Australian Research Alliance
for Children & Youth

TELSTRA FOUNDATION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

Cross-sector collaboration for child and youth services

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For the Australian and Research Alliance for Children and Youth December 2007

CONTENTS

Summary 1

Introduction 3

Context 9

Benefits of collaborating 12

Challenges and incentives to collaborate 21

Discussion and recommendations 48

References 55

Appendix 1: Survey results 57

Appendix 2: Case studies 82

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Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

ABOUT ARACY

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) was founded by a group of eminent experts and organisations in reaction to increasingly worrying trends in the wellbeing of Australia's young people.

ARACY is a national organisation with members based across Australia.

ARACY asserts that by working together, rather than working in isolation, we are more likely to uncover solutions to the problems affecting children and young people.

ARACY is a broker of collaborations, a disseminator of ideas and an advocate for Australia's future generation.

ARACY has two primary goals:

1. To promote collaborative research and agenda setting for children and young people
2. To promote the application of research to policy and practice for children and young people.

This paper is one of a series commissioned by ARACY to translate knowledge into action. This series of papers aims to convert research findings into practical key messages for people working in policy and service delivery areas. This paper has been supported by funding from The Telstra Foundation Community Development Fund.

The ARACY topical papers may also be the focus of workshops or seminars, including electronic mediums.

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SUMMARY

Collaboration provides the opportunity for learning and creative problem solving. Bringing people from diverse backgrounds together provides a positive environment for transferring knowledge between sectors or organisations, and for generating new ideas and practices. In this context, collaboration across the research, policy and practice sectors can help to solve complex problems and meet specific needs in the child and youth services area. The benefits of this collaboration—benefits that would not have been possible in collaboration across just one or two of these sectors—include generating increased knowledge for all three sectors and influencing policy in a way that otherwise would not have been possible. Collaboration across the three sectors is more resilient to social and political change, but is not widely used in Australia due to the difficulty in obtaining the necessary funding; the time required to make the collaboration work; and the different objectives, needs and cultures of each sector.

Relationships are the key factor in collaboration. Creating an environment in which relationships can flourish ensures the success of the collaboration. Key ingredients for achieving success in collaborative projects across research, policy and practice are related to project initiation, implementation and outcomes:

Initiation

- organisational support and rewards for collaboration
- face-to-face interactions to better understand each other
- agreed administrative structure and goals
- support by the affected or involved community.

Implementation

- funding and support for flexible approaches and outcomes
- regular formal and informal interaction among members
- training and opportunities for sharing knowledge
- people who facilitate communication across sectors

- members are regularly consulted about decisions
- inclusive leadership style
- funding for maximum face-to-face interactions.

Outcomes

- funding agencies recognise the importance of long-term commitment to achieving outcomes.

We recommend that The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) and others involved in the policy, research and practice sectors support increased collaboration across these sectors in the child and youth services areas by contributing to an environment that supports cross-sector relationships and networks as follows:

1. Promote a new mindset through workshops that bring together all three sectors, and increase the exposure of the benefits of this collaboration through ARACY networks and the media.
2. Lobby agencies that fund collaboration so that they recognise the need for resources to support face-to-face communication, provide separate funding streams for collaboration, minimise administrative and reporting loads, recognise the need for flexible processes and outcomes, and support a long-term vision of collaboration.
3. Facilitate training programs and mentoring to support the understanding and application of the key ingredients for successful collaborations across sectors.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we describe the benefits of collaborating for achieving child and youth services outcomes, and the incentives and impediments to the success of this collaboration. We focus on collaboration across the research, policy and practice sectors.

We synthesise the knowledge we collected by:

- reviewing recent literature from Australia and overseas about collaboration involving research, policy and practice in human services
- running a web-based survey designed to test the key ingredients for successful collaboration as identified in the literature review
- describing three case studies of collaboration across research, practice and policy sectors for child and youth services outcomes, and one case study of a single-sector collaboration.

We identify key ingredients for successful collaboration for achieving child and youth services outcomes. We also make recommendations for encouraging further successful collaboration between the research, practice and policy sectors for child and youth services outcomes.

Literature review

In the literature review we looked at the benefits of collaboration between research, policy and practice in the child and youth services area, and the factors that encourage or inhibit collaboration. While the role of evaluation in successful collaborative practice is well recognised, collaborations rarely evaluate themselves, and when they do, few reports are produced. With this in mind, we also look at useful theories, frameworks and tools for evaluating collaborative projects. The literature for this review is from both academic and more practical sources such as workshop materials and reports. Raymond (2006) believes we can learn a lot about collaboration from the

extension and health promotion areas. For this reason, we also refer to documents from other areas that may have theoretical and empirical implications for child and youth services.

Survey

We promoted a web-based survey to human services networks, including The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), our own contacts and our case study contacts. See Appendix 1 for survey questions and results. Of the 66 valid respondents, 34 were involved in collaborative projects that included all three sectors of research, policy and practice. Another 32 were involved in collaborative projects that included only one or two of the research, policy and practice sectors. The following table shows the number of collaborations involved in differing combinations of sectors.

Collaboration sectors	Number of projects
Research/practice	11
Research/policy	1
Policy/practice	9
Practice only	7
Research only	4
Total	32

The average size of all the collaboration teams reported in our survey was 27 people (n=61), with the largest collaboration involving 285 people.

Size	One or two sectors (n=30)	All three sectors (n=31)	Total (n=61)

10 people or less	15	9	24
More than 10 people	15	22	37

58% of respondents had collaborated on projects where members were geographically dispersed. However, members of collaborative projects involved in the three sectors were almost twice as likely as other collaborative projects to have at least some members of the collaboration co-located.

The majority of respondents (89%) were involved in collaborative projects that were mid-way in their lifecycle. About half of the projects reported in the survey received state or federal funding, at least in part. About a quarter of survey respondents received funding for their projects from not-for-profit organisations. About half of the collaborative projects reported in the survey had a budget of less than $200,000. Collaborative projects involving all three sectors were more likely to have slightly larger budgets.

Most of the collaborations (45%) expected to run projects for one to three years. However, collaborations involving all three sectors were more likely to have a longer term for their projects.

Case studies of collaboration

Throughout this paper, we refer to three Australian case studies that involve collaboration between research, policy and practice. We also looked at a case study that involved collaboration between various practitioners, which was informed by research and aims to influence policy. These case studies help to illustrate the findings of the literature review and the survey. We used interviews and focus groups to gather information about each of the case

studies. Further details about the case studies, including the questionnaire we used, can be found in Appendix 2.

KidsMatter: Australian primary schools mental health initiative

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners are working together to create the first national mental health promotion and early intervention initiative. KidsMatter is being developed in partnership with health and education sectors for Australian primary schools.

One hundred and one primary schools across Australia, representing a broad cross-section of government, catholic and independent schools (both metropolitan and non-metropolitan) are taking part in the initial trial which commenced in September 2006.

A team based at Flinders University in South Australia is evaluating the KidsMatter trial. The evaluation will provide information about the implementation process and whether KidsMatter leads to improved mental health for students.

This collaboration brings together practitioners, researchers and policymakers from the fields of education and mental health (Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council, Australian Psychological Society, beyondblue: the national depression initiative, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund). Without the time resources, mental health expertise and direct access to teachers, improvements in the mental health of children would not be possible. While developing new knowledge and practice, this project is also helping to inform future education and mental health policies.

Delfin Lend Lease: Child safety kit

A recently-developed child safety kit, now being rolled out across the nation, would not have been possible without collaboration between the

Queensland Safe Communities Support Centre (QSCSC) and community developer, Delfin Lend Lease. The kit and accompanying workshop were developed to support young families and keep them safe from injury.

Based on emergency data collected from 15 Queensland hospitals by the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit (QISU) and established intervention methods, the kit is aimed at anyone interested in the safety of children of 0–5 years of age. It contains a facilitators section that can be used by community workers, nurse educators and parenting groups; a wide range of activities that can be used across all injury topics; and evaluation forms for both the facilitator and workshop participants.

'Safer and more supportive communities' is one of the five current priorities of the Queensland Government. The government is using the outcomes from this project to inform future child safety policies as it recognises that a Safe Communities Program is a key approach to building a safer Queensland. The kit developed from the collaboration is based on a child safety kit developed at Queensland Health. This collaboration between government-supported centres and big business is able to provide a greater reach for child injury prevention promotion programs by promoting a culture of safety and by sharing localised injury data information about what works and what doesn't between communities, researchers and policy makers. The Child Safety Kit is informed by QISU data, written by clinical and non clinical members of the QISU team, and pilot tested by Delfin Lend Lease in their communities.

Outcomes for young people at Quamby Youth Detention Centre

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners are working to understand the ways in which young people are supported before, during and after their incarceration at Quamby Youth Detention Centre in the Australian Capital Territory. This Youth Detention Centre attempts to meet the needs of youth with a broad range of needs. The overall research question is: How well does the case management model facilitate positive outcomes for young people?

The model for collaboration is a research reference group of broader interests and an internal steering committee made up of practitioners from the Quamby Youth Detention Centre; policy makers from the Australian Capital Territory Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services' Office for Children, Youth and Family Support; and researchers from the Institute for Child Protection Studies at the Australian Catholic University. The collaboration works by research informing practice and providing a strategy to make this research accessible to both policy makers and practitioners.

Nepean Brighter Futures: early intervention collaboration

More than 30 small to medium-sized organisations offering family support and child care services, and based in the Nepean region west of Sydney, are developing new services, within the Brighter Futures model Brighter Futures is the model of early intervention adopted by the NSW Department of Community Services. This policy seeks to support disadvantaged families and reduce the numbers of children and young people being taken into care.

This cross-agency collaboration of practitioners is supporting and sustaining local grass-roots organisations to make sure that services are locally relevant and contributing to community development. The collaboration has a Lead Agency which provides research support services to the project through its in-house research unit.

CONTEXT

Defining collaboration

To set this paper into context, it is useful to discuss definitions of collaboration, particularly collaboration designed to achieve outcomes for children and young people. Collaborating involves separate organisations working together. Collaborations are not mergers.[1] Collaborating partners keep their own identity—an important factor to recognise for managing a collaborative project. Collaboration is a way for groups and organisations to better achieve their own missions.[2]

Mattessich[3] describes collaboration as a long-term, well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve common goals. Collaboration is different from groups networking or coordinating their activities—the collaborating groups must support each other to increase their joint capacity.[4] However, collaborations are not the only tool for achieving child and youth services outcomes. As Mattessich et al.[5] explain:

> *Collaboration is a tool for achieving something of value. It is not an end in and of itself. Collaboration does not always constitute the best way to accomplish tasks or address issues… (p. 34).*

Many of our survey respondents (42%) described their collaboration as "a formal agreement involving new systems and processes and with at least some of the team fully committed to the collaboration". However, a significant number (31%) also described their collaboration as "a collection of people and or organisations with loose, flexible links and independent goals".

Collaborating across research, policy and practice

The increase in collaborative projects and programs designed to strengthen relationships between research, policy and practice in the child and youth services area reflects some of the major challenges faced in that area. Ever since Schorr and Schorr's[6] ground-breaking work showed that the problems of children and youth are interrelated and complex, there has been growing recognition of the value of collaboration and service integration as a significant agent of change in the child and youth services area.

In recognition of this increased complexity of social need, more models have been developed to overcome the limitations of professions and policy. One area of growing collaboration is in agency services. Agencies are increasingly being encouraged to collaborate for better outcomes. Okamoto[7] believes that high-risk youth agency collaboration is essential for dealing with adolescents with difficult and multi-faceted problems. Collaboration can help by recruiting essential expertise from practitioners and researchers in various agencies and overcoming recognised limitations inherent in the different professions.

Describing the collaboration between agencies in New South Wales under the state government Families First policy, Kisevan (2004) demonstrates that inter-agency collaboration occurs at all levels—policy implementation, service planning, service delivery for families with young children, and professional support for service providers. The Families First policy drives collaboration between state agencies because it provides a shared vision for potential collaborators, which recognises that the early years of development are important and there can only be improvement in this area if people work together.

However, while the number of informal networks and inter-agency collaborations in the area of child and youth services has grown significantly,

formal collaboration between the sectors of research, policy and practice is in the minority. For example, collaboration between these sectors in the early intervention area is quite new and not yet standard practice.[8]

There are many reasons for these research-practice-policy gaps. Phillips and McCartney[9], for example, show that the influences of research and policy on each other in the child care area have been limited because research and policy have developed along separate tracks. These researchers have explored the lack of connection between research and policy showing that the concerns and incentives for both areas are quite distinct. They use child care as an example to illustrate this point.

Historically, policy makers have viewed child care as having a dual role:. Firsly, enabling better employment opportunities for working mothers (work and family policy) and, secondly as a means of providing better healthcare and nutrition to children of poor families (early intervention). For researchers, their central concern is the development and wellbeing of the child. The different considerations associated with early intervention and childcare in these sectors needs to be acknowledged before research and policy can be useful to each other.[9]

Tsui[10] proposes the gap exists because researchers, policy makers and practitioners have different values and priorities and these values and priorities are not well understood or acknowledged. Practitioners also acknowledge that competitive tendering can run counter to collaboration.

