INCLEN Leadership & Management Program

Module 2
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Team & Coalition Building

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Team & Coalition Building

This module is about how people and organizations work together – and can learn to do so more effectively.

Why are team building and coalition building important for an international research and training network such as INCLEN? Why include this topic in a series of modules about leadership and management? Here are some reasons:

1. INCLEN has called itself a network since its beginning 20 years ago. The very term "network" includes the concept of people and groups (units, institutions, project teams) linked together around common interests.

2. The central "unit" in any description or organizational diagram about INCLEN is the clinical epidemiology unit (CEU). There are more than 60 CEUs in about twenty countries around the world. Several CEUs have now become Clinical Epidemiology Research and Training Centres (CERTs).The term "unit" is significant – it implies unity and "one-ness". Yet, we know that any CEU is deliberately designed to include academics with a range of interests and expertise. Add to this, the diversity of working styles and individual interests of people in any group, and quite soon we can understand that demonstrating "one-ness" is a big challenge for any CEU.

3. In addition to CEUs, INCLEN includes other teams: regional and global research project teams, and the leadership groups (called by various names) responsible for the management of the different regional CLENs. Even the INCLEN Trust Board of Trustees (BOT) can be thought of as a team.

4. A key strategic direction of the "new INCLEN" has to do with partnerships and partnership development. This emphasis arises from the realization that INCLEN's new mission (*"Research and Training for Improving Equity, Efficiency and Effectiveness in Health Care")* won't be achieved if INCLEN functions in isolation. Partnerships with other "like-minded" organizations – at national, regional and global levels – are essential for achieving the goals of INCLEN.

5. When we ask ourselves why certain CEUs work well, and others don't, we must admit (if we're honest about it) that the reasons often lie in "people factors". More often than not, there are unproductive (and sometimes unpleasant) interactions that involve two or more people – that is, there is a "team function" challenge.

6. Teams and coalitions are increasingly seen as the "new way" for organizations to function for optimal productivity and satisfaction. This is particularly true for organizations (like INCLEN) that are involved in the "knowledge business" where, among other things, modern information and communication technologies have revolutionized the way we work (or could work). Such provides all the more reason to be competent at understanding and managing the "human factor" in our work.

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the functions of teams and the dynamics of teamwork; and to identify strategies for improving team performance.

2. To explore a framework for analyzing how organizations interact, with a special focus on coalitions and strategies to ensure productive collaboration.

3. To apply the above concepts (and suggested tools) to teams and organizations of which the learner is a member.

Some definitions

The following terms describe several ways in which people and organizations interact. The focus of this module is **people, both as individuals and as organizations, working together for a shared purpose or goal.**

> **Collaboration**: a general term derived directly from the Latin words for "working together".
>
> **Partnership**: usually refers to two individuals or organizations, who share some specific goals, and who commit themselves to work together (or "live together") in a long-term relationship.
>
> **Team**: a group of individuals working together to accomplish a specific task (or several tasks). Examples of teams within INCLEN were mentioned earlier – most typically a clinical epidemiology unit (CEU).
>
> **Coalition**: a specific arrangement where a group of organizations (usually three or more) work together for a defined goal. *(There are several other terms that describe various arrangements within which organizations collaborate; these are discussed in more detail below.)*

The remainder of the module is divided into two sections. The first section is concerned with how individuals work together within teams; and the second section discusses how organizations work together, primarily in an arrangement such as a coalition.

Section 1: About Teams and Team-building

Exercise:

You will get the most out of this module (or any of the modules, for that matter) if you connect your reading and thinking to a "real life" situation – preferably a situation where you are directly involved yourself.

Take a few moments now to think about a team of which you are a member (this could be your own CEU; or some other research team). Conduct your own assessment about how well this team is functioning.

1. In what ways is the team is functioning well? List 2 or 3 specific features or things that the team does well
2. In what ways is the team not functioning well? Again, list some specific features about this.
3. List some reasons for both sets of observations. Why is the team functioning well; and why is it not functioning well?
4. Among the reasons that you have listed, select the single most important reason that explains why the team is not working well.
5. As you think about this explanation, what could be done to improve the situation (that is, to effect a change)? Is there something that could be done by you (as a team member; or as the team leader)?

Read the following sections on key concepts about teams then return to the notes you made on reasons why your team does/does not work well and ideas about how to improve its functioning? What qualities does your team share/not share with those of Pearman's high-performing teams? At which of the seven stage(s) of team performance is your team? Do any new ideas suggest themselves on how to enhance the performance of your team? Are there new communication strategies your team might utilize?

Concept 1: Teams Have Specific Functions

This sounds like a very simple idea – and in some ways it is. The main reason to have a team at all is to achieve something that cannot be done as well, as quickly, or at all, by individuals working alone and separately. The starting assumption is that members of a team (or committee or working group) have diverse skills and abilities, and that this diversity is necessary in order to achieve a group task. To take it a step further, the key challenge of any team is to harness the diversity represented within the team members, and apply this "collective" resource to a specific task (or tasks) in the most efficient (cost-effective) and satisfying manner.

