



Banyule Nillumbik Primary Care Alliance

Partnership Self-Assessment Report - April 2009

Introduction

The information in this report is based on data that the Strategic Partnership Group members of the Banyule Nillumbik Primary Care Alliance provided when they completed the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool¹ questionnaire in 2009 and is compared with the 2007 results. A Partnership is considered to be made up of individual participants who work together to achieve a common goal. Most of the questions in the questionnaire focused on how members view the Alliance as a whole (for example, the alliance's collaborative process, leadership, and administration and management). To analyze the respondents' answers to these questions, the mean of the responses has been used. These mean scores represent the views of the partnership respondents, on average. The other questions in the questionnaire focus on how participants view their own involvement in the partnership (for example, their satisfaction with the partnership and the benefits and drawbacks they are experiencing). In analyzing the answers to these questions the percentage of responses in each answer category has been calculated.

The BNPCA has eleven representatives at the Strategic Partnership Group, and all of the members were asked to complete the questionnaire. Within the time frame allocated (it was extended beyond one month due to the bushfire in February 2009) eight completed questionnaires were received, which is a 73% response rate. Since the Partnership Self-Assessment was completed in 2007 we have two new members in the Strategic Partnership Group.

Throughout this report the items that were identified in 2007 as requiring particular attention have been shaded slightly darker than the others so that the 2009 result can be noted easily.

Partnership Synergy Score: An indicator of the success of the BNPCA Collaborative Process.

The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool assesses the success of a partnership's collaborative process by measuring its level of synergy. Synergy is a key indicator of a successful collaborative process because it reflects the extent to which the partnership can do more than any of its individual participants. Put another way, the partnership's level of synergy indicates the extent to which the partnership, as a whole, is greater than the sum of its parts.

In the Partnership Self-assessment tool, synergy is measured by a set of 9 questions. The partnership's overall synergy score is the mean of all the respondents' answers to all 9 of the questions. It reflects the extent to which the participants in your partnership are accomplishing more together than they can do on their own.

The Strategic Partnership Groups overall synergy score is 3.7 (out of a 5).

This is in the Work Zone, meaning that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. In 2007 the score was 3.3 so there has been improvement, but still requires more work.

The following table shows how the partnership scored on each of the 9 questions that make up the overall synergy scale. This table, which is more detailed than the overall synergy score, reflects the particular ways that the participants in the partnership are doing more together than they can on their own. The 9 questions each represent an attribute of synergy.

¹ The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool was developed by Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health, New York

Table 1 Synergy

How well, by working together, the participants in your partnership are able to:	Partnership Mean 2009	Partnership Mean 2007
Identify new and creative ways to solve problems	4.4	3.5
Include the views and priorities of the people affected by the partnership's work	4.4	3.6
Develop goals that are widely understood and supported among partners	4.4	3.5
Identify how different services and programs in the community relate to the problems the partnership is trying to address	3.4	3.3
Respond to the needs and problems of the community	3.3	3.2
Implement strategies that are most likely to work in the community	3.4	3.8
Obtain support from individuals and organisations in the community that can either block the partnership's plans or help move them forward	3.1	3.1
Carry out comprehensive activities that connect multiple services, programs, or systems	3.5	3.1
Clearly communicate to people in the community how the partnership's actions will address problems that are important to them	3.6	2.9

Scoring: The partnership is achieving a given attribute of synergy *extremely well* if the respondents' mean score is 5, *very well* if the score is 4, *somewhat well* if the score is 3, *not so well* if the score is 2, and *not well at all* if the score is 1.

From the table it can be seen that the partnership has improved its effort in all areas except one. The improvements were the most notable in "Identifying new and creative ways to solve problems", "include the views and priorities of the people affected by the partnership's work", and "develop goals that are widely understood and supported among partners". The exception was in "implementing strategies that are most likely to work in the community".

