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Inter-organisational collaboration : social workers' perceptions regarding collaboration in child and family welfare.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The complex nature of problems experienced by social workers' clients has often challenged social workers to collaborate with other organisations (Patel, Hochfeld, Graham and Selipsky, 2008). The concept of collaboration has many promises, yet this delicate and complex process presents numerous risks of failure, threatening both the process of collaboration and the outcomes being sought. There are many barriers to inter-organisational collaboration. Collaborating organisations may directly or indirectly be competing for resources and clients, yet need to work together to realise their objective of leaving a meaningful impact on social development needs.

Consequently there exists a need for knowledge and skills in the direct practice of partnership development in social development - inter-organisational collaboration being one form of partnership development. This research report aims to gain greater understanding of collaboration that meets the diverse needs of clients that pass through different, but related welfare systems. The report explores and describes the concept of inter-organisational collaboration as a social service delivery strategy; few guides exist that assist in the planning and managing of collaborative partnerships ensuring that it achieves its intended aims and goals of delivering quality social services.

This research report attempted to shed light on establishing and maintaining successful inter-organisational collaboration, by translating social workers' experiences in partnership development into a formula for practice. This approach is congruent with the academic tradition which shaped early social work education, namely, agency-based formulation of practice theory from first-hand experiences in meeting clients' expectations and dealing with human need (Middleman & Wood, 1990).

An analysis of the scope of inter-organisational collaboration was provided, by delineating the unique systems created from interaction between social systems (people), communication systems (decision-making and information exchange), and technical systems (service formulation and delivery) (Cherin, 2000).

1.2 PRE-UNDERSTANDING AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The aim of this research report was to describe the concept of inter-organisational collaboration, as perceived by the social workers chosen as respondents in the research project. The research proposition was that service provision strategies such as networks, coordination and collaboration can be used effectively and efficiently if they are known and understood. The objective of this study was therefore to explore the nature of the construct of inter-organisational collaboration by delineating its purpose, processes and outcomes.

Pervasive social problems of poverty, illiteracy, crime, HIV and AIDS and unemployment, to name a few, cannot be addressed by one agency acting unilaterally. The pervasiveness of today's social problems has often challenged social development professionals to collaborate in order to have a maximum impact on the social problems that undermine quality of life. Inter-organisational collaboration presents one way in which human and material resources can be integrated to meet the various needs of the service users that pass through separate yet related agencies (Abramson & Rosenthal, 1995).

For Lombard and Van Rensburg (2001) the advent of partnerships, networks, cooperation, coordination and collaboration in their time represented a policy shift from fragmented, specialist services to integrated, developmental services. This policy shift should be understood in view of the modern socio-economic and political context, marked by constrained social spending, economic downturn and deeply ingrained social problems. These broader issues compelled social development professionals to network, coordinate services and collaborate across organisational boundaries.

Social work practitioners whose competencies primarily lie in the knowledge, methods and professional orientation in case work, group work and community development, are well positioned to enhance the effectiveness of each partner agency at the professional and organisational level. In effect, social workers are equipped to facilitate individuals' interaction with their social environment, making partnership development about a natural extension of the capabilities - whether a less intense form of partnership, such as networking, or a more intense form, such as collaboration.

This report examined the factors that distinguish collaboration from other approaches to working together. Inter-organisational collaboration is chiefly characterised by the ability of participating partners to pool resources to create a single structure (Harding & White, 2002), a factor that distinguishes it from any other form of working across organisational structures.

In examining inter-organisational collaboration, Swanepoel and De Beer (1996) further argue for the understanding of the activities of people and institutions that perform tasks for mutual benefit.

The intended value of exploring and describing collaboration in this fashion is to capacitate practitioners to attain a level of competency deemed sufficient to achieve collaborative outcomes.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The following section outlines the primary aim and the secondary objectives of the study.

1.3.1 PRIMARY AIM OF THE STUDY

The overall purpose of this study was to gain greater understanding of the perception of collaboration among social workers.

1.3.2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Identifying the extent of social workers' knowledge and understanding of the nature of inter-organisational collaboration,
- Identifying the extent of social workers' knowledge and understanding of the purpose of inter-organisational collaboration,
- Identifying social workers' views on the need to consider collaborating with other organisations in certain instances, with the purpose of describing factors that compel social workers from different organisations to work together,
- Identifying social workers' views on the factors that facilitate and hinder inter-organisational collaboration,
- Establishing the extent to which social workers believe inter-organisational collaboration has had an impact (positive or negative) on their work.

The research project sought to make recommendations as to how inter-organisational collaboration processes can be better managed by outlining roles and functions that individuals can fulfil, thus ensuring effective and efficient inter-organisational collaboration.

1.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the participants' knowledge and understanding of the nature of inter-organisational collaboration?
- What are the participants' knowledge and understanding of the purpose of inter-organisational collaboration?
- What are the participants' views as to when to collaborate with other organisations?
- What are the participants' views on factors that facilitate and hinder collaboration?
- What are the participants' views about the impact of inter-organisational collaboration?

1.4 ANTICIPATED VALUE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study may be of value in the following ways:

- To provide a baseline source of information to appraise forms of partnership development. To be able to define and use networks, coordination and collaboration.
- To encourage future research in the area of inter-organisational collaboration.
- To contribute recommendations about how better to manage collaborations to maximise their outcomes and impact on social problems.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was a hybrid, consisting of exploratory and descriptive elements. Twenty five social workers who participated in the study were randomly selected from the total population of social workers in Gauteng. The researcher administered a specially-designed interview guide to inquire into their experiences in working collaboratively with other organisations.

The interview guide was piloted with two other social workers that were not part of the sample selected for the study, and modifications were accordingly done. The data obtained was analysed using thematic

content analysis, which allowed for it to be grouped into themes and categories. Grouping the data is followed with interpretation and explanation.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 The study focuses on social workers and does not include other professionals in the social development sector, i.e. psychologists, occupational therapists, nurses etc. The anticipated findings can not be generalised to other healthcare professionals.

1.6.2 The study was limited to the Gauteng area and may not be generalised to what happens in areas other than the mentioned area.

1.6.3 The study explored the experiences of social workers in the field of child and family care, and not the experiences of social workers in other fields that are beyond child and family care.

1.6.4 The different hierarchical positions of respondents, i.e. chief social worker, managers, supervisors and field social workers might influence their perception of issues, thus opening the data to extraneous variables that may not be grasped by the researcher during the analysis.

1.6.5 Face-to-face interviews might have inhibited the respondents' levels of openness, they may not have felt as free as when filling in questionnaires in private.

1.6.6 Due to the researcher's past experiences of collaborations, the researcher's own perceptions may have influenced the way in which interpretations were made.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Networking: The act of creating and maintaining a cluster of organisations for the purpose of exchanging, acting or producing among the member organisations (Alter and Hage, 1993).

Cooperation: Short-term informal relations that exist without any clearly defined mission, structure or planning effort (Winer and Ray, 1996). Such relations are characterised by relationships that are based on information sharing without having to establish a commonly defined structure and authority (Reilly, 2001).

Coordination: Coordinative efforts focus their interaction around a specific effort or programme. They require some planning and division of roles (Winer and Ray, 1996).

Collaboration: A collaboration is a more durable and pervasive relationship than networking, cooperation or coordination. Independent agencies form a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. It is characterised by more formal relationships and a structure that determines its own authority. A collaboration presents as a structure that unites previously separate groups into a new structure to achieve a mutual goal (Reilly, 2001; Winer and Ray, 1996).

Social Worker: Social work graduates with four years minimum training at university level and registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP).

1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the pre-understanding and rationale for the study as well as its aims, research design and methodology, limitations of the study, overview of the research report and the anticipated value of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature explores and describes the concept of inter-organisational collaboration, purpose of collaboration, hindering and facilitating factors, and its impact. According to Neuman (1997), literature review is a broad survey of what some authors and researchers have inquired about a specific phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in this study. Moreover it outlines the procedures that the researcher followed to collect and analyse data.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents research findings sourced from the use of the interview guide. The data outlined the concept of inter-organisational collaboration, its purpose, facilitating and hindering factors, as well as roles and relationships that are essential for collaboration to take place.

CHAPTER 5: MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents main findings and conclusions drawn in terms of the aims and rationale of the study. Recommendations are proposed in terms of theory and empirical findings. Areas for future research are suggested.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review is a broad survey of the work a number of authors have done on a specific phenomenon or topic (Neuman, 1997). This research report is an inquiry and overview of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration - delineating its nature, purposes, its enabling and hindering factors, its impact and the role of human relations in this field. The appraisal of relevant literature would provide a perspective on partnership development in the South African context by locating its relevance to issues of better service delivery specifically in the welfare sector.

"Poverty, a lack of employment and access to social services, food insecurity, the fragmentation of the family and alienation from kinship and the community are some of the factors contributing to the declining quality of family life in South Africa" (Patel, 2005: 165). For example, within this bleak picture, there is record of 14.3 million children (75% of children in South Africa) who lived in poverty, 11 million (of the 14.3 million) who lived in extreme poverty (Martin 2003 in Patel, 2005). Inter-organisational collaboration seems to be a favourable service delivery strategy where social problems are enormous, while resources in human and material form are scarce and inaccessible. "Social development partnership could enhance the delivery of developmental welfare services through enlarging budgets and finding synergies between partner activities to meet needs and deliver services more efficiently and effectively" (Patel, 2005: 283).

According to Lombard (2008) a developmental welfare policy framework has been put in place in South Africa, but the implementation of service delivery remains an ongoing challenge. Though partnerships may not be a panacea to all social problems, it is through collaborative partnering that the duplication and fragmentation in service delivery at local levels could be addressed (Patel, 2005). For collaborations to be utilised optimally, it is critical that the concept be first explored and described.

2.2 INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

A novice observer of partnership development that occurs across independent organisations would be easily intrigued by similarly sounding terms like collaboration, networks, co-ordination, 'task forces', coalitions, and so on. At what point can we say cross-agency interaction is a network, co-ordination or collaboration? What are the main features of inter-organisational collaboration that distinguishes it from other forms of partnership development?

Harding and White (2002) especially identified the pooling of resources by different and autonomous organisations as one of the main characteristics of collaboration. The terms inter-organisational collaboration and collaboration are used interchangeably in this report. The pooling of resources should result in the creation of a single organisational framework or structure, a dedicated project leader, shared or decentralised control and a common or joint budget. Compared to other forms of partnership development "…..it is an intense form of mutual attachment…" (Harding & White, 2002: 7).

Lombard and Van Rensburg (2001) unpack these similarly sounding concepts using a continuum: which considers networking as a lower level of interaction intensity, while collaboration reflects higher levels of interaction intensity. Related cross-agency interactions such as co-ordination's, task forces and alliances in the middle of the continuum reflect medium levels of interaction intensity.

CONTINUUM OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Networking_____Co-ordination_____Collaboration

Lower intensity Moving into resources High intensity

(Adapted from Lombard and Van Rensburg, 2001)

FIGURE 1: CONTINUUM OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This conceptualisation of cross-agency interaction points to the extent that different, but related, organisations blend their own people, structures and systems into a single and distinct structure to pursue common interests. Some definitions cluster together all related cross-agency concepts to the detriment of clear analysis, for instance Abramson and Rosenthal (1995: 1479) inferred that "……it is a group of independent organisations who are committed to working together for specific purposes and tangible outcomes while maintaining their own autonomy, they terminate their collaboration or transform themselves into other forms of organisations when that purpose is met. Such collaborations are variously referred to as coalitions, networks, strategic alliances, task forces or partnerships, each with its own characteristics". Accordingly any cross-agency interaction can be called collaboration.

2.2.1 THE SCOPE OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The main defining scope of collaboration revolves around blending commonalities in vision, mission, funders, professional profile and target service users to create a dedicated structure to solve issues of mutual interest (Siegel, 2008). A fully-fledged collaboration is informed by a different value system that pushes differences to the background and pulls essential similarities to the foreground. This basically relates to the degree of participation in the essential processes of the collaboration (Harding & White, 2002).

There is an emphasis that inter-organisational collaboration requires diverse stakeholders to pool resources and collectively solve a problem that one organization can not address unilaterally (Mullen, 2008; Walker, 2000). Moreover, unlike networks, co-ordination and other forms of partnership development, resources, power and authority are shared to the extent that they become the glue that holds the collaboration together (Oxfam, 2007).

2.2.2 THE COLLABORATION PARADOX

The concept of inter-organisational collaboration in theory and practice is not without its own potential problems and challenges. Others consider cross-agency collaboration as an idea and practice open to contradiction, successes and failure. In practice, inter-agency relations can be characterized by conflict and competitive behaviour (Ferlie & McGivern, 2003; Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2005). Scott (2003) identified four interrelated levels where potentially complex and protracted problems can appear: inter-organisational, intra-organisational, inter-professional and inter-personal.

The participants may be driven at an inter-personal level by a mix of incentives, ambitions at the inter-professional level, power relations at the inter-organisational level, and at the intra-organisational level by different “organizational meaning” that each may attribute to the collaborative (Ferlie & McGivern, 2003). The concept of cross-agency collaboration can be a paradox, “…. (a) dynamic tension grounded in the coexistence of opposites (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2005: 3).

2.3 THE PURPOSE OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The main purpose of inter-organisational collaboration is to bridge organisational gaps that prevent independent agencies from having a maximum impact on social problems i.e. poverty, HIV and AIDS, crime, unemployment, illiteracy, substance abuse, etc. It can be noted that despite its problems, the

motive behind collaboration is to increase effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and represent efforts to restructure services to be more responsive to the needs of service users (Mullen, 2008; Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2005).

Government directives appear to be the main driving force in motivating for the use of multi-sectoral collaboration in social welfare delivery. The main reason is to promote policy shifts from fragmented, specialist services to developmental, integrated social services. Governments want structures to be more responsive to addressing social problems and to implement policy shifts that actively encourage partnerships, networks and co-ordinated efforts in social services delivery (Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001).

