

**Developing Effective Supports for Immigrants and Refugees:
Collaboration across Institutions and Community**

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COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Abstract

This paper blends the results of a meta-analysis of research literature which identifies key ingredients for the success of inter-organizational collaboration with empirical data on the experience of recent immigrants and refugees in a region of Minnesota, U.S.A.

A survey of 459 Hmong, Karen, Latino, Liberian, and Somali immigrants and refugees portrayed the principal needs experienced by these groups, with respect to: civic participation and social engagement; education; employment; health; money management; transportation, housing, and safety. Survey respondents identified the services most likely to improve their transition to a new area of residence: services supplying food, housing, and clothing; employment training and employment services; and multilingual programming of many types.

A separate study of emergency preparedness among eight cultural groups indicated those groups seek to partner with institutions to improve services and education for their members.

Eight factors that influence the success of inter-organizational collaboration relate most directly to institutional arrangements among service-providing agencies and immigrant populations themselves: mutual understanding and trust; open and frequent communication; shared vision; favorable political and social climate; concrete, attainable goals and objectives; history of collaboration or cooperation in the community; established informal relationships and communication links; and sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time.

Providers of services to immigrants, funders of such services, and immigration policy makers can benefit from understanding the factors which influence the success of inter-organizational collaboration, especially if those individuals apply this understanding to foster more effective relationships among agencies serving immigrant populations and between those agencies and the immigrant populations themselves.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Developing Effective Supports for Immigrants and Refugees: Collaboration across Institutions and Community

Immigration constitutes an ongoing dynamic throughout the world. The theme statement for the 2017 Metropolis Conference suggests that “global trends have produced an unprecedented degree of human mobility.” In 2015, the World Bank estimated a total of 243 million migrants around the world, with the United States of America having the largest number of foreign-born residents – approximately 46 million (World Bank, 2015).

Effectiveness in welcoming and integrating immigrants into a new home country and community requires collaboration among, and within, institutional sectors in the receiving countries. Partnering must occur among organizations of varied types: social services; legal services; education; government; voluntary assistance organizations; religious organizations; community-based organizations; advocacy groups; and others. In addition, entities in the for-profit sector may join initiatives to support the integration of immigrants.

Collaboration among immigrant-serving organizations can occur formally – for example, through contractual relationships among agencies, or legally mandated alliances. It can also occur informally – for example, when agencies loosely partner with one another or with immigrant groups, or engage minimally in sharing of information or referring people to one another for services.

However, collaboration among organizations, especially among organizations from different sectors, does not always happen efficiently. These efforts often fail. Even within a defined service-delivery sector, different organizations may have never partnered or might not have awareness of one another, and thus have trouble working jointly. Effective leveraging of the capacity of organizations intending to promote integration of new arrivals in a particular community requires deliberate, joint effort.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

To that end, for example, Canada has developed local immigration partnerships which do not provide services themselves, but rather act to “Foster local engagement of service providers and other institutions in newcomers’ integration process; Support community-based knowledge-sharing and local strategic planning; and, Improve coordination of services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014, p.3).

In today’s modern and complex societies, collaboration among multiple organizations within a specific region constitutes a necessary condition for addressing social issues and promoting social progress of all types: “Changes in the ways communities must and do solve problems, coupled with changes in information technology may, in many situations, make collaboration the most effective tool for bringing together a wide range of talents and resources to solve a problem, build a program, or create something entirely new” (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001, p. 5).

