REACH 2012 Coalition Building
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Overview

- Concepts and Terminology
- Rationale, Advantages and Challenges
- Steps in Forming a Coalition
What is a coalition?

“A coalition is a union of people and organizations working to influence outcomes on a specific problem.”

Coalitions can aid in accomplishing a broad range of goals that reach beyond the capacity of any individual member organization.

These goals can range from information sharing to coordination of services, from community education to advocacy for major environmental or policy (regulatory) changes.

Other Collaborative Organizations

- Advisory Committees
- Commissions
- Consortia and Alliances
- Networks
- Task Forces
Roles within Coalitions

- Chairperson
- Facilitator
- Individual Member
- Lead Agency
- Member Organization
- Representatives
- Staffing
- Steering Committee
Why are coalitions necessary?

- No single group acting alone can accomplish the many tasks required for changing the social, economic and environmental conditions that impact health.
  - Pool and leverage resources to maximize the impact of your efforts
  - Increase community understanding of community needs and maximize community assets
  - Promote community-wide change through coordination and diversity of participants
  - Create a sustainable impact and change

References:
Strengths of a Partnership (or Coalition)

- A partnership can bring/offer:
  - opportunities for co-learning and active participation
  - shared risks and benefits
  - shared accountability
  - an ability to adequately respond to the community’s changing needs

Advantages of Coalitions

- Coalitions have greater credibility than individual organizations.
- Coalitions provide a forum for sharing information.
- Coalitions provide a range of advice and perspectives to the lead agency.
- Coalitions foster personal satisfaction and help members to understand their jobs in a broader perspective.
- Coalitions can foster cooperation between grassroots organizations, community members, and/or diverse sectors of a large organization.
Challenges of Coalitions

Partnerships can be challenging because of:

- differences in or changes in beliefs, experiences, cultures, languages, interests, political or personal agendas and partners
- the inability to communicate with, engage and motivate partners
- fluctuating or limited resources and influence in the broader community
- limited commitment, availability, expertise or skills
- a lack of effective leadership or trust among partners
Join or Form a Coalition?

Benefits of joining an existing coalition:

- May be easier than your UIHO being the lead organization
- Networking opportunity to learn what’s happening in the city/community
- Opportunity to “recharge your batteries” hearing new ideas and meeting new people
- May help you identify what is currently being done in your community and build on existing efforts
- Will likely increase available resources in a more timely fashion
Challenges in Joining an Existing Coalition

- UIHO needs may be secondary concern of the existing coalition (option is to spin off a smaller workgroup)
- Existing coalition may be more of an information sharing group rather than proactive change agent in the community
Benefits of Forming a Coalition

- Will promote understanding and awareness of urban Indian issues
- Will create a network of supporters
- You can recruit the people you want on the coalition
- Will increase the impact of your organization’s work to strategically plan communitywide initiatives
- Will allow a strong focus on UIHO needs and concerns
- May result in the partner organizations interacting with each other in new ways and with different levels of shared resources and responsibilities
Challenges in Forming a Coalition

- Takes energy, time, commitment to plan and implement a coalition
- Demands support from UIHO leadership
- Competition or turf issues
Step 2: Assembling a Community Team or Coalition

- Starts the commitment phase of the community change process
- Representation from diverse sectors is key
- All members of the community team should play an active role
  - Particularly in the community assessment to ensure equitable access to and informed knowledge to help solidify his/her support
Recruit the Right People

- Consider the makeup of the community team (10-12 individuals maximum is desirable to ensure the size is manageable and to account for attrition of members).

- Include key decision-makers — the CEO of a work site or the superintendent of the school board—to diversify the team and utilize the skill sets of all involved.
Recruit the Right People

- Include representatives of all identified stakeholder groups; community representation is key.
- When focusing on policy, consider talking with high-level decision-makers.
Recruit the Right People

Who to include:

- People who experience health inequities in the community and their family members
- People who are committed to the community or to improving conditions in the community
- Multiple sectors (e.g., policymakers, transportation, city planning, health care) of your community
- Perceived adversaries and/or those not supportive of past efforts
Possible Team Members
Step 3: Devise a set of preliminary objectives and activities for the coalition

- Set the tone by defining the purpose of the team.
  - A written mission statement may be useful in clarifying the purpose of the coalition.

