EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS:

STRENGTHENING THE SPORT AND RECREATION SECTOR IN THE NORTH

By

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We accept this Report as conforming
to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

The sport and recreation sector in the Northwest Territories consists of a myriad of relationships and contractual agreements. Within the sector, many organizations are responsible for providing programming to improve the lives of residents through physical activity, sport and recreation. Over the last ten years, organizational relationships have deteriorated and have become ineffective. By strengthening the organizational relationships, program delivery could be vastly improved and enhanced. Through the use of a qualitative action research strategy, this project examined effective collaboration between one government division and one program delivery non-government organization. Under the auspices of the Government of the Northwest Territories, this inquiry found that effective collaboration is based on an evolution of relationship. Resulting recommendations propose that value be placed on interpersonal and professional development opportunities for staff while investing in a structure which will support staff in their collaborative activities.

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CHAPTER ONE – FOCUS AND FRAMING

> It is not enough to teach a man a specialty. Through it he may become a kind of useful machine but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. (Einstein, 1952, Education for Independent Thought section, para. 1)

The Northwest Territories sport and recreation sector consists of a multitude of organizational relationships. Within the sector, the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth (SRY) is ultimately responsible for $6 million which is channelled toward youth initiatives, sport, recreation, and physical activity. A large portion of this funding is distributed to five non-government organizations (NGOs) through an organizational arm of the GNWT; the NWT Sport and Recreation Council (SRC). Each in their own way, the five NGOs, SRC, and SRY are working to define and build "a culture of physical activity" (SRC, 2010, para 1). In essence, SRY and the NGOs engage in contracts outlining deliverables, however, more than that, they are part of a collaborative partnership that collectively strives for similar outcomes. As such, this inquiry examines the factors that contribute to effective collaboration within a government and NGO relationship.

I have worked within the NWT sport and recreation sector for 13 years in a variety of capacities. For the last nine years I've worked within GNWT and for the last six years I have served as the Manager of Youth and Volunteer Programs. During my tenure in sport and recreation I have witnessed the dynamics of organizational relationships change dramatically. In part, it has been the deterioration of these relationships that has motivated me to explore effective collaboration. My purpose, through this inquiry, is to create an opportunity for individuals to understand the nature and benefit of collaborating effectively.

This paper will investigate and identify elements of effective collaboration; describe individual values and skills utilized to foster collaborative relationships; and explore the NGO-government collaborative relationship. The inquiry question being explored in this project is: How can the GNWT's Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth build an effective collaborative relationship with a key Northwest Territories sport and recreation partner? The inquiry focuses on the organizational relationship between the GNWT and the Northwest Territories Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA); one of five partner NGOs. NWTRPA is a non-profit organization with a primary focus on providing leadership, support and services to NWT communities, volunteers in recreation, and recreation professionals. It works in the areas of leadership, active living, trails, and aquatics (NWTRPA, n.d., para 3).

Sub-questions of this inquiry are:

1. What values and skills do individuals within the GNWT need to utilize in order to foster collaborative relationships?
2. What realities do NGOs and governments face within collaborative relationships?

Significance of the Inquiry

Collaborative relationships between governments and NGOs are increasing in number. Governments are guided by policies on spending public money and NGOs play the role of program delivery agencies. Both work to reach similar goals and objectives (Buchanan & Pilgrim, n.d., p. 1). As Linden (2003) notes; "the point of forming a partnership or alliance is to create a product or service that none of the parties can produce (as well) on its own" (p. 43). Examining the significance of collaborative relationships between SRY and NWTRPA may serve as an integral step in understanding the elements of effective collaboration within the entire NWT sport and recreation sector. Kouzes and Posner (2007) emphasized that "collaboration is a

critical competency for achieving and sustaining high performance" (p. 224). Similar to a high performance sport team, individuals working in the sector must bond together and understand what it takes to work collaboratively toward common goals.

Over the last number of years there have been many attempts to unite the entire sector in an effort to improve the delivery of programs and services in the NWT. In the last attempt in 2010, each organization came together to collaborate on redesigning the structure of the entire sector. Within eight months the process stalled because "on both sides of the argument, organizations remained entrenched in their positions, and as a result, creative solutions to the current stalemate could not be found despite several attempts to do so" (DM Process Closure Communiqué, personal communication, 2010). As the Director of SRY explained:

> There are some strained relationships in the sector as a result of the failed collaboration process. We [GNWT] have an obligation to help deal with this problem by trying to understand the partner organizations and work with them to achieve results that will benefit both of us. If we can identify the elements of healthy partnerships with all partner organizations we demonstrate that we are supportive of the sport and recreation community in general, and that by working together we will be more effective in our efforts to promote healthy lifestyle choices to NWT residents. (I. Legaree, personal communication, June 15, 2011)

Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggest that "a focus on a collective purpose binds people into cooperative efforts" (p. 233). If the opportunity to examine and identify factors of effective collaboration within the GNWT organizational relationship with the NWTRPA is missed organizations may remain "entrenched in their positions" (DM Process Closure Communiqué, personal communication, 2010). When this occurs there is little possibility of investment in shared goals and the realization of a shared vision. "All of us sometimes construct our own psychic prisons, and then lock ourselves in. When we don't know what to do, we do more of what we know" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 8). By understanding and demonstrating factors contributing to effective collaboration an opportunity may be created to model collaboration to

all partners. As a result, this allows a collective effort to be channelled towards furthering the GNWT's priority of ensuring a "fair and sustainable health care system by investing in prevention, education and awareness" (GNWTa, n.d., para 7).

By exploring effective collaboration, organizational relationships in the sector may become stronger and the recognition and understanding of a united vision may once again be shared among all NWT sport and recreation partners. After all, "soccer isn't a one-on-eleven sport; hockey isn't one-on-six; baseball isn't one-on-nine; basketball isn't one-on-five. They require team effort – as do all extraordinary organizational achievements" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 238).

Organizational Context

In Canada, the GNWT operates as a consensus style of government. "The consensus system of governing is more in keeping with the way that aboriginal peoples have traditionally made decisions" (GNWTc, n.d., para. 5).

The residents of the NWT elect Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) every four years. The vision of the 17th Legislative Assembly, elected in October 2011 is: "Strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories" (GNWTa, n.d., para. 1). Of the many goals related to this vision one underscores the importance the GNWT places on collaborative processes; it states: "A strong and independent north built on partnerships" (GNWTa, n.d., para. 2).

The Government's goals and priorities are assigned to 13 government departments in an effort to assist the GNWT in achieving this vision. Every department is ultimately governed by one Minister elected by MLAs, which is a significant factor in the success of Departments

achieving goals. The dynamics of a department can - and more than likely will - change in an election year. Further, at any moment Ministers can be moved between departments at the prerogative of the Premier. "The role of the Premier includes chairing Cabinet meetings, assigning portfolios to Ministers and disciplining Ministers" (GNWT, 2010, para. 2). One department working to achieve the goals of the 17th Legislative Assembly is Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) whose vision is; "Responsible, responsive community governments, citizens and youth in safe and vibrant communities" (GNWT, 2010, p. 4). In an effort to realize its vision, MACA directs 77% of its budget, managed by a number of specialized departmental divisions, directly to NWT communities (Main estimates, 2011, p. 6-6). One of these specialized divisions is SRY.

SRY consists of 17 staff working in four overlapping areas; sport, recreation, youth, and volunteerism. These staff work across the NWT in five different regional centres with one central office (headquarters) located in Yellowknife, the capital of the NWT (see Figure 1). Guided by the goals and priorities set by the Legislative Assembly, a director, two managers, and officers/support staff work in headquarters overseeing program budgets and the general direction of SRY activities. Regional field experts work directly with communities to support programs and build capacity at a local level. The field experts each report to a Regional Superintendent, however, work plans are developed with input from the Director of SRY.

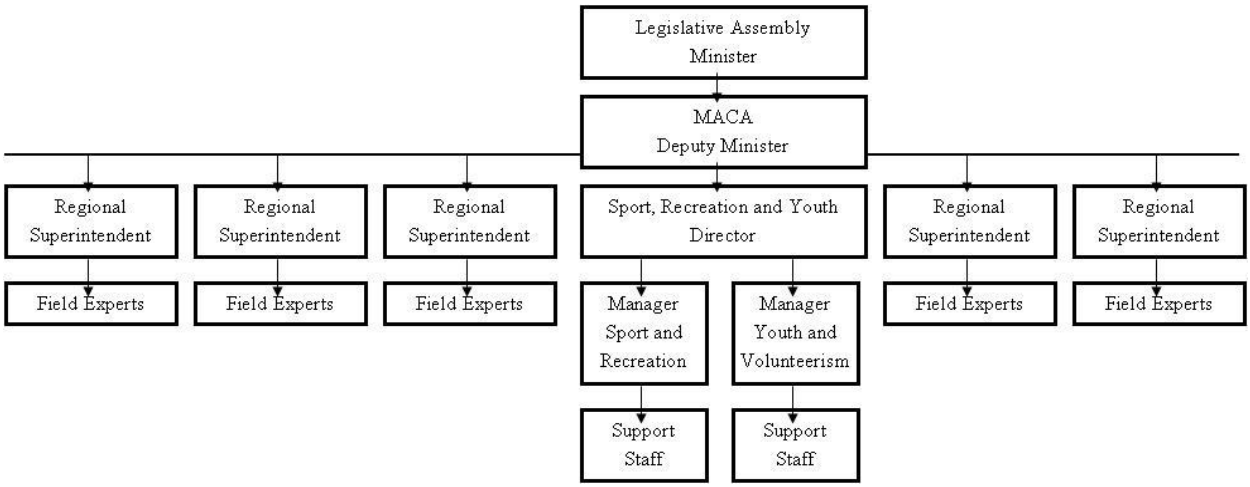

Figure 1. Reporting structure of the Government of Northwest Territories' Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth.

Specifically related to SRY, one goal of MACA is to "partner with a broad base of stakeholders to encourage healthy lifestyle choices with a focus on physical activity, youth and volunteer initiatives" (GNWTb, 2010, p. 19). To fulfill this goal, SRY enters into partnerships with sport and recreation partners, as well as numerous other community organizations that are aligned with MACA's goals.

As a division within a government, there are protocols and policies to adhere to as government officials guide spending of public money. To fulfill government mandates, workable solutions must be found in order to engage in successful partnerships with other government departments as well as NGOs. In a NGO forum held in 2010 by the GNWT Department of the Executive, the concluding comments from the facilitators report stated that "working with the NGO community, as a whole, has advantages for the GNWT – but if such collaboration is to be successful, in the longer term, a clear definition of purpose, intent and leadership of the effort will be necessary" (Facilitators Report, personal communication, November, 2010).

Organizational Systems Analysis of the Inquiry

Existing within a government, whose responsibility is to ensure the future and success of the territory as well as the health and safety of the residents, can overshadow the priorities of SRY. More specifically MACA, responsible for SRY, is often referred to as the "department which deals with dogs, ditches and dumps" (G. Schauerte, personal communication, January 8, 2011) because it responds and reacts to the immediate and critical needs of 34 communities.

Within the sector, SRY exists alongside five partner NGOs. Each NGO is led by an executive director who reports directly to the NGOs respective volunteer board. There are a total of 41individual board positions within the SRS. Figure 2 shows the SRC and five NGOs outlining the number of respective board (executive) positions.

Figure 2. The organizations within the NWT sport and recreation sector.

Having a limited pool of volunteers in the NWT, it is not uncommon to 'recycle' board members or have an individual serving simultaneous terms on two or more boards. In the last few years this has been the case within the sector as each of the partner NGOs elects board members. This can lead to individuals experiencing competing interests and find them in conflict of interest situation. As an example, a current Chairperson of one of the partner NGOs

board was, simultaneously, also a board member of the SRCs board (A note to the reader, in order to maintain the anonymity of my references I have used pseudonyms):

> In this situation, you have competing interests. On one hand, the NWT Sport and Recreation Council's board was committed to change by bringing in accountability and on the other hand, you have the existing partners that are reluctant to embrace change. People don't want to give up part of the pie for a more equitable share. (Jack, board member, personal communication, February 12, 2011)

In addition to dual roles, some board members remain in a variety of board roles for 10 years or more. This length of tenure in a role can perpetuate resistance and reluctance to change ways of operating. As Bolman and Deal (2008) outline "change disrupts existing patterns or roles and relationships, producing confusion and uncertainty" (p. 396). In almost every changing circumstance, people tend to resist change, unless steps are taken to address the needs of individuals (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Stringer, 2007).

Nationally in Canada, sport, education, health, and recreation sectors are engaging in collaborative efforts to educate and encourage Canadian residents to participate in sport and physical activities throughout their entire lifespan. The Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is "a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada through improved athlete training and better integration between all stakeholders in the sport system, including sport organizations, education, recreation and health" (CS4Lb, 2011, para. 1). Currently the sector is working to adopt this collaborative model and align with Canada's national goals to promote physical activity in the NWT. This movement will expand the sector's breadth of stakeholders in physical activity by collaboratively joining forces with the education and health sectors in the north.

When viewed from a systems theory perspective, the sector is a long-standing intricate web of organizations and individuals (see Figure 3). From this perspective there are multiple

organizations and multiple levels of government involved; each impacted by the next. Each organization has its own mandate and goals. Each government department has its own goals which link back to the Legislative Assembly's vision and goals. Every individual organization within the sector feels the pressure to protect and achieve its own mandate. Bolman and Deal (2008) state;

> If political pressures on goals are visible in the private sector, they are blatant in the public arena . . . Public agencies operate amid a welter of constituencies, each making demands and trying to get its way. The result is a confusing multiplicity of goals, many in conflict. (p. 199)

Figure 3 illustrates the complexity of the sector's system of connections. It illustrates formal and informal working relationships as well as funding accountability relationships and shows funding relationships within government; within the NGO sector; and finally between government and NGOs.

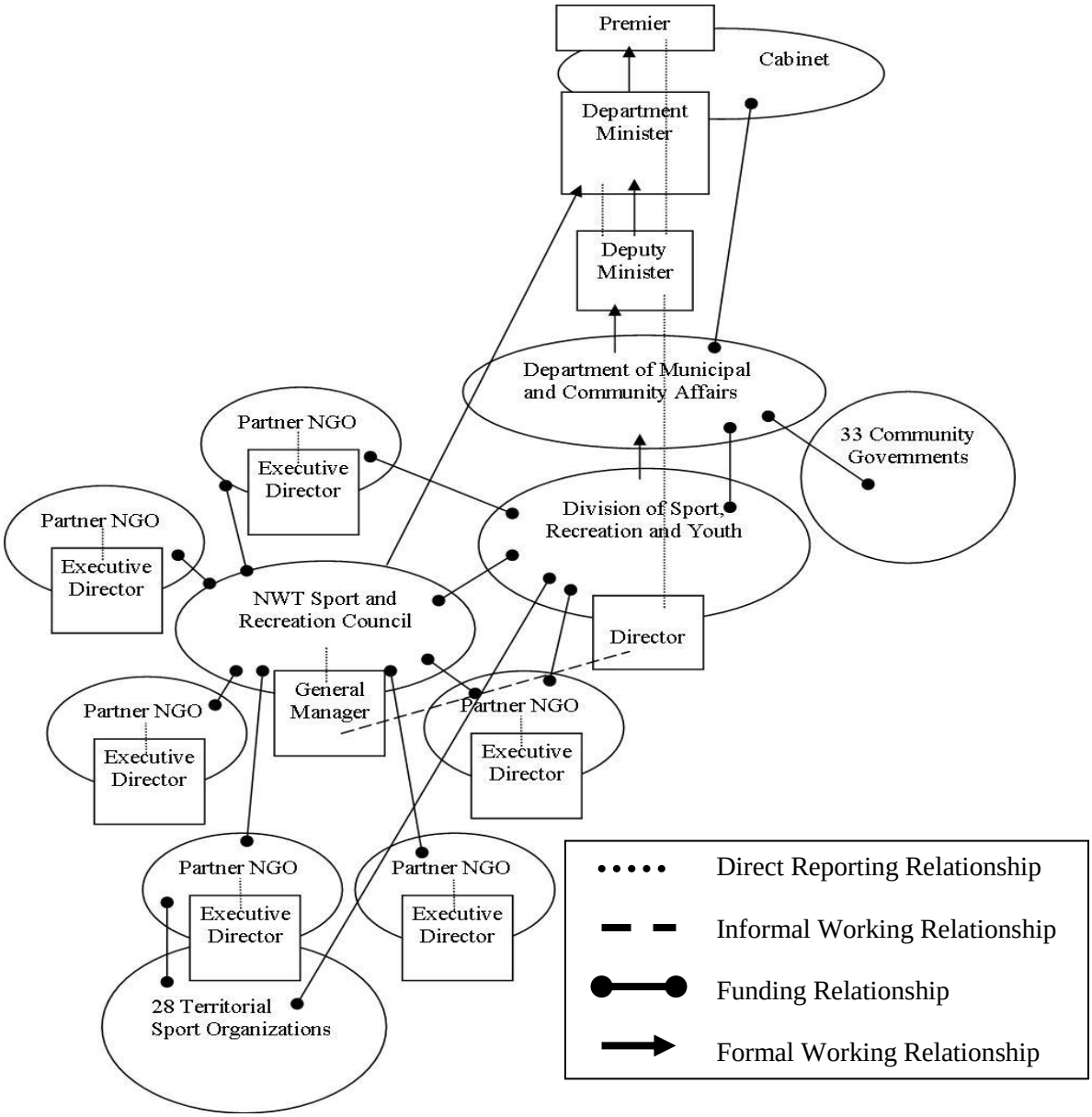

Figure 3. NWT sport and recreation system of relationships including; direct reporting, formal, and informal relationships between individuals and organizations.

