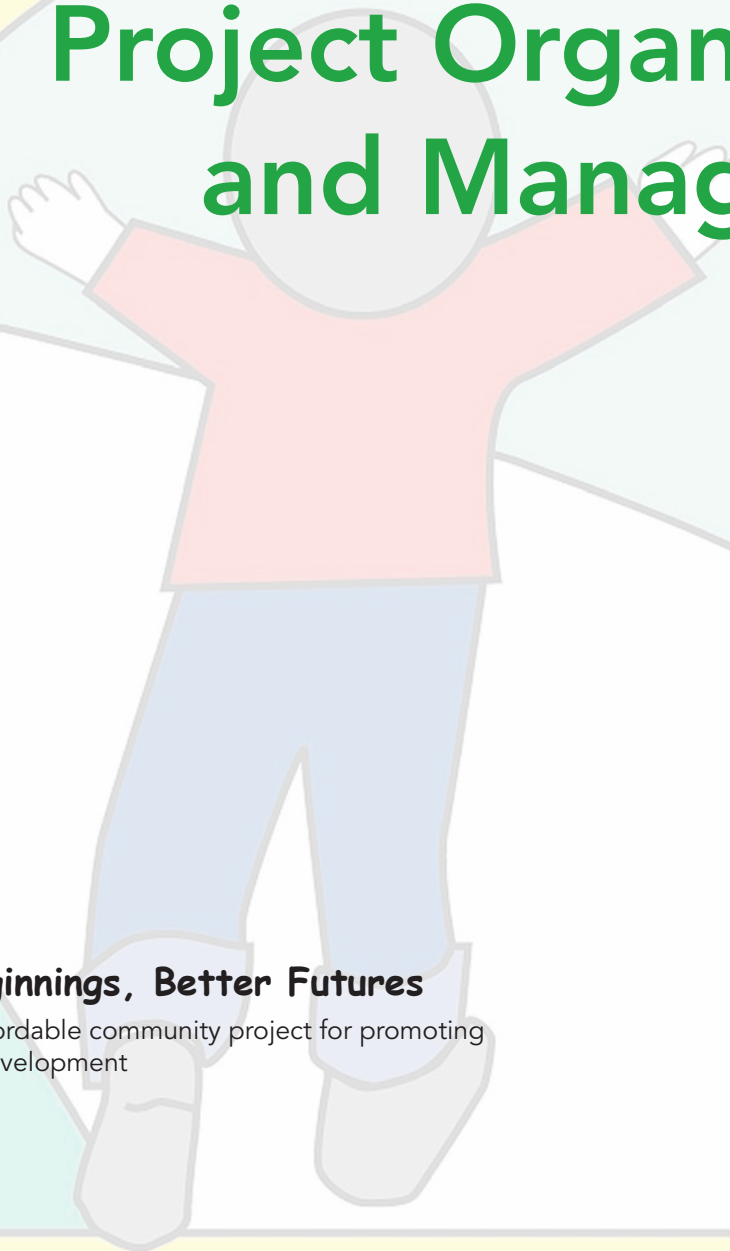


# 6

BUILDING BETTER BEGINNINGS: A TOOLKIT

## Project Organization and Management



### **Better Beginnings, Better Futures**

An effective, affordable community project for promoting positive child development

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Better Beginnings, Better Futures Research Coordination Unit.*

**Design**  
Stéphane Gibelin

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# INTRODUCTION



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### 1. Values and principles

Understand and appreciate the values and principles upon which the *Better Beginnings* projects were based.

### 2. Organizational structures

Be aware of the differences in the organizational and administrative structures and processes that developed at the different sites.

### 3. Planning

Understand the various steps that may be involved in building a workable organizational structure.

### 4. Challenges

Understand and appreciate the challenges of project organization and management.

### 5. Strategies

Be aware of the strategies that can address possible challenges and help with project organization and management.

### 6. Guiding principles

Know the guiding principles of project organization, development, and management.

# BETTER BEGINNINGS, BETTER FUTURES

## PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

### A brief history

The *Better Beginnings* sites were charged with ensuring that all features of the program model were taken into account when organizing and managing their prevention projects. From the initiation of the project, each site had a “host organization”. The host organization was legally and financially responsible for the project. All project funds flowed through the host organization and the *Better Beginnings* projects were, to greater and lesser degrees, subject to the standard operating policies and procedures of their host.

During the proposal development phase, *Better Beginnings* projects were managed by the group that was responsible for developing and submitting the proposal. This usually included residents and service providers from the host and/or other agencies or organizations. Each site was responsible for all the work necessary to plan and implement their programs. During the approximately 18 to 24 months between when the sites were selected, and when all

programs were up and running, there were a number of tasks the decision-makers at each site had to complete, including:

- Hiring key staff, including the project manager, to help get the initiative off the ground;
- Developing the overall program model, as well as the specific program components;
- Further enhancing community resident participation in the project, including in management and governance;
- Further developing partnerships with service providers in the planning and delivery of the program; and
- Developing an organizational structure (e.g., main decision-making group, sub-committees or working groups) and the relationship between the project and the host organization.