- Merge and combine the objectives of the member groups to maximize the benefits of the coalition to member organizations.
Step 3: Preliminary coalition objectives and activities

- Ensure that activities focus on policy, systems, and environmental change.
  - Prioritize objectives and activities from your work plan.
- Define the community capacity of the team and identify potential barriers to success.
Step 4: Convene the coalition

- Hold a meeting of potential members.
- Arrive at the first meeting with a strong proposal for the coalition’s structure, including its mission and membership.
Step 5: Anticipate the necessary resources

- Your UIHO as the lead agency will provide the majority of the staff time.

  - **CLERICAL**: Mailings, typing minutes and agendas, making reminder calls, photocopying
  - **MEETINGS**: Planning agendas, taking minutes, locating and preparing the meeting site, planning facilitation, coordinating with the coalition’s chairperson or steering committee, providing refreshments
  - **MEMBERSHIP**: Recruitment, orientation, ongoing contact, support, and encouragement
Anticipate the Resources

- **UIHO Staff Time:**
  - RESEARCH AND FACT GATHERING: Data collection, process and outcome evaluation
  - PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION: Development of materials, press releases, linkages to local reporters
  - COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES: Special coalition events, media campaigns, joint projects

- Substantial time commitments are required of the coalition members as well.
- Divide the labor.
Step 6: Define elements of a successful coalition structure

- Coalition life expectancy
- Meeting location, frequency, and length
- Membership parameters
- Decision making processes
- Meeting agendas
- Participation between meetings
Step 7: Maintain coalition vitality

- Address coalition difficulties (e.g., a decline in membership)
- Sharing power and leadership
- Recruiting and involving new members
- Promoting renewal by providing training and by bringing challenging and exciting new issues to the group
- Celebrating and sharing successes.
Step 8: Make improvements through evaluation

- Measures may include:
  - Representation
    - Sectorial
    - Member diversity
    - Community representation
  - Skills and experience
  - Participation
  - Satisfaction
  - Leadership

- We will develop a plan with you!
Additional Considerations

- Formalize rules, roles, procedures, and responsibilities (e.g., bylaws, standard operating procedures, goals and objectives, memoranda of understanding).

- Raise community awareness of the team and the issues it is addressing.
Additional Considerations

- Generate additional funds to support the community team.

- Community teams must provide benefits (e.g., solidarity, appreciation, evidence of impact) that exceed costs (e.g., time, frustration) to sustain membership and momentum.

- Assign tasks based on skills and available resources.
Essential Leadership Roles

- Gather the right mix of perspectives and help turn the group into a team
- Ensure the focus is on results (not activities)
- Help the group move through creative tensions
- Continue to assess what is needed and match with meaningful roles for team members
- Establish strategies and conditions that support sustainability
REACH Keys to Success

- **TRUST**: Build a culture of collaboration with communities based on trust

- **EMPOWERMENT**: Equip individuals and communities with the knowledge and tools necessary to create change by seeking and demanding better health and building on the resources and capacities that exist within the community

- **CULTURE & HISTORY**: Design health initiatives that acknowledge and are based on the unique historical and cultural context of racial and ethnic minority communities in the U.S.
REACH Keys to Success

- **FOCUS**: Assess and concentrate on the underlying causes of poor community health and implement solutions that will remain embedded in the community’s infrastructure.

- **COMMUNITY INVESTMENT & EXPERTISE**: Recognize and invest in local community expertise and motivate communities to mobilize and organize their resources.

- **TRUSTED ORGANIZATIONS**: Embrace and enlist valued community organizations, including those whose primary mission is something other than health.
REACH Keys to Success

- **COMMUNITY LEADERS**: Activate leaders and key organizations that are catalysts for change within their communities.

- **OWNERSHIP**: Develop a collective outlook that promotes shared interest in a healthy future through wide-spread community engagement and leadership.

- **SUSTAINABILITY**: Focus on changes to organizations, community environments and policies so that health improvements will be long-lived and make plans for self-sufficiency of coalition activities and programs.

- **HOPE**: Foster optimism, pride and a promising vision for a healthier future.
Questions?

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Vision and Mission

What is a vision?
- A statement that captures the desired end state of your partnership and describes future direction and long-term focus

What is a mission?
- A statement that captures the enduring focus of your partnership — why your partnership exists and what needs it fulfills in your community

Goals and Objectives

What are goals and objectives?

- Goals are long-term outcomes that you hope to achieve (e.g., to decrease the number of new cases of diabetes in the community).

- Objectives are concise time- and action-specific measurable statements that describe how a goal will be reached (e.g., within 1 year, increase awareness of social determinants of diabetes; within 3 years, increase access to affordable, healthy foods).