The 17th Legislative Assembly has emphasized the necessity of creating and strengthening partnerships in the NWT. Within the sector, opportunities to move forward by using an effective collaborative framework must be seized because "the fact is that cooperation pays bigger bonuses than individualistic or competitive achievement" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 238). Considering the complex opportunity of the impending CS4L collaborative movement

nationally and within the NWT, clarity on a shared vision and the ability to forge effective collaborative relationships is quickly becoming paramount. There is an opportunity for the sector to engage in and model systemic and effective collaborative processes through established lines of relational connectedness. It will be through these effective collaborative efforts that the sector will forge ahead, as one team committed to a shared vision, in an effort to improve the lives of NWT residents though physical activity and positive leisure opportunities.

CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As part of the exploration of how the GNWT's SRY can build an effective collaborative relationship with a key Northwest Territories' sport and recreation partner, the following chapter examines literature related to effective collaboration, the values and skills necessary to foster effective collaboration, and a general overview of NGO - government organizational relationships.

The review of the literature demonstrated that effective collaboration is not necessarily a 'one size fits all' process and, in fact, many factors must be considered when engaging in a collaborative process. Each stakeholder has unique characteristics which should be recognized as all stakeholders work together to identify common structures, goals and outcomes – outcomes that far exceed the ability of a singular organization. If scholars and organizations are to fully understand multi-organizational collaboration "the myriad of needs or goals driving organizations should be articulated and linked to impacts or outcomes" (Sowa, 2009, p. 1022).

A Holistic Framework

In order to understand and appreciate the complete and complex nature of effective collaboration, a two-pillared framework was applied within the following literature reviews. This framework bridges two theories: Spiral Dynamics and Integral Theory. Both theories are presented individually; then meshed; and finally, woven within the three reviews of literature.

Spiral Dynamics

To assist me in my exploration of the complexities of effective collaboration, I have chosen to consider the research of Clare W. Graves. "Graves was one of the first psychologists who understood that we live, act, make decisions and undergo change through complex systems" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 29). Graves was keenly interested in investigating human existence

and proposed that "the psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiralling process marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behaviour systems to newer, higher-order systems as man's existential problems change" (Graves, as cited in Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 28). This proposition underlies the theory of Spiral Dynamics.

Spiral Dynamics describes eight levels of human development - these levels represent stages of developmental complexity and are named '[v]MEMEs' (short for 'memetic values systems'). Beck and Cowan (2006) stated that "a [v]MEME transposes itself into a world *view*, a value *system*, a *level* of psychological existence, a belief *structure*, organizing *principle*, a *way* of thinking, and a *mode* of living" (p. 40). In an effort to simplify and depersonalize each level, Beck and Cowan (2006) assigned colours to each [v]MEME ; further, they described the first six [v]MEMEs (Beige, Purple, Red, Blue, Orange, Green) as the first-tier memes and part of an 'old paradigm'. The second-tier and currently the last two [v]MEMEs (Yellow, Turquoise) are part of a 'new paradigm' (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 5). Affirming Graves' assertion, Wilber (2000) made a distinction between the two tiers stating that "what none of the first-tier memes can do, on their own, is fully appreciate the existence of the other memes . . . second-tier thinking appreciates the necessary role that all of the various memes play" (p. 12).

The principles of Spiral Dynamics are fractal and can be applied at different scales of human systems; e.g. to an individual, to an organization, and even to society. It is a way of understanding human nature universally, as it is not dependent solely on such attributes of personality type, race or gender. "It offers a unifying framework that makes genuinely holistic thinking and actions possible" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 30). Table 1 describes key phrases that define the eight development levels, or [v]MEMEs, within Spiral Dynamics.

Table 1

[v]MEMEs and Their Core Definitions

[v]MEME	Core Definitions
BEIGE	Driven by deep brain programs, instincts, and genetics; little awareness of self as a distinct being (undifferentiated); minimal impact on or control over environment.
PURPLE	Show allegiance to elders, custom, clan; bond together to endure and find safety; seek harmony with nature's power.
RED	Gratify impulses and sense immediately; fight remorselessly and without guilt to break constraints; don't worry about consequences that may not come.
BLUE	Bring order and stability to all things; enforce principles of righteous living; divine plan assigns people to their places.
ORANGE	Progress through searching out the best solutions; play to win and enjoy competition; learn through tried-and-true experience.
GREEN	Promote a sense of community and unity; reach decisions through consensus; share society's resources among all.
YELLOW	Find natural mix of conflicting 'truths' and 'uncertainties'; experience fullness of living on an earth of such diversity in multiple dimensions; demand integrative and open systems.
TURQOUISE	Self is part of a larger, conscious, spiritual whole that also serves self; global (and whole-Spiral!) networking sees as routine; acts for minimalist living so less actually is more.

Note: Adapted from Beck and Cowan (2006)

An organization structure is not simply four exterior walls, a multitude of interior office and meeting spaces, a network of cables, machinery and memory sticks. Organizations are in fact, people, and perhaps even more accurately,

> organizations are constructions of the mind. Words printed on wall charts, symbols of rank worn around the neck, and spaces occupied as manifestations of power are but artifacts and icons. The real connections are within [v]MEME profiles of people, those invisible webs that order society and snare relationships. (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 172)

Organizations are created by and operated by individuals and at any point in time; each individual (or organization/society) will display a dominant [v]MEME. The dominant [v]MEME is referred to as a particular *center of gravity*; however, other [v]MEMEs will be present as well. Within an individual, organization or a society, this collection of [v]MEMEs is described as a [v]MEME stack. "The specific [v]MEMEs which are active within an individual, organization, or society . . . are arranged in response to specific issues and circumstances" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 68). Table 2 summarizes each [v]MEMEs developmental level and describes that particular [v]MEMEs motivational factor.

Table 2

vMEME Developmental Levels and Basic Motives

vMEME	Popular Names	Basic Motives
BEIGE	*SurvivalSense*	Staying alive through innate sensory equipment.
PURPLE	*KinSpirits*	Blood relationships and mysticism in a magical and scary world.
RED	*PowerGods*	Enforce power over self, others, and nature through exploitive independence.
BLUE	*TruthForce*	Absolute belief in one right way and obedience to authority.
ORANGE	*StriveDrive*	Possibility thinking focused on making things better for self.
GREEN	*HumanBond*	Well-being of people and building consensus get highest priority.
YELLOW	*FlexFlow*	Flexible adaptation to change through connected, big picture views.
TURQUOISE	*GlobalView*	Attention to whole-Earth dynamics and macro-level actions.

Note: This is a simplified description of the eight vMEMEs; the developmental levels not only of individuals, but also the evolution of society. Adapted from Beck and Cowan (2006)

In the context of collaborative partnerships, organizational structures play a significant role in the level of complexity within the partnership. Organizations evolve through stages of complexity. How an organization is structured will contribute to the dominant vMEME, or center of gravity, within the organization as a whole. When we consider the organizational structure within a single, whole organization, and then consider the added complexity of merging one organization with another organizational structure as the organizations strive to create effective collaborative relationships – the emergence of greater complexity becomes evident. To

this process, it can be said that the level of complexity within a collaborative partnership increases as higher level ^{v}MEME organizations partner with any other level ^{v}MEME organizations (M. Hamilton, personal communication, September 24, 2011). Table 3 describes the ^{v}MEME developmental levels as they each relate to organizational structures.

Table 3

^{v}MEME Organizational Structure Descriptions

Level of Complexity	**Structure of Organization**
Level 1 (BEIGE)	Hearth circle
Level 2 (PURPLE)	Tribal gathering circle
Level 3 (RED)	Power-based hierarchy
Level 4 (BLUE)	Authority-based hierarchy
Level 5 (ORANGE)	Strategic hierarchical system
Level 6 (GREEN)	Social network
Level 7 (YELLOW)	Self-organizing system
Level 8 (TURQUOISE)	Global noetic field

Note. Adapted from Hamilton (2008)

Within the levels of Spiral Dynamics and considering the core definitions of each ^{v}MEME, Beck and Cowan (2006) proposed that the construct of an integral organizational relationship encompasses these elements:

> PURPLE and RED must establish effective BLUE authority before ORANGE enterprise can sprout. BLUE stability and ORANGE entrepreneurism must be present before GREEN social transformation is feasible. At the same time it takes an overarching YELLOW to macro-manage the whole process.*(sic)* (p. 13)

Using a Spiral Dynamics lens illuminates the deeply rooted and often invisible logic pulsating "at the choice-making center in the core intelligences of every person, organization, or society" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 33).

Integral Theory

Complimenting Spiral Dynamics is the holistic concept of Integral Theory. At its core, the meaning of integral is to embrace or join, "in a sense of unity-in-diversity, shared commonalities along with our wonderful differences" (Wilber, 2000, p. 2).

A holistic, 'all-quadrant, all-level,' illustration is used in depict the complexity of Integral Theory (see Figure 4). "The point of an 'all-quadrant, all-level' approach is that it would honor all the waves of existence – from body to mind to soul to spirit – as they all unfold in self, culture, and nature" (Wilber, 2000, p. 52). The quadrants themselves are used to distinguish the two "fundamental dimensions of existence" (Edwards, 2005, p. 272) which exist in all social domains. These two dimensions refer to the interior/exterior dimension, and the individual/collective dimension.

> The interior-exterior dimension refers to the relationship between the intangible world of subjective experience and the tangible world of objective behaviour. The individual-collective dimension refers to the relationship between the individual world of self-agency and collective world of social communion. (Edwards, 2005, p. 272)

Figure 4 illustrates the two dimensions of interior-exterior and individual-collective, provides a one word description of each quadrant (consciousness, upper-left; behavioural, upper-right; cultural, lower-left; social, lower-right), and shows the continuum of individual capacities by way of the diagonal lines within each quadrant. Further, Wilber (2000) outlined that within each quadrant and within each diagonal line, consideration must be given to the individual level of capacity, which will vary from person-to-person. This complete picture of Wilber's (2000)

integral approach is captured as: "all-quadrants [I, It, Its, We], all-lines [individual capacities], and all-levels [developmental levels within the lines]" (p. 42).

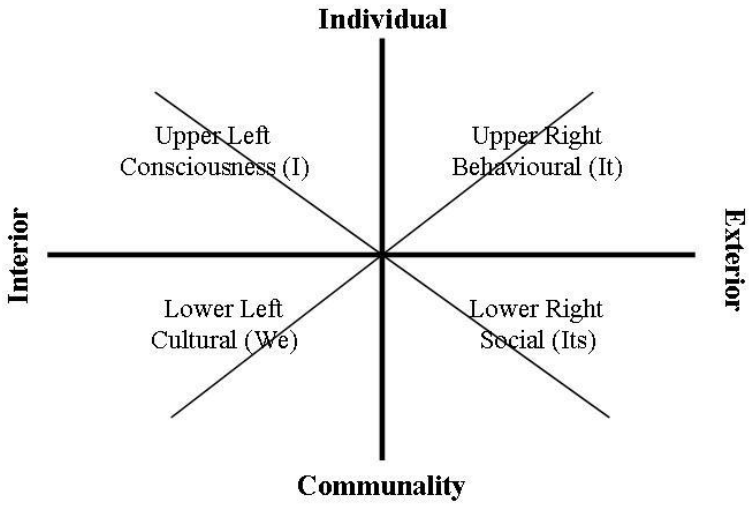

Figure 4. Integral Theory Quadrants. Adapted from Edwards (2005).

Integral Theory can be applied across many disciplines including, but not limited to education, health care, politics, and business. If one were to illustrate a two dimensional integral map of universal humanity it would depict:

> Multiple levels or waves of existence. . . . numerous different streams, modules or lines of development. . . . multiple states of consciousness. . . . numerous different types of consciousness. . . . multiple organic factors. . . . numerous cultural factors. . . . forces of the social system. . . . selves with a *center of gravity.* (Wilber, 2000, pp. 53-54)

A bridge between two theories

Now, let us consider the connectedness of the two theories. Both theories are holistic in nature, taking into consideration the internal and external conditions of both self and collective. Both theories recognize and distinguish the significance of the past and the requisite to honour that which has come before. At any particular point on the continuum, it can be said that wherever a particular individual, organization or society exists, its wellbeing will be influenced by other individuals, organizations and societies with which it connects. In essence, "the health

of the entire spiral [or system] is the prime directive, not preferential treatment for any one level" (Wilber, 2000, p. 56). A similar philosophy is found within teams, insomuch as it can be said that a team is only as strong as its weakest player.

This integral thinking implies that it is not simply about progressing up the spiral or through the quadrants; rather, it is important to be aware of the current conditions (internal and external) and strengthen the health of the current conditions. As shown in Figure 5, individuals are born and evolve through "the great spiral of consciousness, moving from archaic [Beige] to magic [Purple] to mythic [Purple/Red] to rational [Blue/Orange/Green] to perhaps integral [Yellow/Turquoise] . . . but for every person that moves into integral or higher, dozens are born into archaic" (Wilber, 2000, p. 56), as such no single society will ever *arrive* at solely an integral level, but will emerge a 'centre of gravity' that embraces all the levels of development. Thus, the quest is not in finding a solution to move every person through to an integral level and beyond, it is more about the improving the health at every level (Wilber, 2000, p. 57).

Figure 5 presents a meshed view of the two theories. Specifically related to this research project it captures the [v]MEMEs in relation to the tiers of individual, organization, and system. Each is presented within its corresponding quadrant of individual: internal (upper left) and external (upper right), and collective: internal (lower left) and external (lower right).

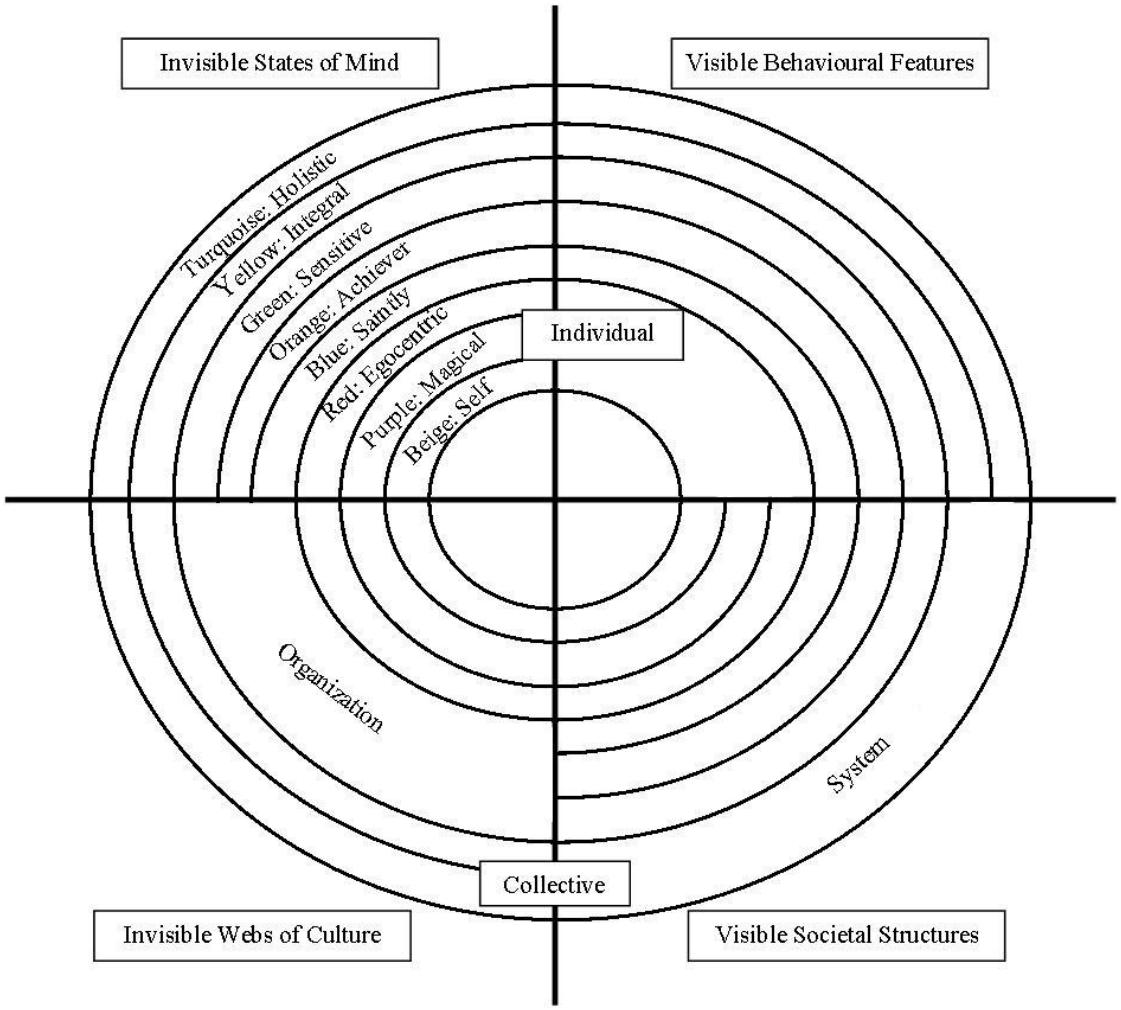

Figure 5. Spiral Dynamics and Integral Developmental Levels. Adapted from Beck (2002) and Wilber (2006).