Partnership's strengths and weaknesses in areas that are known to be related to synergy

The Center's National Study of Partnership Functioning identified four factors that are related to a partnership's ability to achieve high levels of synergy:

- The effectiveness of the partnership's leadership
- The efficiency of the partnership
- The effectiveness of the partnership's administration and management
- The sufficiency of the partnership's resources

The Partnership Self-Assessment tool measured the partnership's strengths and weaknesses in these areas. We can now readily identify what it is doing well and what it needs to focus on to improve the success of its collaborative process.

The Effectiveness of your Partnership's Leadership

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the effectiveness of a partnership's leadership is measured by a set of 11 questions. The partnership's overall score for leadership effectiveness is the mean of all of the respondents' answers to all of these questions.

The partnership's overall score for leadership effectiveness is 3.6.

This score is in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. In 2007 we scored 3.2, so again there is improvement but still in the work zone.

Table 2 shows how the partnership scored on each of the 11 questions that make up the leadership effectiveness scale. The table provides more detailed information than the overall score. The 11 questions each represent an attribute of effective leadership.

Table 2: Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership Attributes:	Partnership Mean 2009	Partnership Mean 2007
Taking responsibility for the partnership	3.6	3.9
Inspiring and motivating people in the partnership	3.3	3.3
Empowering the people in the partnership	3.4	2.8
Communicating the vision of the partnership	3.4	3
Working to develop a common language within the partnership	3.6	3.1
Fostering respect, trust, inclusiveness, and openness in the partnership	3.9	3.5
Creating an environment where differences of opinion can be voiced	3.9	3.8
Resolving conflict among partners	3.5	3.4
Combining the perspectives, resources, and skills of partners	3.6	3.4
Helping the partnership be creative and look at things differently	3.5	2.9
Recruiting diverse people and organisations into the partnership	3.5	2.4

Scoring: For each attribute, the effectiveness of your partnership's leadership is *excellent* if the respondents' mean score is 5, *very good* if the score is 4, *good* if the score is 3, *fair* if the score is 2, and *poor* if the score is 1.

The biggest improvement was seen in diversifying the partnership, helping the partnership to be creative and see things differently and empowering people in the partnership. These were identified weakness in the original self assessment, so this is a particularly pleasing result. The only area that there was a lower score was in taking responsibility for the partnership.

The Efficiency of your Partnership

The partnership's overall efficiency score is 3.5.

This score is in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. This was an improvement from 3.2 in 2007.

Table 3 shows how the partnership scored on each of the questions that make up the efficiency scale. The 3 questions each represent a dimension of partnership efficiency.

Table 3: Efficiency

How well your partnership is using its partners'	Partnership Mean 2009	Partnership Mean 2007
Financial resources	3.5	3.4
In-kind resources	3.6	3.1
Time	3.3	3

Scoring: This reflects how well the partnership is using its partners' financial resources, in-kind resources, and time. A mean score of 5 across your respondents is *excellent*, a score of 4 is *very good*, a score of 3 is *good*, a score of 2 is *fair*, and a score of 1 is *poor*.

It is particularly pleasing to note the improvement the partnership has made in using partners' in-kind resources such as skills, expertise, information, data, connections, influence, space, equipment and goods. The results also indicate an improvement in the use of partners time, which would confirm the changes made to the structure for this current Community Health Plan period 2006 – 2009.

The effectiveness of your partnership's administration and management

The partnership's overall score for the effectiveness of its administration and management is 3.9. This score is in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. In 2007 the score was 3.4.

The following table shows how the partnership scored on each of the questions that make up the administration and management effectiveness scale.

Table 4: Administration Management Effectiveness

Administration and Management Activities	Partnership Mean 2009	Partnership Mean 2007
Coordinating communication among partners	4.1	3.8
Coordinating communication with people and organisations outside the partnership	3.5	2.8
Organizing partnership activities, including meetings and projects	4.1	3.4
Applying for and managing grants and funds	4.3	3.6
Preparing materials that inform partners and help them make timely decisions	4.4	4.1
Performing secretarial duties	4.1	4

Providing orientation to new partners as they join the partnership	3.7	2.6
Evaluating the progress and impact of the partnership	3.7	2.6
Minimizing barriers for participation in partnership meetings and activities	3.6	3.9

Scoring: for each activity, the effectiveness of your partnership's administration and management is *excellent* if the respondents' mean score is 5, *very good* if the score is 4, *good* if the scores is 3, *fair* if the score is 2, and *poor* if the scores is 1.