This paper blends two types of information: the results of a meta-analysis of research literature which identifies key ingredients for the success of inter-organizational collaboration; and empirical data, derived from studies conducted by Wilder Research, on the experience of recent immigrants and refugees in one area of the world (the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region of Minnesota, U.S.A., also known as the “Twin Cities”).² Our research indicates that collaboration is one way to achieve a significant, effective, community-wide approach to welcoming and

² Since its inception as a state, compared with other U.S. states, Minnesota has had a higher-than-average proportion of its population who are first- or second-generation immigrants. At that time, European countries were the most common countries of origin of foreign-born residents, predominantly Germany, Sweden, and Norway. These three countries remained the most common birth places for foreign-born residents in Minnesota until about 1980 (Minnesota Compass, n.d. a). Starting in 1970 and continuing today, the number of foreign-born residents in Minnesota has grown substantially, and more frequently includes immigrants and refugees from Central and South America, Asia, and Africa. As of 2015, the largest number of foreign-born residents in Minnesota came from Mexico, followed by India, Laos and Thailand (Hmong), Somalia, and Vietnam. In 1970, 55 percent of Minnesota’s foreign-born residents lived in the Twin Cities. By 2000, that proportion reached 80 percent (Minnesota Compass, n.d. b).

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

meeting the needs of immigrants and refugees. We hope that our work can inform agencies that provide services to immigrants, that fund such services, and that establish policies related to immigration.

Ingredients for the Success of Collaboration

Collaboration refers to mutually beneficial and well-defined relationships entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. A meta-analysis of research literature on collaboration (Mattessich et al., 2001) has identified 20 factors that increase the likelihood of success in collaborative relationships. These factors appear in Appendix A.

All of these factors have importance for collaborative efforts intended to promote the integration of immigrants and refugees into new communities. We highlight eight of these factors to which the empirical data presented later in this paper point directly.

Mutual understanding and trust. “Members of the collaborative group share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations: how they operate, their cultural norms and values, their limitations, and their expectations” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 14).

Trust constitutes a significant element of any collaborative relationship. Sometimes, organizations working within the same area to serve immigrants know each other well, whereas other times they need to create or strengthen trusting relationships. This trust needs to exist among the formal organizations, the immigrants’ informal associations, and the immigrant population itself. Building trust takes time. Moving quickly into task accomplishment before developing mutual understanding and trust can lessen the likelihood of success.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Open and frequent communication. “Collaborative group members interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly, and convey necessary information to one another and to people outside of the group” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 23).

Organizations that are working together to serve immigrants, whether created by government, by non-governmental efforts, or by immigrants themselves – must establish mechanisms for interaction among the partners. An analysis of barriers impeding adequate treatment of asylum seekers, based on a literature review and interviews with key informants, identified the need for cross-sector consultation, collaboration, and high quality communication among public authorities and community-serving organizations as an absolute necessity³ for effective processes and services (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2007, p. 82).

Shared vision. “Collaborating partners have the same vision, with clearly agreed-upon mission, operating principles, objectives, and strategy. The shared vision may exist at the outset of collaboration, or the partners may develop a vision as they work together” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p.26).

A vision shared by all who collaborate on immigrant issues and the delivery of services to immigrants provides direction, enabling organizations better to work in concert. A shared vision helps to prevent misunderstandings. Therefore, for greatest effectiveness and efficiency, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, immigrant-developed organizations and networks, and the immigrants they serve, should share a similar vision: “What, ideally, do we want to achieve through the integration of immigrants into this community?”

³ “Une concertation intersectorielle, une collaboration et une communication de meilleure qualité entre les divers pouvoirs publics et les organismes sont aussi requises et mentionnées systématiquement dans les récits des intervenants.”

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Favorable political and social climate. “Political leaders, opinion-makers, persons who control resources, and the general public support (or at least do not oppose) the mission of the collaborative group” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 23).

Concrete, attainable goals and objectives. “Goals and objectives of the collaborative group are clear to all partners, and can realistically be attained” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 25).

History of collaboration or cooperation in the community. “A history of collaboration or cooperation exists in the community and offers the potential collaborative partners an understanding of the roles and expectations required in collaboration and enables them to trust the process” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 12).

If collaboration has already occurred among organizations serving immigrants, or if organizations in a specific locale frequently collaborate in service delivery or social initiatives even if they have not yet served immigrants, then they have an understanding of the processes, resources, and normative expectations for working jointly rather than independently. This understanding, the research shows, enhances the capacity of those organizations to collaborate in other efforts.

