



NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

WHAT'S PARTNERSHIP

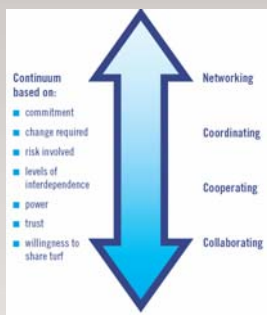
There are different types of partnerships, ranging on a continuum from networking through to collaboration (VicHealth, The partnership analysis tool <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au>):

NETWORKING involves exchange of information for mutual benefit.

COORDINATING involves exchange of information for mutual benefit and altering activities for a common purpose.

COOPERATING involves exchanging information, altering activities and sharing resources for mutual benefit and a common purpose.

COLLABORATING involves all of the above plus a willingness to increase the capacity of another organization for mutual benefit and a common purpose.



Not all partnerships should move to collaboration, sometimes networking is enough. The nature of partnership will depend on the needs, purposes and willingness of participating members.

WHY PARTNERSHIP

Working together should help different partners to meet their own objectives as well as contributing to shared targets and objectives and this by building organizational capacity tapping into existing abilities of organizations or systems to increase involvement, decision-making and ownership of issues. Partnership should also be an opportunity for shared learning, pooling resources and for increasing the potential for innovation. Nevertheless building partnerships is not always neither easy nor an appropriate of effective strategy. Before building partnership is necessary to decide if it worth and be aware of challenges and success or failure factors.

In Occupational Health, main collaboration actions consist on a mutual search for information and solutions and key stakeholders for partnership will belong mainly to:

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS, as Public administration bodies or research and training organisations that will increase awareness and knowledge, develop a framework for action, gather data and transfer information or promote and support interventions.

INTERMEDIARIES as mandatory insurance organisms, professional associations, social agents or external preventive services, that will provide direction and support to those within the workplace, networking, standards, continuing education and professional advice.

WORKPLACE agents as own and joint prevention services, union representatives, human resource managers, employer, employees...that will take decisions, give resources and implement interventions.

MAIN STEPS FOR BUILDING PARTNERSHIP

-Determining the need for the partnership and choosing the partners: it's the problem-setting phase. Partnership is mostly initiated by a single organisation which faces a problem or issue and need other stakeholders for solving or addressing it. During this phase it's important to identify the right partners, make a common definition of problem, rise commitment to collaboration, and allocate resources.

-Making sure partnership works: it's the direction-setting phase. Partners should establish ground rules, organise information search, explore options, develop trust between them and clarify partnership goals around which agreements can be made.

-Planning and implementing collaborative action taking into account barriers for partnership; reinforcing strengths, putting in place good structures and communication means, etc.

-Evaluating and reviewing partnership: assessing the quality of the partnership process and measuring progress towards goals and partners expectations; ensuring agreement compliance and promote adjustments, if necessary.

EUROPEAN PROJECT ON PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION

The features and value of partnership in Workplace Health Promotion has been explored in a European project funded by the Public Health Program of the European Commission, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland and Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The project, so called 'Workplace Health Promotion: National Health Policies and Strategies in an Enlarging Europe during 2005-2007' has been coordinated by FIOH and supported by ten ENWHP network members who have devoted time and expertise in experimenting and testing partnership approach for WHP.

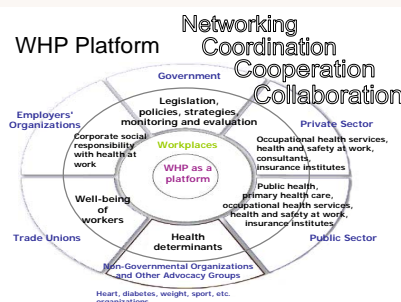
This project will have two main outputs, available around September 2007 in <http://www.enwhp.org>:

- A Practice guideline for partnership building
- A fact Sheet on the value of partnership for workplace health promotion.

In this project partnership is defined as "a strategy for building alliances and attaining common goals between various stakeholders, such as public, private, and non-governmental organizations and social partners to improve workers' health". The main critical issues for the functioning of a partnership highlighted by researchers are leadership, administration, and management, partners' efficiency and involvement, and actual implementation and challenges at workplaces. Other critical issues are sufficiency of resources, governance structures, non-financial resources, satisfaction and commitment of partners, and quality of plans.

The project will also made available ten examples of partnership in WHP at local and national level, coming from ten different European countries and tackling areas as information campaigns, training and WHP interventions and tool development:

- Belgium:** Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (PREVENT) www.prevent.be
- Finland:** Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) www.ttl.fi
- Germany:** Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) www.baua.de
- Iceland:** Administration of Occupational Safety and Health (AOS) www.vinnueftirlit.is
- Ireland:** Work Research Center (WRC) www.wrc-research.ie
- Italy:** Department of Public Health, University of Perugia www.unipg.it
- The Netherlands:** TNO TNO Quality of Life/Work and Employment www.tno.nl
- Poland:** Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine www.imp.lodz.pl
- Romania:** Romtens Foundation www.romtens.ro
- Spain:** National Institute for Safety and Hygiene at Work (INSHT) www.mtas.es/insht



EXAMPLES OF NETWORKS IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AREA

- European Network for Workplace Health Promotion - ENWHP (<http://www.enwhp.org>)
- Mediterranean Training and Research in Occupational Safety and Health Network - METRONet (<http://www.metronet-osh.org>)
- Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health - PerOSH (<http://www.perosh.org/home.html>)
- Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety- BSN (<http://www.balticseaosh.net/denmark/index.shtml>)
- EuroHealthNet (<http://www.eurohealthnet.eu/>)
- The New Quality Initiative in Germany – INQA (<http://www.inqa.de/Inqa/Navigation/english.html>)
- Enterprises for health EfH – (<http://www.enterprise-for-health.org>)
- European Network for Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health – ENETOSH (<http://www.enetosh.net>)

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