Given this general assumption about teams, we can consider teams to have two types of functions: task-related and people-related.

Task-related functions:

These include specific elements such as:

- clarifying the objectives of the team (committee, working group, and so on);
- identifying the expected outputs ("products");
- preparing a specific team plan (who will do what by when);
- establishing "ground rules" of team functioning; and
- regularly assessing progress, in relation to a pre-determined plan.

Here are some examples of ground rules for team functioning with respect to meetings:

1. Team members arrive on time for meetings.
2. The team leader (chairperson) distributes an agenda ahead of time.
3. A designated person prepares and distributes minutes (a summary) of the meeting within a specified time period – such as one week.

(Also see the module on Time Management: Strategy 4 (page 9) - "Conduct Productive Meetings".)

People-related functions:

Frequently the reasons for poor team functioning have to do with the “less tangible” elements of human interaction, such as motivation. A key leadership question is how to engage people (as individuals and as a group) toward specific activities and outcomes. This question is particularly relevant to an organization like INCLEN that is made up of busy part-time professional peers.

Two complementary “people” aspects of teamwork can be considered:

The first aspect is ensuring that individual team members are clear about their distinctive roles, providing feedback to individual colleagues about their performance, and making sure that they feel appreciated for their contribution. This function is best achieved when it is seen as a shared responsibility of both the team leader and other team members.

The second aspect is facilitating team synergy. It entails setting the stage for the team to function as a "unit". In general, this aspect of teamwork depends upon adequate attention to the "task-related" functions and ensuring optimal individual contributions (as described above). If these aspects are in place, team synergy can be facilitated by:

- periodic "strategic planning" retreats
- occasional social ("no agenda") gatherings

- designating blocks of time in a regular meeting to creative "brain storming" about specific issues.

Other elements of effective teamwork and important qualities of high-performing teams are presented below. This figure summarizes the results of a study by Roger R. Pearman in which he interviewed and observed work teams in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, over a 5-year period.

Qualities of a High-Performing Work Team	**Obstacles to Effective Teamwork**
• mutual respect and cooperation	• lack of respect; conflict among team members
• clear and positive communication	• misunderstanding and lack of communication
• regular feedback about performance	• inconsistent feedback
• feeling of appreciation for contribution	• feeling ignored, unappreciated and unsupported for efforts
• clarity of structure and goals	• management confusion about team objectives

Source: Pearman 1998

There are a number of published tools (instruments) designed to help teams conduct self-assessments about their activities. An example of a team assessment tool (sometimes called a "diagnostic") is found at the start of Section 1 and in Appendix 1.

Concept 2: Teams are Dynamic Entities

Because teamwork involves a certain kind of relationship among people, the team itself becomes a social entity – a type of "unit". As such, its development and on-going activity can be viewed as a cycle – almost like the life cycle of an organism, going through specific stages. Recognizing this dynamic – that teams go through stages – can be helpful in putting together new teams, and analyzing the performance of existing teams.

One "team performance model" which illustrates this dynamic is displayed in Appendix 2. Seven stages are identified. These are described in terms of the key question in the minds of team members. Early stages (1-4) of team building are referred to as “Creating Stages” and the later ones (4-7) as “Sustaining Stages”.

<u>Creating stages</u>: These consist of specific activities that often occur (or perhaps <u>should</u> occur) in an approximate sequence:

1. Orientation: Why am I here?
2. Trust Building: Who are you?
3. Goal and Role definition: What are we doing?
4. Commitment: How will we do it?

Sustaining stages: These stages include the following:

4. Commitment: How will we do it?
5. Planning: Who does what, when and where?
6. Implementation: the high performance (or "wow!") stage
7. Re-assessment and Renewal: Do we continue? If yes, why and how?

Of course, because each team is different, the above stages and activities within them do not occur in a mechanistic sequence. Some of the activities can happen at the same time. For example, trust among team members can be developed during the course of a day-long planning retreat (that is, trust building and planning can be happening at the same time).

Concept 3: Geographically Dispersed Teams Can Work

The increasing availability of information and communication technologies (ICTs) opens up the possibility that teams can function well, even when the members live in a different location, and even different time zones. This is a particularly important idea for INCLEN with its more than 500 members who are widely dispersed across more than twenty countries on six continents.

Some writers have gone as far as to say that geography is no longer a barrier to teamwork, and that teams can communicate and function "any time, any place". This concept is illustrated in Appendix 3. Essentially, this diagram asks the question, “What is the most appropriate and cost-effective communication method ("technology")?” in four different situations. But we could also ask the question, “What specific functions or activities are most effective in these four types of situations?” Perhaps most important is the reminder that effective teamwork involves a combination of methods, where several methods, carefully considered and skillfully applied, are used to achieve the group's tasks.

1. Same place / same time:

   This is essentially a meeting, or some kind of "face to face" event where team members are all together. This setting is particularly appropriate for "human interaction" functions, such as trust building and "brain storming". Conversely, it may be a waste of time to use face-to-face meetings for activities such as simply transmitting information (such as a long speech by the chair person!). This is much more efficiently done some other way (such as having the chairperson write up his speech and distribute it to team members ahead of time).