If collaboration has not occurred in a specific locale, that means that organizations seeking to collaborate may need more time to get to know one another; they may need to build in specific steps for forging their collaborative alliance, taking time to identify processes for effective joint work, to secure necessary resources, and to develop a plan that reflects mutually agreed-upon expectations regarding the rights and responsibilities of collaborating organizations.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Established informal relationships and communication links. “In addition to formal channels of communication, members [of collaborative efforts] establish personal connections—producing a better, more informed, and cohesive group” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 24).

Regardless of formal inter-organizational agreements and patterns of interaction, effective collaboration requires relationships among individuals. To the extent that these relationships evolve and sustain themselves informally, the research indicates that the bonds among collaborating organizations will strengthen, and the effectiveness of their work together will increase.

Findings from recent studies conducted with immigrant and refugee communities, as highlighted in the following sections of this paper, suggest that commonly used modes of communication within immigrant and refugee communities include word-of-mouth and other informal avenues. In order for relationships to develop and for communication links to form, it is important to immigrants and refugees that those they partner with are knowledgeable about and understand their communities’ cultures and backgrounds. This relationship building may require time, energy, and resources to engage in informal meetings and interactions, like sharing a meal, visiting a community center, or participating in a community cultural celebration to open up lines of communication that make effective collaboration possible.

Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time. “The collaborative group has an adequate, consistent financial base, along with the staff and materials needed to support its operations. It allows sufficient time to achieve its goals and includes time to nurture the collaboration” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 27). In an article directed toward foundations and other funders we addressed the importance of funders who have an understanding of the time and resources required for successful collaboration to serve immigrant and refugee communities

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

(MartinRogers, Evans, & Mattessich, 2016). When starting a new project or initiative within a cultural community, funders and other parties with power should proceed slowly and recognize the time and other resources that are needed to make true community engagement and collaboration successful. We have often seen efforts fail because of timelines that were too short to allow for authentic relationship-building, or projects that were funded inadequately or over too short of a time period to accomplish anything measurable or noticeable for the community. The extent of time and resources needed may in some cases be due to a community's lack of experience navigating U.S. systems and processes and may, in other cases, be due to a community's preference for doing things according to their cultural traditions rather than aligning with standard American/Euro-centric and bureaucratic systems and approaches. A funder's and power-holding stakeholder's time and flexibility, willingness to step back or start over as needed, and openness to authentic collaboration, dialogue, and critical input from start to finish are the hallmarks of successful efforts to engage and better serve communities of immigrants. Further, initiatives without these key ingredients in some cases do more harm than good and could permanently damage the relationship between a cultural community and a funder or other mainstream institution.

Surveys of Immigrants and Refugees in Minnesota, U.S.A.

Although the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources provide some population-level data on immigrants and refugees, they do not provide in-depth understanding of the immigrant experience in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region (i.e., the Twin Cities).

This paper combines information we gathered about immigrant and refugee experiences in the Twin Cities through multiple studies: first, new data gathered from over 450 immigrants and refugees through a culturally responsive and community-based research project called

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Speaking for Ourselves; second, findings from a community needs assessment for a local public health agency about unique needs related to emergency preparedness among immigrant and refugee communities; third, work with a public television channel to learn ways of promoting increased mainstream financial systems access and usage among under-served cultural communities.

Speaking for Ourselves

Wilder Research first surveyed immigrants in 2000 and reported the findings in *Speaking for Themselves*, a study of Hmong, Latino, Russian, and Somali immigrants in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region (Mattessich, 2000). Many community organizations, students, government agencies, and others found the information valuable and asked for updated information.

The second study, *Speaking for Ourselves*, is a community-engaged research project that looks at the experiences of Hmong, Karen, Latino, Liberian, and Somali immigrants and refugees living in the Twin Cities (MartinRogers, 2015). An advisory group that included individuals from the cultural communities was formed. Advisory group members held professional positions in organizations that serve communities of immigrants and refugees across a variety of sectors. This group offered guidance on all major aspects of study design, implementation, and dissemination of findings.