During the demonstration phase,<sup>1</sup> each of the three sites worked hard to further refine its organizational and governance structures. Some changes were made to ensure that residents were meaningfully involved in governance. To some extent service provider involvement lessened during this time as staff were now hired and could take over much of the work for which the original decision-making group was responsible. As well, there was a general trend towards clarifying procedures and adopting more formal policies and procedures. During the demonstration phase, one of the three older cohort sites sought independence from the host organization through incorporation, and one continued to struggle with the bureaucracy of its host. The transition from demonstration project to a permanent program, as the projects moved into the sustainability phase, was challenging for some.



<sup>1</sup>The proposal development phase occurred in 1990, the planning phase from 1991-1993, the demonstration phase from 1993-1997, and sustainability occurred when the projects received sustained funding beginning in 1998.



## Values and principles guiding project development

To help the reader understand the organization and management of the *Better Beginnings* projects, it is useful to begin with a discussion of the values and principles that guided project development, and project organization and management, at the sites. Developing an organization based on shared values and principles was important to the *Better Beginnings* projects. Stakeholders at each site spent considerable time and energy identifying, discussing, and clarifying the values and principles which would guide them in the development, and management, of their projects. The basis for many of their guiding principles came from the original *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* document.

These values and principles included:

- **Community participation and ownership:** All of the sites identified community participation as a guiding principle for project organization and management. The concept of community involvement and participation was an important and widely held value among all the sites. One of the sites, from early on, also identified community ownership as a specific principle.
- **Inclusiveness:** Being inclusive, open, and accessible to all persons from the communities was also a principle stated early on.
- **Hiring residents as staff:** Hiring community residents was valued from the beginning at all of the sites.
- **Democratic management style:** Most of the sites also strove for a more democratic and non-hierarchical management style.
- **A new way of thinking and acting:** The sites placed a value on doing things differently — that *Better Beginnings* represented a new way of thinking and acting.

## Better Beginnings organizational structures and procedures

At the *Better Beginnings* sites, while the broad organizational structures were similar, there were important differences as well. As described earlier, when funding was announced most of the sites were still run by the group which had developed the proposals. These groups were generally open, had flexible membership, and tended to be dominated by service provider professionals.

After receiving funding these groups had to begin to create and implement programs and to hire staff. Generally, the groups tended to delegate tasks and responsibilities by creating sub-committees, working groups, or task forces to tackle certain aspects of project development.

Hiring staff meant that the original decision-makers were less “hands-on”. Subsequently, roles needed to be clarified. In addition to sorting out the roles and responsibilities of the decision-making group, dealing with newly hired staff and program development sub-committees or groups, the sites also had the challenge of developing an organizational structure which facilitated the involvement of community residents. In all sites this meant increasing the influence, numbers, and/or proportion of residents in decision-making roles.

As time went on, the organizational structure at each of the sites tended to be simplified. A main decision-making group was kept, as well as some sub-committees, but there were fewer working groups or

committees. Once programs were implemented the need for these working groups or committees was reduced.

Each project site had its own unique organizational and management structure, and its own evolution throughout the years. *For more information, please see Appendix B for an overview of the management and organizational structure at each of the three sites.*







# APPROACH

## HOW TO BUILD A WORKABLE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In this section we outline the fundamentals of how to build an organizational structure that makes sense for a community-based prevention project. By organizational structure we mean the framework around which your group is organized. Your organizational structure can take many different forms — you will need to figure out which structure is best suited to your initiative. Regardless of what your structure will look like, it should provide you with governance for your initiative, rules by which your organization operates, and a distribution of work.

In this section we try to answer a few key questions in helping you on your way to developing a workable organizational structure. How do you begin? Who should be involved? What administrative and management structures should be developed? What decision-making processes should be used? And, what supports and resources are required?



## How to begin

In *Better Beginnings*, a core set of principles by which the project sites had to operate was provided from the outset. Therefore, the structures and procedures that developed at the project sites were somewhat dictated by the government. However, the sites did have some autonomy in deciding on project organization. Although there were commonalities, each site's administrative structure and management procedures developed differently.

In each of the sites, there was an initial group of individuals interested in pursuing a *Better Beginnings* grant. Ostensibly this group of individuals had formed because they believed in the principles of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures*. With respect

to project organization and governance, there were two main principles that guided the development of the structures and procedures: community participation and service provider involvement or partnerships. In the *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* document that contained the guiding principles, equal weight was given to these principles; yet, in all three sites the stakeholders seemed to give more weight to the principle of community participation.

*Refer to Chapter 4: Community Resident Participation, and Chapter 5: Engaging Community Partners, for more information on how to involve community residents, and how to develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations.*



## TIPS

**Tips to consider when beginning to develop your organizational and administrative structures and procedures:**

Be clear about the values, principles, goals, and objectives that will guide not only the project development, but project governance.

Select individuals who agree with your values and principles and can contribute meaningfully to your project.