There has been improvement in most areas of the administration and management of the partnership. The most notable of these are in evaluating the progress and impact of the partnership which could relate to the bi-monthly reports to the SPG, the evaluation of the health promotion projects, service coordination survey and self management mapping exercise. The partnership has applied for multiple grants and been approached to take part in several projects over the last 2 years and this is acknowledged in this area as well. The only area that we did not improve on is around minimizing the barriers for participation in partnership meetings and activities.

The Sufficiency of your Partnership's Resources

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the sufficiency of a partnership's non-financial resources is measure by a set of 6 questions. The partnership's overall score for sufficiency of non-financial resources is the mean of all of the respondents' answers to all of these questions.

The partnership's overall score for sufficiency of non-financial resources is 3.6. This score is in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnerships collaborative potential. Our score for this has decreased from the 2007 result of 3.8.

Table 5 shows the partnership scores for each kind of non-financial resource.

Table 5: Sufficiency of Non-Financial Resources

Kinds of Non-financial Resources:	Partnership Mean 2009	Partnership Mean 2007
Skills and expertise	3.9	3.8
Data and information	3.4	3.5
Connections to target populations	3.5	3.5
Connections to political decision-makers, government agencies and others	3.4	3.6
Legitimacy and credibility	3.8	4
Influence and ability to bring people together for meetings / activities	3.9	4.3

Scoring: for each kind of non-financial resource, the partnership has *all of what* it needs if your respondents' mean score is 5, *most of what* it needs if the scores is 4, *some of what* it needs if the score is 3, *almost none* of what it needs if the scores is 2, and *none* of what it needs if the score is 1.

Our performance in this area is not that different from last time, except for the last item on influence and ability to bring people together for meetings / activities. This could be seen as contradictory result given the improvement we scored in diversifying the partnership.

The Partnership's Financial and other Capital Resources

In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, the sufficiency of a partnership's financial and capital resources is measured by a set of 3 questions. The partnership's overall score for sufficiency of financial and capital resources is the mean of all the respondents' answers to all of these questions.

The partnership's overall score for sufficiency of financial and other capital resources is 3.5. This score is in the Work Zone, which means that more effort is needed in this area to maximize the partnership's collaborative potential. This score is very similar to what we scored in 2007 at 3.6.

The following table shows the partnership's scores for each kind of financial and capital resource.

Table 6: Sufficiency of financial and other Capital Resources

Kinds of financial and Other Capital Resources:	Partnership Mean 2009	Partnership Mean 2007
Money	3.4	3.1
Space	3.5	3.8
Equipment and goods	3.6	4

Scoring: For each kind of resource, your partnership has *all* of what it needs if your respondents' score is 5, *most* of what it needs if the scores is 4, *some* of what it needs if the score is 3, *almost none* of what it needs if the score is 2, and *none* of what it needs if the score is 1.

The only area we have improved on in this area is with financial resources which had been identified as a weakness previously. We have managed to attract some small project funds and it might appear we are managing well, but the budget is balanced by the inclusion of a significant amount of previously unexpended funds. It is unlikely the same staffing allocation will be possible into the next strategic planning period. At Banyule Community Health we have similar office space allocation as at Banyule Council and access to meeting rooms. The improvement has been the large meeting room where various larger functions and launches have been able to be held. Over the period there have been no large equipment or goods needed or purchased; the co-location arrangements assist in this regard.

How Respondents viewed the Partnership's Decision-Making Process

A partnership's decision-making process determines who is involved in partnership decision making and how partnership decisions are made. In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, respondents' views about a partnership's decision-making process are measured by 3 questions.