The *Speaking for Ourselves* study accomplished interviews with 459 immigrants and adult children of immigrants about their lives – their families, education, jobs, health, and engagement in their communities – in order to learn: What are the most pressing needs of immigrant and refugee communities in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region? What are the issues of greatest concern? What assets are available to address these issues and concerns?

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Of all survey respondents, 95 percent were first generation (born outside of the U.S.); 65 percent were female; 25 percent were age 18-29, 54 percent were age 30-49, and 21 percent were age 50 or older; education levels varied from having no formal education (17%) to having a bachelor's degree or higher (9%); 55 percent had an annual household income of less than \$30,000 and 32 percent had an annual household income of \$30,000 or more (MartinRogers, 2015).

We ultimately produced reports on several topics including: civic participation and social engagement; education; employment; health; personal money management; transportation, housing, and safety; and the immigrant experience. These reports share study participants' perspectives on the most important steps that institutions and public officials need to take in order to promote optimal education, employment, health, mental health, financial management, transportation, housing, and safety for newcomers to the region (MartinRogers, 2015).

Speaking for Ourselves participants also shared, in their own words, about the resources and supports that were most helpful to them, as a new immigrant family, when they first came to the Twin Cities (MartinRogers & Bartholomay, 2015). Respondents most commonly named housing (29%), employment assistance or training (24%), government agencies (20%), food assistance (20%), and health care coverage (20%).⁴ Although these resources were mentioned most frequently, none of these resources was named by a majority of respondents. The resources and supports viewed as most helpful varied greatly both within and across cultural communities. For Somali participants, over two-thirds (69%) said that government agencies were the most helpful support for new immigrant families. Comparatively, the greatest percentage of Karen

⁴ Survey respondents answered an open-ended question where they could include multiple responses.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

respondents (43%) said that food assistance, such as government-funded programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), were the most helpful for them when they first arrived in the U.S.⁵

With respect to collaboration, government agencies, schools, religious institutions, nonprofits, and those in the private sector, working together to provide the services and supports highlighted as most helpful by study participants, may be an effective strategy in ensuring access to supports and services for new immigrant and refugee families. Institutions working to address the top needs identified by survey respondents (health care, employment, housing, and food support) may be challenged to collaborate due to environmental factors, such as an unfavorable political and social climate, or a lack of history and institutional systems around collaboration to provide these services. However, institutions may be well-positioned to successfully collaborate if they have an appropriate cross section of members and members that see collaboration as in their self-interest.

The immigrants and refugees who participated in *Speaking for Ourselves* want community leaders, organizations, government agencies, and service providers to learn more about their communities. When asked to name one thing institutions could do to support the quality of life for their cultural community, participants' responses were very mixed. The most common response was to learn about their community and culture.

For many other study respondents, basic needs and jobs and employment training are areas where more resources are needed to make the transition to Minnesota easier. Providing basic needs such as food, housing, and clothing (21%) and providing jobs (14%) were the most

⁵ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal aid program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people living in the U.S.A.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

commonly mentioned services by study respondents that should be provided to make the transition for new immigrants easier. Again, the resources and supports deemed most helpful varied both within and across cultural communities. For example, Somali respondents, having service providers that speak their language and understand their culture was mentioned more often than basic needs and employment as an important factor in making the transition easier (MartinRogers & Bartholomay, 2015).

Therefore, we believe there are more opportunities for collaborative effort to provide job opportunities and job training for immigrants and refugees to make the transition easier for newcomers. In addition, survey respondents and the advisory group felt that collaboration, working across sectors and with members of immigrant and refugee communities, could improve immigrants' ability to access resources to meet their basic needs when they first arrive in their new community. Working collaboratively across sectors to provide economic opportunities for immigrants and refugees may be facilitated by collaboration factors related to purpose (e.g., sharing concrete, attainable goals and objectives); however, collaborative partners may be challenged to identify sufficient funds, skills, materials, and time needed to effectively establish shared goals.