Distinguishing Effective Collaboration

Effective collaboration is a critical process for the success of multi-organizational partnerships. As such it is important to distinguish effective collaboration. The purpose of this

review is to capture elements of effective collaboration within the context of multi-organizational partnerships.

The Merriam-Webster (2012) dictionary defined *collaborate* as working "jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavour" (para. 1). While the dictionary simplistically defines the word collaborate, it does not capture the holistically complex nature of effective collaboration discussed in academic literature.

Within collaborative partnerships, stakeholders create value that no single organization could create on its own and "multiparty alliances can generate multiple value creation opportunities" (Austin, 2000a, p. 178). Ultimately, collaborative efforts aim to achieve a "collaborative advantage" (Huxham & Vangen, 2000, p. 772) where the outcome of the collaborative effort is greater than what could have been achieved by any single organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Linden, 2003). However, for the success of any collective effort it is vital to honour the role of the Red [v]MEME (stakeholder is more important than group) and understand the holonic nature of Purple (stakeholder subsumed into group).

> On the one hand, the collaboration must be strong enough to overcome the pitfalls of individualism [Integral upper-left quadrant], otherwise there is little point in having it. On the other hand, it must be designed [Integral lower-right quadrant] in such a way as to be sensitive to the problems of loss of control, flexibility and glory [*sic*] and to the cost of collaboration. (Huxham & Macdonald, 1992, pp. 51-52)

Honouring Red and Purple underscores the significance of the holonic nature of multi-organizational relationships. Within the holonic multi-organizational relationship, it is critical to consider the needs of each of the 'wholes' (Red), or organizations, involved. Huxham (1996) noted that within effective collaboration, stakeholders feel a need to justify the partnership in terms of their own (Purple/Orange and Integral upper-right) net benefit (p. 15). However, the

motivation to collaborate because of self-interest versus the collective interest may induce tension (Red: I control) within the collaborative effort. "When collaboration's goals conflict with the autonomous goals of individual partner organizations, identities are at stake. Unless the particular problem is of sufficient urgency to all partners, it is likely that individual missions will trump collaboration missions" (Thomson & Perry, 2006, p. 26).

For a collaborative effort to be successful, stakeholders within partnerships must remain engaged and the benefit of the partnership must be "two-way and relatively balanced" (Austin, 2000a, p. 178). This calls attention to the Integral lower-left quadrant: the culture of the partnership. To this end, Austin (2000a) emphasized that continued renewal of partnership value (Purple: allegiance) is a very real challenge and "knowing when to end a collaborative alliance is as important as knowing when to begin it [Blue: purposeful]" (p. 179).

Wood and Gray (1991) emphasized that there is "increasing importance of collaboration as an interorganizational [*sic*] phenomenon designed to achieve desired ends that no single organization can achieve acting unilaterally" (p. 140). They argued when defining the collaborative process, focus must remain on the "interorganizational [*sic*] problem domain" (p. Wood & Gray, 1991, p. 140), rather than identifying each individual partner within the domain. Thomson and Perry (2006) defined collaboration as an evolving framework [Integral lower-right] that "occurs over time as organizations interact formally and informally through repetitive sequences of negotiation, development of commitments, and execution of those commitments [Integral upper-right]" (p. 21). The collaborative relationship, which is one of negotiation and continued commitment, demonstrates a Blue/Orange [v]MEME (considers all options and seeks the best path).

From a strictly Orange perspective (competitive and highly success-driven), before engaging in a collaborative relationship, stakeholders should not only explore benefits, but also costs, to determine if the choice to collaborate will produce net benefits that exceed anticipated costs (Gray, 1985; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Sowa, 2009). According to Austin (2000a), before engaging in collaborative efforts, important factors to consider are the recognition of the needs of each stakeholder, and stakeholder agreement on the structure of the collaborative effort. From a Spiral Dynamics and integral perspective, this underscores the need to design a supportive structure (lower-right) and recognizes the importance of Orange; the driven individual, but also emphasizes Green; the collective. "Effective collaboration ultimately involves jointly tailoring a garment that fits the unique characteristics and needs of the partners" (Austin, 2000a, p. 173). Kouzes and Posner (2007) classified stakeholder characteristics as one complexity of collaboration. "With multiple constituencies come diverse and frequently conflicting interests" (p. 224). Multiple ^{v}MEMEs within organizations and across collaborative entities adds additional layers of complexity within the relationship.

Successful collaborative relationships may have a dominant Green ^{v}MEME (tolerance of differences); "Collaboration is a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (Gray, 1989, p. 5). Effective collaborative efforts transcend individual differences by valuing opposing ideas thereby discovering unique possibilities and opportunities. Underscoring the integral nature of effective collaboration, Glatter (2003) confirmed there are a multitude of attributes [and ^{v}MEMEs] within successful partnerships including:

> Clarity of objectives; agreement on modes of operation [Green/Blue]; clear lines of communication and decision making [Blue]; clear exit routes [Red]; suitable incentives

> within and between organisations [Orange]; support among the partners [Green]; institutions and, most importantly, trust between the partners [Beige/Purple/Blue]. (p. 19)

Reaping potential benefits is dependent on several of these attributes and conditions interacting at the correct phases within the collaborative process (Gray, 1985, p. 932). "Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that a great many collaborations apparently never agree on aims – and consequently struggle to achieve action" (Huxham & Vangen, 1996, p. 9). Researchers observed that benefits of effective collaboration can be far reaching, and in fact, far exceed the tangible product derived from the partnership (Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Sowa, 2009).

Reflecting the levels of complexity within collaboration, Huxham and Vangen (1996) summarized three levels of benefit collaborative partnerships can yield: the collaboration as a whole; each participating organization; and each individual member of the organizations (p. 9). From a Yellow systemic perspective, a fourth level, introduced by Sowa (2009), states that collaborative efforts may also "have an effect on the organizations themselves, effects that are separate from the effect on the product or services that the organizations are delivering" (p. 1009). Multidisciplinary thinking speaks to the Yellow [v]MEME where Yellow systemic thinking seeks to find a "Win: Win: Win [*sic*]" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 284), or integrated, solution.

It is apparent that collaborative relationships take continued commitment and attention to the various motives and needs of individuals and organizations. Before choosing to collaborate, the complexity and sheer work of engaging in multi-organizational endeavours must be carefully considered. However, there are real benefits to investing in collaborative relationships, after all

"collaboration is a social imperative – without it you can't get extraordinary things done in organizations" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 224).

Distinguishing Collaborative Values and Skills

This section of my literature review explores and identifies specific values and skills demonstrated by individuals working within effective collaborative partnerships. By identifying the values, skills and characteristics that have been present within these relationships, it is possible to distinguish potential opportunities of growth for individuals engaging in collaborative partnerships.

The Latin root of collaboration is *collaborare*, meaning 'working together'. Maccoby (2006) noted that although the meaning of collaboration "may be clear, creating collaboration can be extremely complex" (p. 60). Further, complicating collaborative efforts is the reality that "different contexts and managerial challenges are involved, and they all engage the human side" (Maccoby, 2006, p. 60). The *human side* is a web of genetics, knowledge, paradigms, life conditions and deeply rooted value systems; all of which makes every individual uniquely complex.

> Strategies can go awry because organizational leaders are not fully aware of the values held by its members. No matter how brilliant the analysis that underlies a strategy, it is the people - from the board room to the factory floor - who must understand and implement the strategy. That only happens when the strategy fits their values. Values matter. Ethical decisions and actions are based on values. (Cowan & Todorovic, 2000, p. 4)

By contrast, while aligning values and strategies is an important piece of organizational life and collaborative efforts, McLagen and Nel (1995) argued that values alone, over the long run, will not ensure "aligned action" (p. 10). There are many factors that contribute to the overall success of collaboration.

Reflecting the Integral upper-left quadrant of the individual, Whitaker (2009) further stated that the real drivers behind effective collaborative efforts are individuals, and the results of the individual contributions to the collective may result in high performing teams. "The reasons for emphasizing the 'we' [Purple: tribal] in team performance are clear but it is an oversimplification that can mask the importance of the individual [Red: egocentric] achieving a high level of collaboration" (Whitaker, 2009, p. 50). (A note to the reader, see Table 1 on page 22 for a description of the [v]MEME colours).

Lencioni (2005) outlined that fundamental to any partnership or team is a foundation of trust, however, "there is probably no quality of characteristic that is as rare as trust" (p. 13). The action of being honest about oneself builds trust and demonstrates behaviours within the Integral upper-right quadrant. Further, *vulnerability-based trust* is the key ingredient in any high-performing team: "Vulnerability-based trust is predicated on the simple-and-practical idea that people who aren't afraid to admit the truth about themselves are not going to engage in the kind of political behaviour that wastes everyone's time and energy" (Lencioni, 2005, p. 14). In contrast, Burke and Biggart (1997) argued that vulnerability within inter-organizational partnerships can threaten "an organization's long-term stability and viability" (p. 706). However, they conceded by noting that choosing to avoid collaborative partnerships altogether may be a costly choice – a choice that leads to ineffective and scarce learning opportunities (p. 706).

Skilled leadership also plays an important role in collaborative partnerships. Researchers have found that organizations which have been effective in creating collaborative partnerships are guided by leaders who possess "skill in connecting people and building trust" (Maccoby,

2011, p. 59). Building connections in order to foster personal relationships and strengthen team performance speaks to the relationship quadrant of the Integral lower-left.

> Collaboration is really the only 'game' in town for teams if they are to truly harness the potential synergy that exists between individuals. For a team leader, understanding this and working with the team to realise this potential is probably the most valuable work you can do. (Whitaker, 2009, p. 54)

Particularly in collaborative efforts it is critical to be able to understand not only the value of connections, but also to see connections as they relate to the whole system. Specifically related to behaviours, Hamilton (1998) stated "connections permit us to see the relationship between the individual behaviour . . . and the whole system" (p. 9).

Linden (2003) further noted the characteristics of a collaborative leader include; "tremendous persistence, energy and resolve with a measured ego" (p. 45). Underscoring the importance of perseverance, several scholars emphasized that continued investment by each stakeholder for the duration of the collaborative effort is critical to its success (Austin, 2000a; Gray, 1985; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Connected to 'ego' (Red: egocentric), it is essential that leaders recognizes that they themselves view the world through their own lens and operate from their own value system. "They see what they can see, based on their own filters. To serve strategy, all layers of values must be tracked across employee groups, companies, industries, governments, and societies" (Cowan & Todorovic, 2000, p.11).

The literature also emphasized the value of the Green ^{v}MEME, which recognizes the need for not only the leader, but also involved individuals, to value diversity within collaborative relationships. Individuals within the collaboration must understand and value the simple truth that they each think uniquely. "Teams composed of individuals with different characteristics have the potential to reach better decisions because they access more varied information sources" (Mello & Ruckes, 2006, p. 1038). Austin (2000b) echoed valuing diversity in partnerships.

"The power of collaboration comes from combining partners' core competencies in mutually reinforcing ways" (para. 18). Individuals within partnerships who share similar worldviews probably have fun together but they can miss the creative tension that can escalate between fundamentally different views and approaches to work (Richards, 2003, p. 21). However, if not handled properly, divergent perceptions can trigger Red (power) actions and spiral the group into conflict situations which perpetuate a perceived lack of trust, or worse, broken trust.

> When people who don't trust one another engage in passionate debate, they are trying to win the argument. They aren't usually listening to the other person's ideas and then reconsidering their point of view; they're figuring out how to manipulate the conversation to get what they want. (Lencioni, 2005, p. 37)

Disputes within collaborative partnerships are likely inevitable, however, individuals who are emotionally mature are more likely to able to free themselves - and the group – from a potentially paralyzing situation. Friedman (2007) ascertained that people who have been involved in "an imaginatively gridlocked relationship system know that more learning will not, on its own, automatically change the way people see things or think. There must first be a shift in the emotional processes of that institution" (p. 31). Real collaboration is not simple as it calls for individuals to be critical of their own thinking and the way they interact; "it requires a tremendous amount of emotional self-management" (Richards, 2003, p. 22).

Gerzon (2006) spoke to the importance of developing one's emotional intelligence in order to become aware of what we, ourselves feel in order to empathize with divergent points of view and "practice the communication skills that make genuine collaboration possible" (p. 104). The practice of *presencing* in conversations, especially debates, allows for an emergence of many realities without labelling those realities *right* or *wrong*. Within the context of organizations, Scharmer (2007) describes presencing as "a movement where we approach our self *from the emerging future*" (p. 163). He describes the necessary first step of presencing as

letting go and surrendering. "Letting go concerns the opening process, the removal of barriers and junk in one's way, and surrendering is moving into the resulting opening [Turquoise: we experience]" (Scharmer, 2007, p. 185). Beck and Cowan (2006) noted that historically, "new times produce new thinking as new theories of everything are spawned, history is revised, priorities and values are reordered-stacked" and when this fundamental understanding is realized people are amazed that they had not seen this new thinking so clearly before (p. 24).

The literature explores the complexity of values and skills present within effective collaborative efforts and it demonstrates that within every unique collaborative partnership, there are unique individual values and skills required to make the partnership a success. Sonnenfeld (2002) stated to become healthy and strong, a team must be "one whose members know how to ferret out the truth, challenge one another, and even have a good fight now and then" (p. 111). In order to seek the truth and challenge each other within the partnership individuals must develop a certain level of emotional intelligence and be adept in communicating and empathy: "through communication people may gain some understanding about how people make judgements and what motivates them" (Tidwell, 2004, p. 89). Gilbert (1992) summarized it best by stating: "if one wants to work on a relationship [togetherness], one must work on oneself. If one wants to work on individuality, it is best done in relationship to others" (p. 169).

Exploring Government and Non-Government Relationships

With partnerships between non-government organizations (NGOs) and governments on the rise, the following review serves as an exploration of the realities that NGOs and governments face within these specific inter-organizational collaborative relationships.

Successful collaborative relationships can and do occur between two or more distinctly structured organizations such as government and non-government organizations. The level of

complexity within the organizational partnership will be directly reflective of the level of complexity within each of the organizational structures at play. (M. Hamilton, personal communication, September 24, 2011). Increasingly, NGOs and governments are forming partnerships in an effort to increase that quantity and quality of programs and services delivered to the citizens they serve. As Buchanan and Pilgrim (n.d.) explained:

> We live now in an era of collaboration and partnership between government and communities, where policy choices around the spending of public money are made by government and the delivery of services is increasingly undertaken by non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") in the private and voluntary sectors. (p. 1)

Ultimately governments partner with NGOs in an effort to deliver programs and services in a timely and efficient manner to customers and community members. Reichheld (2001) noted that "partnerships are not simply about mutual benefits; partnership does not equal collusion. True partnerships serve the customer's best interest" (p. 78). When this type of collaboration successfully occurs, between the public and private sectors, Dawes and Préfontaine (2003) defined this relationship as "a reciprocal and voluntary agreement [Blue: order and stability] between two or more distinct public sector agencies, or between public and private or non-profit entities, to deliver government services" (p. 40). However, collaborating can be painful and drawn-out and in NGO government relationships and the outcomes may not meet the intended expectation (Glatter, 2003, p. 18). These sluggish partnerships may indicate conflicting organizational [v]MEMEs as well as the absence of a clear vision and expectations.