When selecting your host or sponsor organization be sure there is a good fit with respect to the values and principles of your prevention initiative.





## Decide who should be involved

Considerations for whom to select as partners — both service providers and residents — were described in Chapters 4: Community Resident Participation and 5: Engaging Community Partners. Most of the discussion here, and considerations listed below, were provided in those chapters. This section is included as review, or for those readers who have not read the previous chapters.

The *Better Beginnings* program model was to be holistic in nature and was funded by three different provincial ministries. There were no strict guidelines provided by the government about who the partners should be, or who should be involved in project governance and management. There was one exception: because the projects were working with school-aged children, schools were expected to be partners at each of the sites. There were guiding principles for the project as a whole, but sites did have autonomy and the discretion to determine who should be involved.

In each of the sites there was an initial group of stakeholders interested in the project and that believed in the guiding principles. This group included community residents, but initially tended to be dominated by service providers who worked in or served these communities. These service providers worked for organizations usually funded by the three funding ministries for *Better Beginnings*. In the beginning these groups were fairly open to all who were interested in the project and who believed in the guiding principles.

Once funding was received, the original group of stakeholders that was responsible for developing the proposal became the initial administrative structure at the project site. This group was responsible for beginning to develop an organizational structure and procedures for managing the project. In each of the three sites, therefore, there was restructuring of this main decision-making body to ensure that the residents' voice was not lost.

Sites reorganized so that parents were either equally represented or had a majority representation on the main decision-making body, or so that the main decision-making body was composed entirely of residents.

There were times, as well, when there may not have been a good “fit” between the project and certain service providers, or where service providers just did not have the time and resources to devote to the projects.



## TIPS

### Tips to consider regarding who should be involved:

Do the organizations you are considering partnering with have similar mandates? Do they agree with your governing principles?

Do the service providers have similar ways of working within the community?

Do the service providers have ties to the community? Do they know the community well?

Overall, is there a good “fit” between potential partners? Will they help you achieve your goals?

Do the service providers you are thinking of involving in project governance and management have

experience with a shared-power approach where residents have an equal voice on decision-making bodies?

Will they be flexible in their ways of working in order to accommodate residents in project management and governance roles?

Is there a particular group or population for your programs? If so, you may want to recruit residents from that population or organizations providing services to that population.

If you are trying to include minority groups you will need to address any cultural or language issues in your recruitment. Ways in which you recruit

may differ across cultural groups. And, any advertising may need to be distributed in multiple languages.

You may need to consult with other organizations or groups that work with your population to learn more about how to recruit potential volunteers.

Are you expecting that you will be inundated with potential volunteers? If so, then you may need to consider how you will deal with that issue. Should you recruit volunteers who have had previous committee or board work?

## Decide what roles different stakeholders should play

As described in Chapter 4: Community Resident Participation, the *Better Beginnings* sites worked diligently to seek out residents' opinions in these various meetings so that residents' voices were heard and that programs incorporated their feedback. In the planning phase, community residents were also involved in the hiring process for staff. The sites had to devote considerable time and resources to help residents feel comfortable in their decision-making and governance roles.

Service providers served in the same roles as residents with respect to project management. They served on decision-making bodies and sub-committees, and were involved in the hiring process. In the early years all three sites had similar roles for both residents and service providers. However, in the later years of the demonstration phase, one site became incorporated and only residents were allowed on the main decision-making body. Service providers were involved as partners in various programs; however, they were not involved in project governance.

## TIPS

### Tips to consider regarding what roles different stakeholders should play:

Be clear about your goals and objectives with respect to having others involved in project management.

- What are you hoping to achieve by having others involved?
- How will this benefit the organization and management of your initiative?

It may be difficult, early on, to get enough community residents interested in taking on decision-making and governance roles. They will require encouragement, support and training. [Please see Chapter 4: Community Resident Participation for more information.](#)

Ensure that service providers who do become involved in project governance are a good "fit":

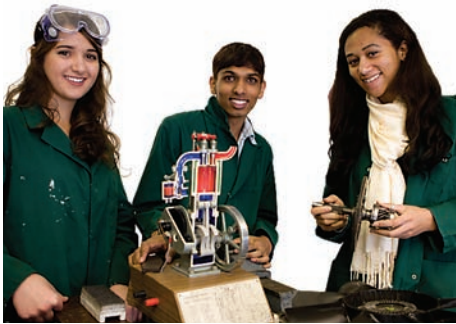
- They should agree with the values and principles of your initiative.
- They should be familiar with your community and have similar ways of working.
- They should have enough time and energy to devote to the initiative, particularly early on.

Staff time will need to be dedicated not only to recruit volunteers, but also to help them feel comfortable and develop their skills and abilities.



## Develop clear policies for project governance and management

Very early on, your main decision-making group will need to develop clear project governance and management policies that can help in the start-up and implementation phase, as well as for ongoing project management. Many of the governance policies may be standard and project stakeholders can probably look to existing organizations for help and examples. However, given that the project will be community-based, stakeholders may need to “tweak” policies to make sure they are in line with their values and principles.