2. Same place / different time:

   This is the work place scenario, where a team is based in a physical (geographic) location, and where the members come and go at different times. The work room or library of a CEU illustrates this idea. Again, the question is, “What elements of a team's activity can be achieved in this situation?” An example might be the creative use of bulletin boards to display preliminary research findings (and invite written "what do you think" comments.) Another example is a "team room" where some research associates may be working all day, but where other faculty team members only "drop in" for short periods. In this situation, one specific question or issue can be brought to the attention of several "drop in" members, opinions obtained, and summarized and distributed (for example by email) at the end of the day.

3. Different place / same time:

   This is the "conferencing" scenario. The most typical example is the pre-organized telephone conference, sometimes including team members who are in different time zones. This method of communication is increasingly used by global teams of all kinds, particularly in the private sector. Several INCLEN groups (such as the Board of Trustees) use international teleconferencing on a regular basis. Appendix 3 also suggests other "technology tools" for this situation: two-way video, remote screen sharing, and data conferences on linked electronic boards. We've all heard stories (or had experiences) where certain highly-sought-after speakers are unable to come to an international conference, but can spare an hour – so they are "beamed in" through a video-conference facility. No doubt we will be seeing more of this communication strategy in the coming few years.

4. Different place / different time:

   This is the "mail system" scenario. In the past (and still to some extent now) this is the situation where documents are distributed and acted upon by team members who are in different places at different times. Of course, the "information revolution" is changing this scenario dramatically, with the increasing availability of email, voice-mail, text-messaging, and so on. Taking the example of email, we are still in the process of learning (as we once did with telephones) the most time efficient uses of this technology. *(See the LAMP modules on Efficient Email and E-Conferencing.)*

In this module about teamwork, we must ask the question, how can electronic communication facilitate the work of geographically dispersed teams? An interesting development in this area is represented by the new "digital work space" tools. Appendix 4 provides a primer on digital workspace technology.

Section 2: About Coalitions and Coalition-building

In this second section, we shift our focus from individuals (working in teams), to organizations working together in various arrangements, such as coalitions.

A Note About Collaboration

As suggested earlier, the term "collaboration" is a direct derivative of the Latin words for working (or "labouring") together. While the idea of collaboration can obviously apply to the idea of <u>individuals</u> working together, it is more commonly used to describe how <u>organizations</u> work together.

Several useful books and studies about collaboration are available. One example is a study by Eugene Bardach (1998) about "inter-agency collaborative capacity" (see Appendix 5 for a review of this book). In this study, Professor Bardach analyzed nineteen (19) examples where two or more agencies in the United States worked together on a shared problem in order to enhance "public value". Other writings are referenced in the attached reading list and Appendix 6 contains a review of Chrislip and Larson's book "about how citizens and civic leaders can make a difference in addressing the most pressing public challenges in their communities."

In most of these analyses, it is recognized that organizations are confronted with complex problems that cannot be solved by one organization alone. Some kind of an arrangement for working together is needed. This is the reason why the Board of Trustees of the "new INCLEN" has identified the strategy of "partnership development" as a key strategic direction for the future. In other words, for INCLEN to fulfill its new mission, strategic partnerships are essential. And these partnerships (or coalitions) must be explored at several levels – global, regional and national.

Some More Definitions

As mentioned earlier, there are several terms used to describe the arrangements whereby organizations work together. Here are some of them:

> **Network:** an arrangement where several organizations or institutions share a common interest; the main activity is information sharing. Well-functioning networks usually have an efficient "node" or secretariat.
>
> **Alliance:** an arrangement where organizations with similar goals intentionally synchronize their activities, and sometimes actually share resources.
>
> **Consortium:** an entity created by several organizations, usually for the purpose of increased access to resources.

Coalition: an entity specially created by two or more organizations to achieve an explicit goal. In addition to increasing access to resources, a coalition results in an enhanced profile, presence and "leverage".

Coordinating Unit: an arrangement where several organizations agree to have some of their activities coordinated by a separate (but shared) unit, in order to achieve a shared goal. *(By way of example, several countries have created "units" or "centres" to coordinate efforts related to Essential National Health Research - ENHR.)*

When an organization is exploring whether to join one of the above arrangements, the key consideration is the "trade off" between <u>benefits</u> on one hand, and <u>costs</u> of involvement on the other.

The benefits include increased access to information, increased impact of effort, increased access to resources, increased recognition (profile) and increased influence ("leverage"). The costs are expenditure of time and effort (including the effort of establishing "trust relationships" with other groups), and loss of autonomy – in relation to the specific goal of the collaborative arrangement. *(A more detailed cost-benefit analysis of these various arrangements can be found in Fowler 1997. His book, <u>Striking a Balance</u> is described as "a guide to enhancing the effectiveness of non-government organizations in international development".)*

Coalitions at a National and Regional Level

In 2001, several CLENs included a Leadership and Management Program (LAMP) workshop as part of their regional meetings. Discussions about team building and coalition building took place in several of these workshops (India, Africa, China). Below is an example of a small group exercise about coalitions that took place at the ChinaCLEN workshop. It illustrates the practical application of several principles about coalitions.

