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Capstone Portfolio

# Intersectoral Management

Intersectoral management refers to collaboration between and across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors to address complex societal issues. “While each sector has its limitations, it also has unique assets, capabilities, relationships, and mandates. If the sectors collaborate toward a common purpose, they can accomplish far more than each one can alone” (Britto & Gitterman, 2021). Intersectoral collaboration allows the sectors to share their expertise and resources to more effectively and efficiently address societal problems. As we encounter more domestic and global challenges, such as disasters, pandemics, and economic crises, intersectoral cooperation becomes increasingly necessary and more common, especially as trust in the public sector decreases.

“Cooperation across sectors takes a range of forms, from outsourcing, multistakeholder governance, and informal emergency aid to more complex joint ventures, alliances, and formal partnerships (Britto & Gitterman, 2021). As each organization has its formal systems, resources, and goals, collaboration between them requires flexibility. Cross-sector cooperation can be enhanced by:

- Increasing communication between stakeholders through regular meetings
- Fostering a culture of transparency and trust through information sharing
- Establishing and promoting cross-sector task forces and partnerships
- Creating formal agreements to outline roles and responsibilities which streamlines and reduces conflict in the decision-making process

However, various challenges arise when discussing collaborative governance: goal congruence, alignment of resources, and measurement of outcomes (Britto & Gitterman, 2021).

*Goal Congruence*

“Public, nonprofit, and private organizations in various sectors have different goals” (Britto & Gitterman, 2021). Public organizations are typically working to manage public goods and services, expand governmental agencies, and enhance public infrastructure (Britto & Gitterman, 2021). Nonprofit organizations seek to advocate for and promote ideas and provide service delivery to communities not reached by the public and private sectors. Private organizations' goals typically focus on increasing market share, growth, and profitability. Additionally, with different goals, organizations vary from one another in their strategies to achieve their goals.

The general goal of a collaborative governance network should be to provide services or goods more efficiently, such as being more cost-effective. Achieving goal congruence between the stakeholders helps to reduce conflict which may act as barriers to effective collaborative governance. Goal congruence may shift over time, such as during times of public emergencies, but in general, it allows cross-sector cooperation to be more successful.

*Resource Alignment*

"Organizations in different sectors typically have access to different types of resources" (Britto & Gitterman, 2021). Large, private multinational organizations have access to resources on a global scale, while smaller, more local organizations have relationships with the communities they exist in, allowing them access to local resources, such as local governments and other community organizations (Britto & Gitterman, 2021). Governments at all levels have resources available to them from other local, state, and government agencies, allowing them to share information. Nonprofit organizations are unique in that both the private and public sectors act as resources for them by partnering with them on various initiatives and activities.

"Cross-sector collaborations are most likely to succeed when partners bring to the table resources that are complementary, but not so idiosyncratic to prevent effective governance" (Britto & Gitterman, 2021). If organizations lack formal networks or trust, challenges can arise when depending on each other's idiosyncratic resources. It can lead to poor communication and withholding of critical resources (Britto & Gitterman, 2021).

*Performance Measurement*

Performance is measured differently by each sector and even by organizations within each sector. Private organizations tend to have measurable, quantitative goals, such as sales growth, which allows for performance comparison both within and between companies. Nonprofit and public organizations have more qualitative goals such as increased public safety and reduction of poverty which cannot always be objectively measured.

Successful collaborations require a formal set of performance measurement systems to be established and agreement on how success or failure will be determined. These systems should be flexible enough to assess and accommodate the goals of all stakeholders involved.

**The Role of Public Administrators in Collaborative Governance**

As the societal issues we face become increasingly complex, collaboration across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors is needed to address these issues. “Collaborative governance is common in numerous policy areas, including economic development, municipal budgeting, public health, human services, environmental protection and restoration, and transportation and land use” (Scott & Thomas, 2016). Understanding intersectoral management is crucial for public administrators to effectively navigate and engage with various stakeholders. To do this, public administrators require a numerous, diverse set of interpersonal skills –political astuteness, communication, conflict management and mediation, negotiation, and leadership.

Scott and Thomas identify three roles public administrators play in collaborative governance.

> They may act as (i) leaders, who convene and direct collaborative governance initiatives; (ii) encouragers, who provide human, financial, or technical resources in order to precipitate or support collaborative governance; and/or (iii) followers, who join collaborative governance efforts convened or encouraged by others (Scott & Thomas, 2016).

Most often we find that public administrators act in a ‘broker’ position, leveraging their relationships with individual stakeholders to create a larger collaborative governance network (Scott & Thomas, 2016). When public administrators encourage collaborative governance, there is a “transfer of resources to external actors,” Scott and Thomas note, “No matter the nature of the resource, in essence the public decision maker encouraging collaborative governance allows participants to shape planning and policymaking (presumably to be more in keeping with participant interests) in exchange for participation” (Scott & Thomas, 2016).

Successful understanding and leveraging of collaborative governance networks increase the “perceived legitimacy” of public administrators because of their relationships with other well-respected parties (Scott & Thomas, 2016). It also provides them with resources they might not otherwise have access to. For example, if a public administrator wants to push forward a program or bill but has limited resources, they can use collaborative governance as a tool to solve their problems by reaching out to nonprofit or private organizations they have established relationships with.

**Case Study: COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented event that revealed the weaknesses and strengths of collaborative governance in the U.S. and forced a new era of cooperation among the sectors.

Cross-sector cooperation occurred at various levels of government in response to the pandemic. It required collaboration at all levels of government and across sectors to provide health and emergency response. "Ensuring a sustainable supply and appropriate skill mix of health workers requires effective cooperation and governance across multiple sectors, including health, education, labor, trade, finance, gender and social welfare, as well as the engagement of the private sector, and across all levels of government – from the local to the national" (Caffrey et al, 2023).

There were instances of government partnerships with non-profit organizations throughout the pandemic to improve service delivery and response.

> For example, in April 2020, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) created the Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV) partnership, a cross-sector collaboration to develop a coordinated research strategy for prioritizing and speeding development of the most promising treatments and vaccines. While NIH refers to ACTIV as a public-private partnership, it is coordinated by the nonprofit Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) and includes public and private-sector partners. The ACTIV initiative pursues four fast-track focus areas, each of which is led by a cross-sector working group representing the public (government), the private sector (industry), and nonprofits, as well as philanthropic (foundations) and academic organizations (universities). (Britto & Gitterman, 2021).

There were also many instances where the private sector was leveraged to support the efforts to address post-pandemic recovery. "The U.S. Department of State's Office of Global Partnerships launched the COVID-19 Private Sector Engagement and Partnership Fund (the

Fund) in August 2020. The Fund is jointly administered with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in line with the 2020 State-USAID four pillar COVID-19 Recovery Strategy (Office of Global Partnerships). The Fund provides support for public-private partnership programs to mitigate and address the impacts of the pandemic (Office of Global Partnerships). By leveraging the expertise and resources of private sector organizations, innovative solutions were able to be developed and accelerated to aid in post-pandemic recovery efforts. Each of the initiatives supported by the Fund "were selected based on their unique approach to mounting a broad-based economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic" (Office of Global Partnerships).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the inadequacies of our current intersectoral governance structures and the importance of investing in these networks. The pandemic demonstrated how response efforts span past the boundaries and responsibilities of individual departments, organizations, and jurisdictions. Intersectoral management plays a significant role in the response to large, complex societal issues and should continuously be developed and improved upon to best service the public.

References

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