## TIPS

### Tips to consider for developing project governance and management policies:

#### The organizational structure:

- What will the main decision-making group be?
- What sub-committees or working groups are required?
- What should the composition be for these various groups?
- Should representatives on the committees be elected? What length of term, if elected, should they serve?
- What decisions can be made in these groups?
- What types of minutes will be taken in the meetings?
- Who should chair the meetings?
- Are there are other roles that need to be established?

**Decision-making:** How will decisions be made? For example, should consensus be used (or strived for), or should voting procedures be used?

#### Hiring policies:

- What will the qualifications be for each position?
- What other qualities are important?
- Should residents be given priority over other candidates?
- Are there hiring policies of your host organization that you need to follow?

#### Supervision and training:

- How will staff be supervised?
- What training will be provided?
- How will performance issues be handled?
- Are there supervision and training practices and policies of your host organization that you need to follow?

#### Volunteerism:

- What supports and training will be provided to resident volunteers?
- What expenses will be covered to remove any barriers to their participation?
- How will conflicts between volunteers be addressed?

#### Conflict of Interest:

- How will conflict of interest be defined?
- What steps will be put in place to address conflict of interest issues?
- Are there conflict of interest policies of your host organization that you will need to follow?



## Decide what supports and resources are required

In order to create an organizational structure that includes service providers but also meaningful resident participation, community initiatives will need adequate supports and resources. In the *Better Beginnings* sites, considerable staff and management time was spent to recruit residents as well as train and support them. Residents were encouraged and supported during committee meetings, working groups, selection committees, and planning days. In some cases residents were trained in issues dealing with project management and governance — for example, how meetings run, taking minutes, chairing a meeting, and mediating or facilitating discussion to try to reach consensus.

## Be patient and allow the organization to evolve

The organizational structure that develops early on, during the planning phase, may not necessarily be the organizational structure that exists later, once programs have been implemented. In each of the *Better Beginnings* sites, the administrative structures evolved over time. Early on, there was a tremendous amount of work that needed to be done. The original decision-making group was faced with several time-consuming demands: building resident participation in the projects, developing partnerships with other service providers, developing program components, developing a workable organizational structure and procedures, and hiring staff.

The roles and responsibilities of the original decision-making group changed as time went on. Early on, as mentioned, there was a lot of work to do and the original group

The project also planned events so that staff, service providers or partners, and residents could get to know one another. Project resources, including staff time and budget, therefore, were dedicated to these types of events.

Service provider partners required less time and effort in their role as decision-makers. Most had already had experience on committees and in governance and management. However, some did need to be reminded to encourage community residents to voice their opinions during meetings — particularly early on.

of stakeholders had many varied roles and responsibilities. But, as staff members were hired and all programs were implemented, the roles for stakeholders became less hands-on and more consultative.

The sites generally had a simple organizational structure in the proposal development phase. This changed after funding was received; the projects grew in complexity and size and project governance also became more complex and challenging. Later in the demonstration phase, however, the sites made adjustments to simplify, formalize, or clarify their organizational structures and procedures. There was also a general trend toward more traditional forms of management as the demonstration stage came to an end, and as projects then entered the sustainability phase.

## TIPS

### Tips to consider regarding supports and resources required:

You need staff time dedicated to resident recruitment, support, training, and skill building. Some financial resources may also be required to train staff in this role.

Other than staff time, financial resources should also be dedicated to recognizing the efforts of residents, covering their expenses, and building interpersonal relationships and trust (e.g., social events).

## Examples of structure

There are many possibilities for how all these pieces can be put together. The form that your particular initiative takes should be based on what it does and what it is hoping to achieve. It will depend also on the size of your organization and the complexity of your initiative.

The Community Tool Box is an on-line resource providing information for building healthy communities (<http://ctb.ku.edu>). Chapter 9 is devoted to building an organizational structure for community initiatives and provides three different examples of organizational structures, as well as other valuable information. Readers are encouraged to use that resource when beginning to develop their own organizational structure.

# CHALLENGES



## CHALLENGES OF PROJECT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM

Many of the challenges faced in developing partnerships with service providers and developing a strong community voice, as described in the other chapters, are applicable here as well.

*See Chapter 5: Engaging Community Partners and Chapter 4: Community Resident Participation for further information.*



## Implementing value-based project management

As described earlier in this chapter, having an organization based on shared values and principles was important to the *Better Beginnings* sites. Implementing this value-based project management, however, did present challenges. First, there was a substantial amount of time and effort invested into group processes. Management at the sites was characterized by various staff, management, planning, and stakeholder meetings. There were, however, differences across the three sites in the amount of time spent on group processes. For example, at one site, where many local residents were hired, approximately 17% of its time, or about two full-time months, was needed to provide training and support, and to discuss budgetary and other issues. The other two sites did not spend this amount of time on group processes.