When respondents were asked how comfortable they are with the way decisions are made in the partnership:

2009		2007
75%	Reported they are extremely comfortable	75%
25%	Reported they are very comfortable	25%
	Reported they are somewhat comfortable	
	Reported they are a little comfortable	
	Reported they are not at all comfortable	

The partners are mostly comfortable with how decisions are made and had the same result as in 2007 in this regard.

When respondents were asked how often they support the decisions made by the partnership:

2009		2007
12.5%	Reported all of the time	
75%	Reported most of the time	100%
12.5%	Reported some of the time	
	Reported almost none of the time	
	Reported none of the time	

When respondents were asked how often they feel they have been left out of the decision-making process:

2009		2007
	Reported all of the time	
	Reported most of the time	
	Reported some of the time	12.5%
50%	Reported almost none of the time	75%
50%	Reported none of the time	12.5%

The results this time indicate that partners have been included in decision-making processes over the last two years.

View of the Benefits and Drawbacks of Participation

In the Partnership Self-Assessment tool, respondents were asked to compare the benefits and drawbacks they are experiencing as a result of participating in your partnership and to identify the particular kinds of benefits and drawbacks they have experienced thus far.

When respondents were asked how the benefits of participating in your partnership compare to the drawbacks:

2009		2007
	Reported that the benefits greatly exceed the drawbacks	
87.5%	Reported that the benefits exceed the drawbacks	100%
	Reported that the benefits and drawbacks are about equal	
12.5%	Reported that the drawbacks exceed the benefits	
	Reported that the drawbacks greatly exceed the benefits	

This result may indicate a new member reassessing the value of participating in the Alliance. For the majority, they feel the benefits exceed the drawbacks.

The table below shows the percentage of respondents in our partnership who have received each of 11 kinds of benefits.

Table 7: Benefits

Percent Receiving 2009	Kinds of Benefits	Percent Receiving 2007
87.5%	Enhanced ability to address important issues	87.5%
50%	Development of new skills	62.5%
37.5%	Heightened public profile	37.5%
75%	Increased utilization of my expertise of services	87.5%
100%	Acquisition of useful knowledge about services, programs, or people in the community	87.5%
50%	Enhanced ability to affect public policy	43%
100%	Development of valuable relationships	100%
62.5%	Enhanced ability to meet the needs of my constituency or clients	75%
100%	Ability to have a greater impact than I could have on my own	87.5%
75%	Ability to make a contribution to the community	71.4%
62.5%	Acquisition of additional financial support	75%

This table has mixed results. There is a decrease in the development of new skills, which is interesting given the support the PCP has offered for staff to attend the Health Promotion Short Course, Motivational Interviewing Workshops and more recently the intensive Health Coaching Training. The decreased result for utilization of my expertise of services is also disappointing as this was identified as something we should do more of. Perhaps the most disappointing outcome was a decrease in the ability to meet the needs of my clients, albeit the score was probably contributed by only one survey respondent. These results also indicate that the partnership hasn't enabled agencies to attract additional financial support. On the other hand there is clear support that the partnership enables agencies to have a greater impact than they could on their own.

The next table shows the percentage of respondents in the partnership who have experienced each of 6 kinds of drawbacks

Table 8: Drawbacks

Percent Experiencing 2009	Kinds of Drawbacks:	Percent Experiencing 2007
37.5%	Diversion of time and resources away from other priorities or obligations	62.5%
12.5%	Insufficient influence in partnership activities	25%

0%	Viewed negatively due to association with other partners or the partnership	0%
37.5%	Frustration or aggravation	25%
0%	Insufficient credit given to me for contributing to the accomplishments of the partnership	0%
25%	Conflict between my job and the partnership's work	37%

These results show that most of the drawbacks of partnership were shown to be decreased this time, except for the frustration or aggravation.

How satisfied your respondents are with their participation in the Partnership

Participants who are satisfied with their involvement in a partnership are more likely to maintain and increase their level of commitment than participants who are not satisfied. In the Partnership Self-Assessment Tool, respondents' satisfaction with participation in the partnership was measured by 5 questions.