In August 2000 in Beijing, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), assisted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), conducted a workshop on "Capacity Strengthening for Health Research for Development". Subsequently, some key individuals from the MOPH and from various Chinese universities attended the International Conference on Health Research for Development in Bangkok in October 2000.

Several months later (March 2001), the Department of Science, Technology and Education of the MOPH created a study group to assess the current status of health research capacity in China, with respect to:

- *the available international experience about this issue*
- *the relevance of current research to the priority health needs of the people of China*
- *the quality of the research currently being conducted in China*

In the course of preparing the future plan of ChinaCLEN, the ChinaCLEN Board of Directors is aware of the new strategic directions of INCLEN, particularly the increased emphasis on partnership and collaboration. Through Prof. Wang Jialiang, the Board of Directors is considering an invitation to contribute to the Capacity Strengthening study, and have asked a Task Group to consider the following questions:

a. What are the advantages and disadvantages to ChinaCLEN of participating in this study?

b. Is there a satisfactory level of collaboration within ChinaCLEN (that is, among the various CEUs), to contribute to this national study? If not, what could be done to improve the situation?

c. Should ChinaCLEN build coalitions with other health research organizations and agencies in China? If yes, which 1 or 2 groups are the most important to consider? Why these particular groups?

This exercise stimulated an active discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of ChinaCLEN's participation in this national study. It was generally agreed that among several possible "coalition targets", the MOPH Department of Science, Technology and Education was the most important potential partner for ChinaCLEN at this time. As a next step, a working group has been created which will further clarify the role of ChinaCLEN in the proposed national study.

An important question for any organization to ask is, are we ready to collaborate (in a coalition, or in some similar arrangements)? This issue has been examined in several studies about inter-sectoral action for health, where collaboration among agencies from different sectors has been attempted. An emerging lesson from these studies is the importance of determining "readiness" before actually entering into a collaborative agreement. A tool for assessing organizational readiness can be found in Appendix 7.

Research and Learning Coalitions

Over the last few years, health researchers have become increasingly concerned about the gap between the "producers" and "users" of research. The process of closing this gap is complicated and time-consuming – there is much to learn on both sides. One response to this challenge has been the evolution of arrangements known as "research and learning coalitions". Below is a summary of the main features of such coalitions, drawn from an excellent report from Tanzania (Harrison, Kitua & Alilio 2000).

1. **A focus:** A problem, challenge or situation that captures the interest, concern and commitment of participants.

2. **Inclusiveness:** Both producers of knowledge (researchers) and users of knowledge are included. Depending on the focus, user groups can include policy makers, planners and managers, NGOs, community groups and

representatives, the media, the private sector, and so on. By working together on a common challenge, the capacities of both producers and users of research can be strengthened.

3. **Team work:** The coalition functions through the creation of multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral teams. Teams are effective when each team member's share of collective benefits are greater than the benefits of working alone. Incentives driving teamwork also include communication with colleagues and a sense of mutual purpose – in this case to improve the health of the people. Specific strategies to foster teamwork could include:
   - calling for and funding proposals from teams, rather than from individuals;
   - facilitating ease of communication among team members (such as regular face-to-face discussions, electronic forums, exchange visits, and so on);
   - national recognition of joint (team, rather than individual) outputs; and
   - recognition by academic institutions of non-journal publications.

4. **Appropriate communications:** The creative use of a broader range of communication methods, depending on whether coalition members need to be in the same place at the same time (that is — a meeting). In particular, the newer information and communication technologies have greatly increased the ability of persons to work together who are separated by space and time.

5. **Intentional learning:** The recent literature on science and technology suggests that "knowledge diffusion" is the key to innovation and development. The challenge is to develop a "culture of learning" or (as stated in the report referenced below), *"…to create an environment in which people are constantly curious, comfortable to challenge assumptions and findings, and willing to make and learn from their mistakes".* Practical learning "tools" include reflective discussions, learning briefs, and personal and team diaries that record the lessons being learned.

6. **Leadership and facilitation:** It is helpful to involve persons who are skilled at facilitating coalition-building and teamwork, guiding the whole research process from problem identification through to implementation of research results.

On the next page is an African example of a "research and learning coalition", excerpted from the January 2001 INCLEN newsletter.

Injury control in Uganda *(Source: INCLEN Newsletter, January 2001)*

The story of Uganda's Injury Control Centre (ICC-U) illustrates a new kind of "critical mass". Dr. Olive Kobusingye, a trauma surgeon and epidemiologist, returned to Uganda in 1996 after some years of post-graduate training in the U.K. and U.S.A. She became interested in the problem of road traffic accidents, but realized that the evidence base for defining and managing this problem was weak. Her work began with the development of a hospital based trauma registry, and a monitoring tool – the Kampala Trauma Score. With some external support, she established the ICC-U in 1997. Working with colleagues in the Clinical Epidemiology Unit at Makerere University, she conducted further prevalence studies, as well as training sessions regarding the care of trauma victims.

