Australia, specifically catering for Year 8 and 9 students. The College has a culturally diverse student population of around 600, of which 28 per cent are Aboriginal. The College promotes academic excellence in all areas but, because of the age of the cohort, faces many challenges pertinent to attendance, literacy and numeracy and student behaviour.

The College has a sub-school structure, which promotes a team focus and is designed to develop closer relationships between teachers, students, families and caregivers.

The SHINE program has been developed at John Willcock College for Year 9 Aboriginal girls who were becoming disengaged from school.

The Need

The College identified that Aboriginal female students had poor physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing, were disengaged and had low retention and participation outcomes. Year 9 Aboriginal girls at the College had become a marginalised group in terms of education, attendance and achievement. There were large numbers not transitioning to Year 10 at the Senior College and missing out on access to further education and workplace training opportunities.
The major impetus for SHINE came from the need to significantly raise attendance and positive behaviour statistics, levels of student engagement, confidence, self-esteem and educational outcomes for Aboriginal girls.

The Partnership

In order to expand and strengthen SHINE, the College fostered partnerships with an aged-care facility, the local council and a health service to develop valuable connections, build trust, raise awareness, and to create accountability. These key partnerships have contributed to SHINE’s success. The Uniting Church Home is an aged-care facility that SHINE girls attend as part of their regular scheduling with the aim of developing respectful relationships between the young and the old. The SHINE girls pamper the residents in different ways, some of which include listening and engaging with their wisdom and knowledge, walking together and giving residents hand massages and foot spas. These interactions, through connection and human touch, foster and nurture acceptance and respect. SHINE students have worked with Hillcrest on a regular basis from the beginning of the project.

The City of Greater Geraldton connects the SHINE girls with the community-based mobile SHINE workshop, which operates from the Council’s bus. The bus is parked in town and attracts young people from the region. The girls interact and display their SHINE skills, further improving relationships and the perceptions of Aboriginal youth. The ‘City-bus’ partnership has benefits that are far-reaching as the SHINE girls create a fun space in the middle of town to practise applying makeup, doing nails, hairdressing skills and mentoring.

The Women’s Health Resource Centre partner with the SHINE students to develop their physical and emotional health and wellbeing, particularly sexual health and improving respectful relationships, empowering the girls to make better informed decisions in relation to sexuality and health.

The Benefit

The SHINE program generates much positive media coverage (written and visual) for the school, as well as attracting awards and recognition for its school–community partnerships, and also for its innovations in Aboriginal education, attendance and engagement programs. John Willcock College receives almost daily communication relating to SHINE including ministerial visitors, student visitors from other schools, members of the public, corporate interest and traffic through its designated web address.

Attendance at the College has improved for these Aboriginal students; they are more motivated to engage with learning and their attitudes to work and to school have become more positive. These benefits impact on the rest of the student population and engender positive relationships within the school community by improving teachers’ capacity to successfully achieve better outcomes for all students. Additionally, the students are now focused on remaining within the secondary education system so that they may achieve better employment opportunities. This is illustrated by the increase in the numbers of Aboriginal girls transitioning from Year 9 at John Willcock College to Year 10 at nearby Geraldton Senior College.

After participating in the SHINE program with the community partners, 22 girls enrolled in courses at the local TAFE, Durack Institute of Technology. This was an unprecedented number. John Willcock College and the partners are now increasing the number of SHINE groups to five, which will rotate through a six-day timetable, and cater for fifty
Year 9 girls. As a result of their participation in SHINE, students have developed strong networks of support within the wider community, with external agencies and with each other; they have an increased sense of community, as illustrated by their willingness to assist others, and demonstrate increased measures of confidence, self-esteem and connectedness to the wider community.


Case Study 2 – Canberra Theatre Company and Vision Australia

Introduction
The Canberra Theatre Centre (the Theatre) is an activity of The Cultural Facilities Corporation, an agency of the ACT Government. As an agency of government, the Theatre is a not-for-profit organisation. However, it operates its own facilities in a commercial environment, competing nationally for ticketing services, venue hire of its theatres and provision of specialist theatrical programming and marketing. This partnership highlights how a government organisation operating on business principles can have a successful and beneficial community partnership.

The Partnership
In 2002, Vision Australia (previously known as the Royal Blind Society) approached the Theatre with the idea of developing an Audio Description with volunteer narrators for people who are vision impaired. At that time, the Theatre had an active program ideal for inclusion (although nothing specifically for the vision impaired) and was, therefore, receptive to the idea.

Since this partnership began in 2003, the Theatre has diversified its program to now include adaptations for people with hearing impairments (through projected captions during performances) and tactile tours of theatrical sets.

The Need
Vision Australia's mission that Australian's with vision impairment will have access to and participate in every aspect of life was a good match with the Theatre’s commitment to “providing access to live performing arts for all of Canberra”. The Theatre had done its research and knew one of the community groups that it was not accessing was the vision impaired. The Theatre also knows that for it to survive it must be “close to its community” and has since expanded its partnerships with other community organisations servicing those that are disadvantaged and excluded from the “theatre experience”.

Aims and Objectives
For both partners the aims and objectives of this partnership are a shared interest by both partners to increase inclusivity for the vision impaired.
Partnership Activities
The Theatre also advertises for volunteers and encourages people to attend training programs. The Theatre covers the contained costs associated with the volunteers and the audio description. This includes advertising; technical equipment and support to describe each play specifically to the needs of the audience, promotion of the partnership; and raising awareness of visual impairment within the community.

