

One Size Does *Not* Fit All!

Exploring the Complexities of Partnership Development

Carina Sass, California State University Long Beach
Anna Totta, Catholic Charities

Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities
10th Anniversary Conference

December 2-5, 2008
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Presenters

- Carina Sass, Associate Director, CSULB Center for Community Engagement
 - Project Director, *Carmelitos Initiative* (COPC 2003)
 - Project Director & PI, *Villages at Cabrillo* (HSIAC 2007)
 - 17 years experience in campus/community partnerships
- Anna Totta, Regional Director, Catholic Charities San Pedro/South Bay Region
 - Participated in the partnership for *Carmelitos Initiative* as Executive Director for Long Beach BLAST.
 - Partner and Sub-grantee with *Villages at Cabrillo* HSIAC grant.
 - More than 17 years experience with cross-organizational collaborations and 36 years experience with non-profits.

Workshop Goals

- Explore the complexities of particular partnerships.
- Understand how and why successful strategies in one partnership may not be successful in another.
- Identify the ways that organization's cultures, politics, and expectations can impact partnership development
- Find strategies to respond to the resulting challenges or opportunities that may arise.

Workshop Overview

- I. Present two partnerships: one COPC-supported and one HSIAC-supported.
- II. Identify then discuss strengths, challenges, and critical moments or turning points of campus/community partnership.
- III. Explore implications for partnership development.

I. Two Partnerships Explored

Carmelitos Initiative & Villages at Cabrillo
Long Beach, California

City of Long Beach



- Population: 487,100*
- 5th largest city in California, located in densely urban South Bay region of Los Angeles County
- Considered most ethnically diverse major city in the U.S. with 40+ languages spoken
- One of largest Cambodian communities in U.S.

**2004 Census Data*

City of Long Beach



- 23% of Long Beach's population is living in poverty
- 48% of L.B. households earned less than \$35,000 per year.



City of Long Beach



- January 2007 LB Homeless Census: 3,829 (3,145 adults, 684 children).
- Homeless' Monthly Income*
 - \$619 or less (80%)
 - \$224 or less (40%)
 - no monthly income (17%)

**2004 Homeless Assessment*

California State University Long Beach



Large, urban, comprehensive 4-year university in the 23-campus California State University system.



CSULB Center for Community Engagement



Facilitates connections between the university and the community through service-learning, community-based research, and engagement initiatives to enrich campus-community experiences and strengthen community capacity.



Two Partnerships Explored

**Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community
Partnership
(Carmelitos Initiative)**

Villages at Cabrillo

Long Beach, California

Two Partnerships Explored

**Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community
Partnership
(Carmelitos Initiative)**

Villages at Cabrillo

Long Beach, California

CSULB Center for Community Engagement



Community-Campus Partnerships & Initiatives:

- *Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership: Carmelitos Initiative (COPC):* Multi-campus, multi-agency partnership to address needs of residents of a 713 unit, county-run public housing community.



Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership



1. Los Angeles County Community Development Commission/Housing Authority (LACDC)
2. Carmelitos Housing Development—LACDC public housing community
3. California State University Long Beach
4. Long Beach City College
5. California State University Dominguez Hills
6. Long Beach BLAST—after school programs
7. Goodwill of Long Beach & South Bay—workforce development

Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership



Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership



What Worked?

- Clear shared vision from the start
- Goals were in line with partners' priorities
- Partnership developed for 14 months prior to submitting COPC proposal
- Met on a regular basis (monthly, sometimes more frequently)
- Communicate via e-mail and phone regularly
- Partners demonstrate commitment at both the individual and organizational levels (to varying degrees)

Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership



What Worked?

- Manageable number of partners
- Relatively equal participation among partners
- Became advocates for one another
- Dealing with problems as they arise
- Build in social interaction (relationship building)
- Continually building trust
- Learning to work as a group
- Learning to share & pool resources
- Learning how to disagree and make up

Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership



Partnership Challenges?

- Changes within partnering organizations:
 - Personnel changes
 - Administrative turnover
 - Funding/program cuts
- Partner organizational politics
- Incompatible policies/procedures among partners
- Varying levels of commitment and/or trust within partnering organizations (leadership versus staff representative)

Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership



Critical Turning Points

- Community Café: defined need, established partnership
- Post-COPC proposal barbeque: social/bonding solidified partnership and established “traditions”
- LACDC Educational Partnership Symposium: Partners were central in organizing this county-wide event. LACDC Executive Director Carlos Jackson began calling for a formal assessment of the benefits of partnerships with local colleges and universities.

Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community Partnership



Critical Turning Points

- Long Beach City College *City SERVE* Program is eliminated: LBCC representative continues without organizational support
- Key founding partner leaves LACDC: Partnership is significantly affected by the loss of one individual.
- LACDC Office of Educational Partnerships established: Step toward institutionalization within the LACDC, but creates challenges with partnership

Two Partnerships Explored

**Greater Long Beach/South Bay Community
Partnership
(Carmelitos Initiative)**

Villages at Cabrillo

Long Beach, California

CSULB Center for Community Engagement



Community-Campus Partnerships & Initiatives:

- *Villages at Cabrillo (HSIAC)*: Multi-agency partnership identifies and addresses service gaps at the Villages at Cabrillo.