It soon became apparent that in order to reduce Uganda's burden of illness due to trauma, a range of stakeholders needed to be included in the work of the ICC-U. And so various research "user groups" became involved – planners from the police traffic division, members of the Uganda Road Safety Council, and policy makers from the Ministry of Health. The ICC-U group also organized pedestrian safety campaigns, involving local schools (both teachers and students). With the Kampala City Council, a feasibility study was conducted about the state of the city's ambulance services. All of this involved increasing experience in creating and managing effective inter-sectoral teams.

Along with research, advocacy and action elements, the ICC-U has also become an important learning centre. Post-graduate students from the university, serving as research associates, are conducting various studies related to the problem of injuries. Hospital personnel are being trained in the management of trauma victims. A specialized trauma library has been established.

With some initial funding from INCLEN, the ICC-U played a leading role in the creation of a problem-specific African coalition – the Injury Prevention Initiative of Africa (IPIFA). It now includes colleagues from eight African countries who are involved in various research, training and advocacy activities. Members of this group have also contributed to seminars and workshops related to injuries in other parts of the world.

And so the ICC-U provides a good example of a "research and learning coalition" – the new form of "critical mass". There is a specific focus (injury control). Both research producers and users are included in research and action coalitions. National policy has been influenced – injury prevention and management is now included as a high priority in Uganda's new 5-year health strategy. Intentional learning is included in the range of activities. And the Uganda team has demonstrated leadership in the creation of a regional injury control network.

References:

Bardach, E. 1998. *Getting Agencies to Work Together: The Practice and Theory of Managerial Craftsmanship*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Fowler, A. 1997. *Striking a Balance.* London: Earthscan Publications Ltd. Pgs. 107 - 119.

Harrison, D., Kitua, A., Alilio M. 2000. *Health Research in Tanzania: How should Public Money be Spent?* A COHRED Issues Paper. COHRED Document 2000.9 (November 2000). Geneva: Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED). The report can be accessed through the COHRED website: www.cohred.ch

Pearman, R.B. 1998. *Hardwired Leadership*. Palo Alto: Davies-Black Publishing. Pgs. 171-172.

Recommended Readings:

Bardach, E. 1998. *Getting Agencies to Work Together: The Practice and Theory of Managerial Craftsmanship*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

This book summarizes a study of inter-agency collaboration in the American public sector, based on nineteen case studies of "interagency collaborative capacity". (See Appendix 5 for a more detailed book review.)

Chrislip, D.D., Larson, C.E. 1994. *Collaborative Leadership. An American Leadership Forum Book*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

This book is "about how citizens and civic leaders can make a difference in addressing the most pressing pubic challenges in their communities". It is based on six case studies in the United States, where communities were dealing with complex challenges, where the "stakeholders" involved were angry and frustrated, and where they attempted to break bureaucratic "grid lock". (A review of this book is contained in Appendix 6.)

Fowler, A. 1997. *Striking a Balance*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.

This helpful book has the sub-title: "A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Government Organizations in International Development". It contains a detailed analysis of various arrangements for organizing and managing relationships among non-government organizations.

Harrison, D., Kitua, A., Alilio, M. 2000 *Health Research in Tanzania: How Should Public Money be Spent?* A COHRED Issues Paper. COHRED Document 2000.9 (November 2000). Geneva: Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED). Available through the COHRED website: www.cohred.ch

An analysis of recent efforts by the health research community in Tanzania to set health research priorities. In a section about "Practical Ways to Seize the Opportunities", there is a helpful sub-section about designing team-based incentives to fill investment gaps.

Pearman, R.B. 1998. *Hardwired Leadership*. Palo Alto: Davies-Black Publishing.

Contains a useful chapter about team building which emphasizes the importance of diversity within teams.

Appendix 1: Team Assessment Tool

Think about the work that the team has done over the past year or more.

1. In what ways has the team performed <u>well</u>?

2. In what ways has the team performed <u>poorly</u>?

3. Think about some of the <u>individuals</u> on the team:

   a. What were the distinctive attributes of each person that contributed to the success of this team?