The success of partnerships between NGOs and governments is partly dependent upon the parties' ability and willingness to view the NGO government relationships as truly *collaborative* relationships, and in place of perceived power (from either side); an environment of participation and openness must be fostered (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Austin (2000a) explained that shifting to "a collaborative mind-set supplants the *them and us* [Orange:

autonomy] perspective with a *we together* [Green: community] perspective" (p. 176). However, this fundamental organizational paradigm shift may take a substantial amount of time as Armstrong and Lenihan (1999) stated:

> Collaborative partnerships require some fundamental changes in the organizational culture and traditional values [Integral lower left: community culture] of the public sector. In particular, they require a new willingness to share authority and the development of a learning culture, that is, one that is more tolerant of error and able to benefit from it [Integral lower right: system structure]. (p. 12)

Additionally, Austin (2000a) contended that identifying both *what* the collaborative effort is, and *how* the collaborative effort will be undertaken is critical. "Learning about one another's business and operations not only builds rapport and enhances communication [Integral upper right: relational action] between partners, but can also lead to the identification of new collaboration opportunities" (Austin, 2000a, p. 182). Further, Low and Davenport (2002) noted that emphasizing the learning organization as opposed to the learning individual strengthens the capacity of the whole NGO to effectively problem solve and to self-organize (p. 374).

Within an NGO government collaborative relationship, one element impacting the level of complexity is that of perceived power. Research has shown a link between dependency and power insomuch as "if A has something B wants, A has leverage" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 196). Applying this concept to the NGO government relationship, it can be noted that governments have funding resources and NGOs must, in part, have those resources to exist. However, what is not often considered is that the NGO also has leverage within this funding relationship as governments must deliver critical programs and services and NGOs can typically deliver these services in a timely and consistent manner.

Further complicating the funding relationship is a reality which can cripple an NGO: a steady and stable source of operational funding is essential to its continued existence. While

NGOs typically have the ability to access funding related to programming and providing services, accessing stable funding programs targeted at supporting operational costs of NGOs can be a challenging and time consuming task. Low and Davenport (2002) emphasized this challenge by stating:

> Essentially, the view from the NGO sector is that whilst it is possible to access project funding from donors [government], it is difficult if not impossible to obtain funding for core administration costs such as salaries, the cost of renting a building, vehicles for project use and so forth. (p. 370)

An important factor in any successful collaborative partnership is a commitment to accountability (Blue: order and stability). Accountability becomes critical however, in relationships based on funding agreements. Without an existing accountability framework, there can be an inability to analyze areas of potential growth and learning, which can also induce falsity within reporting. "Such falsity ends up being a major problem and leads to endless events where NGOs and donors [governments] tell each other how good they are in spite of evidence that no one is willing even to challenge" (Prato, 2006, p. 12). However, a commitment to accountability can only be present when clear expectations, and roles and responsibilities are defined at the inception of the collaborative effort. Johns (2005) argued that:

> When government embraces participation through engagement with NGOs, there is the tendency to fold multiple objectives – such as community consultation, buying votes and public relations, expert advice, and the achievement of specific contractual obligations for services rendered – all wrapped into one government - NGO relationship. (pp. 30-31)

A lack of clarity around expectations and outcomes can lead to distrust, not only organizationally but also between the individuals who are involved in the NGO government relationship. In the Integral upper-right quadrant, behaviours that strengthen personal relationships are critical for the collaborative effort to be deemed effective. Austin (2000a) explicitly stated that "positive personal chemistry is essential to productive partnerships even

though not sufficient alone to guarantee alliance success, whereas bad interpersonal relations alone can destroy a partnership" (p. 174).

The success of any collaborative effort is dependent upon each of the parties having the ability to recognize they each participate as 'wholes' which are also part of something greater. Each must strive to understand the 'business' and structure of every partner, remain open and honest about expectations, clearly and continually define roles and responsibilities, and most importantly, nurture the balance of trust throughout the relationship. Effective collaboration takes perseverance and a continued investment in the holonic nature of multi-organizational partnerships. Senge (2006) summarized by stating: "perhaps when we rediscover organizations as living systems, we will also rediscover what it actually means to us as human beings to work together for a purpose that really matters" (p. 271).

CHAPTER THREE – INQUIRY APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Inquiry Approach

Using a phenomenological methodology to identify key factors of success in a collaborative relationships between one government division and one non-government organization, this project explored the research question: How can the GNWT; Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth, build an effective collaborative relationship with a key Northwest Territories Sport and Recreation Partner? Phenomenology implies that it is "the participant's lived experience that is the focus of this inquiry and this description is always viewed as credible" (Paton, Martin, McClunie-Trust & Weir, 2004, p. 178).

After discussing the nature of my research with my Sponsor, and considering the complexity and deteriorating state of the organizational relationships in the NWT sport and recreation sector, it was determined that an action research approach with an appreciative inquiry (AI) framework would be applied. AI examines the reports from an organization which is performing at its best and uncovers evidence and commitment which combined generates energy for positive transformation (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 4). Stringer (2007) explains that action research is a "collaborative exploration" (p. 11) which assists relevant stakeholders "to develop increasingly sophisticated understandings of the problems and issues that confront them" (p. 11). Action research allows stakeholders to focus on occurrences they determine meaningful (Stringer, 2007, p. 204), while AI creates opportunities for people to get together "to tell stories of positive development in their work that they can build on" (Reed, 2007, pp. 46-47).

Using a qualitative AI framework to conduct action research provided opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in a process that looked inward to identify positive factors within collaborative organizational relationships. The results of this process have not only created an

opportunity to build and strengthen organizational relationships within the sector, in fact, the results are useful for other organizations entering into any collaborative partnership.

Participants

My inquiry team consisted of Mr. Geoff Ray; Executive Director of the NWTRPA and me. The purpose of the inquiry team was to not only ensure the NWTRPA had a sense of ownership in the project, but also to ensure transparency in processes and outcomes. Stringer (2007) states that "ownership is an important element of community-based action research" (p. 43). Involving stakeholders in the inquiry team from the beginning of the process and throughout the entire research project ensured a sense of ownership and accountability. "Action research is built on a voluntary partnership with stakeholders who form a collaborative team, learn and apply the methods together, implement the methods together and analyze the outcomes together" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010, p. 135).

The inquiry team assisted with the development of the interview questions and engaged in meetings to discuss the progress of my research. To ensure that the member of the inquiry team understood his role within the team, as well as the importance of confidentiality, Mr. Ray signed an Inquiry Team Member Letter of Agreement (see Appendix A) and an Inquiry Team Member Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix B). To protect the identity of my participants, throughout the process, Mr. Ray only had access to data which had all participant identifiers removed.

In order to obtain a deep level of understanding, four interview participants were invited to take part in my research project. As Glesne (2011) advises "for depth of understanding, you repeatedly spend extended periods with fewer respondents and observation sites" (p. 46). The participants were selected based on consultation with both the project sponsor and the Executive

Director of the NWTRPA. Within these consultations I advised both the project sponsor and the Executive Director of the nature of my research (my use of AI to identify factors which exist in this one organizational relationship which I perceive to work well) in order to identify who best to interview within each organization. The participants were selected from within existing staff from SRY as well as the NWTRPA because of their professional relationships and responsibilities to work together within organizational partnerships. I ensured my participant's anonymity by using pseudonyms (Edmund, Susan, Peter, and Lucy). The pseudonyms are not reflective of the gender of participants or sequence of interviews. As well, where research participants referred to specific individuals in the interviews and focus group meeting, those names have also been replaced with pseudonyms.

I conducted all individual interviews and transcribed each digital recording of each interview. Each transcription was reviewed by the individual participants to ensure accuracy. Once the anonymous data from the interviewees was collected and synthesized, the same interview participants were invited to engage in a focus group meeting. The focus group meeting provided participants with an opportunity to collaboratively explore findings from the interview process and further explore the research question. Choosing to facilitate a focus group meeting as the second stage in my data gathering was a "useful way to gather further insight into issues that developed through analysis of individual interviews" (Glesne, 2011, p. 134).

Inquiry Methods

The research methods included in-depth interviews followed by a focus group meeting with key individuals from the NWTRPA and SRY. Glesne (2011) states focus group meetings "can be a useful way . . . to check your developing understandings with your participants" (p. 134). By building on their experience within the individual interviews, the focus group meeting

created a space in which participants shared personal stories, and their hopes and dreams for the sector. Glesne (2011) explained that "focus group research can also have emancipatory qualities if the topic is such that the discussion gives voice to silenced experiences or augments personal reflections, growth, and knowledge development" (p. 134).

This approach (along with the literature review) ensured triangulation - whereby a number of diverse perspectives, sources, and methods were incorporated in my data collection – ultimately aiding and enhancing the credibility of my research (Glesne, 2011; Stringer, 2007).

Data collection tools

Using the interview method to gather data allowed me to perceive the unknown and explore alternate interpretations of what is known. This is the "special strength of interviewing in qualitative inquiry" (Glesne, 2011, p. 104). Interviews allow for a deeper conversation in which the researcher may reframe an inquiry or gain clarity on any confusion around an answer. The participants are able to tell their story, as they see it. It was my responsibility, as the researcher, to ask good questions that led to relevant answers related to the topic being explored (see Appendix C for Interview Questions). As Stringer (2007) outlined, the process of interviewing is two-fold: it gives the researcher "'a record of participants' views and perspectives and also symbolically recognizes the legitimacy of their experience" (p. 69).

Utilizing a focus group meeting to bring the same interviewees together created another opportunity for continued ownership and investment in the research project. Glesne (2011) refers to focus group meetings as a "group interview" (p. 73). By having all participants engage in this focus group meeting, another opportunity was created to identify what factors of effective collaboration matter most too each individual. It also provided an opportunity for each

participant to hear different stories related to the NGO sector and from the government perspective. These perspectives provided a learning opportunity for the research participants.

Study conduct

"Action research seeks to develop and maintain social and personal interactions that are nonexploitative and enhance the social and emotional lives of all people who participate" (Stringer, 2007, p. 27). There were a number of checks and balances throughout the research process, which ensured "that the outcomes of the research are trustworthy" (Stringer, 2007, p. 57). The first two checks were with the Royal Roads University Ethics Review Board and the Aurora Research Institute. Once my proposal was approved by both institutions, my research was initiated with an interviewing process in which participants were given an opportunity to explore factors of effective collaboration existing within the organizational relationship between SRY and NWTRPA. Prospective participants were emailed an invitation to participate in my research project (see Appendix D). Upon agreeing to participate in my research an informed consent form was emailed to each participant (see Appendix E). At the time of the interview, the intention behind the research was explicitly stated and the informed consent form was reviewed in detail. The interviews did not commence until each of the participants clearly understood their purpose in participating, the intention behind the data collection, and by indicating their agreement in signing the informed consent forms.

At the conclusion of each interview I began the transcription process immediately. Upon the completion of my transcriptions of each interview I asked each participant to review their respective transcription; ensuring I captured their opinion and perspective accurately. The transcriptions were then analyzed and synthesized. Through this process, the questions for the follow-up focus group meeting were developed (see Appendix F).

The invitation for the focus group meeting was sent to potential participants electronically (see Appendix G). The invitation included an explanation of this next step in the research process and the list of questions to be explored further within the focus group meeting. An informed consent form was also included with the electronic invitation and was reviewed in detail before the focus group meeting (see Appendix H). All of the informed consent forms and data collected (including raw data) will be stored in a secure location until the date of data destruction.

Data analysis

Glesne (2011) summarized that "data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can figure out what you have learned and make sense of what you have experienced" (p. 184). The first cycle in data analysis was the transcription and initial review of the anonymous data collected from the interviews. Stringer (2007) suggested that "researchers should first review the transcripts or records of interviews, reading them to familiarize themselves with the contents and to get a feel for the views and ideas being expressed" (p. 100). As each interview was completed, the data analysis process commenced immediately. Data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enabled me to focus and shape the study as it proceeded.

> If you consistently reflect on your data, work to organize it, and try to discover what they have to tell you, your study will be more relevant and possibly more profound than if you view data analysis as a discrete step to be done after data collection. (Glesne, 2011, p. 188)

The focus group meeting reconvened interview participants to engage in a collaborative dialogue further exploring questions which linked back to the interview process; ultimately outlining what the participants felt contributed to effective collaboration. Stringer (2007) explained that by prolonging the engagement of participants; the credibility of research is

strengthened as are personal commitments to outcomes. "Interviews and focus groups should provide all participants with extended opportunities to explore and express their experience of the acts, activities, events, and issues" (Stringer, 2007, p. 58).

Initially, after transcription (the first round of data analysis), I 'pawed' through the data identifying patterns, which allowed for a preliminary identification of themes and key words. The key words were colour coded and grouped on large sheets of paper, which enabled me to see commonalities in each story, separate from myself. In the analysis cycle, Glesne (2011) suggested that rather than purposefully segregating "stories into themes and patterns, the analysis process is often concerned with both the story itself and the telling of the story" (p. 185). By entering data into a spreadsheet, a compare and contrast approach was used to analyze the lines of data which allowed for a more detailed reflection on meaning (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

During the data analysis, I examined the links between the storyteller's circumstance and their experience, realizing that "circumstances do not determine how the story will be told or the meaning that is made of it" (Glesne, 2011, p. 186). Throughout my research process I kept a research journal. This allowed me to capture my own feelings and interpretations of the stories and my process; an activity which ultimately allowed me to make better sense of my data as I moved through the cycles of analysis.

At the conclusion of my research project, an executive summary report complete with findings and recommendations from the research will be hand delivered to each research participant, the GNWT, and NWTRPA. A brief presentation of recommendations will also be made to SRY at their spring staff meeting in May, 2012. In future, the report may be circulated to other partner NGOs at the prerogative of the GNWT.

Ethical Issues

"'Research ethics' refers to principles that guide the way researchers interact with research participants and the commitment to safeguard their rights and interests" (Palys & Atchison, 2008, p. 69). Ethically, I took steps to ensure that my research caused zero harm to participants. Stringer (2007) outlined there are standards of "duty of care" (p. 54) related to all people involved within research.

While playing a significant guiding role in the goal of acquiring knowledge through research, ethical principles are also critical for the protection of research participants. Throughout my research I was guided by the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS). TCPS (2010) states that "respect for human dignity is expressed through three core principles – Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2010, p. 8).

Respect for persons

I ensured every research participant understood and signed an Informed Consent Form (see Appendices E & H). The informed consent "requires those responsible for the study to provide written information about the aims, purposes, and processes of the study and to gain written acknowledgment of participants' willingness to participate" (Stringer, 2007, p. 55). By utilizing and explicitly describing the informed consent to each research participant, not only was I able to confirm the ethical conduct of my research, but also I was able to demonstrate my continued "commitment to accountability and transparency" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2010, p. 9).

Concern for welfare

Consideration was paid to participants' welfare. An individual's welfare includes not only their spiritual, mental, and physical health but also their social, economic and physical circumstance (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada, 2010, p. 9). Throughout my research process I remained transparent; ensuring that research participants fully understood and had the opportunity to assess any potential risks that may be associated with the research. Engaging key stakeholders from both organizations helped "to clarify the potential impact of the research and indicate where any negative impact on welfare can be minimized" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada, 2010, p. 10).

Justice

Each of the research participants were treated with care and respect. Within the research process no participant was "burdened by the harms of research or denied the benefits of knowledge generated from it" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2010, p. 10). Consideration was given to potential imbalances of power within the researcher-participant relationship. I remained cognisant of the fact that I could be perceived as holding a position of power within the relationship and ensured continuous, open, and transparent communication about the process and outcomes. Each participant understood that while my professional role contributed to my interest in the research topic, I undertook this research as a means to move beyond my professional assumptions and personal experiences. I ensured that each participant understood that they had the choice to participate and at any point, up to and during the interviews and focus group meeting, they could choose to withdraw. I also ensured

that they had the opportunity to review, challenge or validate the data that I collected and transcribed. As Pettigrew (2003) noted:

> The action researcher has to build trust with partners operating in different styles of organization and at different levels, yet playing the partnership game and building multilateral trust paradoxically cannot always be achieved by openness, honesty, and transparency. (p. 384)

I ensured that each participant understood that their confidentiality was to be protected at all times, including protecting their identity, throughout the analysis, from Mr. Ray. I remained aware that my research role was not one of 'sides' and ultimately "that being receptive to confidences is the very substance of trust" (Pettigrew, 2003, p. 385).

Throughout my research project, each research participant understood that they were free to withdraw from the process at any time and without any prejudice. As Glesne (2011) summarized "ethical codes certainly guide your behaviour, but the degree to which your research is ethical depends on your continual communication and interaction with research participants throughout the study" (p. 181).

CHAPTER FOUR – ACTION INQUIRY PROJECT RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Using an appreciative inquiry lens, this research project explored the research question: How can the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT); Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth, build an effective collaborative relationship with a key Northwest Territories Sport and Recreation Partner? Further, sub questions included:

1. What values and skills do individuals within the GNWT need to utilize in order to foster collaborative relationships?
2. What realities do NGOs and governments face within collaborative relationships?

This chapter presents the findings and themes that emerged from the data analysis using an integral lens. The findings from the interviews are presented first, followed by the findings from the focus group. SRY and NWTRPA participants participated in both the interviews and focus group.

Interview Findings

In order to understand the complexity and stages of effective collaboration, findings from interviews have been analyzed and presented using an integral model. Viewing the data through Wilber's (2000) Integral quadrants (individual, behaviour/action, relationships and systems) allowed for the emergence of sub-themes and also provided a deeper understanding of the holistic nature of collaborative partnerships.