Gilfus et al.[11] describe a model of collaboration with researchers, advocates, practitioners and policy makers looking at survivors of violence. Members of these sectors meet monthly to discuss work in progress and to mentor each other. These researchers believe collaboration between research, policy and practice is important for making a project relevant to, and respectful of those being researched.

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATING

Collaboration is an approach to solving complex problems that requires the skills, approaches and tools of many sectors. Head[12] suggests that the traditional approach of governments and communities toward service delivery are increasingly being supplemented by detailed stakeholder consultation and collaboration across sectors. For effecting change in the youth and child services area, collaboration across research, policy, and practice can be particularly important.

The benefits (and costs) of collaborating can be extensive. Head[13] proposes that for ARACY, collaboration is seen as the key to identifying and tackling important and complex problems that have resisted solutions. He further suggests that the process of collaboration "should generate innovation, fresh research, and better targeted programs or interventions that will have optimal impact on the key problems".

Our survey results indicate that collaboration across the three sectors (research, policy, and practice) is more likely to be resilient to political and social change than those collaboration that don't involve all three sectors. This is another key benefit from collaborating across sectors.

Solving complex problems in youth and child services

The majority (85%) of survey respondents reported that the outcomes of their projects would not be achievable without collaboration. The majority of respondents also agreed that they worked on problems that others have had great difficulty in solving. Collaboration can be seen as response to a complex modern society in which one group or organisation alone cannot tackle the associated problems.[14] Scott[15] further describes the benefits of collaboration in addressing the complex nature of services for children and young people. However, she also notes that while social problems are becoming increasingly complex, funding for child and youth services has not

increased. This results in significant financial reasons for sectors to collaborate. All of our case studies indicated that the resources of the partner organisations, including funding, expertise and contacts, were essential for initiating the collaborative projects. For example, the KidsMatter collaboration was initiated when it was recognised that time, resources and expertise in the mental health area were not readily available to schools. The collaboration provided such resources. The Nepean Family Choices collaboration was formed to attract funding for additional programs to improve the work of existing service organisations in the Penrith-Blue Mountains-Hawkesbury areas west of Sydney. It sought to address the complex needs of children and families within the community context.

Generating and sharing new knowledge

Partnerships in the community services area often form to share information and learning, reform and improve existing systems, and solve existing problems more creatively.[16]

Collaborators in our case studies believed they were educating each other in the process of meeting the goals of the collaboration. In this way, they became more aware of the workings of others outside of their own sectors:

> *[The collaboration] means working together for the best outcomes and listening to each others' perspectives. It gives you a different set of strategies… Health has a very specific approach and education has a different one; collaboration means we have other options that we hadn't considered. [KidsMatter]*

Learning how other organisations tackle particular tasks, and diffusing knowledge distilled from the project through the network are two of the main benefits of collaboration for some organisations:

> *One thing that it [the collaboration] brought to our awareness was other things that are going on out there. [For example], in Victoria they partnered with the Royal Children's Hospital and developed a handbook… we've had discussions with them so we weren't reinventing the wheel. [Child Safety Kit]*

Tsui[10] describes this process of exchanging skills, experience and understanding among collaborators as 'knowledge sharing'. Knowledge sharing is both a process and an outcome of collaboration. Collaboration stimulates knowledge-sharing, as stated by our KidsMatter case study participants:

> *Collaboration between research, policy and practice is essential because what often happens is that people beaver away in research areas… Often the people doing the work in those areas on the ground are not connected to the research. They initiate the hands-on stuff but it is not informed by current research. There is a strong need to bridge that gap and both parties need to communicate and learn from and with each other.*

In our survey, people involved in collaborations across all three sectors (research, policy and practice) were much more likely to agree (96%) than those collaborating across only one or two sectors (76%) that their collaboration is generating new knowledge and learning that would not have been possible through the work of their organisation alone. This could reflect the fact that collaborations involving research are more likely to have objectives that are related to developing new knowledge and learning.

Our three cross-sector case studies also had a focus on learning and knowledge outcomes. For example, in the KidsMatter case study collaborators feel they have a better understanding of both what can be managed in a school setting and what can be provided by health services from the collaboration. The people involved in KidsMatter feel that the collaboration allows them to have a much greater impact than if they acted separately:

> *We look at the world differently. [The collaboration means] we have a much better opportunity of not missing issues. Economically it is terrific and strategically it is a good thing. Often approaches are hit and miss and I think in this way we've got a larger world picture.*

Collaborators in all our case studies expressed a desire for sustainable, long-term information transfer and uptake. However, some participants indicated that there was a need for negotiation with team members and an awareness of each others' perspectives for information to be taken on board.

Increasing innovation

Collaboration is often supported because it is believed to encourage creativity and innovation.[17] Collaboration is helpful in bringing together people who challenge each other's assumptions and borrow from each other's disciplines.[18,19] Innovation occurs at the periphery of knowledge and thrives on the sometimes chaotic conditions at the interface of different organisations or sectors.[20] From our survey, 88% of all respondents agreed that their collaboration resulted in innovative solutions.

The idea that innovation is a product of collaboration is supported by our case study participants. They often spoke about their work with others as having extended them personally and professionally, and they listed this as one of the main benefits of collaboration.

Collaboration is about more than just the outcomes for the Quamby Youth Detention Centre. It is about establishing a process to inform best practice, and incorporating a research agenda into future work. It is the first time that the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support – Youth Justice has supplied a person to work in the research department:

> *The collaboration is trying something new—we are seeing the benefits of working this way and it may be a useful model for future collaborations.*

Survey respondents mostly agreed (88%) that their collaboration was developing innovative solutions.

Sharing risks and resources

Collaboration is often promoted as a way of providing access to more resources (in the form of expertise, knowledge and connections, or funding) so that organisations can better achieve their own objectives. Fox and Faver[21] describe many of the advantages of collaboration which include

joining resources and dividing labour, overcoming the tendency to work in isolation, and sustaining motivation by being accountable to others (although they temper their enthusiasm for collaboration by describing the many disadvantages including time and resource costs, the level of interpersonal involvement required, and the problems associated with co-authorship).

The Nepean Family Choices case study shows how collaborators are overcoming the tendency to work in isolation. As the collaboration has moved to implement new programs, there has been better networking and sharing of the workload across organisational boundaries. The opportunity to share expertise and local knowledge has led to the development of new practices and procedures which have improved the capacity of each individual partner organisation. The Nepean Family Choices case study has brought together each agencies own special knowledge of the community, which has improved the overall delivery of service in the region:

> *The unique contribution brought by every partner has been their strong identification with their local community in a region characterised by considerable diversity, a dispersed population and unique local challenges to service delivery. Collaboration has provided the opportunity for these organisations to work together for a common purpose without loss of individual identity and autonomy within local communities.*

The other case studies collaborating across all three sectors noted similar benefits, including improved coordination of and access to resources:

> *Having the combination of partners working together means that we are not overlapping [in our efforts]. We are managing to coordinate our resources and our approach so that schools feel supported. [KidsMatter]*

> *[As researchers] we now have less access issues. We want to work with practitioners on research that is meaningful… [Quamby]*

Huxham and Vangen[22] discuss how coordinating services through collaboration can avoid duplication, which leads to greater efficiency and justification of public expenditure. The authors also comment on other perspectives on collaboration and efficiency including government arguments for more efficient public-private partnerships, economies of scale (sharing of services and supplies), and operational efficiency. However, they

argue that coordination is not wholly concerned with seamlessness, and that co-located 'one-stop shop' services are subject to pitfalls including the omission of some activities, and dilution and conflict between available activities.

These same authors describe the benefits of partnerships where risk is shared because, if the project were to fail, the risk to each partner alone would be too great to bear, economically or socially.

Credibility

People in our case studies spoke about the credibility that the collaboration had compared to organisations going it alone. They gave various reasons for why working with the other partners provided more credibility to the project. Research organisations were cited as benefiting from links and access to the community, whereas practitioners gained research independence. For example, a practitioner from the Child Safety Kit case study said:

> *Credibility is our biggest factor. With having a partner who is impartial, our competitors won't be put off by seeing our name on it when they also see the research centre's name is on it.*

Influencing policy

The literature review and our case studies indicated that translating research findings into policy action is best done by involving policy makers early in the research process. In addition, it was perceived that a collaborative structure involving research, policy and practice makes it easier for knowledge from practitioners to feed directly into policy and research agendas and activities.

> *A feature of the development of the [overarching] program has been the deliberate linking of research to policy which has informed the funding tender process and therefore the service models and service practice. [Nepean Family Choices]*

> *You need each of those areas [research, policy and practice] for a credible and sustainable approach… combining credible research and putting it into practice helps you drive policy. [Child Safety Kit]*

Our case studies represent two ways in which policy can be influenced in collaboration for children and youth outcomes:

- through support for existing policies for some partners and
- helping develop policy for others.

For the Quamby Youth Detention Centre case study, the main benefit of collaboration was perceived to be using research to inform practice and policy. The dynamic of this relationship works both ways—researchers gain access to information they would not normally have, and practitioners and policy makers benefit from the expertise of the researchers. All parties benefit from research that is directly relevant to the specific issue they are all addressing:

> *The outcomes will be of potential benefit, but the process will be great. I'm hoping one of the key benefits, as an early step, will be the involvement of a research agenda for our work in the future.*

Phillips and McCartney[9] warn against taking research findings into policy too quickly. They see the role of research as bringing new issues and concepts to the attention of practitioners and policy makers rather than having a direct influence. Collaboration can provide a means for achieving this awareness as collaborators gain a better understanding of each others' perspectives.
Scott[15] believes evidence-informed policy and practice is achievable, not by disseminating research or professional training but by making change in complex organisations through mechanisms such as collaboration.

Respondents in our survey who were from collaborations that included all three sectors (research, policy, practice) were more likely to agree (82%) than those from one or two sector collaborations (68%) that their collaborative project will influence policy in a way that would not have been possible for a single organisation.

Developing long-term relationships

In describing factors for a successful partnership, the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation[23] proposes that partners need to develop long-term relationships. It suggests that members of successful partnerships usually share a goal that is larger than that of a single research project, and that they understand that the project at hand is one step toward solving the overall problem.

The desire to establish long-term sustainable projects was reflected in conversations with our case study collaborators who view their projects as pilots for much larger or extended collaborations with the partners. They believe the collaboration will have opened the way for other partnerships to form and for partners to make better use of their existing networks in ways they had not previously thought possible.

For example, for a participant in the Child Safety Kit case study, the process of networking was even more important than the outcome:

> *From my point of view, I don't care if we produce a kit if it will help continue the ongoing networks that we are forming. If that is what it takes to keep the collaboration going then we will support it.*

Three of our four collaborative case studies (excluding the Quamby case study) listed extending and building on existing networks as a major benefit of the collaboration, and spoke of an increased tolerance and understanding of the other sectors over the long term.

> *All the things I've wanted to do I'm now able to do—also things that I didn't think were possible. I've been able to share what I've learnt with others and learn from what they've done with their partners… We extend and better use the contacts that we already had but didn't know we could use them. [Child Safety Kit]*

All of our survey respondents, especially those in collaborations crossing three sectors, agreed that their collaborations were developing extensive networks that would assist future collaborations and projects.

CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATION AND WAYS OF OVERCOMING THESE CHALLENGES

While there are many benefits associated with collaborative projects, they should not be undertaken without careful consideration. Collaborative projects usually take more time and require more effort to make them work. Underestimating the costs, both monetary and otherwise, involved with collaboration can cause collaborative agreements to fall apart. Unless the potential for real collaborative advantage is apparent, it is likely to be more efficient for organisations or groups to carry out projects independently.[22] For a variety of reasons, collaboration may be too challenging for organisations to consider.

In the following discussion, we identify some of the challenges for collaborating across the research, policy and practice sectors for child and youth services outcomes. We also identify ways to overcome these challenges, some of which reflect the benefits identified in the previous section. The challenges or impediments and the incentives for overcoming these challenges are summarised in the following table. This can also be used as a checklist for potential or existing cross-sector collaboration projects.