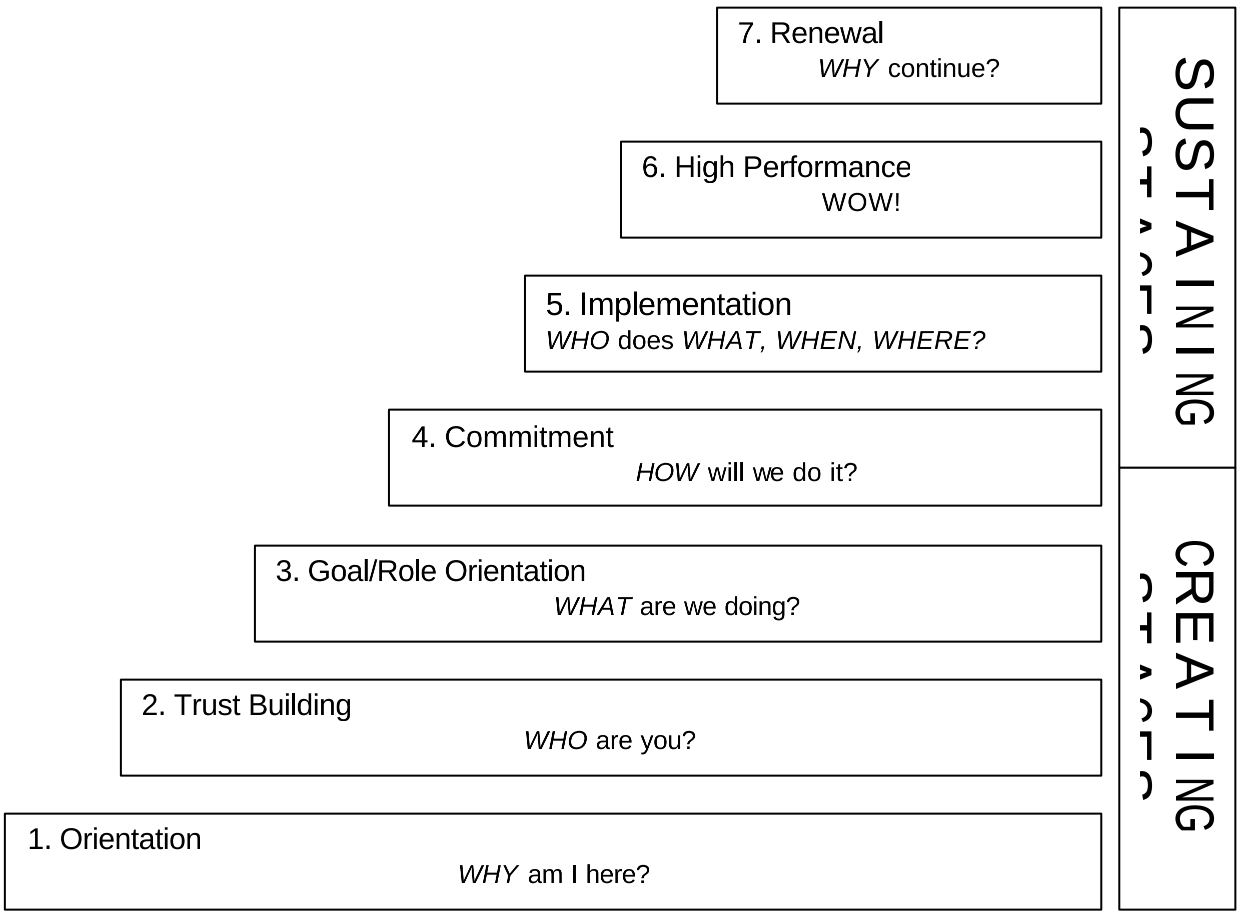
   b. Given what you are trying to achieve, are there <u>gaps</u> or <u>weaknesses</u> in the team that make you consider adding some individuals? If yes, who might they be?

4. Assuming that you are the leader of your team, who do you think will, or should, succeed you? Have you specifically prepared your successor(s)?

5. Are younger associates (as "emerging leaders") deliberately and systematically included in the leadership team? Do you have a program or plan to help them develop as leaders?

Appendix 2: Team Performance Model

(Adapted from 8.5 TPModel © 1994 Allan Drexler & David Sibbet)



Appendix 3: The 4-Square Map of Groupware Options
Best Technologies for Global Teams

	Same Time	Different Time
Same Place	**White boards** **Flip charts** **Computer projectors** **Decision support tools** **Video** **Large graphic displays**	**Workstations** **Bulletin boards** **Kiosks** **Team rooms**
Different Place	**Telephone conferencing** **Two-way video** **Remote screen sharing** **Data conferences on linked electronic boards**	**Email** **Voice mail** **Computer conferencing** **Fax/express mail** **Shared data bases**

Anytime
Anyplace

(Source: O' Hara-Devereaux, M. Johansen, R. 1994. *Global Work: Bridging Distance, Culture and Time*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.)

Appendix 4: Digital Workspace Primer

Prepared by Nancy Johnson
(17 October 2001)

Health researchers and managers today face a variety of new challenges in their work place and work processes:

- A diversity of work environments – multiple offices, home office, hotel rooms while traveling, different countries, different time zones.
- Collaborative involvement of groups and individuals who are widely dispersed geographically.
- A need to have instant access to the most recent information on demand to meet immediate needs.
- Effective multi-tasking of roles and responsibilities across a number of different projects and commitments.

A digital workspace can help individuals and teams meet these challenges and enhance knowledge management within their unit or organization.

What is a "digital workspace"?

The term "digital workspace" is used to refer to a web-based work environment that allows individuals to communicate, collaborate and share information regardless of their geographic location. The technology that supports such digital work environments is commonly referred to as "instant groupware" – "groupware" because it facilitates collaborative team work while also supporting individual work and "instant" because many applications offer an "out of the box" ready-to-use set of tools requiring little set up time or in-house programming.

There are a number of instant groupware products on the market. The names of some capture the notion of a virtual office – a cyber work place. eRoom is an example. The names of others, such as eProject and Project.net, emphasize the work performed in a digital workspace – namely, project-oriented work. This distinction aside, the products tend to be similar in their user interface and the features they offer.

