

# Cross-Sector Collaboration

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Crime prevention through social development is rooted in an understanding that rates of crime and victimization can be significantly reduced with concerted and coordinated efforts by a wide range of sectors. These sectors include, but are not limited to, government, not-for profit, business, education, police, healthcare, city planning, and community. The substantive systematic change required to address such complex issues as crime and victimization requires cross-sector collaboration.

This practice brief explains how members of the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) can approach cross-sector collaborations that support crime prevention efforts and impacts through social development.

### **What is cross-sector collaboration?**

- Information sharing versus collaboration
- Common barriers to collaboration

### **Why Collaborate?**

- Capacity to define problems and shape solutions
- Enhanced resources
- Credibility and advocacy power
- Staying power

### **How to collaborate?**

- Structure: Collective Impact
- Process: Ten principles for collaboration



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# BACKGROUND

## WHAT IS CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION?

Cross sector collaboration brings interested and invested partners together around a common vision and mission. Collaborators establish a new structure that shares risks, responsibilities, skills and expertise.

### Information sharing versus collaboration

Cross-sector collaborations can be organized along a spectrum according to level of engagement: (1) networking, (2) cooperation, (3) coordination, and (4) full collaboration.

Addressing crime and victimization, which are problems bound and influenced by intersectional systems, most often requires the greatest degree of collaboration among partners.

<b>Full collaboration</b>	With a formal agreement in place, partners work toward developing enhanced capacity to achieve a shared vision. Roles are formalized; links are formal and written into a Memorandum of Understanding, which all partners sign. Communication is frequent, and decisions and ideas are equally shared. Risk and trust are high. Resources are pooled.
<b>Coordination</b>	Partners are engaged in mutual projects and initiatives, modifying their own activities to benefit the whole. Roles are defined, links are formalized but members maintain full autonomy, and communication is regular. Decisions are shared around joint work and there is low to moderate risk. Members share some resources.
<b>Cooperation</b>	Partners support one another's activities but have no formal agreement in place. Roles are somewhat defined, relationships are informal and supportive, and communication is frequent. Decision-making is limited and there is little to no risk.
<b>Networking</b>	Partners share information and talk with one another for mutual benefit. Relationships are loose, with minimal decision-making and no risk.

\*Table based on the following [tool](#):

### Common barriers to collaboration

Cross-sector collaborations are not easily developed or sustained; as such, different sectors—despite having intersecting interests and the potential to be mutually reinforcing—work independently and inefficiently. A host of reasons can limit the success of cross-sector collaborations. These barriers to collaboration are significant; any one of these, if not managed properly, can prevent cross-sector collaborations from getting started or cause them to fall apart. However, they are not insurmountable. It is possible to facilitate significant, effective, and healthy cross-sector collaborations if certain considerations are taken. Participants of the CMNCP conference in April 2017 along with a review of academic literature indicated a number of barriers to effective cross-sector collaboration, including issues with leadership, the structure of the collaborative, processes, and group dynamics. The following considerations can help prevent or address many of these issues:

## Leadership

- Ensure the collaborative has strong leadership

## Structure

- Ensure partners are prepared to collaborate
- Ensure collaborative has adequate and sustainable resources
- Work with competitors to pool resources
- Ensure shared understanding of mandates for different funding sources to which various partners are accountable and develop strategies to address those requirements
- Reduce inefficiencies in the structure of the collaborative and support systems (i.e., backbone organization)

## Process

- Recognize that cross-sector collaboratives take time to develop and be sustained
- Ensure partners spend adequate time establishing clear and specific objectives

- Ensure partners spend adequate time developing a shared vision and common agenda
- Dedicate time and processes to build trust among members of the collaborative

## Group Dynamics

- Dedicate processes to building positive relationships among members of the collaborative
- Understand historical relationships between partners and communities
- Dedicate time and processes to ensure the collaborative is beneficial to all partners
- Collaboration facilitator (backbone organization) should maintaining neutrality with partners

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## WHY COLLABORATE?

The complexity of prevention often requires interventions beyond the scope of any one organization. Successful prevention initiatives optimize limited resources organizations can dedicate to prevention enabling partnerships to achieve economies of scale. Pooling unique resources, experience, expertise, and knowledge produces innovative solutions. Further, cross-sector collaborations can become effective mechanisms to leverage resources and influence policy and decisions in all sectors, including government. The UNITY Assessment of Youth Violence Prevention Activities in USA Cities (2008) reinforces the evidence that collaboration works: their assessment showed that cities with the greatest coordination and communication across sectors had the lowest rates of youth violence.

Four benefits of cross-sector collaboratives:

### **1. Capacity to Define Problems and Shape Solutions**

Through leveraging diverse expertise, cultivating innovation and creativity, enhancing impact through mutually reinforcing activities and structure.

### **2. Enhanced Resources**

Through leveraging investments, supporting access to resources and sharing resources across sectors, and allowing for more flexible use of existing resources and decreasing duplication of efforts.