Table 1 – Impediments and incentives to collaborating across sectors

Factor	Impediment	Incentive
Structure & teams	• Competition for resources • Fear or loss of autonomy • Individual organisational differences with regard to structure, processes, goals, and culture • Partners don't communicate their own aims from the collaboration to avoid conflict • Long term process of involving the community • Expense and time of reporting to organisations and funding agencies • Conflicts between individuals as relationships develop	• Existing relationships used to establish the collaboration • Membership is inclusive to involve as many relevant partners as possible • Processes and structures within partner organisations are mapped and understood • Strong support from partner organisations • Partner organisations are flexible and open to new ideas and change • There are formal rules for the collaboration • There are clear collaboration processes, • Partners in collaboration have shared values • Collaborative partners have equity in

Factor	Impediment	Incentive
		decision-making • Each partner benefits from the collaboration • Partners in the collaboration understand each others' needs from the collaboration as well as the aims of the overall collaboration • Focuses on and involves the community • Has community support • A designated person or organisation is responsible for accountability • Has an active monitoring and evaluation program
Power distribution & trust	• Individuals and organisations concerned about loss of control • Control of the majority of resources by one organisation, who has greater power in the collaboration • The collaboration being more important to one partner than to others • The time it takes to build trust in relationships, especially if collaborative partners do not have established relationships	• Members of the collaboration have an equal say in decision making • A third party collaboration manager who facilitates, mediates, trains, supports and builds capacity • Mutual respect among collaborative partners • High level of face-to-face interaction amongst partners • There are opportunities for mutual learning
Resources & support	• Gaining and maintaining resources • Time needed to make a collaboration work through building relationships and face-to-face interactions • Competing workloads and commitments	• All partners have a stake in the collaboration and commit resources • All partners share the risk • Flexible timelines • Assistance with administration • Funding of the collaboration is separate to other funding • Funding for face-to-face interaction
Commonalities & differences	• Different values, cultures and norms of the organisations and sectors involved • Prior assumptions made about the other partners • Partners operating from different theoretical frameworks	• Training and mentoring is provided in how to share expertise across organisational and sectoral boundaries • Time is allocated so partners can understanding each others' values and practices • Collaboration partners have clear roles and responsibilities • The collaboration has a common purpose or goal
Communication	• Duplication of activities • Lack of time • Competing priorities • If initial relationships between partners are weak, this threatens the collaboration • The need to develop a common language • The potential to lose key members of the collaboration	• Frequent opportunities for face-to-face open communication • Formal mechanisms for encouraging collaboration • Frequent opportunities for informal conversations • Pre-existing relationships • Resources provided for communication • Employs knowledge brokers to

Factor	Impediment	Incentive
		facilitate interactions
Personality traits of team members	• The need for resources to initiate and maintain collaborations • Loss of champion, leaders or key collaboration members	• Have champions to support and advocate for the collaboration • Members are passionate, open and honest about the collaboration • Members are committed to the collaboration • Leader/s are strategic, good managers, inspiring, good listeners and able to facilitate change
Success in achieving outcomes	• Maintaining enthusiasm and momentum	• Is flexible about the potential outcomes • Recognises early successes • Identifies where new knowledge and learning has been creates

Structure and team management

Huxham and Vangen[22] believe there are some key management processes and structures that need to be examined in collaborations, including:

- the representativeness and accountability of members
- the way in which the collaboration is governed
- the alliances formed in meeting the aims of the collaboration.

They recommend that collaborators map these processes and structures to gain a better understanding of the partnership organisations in the context of the collaboration. Some of the main processes and structures that contribute to successful collaborations or collaboration inertia are provided below.

The survey respondents involved in collaboration across the three sectors (research, policy and practice) were far more likely to agree (72%) that their collaboration had formal rules than those involved in collaboration across just one or two sectors (52%). However, they were also slightly more likely to agree (75%) that their own organisational structures were flexible compared to those collaborating across one or two sectors (68%). Interestingly, respondents rated having 'large project teams' and 'co-location of team members' as being

the least important factors contributing to successful collaborative environments.

Inclusiveness or exclusiveness of membership

Selecting the right partners for collaboration is one of the keys to success and de Souza Briggs[24] has shown that partnerships formed by choice are more successful than those formed in response to external forces. Our survey respondents were twice as likely to indicate that potential collaborative members were identified through their own existing networks compared to other means.

Some authors point to the need to involve anyone who is likely to be affected, or who has an interest in the collaboration, in designing the collaborative process and participating in ongoing decision making. [3,25,26,27]

Competition for resources and fear of loss of autonomy are major barriers to collaboration for some partners. However, Huxham and Vangen[22] suggest that smaller agencies can be the most powerful in partnerships because of the unique strengths that they bring to the collaboration, so it is worth the effort for them to identify their value to the collaboration.

Gilfus et al.[11] describe the tensions between inclusiveness and overcoming diversity issues. They suggest developing some well-articulated and shared values to determine how inclusive the collaboration needs to be, without becoming too fractured.

Lasker and Weiss[28] believe that while the right mix of people and organisations is important, there are other factors involved in making collaboration successful. It must be feasible within the collaborative model for members to participate and develop relationships with other members. Members must also have some real influence and control over the collaborative process on an equal footing, and there must be structural

processes in place for being able to set the agenda, plan and carry out activities as well as deal with multiple issues and problems.

Most of our survey respondents (90%) agreed that the members of their collaboration represent a cross-section of those who have a stake in what they are trying to accomplish.

Members of our Child Safety Kit case study wanted to be as inclusive as possible as they saw this as being an important mechanism for getting the outputs of their project to as many people as possible:

> *When we were looking at collaborating, we decided that there would not be exclusivity...You rule out anyone else in the market if you take intellectual property. We don't care, we just want to be able to use it [the Kit] and challenge other people to use it.*

Organisational support

The 'climate' of a collaboration is described as the set of attributes specific to a particular project or group that can be identified from the way the group deals with its members and its environment.[29] Collaboration works best when the partner organisations value the collaboration and support their staff by providing acknowledgement and skills development opportunities.[26] The commitment of individuals can be based on whether the priorities of the organisations involved are supportive of collaboration.[30]

A positive collaborative environment within organisations was reported by 90% of our survey respondents who agreed that it was normal for people within their organisation to collaborate with one another. The case studies also described the importance of a supportive environment:

> *I don't know how you get people to extend their thinking to see the importance of this [sort of] collaboration. They almost have to see it themselves. I've been fortunate to be able to manage the centre as I see fit—I have had support. [Child Safety Kit]*

> *Part of what I was always going to do was to get our managers on board early. If that hadn't occurred, it could have been problematic. The detention centre*

needed to see the benefits and feel confident to allow the process to move forward. Research like this is outside what is normally seen in a centre like this. [Quamby]

The Nepean Family Choices collaborators noted organisational flexibility and openness to frequent change in response to emerging issues as key success factor for their collaboration.

Mutual benefits

Our literature review and case studies noted the importance of members of a collaborative project gaining mutual benefits from their participation. Mutual benefits occur when each partner benefits from the collaboration.[31] Successful collaboration provides benefits to partners above what they could receive from working within their own organisation.[32]

Weiss[33] cites three reasons that motivate potential collaborators to consider collaboration:

1. They see benefits to their clients. For example, the collaboration makes it easier for their clients to get help.
2. There are benefits to them personally, that make their job easier.
3. There are benefits for the collaborating organisation or the funding organisation, such as reduced costs, less waste or increased efficiency; this results in organisational recognition of the individual.

Each partner wants to benefit from the collaboration as much as possible.[22] In some cases, partners do not communicate their aims to other partners because they want to avoid conflict and maintain the collaboration. Successful collaboration recognises individual needs as well as the overall collaborative goals.

Members of the Child Safety Kit collaboration felt that it was important to meet their own organisational needs in the collaboration, and to be able to

act when needed and not be hampered by the collaboration. This was also true for other case studies:

> *Working collaboratively means that everyone is getting their needs met. But really what is happening is kids are getting their needs met. [KidsMatter]*

Community focus and involvement

Collaboration for child and youth outcomes should involve families and the broader community as users of these services.[1,16] Involvement helps build a strong sense of community, both professionally and in the wider social community.[16] Projects and programs often depend on strong community support for survival.

From our survey, respondents in collaborations across all three sectors (research, policy and practice) were more likely to agree (93%) that their collaboration had community support for its goal and outcomes than collaborations with only one or two of research, policy, and practice sectors (70%). Members of our case studies also stressed the importance of having communication pathways to the communities of concern:

> *We've learnt about dissemination—one of the criticisms of practitioners is that the research isn't accessible. [As a result], in our case study there will be something for young people that reflects their involvement, and we'll give seminars. [Quamby]*

Involving the community is a long-term process that is time and resource intensive. However, working on short-term goals, while keeping larger goals in mind, can keep members focused and motivated because they can see the benefits of their involvement. Cook's[16] recommendations for community involvement include:

- having a clear statement of purpose that is relevant to immediate local needs
- focusing on community problems and issues

- considering barriers to participation (e.g. attendance at meetings and costs of involvement, providing regular ongoing engagement and timely feedback).

Clear lines of accountability

Darlington and Feeney[34] believe all partners need to develop clearly defined processes and structures for accountability. Accountability is an important issue to consider at project initiation because measuring the results of collaboration can be more difficult than for a single organisation with a narrow focus. Collaborative projects are generally accountable to more organisations and funding agencies and so are usually subject to more rules and reporting requirements. This can place additional burdens on partners who may not have the capacity to meet accountability requirements. Darlington and Feeney[34] recommend practicing collaboration through pilot programs or specifically-funded programs to put accountability processes in place before embarking on a larger collaboration.

Our survey respondents indicated that clear expectations were important for managing barriers to collaboration. They also rated individual accountability as essential for success. This was particularly true for cross-sectoral collaboration.

Our KidsMatter case study noted the importance of someone being responsible for making sure there is accountability:

> *The Department of Health and Aging bring accountability in terms of making sure that what we are providing is around mental health; the money was released to improve mental health outcomes - the monitoring component.*

Addressing conflict

Accepting that there will be initial and ongoing conflict as relationships change is a major factor for successful collaboration, according to the literature. However, this issue did not arise in our case studies or in our survey.

Survey respondents rated managing conflict as a neutral challenge they needed to face.

This could be because all our case studies and most of the survey respondents' collaborations started through existing contacts and networks where relationships of trust had already been established, at least to some extent.

The literature indicates that those collaborations that accept up front that conflict is inevitable and needs to be resolved through structures within the collaboration are more likely to be successful.[1] Gaskill et al.[35] call for greater investment in relationships and teamwork to overcome problems associated with value conflicts and competing goals. However, these authors also acknowledge that conflict can be useful for increasing diversity and the range of views needed to solve complex problems.

Performance measures and rewards

Another issue noted in the literature and from our survey, but not evidenced by our case studies, was the need for collaborative projects to have performance measures and to reward progress towards achieving outcomes. The majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their collaboration had an active monitoring and evaluation program. Raymond[36] claims that mechanisms for evaluating performance and providing incentives for good work are just as important as trust for encouraging collaboration. Kisevan[37] describes useful strategies for formalising collaboration, including performance review processes.

Power distribution and trust

Managing power

The literature we reviewed talked about the importance of equity in collaboration and the need to manage power relationships. However, this

was not such an issue for most of our case studies or for our survey respondents. In The Child Safety Kit case study—the only one we described that was not based on existing relationships and networks—perceived loss of control was a challenge until relationships had time to develop:

> *I'm getting better with the issue of control. There is no need for me to feel the need for control. There wasn't trust there at the start… but now it is working. It takes time for this to work.*

Power and control are rarely discussed in the literature on collaboration but can be a major influence on its success or otherwise.[35] Huxham and Vangen[22] describe the sources of power that partners hold which can influence collaboration. Partners can be more powerful if they have resources or skills that are scarce or they control the resources and/or information. When the collaborative relationship is more important to one partner than it is to another, the power balance can be affected by the strategic importance of the collaboration aims, the degree to which knowledge or learning has been gained from a partner, and the availability of alternatives. Differences in power, resources and influence exist but members need an equal voice in decisions for collaboration to work.[32]

Cook[16] points to the value of using a 'third party' agency in collaboration to provide leadership and support. The agency could be a consultancy, a research organisation, an umbrella organisation, or a large non-profit organisation. It would focus on managing the partnership rather than delivering outcomes to the community. It would support the collaboration by facilitating, mediating, training, building capacity, and providing technical support. The number of collaborative activities involving a third party agency has increased in recent years as many funding bodies in the US, Canada and the UK recognise the need to include infrastructure and capacity building in collaborative projects. They see the funding of a third party agency as an effective way to achieve this.

Survey respondents suggested that support from neutral third parties could be useful. One respondent made the following comment:

> *Facilitation by a neutral party (i.e. not a service provider), with high level skills in managing organisational change [makes barriers to collaboration more manageable]. It shifts group thinking from 'sustaining individual service' to 'sustaining group for the benefit of children and families'.*

Trust

One of the most frequently used terms to describe the quality of relationships in a successful collaboration is trust.[38,35] When collaboration occurs for reasons other than the pre-existence of relationships, trust in the partnership can be low, particularly if factors such as awareness of reputation are also absent. Cook[16] believes that reputation may be a significant factor in the willingness of organisations to engage each other. Mattessich[3] suggests that mutual respect is a prerequisite to trust, and other authors have shown that trust is built in stages over time.[38, 22] Huxham and Vangen[22] found that there was more suspicion than trust in many of the collaborations they examined. They believe trust is a complex issue and cannot be developed through prescribed means. It must be built in small stages over time, for managing risk, relationship dynamics and power imbalances.