Second, the process demands of project organization and management for *Better Beginnings* were augmented by the need to coordinate the efforts of different types of employees, varying work hours, and varying work locations. At one of the sites there was also a requirement to bridge linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences among project personnel.

Third, people were not used to this style of management and it was difficult for some stakeholders to adapt to this management style.

Finally, with so much effort being placed on value-based project management and group processes, the question was raised by researchers whether the process emphasis may have lessened the concern with efficiency or taken time away from the details of prevention programming.

## STRATEGIES

- Be prepared to spend time and effort on group process to ensure that the project lives up to the values upon which it is based.
- Ensure that stakeholders and staff understand and appreciate the value-based management style.
- Take whatever opportunities are available to reinforce the values and principles that underlie the management style.
- There will always be competing demands in any organization. Try to ensure that the key principles of the project receive equal attention.







## Developing a workable organizational structure that has a strong community voice

The sites all struggled with trying to accommodate several purposes which pulled them in different directions. They were to develop project organizations which would have sufficient autonomy to create new ways of working and to influence external systems to become more integrated. They also needed to ensure that the organization, and its partners, were prepared for the end of their short-term funding. Finally, they were to find ways to facilitate the meaningful and significant participation and involvement of community residents. Managing these differing expectations was, without exception, difficult.

Of these different expectations or aims, though, the involvement of community residents appeared to have received the greatest investment of attention and resources — particularly at one of the *Better Beginnings* sites. At this site it appeared that there were more resources and creativity spent on developing meaningful resident participation than on developing efficient organizational structures and procedures. This was the site with the most complex organizational structure. Please refer to Appendix B for descriptions of the organizational structures that developed at each of the sites.

## STRATEGIES

- Bring community residents into the organizational structures; use food and social events as prominent and regular features of meetings.
- Use informal, casual and flexible ways of operating. Keep jargon to a minimum.
- Remove any possible barriers by providing child care and transportation.
- Ensure residents are trained and supported in their roles as decision-makers. Examples of training that could be provided include: chairing meetings, facilitating discussions, taking minutes, managing finances.
- Materials that are used in meetings to help facilitate decision-making should be simple and to-the-point.
- Keep the main decision-making body a reasonable size, and ensure that residents comprise at least 50% of the voting members.
- The use of sub-committees and working groups (of a smaller size) may help to make the management of the organization more workable.
- Ensure that the structure and procedures developed are in keeping with your principles and values.

## Hiring residents as staff

At each of the *Better Beginnings* sites, residents were hired as staff — mostly in front-line positions. During the demonstration phase, the proportion of community resident staff varied from site to site and ranged from 31% at one site to 75% at another. There were many benefits of having residents as staff members — as described in *Chapter 4: Community Resident Participation*. Although there were many benefits, hiring residents as staff was not without its challenges. Many of the residents hired had little work experience and required a lot of training and support. The amount of time, energy, and support devoted to training and supporting staff, however, varied across the sites.

Residents as project employees had to confront the challenge of setting boundaries around their work. These employees had difficulty being “off-duty” when in their community or neighbourhood.

Hiring residents who had leadership roles in the project also resulted in siphoning off some of the volunteer leadership available to the projects and created a few tensions as residents competed for some jobs.

*There is more detail about this challenge in Chapter 4: Community Resident Participation.*

## STRATEGIES

- If hiring residents who have little work experience or qualifications, be prepared to devote a great deal of time and energy into training and supporting these employees.
- As part of the training, try to guide employees to set boundaries in their “off” time. Share examples of how other resident employees dealt with this issue.
- To ensure that there will always be a sufficient number of residents involved in project governance, devote the time and energy into “growing leaders”.

## Developing decision-making approaches

Overall project governance and management decisions were made by the *Better Beginnings* sites through their main decision-making body, as well as through other working groups or sub-committees. The sites reported that decision-making was made difficult because of the time needed to consult with so many different groups, and because of the difficulty of ensuring that community residents were well

informed about the issues. In time, each of the sites simplified its administrative structures and processes.

As well, despite a commitment to consensus in principle and practice, there were difficulties, ambiguities, and lack of certainty about how consensus was actually to be done. Training in reaching consensus was provided at only one of the three sites

— although it is not clear that this made reaching consensus any easier.

Despite the challenges faced by all of the sites in developing satisfactory decision-making processes, generally these processes became easier as time went on and the sites reported that most decisions made had been relatively functional and the procedures used had worked well.

## STRATEGIES

- Try to avoid developing overly complex structures for project governance and management, while still abiding by principles of community participation and inclusion.
- Develop a decision-making process that makes sense to stakeholders and is based upon your values and principles.
- Provide training to residents, and other stakeholders if required, in the decision-making process selected.
- Ensure that all stakeholders are clear about the decision-making processes. When new stakeholders become involved in your organization, ensure they are trained in the decision-making processes.
- Review and evaluate your decision-making processes periodically to ensure that they continue to make sense and are based upon your values and principles.