Individual: intrinsic connectedness

Within the Integral upper-left quadrant, personal connectedness to the topic of collaboration emerged as a theme from the interviews. Generally, interview participants reflected on their initial connectedness to the reason behind the collaborative partnership, as if to

outline what personally attracted them to the topic. Within this theme three sub-themes emerged through the data analysis: passion and desire, importance and benefit, and learning.

Passion and desire

As interviewees reflected on their experience within effective collaborative partnerships, it was generally felt that initially they personally embodied a strong desire or passion for the topic matter of the partnership. Edmund recognized that at the beginning of the partnership, he was "excited because it was something that I knew I could do really well".

Lucy said that in an effective collaborative relationship it was necessary to bring "a whole lot of knowledge and a whole lot of passion" to the partnership. She went on to say that in order to see the importance of a particular collaborative relationship, individuals must have passion and an clear understanding of their involvement within the partnership: "I believe that unless you have some kind of passion and an understanding of what it means to be involved, you don't really get a feel for how important it is," she said.

Importance and benefit

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was the individual belief that the collaborative effort was important. Each interviewee reported that they felt as if they had been part of something that was making a difference. The belief that the collaborative effort is of benefit was of particular significance to Susan, who stated that the partnership knew they "we're going to deliver a program and the work that we're going to put in delivering it is absolutely beneficial". Lucy indicated she felt the collective effort of her collaborative partnership benefited all: "Standards, criteria, and all that sort of stuff that we work on, everybody benefits. This partnership is an "essential component of recreation delivery in the community" (Lucy).

Continuing, Lucy referred to her collaborative experience as belonging to "something that is worth doing" and felt it was "worthwhile and [that] you're part of something that is at least making a difference". Another participant, Peter, explained that the participants within the partnership "felt that we were bringing something important to the table" and in the end he also felt that he personally got "something valuable out of it [partnership]".

Learning

Related to the initial intrinsic attraction to the collaborative partnership is personal learning. The feeling that through participating in a process, one is learning and evolving, individually and organizationally, was described as an important component of effective collaborative relationships. Edmund spoke about learning during the initial stages of the partnership stating specifically "I think I learned a ton in that process". The same interviewee commented that while reflecting on the partnership, he realized he was taught how "to write a proposal" and that within the particular partnership he felt like he was "given room to make mistakes" (Edmund).

Lucy commented that the organizational partnership itself "is continuously being worked on and resurrected" underscoring the importance of the ability of the organizational partnership to evolve and respond to changing times.

Behaviour: connecting to action

Moving from the Integral upper-left to the upper-right quadrant, the over-arching theme was the ability to connect to behaviours or actions of others within the collaborative partnership. As individuals initially were attracted to the topic of collaboration and felt a strong desire to participate, once in the partnership their relationship to the topic remained important, but connecting to behaviours that supported personal relationships grew in importance. Within this

theme two sub-themes emerged through the data analysis: trust and honesty; and forging personal relationships.

Trusting and honest actions

Actions and behaviours within the collaborative partnership that promote trust between individuals, as well as an honest environment, are critical factors for the partnership to be effective. Edmund explained that because the individuals within the collaborative partnership showed interest in their project, he felt "empowered and trusted" in the relationship. He continued stating that "the values that exist within our relationship, is I feel, a tremendous amount of trust from [the individuals within the partnership]". Edmund went on to describe the partnership as a "business relationship - very professional, but it's also really, really trusting so I don't feel like there's any micro-managing". Susan described trust in the context of relational history, specifically feeling like the other organization involved in the partnership "trusted us and that trust was built on the successful delivery of the year one program, but also on the whole organizational history".

The importance of honesty throughout the collaborative partnership was described as necessary. "I think that honesty works from both ways" (Edmund). Lucy commented that leadership within her organization "provides support by communicating with the board and other agencies" and by that support it is understood that the leadership "fully trusts the [partnership] to lead and to keep moving forward". This underscored the need for trust among the individuals within the partnership, and the importance of trust from external individuals who belong to the partnership organizations but not necessarily to the partnership itself.

Forging personal relationships

As interviewees reflected on their experience of effective collaborative relationships they each consistently highlighted collegial actions leading to the creation and strengthening of personal relationships, which ultimately contributed to successful outcomes of partnerships. Susan felt that the partnership was a success in part due to knowing the individuals involved. She commented she felt the other organization had a personal interest in what was occurring with her organization.

> The personality, which is an intangible, it's really hard to replicate that but the fact that we have sort of similar life views or, perspectives, philosophies, ideologies, whatever, within the organizations. There was an interest also in the delivery of the program, I felt like [there was a] personal interest in it, [that they] believed in it enough, to want to hear the stories when we came back, not just the numbers.

Building on the importance of personal relationships, two interviewees spoke directly to the physical proximity of the stakeholders within their partnerships. They each noted that the location of their offices being in the same building was conducive to engaging in daily actions that strengthen personal relationships. Edmund named proximity as a value in the relationship and stated that:

> Because you're seeing someone, you're making an effort to go to their office, it's face to face. It's all the things that make our relationships work in the communities as well, so once we get there, once we meet people and you spend thousands of dollars on meetings that feel like a waste of money, but the face to face, contact is so key.

Relationships: sense of community

Moving from intrinsic desire to extrinsic connectedness and into the Integral lower-left quadrant of culture, interviewees described their effective collaborative relationships as *unique communities* where they shared many attributes and experienced a supportive environment. Within this theme three sub-themes emerged through the data analysis: commonalities and differences, reciprocal support, and effective communication.

Commonalities and valuing differences

Connectedness through a sense of sharing not only things in common, but also valuing differences, was described as a key factor within effective collaborative partnerships.

Sharing commonalities does not mean always agreeing with each other. Lucy described the ongoing productivity of the partnership she is engaged in, as *working towards common ground*:

> I'd like to think that we are all on the same page but that's not necessarily so, it's the people who sit at the table make it happen. That's what I think it is. We don't step on each other. We look at ways at finding common ground. To go and get it done we don't build up silos. We don't do things that alienate other.

Peter consistently referenced the existence of shared respect: "there is a mutual respect for what each organization does". He described each stakeholder as being able to cooperate and see value in organizational strengths. "We were willing to work with each other and collaborate and cooperate, sharing our organizational strengths," said Peter. Also Peter recognized the value of the participation of the *whole* person. "It still comes back to what each person is willing to bring to the table and what each person is willing to share and what strengths and weaknesses they have" (Peter).

Reciprocal support

Within an effective collaborative relationship, interviewees commented on the need to both be able to support and be supported. Edmund expressed feeling personally supported within the partnership, stating "I feel sincerely supported". Susan described feeling supported by receiving guidance within the partnership specifically "when there were questions about whether money could be spent on this or that, there's some guidance".

The recognition of reciprocal supportive relationships was captured by Lucy as she repeatedly commented that within her collaborative partnership she feels that "we lean on them

and they lean on us". Lucy added that she thought "there's just an appreciation for helping each other". Related to appreciation, Peter spoke specifically about "gratitude as something [important]. We both appreciated each other's help". In that same interview, he recognized his organizational role within the partnership by saying that it is "important for us to help them get their job done" (Peter).

Effective communication

Effective communication is crucial in any relationship and is essential in effective collaborative efforts. Interviewees addressed communication from many angles. Edmund referenced it as a personal gauge within the partnership. He stated "for me to want to come and communicate that stuff, just tells me that I feel really supported and I want to include [everyone in the partnership]".

Looking at organizational support, Lucy outlined that individuals within the partnership "provides the support through communication with [their leadership] and by communicating with other agencies and government departments". She continued by stating that because of partnerships' communication strategy, "they have the ability to lobby even more effectively so that they dialogue with communities in a really meaningful way".

Lucy identified opportunities within the partnership to lead and address bigger issues: "There have been opportunities to get together to talk about the strategies. To talk about the issues, to talk about the bigger things. We are all able to talk about the issues at hand and lead." She also noted her responsibility to communicate as an organization by stating that she needed to "keep them [organizations within the partnership] as informed as we possibly can and engage them were we can" (Lucy).

Systems: process

Shifting to the Integral lower-right quadrant of systems, the theme that surfaced within the interviews was the necessity of having a clear process that supports and continually invests in the collaborative partnership. Within this theme three sub-themes emerged through the data analysis: early engagement, defined roles, and flexibility.

Early engagement

Engaging organizations in a meaningful way from the outset of the collaborative partnership was described by many interviewees as being critical to the partnership's success. Specifically, Susan spoke to having a clear understanding of the structure of funding before engaging in the partnership. She stated that "understanding how the funding flowed, because it benefits or helps me ultimately know who is involved in the project" (Susan). Within that same interview she also spoke about "collaborative project design" to ensure that all organizations in the partnership have buy-in and are "empowered more to design the program rather than have the program design us" (Susan). Another interviewee spoke of defining effective collaborative partnerships as "being more participatory" (Edmund). "Before a program starts, know who you want to work with, and sit down at the table with them ask them what they think would work," advised Edmund.

Defined roles

Part of the process in the beginning of an effective collaborative effort must be to identify clear roles and responsibilities for each partnering organization as well as each individual. Related to being clear on the roles of the stakeholders, Lucy spoke about honouring the individuality of each stakeholder. "Recognize them as a distinct organization," she said, adding that within the partnership, "we don't step on each other".

Understanding what each partner brings to the table and where work can be done to complement each other's strengths and areas for improvement aids in eliminating the risk of working in isolation. As, Lucy commented, "we don't build up silos".

Flexibility

Flexibility was reported to be an essential part of effective collaborative partnerships. Interviewees spoke to this attribute through a variety of lenses including empowerment, a sense of having room within the partnership, and creating space to allow stakeholders to be themselves.

Edmund stated "the flexibility in our working relationship is key". He continued by saying that within the partnership, individuals are "very flexible and with that flexibility I think comes the autonomy". He elaborated by saying he felt that "we're given room to make mistakes" (Edmund).

Feeling like there was enough flexibility to make mistakes was also highlighted by another interviewee. Susan said "we were able to put the time and effort into developing a program and tweaking it, so from year to year we were able to improve the program". Susan recognized that with flexibility, responsibility is born. "Though there's trust and some arm's length for empowerment, I guess, on the other hand, I felt like there was also responsibility so it complements the other".

Honouring the stakeholders was identified by Lucy when she stated that each organization within the partnership "gets to be what it wants to be". From her organizational perspective, she didn't feel that they [partnering organization] were "pushing anything. There's no [hidden] agenda" Lucy said. Continuing to reflect from an organizational perspective, the same interviewee underscored her view feeling that "we firmly believe in allowing organizations to be who they want to be and what they want to be" (Lucy).

Focus Group Findings

Adhering to the holistic nature of effective collaboration, data from the focus group is also presented using an integral model. By reconvening interview participants to further reflect and share their experiences within other partnerships, an opportunity was created for participants to further describe their experience of effective collaboration. Similar to the interview findings, many of the same sub-themes surfaced within each of the Integral quadrants (individual, behaviour/action, relationships and systems).

Individual: intrinsic connectedness

Within the focus group setting, participants explored and shared their experience related to their organizations as a whole and their perceptions of what the other stakeholders within the partnership were gaining by being involved in the partnership. This represented a shift from internalizing their involvement to seeing themselves part of something larger. Within this Integral upper-left quadrant one sub-theme emerged: learning.

Learning

Within the focus group findings, the concept of learning shifted from individual growth – which was present within the interview findings - to organizational evolution. Edmund commented he saw "The partnership really changing and [that] we're learning to really focus on what their [partner organization] needs are and try to figure out how we can meet them, which I think is our role".

Not only was there a shift from personally reflecting on their own learning, Susan commented on the learning taking place related to an individual within the other organization in the partnership. She stated that:

> This [individual] who was charged with developing the [project] had no experience at the beginning and by the end [she] knew the people to talk to and had a sense of what [the

> project] could look like. [She] also realized, I think, that some of limitations of [herself] as a manager in [her] position. [She] ended up contracting out project management which is a good idea. (Susan)

Behaviour: connecting to action

Within the Integral upper-right quadrant, participants described connections between the actions or behaviours of others within the partnerships to the following three sub-themes: visible commitment, trust and honesty, and forging personal relationships.

Visible commitment

Commitment surfaced as a sub-theme within the focus group as interviewees reflected on behaviours which demonstrate that individuals are committed to the partnership. Edmund spoke about including individuals within the partnership in all of their own organizational training opportunities because they see the commitment. "Right now, essentially, every time I have a training opportunity, one of the first people I call is [Jadis] and [Aslan] because I know that they're committed and they're interested" (Edmund).

Seeing committed action within the partnership further underscores the belief that individuals are committed to the project. Edmund stated he personally believes commitment is an imperative and linked the action of commitment to taking initiative:

> Commitment to the project that we're working on together [by taking] initiative. It's really nice when the person you are working with calls and says 'just to give you an update, this is what I did this week' and you know it wasn't on our collaborative to do list. Or [someone says] 'I remember that we forgot to do this' and the person just goes ahead and does it. That's nice when you are working in a team because you know you're going to drop the ball and other people will pick it up. (Edmund)

Lucy commented that commitment is critical in effective collaborative partnerships and is demonstrated by being wholly involved in the partnership. "Commitment was, and is, a big part of any collaboration but it was huge in this because you couldn't just sort of half way do it, you had to do it [all the way]" (Lucy).

Trusting and honest actions

Participants commented that establishing personal relationships within the partnership, helped foster trust. Peter reflected that "trust was there, prior to starting - and it's mostly because I personally, had a personal relationship with [Digory] and actually some of the other people that were in the [organization]". Susan specifically spoke about personal relationships leading to trust stating that:

> I think that it's [personal relationships that are] important because it leads to the next one which is trust. The more you know about a person, the more you respect them and the more trusting your relationship is. I think that is really critical in this project.

Susan continued by stating once the personal relationship was formed, trust grew and she had more confidence in the individuals within the partnership:

> From that [personal relationship] grew trust. So I knew that [Digory] was in charge of this project, who is quite good, I didn't have to send [him] templates or discuss how [it] was supposed to look because I trusted [him].

Interviewees commented that witnessing committed action within the collaborative partnerships contributed to the sense of trust and the ability to foster honesty. Specifically Edmund linked committed action to trust:

> I know that they're committed and they're interested and we have created a really great honest and trusting relationship, which I also think is important. I know that if they say they are going to come, or if they say that they are going to bring [supplies] this weekend, that they'll bring them.

Edmund continued by outlining that within the trusting relationship was an ability to communicate honestly. "Very similar to trust would be honesty. I think both [Aslan] and [Jadis] are very honest with each other [about] where things are at and at any given time where they want to see the program going" (Edmund).

In Lucy's opinion the quality of work being done within the partnership as a by-product of trusting relationships.

> There was a huge trust factor going on, a big emphasis on quality and timing and everything [else] to make this thing [project] work well. [They had their] role making sure that nothing was missing. I believe that trust is a big ingredient in any successful collaboration. (Lucy)

Linking decision making and flexibility to trust, Peter commented that within his partnership, "trusting in each other that we were making the right decisions - based on what we needed in that particular moment - and be willing to help make adjustments" were actions he associated with trust.

Forging personal relationships

Focus group participants observed and reflected on the personal relationships within their collaborative partnership. Susan underscored the importance of personal relationships by stating that:

> [Jadis] and I would always start our conversation with totally unrelated but personal things. I think that's really important. It might end up going a little long, our conversation over the phone, but that personal relationship is what has been successful in other NGO government relationships and in our relationship.

She continued by explaining that:

> It's not conniving. I really like talking to people about their kids, but I think the result is worthwhile because there's an investment in the relationship. If I'm talking to someone in Ottawa or in a federal department, it's pretty easy for them to not return my call to not return my email because [they think] who is this guy?

One interviewee explored the actions associated with establishing personal relationships leading to the trust and the ability to set clear guidelines for engagement between the individuals within the collaborative partnership. Lucy explained:

> It's like what [Susan] said, [she] built [their] relationship over a series of conversations, and then maybe a face to face meeting, and then as that relationship was being built, so was the trust between what each organization was trying to do and how they were going to work together to.

Interestingly, Susan referenced personal relationships as a framework to use if the need arises to mend negative situations which may occur in collaborative partnerships.

> If things go wrong in a trusting relationship you can generally figure it out. If things go wrong in a distrustful relationship, there's no support framework to work it out. People are more willing to walk away from something. But it there's [an] architecture of relationship around it, I think there's an ability to pull it all back together.

Not having a personal relationship was also described by Susan who stated that "if you don't have the personal relationship I think trust becomes naïve. I probably wouldn't trust someone on the other end of the phone if I didn't know them". Personal relationships can also be something each individual must recognize and if there have been negative experiences in the past sometimes "you have to depersonalize your relationship" (Susan).

Relationships: sense of community

Within the Integral lower-left relationship quadrant, focus group participants reflected upon effective collaboration from which emerged three sub-themes: acceptance, reciprocal supportive environments, and effective communication.