In our survey, 92% of respondents agreed that their collaborative members trust each other, and 97% agreed that they had a lot of respect for the other members of the collaboration. They also rated respecting and trusting the members of the team as the second highest factor for successful collaboration. Trust and respect were frequently cited in our case studies:

> *There is trust and credibility involved. When I've said "no, it won't work", they listen to me and vice versa. They have listened so I'm willing to take it on. [KidsMatter]*

> *We understand that there are difficulties in this area, so we aren't unreasonably optimistic about what can be achieved, but we do respect people's areas of expertise. [KidsMatter]*

Cook[16] makes the following recommendations for supporting respect and trust in integrated partnerships:

- active face-to-face engagement (formal and informal)
- opportunities to express grief or anger over past issues or to express individual agendas
- fair and honest practices and procedures for the collaboration
- shared power and control of projects
- a clearly defined problem or issue to be addressed
- decisions made by consensus
- mutual learning activities.

For Cook, trust may be a measure of the success of a partnership rather than a prerequisite. She identified many indicators of trust in her examination of integrated partnerships.[16] These indicators include being able to disagree and feeling comfortable about making and sharing mistakes. The willingness of participants to be represented by other partners in meetings with people outside the collaboration was also an indicator of trust.[39]

Resources and support

Collaborative projects need adequate time and resources to succeed.[34,37,7,16] Members need time to learn about the purposes and activities of other sectors, develop a common language and common areas of focus, and resolve conflicts.[40]

The most challenging issues identified by our survey respondents were:

- competing priorities of workloads and commitments
- the time needed to make the collaboration work
- lack of resources.

In each of our case studies, members indicated that competing demands from other projects makes it difficult to find the time needed for collaboration.

But they also stressed that the time working together was important for building trust. Members of the Nepean Family Choices collaboration perceived time to be the single greatest cost. Time was needed to:

> *… build relationships and engage in shared planning and decision making through a regular schedule of face-to-face meetings.*

The three case studies that cross the research, policy and practice sectors (KidsMatter, Child Safety Kit, and Quamby) also indicated that gaining and maintaining resources (including funding) was the hardest challenge to overcome.

> *It can be incredibly frustrating at times [to get funding for meeting]—particularly early on, when you are trying to develop a common language or common understanding. [KidsMatter]*

For successful collaboration, all parties need to have a significant stake in the project by committing financial, human and material resources.[31,27] Many authors in the literature we reviewed believed partners needed to commit time and resources equally to share the risk associated with a collaborative project.[41,42,43,31] For many partners an increase in perceived risk can mean an increase in resistance to collaboration, even if significant benefits exist.[44]

Our survey respondents reported that barriers to collaboration could be made more manageable through support for workload sharing, dedicated staff and non-government funding. Government funding was seen to bring heavy reporting requirements.

Collaboration generally takes more time than non-collaborative work. Reaching decisions can be difficult for members as they need to remain aware of the potentially conflicting needs of their own organisations. So, timelines for collaborative projects must be flexible.

The Nepean Family Choices collaboration used a lead agency to deal with administrative issues:

In this model of collaboration, one agency – in this case the largest agency in the collaboration – is nominated as Lead Agency and has the responsibility for contract management with the funding body, including the distribution of funding, data collection, reporting, contract negotiations and the achievement of performance targets. This approach significantly reduces the administrative burden on other partner organisations.

Cook[16] provides several strategies for funding to promote collaboration:

- Provide separate funding streams for the partnership and the delivery of services arising from the partnership, making sure that the minimum level of resources required for coordination and technical support in the collaboration are available.
- Allow flexibility in the approaches and processes to achieve the desired outcomes.
- Commit to funding long-term projects to achieve outcomes.
- Provide resources for any ongoing support services arising from the collaboration so that partners can continue to produce the outcomes required.

Commonalities and differences

Many of the barriers to collaboration across the research, policy and practice sectors in the child and youth services area are related to the different cultures, values and norms of the sectors and organisations involved.[6,33] For example, different expertise within existing organisations can make it challenging for people to work together, yet different approaches are essential for solving complex problems, as previously discussed. Unfortunately, in coming to agreement on norms, values and practices in collaboration, this expertise has the potential to be lost. Participants in our case studies suggested that collaborators need training in sharing their different expertise and knowledge across organisational and sectoral boundaries. At the very least, there needs to be recognition of what is shared across the collaborative team and what is of individual or organisational importance only.

Survey respondents involved in all three sectors were much more likely to agree (87%) than those involved in one or two sector collaborations (67%) that their members allocate time to trying to understand each others' views and practices. They were also slightly more likely to rate understanding the different beliefs, culture and practices of partners as a success factor for the collaboration. Training and mentoring for successful collaboration were strategies supported by all respondents.

Shared norms, values and practices

Cook's guidelines[16] for successful partnerships include examining the issues, values, mission and infrastructure of partners for similarities and differences. It is worth investing time before collaboration is undertaken to identify the values that each potential partner will contribute.

Shared norms, values and practices are the foundation of successful collaboration. While exchanging and managing information is essential for innovation in collaboration,[45] members of a group need to understand the significance and purpose of information through shared norms, values and attitudes for it to be useful to them.[46] For example, in the KidsMatter collaboration there were prior assumptions about the other partners that needed to be overcome.

> *I was surprised about the assumptions we make about one another. From the health perspective the assumption is that schools are uniform and we can just roll [the project] out to all the schools. Not understanding that schools are different and diverse… You can't know what you don't know, and I certainly wasn't aware of the health resources we now have at our disposal.*

In our survey, understanding the different beliefs, culture and practices of the research, policy and practice partners involved in the collaboration ranked in the top three success factors for collaboration.

Darlington et al.[34] believe that different practices for areas such as confidentiality and information sharing can be barriers to inter-agency collaboration. Differences in professional identity and partners operating from

different theoretical frameworks can also cause communication problems. However, the authors believe that attacking these differences directly can cause partners to become defensive and should be avoided. Attempts to convert others to a group or organisation's way of thinking can be a major barrier to collaboration. Rather, it is a matter of taking all perspectives into account and finding a way forward for the collaboration. This was particularly true for the KidsMatter collaboration:

> *When we are talking about collaboration with different backgrounds and orientation, we need a specific lead-up time [to develop a] shared vision and consistent language. Quite often, health and education have different literature focused on the same thing in mental health and wellbeing.*

A shared vision and clear, agreed aims and roles

Joint decision making through all stages is important for successful collaboration,[31,27] and was valued highly by members of our case studies.

> *One of the key things is the understanding that you can't make decisions in isolation—you need to think clearly how you impact on others in the group [KidsMatter].*

Survey respondents, especially those involved in collaboration across the three sectors, disagreed that members stuck to their own ideas and methods, and agreed that their collaboration had formal rules. Most respondents (65%) agreed that their members had clear roles and responsibilities. The highest factor leading to collaborative success for all survey respondents was having a common purpose or goal.

Gaskill et al.[35] believe that it is important to have early discussions with all team members to identify the research problem and see that the approach makes sense to everyone. They believe that in too many cases researchers are viewed as evaluating the practitioners rather than analysing the practice to produce better services. Kunesh[27] suggests that successful collaborations develop a collaborative strategy with a common vision and goals, and gain agreement by all parties to use their institutional and personal power to achieve those goals.

Communication

Okamoto[7] believes that communication and cooperation are the two essential ingredients for successful collaboration. Good communication can help prevent the duplication of services and lead to better understanding of the complex problems of high-risk youth. Aitkinson[1] illustrates the need for frequent face-to-face interaction, with the idea that 'institutions don't collaborate, people do'. With that in mind, partners must make time for face-to-face interaction to negotiate reciprocal benefits for being involved.

People in our case studies reported that barriers to collaboration could be made more manageable through clear, open and regular communication between collaborators at face-to-face meetings:

> *We've established a protocol around communication. We let each other know what is going on around our own areas of expertise. We get together regularly…face to face.*

Our survey respondents had a positive outlook toward communication in their collaborations with 90% or more agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements about communication:

- "We discuss our ideas with those likely to be interested and/or affected by our collaboration's outcomes".
- "We openly discuss with each other how to achieve our goals".
- "I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration".
- "I have informal conversations about the project with others on the team". (100% of respondents from collaborations across all three sectors agreed or strongly agreed with this last statement).

Survey respondents from collaborations across all three sectors were far more likely to agree (88%) that they had formal mechanisms in place to encourage communication across the collaboration than those involved in collaborations across only one or two sectors (66%). However, they were more

likely to disagree that they have time to provide each other with feedback, indicating their need to have even greater time for personal communication.

Good communication helps to develop good relationships, which are important at all stages of collaboration.

Relationships

Relationships are important for initiating and maintaining a healthy collaboration. Participants with a past history of collaborating are important for initiating a successful collaborative project, especially for collaboration between universities and community-based organisations.[31] In addition, pre-existing informal relationships lead to partnerships that develop quicker.[47] This was true for many of our case studies, where the collaboration developed from existing relationships. For example, a participant in the Quamby Youth Detention Centre case study said:

> *We've had a relationship over many years. There was no need for a lengthy 'getting to know and trust each other' period.*

The Nepean Family Choices collaboration also noted pre-existing relationships and a high level of mutual trust as a key indicator of collaborative success.

When survey respondents were asked about how they identified potential members for the collaboration, a slight majority (52%) said they did so through existing networks and about 25% said they did so through their own organisations. This again indicates the importance of existing relationships for initiating collaboration.

Trust, enthusiasm and motivation in collaboration are built over time through strong relationships.[25] Cook[16] has shown that relationships are a key driver as well as a barrier to successful collaboration. Strong relationships have been shown to help collaboration because they motivate people to communicate,

and members have a sense of belonging to the collaboration that can help overcome major challenges.

However, collaboration only works when partners put time and energy into developing and maintaining their relationships.[3] Strong relationships motivate people to maintain the relationships, and Hudson et al.[48] and Huxham and Vangen[22] show that collaborative projects can be most vulnerable in the early stages when relationships are weak.

In the survey, respondents from collaborations across all three sectors (research, policy and practice) were more likely to agree than those involved in collaborations across one or two sectors that members allocate time to trying to understand each others' views and practices. Clearly, time in developing relationships is essential for those involved in collaboration across three sectors.

Kisevan[37] points to many of the challenges associated with developing relationships in collaborations across the youth and child support sectors. They include:

- having time to develop relationships
- gaining senior and middle management participation
- making sure the collaboration is meaningful for partners, and avoids duplication
- developing a common language
- losing key members on whom the relationships in the collaboration depend.

A factor identified in successful collaboration is the ongoing interaction of members from the inception of the collaboration.[49] Cook[16] recommends actions to minimise the impact of changing membership:

- Make sure that a core group of members are able to commit for the duration of the partnership.
- Induct new members into the collaboration.
- Commit resources to developing the relationship and integrating partners on an ongoing basis.

While not an issue in the case studies, staff turnover was acknowledged as a potential problem. It can be a major contributor to collaboration inertia and in some cases is unavoidable. For example, the fact that policy makers are often in term-limited positions can cause difficulties for ongoing collaboration.

Boundary management

Researchers have investigated ways of overcoming the boundaries that inhibit effective working relationships. One way is to use 'boundary spanners'—people who can communicate across sectors.[50] Huxham and Vangen[22] believe that boundary spanners can be identified through a mapping exercise looking at individuals who play central roles in many facets of the collaboration.

Employing knowledge brokers is a way of overcoming the cultural and organisational boundaries that separate researchers, policy makers and practitioners.[10] Knowledge brokers are responsible for facilitating interactions between groups in the collaboration and creating opportunities for sharing.

More than 90% of our survey respondents agreed that some members of their collaboration facilitate communication across the partners.

Personality traits of team members

Champions

The literature we reviewed considered it important for each of the partner organisations to have champions to support and advocate for the

collaboration.[47] Managers can also improve the climate of the collaboration by committing to the collaboration and championing it outside the collaboration. These champions can cultivate relationships that assist the collaboration.[1] In an investigation of collaboration between universities and community-based organisations, Smith[31] shows that involvement of high-level visible leaders is needed to champion collaborations.

All of our case studies required champions to sustain and build on the projects and to fight for them within their respective organisation. This was particularly important at the start of the project:

> *In the first two years you need people to champion it and then after a few years it has taken on enough tentacles that people will pick it up. [Child Safety Kit]*

> *I do a lot of work talking to organisations. I oversee every project conceptually and technically…I meet with a lot of people in the early stages. I don't do a lot of research. [Quamby]*

Most of our survey respondents (93%) agreed that their collaboration leaders champion the collaboration to decision makers. Those involved in collaboration across the three sectors were more likely to agree (69%) than those with collaborations across just one or two sectors (59%) that their collaboration relied heavily on champions.

Enjoying working together

While none of the literature indicated its importance, the collaborators in our case studies spoke frequently about liking each other and enjoying working together:

> *I don't think I expected [the collaboration] to be such fun. We are lucky that we have a good team of people to do things with. It's fun, creative and extending. [Child Safety Kit]*

Individual traits of members were frequently cited by our case study collaborators as contributing to the success of the collaboration. For example, the KidsMatter case study members felt that personal traits such as

passion, openness and honesty were important for collaborative team members:

> *We've worked really hard to get the right team of people. We have some fantastic project officers [with] good people skills, flexibility, sense of humour, lots of initiative and also a strong sense of professionalism and credibility in the area that they have come from… Having the right people is really important.*

Survey respondents reported that barriers to collaboration could be made more manageable by having a sense of humour, good sociability, commitment, goodwill, patience, persistence, and flexibility of the partners. They also rated collaborative members with the right mix of skills and personality in the top three characteristics that help collaboration succeed.