## Making the transition to long-term sustainability

*Better Beginnings* sites were initially funded by government for a period of five years, after the planning phase, with no promise of continuing funding. Consequently, they spent considerable time at the end of the five years planning how to sustain themselves without government funding. Also, staff members were fearful of losing their jobs and community residents were fearful of losing the programs when funding ended. Each site put time and energy into looking for additional funds that could help sustain them if government funding was discontinued at the end of the demonstration period. It was a tense and challenging time for everyone.

In the end, the government decided to fund the projects on a permanent, annualized basis.

When permanent funding was announced, of course, everyone was relieved and elated. Yet, permanent funding also brought with it an additional set of challenges to face. Each site had to figure out how to proceed. There were major changes that occurred at this time, and with that again came tension and stress.

In the end, each site came out of the transition period still providing programs in much the same way they had during the demonstration phase. At one site, there were major changes to the administrative structure and the project became a permanent program of the host organization, with less autonomy and decision-making power. At another site an organizational review occurred that was stressful for staff. As well, the project made the decision to go with a new host agency.

Although it took some time and effort, in the end there was a good fit between the project and the new host agency, and staff morale was good. At the third site, there was staff turnover in the project manager position that had a negative effect on staff morale, as well as turnover at the level of their main decision-making body. Eventually, however, staff morale recovered, at least partially.

## STRATEGIES

- During any transitional period, or organizational review process, provide opportunities for staff and residents to express their fears. It may be worthwhile to have a third-party mediator to help this process.
- Be transparent about what is happening and always ensure open lines of communication.







# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



# Guiding Principles for Project Organization and Management

1. **It is important that partners have clearly articulated principles and values that will guide project development, and management/governance.**
  - These principles and values need to be understood and accepted by all stakeholders involved in project governance.
  - Time and energy will need to be devoted to ensuring that these values and principles are upheld. Make the effort to revisit these values and principles periodically.
  - These principles and values will guide the organizational structure and processes that are developed; therefore, the result may be quite unique to your community and circumstances.
2. **Develop workable organizational and administrative structures that are relatively simple and ensure a strong community voice.**
  - Ensure that the main decision-making group is not overly large and cumbersome and that all stakeholder groups are represented.
  - Develop smaller sub-committees or working groups to help in the management of the project.
  - Ensure that residents are trained and supported in their role as committee members.
3. **Devote the necessary time and effort to ensure that residents are meaningfully involved in project management and governance.**
  - It is important that all stakeholders should be committed to meaningfully involve residents in project management.
  - Residents should be trained and supported in their roles as policy and decision-makers.
  - Remove any potential barriers to resident participation in project governance.
4. **Make it clear to stakeholders that they will need to invest considerable time, effort, and resources into project development, organization, and governance.**
  - Early on, in particular, there is a great deal of work to do in setting up the organizational structure and processes, in developing policies, and in ensuring that residents and other stakeholder groups are meaningfully involved.
  - Time and effort is required to build trusting interpersonal relationships.
  - Good interpersonal relations based upon mutual trust and respect are important.
  - Ensure that everyone gets to know one another personally and has safe environments in which to interact.
5. **Consider “fit” — between the project and the host or sponsor agency, between service provider partners and the project, and between project staff, service provider partners, and residents.**
  - Ensure that each stakeholder group understands and appreciates the underlying values and principles of your community-based initiative.
6. **Develop decision-making processes that make sense for your community-based prevention initiative.**
  - In *Better Beginnings*, regardless of which style of decision-making was used, the procedures were described as being linked to the value and principle of inclusiveness.
  - It may be important to revisit decision-making processes if stakeholders are feeling that decision-making is too cumbersome or not in keeping with the underlying values and principles.
7. **Cultivate good leadership and staffing.**
  - The project managers played a key role in each project site — in setting the climate of the project, and in what decisions were made.
  - Ensure that your staff is caring and welcoming and encourages the residents to speak up and voice their opinions. A good sense of humour also helps!
8. **Ensure ongoing monitoring and review.**
  - Through retreats or planning days, ensure that you “check in” on project management and governance. Are decisions being made appropriately? Are any changes necessary? Should committees recruit new members to keep ideas fresh? Are there new training opportunities that should be extended to stakeholders?



## Implementation/Evaluation Checklist

- Are your project management and governance values and principles clearly articulated?
- Have you thought specifically about what stakeholders you would like to have involved? What service provider partners should be involved in managing and governing your community-based initiative? What residents should be involved?
- What roles should stakeholders play in project management and governance?
- Have you thought about what organizational structure makes the most sense for your initiative?
- What decision-making processes will you use?
- Do you have the necessary supports and resources to implement the organizational structure and processes you envision?
- How will you go about monitoring or reviewing your organizational and administrative structures and processes?



# APPENDICES



# APPENDIX A:

## On-line Resources and Abstracts

### On-line resources:

#### 1. <http://ctb.ku.edu>

The *Community Tool Box* is an on-line global resource for free information on essential skills for building healthy communities. It offers more than 7,000 pages of practical guidance in creating change and improvement. Chapter 9 is devoted to building an organizational structure for community initiatives and provides three different examples of organizational structures, as well as other valuable information.