The findings from *Speaking for Ourselves* also reinforce the centrality of one aspect of what makes collaboration work: mutual understanding, respect, and trust among collaborators. Ways for the staff in organizations serving immigrants to increase mutual understanding include spending time, energy, and resources on learning about newly arriving immigrant and refugee communities. Study participants considered such steps very important for supporting the quality of life of their cultural community. Unfortunately, many organizations and institutions face barriers due to structure or workplace culture that make it difficult for them to engage with

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

community members in a meaningful way. Bureaucratic and cultural barriers sometimes impede engagement with community, for example, a culture of busyness, corporate professionalism, or individualism can sometimes be off-putting for people working in smaller, culturally based community organizations that may have a culture of collectivism. These differences can make it difficult to develop informal relationships with community. Additionally, barriers like requiring that subcontractors have an extremely high amount of insurance coverage can make it impossible to partner with community organizations and provide them with compensation for their work.

Over half of *Speaking for Ourselves* participants have felt at least once that they are not accepted in Minnesota because of their race, culture, religion, or immigration status. Two out of 10 participants say they feel this way once or twice a month or more often.

Again, mutual understanding, respect, and trust among collaborators is essential to effective collaboration and essential to a positive experience for immigrants and refugees transitioning to a new environment and utilizing services. Additionally, having a favorable political and social climate that supports the mission of a collaboration to provide immigrants and refugees the services and supports needed to thrive is key to success in collaborative efforts. The data from our studies support the notion that, for successful integration, new immigrants and refugees must feel accepted regardless of their race, culture, religion, or immigration status and that the overall political and social climate must tend to support them.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cultural Needs Assessment in Hennepin County, Minnesota

A community needs assessment in eight different cultural communities (Hmong, Latino, Liberian, Sierra Leonean, Guinean, Somali, Oromo, and South Asian Indian), conducted for the

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

emergency preparedness department of a local public health agency, provided insights into how local government agencies might collaborate with immigrant and refugee communities to provide services in the event of an emergency. Three principles as identified by study participants are described below.

Partnership. Findings from this assessment indicate that there is a desire among immigrant and refugee communities to work collaboratively with institutions to improve services, education, and training for their communities. Ways in which communities would like to collaborate include building partnerships between government institutions and respected leaders within their community as well as community organizations that are run by and serve their community. Community organizations may include places of worship as well as small, nonprofit organizations.

Communication. In communicating with immigrant and refugee communities it is important that information and materials be provided in the native language spoken by that community. In addition, effective communications strategies should be identified for each community as there may be different modes of communication commonly used across different cultural groups. Understanding how different cultural communities communicate is important in partnering to share information and resources. Open and frequent communication is required for effective collaboration. Primary sources of information for the communities included in this study were community centers and organizations as well as culturally- or language-specific television channels or radio stations.

Connecting social networks. Related to the principal of partnership, immigrant communities, both new and established, have rich social networks and systems through which information is shared and communicated whether through their religious institutions, select

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

community leaders, or word-of-mouth. Similarly, the institutions that serve them, like public health agencies, also have a social network structure within which they operate. To the extent to which these distinct networks are connected to create a collaborative system for communication and information sharing depends upon the development of trust and a mutually beneficial relationships as described in the core principles of collaboration. Connecting these networks may require government agencies and other service providers to identify and establish meaningful relationships, both formal and informal, with key leaders and organizations within immigrant and refugee communities. These relationships lead to the identification of existing and trustworthy avenues through which to share important service-related and other information to these communities.