Commitment

Researchers agree that committed individuals are important for successful collaboration. In their analysis of early education and child care partnerships, Broadhead and Armstead[47] found that the commitment of skilled individuals involved over at least a three-year timeframe was a key success factor. Tennyson[32] also points out that partners must have the right attitude and strong commitment for the collaboration to work.

Our survey respondents reported lack of commitment in the team as the least challenging issue.

Members of our case studies believed their projects were successful due to the commitment of individuals and the relationships they had built over time. This was a key success factor to their collaboration:

> *A high level of individual commitment from the managers and representatives of the partner organisations and consortia [was a key success factor]. [Nepean Family Choices]*

> *Shared commitment has kept the collaboration going. All parties are very committed to this. We have regular structured meetings and a clearly defined project/research plan. [Quamby]*

Case study members questioned whether new people coming in would have the same commitment or drive to champion the collaboration to their own organisations, or to be able to pick up the work and deal with it at the same level. There was acknowledgment that as the collaboration grew there was more organisational commitment and the collaboration would not necessarily die without these individuals. However, in the early stages, retaining the same staff and maintaining these relationships was seen as crucial:

> *Getting the right people on board early was critical in trying to get it progressed quickly in the early stages. Identifying the right people, getting the planning finalised [got] the project off the ground. [Quamby]*

> *If half our project officers left, that would be a disaster as it takes time to build a relationship with schools… The continuity of relationships is important. [KidsMatter]*

Leadership

Leadership has been identified as critical to the success of collaboration.[27,28] While not finding it a relevant factor in their own work on collaboration, Huxham and Vangen[22] investigated leadership when they found it was central to informing policy makers.

Cook[16] describes the characteristics of a good collaborative leader as follows:

- strategic thinking, planning and concept development across organisational and sectoral boundaries
- good listening and change management skills
- the capacity to inspire and involve partners in the collaboration
- strong entrepreneurial skills.

Expertise in the field and a reputation for excellence were also mentioned as good qualities of a leader. Kunesh[27] believes leaders should be visionary, risk-taking and able to facilitate change.

Most of the survey respondents are leaders in the collaborations they reported on. So their responses reflect their perceptions of their own role as leaders in the collaborations. There was high agreement from all respondents (93%), especially those with collaboration across the three sectors (100%), that collaboration leaders were aware of the 'big picture' and discussed both this and any decisions with their teams. This was backed up in our case studies:

> *An inclusive diffuse leadership approach involving joint planning and decision making with a transparent sharing of information [was a key success factor]. [Nepean Family Choices]*

> *Someone has [to take] the leadership to drive the things that need to happen and that is always an issue in these sorts of things. [KidsMatter]*

Survey respondents with collaborations across all three sectors were equally as likely to agree/strongly agree as they were to disagree/strongly disagree that leaders do not have the authority or resources to improve the team's working environment, whereas people from collaborations with one or two perspectives were more likely to disagree with this statement.

From our survey, 95% of respondents agreed that leaders listen to collaborative team members when approached on an issue. Most also agreed, especially those in collaboration across all three sectors (100%) that their leaders facilitate decision making within the team and delegate responsibility to team members (93%). This is reflected in the majority of survey respondents feeling consulted about the issues that affect them, especially those from collaborations across all three sectors (97%).

Success in achieving outcomes

Achieving realistic short-term goals to provide early success was recommended by Cook[16] as a means of developing trust in the collaboration. Success increases trust in the collaboration and can be built up over time.[31]

Many of the case study collaborators feel that seeing the project progress and experiencing success along the way is important. One of the Child Safety

Kit collaborators said that maintaining enthusiasm in others when the work is slow is a challenge. The Quamby Youth Detention Centre collaborators were also aware of the need for early success to drive the project forward:

> *The detention centre needs to see the benefits and feel confident to allow the process to move forward. Research like this is outside what is normally seen in a centre like this.*

Survey respondents reported that barriers to collaboration could be made more manageable by celebrating success. Interestingly, respondents in collaborations that crossed all three sectors (research, policy and practice) were almost three times more likely to disagree that they had solved the problem that the collaboration was designed to address, compared to collaborations that involved only one or two sectors. This suggests that the outcomes for collaborative projects involving researchers, policy makers and practitioners are difficult to determine at the beginning of a collaborative research project and require more flexibility to succeed.

Our survey respondents reported that they were successfully achieving collaborative outcomes such as new knowledge, products, services, publications and displays. In particular, the majority (96%) of survey respondents agreed that their collaboration was developing new knowledge and learnings. Those in collaborations across all three sectors (research, policy and practice) were more likely to agree that their work had influenced the work of others at the state level and/or nationally and/or internationally.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Collaboration across research, policy and practice

Collaboration provides the opportunity for learning and creative problem solving. Bringing people from diverse backgrounds together creates a positive environment for transferring knowledge between sectors or organisations, and for generating new ideas and practices. In this context, collaborative projects across the three sectors of research, policy and practice can help solve complex child and youth services problems; create new knowledge; and inform and direct research, practices and policies designed to provide benefits to children and youth. They tend to be more resilient in the face of change, are more likely to influence policy, and are better able to develop longer lasting networks for future collaboration than those projects collaborating across just one or two sectors. They are influencing the work of others on a state, national and international scale.

Both the literature review and survey responses demonstrate that collaboration, whether across organisational boundaries within the same sector or between sectors, has the potential to improve learning and practice. The findings suggest that including partners from all three sectors improves learning and transfer of knowledge. However, single- or dual-sector collaboration is also useful and desirable in generating new thinking. Certainly participants in the Nepean Family Choices collaboration indicated that there were benefits to practice collaboration across several agencies on a regional basis. These sorts of collaboration face many of the same challenges as collaboration across several sectors and should continue to be encouraged.

Collaboration across the three sectors can be difficult due to the differing aims, processes, values and expectations of each sector. As such, it is useful to compare it with single- or dual-sector collaboration to determine the special advantages and needs of collaboration across all three sectors.

The survey had almost equal numbers of respondents collaborating across the three sectors (research, policy and practice) as those collaborating across just one or two sectors. When we compare these two groups, responses indicated that collaborators across three sectors were more likely to be:

- dependent on community support for their goals and outcomes
- dependent on formal collaborative rules within a flexible work structure with good administrative support
- having informal conversations with others in the collaborative team
- dependent on having enough time to try and understand each others' views and practices
- supported by formal mechanisms for encouraging communication
- consulted about decisions that affected them by collaborative leaders who were aware of the 'big picture' and the need for the team to provide input, and were willing to delegate responsibility
- reliant on champions for support
- 'time poor' when it came to providing each other with feedback, but more aware of the need to try and find the time to understand each others' views and practices
- in need of flexibility in determining their project's processes and outcomes.

Key ingredients for successful collaboration

The following key ingredients for successful collaboration are true for all collaboration seeking children and youth outcomes. However, based on our previous discussion, the most important ingredients for successful collaboration across all three sectors are:

- community, organisational and administrative support
- flexibility of project processes and outcomes
- time to communicate and understand each other.

The following key ingredients are provided as a checklist for collaboration success. The ingredients that are most important for collaboration across the three sectors are marked with an asterisk (*).

Project initiation

- Members are supported and rewarded by their own organisations for collaborating.*
- The collaboration team spends time from the beginning in face-to-face communication to better understand and respect each others' needs, objectives, values and processes.*
- The collaboration team has an agreed administrative structure to support its operations, which may be run by an organisation external to the collaboration.*
- The relevant community affected by or involved in the project supports the collaboration.*
- The collaboration is based on a history of previous relationships and networks.
- Members represent a cross-section of those with a stake in the problem or need being addressed.
- The collaboration is addressing a clearly defined problem or need that the community also recognises.
- The collaboration team agrees on overall project goals and outcomes and on an accountability and performance review process.
- There are champions for the collaboration.
- There are agreed processes for resolving conflict.

Project implementation

- The collaboration has organisational and funding agency support for flexibility in approaches and outcomes.*
- The collaboration team has regular formal and informal opportunities to communicate, especially face to face.*
- There are regular training and interaction opportunities to allow partners in the collaboration to share knowledge.*
- There are people ('boundary spanners') in the collaboration team who communicate across sectors and organisations.*
- Members feel they are consulted about decisions that affect them.*
- Collaboration leaders regularly share information with the team and rely on the team for input into decisions. *
- The funding agency(s) recognises the need to invest sufficient funds to maximise face-to-face interactions among the team.*
- Team members have fun working together and enjoy each others' company.
- The key people who initiated the collaboration remain as committed members of the team.
- The needs of individual members and organisations are recognised and met on a continual basis.
- The level of trust between members increases throughout the project.

Project outcomes

- Funding agencies recognise the importance of long-term commitment to collaboration for achieving ongoing outcomes for child and youth services.*
- Early successes and progress towards achieving outcomes are recognised and celebrated.
- The project regularly measures its performance and rewards success.
- Collaborators invest in developing long-term relationships.

Recommendations

Based on our research for this paper, we recommend that ARACY adopts the following three approaches to contribute to an environment that supports cross-sector relationships and collaborations:

1. **Promote a new mindset** that facilitates a greater understanding of the benefits of collaborating across sectors. This could be achieved through:

    a) running cross-sectoral workshops designed to explore key issues of importance to child and youth services
    b) promoting successful cross-sectoral collaboration through ARACY networks
    c) promoting successful case studies of cross-sectoral collaboration through the media.

2. **Lobby for more informed funding** of collaborative projects—funding that recognises the benefits of cross-sectoral collaboration. The funding needs to:

    a) support face-to-face interactions for knowledge sharing, especially at project initiation
    b) be separate from other funding streams to specifically recognise cross-sectoral collaboration
    c) keep administrative and reporting requirements at a reasonable level
    d) recognise the need for cross-sectoral projects to remain flexible in their processes and outcomes
    e) have a long-term vision for supporting cross-sectoral projects for ongoing benefits to child and youth services.

3. **Facilitate training programs and mentoring** for cross-sectoral collaboration that helps these projects incorporate the key ingredients

for success. Training programs are important throughout a cross-sectoral collaboration, from its initiation until its conclusion. A register of people who have been involved in cross-sectoral collaboration and who are willing to mentor others could also be developed and promoted through ARACY networks.

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APPENDIX 1: SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 75 survey respondents, eight were excluded because they did not complete the survey. We excluded one further respondent from the analysis because they did not offer any information about their sector (research, policy or practice) or the type of collaboration they were involved with. The following data analysis is based on the 66 valid respondents.

1.1 Overall population

Size of collaboration

Size	One or two perspectives (n=30)	All three perspectives (n=31)	Total (n=61)
under 10 people	15	9	24
over 10 people	15	22	37

The average size of all the collaborations in this study is 27 people (n=61), with the largest collaboration involving 285 people.

1.2 Could the outcomes be achieved without collaboration?

Achieved without collaboration

Response	One or two perspectives (n=32)	All three perspectives (n=33)	Total (n=65)
Yes	1	0	1
Possibly	5	4	9
Probably not	8	7	15
No	18	22	40

The majority of respondents (85%) believed that the outcomes their collaborations were producing could not be achieved without collaboration. This was true for both groups.

1.3 How are members of the collaboration located?

Location of members

Response	One or two perspectives (n=32)	All three perspectives (n=33)	Total (n=65)
All members are co-located	0	1	1
At least some members are co-located	9	17	26
All members are geographically dispersed	23	15	38

A slight majority of reported collaborations (58%) involved members who were geographically disperse. However, collaborations that involved all three perspectives were almost twice as likely to have a collaboration where at least some of the members are co-located.

1.4 Which of the following best describes the stage where your collaboration is in its lifecycle?

Stage of collaboration

Response	One or two perspectives (n=31)	All three perspectives (n=33)	Total (n=64)
Conceptual	0	2	2
Early	2	3	5
Middle	10	10	20
Outcome	14	16	30
Completed	5	2	7

The majority of respondents (89%) were involved in a collaboration that somewhere between mid-way to completion of its lifecycle. This was the trend for both groups.

1.5 Which of the following best describes the collaboration's funding sources – cash and in-kind? (select all that apply)

Funding sources

Response	One or two perspectives (n=55)	All three perspectives (n=63)	Total (n=117)
State gov't	17	12	29
Federal gov't	12	16	28
Not for profit organisation	11	16	27
Industry/ business	4	6	10
Self-funded	5	6	11
No funding	2	3	5
Not sure	1	1	2
Other (local gov't)	0	2	2
Other (university)	3	0	3

About half of the collaborations reported in the survey received either state or federal funding (at least in part). About a quarter received funding from not-for-profit organisations.