Villages at Cabrillo

- ▣ 26-acre former U.S. Naval housing site
- ▣ Comprehensive residential social service complex serving both veteran and non-veteran homeless individuals in need of transitional and supportive housing services.



From the old (Navy housing)



To the new!



Villages at Cabrillo

The HSIAC-funded partnership supports the independent programs for homeless families and youth by helping to

- Establish a structure to enhance cooperation and collaboration
- Facilitate shared resources to meet common goals
- Promote greater sense of community within the Villages at Cabrillo



Villages at Cabrillo Partners



Family Housing & Support Services:

1. Catholic Charities—Emergency Shelter
2. GLASS—Teen Shelter & Group Home
3. New Image—Transitional Shelter
4. PATH Ventures—Permanent Housing & Support Services
5. The Salvation Army—Transitional Shelter
6. 1736 Family Crisis Center—Support Services
7. Comprehensive Child Development—Childcare & Preschool

Villages at Cabrillo Partners

Educational Support:

8. California State University Long Beach

9. Long Beach Unified School District:

- Hudson School (K-8 grades)
- Bethune Transitional Program for Homeless Children



Villages at Cabrillo Partners

Educational Support:

- 10. Long Beach Parks & Recreation WRAP—After School Program
- 11. Century LIFT—After School Academic Tutoring
- 12. Long Beach BLAST—Academic Mentoring
- 13. School on Wheels—Academic Tutoring



Villages at Cabrillo Partners

- 14. Cantwell-Anderson, Inc.
- 15. Century Housing, Inc./Century Villages at Cabrillo
- 16. U.S. Veteran's Initiative



CSULB Oasis Community Center

HSIAC funding supported the creation of the Oasis Center along with additional leveraged resources through partners such as Catholic Charities.



CSULB Oasis Community Center

Life Skills classes, job search assistance, after school tutoring and enrichment programs, and computer help are offered.



CSULB Oasis Community Center



Family Commons

PATH Ventures will offer supportive services in January 2009 for the Family Commons at Cabrillo, 81-units of permanent subsidized housing. Construction is almost complete and move-in is anticipated for the end of December 2008.



Villages at Cabrillo & CSULB

What is Working?

- Key partners with a shared vision
- Prior university involvement
- Needs/issues emerged from community partners
- Established monthly meetings already in place (Directors Meeting)

Villages at Cabrillo & CSULB

What is Working?

- University participated in Directors Meetings for 7 months prior to submitting HSIAC proposal
- Active involvement and commitment from key partners

Villages at Cabrillo & CSULB

Partnership Challenges?

- Partnership development with sixteen partners
- Negotiating differences of philosophy, values, culture among organizations
- Understanding hierarchy, decision-making differences.
- Balancing autonomy vs. collaboration

Villages at Cabrillo & CSULB

Partnership Challenges?

- Territory issues among partners
- Partners' widely varying degrees of investment
- Staff changes
- Need was recognized by most but not all
- Goals of partnership not central to individual agencies' mission.

Villages at Cabrillo & CSULB

Partnership Challenges?

- For some partners, Villages at Cabrillo programs are a small percentage of total programs.
- Understanding/negotiating different management styles

Villages at Cabrillo & CSULB

Critical Turning Points

- Youth Concerns Committee established: facilitated sense of shared goals
- Success in connecting several CSULB faculty and students to meet community-identified needs: begin to establish credibility
- Opening of Oasis Community Center: positive response of residents, increased interest among staff of previously less-involved shelters.

Best Practices: Measuring Up

CCPH* “Principles of Good Community-Campus Partnerships”

- Agreed-upon mission, values, goals, & outcomes
- Mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment
- Builds upon identified strengths and assets; addresses areas for improvement
- Balances power, shares resources

*CCPH – Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
(see <http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html>)

Best Practices: Measuring Up

CCPH* “Principles of Good Community-Campus Partnerships”

- Clear, open, accessible communication
- Agreed-upon roles, norms, and processes
- Feedback among all stakeholders to continually improve partnership and its outcomes
- Partners share credit for its accomplishments
- Partnership develops and evolves over time

*CCPH – Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
(see <http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html>)

II. Reflecting on the Partnership

Focus on the partnership relationship and process and identify:

1. What works? (successes/strengths of partnership)
2. What are challenges to your partnership's success?
3. What are significant "critical moments" or turning points that impact the partnership? (positive or negative)

Discussion

- Identify examples of “what works” (partnership strengths) and what is a challenge?
- Identify examples of critical moments within partnerships
 - What characteristics of your partners and partnership influence what works and what becomes a challenge to the partnership?
 - How might an outcome differ within another partnership?

Discussion

- How can we determine what is within the scope of the partnership's control and what is not?
- How do we respond to influences that are beyond our control to change?
- How can we anticipate and respond appropriately to factors that are unique to a particular partnership?
- Can we “learn lessons” from one partnership to positively impact another? How?

Wrap-Up

- Community/University partnerships require concurrent attention to both the purpose and activities of the partnership *and* the partnership itself.
- Seek to understand your partners and avoid maintaining an “organization-centric” perspective (seeing everything from the perspective of your organization).
- Expect the best of your partnership but recognize that real life is complex...challenges need not become failures!

Carina Sass, California State University Long Beach

csass@csulb.edu

562-985-2376

Anna Totta, Catholic Charities, San Pedro Region

atotta@ccharities.org

562-591-1641