Behavioral health and emotional support. All participating groups said their community and social networks (e.g., friends, family, neighbors, and others who share the same culture) are their primary source of emotional support and play an essential role in the resiliency of their community. Faith-based leaders and institutions were also identified as playing a critical role in providing emotional support for these communities during difficult times. Past experiences in their country of origin related to war or other disasters require that those collaborating to serve immigrants and refugees take a trauma-informed approach when working in these communities.

tpt/ECHO: Cultural Ambassadors and Responsive Financial Strategies

A practical illustration of the implementation of the principles described above is seen in tpt/ECHO's work to bring health, safety, civic, and emergency readiness communication to immigrants and refugees in Minnesota. ECHO Minnesota (Emergency, Community, Health and Outreach), is a branch of tpt (Twin Cities Public Television). Through close collaboration with

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

health and safety experts, bilingual community leaders, and talented spokespersons, ECHO develops programming for television and regional broadcast, phone, print, web, DVD, and partner relay distribution designed to reach immigrant and refugee communities. To do this effectively, ECHO partners with “cultural ambassadors” to bridge the gap between mainstream institutions and small cultural communities. These individuals are their entry point into the rich social networks that operate within these cultural communities.

In addition to their work with cultural ambassadors, ECHO contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a literature review and community talking circles to identify ways of promoting increased mainstream financial service usage among four cultural communities.⁶ This is an example of one strategy used to better understand the cultural communities they serve. These findings highlight several ways financial institutions could adjust or revise their practices to engage several large cultural communities in their services.

- Hire staff from immigrant and refugee communities at financial institutions, such as banks.
- Create culturally responsive and appropriate financial services and products (i.e., offer micro-savings accounts, develop alternative ways of assessing credit-worthiness, accept alternative forms of ID, facilitate lending circles and other financial practices in which cultural communities already engage, further develop Shari’ah-compliant services and products for observant Muslim customers).

⁶ See Umbreit, M. (2003).

Talking circles are deeply rooted in the traditional practices of indigenous people. The purpose of a talking circle is to create a safe, non-judgmental, place to discuss and issue or react to a speaker of film that allows the opportunity for each person to speak, without interruptions. There are a set of ground rules and guidelines for participation that participants must follow.

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

- Educate and equip frontline bank staff with appropriate knowledge and tools.
Frontline bank staff do not always possess the cultural knowledge or knowledge of services to best assist immigrant and refugee customers.
- Invest in immigrant and refugee communities and engage in in-person outreach efforts, partner with community-based organizations to offer financial services, and open branches where people from these communities are highly populated.

There are many examples locally in the Twin Cities and from other places of how mainstream institutions form cross-sector partnerships to address the needs and preferences and improve the quality of life for immigrants and refugees who have come to these communities. More research and collaborative learning is needed to ensure that these best practices can be documented and shared and used to ease the transition for the growing number of immigrants and refugees around the world.

Conclusion

Providers of services to immigrants, funders of such services, and immigration policy makers can benefit from understanding the factors which influence the success of inter-organizational collaboration, especially if those individuals apply this understanding to foster more effective relationships among agencies serving immigrant populations and between those agencies and the immigrant populations themselves.

This paper demonstrates that the general principles of inter-organizational collaboration apply in the context of integration of immigrants and refugees into their new places of residence. Overarching efforts to promote collaboration among service providers and others may have many benefits. To that end, the Canadian approach offers a good example of an endeavor to

COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

promote collaboration among organizations.⁷ The United States Office of Refugee Resettlement has also recently announced a new initiative to promote collaboration.⁸ Other countries may be engaging in similar efforts or will soon develop them.

The evidence from the three empirical studies incorporated in the analysis for this paper reflects the fact that the strong social networks existing within immigrant populations, with embedded patterns of relationships as well as strong cultural norms and expectations, share many similarities with formal organizations. Therefore, the social engagement of these populations – whether initiated by institutions seeking to connect with them, or initiated within these populations as they reach into the community to participate in social, economic, and political life – should, in fact, resemble the process of inter-organizational collaboration. Our extensive research on the critical factors that enhance and strengthen collaboration can and should be used by collaborative partners, funders who seek to support this work, and other mainstream institutions to better address the needs of immigrants and refugees as they arrive and settle in their now home communities.