1.6 What is the total budget for the collaboration?

Funding sources

Response	One or two perspectives (n=31)	All three perspectives (n=32)	Total (n=63)
Less than $50,000	12	8	20
$50,000-$200, 000	4	4	8
$201,000-$1M	8	7	15
More than $1M	3	10	13
Not sure	4	3	7

About half of the collaborations in this study had a budget that was less than $200,000. Collaborations that included all three perspectives were slightly more likely to have larger budgets.

1.7 How long is the collaboration expected to run for (or how long did it run for)?

Length of collaboration

Response	One or two perspectives (n=32)	All three perspectives (n=33)	Total (n=65)
Less than 1 year	3	2	5
1-3 years	17	12	29
More than 3 years	6	11	17
Indefinitely	6	8	14

Many (45%) of the collaborations in this study are expected to run for 1-3 years. However, collaborations that included all three perspectives were slightly more likely to have longer term (more than three years) collaborations.

1.8 What are the impacts of the collaboration likely to be (select all that apply)?

Impacts of collaboration

Response	One or two perspectives (n=53)	All three perspectives (n=80)	Total (n=123)
Local	17	24	41
Regional	12	16	28
State-wide	12	18	30
National	7	17	24
International	5	5	10

A third (33%) of the collaborations in this study indicated that their collaboration would have local impacts, followed most closely by state-wide (24%) and regional (23%) impacts. Collaborations that included all three perspectives were more likely to have collaborations with multiple level impacts.

1.9 How were potential collaborative members identified (select all that apply)?

Potential collaborative members identified

Response	One or two perspectives (n=49)	All three perspectives (n=60)	Total (n=111)
Existing networks	28	30	58
Serendipity/ chance	2	6	8
Conference, seminar, workshop	5	7	12
Through my organisation	12	15	27
Not sure	1	1	2
Other	2	2	4

About half (52%) of the respondents indicated that potential collaborative members were identified through existing networks. About a quarter (24%) indicated that potential collaborative members were identified through their organisation. This was the general trend for both groups.

1.10 Which of the following best describes your collaboration?

Description of collaboration

Response	One or two perspectives (n=32)	All three perspectives (n=33)	Total (n=65)
A collection of people and/or organisations with loose, flexible links and independent goals	11	9	20
A team of people with a central hub providing direction and funding for joint planning and implementation	8	10	18

A formal agreement involving new systems and processes and with at least some of the team fully committed to the collaboration	13	14	27

The people in the survey responded with a variety of descriptions about the structure of their collaborations.

1.11 How long have you been part of the collaboration?

Description of collaboration

Response	One or two perspectives (n=32)	All three perspectives (n=33)	Total (n=65)
Since it began	26	28	54
I joined mid-way	6	4	10
I joined towards the end	0	1	1

As reported in another question, the majority (89%) of the people completing this survey are involved in collaborative projects that are mid-way or further into the collaboration. Therefore, it is interesting that most (83%) of the respondents to this question have been in the collaboration since it began. This is the general trend for both groups.

1.12 Have you been involved in other similar collaborations in the past?

Collaborative history

Response	One or two perspectives (n=32)	All three perspectives (n=33)	Total (n=63)
No	11	10	21
A few	10	10	20
Some	8	11	19
Many	3	2	3

Both groups were almost equally as likely to have experience in similar collaborations in the past. However, the survey participants were almost twice as likely to have participated in a similar collaboration before than not.

1.13 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to the environment external to your collaboration?

Environment external to collaboration

Response		Rating				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
People outside the collaboration generally agree that the partners in our collaboration are the right ones to achieve the outcomes we are seeking. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 81%, All three = 78%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	0	5	**11**	**11**
	All three perspectives (n=27)	0	0	6	**16**	**5**
The collaboration has political support for its goals and desired outcomes. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 64%, All three = 74%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	1	3	6	**8**	**10**
	All three perspectives (n=31)	1	1	6	**13**	**10**
The collaboration has community support for its goals and desired outcomes. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 79%, All three = 93%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	1	5	**10**	**13**
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	0	2	**15**	**13**
We have good contacts with experts outside our immediate collaborative team. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 93%, All three = 96%)**	One or two perspectives (n=30)	0	0	2	**11**	**17**
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	1	**18**	**12**

The majority of both groups answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to the statements above. This was true for both groups. The greatest difference between groups occurred for the statement "The collaboration has community support for its goals and outcomes", of which collaborations with all three perspectives were more likely to agree/strongly agree.

1.14 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to the environment within your collaboration.

Environment within collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The partners in our collaboration have a history of working together. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 60%, All three = 58%)**	One or two perspectives (n=30)	2	3	7	11	7
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	10	3	14	4
The leader is the only one who decides how we spend our budget. **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 61%, All three = 81%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	6	13	4	6	2
	All three perspectives (n=31)	5	20	4	0	2
My colleagues stick to their own ideas and methods. **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 58%, All three = 63%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	3	15	7	5	1
	All three perspectives (n=30)	1	18	10	1	0
We work on a problem that others have had great difficulty solving. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 70%, All three = 73%)**	One or two perspectives (n=30)	1	2	6	10	11
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	0	8	15	7

We have formal rules in our collaboration. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 52%, All three = 72%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	2	5	8	11	5
	All three perspectives (n=32)	1	5	3	19	4
If the other people in the collaboration were asked, they would say we have a sense of humour. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 64%, All three = 61%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	2	8	9	9
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	1	11	16	3
We have at least some physical space dedicated to the collaborative project. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 55%, All three = 63%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	0	11	3	12	5
	All three perspectives (n=30)	2	7	2	13	6

People in collaborations with all three perspectives were more likely to disagree with the statement "The leader is the only one who decides how we spend our budget", and more likely to agree with the statement "We have formal rules in our collaboration".

1.15 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to the environment within your *organisation*.

Environment within organisation

Response		**Rating**				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The organisational structure in my workplace is flexible. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 68%, All three = 75%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	2	4	4	12	9
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	5	3	19	5

Our collaborative efforts will influence the strategic directions of my organisation. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 65%, All three = 68%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	2	4	5	14	6
	All three perspectives (n=31)	1	1	8	12	9
In my organisation I am consulted and can participate in decisions that affect me. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 81%, All three = 88%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	3	1	2	15	10
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	4	14	14
People in my organisation collaborate with one another. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 90%, All three = 91%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	0	2	1	14	14
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	1	2	20	9
We receive less recognition of our professional skills and knowledge from our organisation than we do from other entities. **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 52%, All three = 58%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	2	14	4	6	5
	All three perspectives (n=31)	3	15	6	5	2
The lack of administrative support in my organisation makes collaborating difficult. **(Disagree/Strongly agree: One or two = 48%, All three = 63%)**	One or two perspectives (n=31)	3	12	4	6	6
	All three perspectives (n=32)	1	19	3	8	1

A great majority of people in both groups (90%, 91%) agreed with statement "People in my organisation collaborate with each other". People in collaborations with all three perspectives were more likely to disagree with the statement "The lack of administrative support in my organisation makes collaborating difficult".

1.16 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to the purpose of your collaboration.

Purpose of collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Members of our collaboration know and understand our goals. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 93%, All three = 90%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	1	1	14	13
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	3	16	13
No other organisation is trying to do exactly what we are doing in this area or community. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 66%, All three = 71%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	4	5	6	12
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	5	4	8	15
The collaboration is generating new knowledge and learnings that would not have been possible through the work of my organisation alone. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 76%, All three = 96%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	3	4	10	12
	All three perspectives (n=28)	0	0	1	13	14

This collaborative project will influence policy in a way that would not have been possible for a single organisation. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 68%, All three = 82%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	5	4	10	9
	All three perspectives (n=28)	0	0	5	10	13

People involved in collaborations with all three perspectives were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statements "The collaboration is generating new knowledge and learning that would not have been possible through the work of my organisation alone, and "The collaborative project will influence policy in a way that would not have been possible for a single organisation".

1.17 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to the structure and process of your collaboration.

Structure and process of collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Members allocate time to trying to understand each other's views and practices. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 64%, All three = 87%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	1	9	12	6
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	4	23	5
Members have clear roles and responsibilities. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 76%, All three = 63%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	2	5	16	6
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	3	9	14	6

Members prefer to use their own methods and practices in the collaboration. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 50%, All three = 32%)** **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 29%, All three = 29%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	2	6	6	11	3
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	9	12	9	1
There is a clear process for making decisions. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 75%, All three = 78%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	3	4	15	6
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	3	4	22	3
I have a lot of respect for the other members of this collaboration. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 97%, All three = 97%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	1	0	12	16
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	1	18	13
Members represent a cross-section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 89%, All three = 91%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	2	1	14	11
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	3	16	13
The collaboration is likely to fail if the political or social climate changes. **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 48%, All three = 64%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	2	12	4	8	3
	All three perspectives (n=31)	3	17	6	4	1

The collaboration relies heavily on one or two champions. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 59%, All three = 69%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	1	9	2	12	5
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	8	2	17	5
The collaboration has an active monitoring and evaluation program. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 76%, All three = 81%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	1	3	3	15	7
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	2	4	18	7
Members trust each other. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 90%, All three = 93%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	1	2	17	9
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	0	2	21	7

For both groups, over 90% agreed or strongly agreed with the statements "I have a lot of respect for the other members of this collaboration", and "Members trust each other". There was also high agreement by both groups that "Members represent a cross-section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish". People involved in collaborations with one or two perspectives were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement "Members prefer to use their own methods and practices in the collaboration"; however, people involved in collaborations with all three perspectives were almost equally as likely to agree/strongly agree with this statement as they were to disagree/strongly disagree. People from collaborations with all three perspectives were also more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement "Members allocate time to trying to understand each other's views and practices", and disagree or strongly disagree with the statement "The collaboration is likely to fail if the political or social climate changes".

1.18 Please select the type of leadership your collaboration.

Leadership type

Response	One or two perspectives (n=30)	All three perspectives (n=34)	Total (n=64)
There is a lead agency that provides the leadership.	14	10	24
There is a lead agency and a formally designated leader who is not necessarily part of the lead agency.	4	0	4
There is a formal designated leader.	3	4	7
There are several designated leaders.	1	7	8
There is one (or more) formal leader(s).	4	6	10
Everyone takes a leadership role.	2	3	5
There are no leaders.	0	1	1
Other	2	3	5

The most popular type of leadership for both groups is a lead agency that provides the leadership. None of the collaborations that involved all three perspectives were involved in collaborations that had a lead agency and a formally designated leader who is not necessarily part of the lead agency. And collaborations with all three perspectives were more likely to be involved in collaborations with several designated leaders.

1.19 How did the leadership structure develop?

Leadership structure

Response	One or two perspectives (n=29)	All three perspectives (n=31)	Total (n=60)
A lead agency formed the collaboration and automatically assumed leadership.	13	10	23
A leader(s) was appointed.	5	5	10
A leader(s) was elected by members of the collaboration.	1	4	5
A leader(s) emerged from the group.	5	6	11
Leadership rotates between members.	0	1	1
Other	5	5	10

For both groups, the most popular leadership structure was developed by a lead agency that formed the collaboration and automatically assumed leadership.

1.20 Are you a leader in the collaboration?

Leadership type

Response	One or two perspectives (n=29)	All three perspectives (n=32)	Total (n=61)
Yes	23	25	48
No	6	7	13

Most (79%) of the participants of this survey are leaders in the collaborations they are involved with. Therefore, the following set of questions that ask about the leader in their collaboration refers to the self-perceived leadership qualities of the survey participant.

1.21 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to the leader(s) of your collaboration. If you are the leader, please complete for yourself.

Leaders in the collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
They are aware of the 'big picture' and discuss this with the team. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 86%, All three = 100%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	1	3	12	12
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	0	17	14
They are a role model for the rest of the team. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 82%, All three = 70%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	1	0	4	20	3
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	1	8	14	7
They listen to collaborative team members when approached on an issue. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 93%, All three = 97%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	0	2	17	9
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	1	17	13
They facilitate participation in decision making within the team. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 86%, All three = 100%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	2	2	13	11
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	0	19	12

They champion the collaboration to decision makers. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 93%, All three = 97%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	0	2	14	11
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	1	16	14
They tend to view administration, funding and reporting bodies as a waste of time. **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 89%, All three = 87%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	7	18	2	0	1
	All three perspectives (n=30)	8	18	0	3	1
They do not have the authority or resources to improve the team's working environment. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 30%, All three = 43%)** **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 48%, All three = 43%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	4	9	6	6	2
	All three perspectives (n=30)	2	11	4	10	3
They delegate responsibility appropriately to team members. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 86%, All three = 93%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	0	4	15	9
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	0	2	24	4

For both groups, over 90% agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about leaders: "They listen to collaborative team members when approached on an issue" and "They champion the collaboration to decision makers". And while 86% of people in collaboration with one or two perspectives agreed or strongly agreed "They are aware of the 'big picture' and discuss this with the team" and "They facilitate participation in decision making within the team", 100% of people from collaborations with all three perspectives agreed or strongly agreed. People in collaborations with all three perspectives were equally as likely to agree/strongly agree as they were to disagree/strongly disagree that "[Leaders] do not have the

authority or resources to improve the team's working environment", whereas people from collaborations with one or two perspectives were more likely to disagree with this statement.