Vision Australia trains and provides the resourcing and management of volunteers to work with the vision impaired. It also promotes the Theatre to its community and incorporates the Theatre’s logos in its material. Advertisements for shows are funded by Vision Australia and included in material sent to its [Vision Australia] client base. Additionally, Vision Australia provides expert advice about the disability and needs of members.

Partnership Benefits
The partnership has provided the following benefits to the Theatre:

• access to new subscribers and attendees;
• staff have had exposure to a specialist group in the community that they would not otherwise have contact with and this has enhanced their training skills and broadened their experiences;
• national touring theatre companies that perform at the theatre have been able to successfully integrate the adaptations to their performances and have embraced the ideas; and government gets a clear message that the Theatre takes its social responsibility seriously and is setting an example for other government organisations.
• The partnership allows Vision Australia to improve its brand recognition and meet its mission statement. Importantly, the general community get the opportunity to share the theatre experience with people who are vision impaired, and this promotes greater understanding of difference and increases their awareness that the theatre plays to an audience with a disability.

Success Ingredients
• Open and quick communication.
• Being clear about the reasons why the partnership exists.
• Having commitment and the enthusiasm from both partners to make it work.
• Mutually beneficial outcomes.
• Trust.
• Respect for volunteers.

Challenges
Some of the challenges have included:
- addressing the issues that have unexpectedly emerged (e.g. physical access issues such as ramps, cost of technical equipment);
- getting source material to Vision Australia a couple of months before a theatrical production;
- the relationship has been built on the strength of both organisations wanting to work together. However, for a while Vision Australia had struggled with a lack of basic infrastructure (office equipment, etc.); and
- retaining good volunteers. Volunteers need to go through a rigorous process of selection, including police checks, and need to commit for a year.

Case Study 3 - Development of a Consortium Service Model - a Snapshot of the Gold Coast Experience

Introduction

From the early to mid 90’s representativeness from Support Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services met monthly in the Brisbane South Region for the purposes of informing the SAAP Ministerial Advisory Committee representatives. The meetings were always well attended and relationships were good between service providers.

In 1997 the Gold Coast was identified, along with 4 other regions across the State to pilot the Local Area Projects (LAP). A significant outcome of the Gold Coast Local Area Projects (GC LAP) was the further development of the regional network, which became the Gold Coast (GC) SAAP network. It now had some structure, a greater sense of purpose and members began having more input into policy and program development.

This was further enhanced through the Sub-regional Service Integration Project which built on the work of the LAP. In particular it took the SAAP network to the next step with more active input into planning and program development. As a network we began to identify gaps, and agree on a way forward to address them together rather then as individual service responses.

Initiatives of that era include:

- Access and Equity project
- Youth at Risk Alliance project
- Increase in funding for young women in the domestic violence sector
- The transitional housing initiative, with the community rent scheme service managing property and tenancy issues.
- The birth of the Housing Options Projects for young people
- The SAAP Assessment and Referral tool

The Consortium

When the Homelessness Initiative was announced by Government in 2005 we were prompted by others in the sector to think about forming partnerships to develop a service model that would meet the criteria for a service HUB for the Gold Coast.

That was the easy bit really. The issue was discussed at a SAAP Network meeting and from that those interested in forming a partnership formed a sub-committee to do the initial work. Recognising that we were now thinking of homelessness as broader than the SAAP program the network invited others join the partnership - these included Non-Government Organisation (NGO) housing providers, Gold Coast City Council (GCCC), other NGO's with an interest in homelessness service provision.

The Consortium was formed! A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was entered into by members and terms of reference developed to guide the project. Consortium members then became the steering group for the project (later to become the ongoing reference group).

Government and NGO service providers were invited to attend a forum. At the forum the ideas for the service HUB were outlined and workshopped to get support and new ideas from participants.
Challenges

The consortium faced some challenges - not the least being how to set up and operate a service hub for the Gold Coast given the linear nature of the strip and then needing to include Beenleigh, a very different community with strong links to Logan. Two Beenleigh services are members of the Consortium.

One of the greatest challenges was having the time to do the work involved with developing the parameters of the project, the submission and the networking. It would have been great to have had paid secretarial support; or better still a project worker to assist with that work, maybe some assistance to back fill and release someone to do the ground work. Much of the work was done outside normal working hours.

Other challenges included putting the submission together. We were fortunate to have received secretarial support and expert advice from a peak group at no cost.

There were some frustrations, however nothing that was insurmountable.

Outcomes included:

- An outreach service model that would service the whole of the Gold Coast region
- A series of access points (within services) throughout the area from which services could be delivered.
- Strong support from GCCC and new relationships with GCCC local law officers
- Lots of sector development - it was during this process that the SAAP network broadened it's membership and is now the GC Homelessness Network.
- Formation of another partnership arrangement and development of a model for the delivery of services for the Early Intervention initiative. - successful.
- We are working with Community Renewal to develop a response to homelessness in the Southport / Labrador area of the Gold Coast.
- An increased awareness of homelessness in the area.

Partnership Strengths

The key strengths of the work involved with developing the consortium include:

- Relationships! Relationships! Relationships! Respectful and solid and hard work for a period of time
- Strong local leadership, particularly drawn from the SAAP service system
- The value of the strong foundation on which to build the consortium - the early work, which at the time we had little idea would be so valuable.
- A well established network of committed service providers and the value of including the GCCC, housing providers and other NGO's - thinking outside the box.
- A good understanding of the region, the gaps in service provision and the issues facing people who are homeless.

Partnership Models Web Links


Partnership Resources Web Links