The role of government, here and abroad, identify as the chief purpose for collaboration the need to have maximum impact on what is called in Australia "wicked" problems (Oxfam, 2007; Australian Public Service Commission, 2007; Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategic Implementation Plan 2006-09, 2007).

In more advanced social welfare systems, the main purpose driving collaboration tends to be more around resolving conflict and competition between well-resourced agencies (Mullen, 2008). While the pooling of scarce resources is the main reason in the context of constrained social spending, fiscal discipline, rationalisation of services and the global economic turmoil, as seen in less developed social welfare systems, are reasons advanced to ensure maximum impact on protracted social problems (Sewpaul, 2001).

According to D'Amour, Goulet, Pineault, Labadia and Remondin (2004: iii) the purpose of inter-organisational collaboration in effect "….consists of designing services more efficiently - an improvement, not only (to) make services more accessible and continuous, but also (to) reduce costs, a welcome feature in our heavily constrained health (social welfare) system".

2.4 THE IMPACT OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The impact and effects of inter-organisational collaboration, or any other form of partnership can mean various things to many people. The effects collaboration can be looked at in terms of task and process goals.

2.4.1 TASK AND PROCESS GOALS

An examination of the impact of collaboration with regard to tasks and goals looks into whether aims and objectives have been met. Was the task achieved? One outlines goals in relation to differences made in dealing with the actual target of the intervention, i.e. how many service users benefitted from the collaboration. While process goals highlight the benefits from the actual working together experience, one seeks to establish whether the collaboration process was beneficial at a personal and/or professional level. For instance, learning new information that one would unlikely have attained on their own refers to the benefits accrued from the actual collaboration process, not more so the collaborative task of realising set goals (Compton & Galaway, 1999).

2.4.2 RELATIONSHIP GOALS

In collaborative arrangements, relationship goals centre on building into the partnership processes for dealing with interpersonal problems. A group of individuals representing different organisations working together is “a natural laboratory for examining and improving the relationship that members have with one another” (Toseland & Rivas, 2001: 294). Collaborations tend to fail due to problems around the management of relationships among the members, thus working on relationship goals is closely related to achieving task and process goals of any partnership for service delivery purposes.

Professional skills for dealing with interpersonal problems can only be acquired by being open to receiving constructive feedback from a variety of people encountered in partnerships, or within ones own work setting. Skills used to achieve relationship goals are usually not taught, as no two collaborations are alike, but are performed on a trial-and-error basis until such skills are performed more appropriately. The ability to work on relationship goals is a way of modelling interpersonal and professional skills in order for stakeholders to work together, to be able to pool resources in order to impact on social problems as a collective (Toseland & Rivas, 2001).

2.4.3 ACHIEVING COLLECTIVE ACTION

Inter-organisational collaboration helps to “structure collective action” (Harding & White, 2002). A much stronger leadership at all levels should emerge where inter-organisational collaboration is widely used. Active and lapsed stakeholders can gain durable new skills, different perspectives and access to

resources that would have been impossible to attain had they not collaborated. The demanding, yet rewarding, process of collaboration should empower active stakeholders in many unique ways.

Harding and White (2002) took this point further by asserting that this sort of reciprocity and trust allows contacts and pooled resources to continue even when the collaboration has been terminated. Moreover, the process of collaboration can provide an enabling environment where direct or indirect risks can be shared, while encouraging stakeholders to innovate and change (Nzimande, 1997). The impact of this becomes clear once fragmented agencies are able to jointly create workable solutions and actually implement them (Mullen, 2008).

2.4.4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hardy, Phillips and Lawrence (2003) assert that collaboration across organisations facilitates the creation of new knowledge, therefore it may produce “synergistic solutions”. Other service delivery strategies are unlikely to produce such an effect. A blended structure that is created through stakeholders pooled resources could be best positioned to produce solutions that integrate the knowledge, experiences and expertise of diverse stakeholders.

2.4.5 LEADERSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The impact of collaboration in the Australian welfare system resulted in the availability of well- co-ordinated leaders of non-governmental, governmental and civic stakeholders (Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategic Implementation Plan, 2006-09). The sharing of resources and flexible management ensured services were delivered in vast areas that were not reached in the past. Here synergistic solutions were produced by involving different agencies, organisations and professional groups to bear on a problem that affected all stakeholders.

2.5 HUMAN RELATIONS

The challenge of collaboration centres mostly around the relationship of stakeholders - the nature of relations can determine success or failure. The relationship between the participating stakeholders forms the main medium through which the collaborative spirit can be nurtured (D’Amour et al, 2004). Mullen (2008) considered any efforts to nurture relationships as deserving of careful attention.

2.5.1 TRUST AND INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS

The issue of trust is one of the main factors that facilitates collaboration, in fact, its absence could signal the failure of any collaboration. Trust problems, according to D'Amour et al (2004) can be seen when partners have doubts about the competency and reliability of other actively involved stakeholders. As collaboration requires intense interaction and commitment, trust is a pre-condition that could determine the success or failure of the partnership.

Trust alone is no panacea to effective collaboration, one needs to also include inter-personal skills and the abilities of stakeholders to co-operate and communicate (Walker, 2000). This should assist participants to relate well across organisational boundaries. This could be the reason, Scott (2003) asserts, that inter-personal and inter-professional chemistry is important to achieve effective collaboration.

For inter-personal relationships to be a facilitative, rather than a hindrance, the collaboration should have mechanisms to address dynamics around culture, norms, language, status hierarchies and in-group/out-group boundaries (Scott, 2003). The convener or facilitator is pressured to be able to "manoeuvre" relationships in order to draw out the participant's commonalities, while focusing on capabilities to sustain a common vision of the problem. The main aim is to encourage the stakeholders to see themselves as part of the solution (Phillips, Hardy & Lawrence, 1998).

Harding and White (2002) looked at relationships in collaboration from a different but very relevant dimension. They conclude that a "top-down" approach to how stakeholders relate is unlikely to build relationships of trust, involvement and ownership of the process. Collaborative efforts, should focus on "bottom-up" relationships, especially because of the intensity of participation that defines them. This refers to conditions where stakeholders are expected to actively participate in all essential aspects of the collaboration. The intensity of stakeholder interaction, which controls the collaboration agenda, forces them (stakeholders) to form relationships of inter-dependence.

2.5.2 INCLUSION TO ACHIEVE A WIN – WIN OUTCOME

Cooperative behaviour and mutual respect have the potential to harvest more benefit for the collaboration, as opposed to competitive interaction between stakeholders (Walker, 2000). Other observers of cross-agency interaction infer that relationships need to be based on "win-win"

negotiations or mediation. Win-win negotiations are characterised by a focus on shared goals, a creative search for problem solutions that meet all sides' goals, acceptance of the validity of each party's expressed needs and ultimately a high degree of trust (Walker, 2000).

The issue of inclusion in the decision making process meant, for Harding and White (2002), that power should be shared equally between all stakeholders. As far as relationships are concerned, inter-organisational collaboration is an involved form of participation. It is best implemented if stakeholders relate to each other in the way that promotes openness and active participation. According to Ospina and Saz-Carranza (2005) this participatory approach and the open nature of relationships need to reflect the value of diversity.

2.5.3 DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Diversity management is a professional skill that seeks to integrate the capacities of different yet interdependent individuals (Nzimande, 1997). This involves the mastery of managing relationships that can be complicated by divides along organisational, professional and personal lines. The attributes of a "diversity manager" are critical in that they can either make or break relationships in a delicate, at times volatile, collaborative structure. Walker (2000) lists professional and personal attributes such as integrity, "business sense", functional competence, flexibility, negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution skills, transparency, empathy, inter-personal competence and emotional intelligence as necessary.

2.5.4 COMMUNICATION

The channels of communication in collaboration can also determine the nature of relationships between involved stakeholders. It should always be kept in mind that inter-organisational collaboration requires intense interaction. Harding and White (2002) found that good communication within the collaboration structure and with other relevant external stakeholders is important for building good relationships. How this is done, the literature seems not to be too forth coming.

The focus on the nature of relationships in collaboration is important because it can determine success or failure. Lessons are still to be learned from the literature on how mutual cooperative behaviour can be enhanced between stakeholders who can make a great impact should they pool their resources. The challenge is to enhance best practice by attending to issues of human relations to ensure collaborative

bodies attain their set task goals and process goals, and managing those factors that hinder and facilitate inter-organisational collaboration.

2.6 THE FACTORS THAT HINDER AND FACILITATE INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The complexities associated with inter-organisational collaboration centre mainly around the fact that collaborating partners have to deal with both hindering and facilitating factors. Hindering factors or obstacles represents threats that can derail the delicate cross-agency interaction process, and may limit or even eliminate the ability to achieve set goals. While facilitating factors are the opposite of the hindering factors, these represent enabling activities that may result in constructive collaboration, and enhance strategies to deliver meaningful services. Details about possible obstacles and factors that are likely to facilitate collaboration, are explored and described.

2.6.1 RESPECT

Majumdar (2005) defined factors that facilitate collaboration as certain conditions that improve the likelihood of attaining the stated vision, mission and objectives that inform the joint structure set up by the participants in pooling their resources. Conditions that can facilitate collaboration include policies and practices grounded in the respect of each participant's values and cultures. Some consider respect shown to participants as essential in retaining and reaching out to potential partners (Mullen, 2008; Walker, 2000; Phillips et al., 1998).

Respect may mean many things to different people in a collaborative arrangement, however, at its most basic definition it should help to contain potentially sensitive and divisive issues at the four levels of cross-agency interaction: inter-organisational, intra-organisational, inter-professional and inter-personal. Furthermore, the collaborative explicit expression of respect is essential in ensuring power, authority and responsibility are equally distributed among the participants (Majumdar, 2005). One can not feel valued and respected, thereby motivated and retained, if one is not respected enough to the extent that one can be trusted with power, responsibility and authority.

2.6.2 COHESION

The use of practices grounded in respect fosters cohesion, which is necessary in a structure that is jointly created by independent, yet inter-dependent, organisations. Cohesion between the participants is a

basic element for the collaboration process to work (Walker, 2000; Abramson & Rosenthal, 1995; Alter and Hage, 1993). It becomes almost certain that lack of cohesion, uneven distribution of power, responsibility and authority may be definite obstacles to collaboration.

Ospina and Saz-Carranza (2005) found that the collaborators need to pay attention to personal relationships if these arrangements are to be better managed. A nurturing collaboration values each members input, which in turn demands skilful management and proactive measures to realise the members full potential. Open and participatory processes are therefore essential in facilitating cross-agency interaction (Majumdar, 2003; Walker, 2000).

Collaboration is less likely to ensure members realise their full potential, and basically inhibit it as a structure if "…stakeholders (are) unwilling to work together, when there is little consensus on action steps or solutions, when substantial power differentials exist, when maintenance of relationships represent significant costs to partners, or when a legitimate facilitator or mediator cannot be found" (Majumdar, 2005: 5). The lack of cohesion can exacerbate divisions and push commonalities to the background in inter-organisational collaboration. Moreover, these hindering factors may make it difficult for the collaboration to retain people and reach out to new potential partners.

2.6.3 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Undesirable characteristics such as an unyielding competitive spirit, established interest, resistance to change, inadequate orientation and negative attitudes are detrimental to collaboration (Mullen, 2008; Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2005; Harding & White, 2002, Alter & Hage, 1993). This hindering condition can be located at all levels of the collaboration, from organisational level to inter-personal aspects. The cost of participation, in this regard, may outweigh the benefits.

As with any other personal or professional change prospect, collaboration can inspire reluctance, fear, uncertainty, and resistance or opposition. These potential obstacles can be expressed consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly. The fact is that in most cases the purpose of a collaboration can originate from an "external" agent such as government, which can be uncomfortable for potential partners (Oxfam, 2007). Any opposition to change can also be related to the need, voluntarily or involuntarily, to change well-established practices overnight (Majumdar, 2005). Collaboration may even be too much to ask overstretched agencies, who will be asked to pool scarce resources - a valid impediment that can prevent collaboration from even taking off the ground.

2.6.4 COMMUNICATION

An obstacle to collaboration may be lack of communication among key stakeholders. The availability of individuals who can communicate vision, desire and commitment, and have the ability to take others with them, is important in collaboration (Harding & White, 2002).

Lack of communication is a significant barrier to collaboration, for instance certain researchers cite ineffective communication as a factor that can lead to frustration, anger and feelings of being excluded (Harding & White, 2002). Phillips et al. (1998) said the use of jargon and "clichés" can generate myths and misunderstanding. For Siegel (2008) the misreading of partners wishes may be another pitfall of cross-agency interaction.

Some hindering factors are most pronounced at micro level, at the point of direct interaction between the participants. For instance, attitudes of mistrust and suspicion are clear barriers that can occur at the level of inter-personal relations, but which can also play out inter-professionally and inter-organisationally (Harding & White, 2002). A focus on micro issues is important, because partnerships that do not acknowledge and communicate even minor internal differences are likely to be racked by tension and conflict (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2005).

2.6.5 GOAL ATTAINMENT

Alter and Hage (1993) suggested the following as indispensable in facilitating collaboration, from a personal, professional and organisational point of view: Each participant should perceive that the collaboration achieved its goal, that they attained something that they wanted, that the payoffs exceeded the costs and that the process was fair and educational. In taking this point further, Majumdar (2005) talks about the "social energy" that is required to collaborate, this refers to active willingness among the stakeholders to bring about change in delivering social services.

It cannot be ignored that relations among independent organisations may be marked by ideological differences, absence of clear vision, sense of purpose and strategies, lack of communication and dominance by one or more participant organisations (Majumdar, 2005). Specific attention is required in research to outline some of the factors. Mattessick, Murray-Close & Monse (2001) consider the following necessary for successful collaboration: mutual respect and understanding, informal and

personal relationships, open and frequent communication, shared vision, concrete and attainable goals, flexibility and adaptability, and a favourable political and social climate.

The role of researcher, therefore, is to inform policies and practices in cross-agency interaction; and to maximise benefits and minimise costs related to collaboration. In order to apply best practice in collaboration one must draw from the available knowledge base, and make the most of available skills to facilitate delicate tasks of blending different organisations resources, staff and expertise.