Acceptance

Within effective collaborative partnerships interviewees commented that fostering personal relationships, and from those relationships fostering trust, provides a space for acceptance between individuals. Specifically, Peter stated that "having that relationship allows you to build that trust along the way and the confidence that each partner can do what they're asked to do and then [you will be more] accepting [of] one [another]". Peter added that "accepting one [another's] limitations and still [being] able to move forward in your project" is critical.

Susan outlined the process of initially engaging in communication specific to understanding what each stakeholder brings – *in their entirety* – to the table. She stated that

initially it was a dialogue: “For this project and through that dialogue we were able to identify each other’s assets and challenges” (Susan).

Lucy commented that each person within the partnership recognized individual strengths which made it easy for the partnership to be effective. “From that partnership and that ability to work together well, we were able to make it seamless for everybody else, so that the process just rolled along seamlessly, and everybody had their strengths, obviously” (Lucy). She emphasized understanding what individual work strengths exist and using those to the partnerships’ advantage.

> I think that we have to use each other. If you’re the pro at [tennis] then I’m coming to you for [tennis lessons]. Why would I go and try to find somebody else, if you’re right there if you have [tennis] knowledge. We have to lean on each other and use those strengths. We do it in small ways, but we can do it in much bigger ways. (Lucy)

Reciprocal support

Participants spoke about being of service to the individuals within the partnership, and in some cases, they continued to be of service even after the collaborative partnership was complete. Edmund described the ongoing assistance outside of the partnership that they willingly provide stating “we can often help them out with those ideas. It’s their program now and they call us for help with little pieces of the program”.

Peter commented that within their collaborative partnership, one stakeholder “realized that they just simply needed help from some another source to get, the job done” and that the role their organization played was one of a middleman. “We were helping, like a middleman helping, to facilitate. Then there was the [organization] which was helping, so I think, collaboratively, it all came together and it was a successful outcome”.

At the beginning of the partnership, Susan described the importance of establishing where she could be of assistance. “Through this relationship we’re able to determine where help

was required rather than throwing someone the terms of reference for a project and saying get back to me with your application" (Susan). Similarly, Edmund commented that recognizing that each partnering organization may have distinct needs so that helping to foster self-reliance within each partnering organization is crucial.

> I guess we're helping each other to be more self-reliant. So [they] might call and [request something and] I will give you some recommendations, but, my recommendations might not fit your needs. You also have to sit down and think about your own resources because they might be more appropriate. (Edmund)

Peter spoke about the necessity of helping throughout the entire collaborative partnership stating this it is "not just at the end but through each stage of [what] you are working on and, making sure that you don't let go of helping one and other". He emphasized the importance of helping each other, reiterating what another focus group participant said stating "strong like two people meaning more people working together can get a job done more easily" (Peter). He continued stating, "in the end, [there was an] appreciation and recognition that together, everybody did a good job, and you were able to achieve what you set out to achieve" (Peter).

Effective communication

All relationships are comprised of conversations – the more effective the conversation, the more effective the relationship. Each participant commented that within their collaborative partnerships, effective communication was critical. Lucy stated "we're one as a unit making something happen, and we all had roles. We communicated strongly". Further, she stressed "defining things like communication, you're defining all of the things that are necessary to get through the process. And, throughout the process [communication was] ongoing; so fluid, fluid, communication" (Lucy).

While Peter explained that "communication was done at [a certain] level, it was an agreement". Susan distinguished within her partnership there was both formal and informal

communication. She emphasised that ongoing communication at all levels within the partnership is imperative. "Though I wasn't part of the team as [far as] a greater communication role between their dedicated staffer and I, the communication was ongoing". Further, she stated "a lot of communication happened within the community. I think consultation at the community level [is critical]" (Susan).

There are many elements of, and ways to define communication. Susan stated that within her partnership, "it wasn't us delivering information on the design of our program. It was a dialogue". Edmund outlined that within communication, availability is necessary as is face-to-face conversations. "I guess the piece of communication that I felt was important with [Jeff] was being available or, just recognizing that the face-to-face communication is also invaluable" (Edmund). Edmund also distinguished feedback as an important element of communication. "A team skill is giving feedback in a constructive manner. We are really good at that. We always have an opportunity to debrief and the structure. It's usually just a dialogue" (Edmund).

Lucy reflected on many of the partnerships that she had been part of and stressed the importance of continual effective communication:

> Communication; and I mean it in the sense keep hidden agendas to a minimum. You should be able to communicate freely amongst each other. You know we're all in this for the same thing, and everybody has their roles. We need to have communication. We need to be able to share what's going on, and if we're working together, that communication is even more important.

Systems: process

In the Integral lower-right quadrant and similar to the analysis of the interviews, the data analysis from the focus group emerged systemic processes that were present in the participant accounts of effective collaborative partnerships. Within this theme three sub-themes were captured through the data analysis: engage early, defined roles, and flexibility.

Engage early

Involving stakeholders from the beginning of the collaborative partnership was highlighted by the focus group. Lucy emphasized that all partnering organizations within her partnership were involved "right from the very beginning of the process". Further, she considered the process to be an example of:

> Collaboration from day one right to the end. We were drawn into the process right at the beginning to develop the [project] to make sure that we were clear and that we were very, very happy with the process - right from the beginning. (Lucy)

Lucy added:

> What didn't happen was there wasn't this thing that developed and then we were told 'okay this is what it is.' We were there from the beginning and developed together how we would work together. There were no surprises. Everybody knew what they were doing and everybody was plugged in.

Susan outlined that through her partnership, she positioned herself to ask questions specifically at the beginning to help define the scope of her partnership. As well she continued to ask questions at the beginning of every phase of the project to ensure that the design continued to meet the needs of the partnering organization.

> The questions that we were asking allowed the [partnering organization] to frame questions themselves, like where they wanted this to be and [what] they wanted to highlight. It was great because it ended up being a successful project that was funded over three different phases. (Susan)

Defined roles

Within effective collaborative partnerships, the importance of ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined – not only for the individuals but also for partnering organizations – was captured by participants. Lucy reflected on the roles each stakeholder had in the partnership and the recognition that each stakeholder also had to adhere to their own organizational rules.

> There are just so many variables to make it [collaborative partnerships] successful from beginning to end, so there was always this understanding that we and they would collaborate to make things work. We figured out a way to do it so that we were working closely together throughout the process. We had rules. They had rules. (Lucy)

Building on what other focus group participants were exploring, Peter explained that defining roles based on strengths was an important factor within his own effective collaborative partnership. He stated that:

> Similar to what [Susan] said about defining roles, I think that was part of it as well because, they realized that they just simply needed help from some other source to get the job done. They knew that, the [individuals/partners] would have the skills that they needed for the job. (Peter)

Flexibility

Flexibility within the systemic structure supporting the partnership was again highlighted within the focus group data. Peter gave specific examples of the flexibility that was present within his partnership. "The flexibility, like the offer between the [partnering organization] and [us] that if things needed to change or if the schedule needed to change was helpful to the success [of the partnership]" (Peter).

Within her effective collaborative partnership, Lucy captured the continued need for "flexibility, teamwork, from beginning to end". She described the flexibility within the partnership as the ability to assist wherever and whenever it was possible. "[They had their] role making sure that nothing was missing, and we plugged in wherever they wanted us, wherever they needed us to fill the void, or to make things more fluid" (Lucy).

Edmund described flexibility as an ability to accept what is happening and to work toward finding solutions. He said that:

> The flexibility to accept the challenges that are thrown at you is really important. With that flexibility also comes the ability to problem solve and not [to] throw up your hands. It's more like 'how we can figure this out.'"

Study Conclusions

Using an appreciative inquiry lens to gather the data created the space for research participants to positively reflect and summarize their experience of a few effective collaborative partnerships. The journey through analysis included viewing the data using Integral Theory (Wilber, 2000) and Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 2006). These theories captured the elements of effective collaborative partnerships and provided a framework which may be useful to support current and future government and non-government collaborative relationships.

Spiralling, Integral theories

Within an integral framework, Wilber (2000) proposes "all four quadrants, with all their realities, mutually interact and evolve – they 'tetra-interact' and 'tetra-evolve'- and a more integral approach is sensitive to those richly textured patterns of infinite interaction" (p. 52). Similarly, the theory of Spiral Dynamics applies not only to individuals, but to organizations and in fact society as a whole. "It offers a unifying framework that makes genuinely holistic thinking and actions possible" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 30). Certainly, collaborative partnerships consist of a multitude of complexities, including but not limited to: organizational structures, mandates, visions, individual developmental levels, values and skills. A framework that recognizes these complexities – all quadrants, all levels, all lines (Wilber, 2000) – provides a comprehensive strategy for ensuring an effective collaborative outcome over the long term.

Through the analysis of data, it became apparent that the research participants described an evolution of their collaborative relationship, which moved through all four Integral quadrants. Their experience began in the upper-left quadrant with individual engagement and interest in the project. In time it shifted to the upper-right quadrant where behaviours and actions foster trust and personal relationships. It then moved to the lower-left where deeper bonds develop and

community is created. Finally participants moved into the lower-right where social systems support a flexible evolution of relationship. It was within this holistic nature of the experiences described that participants clearly demonstrated the qualities of an effective partnership – each with successful outcomes.

Upper left: connecting the individual

Within the collaborative relationships that were described, participants spoke about initially feeling an intrinsic connectedness to the topic of the collaborative effort. Part of the sense of connectedness was a belief that the effort would be of benefit to them as an individual, and the whole sector. Beck and Cowan (2006) stated "connections exist more in the mind [of the individual]" (p. 146). Similar thinking can also be applied to the activities, or in this case, the collaborative relationships individuals were involved in. The necessity and importance of creating the conditions for individuals to make connections within the collaborative partnership is undeniable. "Alliances are successful when key individuals connect personally and emotionally with the alliance's social purpose and with each other" (Austin, 2000a, p. 173).

In this 'connecting' quadrant the desire to learn surfaced as an initial attractor to collaborative efforts. Once engaged within the partnership, participants recalled witnessing the learning of others and also a collective learning and evolution of the partnership itself. Austin (2000a) commented "collaboration must be viewed as dynamic. . . . Continual learning is what enables continuous improvements. . . . The mutual learning benefits of collaboration are many and represent another payoff from partnering" (pp. 182-183).

Upper right: connecting to action

Supporting and strengthening connectedness are the actions and behaviours individuals within the partnership consistently demonstrate, and subsequently, the meaning derived from

those who witness the actions and behaviours. Once engaged in the collaborative relationship, participants highlighted the need to not only *demonstrate*, but also *witness actions* that support the development of personal relationships that are honest and trusting. Austin (2000a) commented "getting acquainted at the individual level pays cooperation and commitment dividends later" (p. 174).

Lencioni (2005) underscores the gravity of building and maintaining trust within any team dynamic emphasizing that there is "one inescapable conclusion: no quality or characteristic is more important than trust. . . . Team members who trust one another learn to be comfortable being open, even exposed, to one another around their failures, weaknesses, even fears" (pp. 13-14). Just as it is the follower who constructs in their mind the personality characteristics of their leader (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 146) it is in the minds of individuals that they choose to see their relationships as trusting and honest, based on their own interpretations of the behaviours and actions of others.

Also within this quadrant, committed actions supporting the collaborative partnership are critical. Focus group participants described connecting commitment to action by witnessing other stakeholders taking initiative and demonstrating integrity. Stakeholders must consistently demonstrate integrity. They must hold each other accountable, and equally crucial to committed action, they must also hold themselves accountable. "When collaborative partners are unwilling to monitor their own adherence to the agreed-upon rules, the ability to build credible commitment is lost, and joint decision making is unlikely" (Thomson & Perry, 2006, p. 24).

Lower left: connecting to relationship

Data analysis uncovered the recognition and acceptance of commonalities and differences between individuals as well as organizations. The research participants described sharing

organizational strengths and understanding what each stakeholder within the collaborative partnership brought to the partnership. Within the described effective partnerships, this recognition – acceptance of the whole individual as well as the whole organization - can be described as holonic in nature. "A holon is a whole that is a part of other wholes" (Wilber, 2000, p. 40). Beck and Cowan (2006) described second-tier thinking within Spiral Dynamics as holonic. "Everything flows with everything else in living systems. . . . If the dimensions are slightly apart, then bridge them. The person does not need to quantify and categorize events as much as experience being" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, pp. 289-290).

Many participants described elements of effective communication within partnerships. Specifically, effective communication must occur throughout the entire partnership, at all levels within the partnership, and take place not only within a professional capacity, but also in a personal capacity, ultimately supporting personal relationships. Though a partnership may have strong personal relationships, emotional ties between individuals are a strategic advantage and these ties are successful at creating something of value. If the partnership lacks ongoing effective communication processes, it is without a strong foundation (Austin, 2000a, p. 180). "Good communication is essential to building trust, and trust is the intangible that makes collaboration cohesive" (Austin, 2000a, p. 180).

Lower right: connecting within system

From the inception of the partnership, involving stakeholders and defining clear roles and responsibilities were highlighted by many participants. Enrolling stakeholders in the vision or desired outcome of the partnership is a critical step in effective collaboration. Participants spoke about being *drawn into the process* and that they were there from the beginning, developing the project and determining how the team would work together. Collaboration takes alignment in

critical areas including purpose, goals, and operating modes within the partnership. This process of alignment enables the team to channel its energy in a single direction and into team performance (Whitaker, 2009, p. 52).

Supporting the collaborative partnership are many systemic processes within each of the stakeholder organizations, but also within the partnership as a whole. Participants described a level of flexibility within the partnership itself that contributed to its overall effectiveness. Maccoby (2011) stated "a flexible structure of roles and processes is also required" (p. 59) within collaborative enterprises. Equally important to flexibility in roles and processes is the allowance and acceptance of errors and mistakes and for individuals to view these situations (which inevitably will occur) as learning opportunities within the collaborative partnership.

Summary

The Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth is one whole in a complex and dynamic system. The work that is engaged in within the sector is extraordinarily representative of the essence of collaboration. In point of fact; the very nature of 'sport' is collaborative at its core. The answer to how the Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth, can build effective collaborative relationships is addressed by using a methodology that is, in fact, very familiar to the Division. The solution points to a parallel in the development of a high-performance athlete (or team). High performance development begins with the athlete (upper-left individual). At a certain level or point in time, the athlete begins to learn about his/her relationship with their peers (upper-right visible action) by either developing team skills or by competing and working within a team-setting (lower-left relationship). Within this evolution, without a developed and supportive system, the athlete will have limited ability to advance, let alone to achieve an elite status (lower-right system).

Addressing the sub question related to the skills and values individuals required in fostering effective collaborative relationships, this inquiry found that creating opportunities for interpersonal skill development and creating conditions for effective collaboration within the whole organization are key first steps in skill development. Embedding the divisional vision and values will then serve like connective tissue between the organizational structure and existing or new staff.

Finally, the realties NGOs and governments face within collaborative relationships are extraordinarily complex. The effectiveness of the multi-organizational relationship will depend on the individual's skill level in fostering personal relationships through effective communication. Effectiveness will also depend upon having a flexible system which supports the relationship. Contributing to the divisional staff's ability to effectively communicate within the NGO-government relationship is the foundation of understanding the GNWT as a whole, and the division's place in the organization.

Ultimately, organizations are made up of relationships and relationships consist of individuals connecting to one another in a web-like pattern. The complexity of relationship increases as the number of individuals and connections increases. Add to this multiple organizational structures, mandates, visions, values and skills and the complexity compounds. However, at the core of any relationship, no matter the size or the complexity, remains the individual, as a whole. Ultimately, this is where development must begin.

The holonic exploration of the data through the meta- theories – all quadrants, all levels, all lines (Wilber, 2000) – has illuminated a foundation for understanding effective collaborative relationships. Establishing personal relationships fosters trust and honesty. This is further supported by the recognition and acceptance of the individual and organization (each as a

whole), which promotes the evolution of relationship ultimately creating a learning environment and successful outcomes. Figure 6 captures the nested and holonic nature of the whole self, as part of the whole organization and part of the whole system. It clearly presents the wholes as part of a greater whole, each dependent and interdependent of the next.

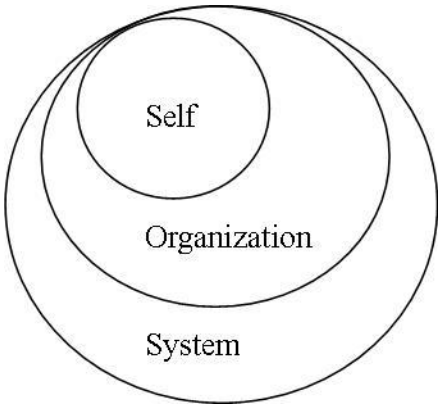

Figure 6. SOS: Nested interdependence of Self, Organization and System.