Information about the three leading instant groupware products mentioned above can be found at the following URLs:

eRoom: http://www.eroom.com

eProject: http://www.eproject.com

Project.net: http://www.project.net

How can digital workspace technology make a difference in my work, the work of our project team, and the work of our unit/organization?

Digital workspace technology can enhance three key knowledge management functions: information sharing, planning and organizing of work, and collaboration. Each of these is described in greater detail below.

Facilitates Information Sharing

All project information and related files are centralized in a virtual “file cabinet” or “library” that is accessible “on demand” anytime (24/7) and anywhere by team members (from their home, hotel or office) through a web-enabled computer and a local connection to the Internet. Many individuals who travel have already discovered the ease of sending and receiving as well as picking up their regular email through the use of web-based email accounts such as *hotmail* or *yahoo*. With a web-based workspace, project data and documents are accessed just as easily from anywhere.

Putting information in “one spot” creates a project archive that not only facilitates information sharing but provides an invaluable tool to support the development of organizational learning as well as project review and overall management. Organizational memory is built through archiving data and documents as well as bulletin board discussions, poll results, and bookmarks.

Supports Planning and Organizing of Work

Features such as the calendar and task lists help teams to do better planning by encouraging identification of tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines. Team members are able to “get the big picture” in the sense both of being able to see what others within a project are doing or to see how various projects within an organization or unit are progressing. This can decrease the need for face-to-face meetings since it is easy to take a look and see where an initiative is at. This is particularly important where teams are widely dispersed geographically and face-to-face meetings and teleconferencing are costly.

By keeping everyone in the loop regarding the status of the project and making the management of work explicit rather than implicit, individual and team accountability is improved.

Enables Collaborative Work

A real-time chat feature can support virtual meetings around focused topics while bulletin board discussions and regular email allow team members to converse asynchronously with one another. Some products have a white board feature that allows team members to draw diagrams collaboratively. All support multiple authorship of documents through the editing features of the source word processing software.

Sounds great! But are there any drawbacks?

The various features (described in greater detail below) will be familiar to anyone with a moderate level of Internet experience. Even users with little familiarity are likely to get up to speed quickly. Users tend to experience difficulty not so much in learning to use the program features but in learning to work differently.

Digital workspaces do require a change in work habits and organizational culture. For many individuals, email has become their primary "in-out box" for work that passes across their desk or through their computer. Although automatically-generated email alerts and reminders are a feature of digital workspaces, the web interface requires individuals to regularly log on to update themselves on the status of the project. The team member's individual home page or the project home page becomes a new (and many cases an additional) "in-out box." Also, the explicit management of work (the program makes it easy for all to see at a glance who has done what and when) can create new accountability pressures. The "on demand" nature of the web-interface means that accessing project information and updates is "self serve." This can represent a change in work patterns for those accustomed to relying on others to place information in front of them. Additionally, organizational culture must place a high value on collaboration and sharing of information.

Team members can become frustrated when there are different levels of comfort or enthusiasm for using the technology amongst the team thus leading to duplication of effort, or when they experience local difficulties in accessing the Internet. Strong organizational commitment and team "champions" for the use of the technology are needed. Champions for new technology must "lead by doing." They need to demonstrate to team members and at the unit or organizational level how the technology makes a difference in the work.

What are the common features of digital workspaces?

Home page
Project home pages and individual team member (personal) home pages summarize new items as well as appointments, issues assigned and tasks to be completed. The project home page allows the viewer to learn at a glance what the latest issues are, what tasks are due, who has been assigned to them and the status of their completion.

Document Management
Document exchange and version management are supported by a central file repository, or virtual file cabinet of project documents. Access to documents can be restricted to certain teams or team members. Documents are checked in and checked out and all versions tracked. Documents may be locked to prevent changes being made to their content. Project documents may be linked to other project items. For example, the agenda for a meeting may be linked to the meeting entry on the project calendar. Clicking on the meeting entry in the calendar calls up a link to the agenda.

Bookmarks
Bookmarks can be used to create a knowledge base or library of links to online resources, tools, articles, and so on.

Calendar
A shared project calendar and personal calendars keep team members apprised of important appointments and events. Agendas, minutes and discussions can be attached to calendar entries.

Tasks
The Tasks tool allows team members to create, assign, and manage tasks - from complex, multi-phase schedules to simple to do lists.

Automatic Alerts
Automatic alerts inform relevant team members of latest updates to the project and upcoming events and deadlines.

Discussions
Real-time chat, discussion boards and regular email allow team members to converse with one another and hold electronic dialogues around issues or problems.

Polling
Assists decision-making by making it quick and audit-able. Teams members can create a poll in minutes with customized response options. Formal approval procedures can be established by linking polls to a document or a discussion.

Team Directory
The team directory provides a list of project members and the contact information they have recorded in their profile.

Related Items
Related Items permits team members to create links between project items such as a calendar event and a document.

Search
Team members can perform cross-project or project-specific keyword searches.