2.7 SOCIAL WORK AND INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

"Research has shown that social work team members are more likely than other members to take active roles in helping the interdisciplinary team function effectively" (Middleman & Wood, 1990: 94).

2.7.1 SOCIAL WORK METHODS: CASEWORK, GROUP WORK AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Social work competencies and rootedness in the social development paradigm could position the profession as a noted strategic partner in collaborative efforts to enhance the process and task of delivering durable social services. A knowledge and skills base, ranging from casework, group work, community development to social policy positions, allows social workers to optimally engage networks, co-ordinations and collaborations in the social development arena. A direct application of social work theory and skills in inter-organisational collaboration arrangements may present an opportunity to make an important contribution to the social development of families, communities and this country at large. Moreover, it may present a way to undo the social workers crisis of confidence in themselves, their profession and make better use of their vital role in the area of social development (McKendrick, 2001).

Bringing together social workers in cross-agency collaboration may have the potential to tap into the following untapped resources: The field of social work has more knowledge and skills relevant to social development; social workers are the largest workforce of all social services professions; agency structure can be adapted towards developmental initiatives; they possess competencies in casework, group, community, social policy and action and government policies overlapping with social work beliefs of social justice and equity (McKendrick, 2001). Social work as a profession promises to add value to

partnerships by bringing in abstracts and concepts, as well as relational, emotive, affective and human skills to enhance the combining of human and material resources for social action (Middleman & Wood, 1990).

2.7.2 SYSTEMS, ECOLOGY AND PERSON – IN – ENVIRONMENT PERSPECTIVE

An "unconventional" application of social work theory and practice orientation provides a model of collaboration, a conceptual framework, to know and understand what informs social workers' involvement in cross-agency collaboration. The application of systems/ecology/person-in-environment theory centres on approaches that deal with the social work clientele group, a conventional or traditional application of this theoretical framework. For the purpose of this literature review, systems/ecological/person-in-environment looks at how social workers are best suited to work across organisations, which is a non-traditional or unconventional use of theory.

Systems theory seems relevant in empowering social workers to be confident players, at all levels, in the partnership development of the delicate and complex process of collaboration: deciding why to collaborate, recruiting and convening stakeholders, defining vision and shared outcomes, establishing policies to guide collaboration and monitoring success. The ability to operate from a micro level (individual casework) to macro level (policy), presents a competitive advantage, which the systems theory can positively reinforce. Systems theory in its theoretical framework directs the social work "gaze" to view a distinct collaborative structure as a whole - a unit composed of people and their unique interactions, in particular focusing on their relationships (Compton & Galaway, 1999).

At surface level the high level of interaction intensity required by inter-organisational collaboration can be met by the utilisation of systems theory, which can delineate partnerships as chiefly animated by not only structure, but by relationships. Therefore, social workers can add powerful value in delicate structures such as collaborations by using systems/ecological/person-in-environment concepts to challenge collaborators, enabling them to see each other as related to the others (whether internally to the collaboration or externally) in a more or less stable way - within a particular time and space (Compton & Galaway, 1999). This can be a unique strength not shared by other social service professions which may also be involved in inter-organisational collaborations.

2.7.3 THE FOCUS OF THE SYSTEMS THEORY

At another level systems theory may serve collaborating social workers well, in that its conceptual framework shifts attention from either the person or the collaboration environment/structure, to problems in the interaction between agent-agent and agent-structure (Compton & Galaway, 1999). Problems that concern complexities and costs around interaction between the collaborating partners, can be addressed by systems theory; by the "person-in-collaboration" interaction which allows for maximum potential in order for the collaboration not to fail and to achieve its goals.

Research examining the application of systems/ecology/person-in-environment in inter-organisational collaboration can add value in the delivery of social development initiatives by: identifying problems in interaction or transaction; issues around lack of fit; opportunities and limitations among individuals and the various levels that make up a particular system (Compton & Galaway, 1999). Empirical findings based on research may enhance the management of collaborations, which are difficult to manage as they are constantly changing as they move towards their goals. Systems theory is intended to be used to understand systems that are in a constant state of flux, while not ignoring the person and the as distinct elements of environmental dimensions - an approach well poised to enable social workers to effectively use inter-organisational collaboration for greater impact on social problems of a massive scale.

The ecosystem theory, a variation of the systems theory, directs the social work "gaze" on problems relating to stakeholder interaction, but puts more emphasis on mutual inter-dependence among players. The ecosystem perspective in social work embodies a balanced emphasis on person and environment, delineating broader analysis of interaction challenges/problems. The main concern at this level of analysis is the integration of fragmented services in the "ecological field", a complex inter-relationship within the whole structure of services (Compton & Galaway, 1999).

2.7.4 SERVICE INTEGRATION

The ecosystem theory is based upon the realisation that without collaboration, clients, families and communities can be caught in a "nightmarish" fragmentation of social services, unable to even scratch the surface of social problems (Compton & Galaway, 1999). A skilful application of systems/ecosystem/person-in-environment theory in social services partnership development can avoid unfortunate situations where clients, families and communities face the burden of helplessness in the face of professional/agency conflict and irreconcilable agency incongruities (Compton & Galaway, 1999).

2.8 INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION AND THE WHITE PAPER FOR SOCIAL WELFARE (REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA 1997)

The White Paper for Social Welfare, which was adopted in 1997, represents a milestone in the South African welfare system. The white paper seeks to address racial disparities in the allocation of welfare services, by redistributing resources based on social rights and equity (Patel, 2003). An appraisal of the history of South Africa's welfare system should clarify its genesis and through an exploration of the White Paper for Social Welfare, map a way forward for the welfare system.

2.8.1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WELFARE SYSTEM: EARLY COLLABORATIVE WORK

"In the course of the 19th century, organised welfare services – established particularly by religious bodies – and welfare-related legislation began to emerge in the Cape Colony" (Loffell, 2000: 54). State welfare and social work in South Africa was born out of a concern for white poverty in the 1920's, "…a concern that carried weight for a white government preoccupied with the needs of indigent whites who were also voters" (McKendrick, 1998: 99). The central role of partnership, development in the provision of welfare services, was manifest in that state welfare banded together with voluntary religious organisations to address the "poor white problem". According to Patel (2003), early welfare services were marked by the structured activities of white philanthropic and religious organisations supplementing government's efforts to deliver services for a small "welfare elite".

2.8.2 THE FORMALISATION OF THE WELFARE SYSTEM

The early collaborative approach to the provision of welfare services was cemented by the establishment of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into the "Poor White Problem", which advocated the use of university trained social workers, armed with an objective methodological approach to the study of poverty and its causes. Other developments included the People's Conference under the auspices of the Dutch Reformed Church, a 1936 National Conference on Social Work, and the formation of a State Department of Social Welfare in 1937, which was charged with consolidating state and white civil societies' efforts to solving the problem of white poverty (McKendrick, 1998).

It must also be noted that the genesis of state welfare and social work were not only shaped by the political ideology of the government of the day, but as well as international educational developments. According to McKendrick (1998), a narrow concern for a poor white minority came with advancements

in scientific assessment of human needs, high craftsmanship and skills in individualised curative and restorative work with individuals and families. Patel (1992) said colonial and apartheid South Africa cultivated an exclusive race group consciousness that translated into extensive social services for whites, which were on par with developed commonwealth countries, while welfare for blacks was either residual or non-existent.

Deeply embedded in the history of South Africa's distorted welfare services was the role played by partnerships - white voluntary organisations basically became public welfare services contractors. White religious welfare organisations provided state subsidised programmes while retaining the discretion in the design and management of programs, and still raised funds from private donors (Patel, 2003). With the National Party coming into power in 1948, Afrikaner nationalism translated into the State, and voluntary welfare benefits and services were more intensely being offered on a differential and unequal basis (McKendrick, 1998; Patel, 1992). "Injustices which had been in place under the colonial systems were entrenched and compounded. As part of this process, core values of the social services were betrayed, and the sector failed to carry out key aspects of its functions in society" (Loffell, 2000: 53).

2.8.3 THE ALTERNATIVE WELFARE SYSTEM

A parallel voluntary sector, which also relied on partnerships in the form of networks, co-ordination and collaboration, emerged to oppose the apartheid racism ideology (Patel, 1992). The alternative formations were ideologically distinct from the establishment and existed because of the failure to address the needs of the black majority (Gray, 2000).

The voluntary and largely informal (as it was not officially recognised by the government of the day) welfare sector was critical of the remedial, inappropriate, low impact, distorted and expensive state welfare programmes (Patel, 1992). Colonial and apartheid welfare, though offered in a limited collaborative manner, failed to address the structural causes of poverty facing black, Indian and coloured communities (Gray, 2000; Patel, 2003; McKendrick, 1998).

If inter-organisational collaboration is defined by the creation of a previously non-existent and distinct structure that comes about as a result of organisations pooling resources, alternative welfare agencies in South African managed in this regard, as marginalised communities founded new structures through funding sourced from communities themselves, foreign donors and from faith-based organisations (Patel, 2003). In the 1970s, for instance, the Black Community Programmes, a network of services,

emerged as a component of the Black Consciousness Movement, with the aim of establishing networks to offer services to promote self-reliance, health and general well-being among black people. In the 1980s, this was further supplemented by activities associated with the Mass Democratic Movement - these included welfare related programmes offered by trade unions, youth and women's organisations, civic associations, religious bodies, etc (Loffell, 2000).

2.8.4 THE COST OF FRAGMENTATION

The cost of fragmentation in state welfare for whites and the alternative welfare for the marginalised was high,- a classic example of the consequences of lack of inter-organisational collaboration in the provision of welfare services. The compartmentalisation of the South African society into Bantustans that were defined by tribal affiliations complicated the quality of the welfare system in a negative way. According to Louw (1998), the state passed a trilogy of legislation for whites, Indians and coloureds, which put a stranglehold on the welfare system by duplication of services. This produced a costly, inefficient and ineffective welfare system. The establishment of inferior welfare systems for all the respective Bantustans fragmented the welfare system even further. "Each one of the ten Bantustans established its own welfare structure and developed its own system of operation with its own bureaucracy to manage it. "In social security, for example, fourteen different systems existed concurrently in the past" (Louw, 1998: 135).

Given the small-scale collaboration between the state and alternative welfare services on one hand, and between white voluntary civil society organisations and the alternative welfare system on the other, the history of the South African welfare system was marked by huge distortions and it had limited impact on deeply entrenched poverty in the majority of communities (Patel, 2003).

2.8.5 THE POST – 1994 CONSTITUTION

The post-1994 constitution reflects a change towards a democratic socialist ideology of social welfare, a radical departure from the colonial and apartheid welfare system. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1994) locates social welfare in the national and provincial departments of welfare, as local government has limited welfare functions. The constitution provides for the Bill of Rights, which directly introduces a new paradigm for social welfare.

The post-1994 dispensation further saw the promulgation of the White Paper for Welfare and the Social Welfare Action Plan (SWAP), which "…stresses participation in decision-making and also expects organisations in civil society to deliver social services and developmental programmes, to ensure that the decision-making structures of the organisations are representative of consumers of services, members of communities are being served and include other relevant role players" (Van Eeden et al.; 2000: 12).

2.8.6 POLICY ADVOCACY FOR PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

It must be stated at the onset that there is a clear policy advocacy for partnership development as a vehicle for social service delivery in the current welfare legislative dispensation. There is a specific recognition of the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration in the redesign and delivery of welfare services in the South African context. But high-sounding legislation is no panacea to addressing past disparities and today's pressing social problems. Moreover, welfare services seem to be overwhelmed by current social problems as manifested by service delivery protests that destabilised some local government authorities, provincial government and national government.

2.8.7 THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RDP)

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) ,which was drafted in the 1990s and was used as the African National Congress (ANC) manifesto for the 1994 elections, made provisions not only for social welfare services, but also for education, health, skills training, housing, transport, job creation, land reform, water and sanitation, electrification, telecommunication and environment management. It was regarded as an integrated, socio-economic policy framework joining the South African community and causing it to move away from separate development, towards partnership for reconstruction and development purposes (Van Eeden, Ryke and De Necker, 2000).

The objective of the RDP was to address the imbalance sof the past, to initiate the empowerment of the individual, family and communities of societies, irrespective of race group, gender, religious, or sexual orientation. Most critically, the objective was to acknowledge the role of the voluntary welfare organisations and other community based welfare organisations in the provision of welfare services (Gray, 2000; Van Eeden, et al. 2000).

2.8.8 THE WHITE PAPER FOR SOCIAL WELFARE (1997)

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) rests on the following key principles:

- Securing basic welfare rights: this refers to "a system of laws, programs, benefits and services which strengthen or assure provisions of meeting social needs recognised as basic for the welfare of the population and for the functioning of the social order" (Friedlander and Apte, 1980: 4).
- Equity: this refers to the eradication of unfair discrimination against anyone on the following grounds, race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnicity or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
- Non-discrimination: (see equity).
- Democracy: "The concept democracy has its origin in the Greek term *demokratia*, which means rule by the people" (Patel, 2005: 105).
- Improved quality of life: this refers to life satisfaction as a result of favourable socio-economic factors (Louw, Van Ede and Louw, 1998).
- Human rights: this refers to values of human dignity, equality and freedom (SA Constitution, 1995).
- People-centred policies: this refers to policy planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation based on the active participation of the intended service users of a specific programme (Thomas & Robertshaw, 1999).
- Investment in human capital: this refers to enhancing and contributing to human capabilities as an asset of advantage.
- Sustainability: this refers service delivery strategies that can endure and withstand socio-economic and environmental pressures.
- Partnership: this refers to the coming together of stakeholders that share a common interest, jointly explore solutions, accept each others bona fide and establish trust (Walker, 2000).
- Inter-sectoral collaboration: this refers to stakeholders representing different sectors, i.e. health, education, welfare and development, pooling resources to address a social problem.
- Decentralisation of service delivery: this involves the authorisation and funding of agents other than the state organs to provide services at local level (Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001).
- Quality services: this refers to the degree of excellence in the delivery of services.