### Abstracts

Evans, S.D., Hanlin, C., & Prilleltensky, I. (2007). **Blending ameliorative and transformative approaches in human service organizations: A case study.** *Journal of Community Psychology, 35*, 329–346.

This paper describes the challenges and benefits of an action-research project with a Nashville-based nonprofit human service organization. In our view, outmoded human service organizations are in serious need of innovation to promote psychological and physical wellness, prevention of social problems, empowerment, and social justice. This project aims to develop and evaluate value-based organizational processes and outcomes designed to transform human services. Although the goal of moving human services from ameliorative to transformative approaches is invigorating, our efforts have revealed expected and unexpected barriers to this process of change. Two main barriers are a strong cultural current working against change and irregular pacing of the change efforts. Positive outgrowths of the project include a new organizational philosophy that includes attention to issues of justice and equality, and changing individual and organizational beliefs and practices. Clear messages regarding the changes desired and a highly participatory process have facilitated these initial outcomes.

## Abstracts, cont'd

Evans, S.D., & Loomis, C. (2009). **Organizational and community change.** In D. Fox, I. Prilleltensky, & S. Austin (Eds.), *Critical psychology: An introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., pp. 373-390). Los Angeles: Sage.

This chapter focuses on planned transformative change — change at the systems level — in both organizations and communities. Intentionally or unintentionally, many organizations within communities provide programs, supports, and services that maintain inequitable, unjust, or other undesirable community patterns. Many community members desiring change do not know how to connect with or mobilize others who would also like to work for change. How community-based organizations can transform themselves to fulfill a “change agent” role and how organizations can engage other organizations and community members to change community conditions are this chapter’s central concerns. We link organizational and community change because most efforts to improve communities involve organizations. Community organizations that function effectively enhance community well-being, and new organizations or alternative settings arise to alter existing arrangements.

Nelson, G., & Prilleltensky, I. (2010). **Community psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being** (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Chapter 9 — *Organizational and Community Interventions*). New York: Palgrave.

In this chapter the authors link organizational and community interventions because most efforts for liberation and well-being take place in, or through, organizations such as human services, voluntary agencies or alternative settings. To enable community change, first we have to persuade our own organizations to contribute to the process. Organizations possess human and material resources that are crucial for initiating and invigorating ameliorative and transformative interventions.

Nelson, G., Pancer, S.M., Hayward, K., & Peters, R.DeV. (2005). **Partnerships for prevention: The story of the Highfield Community Enrichment Project.** Toronto: University of Toronto Press. (Chapter 8).

This chapter provides an overview of theory of community-based organizations. As well, five main issues in project organization and management are described in depth in the context of one of the *Better Beginnings* sites: (a) the vision, values, and philosophy of the project, (b) administrative structures, (c) decision making, (d) staffing and supervision, and (e) relationships with the sponsor organization and project independence.

## APPENDIX B: Organizational Summaries by Project Site

### ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

SITE ONE	SITE TWO	SITE THREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host organization was a local family mental health centre.</li> <li>• The project was located in a Francophone community encompassing three elementary school catchment areas.</li> <li>• Host organization was legally and financially responsible for the project and provided training and support to staff.</li> <li>• The Project Coordinator oversaw all of the project activities and reported directly to the host agency.</li> <li>• Initially there was a main decision-making group (with equal representation from agency representatives and parents) and several working groups and committees.</li> <li>• After the planning phase was completed, and all staff were hired and programs implemented, most of these groups were eliminated because they were felt to be unnecessary.</li> <li>• In the sustainability phase, the Project Coordinator position was terminated and staff reported directly to the Executive Director of the host organization. The main decision-making body was eliminated also and replaced by a consultation committee that met with the ED three times per year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the demonstration phase, the host organization was the local school board.</li> <li>• The project was located on-site at an elementary school in an inner-city, lower-income, multicultural community.</li> <li>• Host organization was legally and finally responsible for the project.</li> <li>• Large bureaucracy of the school board created challenges for the project — project was subject to personnel policies of the school board (e.g., salary levels, where to advertise).</li> <li>• During demonstration phase there was one main decision-making body (51% parents; 49% agency representatives), and several sub-committees related to different aspects of the project (e.g., community development, family resource centre, in-school programming).</li> <li>• The project also had annual “Planning Days” for strategic planning.</li> <li>• The Project Manager used community forums to solicit feedback from the residents on various community and project issues.</li> <li>• During the sustainability phase the host organization changed to a children and family mental health centre.</li> <li>• The main administrative structures continued as during the demonstration phase, although meetings took place less frequently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local cultural centre served as the host agency at this site during the planning phase and early years of the demonstration phase.</li> <li>• The project’s first office space was located at this centre and rented at a reduced cost.</li> <li>• After a few years the project acquired a location (a former school) that had more space and was in closer proximity to other programs it was running.</li> <li>• The project is located in two neighbourhoods, one largely Francophone, the other Anglophone and multicultural, in a mid-sized city.</li> <li>• During the demonstration phase the project legally incorporated and became its own organization. The host organization continued to have a good relationship with the project.</li> <li>• This site had a complex organizational structure. Initially the main decision-making body was an Association, made up almost entirely of residents. Agency representatives were involved in the project through another working group. In addition to these two groups, there were also several cultural caucuses, other committees and sub-committees when needed, and a Community Advisory Committee.</li> <li>• After incorporation the structure changed. A Council was now the main decision-making group (still made up of residents). The Association continued and was organized around the cultural caucuses and staff caucus — each of which elected two members for the Council. Other committees continued to operate (e.g., personnel, finance, fundraising).</li> <li>• These same structures continued during the sustainability phase.</li> </ul>