⁷ See Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014; Esses et al., 2014.

⁸ See Stein, 2017.

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COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Appendix A**20 Factors Influencing the Success of
Inter-organizational Collaboration (from Mattessich et al., 2001)**

1. Factors Related to the ENVIRONMENT
 - A. History of collaboration or cooperation in the community
 - B. Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community
 - C. Favorable political and social climate
2. Factors Related to MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS
 - A. Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
 - B. Appropriate cross section of members
 - C. Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
 - D. Ability to compromise
3. Factors Related to Process and Structure
 - A. Members share a stake in both process and outcome
 - B. Multiple layers of participation
 - C. Flexibility
 - D. Development of clear roles and guidelines
 - E. Adaptability to changing conditions
 - F. Appropriate pace of development
4. Factors Related to COMMUNICATION
 - A. Open and frequent communication
 - B. Established informal relationships and communication links
5. Factors Related to PURPOSE
 - A. Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
 - B. Shared vision
 - C. Unique purpose
6. Factors Related to RESOURCES
 - A. Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time
 - B. Skilled leadership

Appendix B

A Note on our survey methods: A modification of Respondent-Driven Sampling using a community-engaged, culturally responsive approach

Wilder Research used an innovative, culturally appropriate data collection approach to identify and recruit eligible community members to participate in the study. This approach, which is a modification of Respondent Driven Sampling (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004; Dombrowski, Khan, Moses, Channell, & Misshula, 2013), involves randomly selecting a handful of “seed” respondents within each community and asking those respondents to refer up to three additional people from their community. Those respondents are then asked to refer other respondents, ultimately creating respondent referral “chains” that in some cases carried out as far as 11 “waves.”

Adults were eligible to participate in the study if they, or their parent, were born outside of the U.S., they were from one of the cultural communities included in the study, and they lived in Hennepin or Ramsey County in Minnesota. Respondents received \$20 for completing the survey and \$5 for each referral.

There are several ways in which we collaborated with or engaged community members in the process of gathering the data. As noted above, we formed a study advisory group who helped us to select Respondent Driven Sampling as our primary sampling method, and they helped us to modify the approach so it would be feasible in their cultural context and within the limitations of our study’s budget and timeline. In addition, Wilder Research hired bilingual staff from the target cultural communities to help with data collection. The skills of these staff were critical to the success of this project, and includes both social science interviewing skills as well as social

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networking and “sales” skills to explain the study and encourage community members to participate.

After we collected and analyzed the data, we held a community celebration at Wilder Center in Saint Paul. We invited all of our advisory group members plus all of the study participants to come and be recognized for their contributions to the work. We also presented our preliminary findings using small group discussions and flip charts, and asked community members to comment on or refine our initial results and recommendations. The feedback from these sessions was incorporated into the final study reports, and the process itself helped to create a sense of buy-in regarding what we learned and what we plan to do as our next steps.

Strengths and limitations of the study methods. By using a modified version of Respondent Driven Sampling, we were able to survey a group of immigrants and refugees who are more representative of their cultural communities in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region than if we had used convenience sampling methods (i.e., surveying people who are all affiliated with one program, religious organization, housing site, neighborhood group, etc.). However, study participants are not *statistically* representative of their broader cultural communities because scientific random sampling was not used, and the full Respondent Driven Sampling method for weighting and analyzing the survey data was not feasible.

We believe that, for many topic areas and purposes, the data produced by this study are better than any other existing source of data about these immigrant and refugee communities in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis-Saint Paul). Also, because of the iterative and community-engaged approach we used, the key findings have been endorsed strongly enough by a wide enough range of study participants and community stakeholders to be considered valid and actionable for many practical purposes. We recommend that these (and other) data are used with consideration of the

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unique contextual factors that influence research findings. See the detailed study methodology report and data book for more information about the study methods and limitations and detailed findings by cultural community (MartinRogers, 2015).