- Transparency and accountability: this refer to easily accessible and widely understood processes, in a way that state or civil society organs are liable to be called to account for one's conduct, and must be answerable.
- Accessibility: this refers to social services that can be easily reached by the citizens of the country.
- Appropriateness: this refers to a suitability of services for particular people, condition, occasion, or place.
- Ubuntu: the principle of caring for each other's wellbeing is promoted, and a spirit of mutual support fostered (Louw, 1998).

Lombard (2008) concludes that the current legislative dispensation was effective in re-shaping welfare policy, but "….challenges to effectively implementing the White Paper for Social Welfare are ongoing" (Lombard, 2008: 166). The delivery part of the current legislative framework is still to be seen. This research project positions evidence-based approaches in inter-organisational collaboration at the centre of efforts to assist in the effective implementation of this promising legislative dispensation. Collaborative approaches in the South African welfare system seem to be as old as state welfare and the social work profession itself - a unique strength to be explored and utilised to inform more effective policies, practices and guidelines in inter-organisational collaboration.

The central role of partnership development in social welfare is elevated and institutionalised with the introduction of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the White Paper for Social Welfare. The concept of developmental social welfare is based on the six principles of the RDP, which provided for an integrated programme, based on the people and which builds the nation, links reconstruction and development and deepens democracy (Louw, 1998).

According to Lombard (2008), there are five key themes that sum up the features of the developmental social welfare approach in the South African context:

Rights-based

Inter-relations between social and economic development

Democracy and participation in development

Social welfare pluralism with particular reference to the role of the state and civil society in social development

Reconciling the micro-macro divide in developmental social welfare theory and practice.

The developmental social welfare system as provided for in the RDP and the White Paper for Social Welfare 1997, is a point of departure from a residual or institutional approach, to a developmental welfare approach (Van Breda, 2007). According to McKendrick (1990), these two key complementary legislations represent a movement away from the traditional institutional and residual approach adopted during the apartheid era, which was mainly intended to solve the poor white problem.

The policy principles of the RDP and the white paper affirm the role of multi-sectoral collaboration between the state and civil society in addressing past disparities in the allocation and distribution of welfare benefits and services. The democratic government has created an enabling political climate that promotes partnership development and seeks to actively consolidate the efforts of the public (state) sector and civil society, in order to promote individual, family and community empowerment (Patel, 2003).

According to Van Breda (2007), developmental social welfare aims to facilitate partnership development with the sole aim of going beyond just providing comprehensive care to the whole of society, but to enable people in need to generate an income in order to be self-sufficient contributors to the economy, rather than dependant on the state.

The paradigm shift from the old welfare principles to the current approach draws inspiration from the United Nations (UN) description of developmental social welfare, which includes the following values: "…focusing on the maximisation of human potential and on fostering self-reliance and participation in decision-making, stressing the organisation of family-oriented, community-based and integrated services. Social welfare programmes assist individuals and groups at various stages and in different circumstances of life to develop their capacities and to become or remain productive members of society, in addition to supporting those in need of care, protection and financial help" (Van Breda, 2007: 3). There is a need in the UN definition to link social development and developmental social welfare in a way that integrates human and economic development.

2.9 CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Social welfare, which includes child and family welfare, is a broad concept that is defined "as a system of laws, programs, benefits and services which strengthen or assure provisions of meeting social needs recognised as basic, for the welfare of the population and for the functioning of the social order" (Friedlander & Apter, 1980: 4).

2.9.1 THE CONCEPT OF A FAMILY

A family has been traditionally defined in a narrow way, as including a married man and a woman living with their children in a household. Sociologists refer to this type of arrangement as a nuclear family. It is called a nuclear family because it serves as the nucleus or core upon which larger family groups are built. Sociologist went further to identify what is called an extended family, "a family in which relatives other than biological parents and children – such as grandparents, aunts or uncles – live in the same house is known as an extended family" (Schaeffer, 1989: 322).

The definitions of the family are continuously evolving as single parents, gay parents, fostering, adoption and child-headed households are becoming a dominant feature of modern society. Despite all the variations, all families constitute a social system that represents the children's entire social environment (Louw et al, 1998). As a key social system, an "ideal" family fulfils six core functions:

- Reproduction: Families help in society by replacing dying members, therefore a family contributes to human survival through its function of reproduction.
- Protection: From birth until independence in adulthood, humans need constant care and economic security as their dependency is extremely long compared to other species. Families assume ultimate responsibility for the protection and upbringing of children.
- Socialisation: Parents and other close relatives transmit norms, values and languages of a culture to the child. Children are especially influenced by the socialisation of their parents.
- Regulation of sexual behaviour: Whatever the time period or cultural values in a specific society, standards of sexual behaviour are mostly defined within the family circle.

- Affection and companionship: A family provides warm and intimate relationships and help children to feel satisfied and secure. A family is obliged to serve the emotional needs of its members.

- Providing social status: The family unit presents the child with an ascribed status of race and ethnicity that determines his or her place within a society's stratification system (Schaeffer, 1989).

"As a social system, every family has its own role structure defining how each individual should behave and what their relationship with one another should be. The way in which a family functions and the roles assigned to its individual members play an important part in the determination of the different members' personality characteristics" (Louw et al, 1998: 24).

2.9.2 FAMILY DISINTEGRATION

Ramphela (1992) listed elements of social disintegration that directly and indirectly undermine the quality of family life:

- Family breakdown as manifested in an increasing rate of divorce, separation, single – parenthood and teenage pregnancy.

- High levels of alcohol and drug abuse in many families.

- High crime rates and endemic violence at all levels of social interaction: family, inter – personal, neighbourhood and wider society.

In light of the disintegration of the family, child and family welfare needs need to be addressed "….by a variety of professionals who together have to engage in careful teaming and networking" (Kasiram, 1999: 23).

2.9.3 THE DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE AND POPULATION DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Welfare and Population Development of the post-1994 dispensation observes certain rights and obligations as enshrined in the new South African Constitution (1996) and international treaties. The human rights declarations and treaties include the right to social security and

assistance, the right to an adequate standard of living, the fundamental right to be free from hunger, children's socio-economic rights and the right to substantive gender equality. The rights culture forms a point of departure from an exclusionary apartheid welfare centred on a remedial social welfare approach to a developmental one (Vorster & Rossouw, 1997).

2.9.4 CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE

In 1996 a Committee of the Minister of Welfare and the Provincial Members of the Executive Council established the Lund Committee on Child and Family Support (henceforth referred to as the Committee). The Lund Committee was obliged to undertake a critical appraisal of the existing system of state support to children and families, and to develop approaches for effective targeting of socio-economic development programmes for children and families. The Committee presented a new policy paradigm that deviated from the nuclear family preservation policy of welfare of the past, since most poor households are extended families (Vorster & Rossouw, 1997).

According to Vorster and Rossouw (1997), the Lund Committee shifted focus from the family model to a plan modelled around a central theme of "follow the child", balanced with family preservation. The Committee strongly recommended comprehensive inter-sectoral collaboration on programmes aimed at the relief and eradication of poverty, particularly within the health, education and early childhood development sectors. The vision of the current welfare dispensation is to have a redistributive impact by shifting limited resources to poor households and protect the poorest children in the most vulnerable years. Moreover, child protection services are shifting from a rights-based approach to integrated family-centred and community-based services, as one of the key feature of the developmental welfare service delivery model.

The previous Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, in his address at the Children's Right Conference, made a breakthrough in child protection by defining a child as a person under the age of 18 years, irrespective of South African citizenship. Furthermore, "...the Children's Act promotes integrated social services for all children and an improvement in the lives of other sectors of the community" (Lombard, 2008: 163).

2.9.5 KEY CHALLENGES IN THE DELIVERY OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES

"The new Government is presently following a dualistic approach to welfare. On the one hand previously disadvantaged groups are targeted through the social security system as a way to redistribute wealth. On the other hand, a developmental approach is envisioned through which the capacity building of individuals to meet their own needs and assistance in equipping and preparing people for employment, will be the focus. As a result welfare services to white people are declining, while services to the coloured, Indian and especially the black people are escalating" (Van Eeden et al, 2000: 24).

The new welfare dispensation is not only tasked to review all welfare services under the apartheid regime, but is also challenged on an administrative level: efforts are hampered by fiscal constraints, a lack of administrative capacity and poor infrastructure in previously under-serviced areas (Vorster & Rossouw, 1997). "South Africa is currently still in a sensitive process of transformation regarding the rendering of social services" (Van Eeden et al, 2000: 19).

Having re-shaped the welfare policy, a key priority "…is to fast-track the social welfare sectors delivery on socio-economic goals in order to impact on the deep-seated poverty and inequality in which South Africans' social crises are entrenched" (Lombard, 2008: 154).

2.9.6 PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) highlighted the multi-sectoral approach as a central strategy to impact on social problems that affect children and families. Hence the Lund Committee strongly recommended comprehensive inter-sectoral collaboration on child and family welfare programmes, the rationale being that fiscal constraints can be countered with "… a central commitment to inter-sectoral work with other departments (Lund Committee, 1996: 47).

Partnerships and stakeholder participation are key pillars upon which developmental social welfare rests, the envisioned participation incorporating the partnership approach entails integrating the support of the private sector and broad civil society (Lombard, 2008; Vorster & Rossouw, 1997).

The stakeholder relationship needs to mean more than a relationship based on the state funding other sectors in the welfare sector, but to pool material and human resources to have a maximum impact on social problems. "To date the system of welfare in the country has been based on a state or public and

voluntary or private partnership. An important aspect of this so-called partnership was the allocation of state funding to the voluntary sector for service provision" (Ramasar, 1996: xiii).

Radical change is needed, "social welfare in South Africa may indeed experience its own greatest liberation from oppressive casework domination, to achieving balanced inter-sectoral development" (Louw, 1998: 141).

2.10 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

According to Midgely (1995), social and economic development are inter-dependent and are not mutually exclusive, as one can not be socially developed without being economically developed, and that one can not be economically developed without being socially developed. This represents a radical departure from a residual or institutional approach, to a social development approach, where inter-organisational collaboration could play a central role in the transformation of welfare philosophy, policies, services and benefits. A clarification of terms is necessary because the concept of social development and the concept of developmental social welfare are often used inter-changeably, though they are not synonymous. According to Van Breda (2007), social development focuses on economic development to improve people's lives, while developmental social welfare has a much broader range of holistic interventions to meet the multifaceted and fundamental needs of all people, i.e. education, housing, health, social work, trade and industry, social investment etc.

According to Patel (2003), the public sectors' collaboration with the voluntary sector; between government departments; and collaboration within the non-governmental sector, is imperative if the government's social development outcomes are to be realised, given the history of distorted social welfare and the new government's limited institutional capacity to deliver services in a unilateral manner. A refined evidence-based inter-organisational collaborative approach can assist to ensure welfare services are better integrated, accessible, equitable, less discriminatory, more contextually relevant and more responsive.

An evidence-based approach in inter-organisational collaboration could assist in the implementation of the white paper, to ensure that stakeholders do not compromise their autonomy and independence, moreover, to mitigate against pitfalls like goal displacement, co-option and competition (Patel, 2003). According to Lombard and Van Rensburg (2001), the process of partnership development has to be

informed by guidelines for efficiency and effectiveness purposes, mainly to manage the relationship of the key stakeholders.

2.11 THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

Partnership development in the South African welfare system usually includes the public (state/government) sector, private sector, the non-governmental (NGO) sector and the community-based organisations (CBO's). The public sector is represented by either the national or provincial government departments that offer social programmes, housing, welfare, education, health services, etc. The private sector is a stakeholder in social development partnerships, it includes business, banks, commerce, industry, and other for-profit formations that provide social investment programmes.

The NGO sector is heterogeneous in that it represents a wide ranging private, voluntary and self-governing bodies that are not-for-profit, but serve, through state subsidies or private funding, the public interest in health, welfare, education, crime prevention, rehabilitation, poverty alleviation, etc. NGO's are either in the formal welfare sector, that depend mainly on state subsidies, or in the informal sector, in that they source funding that is not from the government. For instance, they may source funds from funding institutions like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union Development Fund, and other local or global development institutions. Community-based organisations can also be classified under the NGO umbrella.

CBO's include civics, youth organisations, church affiliated formations, private foundations, women's organisations, ratepayers associations, etc. The community at large is another important stakeholder, but lack bureaucratic structures features as in the abovementioned stakeholders (Lombard and Van Rensburg, 2001).

(i) The National Coalition for Social Services (NACOSS)

An example of multi-sectoral collaboration is the National Coalition for Social Services (NACOSS), which is a voluntary coalition of twenty national and provincial councils that include the following organisations: the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA), the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA), the National Institute for Crime and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO), the Catholic Women's League, the Deaf Association of South Africa (DEAFSA), to name a few. The majority of social welfare services in South Africa are provided by more than 3500 community based organisations that are branches or affiliates of NACOSS members.

These services range from prevention, early intervention, statutory work and a continuum of care and development services, and embrace all ages and conditions affecting women, older persons, the youth, children, families, drug abuse, disability, crime, HIV and AIDS, poverty and job creation (Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001).

(ii) The South African Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS

The South African Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS (SABCOHA) is an example of a private sector inter-organisational collaboration that pooled resources for public interest, in order to have a maximum impact on the widespread problem of HIV and AIDS. SABCOHA aims to work in the public interest by co-ordinating a private sector response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Its members include several big corporate, medium-sized enterprises and small companies, with multiple collaborations with sectors such as sex workers, traditional healers, peer educators and children-focused organisations.

The coalition's area of focus is to help large and small companies to combat the epidemic through workplace initiatives in order to target millions of employees affected or infected with HIV and AIDS. SABCOHA core functions include:

- Researching, developing and sharing best practice models
- Pioneering new business initiatives
- Communicating key information
- Lobbying for change

Funding is sourced mainly from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and specific projects are also funded by local and international funders. The SABCOHA is a distinct, independent structure with its own constitution, vision, mission statement, organisational structures, personnel, sub-committees, and projects (www.sabcoha.org). It is an example of a structure that has emerged as a result of collaborating partners pooling resources to ensure maximum impact on a social problem.