Appendix 5: Book Review

Eugene Bardach 1998. *Getting Agencies to Work Together: The Practice and Theory of Managerial Craftsmanship.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. (IBSN 0-8517-0798-3 and 0-8157-0797-5)

This book by Eugene Bardach, who is a professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley, arises from a study of interagency collaboration in the American public sector. The study stems from Professor Bardach’s interest in creativity in public management, examining the link between interagency collaboration and innovation. It is based on nineteen (19) case studies of “interagency collaborative capacity” (ICC) in a range of policy domains in American public life, including education, welfare, regulation and ecosystem management.

Primarily intended as a conceptual document, the book provides a framework for understanding purposive collaborative activity where two or more agencies work together on a shared problem in order to enhance “public value”. Using the metaphor of building a house, Professor Bardach uses the term “craftsmanship” as the theoretical basis for this work.

After a summary of the nineteen case studies, two main components are elaborated over the space of four chapters. Objective elements include ICC operating systems and the acquisition of resources (broadly defined to include people, funds and information). The subjective elements again are two: “steering a course”, and creating a culture of joint problem-solving. Toward the end of the book, there is a helpful chapter on “development dynamics” which elaborates on two processes that can be observed in active ICCs: “platforming” (or sequencing), and momentum building. Also included is a sobering section on potential pitfalls and disruptions, such as the slow pace of development and the turnover of key players.

Throughout the book, there are helpful descriptions (often drawing on specific examples from the case studies) of “smart practices”, or best practices. An extensive bibliography of well over two hundred references provides a very useful source for further exploration of this field.

Though admittedly theoretical in intent, there are many useful ideas, frameworks and examples. Good sections can be found on issues such as the role of leadership, negotiation and trust. For those concerned with analyzing and facilitating various forms of collaboration, such as intersectoral collaboration, this book represents a helpful conceptual resource.

Appendix 6: Book Review

David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson. 1994. *Collaborative Leadership*. An American Leadership Forum Book. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

(David Chrislip is a senior associate of the National Civic League and former vice-president of research and development for the American Leadership Forum. Carl Larson is professor of human communication studies and past dean of the School of Social Sciences at the University of Denver.)

As the authors say in the preface, this book of less than 200 pages is "about how citizens and civic leaders can make a difference in addressing the most pressing public challenges in their communities". The book is based on systematic research about six (6) community case studies in the United States. In each case, these communities were dealing with three key challenges:

1. They were dealing with complex issues
2. The "stake holders" involved were angry and frustrated
3. The communities attempted to break bureaucratic "grid lock".

After describing their approach to the research and highlighting the findings, the authors present several components of "collaborative leadership". Included are:

- Setting the stage for collaboration: using tools that help community groups to understand the context, identify relevant stakeholders, and evaluate the capacity for potential change.
- Initiating the collaborative process: this includes the pro-active involvement of key stakeholders, creating a credible and open process, supporting trustworthy leaders, and (as much as possible) supporting the "established authorities".
- Sustaining collaboration: by building trust, demonstrating active and intentional leadership, and "profiling" a common goal.
- Getting Results: this section highlights the leadership tasks that are needed to facilitate effective collaboration; these include: understanding the context, building a constituency (of committed stakeholders), and setting a direction.

In the final section of the book, the authors contrast collaborative leadership with "tactical" and "positional" leadership. (Tactical leadership is used when there is a direct and clear objective – win the game, defeat an enemy, apprehend a suspect, etc. Positional leadership is associated with being at the top of an organizational pyramidal structure – however, position and leadership may not be the same thing!) Four principles of collaborative leadership are identified:

1. Inspire commitment and action.
2. Lead as a "peer problem solver".
3. Obtain broad-based involvement.
4. Sustain hope and participation.

The appendices include a 40-item, 5-category tool for assessing collaboration, as well as a fairly extensive (4-page) list of references.

Appendix 7: Tool to Assess Readiness for Intersectoral Action

Note: This "tool" is adapted from the publication, Working Together: Intersectoral Action for Health, Commonwealth of Australia 1995. The tool reflects six "conditions" which, in the view of the authors, are needed for effective intersectoral action. These conditions appear in an appendix: "Checklist for undertaking effective intersectoral action". Some of the questions in the "checklist" are included below.

Necessity
Is the planned action important to achieve organizational goals?

Does it ensure/enhance organizational survival?

Opportunity
Are there adequate opportunities for the planned action to be undertaken and sustained by supportive environmental contexts?

Are there clear "triggers" for action?

Capacity
Have the health sector and the other participating organizations the capacity to undertake the action that is being planned? Is there a need to strengthen organizational support?

Is there a need to identify resources for use in developing, negotiating, implementing, evaluating and sustaining the planned action?

Relationship
Has the nature of the relationship between the sectors/organizations involved been negotiated?

Is there a high level of trust and respect between the organizations?

Planned Actions
Do the people involved directly in the planned action recognize the need to work together?

Is there an agreed way of working?

Sustained Outcomes
Are there ways of monitoring the outcomes of the action over time?

Are the sectors aware that they may need to take ongoing action to sustain the outcomes?