1.22 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to communication in your collaboration.

Communication in collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Some members of the collaboration facilitate communication across the partners. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 93%, All three = 94%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	0	2	18	8
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	2	21	8
We discuss our ideas with those likely to be interested and / or affected by our collaboration's outcomes. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 97%, All three = 91%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	0	1	16	12
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	3	22	7
We openly discuss with each other how to achieve our goals. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 90%, All three = 97%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	2	1	15	11
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	2	20	10

I am consulted about decisions that are likely to affect me. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 79%, All three = 97%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	1	5	16	7
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	1	22	8
We do not have time to provide each other with feedback. **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 62%, All three = 84%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	3	15	7	2	2
	All three perspectives (n=32)	3	24	3	1	1
Members of the collaboration tend to have their specific terminology and ways of doing things. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 54%, All three = 48%)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	2	4	7	12	3
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	9	7	14	1
I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 90%, All three = 91%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	1	2	19	7
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	3	23	6
I have informal conversations about the project with others on the team	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	2	1	15	11

	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	0	22	9
There are formal mechanisms to encourage communication within the collaboration. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 66%, All three = 88%)**	One or two perspectives (n=29)	0	6	4	11	8
	All three perspectives (n=32)	0	0	4	22	6

For both groups, 90% or more agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about communication in their collaborations: "Some members of the collaboration facilitate communication across the partners", "We discuss our ideas with those likely to be interested and / or affected by our collaboration's outcomes", "We openly discuss with each other how to achieve our goals", "I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration", and "I have informal conversations about the project with others on the team." (100% people from collaborative groups with all three perspectives agreed/strongly agreed with this last statement). People from collaborative groups with one or two perspectives were less likely to agree/strongly agree with the statements "There are formal mechanisms to encourage communication within the collaboration" and "I am consulted about decisions that are likely to affect me". People from collaborative groups with all three perspectives are more likely to disagree/strongly disagree with the statement "We do not have time to provide each other with feedback".

1.23 Some features of collaboration can challenge a project's success. Please rate the severity of the following challenges as they relate to your collaboration.

Challenges in collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Not a problem 1	2	3	4	Very difficult 5
Having to operate outside my comfort zone **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.2, All three = 1.8)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	9	10	5	3	1
	All three perspectives (n=31)	14	12	2	2	1

Competing priorities of workloads and commitments **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.6, All three = 3.7)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	2	5	4	8	9
	All three perspectives (n=30)	1	4	7	10	8
Publishing collaborative work **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.6, All three = 2.5)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	6	9	5	4	3
	All three perspectives (n=27)	8	6	7	4	2
Attrition and initiating new members into the team **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.5, All three = 2.6)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	5	11	7	0	4
	All three perspectives (n=30)	6	9	8	5	2
Managing conflict **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.3, All three = 2.4)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	7	10	8	3	0
	All three perspectives (n=31)	5	15	5	6	0
Managing differences in expectations **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.4, All three = 2.9)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	6	8	11	3	0
	All three perspectives (n=31)	2	9	9	11	0
Lack of commitment within the team **(Weighted Average One or two = 1.7, All three = 1.8)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	16	6	5	1	0
	All three perspectives (n=30)	15	8	5	1	1

Reporting requirements of funding bodies **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.9, All three = 2.7)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	5	7	4	10	2
	All three perspectives (n=30)	8	7	4	7	4
Having to mould ideas to fit government priorities **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.8, All three = 2.9)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	6	4	11	5	2
	All three perspectives (n=30)	6	7	7	3	7
Involving those likely to be interested or affected by the outcomes **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.5, All three = 2.4)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	6	9	8	3	2
	All three perspectives (n=31)	7	11	9	3	1
Time required to make the collaboration work **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.6, All three = 3.2)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	1	5	9	3	10
	All three perspectives (n=30)	2	5	9	12	2
Inequality within the team **(Weighted Average One or two = 1.9, All three = 2)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	10	13	3	2	0
	All three perspectives (n=31)	13	10	3	5	0
Lack of resources **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.2,**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	2	7	7	7	5

	All three perspectives (n=31)	1	9	7	8	6
Differences in professional approaches and practices **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.4, All three = 2.7)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	6	10	7	5	0
	All three perspectives (n=30)	5	9	9	4	3
Geographical distances between members of the collaboration **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.4, All three = 2.4)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	9	6	5	5	2
	All three perspectives (n=31)	9	8	8	4	2

The top three most challenging issues for both groups were (one or two, all three):

- Competing priorities of workloads and commitments (3.6, 3.7)
- Time required to make the collaboration work (3.6, 3.2)
- Lack of resources (3.2, 3.3)

Note that for collaborations with one or two perspectives, competing priorities and time required were rated equally as difficult, whereas for collaborations with all three perspectives competing priorities was the main concern and time required rated slightly lower than lack of resources.

The challenges that were rated the least challenging were (one or two, all three):

- Lack of commitment within the team (1.7,1.8)
- Inequality within the team (1.9, 2)
- Having to operate outside my comfort zone (2.2, 1.8)

1.24 What, if anything, has helped to make the barriers to collaboration more manageable

This question was open ended. Below is a summary of the main points that were offered by the 51 survey respondents who answered this question:

- Clear, open and regular communication between collaborators through email contact and face-to-face meetings
- A joint vision/common goal

- Commitment, goodwill, patience, persistence and flexibility of the partners
- Respect for other collaborative partners
- Clear expectations
- Good support in terms of resources, dedicated staff and non-governmental funding (governmental=heavy reporting)
- Recognition of contributions through celebrations of success and sharing of workload
- Support and perspective from neutral third parties (sometimes project managers)s
- Sense of humour and sociability of partners

1.25 Some features of collaboration can help a project succeed. Please rate the importance of the following features to the success of your collaboration.

Success factors in collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Not important 1	2	3	4	Essential 5
Experiencing early success in the project's life cycle **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.4, All three = 3.7)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	2	1	11	11	3
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	2	10	14	5
The right mix of skills and personality **(Weighted Average One or two = 4.0, All three = 4.3)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	1	0	6	12	9
	All three perspectives (n=29)	0	1	2	13	13
The expectation of future collaboration with members of the collaboration **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.7, All three = 3.5)**	One or two perspectives (n=26)	3	1	4	10	8
	All three perspectives (n=29)	1	4	7	13	4

Understanding the different beliefs, culture and practices of the research, policy and practice partners involved in the collaboration **(Weighted Average One or two = 4.0, All three = 4.3)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	0	2	5	11	10
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	2	5	6	17
Having a common purpose or goal **(Weighted Average One or two = 4.7, All three = 4.7)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	0	0	7	20
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	0	1	8	21
A flat organisational structure with little or limited hierarchy **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.3, All three = 3.4)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	1	7	6	10	3
	All three perspectives (n=29)	0	7	7	11	4
Respecting and trusting the members of the team **(Weighted Average One or two = 4.5, All three = 4.7)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	0	3	8	16
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	2	6	23
Individual members of the collaboration being accountable for their contribution to the project **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.8, All three = 4.3)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	1	9	12	5
	All three perspectives (n=31)	0	0	3	17	11
Training in how to collaborate **(Weighted Average**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	2	5	13	4	3

	All three perspectives (n=30)	4	6	9	7	4
Large project teams **(Weighted Average One or two = 1.8, All three = 1.9)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	11	11	4	1	0
	All three perspectives (n=27)	11	9	7	0	0
Mentoring of members **(Weighted Average One or two = 3.4, All three = 3.7)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	1	5	8	9	5
	All three perspectives (n=29)	1	3	6	14	5
Co-location of team members **(Weighted Average One or two = 2.1, All three = 2.4)**	One or two perspectives (n=28)	10	8	8	2	0
	All three perspectives (n=31)	5	13	9	4	0

For both groups, the top rated features that help a collaboration succeed were (one or two, all three):

- Having a common purpose or goal (4.7, 4.7) - Essential
- Respecting and trusting members of the team (4.5, 4.7) - Essential
- The right mix of skills and personality (4.0, 4.3)
- Understanding the different beliefs, culture and practices of the research, policy and practice partners involved in the collaboration (4.0, 4.3)
- Individual members of the collaboration being accountable for their contribution to the project (3.8, 4.3)

Note that for collaborations with all three perspectives, having a common purpose or goal and respecting and trusting members of the team were equally important and rated the most important, whereas for collaborations with one or two perspectives, respecting and trusting members of the team was rated slightly lower than having a common purpose or goal.

The lowest rated features were (one or two, all three):

- Large project teams (1.8,1.9)
- Co-location of team members (2.1, 2.4)

1.26 The success of collaborative projects can be measured in many ways. Please rate your level of agreement with the following outcomes for your collaboration.

Success factors in collaboration

Response		**Rating**				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
We have assembled an appropriate mix of research, policy and practice collaborators that work well together. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 67%, All three = 79%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	3	6	12	6
	All three perspectives (n=29)	0	0	6	17	6
We have developed innovative solutions. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 85%, All three = 90%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	2	2	12	11
	All three perspectives (n=29)	0	0	3	15	11
We are producing outcomes such as new knowledge, products, services, publications or displays. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 93%, All three = 87%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	1	1	12	13
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	0	4	14	12
The collaboration has developed/is developing new knowledge and	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	1	0	14	12

	All three perspectives (n=29)	0	0	1	14	14
Our project is valued by policy makers. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 60%, All three = 63%)**	One or two perspectives (n=25)	1	2	7	9	6
	All three perspectives (n=27)	0	1	9	10	7
We have solved the problem that the collaboration was designed to address. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 50%, All three = 35%)** **(Disagree/Strongly disagree: One or two = 12%, All three = 31%)**	One or two perspectives (n=26)	1	2	10	10	3
	All three perspectives (n=26)	3	5	9	7	2
Our work has engaged the affected communities. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 88%, All three = 79%)**	One or two perspectives (n=26)	0	1	2	13	10
	All three perspectives (n=29)	0	1	5	12	11
Our work has influenced the work of others in our state, nationally and/or internationally. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 52%, All three = 67%)**	One or two perspectives (n=25)	0	1	11	10	3
	All three perspectives (n=27)	0	1	8	12	6

We have developed an extensive network that will help future collaborative projects. **(Agree/Strongly agree: One or two = 78%, All three = 87%)**	One or two perspectives (n=27)	0	2	4	14	7
	All three perspectives (n=30)	0	0	4	15	11

For both groups, a great majority (96%) of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "The collaboration has developed/is developing new knowledge and learning". There was also high agreement for both groups for statements "We are producing outcomes such as new knowledge, products, services, publications or displays" and "We have developed innovative solutions). Interestingly, people in collaborations with all three perspectives were almost three times as likely to disagree/strongly disagree that they had solved the problem that the collaboration was designed to address. However, people in collaborations were more likely to agree that their work has influenced the work of others in their state, nationally and/or internationally.

1.27 How has this collaboration helped you accomplish your goals?

This question was open ended. Below is a summary of the main points that were offered by the 39 survey respondents who answered this question:

- The outcomes could not be achieved without collaboration
- Greater impact of outcomes
- Wider reach of impacts
- More efficient use of skills and resources, and attracting resources
- Access to and involvement of experts
- Strengthened the understanding of key issues – a more holistic approach through different perspectives and levels of expertise
- Greater relevancy
- More innovative solutions
- Resilience - focus on long-term continuous improvement, not just accomplishing goals.

APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDIES

KidsMatter: Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative

Researchers, policymakers and practitioners have worked together to create the first national mental health promotion and early intervention initiative. The initiative, KidsMatter was specifically developed in partnership with Health and Education for Australian primary schools.

A team based at Flinders University has been engaged to undertake the evaluation of the KidsMatter trial. The evaluation will provide information about the implementation process and whether KidsMatter leads to improved mental health for students.

One hundred and one primary schools across Australia, representing a broad cross-section of government, catholic and independent schools (both metropolitan and non-metropolitan) are taking part in the initial evaluation which commenced in September 2006.

Collaboration stage

Collaboration began during the second half of 2006 and consists of two stages. Stage 1 is late 2006 to end of 2008. Stage 2 will make KidsMatter available nationally and will commence after evaluation of Stage 1 is complete.

Funding

The initiative is the result of collaboration among the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council, the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 'beyondblue': the national depression initiative and support from the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund

All partners bring funding and in-kind contributions to the project.

Partners

The project's partners are:

- Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- beyondblue: the national depression initiative
- Australian Psychological Society
- Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council (APAPDC)
- Flinders University are evaluating the process

Outcomes

The project seeks the following outcomes:

- improved mental health and wellbeing of primary school students
- reduced mental health problems among students (e.g. anxiety, depression and behavioural problems)
- greater support and assistance for students at risk or experiencing mental health problems

Background

Schools have a significant influence on students' emotional, social and behavioural development. There is a growing understanding that the primary school years represent a significant opportunity for promoting mental health, and for preventing and intervening early in children's mental health problems.