(iii) The AIDS Consortium

Supplementing the SABCOHA's efforts in HIV and AIDS work is the AIDS Consortium, a network organisation concerned with servicing people affected by HIV and AIDS, primarily through its affiliate

constituencies. The affiliates benefit from the consortium through communication, capacity building, information, leadership and any services to shape multi-sectoral responses to HIV and AIDS.

Collaboration with affiliates is key in supporting responses to HIV and AIDS at the community level, where the need is the greatest. The AIDS Consortium is a membership based organisation which brings together a network of over 1000 AIDS service organisations and individuals addressing the AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa. Like the SABCOHA, the AIDS Consortium is an independent structure with its own policies, personnel, and bureaucratic structures (www.aidsconsortium.org.za).

(iv) The Community Police Forum

Community Police Forum's (CPF) is another widely used example of inter-organisational collaboration, using partnerships to prevent and eradicate the problem of crime. The existence of the CPF is supported by the following legislations: the South African Police Service Act. No. 68 of 1995, the White Paper on Safety and Security of 1998, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service and the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS).

A CPF is a distinct structure that is formed as a result of the community, police, business, civil society bodies and the local government joining forces to fight crime together. Schools, mosques, churches, youth groups, ratepayers' associations and political groups can become members of the forum. It is important to note that a CPF legislative framework promotes partnerships between the police service and the community at large. Each CPF has its own constitution, an executive committee and governance mechanism (Community Police Forum: Toolkit, 2003).

The legislation that promotes and supports inter-organisational collaboration is something to be celebrated, especially in order to enhance past and present instances of partnership development. But challenges remain as to clarifying best practice in partnership development; how the process of collaboration can be enhanced to be efficient in its processes and effective in its outcomes has to be documented in the South African context. Evidence-based collaborative approaches may have the potential to assist in the implementation of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), specially to deal with the structural causes of poverty. No guidelines on the process of partnership development have emerged from the history and contemporary examples of networking, co-ordination and collaboration in the South African society. Yet collaborating partners have to deal with factors hindering inter-

organisational collaboration, a tension that can either lead to success or failure, a factor calling for best practice guidelines to manage complexities associated with partnerships.

2.12 CONCLUSION

It has been noted that inter-organisational collaboration is one strategy along side other forms of partnership development, that welfare organisations can use to co-ordinate services to meet the needs of service users. Collaboration is not synonymous with networking or co-ordination because it is defined by the creation of a structure, indicating the higher level of interaction among the stakeholders.

Best practice in inter-organisational collaboration need to be formulated in the South African context. The task at hand is to have country specific exploration and description of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration, by delineating its purposes, impact, its hindering and facilitating factors, and its implications for human relations. The objective is to keep an eye on the factors that facilitate or hinder inter-organisational collaboration to ensure that benefits outweigh the costs.

Furthermore, lessons in collaboration need to be drawn from the history of South Africa's welfare system, and resources such as the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) need to be utilised to advocate for more effective partnership development, in order to mould our own blend of best practice in service delivery strategies. As Lombard (2008) indicated, strategies to assist in the implementation of the white paper are still to be seen, best practices in inter-organisational collaboration can hopefully fill the gap between legislation and service delivery.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

"The research design (with which the data collection methods and methods of data analysis and interpretation are closely intertwined) is the road map or blueprint according to which we intend achieving our research goal and objective" (De Vos, 1998: 99).

This chapter outlines the classification of the research design, research methodology, (including an explanation of the units of investigation), the process of pilot-studying the research tool, data analysis, sampling procedure, reliability and validity, ethical considerations and the limitations of the research design and methodology.

3.2 CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a map detailing all the procedures to be undertaken in a research study. It is a plan that details all aspects of a research project, from conceptualisation of the problem to the dissemination of findings (Grinell, 1988). For Mouton (1996), a research design is an exposition or plan of how the researcher plans to execute the research problem that has been formulated, the objective of which is to plan, structure and execute the relevant project in such a way that the validity of the findings is maximised.

The research design used in this study was hybrid in nature, consisting of exploratory and descriptive elements. The primary objective of explorative studies is to provide the researcher with information about the phenomenon chosen for the study because the researcher has limited knowledge of it. The researcher aimed to explore and describe inter-organisational collaboration from the point of view of practising social workers.

The descriptive element allowed for the subject of the study to be described. Descriptive studies are used when we have no theory to work from, or when we are beginning to explore an area that has not been researched before (De Vos, 1998).

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The next section presents units of investigation, sampling procedure, the research tool, pilot-studying of the research tool and data analysis.

3.3.1 UNITS OF INVESTIGATION

Twenty five social workers with a minimum of twelve months to a maximum of three years experience of inter-organisational collaboration were interviewed about their experiences. They were asked to define cross-agency collaboration and to identify its purpose(s), compelling factors, hindering/facilitating factors, and its impact. All social workers worked in the field of child and family social services in the Gauteng area.

3.3.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Sampling means taking a portion of the population and considering it to be representative (De Vos, 1998). It entails a process of selecting research participants that will be included in the research study. Stratified random sampling was used in this study in order to get relevant subjects to discuss the research topic. This type of sampling divides a certain category of a selected population, social workers in this instance, into a number of strata, i.e. managers, chief/senior social workers, and social workers. (The subjects, despite being divided into specific strata, retain an important homogeneity as professional social workers with direct experience in partnerships with other organisations.) The final participants were randomly selected from within the aforementioned strata, based on their willingness to participate, their availability and permission for their participation having been granted by an authorised person. Snowball sampling was used when participants referred the researcher to other social workers with direct experience in partnerships.

Stratified random sampling is mainly used to ensure that all segments of the selected population acquire sufficient representation in the sample (De Vos, 1998). The desired number of subjects was selected within each of the different strata. For this study, 18 social workers identified their titles as either manager/chief/senior social worker and 7 social workers in the field of child and family were selected on the basis that they had experience in collaborations. Age, race, nationality, work experience and educational qualifications were not considered when participants were selected.

3.3.3 RESEARCH TOOL

The research tool used to collect data was an interview schedule/guide with open-ended and close-ended statements and questions. The basic idea of the interview schedule is to set down specific issues to be explored and described (De Vos, 1998). The researcher administered the interview schedule to

inquire into social workers' experiences when collaborating with other organisations, allowing them to draw from their experiences in order to explore and describe this specific phenomenon.

This choice of research tool was useful for the study as it enabled the researcher to engage face-to-face with respondents, in order to ensure questions were asked in such a way that they were understood. The open-ended questions allowed respondents to describe their views, while not being led by the researcher. The researcher was in a position to probe, clarify responses and ask for more information.

The design of the research tool was guided by the major theoretical constructs concerning the research topic and literature in inter-organisational collaboration. The research tool was employed mostly in quantitative fashion, while possessing qualitative elements on a small scale. All respondents were asked the same questions.

3.3.4 PILOT STUDY OF THE RESEARCH TOOL

The interview schedule was subjected to a pilot study with two social workers who had experience in inter-organisational collaboration. They were not part of the sample selected for the study, and the interview schedule was modified accordingly. The language used in the interview schedule was amended to ensure it was simple and unambiguous. Pilot respondents were chosen on this basis because they were more likely to impart valuable feedback regarding questions. In addition, their input helped determine whether questions and statements in the schedule were understandable.

3.3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data emanating from the open-ended questions in the interview schedule was analysed using thematic content analysis, which allows for its grouping into themes and categories. In thematic content analysis, data processing is followed by synthesis, which involves 'interpretation' or 'explanation' of the data (Mouton, 1996).

Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis, by combining and grouping together similar responses and presenting them in a descriptive fashion. The information thus processed was presented in order of importance/frequency, using percentages.

Presenting the data in thematic as well as descriptive fashion helped to give full exploration and description of the phenomenon of inter-organisational collaboration, which is the main objective of this research project.

3.4 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Testing for reliability and validity involved assessing the soundness and trustworthiness of the research design and methodology. Reliability and validity are vital to preventing a problem of systematic bias, confounding variables and other sources of error (Mouton, 1996). Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify five factors to consider in enhancing the reliability and validity of research design:

Reliability: Subjecting the interview schedule to a pilot-study ensured that the research tool was used in a consistent manner and that its application in the interviews was standard. The pilot-study was done to ensure that the meaning of statements and questions on the interview schedule was clear, unambiguous, understandable and appropriately focused on the question of inter-organisational collaboration. “Embodied in the idea of reliability is the idea of replicability or repeatability” (Golafshani, 2003: 598). The interview schedule was subjected to a pilot-study to check for replication, “if two or more repetitions of essentially similar inquiry processes under essentially similar conditions yield essentially similar findings, the reliability of the inquiry is indisputably established” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 299). Reliability is closely linked with the idea of consistency immediately below.

Consistency: The same research tool (the abovementioned interview schedule) was used to interview all research participants, at their places of work. The data was considered to be reliable if the same results were attained by different researchers using the same interview schedule and asking the same questions to the same research participants (Golafshani, 2003).

Validity: This involved determining whether the research tool (the interview schedule) explored and described what it was intended to explore and describe, and how truthful the research results were. The research statements and questions on the research tool were informed by theoretical constructs, and were asked numerous times in different ways to establish validity and reliability (Golafshani, 2003). Multiple items were used on the interview schedule to address the same theme.

Prolonged engagement: Prior to the research, the researcher participated in inter-organisational collaboration for a period of twenty four months to get to know the stakeholders; directly experiencing the process of working across agencies in the child and family welfare sector and talking informally with stakeholders, both to test theoretical perspectives and build trust. This time was used by the researcher to familiarise himself with the subject matter, exposure that helped to ensure relevant research questions would be directed to research participants.

Membership checking and credibility: The research study confined itself to social workers with a minimum of twelve months to a maximum of three years direct experience in partnerships with other agencies in the child and family welfare sector. Candidates without these credentials were excluded. Credibility was established by members/participants transmitting direct experience onto the interview schedule.

Triangulation: The interview schedule was based on a largely quantitative approach, combined with a small-scale qualitative approach, to allow for data to be explored and described.

Inquiry audit: The raw data included completed interview schedules, which have been kept in safe and private storage for purposes of recounting and checking for possible miscalculations. Tables for data reduction and analysis were kept for reference and possible errors. Data in the form of interview schedules and tables was synthesised according to themes, definitions and conclusions in the literature.

"The aim of research is often to study a representative number of events or people with a view to generalising results of the study to a defined population or universe" (Mouton, 1996: 133).

3.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The researcher applied the following procedure in carrying out the research project:

- By consulting the Internet, the researcher obtained the contact details of members of a multi-sectoral committee in the area of child and family welfare in Gauteng, as well as the details of their respective agencies. This information was used to contact the social workers who were directly involved in that partnership.

- Having thus contacted individuals telephonically and explained the purpose of the research project to them, the researcher secured participants' permission first and subsequently that of their employers or line managers, where applicable.

- The researcher then arranged interview appointments with each social worker who agreed to participate in the study. The study data was obtained in this manner.

- Two-hour interview sessions were thus conducted at participants' workplaces.

- Interviews were administered by way of the research instrument, a specially-designed interview schedule. An informed consent form was signed by each participant before each interview.

- The data obtained was manually analysed by the researcher on the day that the interview took place, when the information imparted was still fresh in his mind.

- The data was analysed according to themes and categories identified in the abovementioned way, using literature to give full exploration and description of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration.

- The study was presented in a bound research report.

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.6.1 SAMPLE:

- The sample was small and non-representative - 25 social workers out of the total population of social workers.

- The study was limited in terms of time and geographical area, having been sourced only in the Gauteng area.

3.6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN:

- According to Grinnell (1998) exploratory designs are at the lowest level of the continuum of knowledge that can be derived from research studies. They mainly provide generalisations which need to be tested later with more precise and complex designs and data-gathering techniques.

- The stratified random sampling technique cannot study the entire population that is the subject of the study (Mouton, 1996).

3.6.3 DATA COLLECTION:

- Face-to-face interviews using an interview schedule can inhibit the participants' level of openness, an openness one might feel when filling in a questionnaire in private, as the physical presence of the interviewer can directly or indirectly inhibit openness. Bias can be a hazard, in that responses may be offered for the sole reason that they are perceived as favourable to the interviewer/researcher.

3.6.4 DATA ANALYSIS:

- Thematic content analysis can be subjective as synthesis of raw data is followed by the researchers' interpretation and explanation. Bias can result from own personal or professional experiences and understanding.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical guidelines serve as standards and the basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate his or her conduct while undertaking the research study (De Vos, 1998). There were a number of ethical issues which the researcher adhered to while conducting the research study.

- The respondents were required to sign an informed consent form to indicate that they were aware of all information concerning the goal of the study, the procedures which were to be followed during the study, the possible advantages and disadvantages of doing so as well as the credibility of the researcher. The consent form also showed that participation was voluntary.

- The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the non-medical ethics committee.

- The researcher took all necessary steps to ensure that publication of the final research report would be accurate, objective and honest, and contain all essential information.

- The researcher ensured that the participation of all research respondents was anonymous and their responses kept confidential.

- While the research participants were not anonymous to the researcher, they are anonymous to anyone else reading the research report.

- Participation was voluntary, the participants were not coerced to participate and they were assured there would be no negative consequences to not participating in the study.

3.8 CONCLUSION

"The main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be so as to maximise the validity of the eventual results" (Mouton, 1996: x). The research study sought to gain greater understanding of how social workers collaborate to coordinate services, through an exploratory-descriptive research design. A specially-designed interview schedule was used to obtain data. The research subjects were a random sample of 25 social workers in the field of child and family social services working in the Gauteng area.

The next chapter addresses data analysis. "Analysis of data usually involves two steps: first, reducing to manageable proportions the wealth of data that one has collected or has available; and second, identifying patterns and themes in the data" (Mouton, 1996: xii).

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four presents the research findings. These findings were presented in the form of percentages reflecting the frequency of the participants' responses to statements on the interview guide; these figures were elaborated in discussion and analysis for exploration and description purposes.