### PROJECT ATMOSPHERE AND MANAGEMENT STYLE

SITE ONE	SITE TWO	SITE THREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory style of organization and management.</li> <li>• Established different administrative structures and management levels so that different stakeholders could participate.</li> <li>• During demonstration period parents participated on the main decision-making body as well as on different sub-committees.</li> <li>• During sustainability phase, the main decision-making body of the project was changed to a consultation committee and the project became a program of the host organization.</li> <li>• The Executive Director of the host organization became directly responsible for the project and the consultation committee met with her several times a year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the demonstration phase the organizational structure was more flat than hierarchical and the roles the staff played were flexible.</li> <li>• Leadership style of the Project Manager was based upon trust, support, openness, respect and sharing. The climate was quite positive.</li> <li>• Relationships and meetings tended to be informal.</li> <li>• The transition from the demonstration phase to the sustainability phase was challenging. An organizational review caused stress, strain, and loss of trust on the part of staff. The crisis was eventually resolved, however.</li> <li>• The atmosphere and climate during the sustainability phase was once again very positive. Staff had adjusted to a new host organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project was characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and ownership of the project.</li> <li>• Initial coalition developed guiding principles for the project (community strengths, partnership building, collective concern for children’s welfare) and these principles set the tone for the horizontal and egalitarian management and organization of the project.</li> <li>• There were tensions between cultural groups, but these diminished during the demonstration phase.</li> <li>• During the sustainability phase this site did experience some changes that affected staff morale and organizational climate. There was change in the Project Manager position, and there were changes on the main decision-making body.</li> <li>• The period of turmoil resolved after a couple of years and the atmosphere was later described as warm and welcoming.</li> <li>• The management style was still participatory during the sustainability phase; however, there was a sense that the style was perhaps more traditional than it had been in the past.</li> </ul>

## STAFFING

SITE ONE	SITE TWO	SITE THREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the demonstration phase the staffing profile consisted of the Project Coordinator, several supervisory or managerial staff, one support staff person, and a number of part-time and full-time front-line positions for the three main program areas (child, family, and community-related).</li> <li>During the sustainability phase, the Project Coordinator and managerial/supervisory positions were eliminated. Staff reported directly to the ED of the host organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the demonstration phase the staffing profile consisted of the Project Manager, coordinators for each of the main areas of programming (in-school, community development, family resource, and nutrition), an administrative support staff person, as well as full-time and front-line staff.</li> <li>No formal policy to hire community residents, but there was an implicit understanding to do so.</li> <li>During the transition from the demonstration phase to the sustainability phase, there was staff turnover. However, after this transition occurred, the staffing profile stabilized again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The central management team included the Project Manager, an office administrator, and after the project's incorporation, a bookkeeper.</li> <li>Project staff was organized into teams according to their program activities. Volunteers were also integrated into these teams.</li> <li>Almost all staff were part-time and were residents — the project preferred to do this to spread the money across more people.</li> <li>Most staff lacked formal education; therefore, the project spent much time and effort providing training for these staff members.</li> <li>There was low front-line staff turnover throughout the demonstration and sustainability phases. There was some staff turnover in the Project Manager position.</li> </ul>

## DECISION-MAKING

SITE ONE	SITE TWO	SITE THREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the demonstration phase, decision-making was described as participatory and based upon consensus.</li> <li>Voting was used as a decision-making process as well — presumably at times when consensus could not be reached.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the very early stages, most decisions were made by the initial decision-making group that submitted the proposal. This group consisted almost entirely of agency representatives. During the demonstration phase, there was a concerted effort to get more parents involved on the committees and to make them comfortable with decision-making.</li> <li>Throughout the different phases, decision-making was based generally upon consensus. Voting did occur, however, when consensus could not be reached.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This site was committed to consensus as the sole decision-making procedure. This was a lengthy and bumpy process that often required clarification to reinforce its use and understanding.</li> <li>Over time, people got more used to it and it was applied to all meetings.</li> <li>During the sustainability phase, the project continued to operate on the principle of consensus when decisions were made. However, there was some indication that perhaps less effort and discussion was being put into reaching “true” consensus.</li> </ul>









## **Better Beginnings, Better Futures**

An effective, affordable community project for promoting positive child development