When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the way the people and organisations in your partnership *work* together:

2009		2007
12.5%	Reported they are completely satisfied	
62.5%	Reported they are mostly satisfied	50%
25%	Reported they are somewhat satisfied	50%
	Reported they are a little satisfied	
	Reported they are not at all satisfied	

Respondents are more satisfied this time with the way Alliance members are working together than two years ago. The result of 75% mostly or completely satisfied with this aspect of partnership experience is encouraging.

When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with their *influence* in your partnership:

2009		2007
	Reported they are completely satisfied	
62.5%	Reported they are mostly satisfied	62.5%
25%	Reported they are somewhat satisfied	25%
12.5%	Reported they are a little satisfied	12.5%
	Reported they are not at all satisfied	

When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with their *role* in your partnership:

2009		2007
12.5%	Reported they are completely satisfied	
62.5%	Reported they are mostly satisfied	75%
12.5%	Reported they are somewhat satisfied	25%
12.5%	Reported they are a little satisfied	
	Reported they are not at all satisfied	

The results this time are more spread across the items. It reflects both an increase in satisfaction with their role and perhaps some confusion from new members how they really fit in with the key strategies of the Alliance.

When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with your partnerships plans for achieving its goals:

2009		2007
100%	Reported they are completely satisfied	
	Reported they are mostly satisfied	62.5%
	Reported they are somewhat satisfied	37.5%
	Reported they are a little satisfied	
	Reported they are not at all satisfied	

This is a good result indicating an increased satisfaction with the partnerships plans for achieving its goals.

When respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the way your partnership has implemented its plans:

2009		2007
100%	Reported they are completely satisfied	
	Reported they are mostly satisfied	62.5%
	Reported they are somewhat satisfied	37.5%
	Reported they are a little satisfied	
	Reported they are not at all satisfied	

This shows improvement in satisfaction about the way we have implemented our plans. The process we currently have underway to develop our plans for the next three years should also be clear about how we intend to implement them and include a similar reporting method, which has obviously been appreciated by members of the Alliance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The approach we are taking in our Strategic Planning for the next 3 years incorporates the areas that scored the lowest in the synergy section. We are identifying the needs and problems in the community, identifying the partners that need to be around the table to work on a solution, we use evidence based material to inform our strategies and our partnership skill in obtaining support from the right agencies.

It is timely that we have reviewed the vision of the partnership and certainly this needs to be communicated strongly and clearly with the new strategic plan when it is finalized.

One suggestion arose out of this self assessment about communicating with people and organizations outside the partnership. The interest in doing this will be further explored in the survey soon to be completed by BNPCA representatives.

When the SPG is reviewing the structure of the BNPCA for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2009 – 12 the following items need to be considered:

- Options for people to participate in and be given responsibility for various partnership activities.
- Using the partners' time effectively so that we improve the efficiency of the partnership
- Minimizing barriers for participation
- Participants influence and role in the partnership

The Partnership Self-Assessment indicates from pre-selected items that the Alliance could improve the data and information it makes available, connections to political decision-makers, government agencies and others, as well as connections to target populations. It could be argued that these are not necessarily roles for the BNPCA. Agencies usually have peak bodies to represent their interests to government, although we do on occasions provide submissions to Government discussion papers. BNPCA sees its role in community participation as supporting it's agencies to connect with their communities. However we have just completed a "Client Journey Project" collecting stories from community members with a chronic disease. It is also suggested the BNPCA needs to find additional funding. We have provided the Statewide PCP Executive with the facts about our financial sustainability and representations will be made to Primary Health Branch. We have attracted limited amounts of additional funding over the last 3 years, but the effectiveness of this is yet to be evaluated.

Overall, the BNPCA has improved its self-assessed rating in most items on this Partnership Self-Assessment Tool. Most importantly all except one item that was specifically targeted for improvement was enhanced. Current planning processes underway will address some of the items highlighted for improvement in this report and others will be clarified to determine their relevance for this Alliance.