Social workers involved in partnership development need to have guidelines on how best to collaborate with other organisations, in their endeavour to enhance the provision and impact of social services. The implementation of evidence-based best practice can determine whether the process and task goals of collaboration is being realised or not. An official facilitating the dynamics of a collaboration, network or co-ordination has to know what criteria to consider in order to successfully plan, assess and evaluate activities dedicated to partnership development.

According to Lombard and Van Rensburg (2001), there are no clear guidelines as to how partnerships should be established and maintained. In a way it would be difficult to make policy shifts from fragmented, specialist services to integrated developmental services; and ultimately have a meaningful impact on the protracted social problems of widespread poverty, HIV and AIDS, crime, drug and substance abuse, illiteracy and other problems that undermine the quality of life in most South African communities.

The objective of this study is to describe the process of collaboration in order to establish mechanisms which can help facilitate partnerships between government, the private sector and organisations of civil society. Key aspects such as the nature of inter-organisational collaboration, its purpose, the hindering and facilitating factors, the nature of relationships required in collaboration, and its impact, were delineated in order to make recommendations for evidence-based best practice in inter-organisational collaboration.

This chapter presents the results of the study undertaken with social workers who have had first-hand experience of having participated in collaboration with other organisations. This experience was captured in interviews guided by an interview guide and the results will now be discussed.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS' IDENTIFYING DATA

The following information indicates the participants' professional titles, age range and fields of practice.

4.2.1 PROFESSIONAL TITLES, SECTOR, AGE AND FIELDS OF PRACTICE

The researcher interviewed 25 social workers working in the field of Child and Family Welfare in the Gauteng, Johannesburg area.

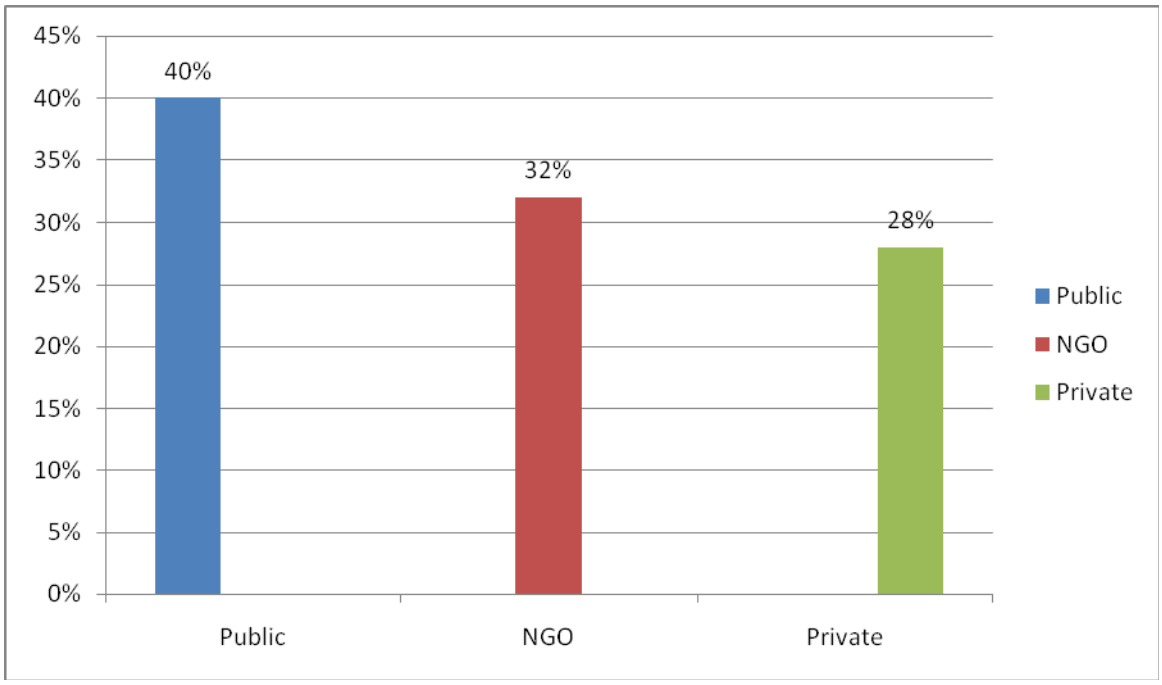


FIGURE 2: PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS' SECTOR AND TITLE: N = 25

Ten (40%) participants were employed in the public sector, while eight (32%) represented the non-governmental sector. Only seven (28%) participants worked in the private sector.

Partners or key stakeholders in the social welfare or social services sector in South Africa include the public sector - this refers to the social development government departments. The non-governmental organisations (NGO's) sector represents wide-ranging private, voluntary and self-governing bodies that are not-for-profit, but serve, through state/government subsidies or private funding, the public interest in welfare, health, education, poverty alleviation, etc. The private sector includes stakeholders in social

development partnership, i.e. business, banks, social workers in private practice, industry, commerce and other for-profit formations (Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001).

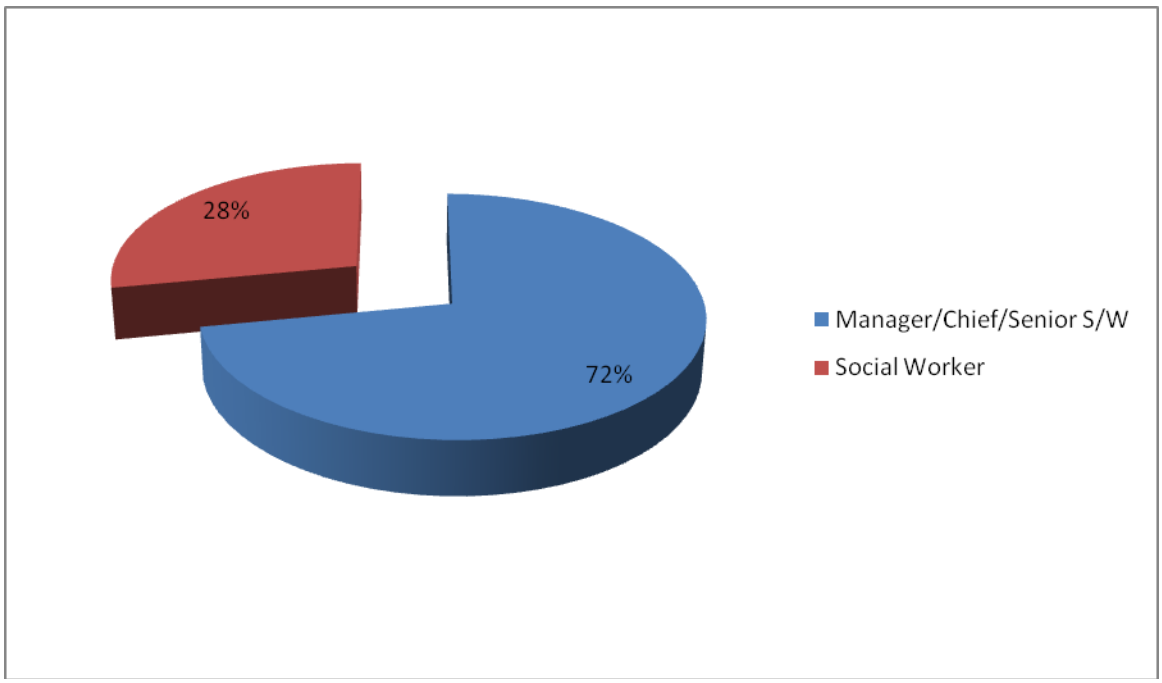


FIGURE 3: PARTICIPANTS' PROFESSIONAL TITLES: N = 25

Eighteen (72%) participants identified their professional title as either manager/chief/senior social worker. Seven (28%) identified themselves as social workers. This pattern demonstrated that social workers in senior positions are more likely to participate in partnership activities, as compared to social workers in junior positions.

The participants' age range was between 27 and 62 years, with a mean age of 38 years.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES IN PARTNERSHIPS

At some point in their professional social work practice experience all 25 respondents were directly involved in partnerships with other organisations, for at least a minimum period of twelve months to a maximum of three years. Therefore, they were in the position to outline with whom they collaborated,

why they collaborated, the nature of such collaborations, relevant hindering and enhancing factors, the implications for human relations and the impact of such collaboration.

4.3.1 COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Fifteen (60%) participants had experience of engaging in collaboration with organisations in the non-governmental sector, indicating that social workers in non-governmental organisations are most likely to be engaged in partnerships by government or private sector social workers. This correlates with Alter and Hage's (1993) assertion that more influential agencies collaborate with less influential agencies to increase the latters' influence as notable service providers.

Twelve (48%) participants were in collaboration with government employed social workers, while six (24%) worked with private social workers to co-ordinate services. This finding is also corroborated by the literature that states private social workers rely less on partnership development to enhance their impact on services provision, and other sectors do not often view them as critical partners in their endeavours to strengthen their own service delivery mechanisms (Abramson & Rosenthal, 1995).

Alter and Hage (1993) suggest that the government sector develops partnerships with other sectors to attain goals, legitimacy and longevity, by tapping into locally based institutional skills. The main reason being to enhance service delivery mechanisms and resources from the private sector that are not optimally utilised, compared to the extent to which NGO's are mobilised as partners in service delivery.

4.3.2 REASONS FOR ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

Twelve (48%) participants identified the need to establish a referral system as the main reason they established partnerships with other social services agencies. Winer and Ray (1996) regarded cross-agency interaction around sharing information for referral purposes as a form of cooperation, a less intense form of interaction compared to collaboration. Nine (36%) participants engaged other organisations to coordinate casework services for specific clientele groups who were served by social workers in the child and family services. Six (24%) worked with other social workers from other organisations to perform joint case work inquiries, networking, conferencing around cases, and joint investigation of cases. This finding suggests that the respondents participated in partnerships that were either networks, co-ordinations or cooperatives, in that a collaboration is defined by the ability of the partners to form a distinct structure by pooling resources (Mullen, 2008).

4.3.3 MEDIUM OF INTERACTION AND INTERACTION FREQUENCY

In the describing the means in which they interacted with social workers from other organisations, a majority of eighteen (72%) participants identified the attendance of meetings as the main activity in their interaction with other child and family welfare agencies. The second frequently mentioned medium of cross-agency interaction did not involve face-to-face contact, with twelve (48%) participants identifying the distribution of case reports as a means to collaborate. This was followed up with discussions using the telephone.

TABLE 1: MEDIUM OF INTERACTION: N = 25

Medium of Interaction	N	%
1. Meetings	18	72
2. Case reports	12	48
3. Telephone	3	12
4. Joint campaigns	3	12
5. Case conference	3	12

Report writing and distribution was supplemented with case discussion at least once a month, which suggests that the attendance of meetings was still the main way in which social workers collaborated. This finding confirms the opinion that networks, co-ordinations and collaborations require structures for the participants to meet in order to plan, divide roles and maintain communication channels. Regular face-to-face meetings are feasible ways to achieve this (Clark, 1992; Winer & Ray, 1996). Three (12%) participants used the telephone, joint campaigns and case conferences as means of interaction, which inferred that they networked rather than interacted. This can be seen to the extent that they pooled resources, which is a main characteristic of an inter-organisational collaboration. Networking relies on exchanging information; co-ordination requires planning and division of roles around a specific programme; while collaboration presents a new structure with a full commitment to a common mission (Alter & Hage, 1993; Winer & Ray, 1996; Reilly, 2001).

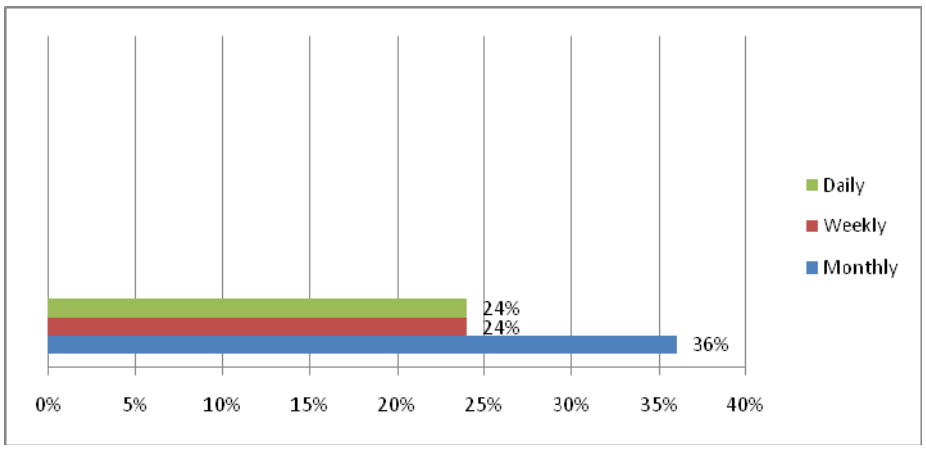


FIGURE 4: INTERACTION FREQUENCY: N = 25

In describing how frequently they engaged other social workers in partnerships, nine (36%) participants dedicated activities related to networking, coordination and collaboration on a monthly basis. This finding suggests that a large proportion of the participants engaged in partnerships at least once a month - the stakeholders met on the last Friday of every month. Six (24%) participants dedicated more time for partnership purposes in that they worked with other organisations on a weekly basis to co-ordinate services, with another six (24%) engaged in partnerships on a daily basis. Those who dedicated activities that furthered the aims of a specific collaborative on a daily basis were mainly charged with administrative duties related to the collaboration, such as fund raising, project management, report writing, communication, marketing and financial management. The daily maintenance of the collaboration was done in line with their job descriptions as professionals in senior positions (as managers, senior/chief social workers).

Only a small fraction of three (12%) participants engaged in cross-agency collaboration on a bimonthly basis, a least frequently mentioned time span to meet for partnering purposes. These findings demonstrated that a large portion of the respondents participated in partnerships on a monthly basis, using face-to-face meetings, showing a medium to a higher level of interaction that seems to go beyond networking and co-operation, to co-ordination and collaboration (Alter & Hage, 1993; Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001).

4.4 PARTCIPANTS' KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The following findings indicate each participant's responses with regards to statements suggesting the nature and purpose of inter-organisational collaboration.