### **3. Credibility and Advocacy Power**

The involvement of key stakeholders from multiple sectors maximizes advocacy power, broadening influence and ability to make change.

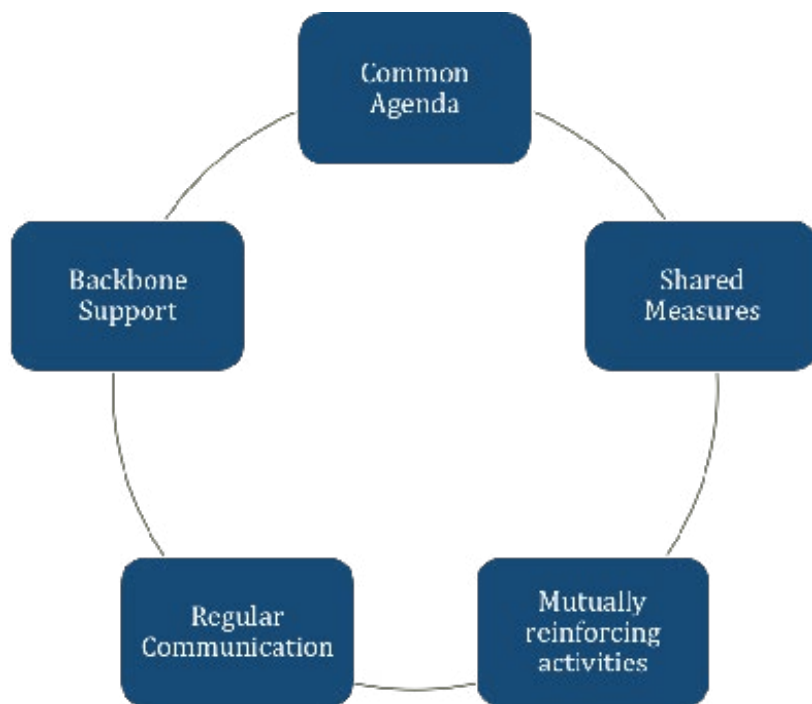
## 4. Staying Power

Through promoting broader reach and impact, joining and connecting networks, and securing broad-based support from within various stakeholders involved in the collaborative, can increase the likelihood of long-term sustainability.

## APPROACHES TO COLLABORATION

### STRUCTURE: COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The collective and cumulative strength of cross-sector collaborations is supported by the sustained application of the five principles of Collective Impact Theory:



### 1. Common Agenda

Members share a common agenda for change. This includes a shared understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

### 2. Shared Measures

Having shared measurement tools and a

consistent data collection approach across all the members is necessary for accountability and maintaining alignment of members' efforts.

### 3. Mutually reinforcing activities

A plan of action that outlines and coordinates mutually reinforcing activities for each member of the collaborative.

### 4. Regular communication

Open and continuous communication builds trust, assures mutual objectives, and creates common motivation.

### 5. Backbone support

The collaborative has a backbone organization with dedicated staff and a specific set of skills to coordinate the initiative and the members of the collaborative. The central role of the backbone organization is to support members to shift from acting alone to acting together.

### PROCESS: TEN PRINCIPLES FOR COLLABORATION

Munger and Riemer (2012) developed a collaboration model built on ten key principles:

1. Assess organizational and personal attitudes and readiness
2. Determine initial collaboration purpose and type
3. Identify membership needs and conduct stakeholder analysis
4. Establish the collaboration
5. Specify collaboration purpose, mission, and structure with members
6. Identify contextual characteristics of the collaboration
7. Determine structural characteristics of the collaboration
8. Manage group dynamics
9. Retain members and grow membership
10. Institutionalize the collaboration

<sup>2</sup> Munger, F. & Riemer, M. (2014). Sustainability. Encyclopaedia of Critical Psychology, 1-10.

## APPLICATION IN PRACTICE

Wraparound Edmonton, or WrapED, is a partnership of six Edmonton organizations working together to help young people affected by violent crime move away from the threat of gangs and learn to thrive in the community. The six WrapED partners integrate

services, using a collective impact approach, with REACH Edmonton acting as the backbone organization, to bring the most effective wraparound supports to some of Edmonton's most at-risk youth.

Learn more about the WrapED initiative [here](#).

## RESOURCES

### Collaboration Tools

- [Vibrant Canada](#)
- [Future Without Violence](#)
- [Levels of Collaboration Chart](#)
- [Supporting Healthy and Successful Transitions to Adulthood: A Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness](#)

### Shared Measurement

- [Implementing Shared Measurement \(Webinar\)](#)
- [Breakthroughs in Shared Measurement \(Webinar and Report\)](#)
- [Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact \(Webinar and Report\)](#)
- [Developing Shared Measures: Lessons Learned \(PowerPoint Presentation\)](#)



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