The data illuminated the importance of connections within relationship as they relate to the individual; purpose of the collaborative effort; stakeholders; and outcome. For these connections to be established and strengthened, specific behaviours must be present (and witnessed) to support relationships throughout the life of the collaborative effort. Hamilton (1998) described the value of distinguishing connections by outlining that "connections permit us to see the relationship between individual behaviour . . . and the whole system" (p. 9). It is through this systemic awareness of connectedness that opportunities to strengthen and build effective collaborative relationships exist.

Scope and Limitations of the Inquiry

Within this inquiry, it is important to note limitations as these factors may limit the application of the findings, conclusions and recommendations presented within.

Collaborative relationships exist in many diverse forms. It should be noted that within this inquiry, collaboration was viewed very specifically from the perspective of one government division and one program delivery organization whose relationships in the past have focussed on the delivery of specific programs through either direct organizational partnerships or direct funding relationships. Research participants had participated in both types of collaborative relationships. The type of collaborative relationship participants chose to share was not delineated in the data analysis findings, conclusions, or recommendations within this inquiry.

It is important to note that the NWT sport and recreation sector consists in part of five program delivery NGOs. Only one of these NGOs contributed to this project and two individuals from within that organization were interviewed and involved in the focus group. As well, two individuals from SRY participated in this research project. Given that the research was based on a specific NGO and four research participants were included, it could be said that by choosing different research participants and/or a different NGO, the results of the inquiry may have been different.

I have worked in a variety of roles within the NWT sport and recreation sector over the last decade. Even though I took measures to ensure that my biases were kept in check, this inquiry project may have produced different results and conclusions if another researcher was to undertake it. It is also important to note that even though I took steps to mitigate the risk of individual perceptions of potential power relationships, I could have been viewed by research participants as a person in a position of power, given my managerial role within the GNWT. I outlined to all the individuals involved in this research project that while the nature of my work was part of my motivation for exploring this topic, it was also due to my desire to challenge and move beyond my professional assumptions and my personal mental models. I also ensured that

each participant understood that while I hoped to provide valuable insight and potential options to the GNWT, there would be no guarantee that my recommendations would be endorsed and implemented.

Finally, the data was viewed and analyzed using two specific meta-theories, both of which have been studied, interpreted and presented based on my own perceptions and understanding, which may or may not be shared by another researcher studying the same results using the same theories.

I believe more research on the collaborative movement is required. It is clearly as complex and diverse as each organization involved, and can be encouraged in many ways and on many levels. As discussed in Linden's (2003) research, collaboration can be a simple and expected voluntary effort; however, Thomson, Perry and Miller (2007) described effective collaboration as much more complex in nature. They noted that an either/or definition does not suffice and that there is a need for multidisciplinary research which would provide "valuable insights into the complex nature of collaborative processes, an area in need of more systemic quantitative research to complement the extensive case research that currently exists" (Thomson, Perry & Miller, 2007, p. 25).

CHAPTER FIVE – INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS

This research project explored the research question: How can the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT); Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth, build an effective collaborative relationship with a key Northwest Territories Sport and Recreation Partner? Further, sub questions included:

1. What values and skills do individuals within the GNWT need to utilize in order to foster collaborative relationships?
2. What realities do NGOs and governments face within collaborative relationships?

Presented within this chapter are recommendations as well as organizational implications, both of which are based on the findings and conclusions of this research project. If implemented, the following recommendations may promote an effective program delivery system of sport and recreation within the Northwest Territories. Presented within this chapter are also potential implications to the organization should the organization choose not to consider the recommendations.

In keeping with the holistic nature of the theories I have used to view and analyze the data, all of the recommendations are presented below within the Integral quadrants of individuals; behaviours/actions; relationships; and systems. The current structure of GNWT lends itself to a four-year cycle, which is the cycle of the Legislative Assembly. Recommendations within each quadrant are further categorized using the delineation of time, thus sorting them into the tiers of immediate (0 – 1 year), intermediate (1 – 4 years) and advanced (beyond 4 years). Further, recommendations, including timelines, have been summarized in Table 4 at the end of this chapter.

Study Recommendations

The twelve recommendations presented below are not intended to stand alone or describe a step-by-step process which leads to effective collaboration. As research suggests, truly effective collaboration takes willingness, commitment and time. What I am proposing is an investment in a continuous developmental cycle that is holistic in nature. Similar to the development of an athlete, it is an ongoing cycle that will take commitment, persistence, time and effort from all levels within the organization. In fact, the progression of recommendations can be compared to the Canadian Sport for Life Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) program which describes the development path an athlete follows from childhood through their entire life. "The concept of continuous improvement, which permeates LTAD, is drawn from the respected Japanese industrial philosophy known as Kaizen. By applying a willingness to always seek improvements in our understanding and practice, LTAD will continuously evolve" (Canadian Sport for Life, 2011a). It is important to note that these recommendations have emerged through data collected using an appreciative inquiry lens. As such, some recommendations surfaced through the sharing of the hopes and dreams for the collaborative partnerships described as well as through analysing the data through the Integral lenses.

Recommendation 1: opportunities for the individual

The recommendations within the Integral upper-left quadrant describe the necessity of creating opportunities for self-development, creating the conditions to link personal values to organizational values, and embedding the vision and values within all levels of the organization.

1 a. Immediate: value personal development

Value and support the personal development of staff through both internal and external learning opportunities; thus creating an environment that promotes personal learning and

commitment. Individuals who continually strive for "personal mastery are more committed. They take more initiative. They have a broader and deeper sense of responsibility in their work. They learn faster" (Senge, 2006, p. 133). It begins with the individual and their opportunity to learn.

Implementation and implications

Create and support an environment that encourages creativity without penalizing perceived mistakes. "Learning is more likely to happen in a climate in which people feel safe in making themselves vulnerable, safe in taking the risk of failure" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 202). Collaboration is essentially an exercise in building and maintaining relationships. Creating a safe environment which promotes personal learning will strengthen relational skills of staff ultimately contributing to effective collaborative efforts. Without a commitment to personal learning, staff commitment and effectiveness, as well, overall morale may suffer.

1b. Intermediate: distinguish and align values

Create space in which individuals can identify and connect to the division through the alignment of their personal values to the divisional values. Kouzes and Posner (2007) declared that "shared values do make a significant positive difference in work attitudes and performance" (p. 62). Further, understanding personal values illuminates connectedness and in the case of organizations, this is an opportunity to strengthen employees' connection to the organization; contributing to the effectiveness of the organization itself.

> Going to work need not be as much work as it is for many people. Getting the right person into the right job at the right time is not difficult if you can align the requirements of the task with the [v]MEME profiles of people who can think in ways to do the job. (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 148)

Implementation and implications

Linking the personal values of staff to divisional values provides an excellent opportunity to create personal commitment. Distinguishing shared values is a group exercise. Staff must be given the opportunity to explore and adopt the values that will guide them in their work. Without an understanding of shared values, staff will have limited ability to make decisions with integrity: "Shared values are the internal compasses that enable people to act both independently and interdependently" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 61).

1c. Advanced: embed a shared vision

Leadership within the organization must understand the vision and create a common language to support the vision. This will ensure stability within the cyclical and changing nature of government. A vision "is the goal pulling you forward that makes all the work worthwhile" (Senge, 2006, p. 138). To foster real commitment and enrolment (versus compliance) from staff, leaders must be able to create pictures which, on many levels, communicate the future (Senge, 2006, p. 9).

Implementation and implications

Leaders must create the conversation that begins to embed a shared vision. Similar to divisional values, a shared vision is holographic in nature, meaning staff can see their own personal visions within the shared vision. Unless the organization's leadership consistently communicates the shared vision; an organizational commitment to personal development and embedding a shared vision will seem like two unconnected activities. "An organizational commitment to personal mastery would be naive and foolish if leaders in the organization lacked the capabilities of building a shared vision and share mental models" (Senge, 2006, p. 136).

Recommendation 2: build the behaviours

The recommendations within the Integral upper-right quadrant expand from inner self or team member to exterior self or team member, as a player within the division as a whole. In an effort to create conditions for staff to learn by engaging in collaborative projects, these recommendations include creating internal collaborative opportunities, connecting within interdepartmental partnerships, and continuing to support the organizational conversation.

2a. Immediate: engage in divisional action learning

Create internal divisional collaborative opportunities to build *self and other* awareness. The leadership should develop cooperative goals, "structure projects to promote joint efforts, and support face-to-face interactions" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 233). By engaging staff in collaborative experiences, they will witness actions which promote trusting and honest relationships with colleagues, and begin to value the diversity found in collaborative relationships. Some of this work has begun, but a broader exploration of individual strengths is recommended. Merging these strengths will create high-performing teams and create conditions for individuals to work effectively and collaboratively within the division.

Implementation and implications

Divisional collaboration serves many purposes including strengthening collaborative skills within teams while creating opportunities for staff to understand the division as a whole (versus solely their position or regional/headquarters office environment). Without creating these initial collaborative opportunities, the occasion to build a high-performing team will be missed. People will continue to work in isolation and they will be of limited support to clients because of lack of knowledge. Kouzes and Posner (2007) emphasized that within team situations, it is apparent "individuals within the group each have distinct roles, but on world-class

teams everyone knows they can't achieve the group goals unless they all play well their individual parts" (p. 238).

2b. Intermediate: connect to the whole organization

Create situations of learning for staff to see evidence of the division's role within the whole organization and how it is connected to the overall vision, goals and priorities of the GNWT. By witnessing the whole system in action, team members will be better equipped to engage authentically in inter-organizational collaborative partnerships by drawing on their knowledge of how the system works; ultimately to the partnership's advantage. Similar to a championship sports team, which acts in an innovative and coordinated way, a great organizational team develops strong working relationships and "an 'operational trust', where each team member remains conscious of other team members and can be counted on to act in ways that complement each other's actions" (Senge, 2006, p. 219).

Implementation and implications

Leadership must model, seek, and create situations for staff to participate in interdepartmental collaborative initiatives across all levels so that staff can visibly connect their work to the organization as a whole. Without an understanding of the whole organization, staff will have no ability to create flexibility and innovation within inter-organizational partnerships due to their limited understanding of the organizational structure and system in which they work. As Beck and Cowan (2006) explained "in First Tier organizations, they [individuals, tasks, processes] are dealt with in isolation and allowed to run separately. Second Tier outfits think in terms of integrated systems on an interactive Spiral" (p. 146).

2c. Advanced: facilitate conversations that support behaviours

In order to realize the current vision, goals and priority of the GNWT, leadership must consistently facilitate clear and evolving conversations with the whole team which support the vision, continually linking the division to the organization as a whole. Ultimately this conversation will embed the vision, goals and priorities of the Legislative Assembly in the daily activities of staff. Scharmer (2007) outlined that "it is in conversation . . . that we bring forth the world, moment by moment" (p. 272).

Implementation and implications

As the conversation evolves, staff will be able see how their work connects to the whole organization thereby empowering them to build and engage in partnerships authentically. Effectively communicating a vision increases motivation, commitment and loyalty as individuals connect meaning to their work (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 133). Without an understanding of the whole organization and the connectedness of the division the opportunity for staff to feel connected to the organization will be missed and loyalty, commitment, and productivity may suffer.

Recommendation 3: foster interpersonal relationships

The recommendations within the Integral lower-left quadrant are based in an understanding of the value of building and nurturing personal relationships. Relationships exist within conversation, as such; the essence of fostering personal relationships is practicing the art of communication.

3a. Immediate: strengthen basic communication

Strengthening individual communication skills will serve both individual and the organization, especially in circumstances which call for collaborative action. Organizations are

made up of relationships and all relationships exist within conversation. "Relationships are both the building blocks [and] the genetic code of the organization is embedded in thousands of interactions that occur every day between people everywhere in the organization" (McLagan & Nel, 1995, p. 48).

Implementation and implications

The leadership must value and encourage the strengthening of communication skills within all levels of the organization. Ensure individuals have access to professional development opportunities related to effective communication and encourage their continued participation. As stated, relationships exist within conversation; therefore increasing the communication skill level within staff will have a direct and positive impact on all the relationships they are involved in. "Both individual satisfaction and organizational effectiveness depend heavily on the quality of interpersonal relationships" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 187).

3b. Intermediate: discern opportunities for generative conflict

Create opportunities for individuals in teams to understand and learn the value of diversity and conflict. Inevitably, within any partnership, conflict will arise. Therefore, it is imperative for individuals to see and value the opportunities within a conflicting situation. According to Lencioni (2005) the ability for a team to recover from conflict builds confidence within the team that it can overcome differences which in the end builds, or rebuilds, trust (p. 40).

Implementation and implications

"[The leadership] is going to have to be ready to not only light the fuse of a good conflict but to gently fan the flames for a while too" (Lencioni, 2005, p. 45). To this process, encouraging conflict ensures that critical issues are not left out of the conversation (Lencioni,

2005, p. 46). Scharmer (2007) describes an important shift toward dialogic conversation as moving from a position of defending one's perception to inquiring into viewpoints, ultimately seeing yourself as part of the greater system at issue (p. 279). Without this understanding, individuals may remain in a state of paralysis when they are subject to differing perceptions and conflict within collaborative relationships.

3c. Advanced: build dialogical skills

Within team gatherings, create the conditions to practice dialogue. Scharmer (2007) suggests dialogue "involves a collective shift of attention from politeness to conflict, from conflict to inquiry, and from inquiry to generative flow" (p. 91). Senge (2006) outlines that dialogue is a discipline that creates the ability to recognize "patterns of interaction that undermine learning" (Senge, 2006, p. 10) such as defensiveness. Within conversation information is offered and information is received. *How* information is offered and *what* is received is entirely the choice of the individual. Understanding that "the quality of the communication one receives resides largely in the head of the receiver, and the meaning of that communication depends, to a large extent, on what the receiver believes it to be" (Tidwell, 2004, p. 88) underscores the importance of listening to understand.

Implementation and implications

Understanding and developing skills in dialogue must be valued as a never-ending process. These skills become especially critical in emotionally charged conflicting situations, which can lead individuals to being stuck in their own paradigms, unwilling to relinquish their personal opinions. Without an ability to communicate effectively, collaborative relationships will be less effective and it will be difficult to foster trust. "Good communication is essential to

building trust, and trust is the intangible that make a collaboration cohesive" (Austin, 2000a, p. 180).

Recommendation 4: create supportive systems

The recommendations within the Integral lower-right quadrant are aimed at recognizing the importance of creating a supportive structure. These recommendations discuss the need to be clear on the core business of the division, aligning values to potential partnering organizations, and the importance of understanding the GNWT as a whole.

4a. Immediate: distinguish core business

The division must clarify what business it is in related to the sector. "Organizations frequently do not know what business they are in, why personnel continue to put up with what they do, or what the true priorities need to be" (Beck & Cowan, 2006, p. 146). To eliminate confusion in roles and responsibility, both internally and externally, the core business of the division must be declared and embedded within MACA as well as the sector.

Implementation and implications

Declaring the division's core business may contribute to the creation of an environment of authenticity internally among staff and also externally across the sector. Given the high level of complexity in multi-organizational collaborative efforts, where it is "often not possible for those involved . . . to recognize each other's perceptions of relative status, to know whether a member is an individual or their organization, to know the degree to which an individual is representative of their organization" (Huxham & Vangen, 2000, p. 783), it becomes critical for those involved understand their own organization. Without this understanding and declaration there will continue to be misinterpretations, authentic relationships will be difficult to build,

unclear roles and responsibilities will ensue, and a lack of trust – both internally and externally – will perpetuate.

4b. Intermediate: align values

Leaders must declare core organizational values and vision. "Core values are necessary to help people with the day-to-day decision making . . . people need 'guiding stars' to navigate and make decisions day to day" (Senge, 2006, pp. 208-209). The declaration of organizational values will lead to opportunities of alignment with partner organizations who share similar values, in an effort to engage in and strengthen existing collaborative relationships.

Implementation and implications

Distinguish and embed shared values and initiate conversations with key organizations to see where alliances may be formed as "inter-organizational collaborations often develop out of one-to-one collaborations between individuals in each of the organizations concerned" (Huxham & Macdonald, 1992, p. 54). Facilitating initial conversations with potential partner organizations will set the stage for involving them early, establish potential roles and responsibilities, and possibly create new opportunities for both organizations to invest in. "Engaging early in conversations about alignment is essential to building a solid foundation for collaboration" (Austin, 2000a, p. 176). These conversations also provide the opportunity to understand other NGOs in the sector, and beyond.

4c. Advanced: create opportunities for learning, flexibility and innovation

Identify opportunities for staff to learn all functions of the whole GNWT, not just the division. Understanding the organizational structure and processes allows for increased flexibility in partnerships and the creation of a more holistic and comprehensive learning environment. Within the lifespan of collaborative relationships, the ability to course-correct

without feeling threatened is realized if a "flexible structure of roles and processes" exists (Maccoby, 2011, p. 59). Creating an environment of learning "requires spirit of inquiry and openness, patience, and building in a tolerance for error and a framework for forgiveness" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 201).