4.4.1 THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

TABLE 2: THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION: N = 25

	Agree		**Disagree**	
The Nature and Characteristics of Inter-Organisational Collaboration	N	%	N	%
1. A long-term formal relationship	25	100	0	0
2. Having a clearly defined mission	25	100	0	0
3. Working on a specific programme as a group	23	92	2	8
4. Having a well-defined structure	20	80	5	20

Table 2 reflects participants' responses to statements that solicited their knowledge and understanding of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration. All twenty-five (100%) participants were of the opinion that inter-organisational collaboration referred to a long-term formal relationship, a key feature highlighted by Winer and Ray (1996) and Reilly (2001) who maintained that inter-organisational collaboration is a more durable relationship where the level of formalisation is more than that observed in networks, co-operatives and co-ordinations.

Theory suggests that networks and co-operatives are generally short-term structures in nature, while collaborations are more formal in that their chief feature is a formal longer-term structure (Alter & Hage, 1993; Winer & Ray, 1996; Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001).

All twenty-five (100%) participants were unanimous in indicating that having a clearly defined mission is one of the basic characteristics' of collaboration, a high level of unanimity seen in the previous set of data that described collaboration as a long-term formal relationship. The findings as reflected in tables 2 corroborated Winer and Ray's (1996) and Abramson and Rosenthal's (1995) opinions by indicating that

having a clearly defined mission and a formal structure characterise collaborations between organisations.

The ability to work as a group on a specific programme was added by twenty-three (92%) participants as another fundamental feature of an inter-organisational collaboration, with only two (8%) respondents not concurring with the majority. Twenty (80%) participants were agreed in describing a collaboration as having a well-defined structure, while a small number of five (20%) disagreed.

The findings described collaboration as a formal relationship, with a well-defined structure, a clear mission that is pursued by people working as a group or team on a specific programme.

4.4.2 AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES

The following findings indicate each participants' response with regards to the issues of authority and resources, as far as inter-organisational collaboration is concerned.

(i) AUTHORITY

As shown on Figure 5 all twenty-five (100%) participants believed that authority rested with all the representatives of different organisations in a collaborative structure, a finding that is supported by Mullen (2008) who said all partners need to be stakeholders in order to be able to take risks and be motivated to dedicate resources.

Group cohesion can also be fostered in an atmosphere marked by shared authority and ownership of the structure, process and outcomes related to working together. Sharing authority is ideal, as reflected by the research findings, but achieving it remains a challenge.

The facilitator's ability to balance authority is an important skill that can be enhanced through the used of evidence informed guidelines and professional 'approaches', these resources could ensure collaborating partners attain tasks, process and relationship goals related to their collaboration.

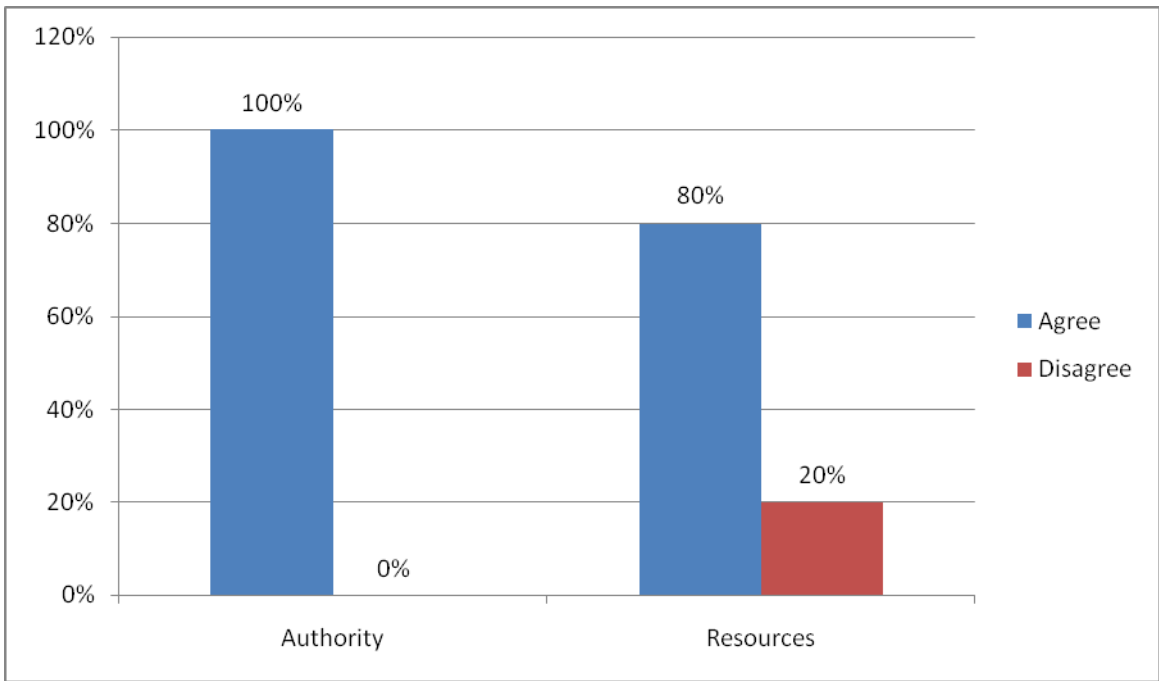


FIGURE 5: AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES: N= 25

It was evident from the data that authority rested with all stakeholders in inter-organisational collaboration, as numbers representing this view were statistically higher in the survey on this specific statement.

(ii) **RESOURCES**

Figure 5 further reported findings about the nature of resources in an inter-organisational collaboration. A majority of twenty (80%) participants believed that resources should be kept separate in a collaboration, a finding which contradicted assertions by Harding and White (2002), which identified the ability of partners to pool resources as one of the defining features of a collaboration. This may be suggesting that most of the participants drew from experiences of having participated either in networks, co-operations or co-ordinations in the social services sector, as the perception of their practical experience of partnership development does not overlap with the definition of collaboration. Only five (20%) participants confirmed the stance in the literature by disagreeing that resources should be kept separate in collaborations. The theory and the participants' understanding were inconsistent, which indicates further research is required in partnerships in the South African child and family welfare context. Therefore, the gap between theory and the participants' practical experience needs to be

closed with more research, especially on the nature of resources which is a critical factor to deal with if the aim of having maximum impact on social problems is to be realised.

4.4.3 IDENTITY, ROLES AND FUNCTION

The following findings delineate participants' responses to the issues pertaining to identity, roles and the function of members in collaborative arrangement.

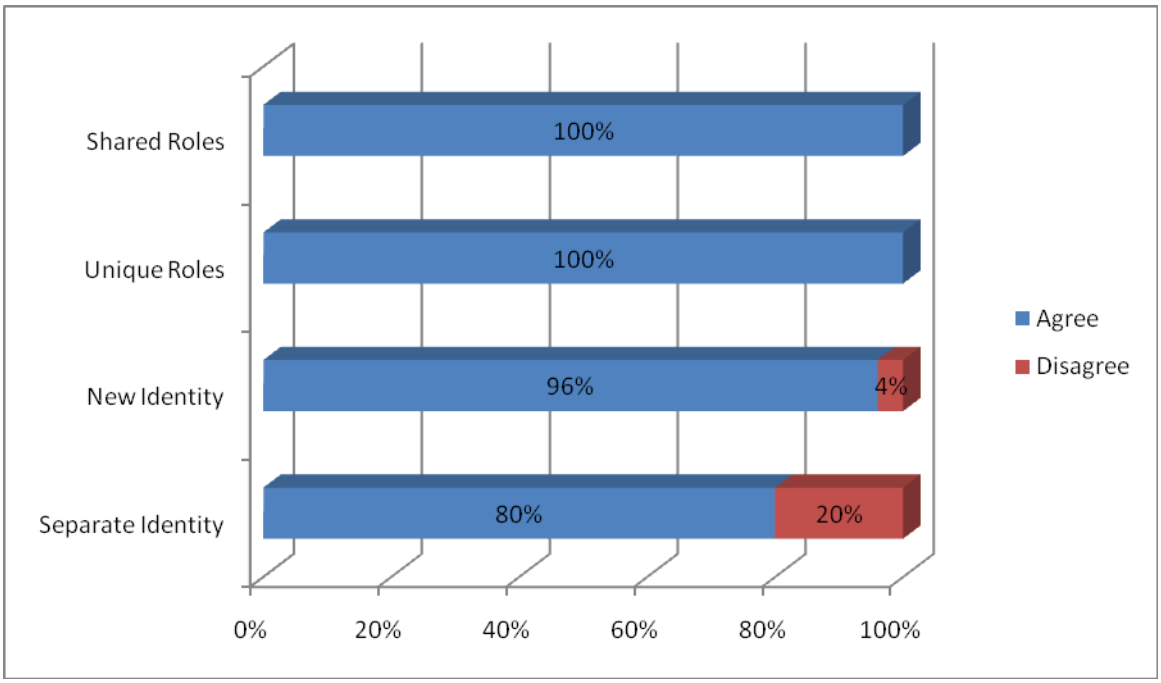


FIGURE 6 : IDENTITY IN COLLABORATIONS : N = 25

(i) **IDENTITY**

Figure 6 reports the participants' perception of the issue of identity in the context of inter-organisational collaboration. A majority of twenty (80%) participants agreed that collaborating organisations keep their respective identities separate, while a minority of five (20%) disagreed on that particular issue. The finding that organisations should keep separate identities is implausible according to Reilly (2001), who indicated that individual agencies pool resources to form a new structure, thus forming a new identity as a distinct structure. There was a notable inconsistency in the findings in that the same participants, twenty-four (96%) of them agreed that an inter-organisational collaboration would lead to a new

identity to be formed. Only one (4%) participant disagreed regarding the suggestion that collaborating stakeholders form a common identity.

(ii) **ROLES AND FUNCTIONS**

Figure 6 reports findings on the question of roles and functions in an inter-organisational collaboration. In summary, the participants agreed that organisations have special and unique roles and functions, and at the same time that many roles and functions were shared. All twenty-five (100%) participants agreed that each stakeholder fulfilled certain roles and functions, yet collaborating meant sharing roles and functions. Abramson and Rosenthal (1995) said a collaboration is a culmination of diversity, as represented by different organisations. This difference should be managed in the way that the end product, programme or solution will be informed and relevant to the social context. The findings suggested that organisations share roles and functions while retaining their speciality, to be able as a group to effectively respond to diverse situations.

4.4.4 FACTORS MOTIVATING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The following findings indicate each participant's responses to the reasons motivating collaboration and some factors that can lead to the establishment of inter-organisational collaboration.

TABLE 3: FACTORS MOTIVATING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION: N= 25

	Agree		Disagree	
FACTORS MOTIVATING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION	N	%	N	%
1. Policy Directive	25	100	0	0
2. Legal Mandate	18	72	7	28
3. Sustainable Change	25	100	0	0
4. Leverage Resources	25	100	0	0

(i) **POLICY DIRECTIVE**

Table 3 lists findings on the specific factors that can lead to the formation of an inter-organisational collaboration. All twenty-five (100%) participants maintained that policy directives lead them to be involved in collaborations, corroborating assertions that policies such as the Financial Policy for

Developmental Social Welfare (1999) were most significant in motivating social workers to establish partnerships in the social welfare sector (Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001).

(ii) **LEGAL MANDATE**

The data further indicated that it was not only policy directives that lead to the establishment of collaborations, but there were other significant factors that motivated social workers to work together across organisational boundaries. Eighteen (72%) participants said legal mandates gave directions for them to partner with their social workers from other organisations, while seven (28%) participants disagreed with the suggestion that they collaborated because of legal mandates. There is a thin line between policy directives and a legal mandate, hence most participants thought the two related factors had the same impact in motivating them to enter into partnerships.

The data as a whole on table 3 suggested that collaborations came about as a result of policy directives, legal mandates and from the efforts of an individual. It was therefore evident that an individual, backed by relevant policies and legal mandates can form a collaboration. For instance, an influential official such as a director or chief executive officer has the authority or capacity to initiate inter-organisational collaboration. The findings suggested that the multiple factors that range from policy directives, legal provisions and motivated individuals initiatives, need to be supported by guidelines in evidence-based practices and approaches to best manage the process of collaboration. This would help to maximise the realisation of task and process goals set out by the collaborating stakeholders.

(iii) **LEVERAGING RESOURCES**

Table 3 reports findings on the main purpose of inter-organisational collaboration. All twenty five (100%) participants agreed on two main purposes of inter-organisational collaboration, which focus on the need to leverage resources and as a result, to achieve sustainable change. The findings overlap with Reilly's (2001) stance that collaborations exist for the purpose of building power/capacity to impact meaningfully on protracted social problems.

Mullen (2008) and Ospina and Saz-Carranza (2005) described the main purpose of collaboration as to bridge organisational gaps that prevent social services organisations from having a maximum impact on massive social problems, like widespread poverty, illiteracy, crime, HIV and AIDS and lack of service

delivery. The ability of organisations to leverage resources, achieve sustainable change and ultimately pool resources supports the efforts to close organisational gaps and so impact on social problems.

The findings on the open-ended part of the interview guide summarised the participants' knowledge and understanding of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration. Twenty (80%) participants indicated inter-organisational collaboration was basically characterised by regular communication, teamwork, policies that provided a mandate, co-ordination and integration of services.

Five (20%) participants said collaborations were characterised by the creation of a structure that resulted from the stakeholders integrating resources to impact on service delivery.

In describing the concept of inter-organisational collaboration further, eighteen (72%) participants maintained that collaborations were organised around fields of practice, i.e. child and family welfare, educations, training and skills development, poverty alleviation and mental health field. Five (20%) participants said collaborations were organised around specific programmes, i.e. awareness raising campaigns, tasks forces to deal with poverty etc.; two (8%) participants incorporated the previous findings by highlighting teamwork from a specific field of practice, teamwork to implement specific programmes.

By way of highlighting frequently mentioned statements, the participants' perception of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration can be summarised as a long-term formal relationship, with a clearly defined mission, where authority rested with all stakeholders, membership was open, identity was shared, resources were shared, agency-agency goals were inseparate, open-ended objectives were set, inter-dependence was more pronounced, and stakeholders had special, yet shared, roles and functions.