Students who are mentally healthy learn better; have better relationships with teachers, family members and peers; and are more resilient in meeting life's challenges. They are better placed to successfully negotiate the transition into adolescence and adulthood. They are less likely to exhibit serious mental

health problems and health risk behaviours. And they have a greater capacity to achieve long-term education and career goals.

On the other hand, mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and behavioural disorders significantly compromise the quality of life of young people, diminishing their capacity for schooling, building relationships and participating in the community. Mental health problems are appearing earlier, and are more persistent, complex and damaging.

'Schools have a profound influence on children, their families and the community. Young people's ability and motivation to stay in school to learn and utilise what they learn is affected by their mental health. Schools are crucial in building or undermining self-esteem and a sense of confidence.' (World Health Organisation 1995).

What is the theory behind the KidsMatter initiative?

The KidsMatter initiative is aiming to strengthen those factors that protect students from developing mental health problems. Some of these factors reside within the student (e.g. being socially and emotionally competent), some occur within the school context (e.g. having a school climate where students feel safe, feel they belong, and have opportunities to experience success), and some reside within the family context (e.g. having supportive and caring relationships with parent/s, family and community). It is particularly important to strengthen these protective factors in students who are at risk or who are experiencing mental health problems.

We know that:

- Protective factors for student mental health can be improved.
- Early signs of mental health problems can be detected in young children.
- Mental health problems are easier to treat (and more effectively treated) at an earlier age before problems become entrenched.

To improve the mental health and wellbeing of their students, KidsMatter schools will focus on four components in Stage 1:

1. A positive school community

   Schools identify how they can improve their school climate to support student mental health and wellbeing, giving particular emphasis to ensuring that students, staff and parents feel 'connected' to each other and to the broader school community.

2. Social and emotional learning for students

   Students receive a social and emotional curriculum using evidence-based programs to improve their self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and their capacity for responsible decision making.

3. Parenting education and support

   Parents and families have opportunities to access information on child development and parenting, and to engage with other parents and families.

4. Early intervention for students at risk or experiencing mental health problems

   School staff and parents receive information on strategies to support and help children at risk of, or experiencing, mental health problems. This includes information on detecting signs of mental health problems in young children, information on local service providers and how to access evidence-based programs and interventions.

Why collaborate?

Time, resources and expertise in the area of mental health is not readily available to school leadership and staff but they recognise that mental health is a requirement for learning – therefore health and education have to work together. The collaborative team members come from very different knowledge bases and environments. These groups sometimes don't have the

processes, means or understanding how to get organisations in to work with us. This collaboration has enabled these groups to work together.

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Delfin Lend Lease Child Safety Kit

The recently-developed child safety kit, now being rolled out across the nation, would not have been possible without collaboration between the Queensland Safe Communities Support Centre and Delfin Lend Lease. The kit and accompanying workshop was developed to support young families and keep them safe from injury.

Based on emergency data collected from 15 Queensland hospitals by the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit (a collaborator in the Safe Communities Initiative) and established intervention methods, the kit is aimed at anyone interested in the safety of children from 0–5 years of age. It contains a

facilitators section that can be used by community workers, nurse educators and parenting groups; a wide range of activities that can be used across all injury topics; and evaluation forms for both the facilitator and workshop participants.

The kit also includes information on injury topics such as burns, poisons, falls, drownings and driveway run-overs. This includes statistics, prevention messages and some useful audits and lists of what to buy, how to assess the dangers, and, most importantly, what changes can be made by families from a behavioural and environmental perspective.

Collaboration stage

Safer Communities have developed an MOU for two years with Delfin Land Lease to conduct the project. They have also signed statement of intent so that the collaboration can have a broader application. For example, the group is looking at the potential for two further projects: injuries and older people and injuries in the workplace

Funding

The Queensland Safe communities Support Centre received $50 000 seed funding from Brisbane's Mater Children's Hospital. Queensland Health supports a position in the team for one day per week. The remaining funds are raised through sponsorship and events. .

Partners

The project's partners are:

- Delfin Lend Lease
- Queensland Safe Communities Support Centre

Partners in the Safe Communities Support Centre initiatives have included:

- Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit, Mater Children's Hospital
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Department of Communities
- Queensland Department of Emergency Services
- Queensland Department of Local Government and Planning
- Queensland Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading
- Townsville/Thuringowa Safe communities
- Citysafe Townsville
- Gallagher Bassett
- Blaze Consulting
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- D&D Technologies

Outcomes

The Child Safety Kit has been rolled out in all of the states, with particular emphasis on Queensland.

Background

Delfin Lend Lease (DLL) communities cater for many young families. The company is currently creating 23 masterplanned communities across Australia which upon completion, will be home to in excess of 150,000 people. In keeping with the company's Incident & Injury Free philosophy, DLL aims to further develop a safe culture in their communities, with its own community safety workers offering educational seminars and information to the residents. DLL sees this CSK not only as an education opportunity but also as an opportunity to be corporate leaders. While its focus is construction, its philosophy is to look after people from construction right though to living in their communities.

The project is one of many supported by the QSCSC Initiatives.

The QSCSC advocates a Safe Communities Program in Queensland guided by the World Health Organisation's Indicators for Safe Communities—it believes an evidence-based approach is the best way to ensure sustainable change. The WHO Safe Communities Program is designed to produce measurable outcomes that are important for individual communities. Individual Queensland communities have embraced the WHO model and government departments are working more toward this multi-agency, collaborative approach.

The initiative promotes injury prevention and a culture of safety by sharing information about what works and what doesn't. This can vary from community to community. There is vast experience with injury prevention and safety in Queensland and this CSK initiative will help to make it available to new and emerging communities. Members of Safe Communities groups share with other communities about the successes and challenges of established Safe Communities, share the resources that other communities have access to and showcase their innovative safety programs.

Why collaborate?

The Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit had all the injury data needed for the project to be based on sound research—what injuries are happening, how they are happening and what preventative strategies can be used. Policy makers and practitioners were shocked at the preventable injuries occurring. Delfin Lend Lease recognised this expertise and, with its networks and resources, had the ability to roll out the child safety kit across the country.

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Supporting Outcomes for Young People at Quamby Youth Detention Centre

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners are working to understand the ways in which young people are supported before, during and after their incarceration at Quamby Youth Detention Centre (Quamby) and ways in which they may be better supported to achieve positive outcomes. The broad research question is: How well does the case management model facilitate positive outcomes for young people?

The model for collaboration is a Research Reference Group of broader interests and an internal Steering Committee made up of members of the Quamby, the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services' Office for Children, Youth and Family Support and the Institute for Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University (ACU)

Collaboration stage

Underway. This 18 month project has been going for 8 months.

Funding

ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services' Office for Children, Youth and Family Support have provided cash and in-kind support for the project. A project officer from the Department is employed on the project for 2 days per week.

Partners

The internal project Steering Committee is made up of members of:

- Institute for Child Protection Studies, ACU
- Quamby Youth Detention Centre

- ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services' Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

The Research Reference Group represents around 20 services including members of juvenile justice authorities, housing workers, education staff, child protections teams and the ACT community section (government and non-government). This group meets every three months.

Outcomes

A clear piece of research to inform practice from transition as well as a strategy to disseminate this research, making it accessible for policy makers and practitioners.

Background

Over the past three decades, much of Australia's juvenile justice policy has attempted to divert young people away from the criminal justice system and to reduce the numbers of young people who receive custodial sentences. Although this has merit, it has been recognised that this focus has failed to respond to the needs of the small number of young people who are committed to secure care facilities for a period of time (Keys Young Pty Ltd 1997).

Young people who enter facilities such as Quamby Youth Detention Centre (Quamby) have a broad range of needs. It has been shown that the way in which these needs are met while in custody and post-release significantly impact on how well the young person will cope with life on the outside and whether or not they will re-offend (Guilfoyle 1995).

The project will:

- identify the needs of young people incarcerated at Quamby

- identify the current range of services and support (particularly, but not limited to case management) provided by Quamby to these young people, during and after their incarceration
- identify the current range of services and supports provided by Community Youth Justice and other government and non-government services before, during and after the young person's incarceration at Quamby
- assess how effectively these services are meeting the needs of young people at each of these key service points
- identify significant issues that may act to minimise service effectiveness, particularly around case planning, collaborative practice, continuity of care and supports during transition and to identify strategies to respond to these issues and improve practice.

Why collaborate?

This is a sensitive area of work. This project is the result of an accumulation of trust and credibility that has built up between the partners over 20 years. The collaboration helps to resolve some of the access issues for researchers that would make conducting this project very difficult. The Institute for Child Protection Studies works with practitioners on research that is meaningful, helping them to use evidence so that they are critical consumers of the research.

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Nepean Brighter Futures Early Intervention Collaboration

More than 30 small to medium sized family support and child care services, based in the Nepean region west of Sydney, are developing new services, within the Brighter Futures model, that will preserve and support families and reduce the numbers of children and young people being taken into care.
This cross-agency collaboration is supporting and sustaining local grass-roots organisations, ensuring that services are locally relevant and contributing to community development.

Collaboration stage

The collaborative project first formed in 2005 as a consortium to seek funding to provide new services for vulnerable families under the Department of Community Services Brighter Futures program.

Funding

The collaborative project is funded by the NSW Department of Community Services.

Partners

The project's partners are:

- Wesley Mission

- Nepean Adolescent and Family Counselling (a local service of Wesley Mission)
- Blue Mountains Consortium represented by Connect Child and Family Services
- Hawksbury Right Connections Consortium represented by Hawksbury City Council
- Bridging the Gap, Sydney West
- South Penrith Youth and Neighbourhood Services
- Nepean Youth Accommodation Service
- Werrington Community Project

Outcomes

The collaborative project provides case management, home visiting, parenting programs, and child care for families with a child up to five years of age, where there are specific factors that would put the child at risk of neglect, exposure to family violence, or abuse.

Background

This collaborative project is made up of practice agencies, with a Lead Agency that is able to provide research support services to the project through its in-house research unit. The funding body has entered into a separate partnership with the University of NSW for the evaluation of the service model. For this reason, no funding has been made available to support the inclusion of research partners in the local collaborations.

The collaborative project is made up of two well established regional collaborations, each with representing a large number of small agencies, and a group of 5 additional agencies previously linked informally through service delivery relationships but not working collaboratively.

An interesting feature of this collaboration has been the bonding of these five agencies into a new collaboration within the bigger collaborative group so

that, for ongoing management purposes, this is now a collaboration between three regional consortia plus a lead agency.

The collaborative project has come through distinct stages in development:

- The formation of three separate groups competing for funds in 2004-5
- The amalgamation of these groups into one group with a common purpose in 2005
- The strengthening of individual groups and the impact this has had on the emerging management structure in 2006
- Collaboration for on-going service delivery in 2007

The Collaboration is supported by a full time Partnership Manager who provides a facilitative leadership role, and takes responsibility for financial and compliance management.

Brighter Futures is a voluntary targeted program designed for families encountering problems that impact on their ability to care for their children. The Program provides families with the necessary support and services to help prevent an escalation of the problems they are facing.

Brighter Futures not only aims to prevent the onset of future problems, such as child abuse and neglect, or emotional and behavioural problems, but also to promote the necessary conditions for a child's healthy development.

Brighter Futures aims to achieve 3 outcomes:

- To promote healthy development in children
- To promote strong, functional, and well-supported families, and
- To reduce and prevent child abuse and neglect in participating families.

Brighter Futures is for families who are expecting a child or have children up to and including 8 years of age (at least one child must be 8 years or younger or

the family will not be eligible). Priority of access will be given to families with children less than 3 years of age.

Why collaborate?

In theory, it would be possible for a single agency to deliver these services throughout the region. However, there was no single agency in the region with the infrastructure in place to deliver these services, and the broad geographic area and diversity of the local communities would have presented very significant difficulties. Collaboration to enhance smaller organisations that were already well established in their areas was seen as the most effective approach.

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Interview/focus group questions used with case studies

1. How would you describe the collaboration?

2. Why is collaboration between research, policy and practice a good thing?
3. What does "collaboration" mean to you?
4. Research, practice and policy can be involved in providing services to children and youth; Approximately how many people are involved in your collaboration from each of these sectors?
5. What did these partners bring to the collaboration that was unique? Policy? Research? Practice?
6. If you didn't you include people from these groups, why not?
7. Who were the people that got the project off the ground?
8. Has your collaboration been successful so far? If so why? What are the key factors? If not, why not?
9. What has kept the collaboration going?
10. What are the major benefits of the collaboration?
11. What about the major costs involved in collaborating?
12. Has anything surprised you about the collaboration?
13. Is there are particular incident or practice that you could share that demonstrates how this collaboration works?
14. Are there any factors that help encourage your collaboration?
15. What about things that discourage the collaboration?
16. What were the major challenges to collaboration in this project? Policy? Research? Practice?
17. Has anything in particular helped to make the barriers to collaboration more manageable? How have you overcome challenges?
18. What have you learned, or what has changed, because of your participation in this collaboration?
19. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered so far?