Implementation and implications

Staff must see that their participation within an NGO collaborative partnership is on behalf of the whole GNWT and not just the division. They must understand the policies and programs of the division as well as the whole GNWT. Building awareness of all departmental programs and services will give staff as the ability to connect and see linkages between the partnership and the whole organization, ultimately benefiting the partnership. Without this knowledge, flexibility and innovation will be limited to the scope of the division and more systemic collaborative opportunities may be missed

Summary

Creating opportunities for individuals to build interpersonal skills is the first step in the process of fostering effective collaborative relationships. By engaging in and learning within relationships through building internal partnerships, and then shifting to sector-wide partnerships, creates a safe continuum of learning for staff. Finally, distinguishing and aligning personal, divisional, and organizational values will aid in building a shared vision and creating opportunities for individuals to fully engage in sector-wide collaborative partnerships. Staff will be equipped and empowered to participate in collaborative partnerships authentically. Table 4 summarizes the twelve recommendations presented within a timeline and Integral quadrants.

Table 4

A Summary of Recommendations for Effective Collaboration Presented in Time and Space

	Upper Left Personal Values	**Upper Right Behaviours**	**Lower Left Relationships**	**Lower Right Systems**
Immediate 0-1 year	Design individual opportunities for development.	Create internal collaborative opportunities.	Strengthen basic communication skills.	Determine what business you are in and declare it.
Intermediate 1-4 years	Link personal values to division values.	Connect division to the whole through interdepartmental activities.	Value and navigate conflict in relationships.	Begin to map organizational values and look for alignment in partnerships.
Advanced 4+ years	Embed the shared vision internally and externally.	Build behaviours through continued conversation.	Build dialogic skills.	Create flexible learning partnerships.

Coda

Over the last four months I have engaged in a number of meetings with my Sponsor, sharing findings and progress related to my research. On December 16, 2011, we reviewed my recommendations and proposed timelines. We discussed the recommendations in detail and moved into a conversation of committed action related to each recommendation. My sponsor commented that he is comfortable with what I am recommending and in fact, he has begun the work of incorporating a number of the recommendations into the division.

We agreed that valuing personal development opportunities is critical; however, we recognize engaging in personal development opportunities will ultimately be a matter of personal choice for each individual staff member. Work has begun in creating internal collaborative opportunities related to the overall divisional work plans. Regional and headquarters workgroups have been established and will be working together over the next five months to

develop draft plans to be presented at the staff meeting in May, 2012. It will be in this staff meeting that the conversation will continue related to the division's common values and vision.

At the conclusion of our December 16, 2011 meeting my Sponsor outlined that while my research has been an academic exercise which is coming to an end, the implementation plan for the recommendations will be the next level of work that must be initiated. It will be he and I that collaborate over the coming months to lead the implementation of the recommendations within this report.

Implications for Future Inquiry

Future research could be conducted to further understand the intricate processes involved in working within collaborative efforts. SRY may be well served to continue to investigate its organizational relationships with all of the program delivery NGOs, as well as its relationship with the SRC. If further research was to be initiated throughout the sector, the findings may serve to not only strengthen other sector partnerships, it may also create opportunities for program innovation benefitting all NWT residents.

Should future research be conducted, it would be of benefit to begin with the SRC. The SRC is mandated by the GNWT to be an evaluation and accountability organization with direct responsibility to "streamline decision making and improve coordination. . . . Plan collaboratively. . . . Effectively use resources. . . . Be accountable for achieving outcomes related to the Department's policy goals in physical activity, sport and recreation" (Robert C. McLeod; Minister of MACA, personal communication, December 8, 2011). Further research could be conducted and implemented with the five NGOs in an effort to increase and strengthen positive collaborative relationships.

This inquiry served to investigate one organizational relationship; however, a number of additional organizational relationships could be analyzed in future. Within the division, investigating the regional and headquarters relationship would serve to streamline processes and build cohesive teams. As stated earlier in this paper, the division's priorities can be diminished by the competing priorities of the department. As such examining divisional relationships within the department would further broaden the knowledge of individuals within the department, and embed the division within the department as a whole. A deeper exploration of interdepartmental relationships may in fact identify factors that contribute to government departments working in isolation, and help to eliminate perceived internal barriers. Researching other NGO-government relationships may inform GNWT policy related to third party funding as it continues to engage in partnerships with NGOs to deliver a variety of programs. All of these organizational relationships, if analyzed would further provide evidence of what is required for a collaborative partnership to be effective.

> It is not enough to teach a man a specialty. Through it he may become a kind of useful machine but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. Otherwise he - with his specialized knowledge - more closely resembles a well-trained dog than a harmoniously developed person. He must learn to understand the motives of human beings, their illusions, and their sufferings in order to acquire a proper relationship to individual fellow-men and to the community.
>
> These precious things are conveyed to the younger generation through personal contact with those who teach, not - or at least not in the main - through textbooks. It is this that primarily constitutes and preserves culture. (Einstein, 1952, Education for Independent Thought section, para. 1)

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APPENDIX A: INQUIRY TEAM MEMBER LETTER OF AGREEMENT

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Leadership Degree at Royal Roads University, Mellissa Wood (the Student) will be conducting an inquiry research study at the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) to investigate how the GNWT, Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth, can build effective collaborative relationships with a key Northwest Territories' sport and recreation partner. The Student's credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta, Program Head, MA - Leadership, School of Leadership Studies at xxxxx.

Inquiry Team Member Role Description:

As a volunteer Inquiry Team Member assisting the Student with this project, your role may include one or more of the following: providing advice on the relevance and wording of questions and letters of invitation, supporting the logistics of the data-gathering methods, including observing, assisting, or facilitating an interview or focus group, taking notes, transcribing, or analyzing data, to assist the Student and the GNWT organizational change process. In the course of this activity, you may be privy to confidential inquiry data.

Confidentiality of Inquiry Data:

In compliance with the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, under which this inquiry project is being conducted, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated or accessed by the inquiry team advisor will only be used in the performance of the functions of this project, and must not be disclosed to anyone other than persons authorized to receive it, both during the inquiry period and beyond it. Recorded information in all formats is covered by this agreement. Personal identifiers include participant names, contact information, personally identifying turns of phrase or comments, and any other personally identifying information.

Bridging Student's Potential or Actual Ethical Conflict

In situations where potential participants in a work setting report directly to the Student, you, as a neutral third party with no supervisory relationship with either the Student or potential participants, may be asked to work closely with the Student to bridge this potential or actual conflict of interest in this study. Such requests may include asking the Inquiry Team Advisor to: send out the letter of invitation to potential participants, receive letters/emails of interest in participation from potential participants, independently make a selection of received participant requests based on criteria you and the Student will have worked out previously, formalize the logistics for the data-gather method, including contacting the participants about the time and location of the interview or focus group, conduct the interviews (usually 3-5 maximum) or focus group (usually no more than one) with the selected participants (without the Student's presence or knowledge of which participants were chosen) using the protocol and questions worked out previously with the Student, and producing written transcripts of the interviews or focus groups with all personal identifiers removed before the transcripts are brought back to the Student for the data analysis phase of the study.

This strategy means that potential participants with a direct reporting relationship will be assured they can confidentially turn down the participation request from their supervisor (the Student), as this process conceals from the Student which potential participants chose not to participate or simply were not selected by you, the third party, because they were out of the selection criteria range (they might have been a participant request coming after the number of participants sought, for example, interview request number 6 when only 5 participants are sought, or focus group request number 10 when up to 9 participants would be selected for a focus group). Inquiry Team members asked to take on such 3rd party duties in this study will be under the direction of the Student and will be fully briefed by the Student as to how this process will work, including specific expectations, and the methods to be employed in conducting the elements of the inquiry with the Student's direct reports, and will be given every support possible by the Student, except where such support would reveal the identities of the actual participants.

Personal information will be collected, recorded, corrected, accessed, altered, used, disclosed, retained, secured and destroyed as directed by the Student, under direction of the Royal Roads Academic Supervisor.

Inquiry Team Members who are uncertain whether any information they may wish to share about the project they are working on is personal or confidential will verify this with [Your name here], the Student.

Statement of Informed Consent:

I have read and understand this agreement.

_____	_____	_____
Name (Please Print)	Signature	Date

APPENDIX B: INQUIRY TEAM CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that as an inquiry team member / question pilot tester / data analysis team member research team member (circle one) for a study being conducted by Mellissa Wood for the *Government of the Northwest Territories; Effective Collaborative Relationships: Strengthening the Sport and Recreation Sector in the North* research project in the Masters of Arts in leadership at Royal Roads University, I am privy to confidential information. I agree to keep all data collected during my participation in this study confidential and will not reveal it to anyone outside the research team.

Statement of Agreement

I have read and understand this agreement.

_____	_____	_____
Name (Please Print)	Signature	Date

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a story about a time when you felt most alive and fulfilled in your involvement in a partnership between your organization (NWTRPA or SRY) and the (NWTRPA or SRY).
2. Thinking back to your experience, what do you think are core, life-giving factors or values that existed within that particular partnership?
3. If you had three wishes or wants for this organizational partnership, what would they be?
    i. Similarly, if you had three wishes or wants for you within this partnership, what would they be?

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF INVITATION FOR INTERVIEWS

[DATE]

Dear [Prospective Participant],

I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting. This project is part of the requirement for a Master's Degree in Leadership, at Royal Roads University. My name is Mellissa Wood and my credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta, Program Head, MA – Leadership, School of Leadership Studies at xxxxx.

The objective of my research project is to identify positive factors within the collaborative relationship between the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT); Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth and the Northwest Territories Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA). In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master's Degree in Leadership. I will also be sharing my research findings with the GNWT, the NWTRPA, and other NWT Sport and Recreation Partners.

My research project will include an interview consisting of open-ended questions and is foreseen to last one hour. The foreseen questions will ask you to explore your own perceptions related to a positive organizational partnership between the NWTRPA and GNWT.

Your name was chosen as a prospective participant because of your past or present involvement within the organizational relationship between the NWTRPA and GNWT.

I would like to confirm that this research is separate from my work as Manager of Youth and Volunteer Programs with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. While my professional role obviously drives my research interests, I am undertaking this research as a means to move beyond my professional assumptions and personal experiences and seek first-hand information on the positive factors that contribute to organizational partnerships between the NWTRPA and the GNWT. Please note that, while I hope to provide valuable insight and potential options to the Department, there is no guarantee that my findings will be endorsed and implemented.

Information will be recorded in hand-written and audio recorder formats and, summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless your specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

If you choose to participate in this research, you may decide to withdraw from this process at any point leading up to, or during the interview without prejudice. However, once the interview is complete, you will have 24 hours to submit a written confirmation of your withdrawal. If you withdraw, data pertaining to you will be destroyed immediately upon receiving written confirmation.

All data (including raw data) will be stored in a secure location until April 12, 2012 at which time all data (including raw data) will be destroyed.

A copy of the final report will be published and archived in the RRU Library.

Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have additional questions regarding the project and its outcomes. Please note that there will not be a debriefing session at the conclusion of this interview.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

If you would like to participate in my research project, please contact me at:

Name: Mellissa Wood
Email: xxxxx
Telephone: xxxxx

Sincerely, Mellissa Wood

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS

My name is Mellissa Wood and this research project is part of the requirement for a Master's Degree in Leadership at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta, Program Head, MA – Leadership, School of Leadership Studies at xxxxx.

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project, the objective of which is to assist the GNWT in determining how to build effective collaborative organizational relationships.

The research will consist of interviews and a focus group meeting. I am approaching you to request an interview. I anticipate the interview will take one hour. I will be asking questions about your experience within the organizational relationship between the NWTRPA and GNWT. I am approaching you as a prospective participant because of your past or present involvement within the organizational relationship between the NWTRPA and GNWT.

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Masters of Arts in Leadership. I will also be sharing my research findings with the NWTRPA and GNWT. Should there be a future opportunity to share the research for the benefit of the community, or another educational purpose, it may also be presented in the form of a presentation, an article in a newsletter or journal, or a summary to another non-profit organization. A copy of the final report will be published and archived in the RRU Library and the National Library of Canada.

During the interview, information will be audio recorded and I will also be taking hand written notes. I will be asking you to review the transcription of your interview, to ensure you feel it accurately reflects our conversation. Where appropriate, the information will be summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless your specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential. The anonymity of individual participants will be protected through the assignment of codes rather than names to the data.

If you choose to participate in this research, you are free to withdraw at any time up to 24 hours post interview, without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have additional questions regarding the project and its outcomes.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP MEETING QUESTIONS

1. Tell us why you choose to work in the sport and recreation field.
2. Besides the NWTRPA and SRY partnerships, can you tell us about a time when you experienced another successful partnership between your organization (NGO or government) and (NGO or government)?
3. Still thinking about the experience you just described, can you tell us what you believe are the team skills that contribute to effective collaboration between a government organization and an NGO?
4. Now thinking about all of the experiences you have shared and heard today, what do you believe are the underlying values that contribute to the success of organizational collaborative efforts?
5. Thinking about the sport and recreation sector as a whole, and all of the organizational partnerships that occur, what would your three wishes or wants be for the improving collaborations in the entire sector?

APPENDIX G: LETTER OF INVITATION FOR FOCUS GROUP MEETING

[DATE]

Dear [Prospective Participant],

I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting. This project is part of the requirement for a Master's Degree in Leadership, at Royal Roads University. My name is Mellissa Wood and my credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta, Program Head, MA – Leadership, School of Leadership Studies at xxxxx.

The objective of my research project is to identify positive factors within the collaborative relationship between the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT); Division of Sport, Recreation and Youth and the Northwest Territories Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA). In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master's Degree in Leadership. I will also be sharing my research findings with the GNWT, the NWTRPA, and possibly other NWT Sport and Recreation Partners. As well, a copy of the final report will be published and archived in the RRU Library.

This second stage of my research project will be a focus group meeting consisting of open-ended questions and is foreseen to last one hour and 30 minutes. The foreseen questions, formulated from previous interview data, will ask you to continue to explore your own perceptions related to a positive organizational partnership between the NWTRPA and the GNWT (please see the attachment for a list of questions).

Your name was chosen as a prospective participant because of your past or present involvement within the organizational relationship between the NWTRPA and GNWT.

I would like to confirm that this research is separate from my work as Manager of Youth and Volunteer Programs with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. While my professional role obviously drives my research interests, I am undertaking this research as a means to move beyond my professional assumptions and personal experiences and seek first hand information on the positive factors that contribute to organizational partnerships between the NWTRPA and the GNWT. Please note that, while I hope to provide valuable insight and potential options to the GNWT, there is no guarantee that my findings will be endorsed and implemented

Information will be recorded in hand-written and audio recorder formats and, summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless your specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential. All data (including raw data) will be stored in a secure location until April 12, 2012 at which time all data (including raw data) will be destroyed.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you choose to participate in this research, you may decide to withdraw from this process at any point leading up to, or during the

focus group meeting without prejudice. However, if you choose to withdraw during the focus group meeting, data collected from you - up until the point of your withdrawal - will be still be used. Upon your withdrawal no data collection from you will take place. If you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have additional questions regarding the project and its outcomes. Please note that there will not be a debriefing session at the conclusion of the focus group meeting.

If you would like to participate in my research project, please contact me at:

Name: Mellissa Wood
Email: xxxxx
Telephone: xxxxx

Sincerely, Mellissa Wood

APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT FOR FOCUS GROUP MEETING

My name is Mellissa Wood and this research project is part of the requirement for a Master's Degree in Leadership at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Niels Agger-Gupta, Program Head, MA – Leadership, School of Leadership Studies at xxxxx.

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project, the objective of which is to assist the GNWT in determining how build effective collaborative organizational relationships.

The research will consist of interviews and a focus group meeting. I am approaching you to request your participation in the focus group meeting. I anticipate the Focus Group Meeting will take one hour and 30 minutes. I will be asking questions related to the findings of the interviews and facilitating a collaborative process to produce a set of agreed upon recommendations. I am approaching you as a prospective participant because of your past or present involvement within the organizational relationship between the GNWT and the NWTRPA

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Masters of Arts in Leadership. I will also be sharing my research findings with the GNWT and the NWTRPA. Should there be a future opportunity to share the research for the benefit of the community, or another educational purpose, it may also be presented in the form of a presentation, an article in a newsletter or journal, or a summary to another non-profit organization. A copy of the final report will be published and archived in the RRU Library and the National Library of Canada.

During the focus group meeting, information will be audio recorded and I will also be taking hand written notes. I will be reviewing the transcription of the focus group meeting, to ensure you feel it accurately reflects the conversation. Where appropriate, the information will be summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless your specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential. The anonymity of individual participants will be protected through the assignment of codes rather than names to the data.

If you choose to participate in this research, you may decide to withdraw from this process at any point leading up to, or during the focus group meeting without prejudice. However, if you choose to withdraw during the focus group meeting, data collected from you - up until the point of your withdrawal - will be still be used. Upon your withdrawal no data collection from you will take place.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____