Moreover, collaboration rested on policy directives and legal mandate, with its main purposes considered to leverage resources, sustain change and to build power.

The findings in this section were at times inconsistent with theoretical perspectives which clearly delineated different forms of partnership development, such as the distinction between networking, co-ordination and collaboration. Networking was considered a less intense form of partnership, while collaboration represented the more intense form of partnership (Lombard and Van Rensburg, 2001).

The research participants loosely termed any form of partnership development as either networking, co-ordination or collaboration without any association with the intensity of interaction, as suggested in the

literature. The findings at times were consistent with literature, especially when collaborations were marked by open membership, sharing of roles and functions, teamwork around specific programmes, policy directives for authority and inter-dependence.

No participant attended any formal training in partnership development - their knowledge and understanding was sourced from practical experience of having been active in working with social workers from other organisations. The participants used their practical experience to describe factors that facilitated inter-organisational collaboration. The facilitating factors, as opposed to hindering factors, were identified as important in compelling the collaborating stakeholders to develop partnerships.

4.5 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS COMPELLING AND FACILITATING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The following section presents findings on factors perceived as facilitating inter-organisational collaboration in the social welfare sector.

TABLE 4: FACTORS COMPELLING/FACILITATING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION: N = 25

VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
A favourable socio-political climate. An adequate cross-section of members. Collaboration facilitates communication.	The need to know about other organisations. An opportunity to belong to a group. To share funding for programmes.	To compromise with other organisations. Closed-ended duration. History of inter-organisational collaboration.

4.5.1 VERY IMPORTANT FACTORS COMPELLED AND FACILITATED COLLABORATION

(i) A FAVOURABLE SOCIO-POLITICAL CLIMATE

Table 4 outlines findings on whether a favourable socio-political climate was considered as important in facilitating partnerships across different organisations. A majority of twenty (80%) participants said having an enhancing socio-political environment was very important in compelling them to engage other organisations in the field of child and family welfare, primarily to have more impact in delivering services

to clients. Five (20%) participants maintained that a friendly socio-political environment was of average importance in making it a duty to collaborate with other agencies within the child and family services.

The overall findings on this statement corroborates Clark (1992) and Sewpaul (2001) in identifying legislation and financial policies, such as the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997), as vital in creating a favourable socio-economic climate for collaborations to flourish. The policies ,however, do not provide guides on how to establish and maintain partnerships (Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001), a significant gap between policy and practice.

(ii) **AN ADEQUATE CROSS – SECTION OF MEMBERS**

Table 4 further captures findings on whether having a good cross-section of members encouraged the participants to participate in inter-organisational collaboration. Twenty-one (84%) participants stated that having a good cross-section of members or stakeholders was very important in encouraging them to participate in collaborations with other organisations. A small number of four (16%) participants were neutral in their response by maintain that a cross-section of good stakeholders was of average importance in compelling them to engage other organisations in collaborations.

(iii) **COMMUNICATION**

Table 4 further reports the participants' perceptions on whether they believed they were motivated to collaborate as it facilitate communication between organisations. A majority of twenty-four (96%) participants maintained that the communication that was made possible in inter-organisational collaboration was very important in compelling and facilitating their involvement in partnerships. Only one (4%) participant said that there was a need for better communication between different organisations and that this was a motivational factor in their decision to participate in collaborations.

4.5.2 IMPORTANT FACTORS IN COMPELLING AND FACILITATING COLLABORATION

The following factors are important in compelling and facilitating collaboration: information, belonging and integration of services.

(i) **INFORMATION**

Table 4 further reports findings on whether the need to know more about other agencies compelled the participants to be involved in inter-organisational collaboration. All twenty-five (100%) participants

confirmed the need to get to know people working in the same field of practice as them was of average importance in encouraging them to collaborate.

Harding and White (2002) maintained that it is very important to be aware of the efforts of other agencies within the same field of practice in order to begin to plan and structure collective action, a baseline phase in the long and intense process of integrating scarce and increasingly expensive social services resources.

(ii) **AN OPPORTUNITY TO BELONG TO A GROUP**

Table 4 reports findings on whether the opportunity to be part of a specific group was an important factor in compelling the participants to be involved in inter-organisational collaborations. A majority of twenty (80%) participants said the opportunity to be part of a specific group was an important factor in compelling them to collaborate with other organisations, five (20%) said this factor was very important for them.

The Harwood Group (1993) believed professionals or lay workers in the social welfare field need to be part of different kinds of partnerships in order to bring fresh perspectives into their practice mission, vision, methods and skills. Moreover, being part of a group challenged each stakeholder to think out of a vacuum and explore better approaches in social services delivery.

(iii) **TO SHARE IN FUNDING PROGRAMMES**

The findings on Table 4 reports the participants' perceptions of whether the individual organisations need to funding for programmes was important or not in compelling them to enter into inter-organisational collaborations. All twenty-five (100%) participants believed the need to share programme funding was important in compelling them to collaborate with other organisations, as everyone hoped to gain by dedicating resources to a specific partnership.

The history of social services fragmentation in the South African welfare system limited access to resources that were vital in ensuring the quality of life in marginalised communities. For example, many were unable to have a stake in state revenue, budgets and funding. The distorted distribution of funding made it difficult for "excluded" agencies to have maximum impact on deeply entrenched poverty in the majority of communities (Patel, 2003).

4.5.3 FACTORS REGARDED AS NOT IMPORTANT IN COMPELLING AND FACILITATING COLLABORATION

The following factors were not acknowledged as important in compelling and facilitating inter-organisational collaboration.

(i) BACKGROUND IN COLLABORATIVE WORK

Table 4 reports on the participants' perceptions as to whether their own organisations' history of participating in inter-organisational collaboration propelled them to enter into collaboration. A majority of fifteen (60%) participants did not believe that a history of partnerships in ones' organisation was important in encouraging them to be involved in collaborations, while ten (40%) of the participants emphasised that a past in collaboration was very important in motivating them to work with other organisations.

(ii) TO REACH COMPROMISES WITH COMPETITORS

The findings on Table 4 reports findings on the participants' perceptions regarding whether the need to reach compromises with potential, or actual, competitors was important or not in compelling them to collaborate with other organisations. A majority of twenty-one (84%) participants felt that the need to compromise with competitors was not important in encouraging them to collaborate with other organisations, while a small minority of four (16%) respondents thought the need to reach compromises was of average importance in motivating them to collaborate.

(iii) THERE WAS A CLOSED – ENDED DURATION

All twenty-five (100%) participants were of the same view that ensuring a close-ended collaboration, with a clear beginning and termination, was not important in compelling them to enter into, or engage in collaborations over a long term basis. There were other more important reasons that compelled them to collaborate, more significant that the above mentioned suggestion regarding duration.

4.6 RESPECT, TRUST AND A COMMON VISION

The following section presents findings on the participants' views on the extent to which respect, trust and having a common vision, facilitated collaboration.

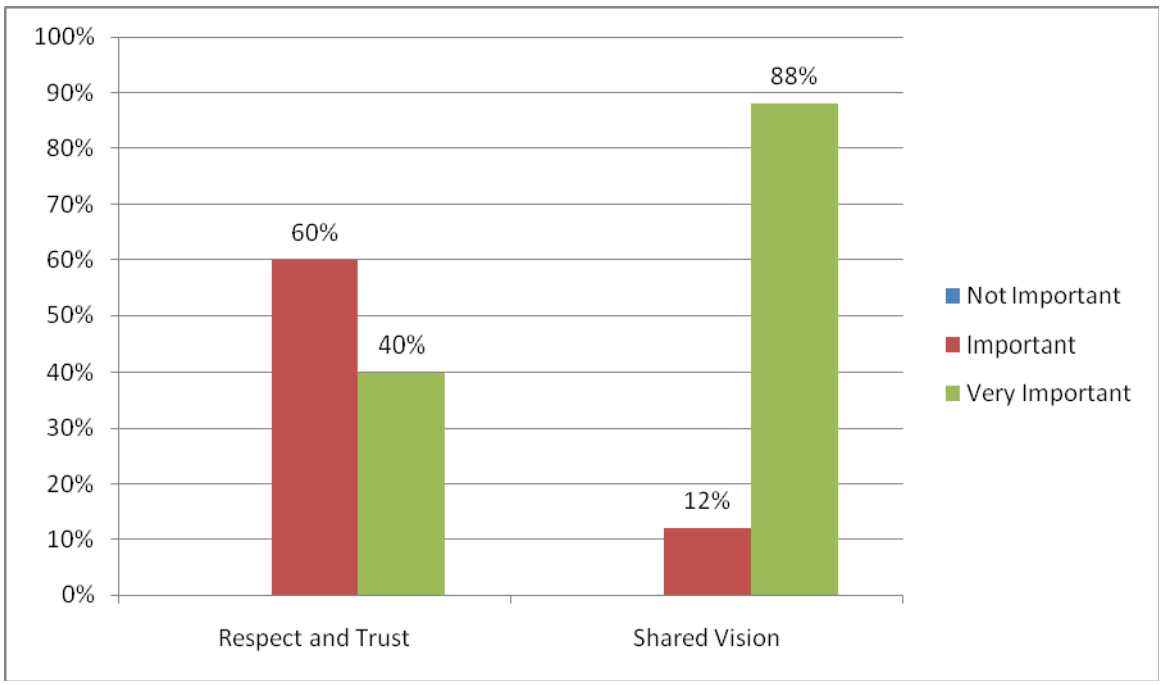


FIGURE 7: MUTUAL RESPECT, TRUST AND SHARED VISION: N = 25

4.6.1 MUTUAL RESPECT

Figure 7 delineates findings on whether the participants believed mutual respect and trust encouraged them to collaborate with other organisations. Fifteen (60%) participants said issues of mutual respect and trust were of average importance in motivating them to enter into collaborations, while ten (40%) maintained that issues of respect and trust were very important in facilitating their involvement in inter-organisational collaboration. Taken together, the findings affirm respect and trust as vital in creating and maintaining structures such as networks, co-ordinations and collaboration. Alter and Hage (1993) believe trust and mutual respect have the capacity to draw stakeholders into participating in collaborations on a longer term basis, as they don't avoid, but rather directly deal with difficult questions of actual or perceived inequities, prejudice and stereotypes that can threaten the very survival of partnerships. Respect and trust, therefore, are associated with addressing stereotypes and inequities, especially within a social welfare system that evolved from a past of racial discrimination and apartheid (Patel, 1992; Mckendrick, 1990).

4.6.2 SHARED VISION

Figure 7 further presents findings on the participants perceptions of whether they were drawn to be part of collaborations, almost all the participants, twenty-two (88%) of them, said a shared vision was important in motivating them to be part of inter-organisational collaborations. Only a small number of three (12%) participants said a shared vision was of mild importance in compelling them to participate in collaborations.

The vision that is mostly shared by stakeholders in the South African welfare system is to shift social services from a specialist, fragmented orientation to a developmental, integrated model (Lombard, 2008).

4.7 PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY AND THE NATURE OF GOALS

The following section presents findings on the extent to which practical considerations like flexibility and adaptabilities compelled and/or facilitated collaborations between organisations.

TABLE 5: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: N= 25

	Agree		Disagree	
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS	N	%	N	%
1. Flexibility	25	100	0	0
2. Concrete Goals	25	100	0	0
3. Adaptability	25	100	0	0

4.7.1 FLEXIBILITY, CONCRETE GOALS AND ADAPTABILITY

(i) FLEXIBILITY

Table 5 reports findings on whether the participants believed the need for flexibility was important or not in compelling them to be involved in inter-organisational collaboration. All twenty-five (100%) participants indicated that the flexibility associated with collaborations drew them to be actively involved in inter-organisational collaborations.

Partnerships are thought to be more flexible in their service provision strategies, the level of flexibility that no one organisation can master (Cherin, 2000). Alter and Hage (1993) and the Harwood Group (1993) thought that the need for greater flexibility as brought about by collaborations can benefit each

stakeholder by implementing through their own agencies, service provisions strategies that can adapt to changing social conditions in which clients live. Furthermore, flexibility in service provision can lead stakeholders to re-examine expectations in order to make sense of changing times and to be always be contextually relevant.

(ii) **CONCRETE GOALS**

All twenty five (100%) participants maintained that the increased possibility for collaborations to set concrete and attainable goals and objectives was very important in compelling them to be involved in partnerships. The promise by partnerships in social services to impact on the clients' lives by setting concrete and attainable goals, seem to have motivated the participants to participate in inter-organisational collaborations. The findings are corroborated by Abramson and Rosenthal's (1995) assertion that collaborations fulfil a unique role and function by enabling stakeholders to work together for very specific purposes and tangible outcomes. Collaboration works on models that allow for them to transform themselves into other forms of partnerships once outcomes and objectives are realised.

(iii) **COLLABORATIONS DEVELOP ADAPTABLE OBJECTIVES**

Table 5 further reports findings on whether the participants believed the ability of collaborations to develop adaptable objectives was important or not in motivating them to be part of collaborations. If this particular factor was important, to what extent was it important?

All twenty-five (100%) participants maintained that greater adaptability in the formulation and refinement of objectives was important in encouraging collaboration with other organisations. The Harwood Group (1993) believed that greater adaptability and flexibility was important in enhancing the process of collaboration, because the services and products of flexible and adaptable structures tend to be more relevant for the context in which they are produced.

4.8 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following section reports findings on whether the participants felt compelled to collaborate due to issues related to professional development.

4.8.1 GAINING INFORMATION

Figure 8 reports findings on whether the need to gain information was important in encouraging and motivating the respondents to be part of inter-organisational collaborations. All twenty (100%)

respondents overwhelmingly endorsed the need to gain information as important in encouraging and motivating them to be in collaborations with other organisations.

According to Winer and Ray (1996) the possibility of gaining new information from a diversity of stakeholders, and the associated multiple perspectives on different service delivery strategies draw open-minded professionals who are always predisposed to learning new options in making their work more effective.

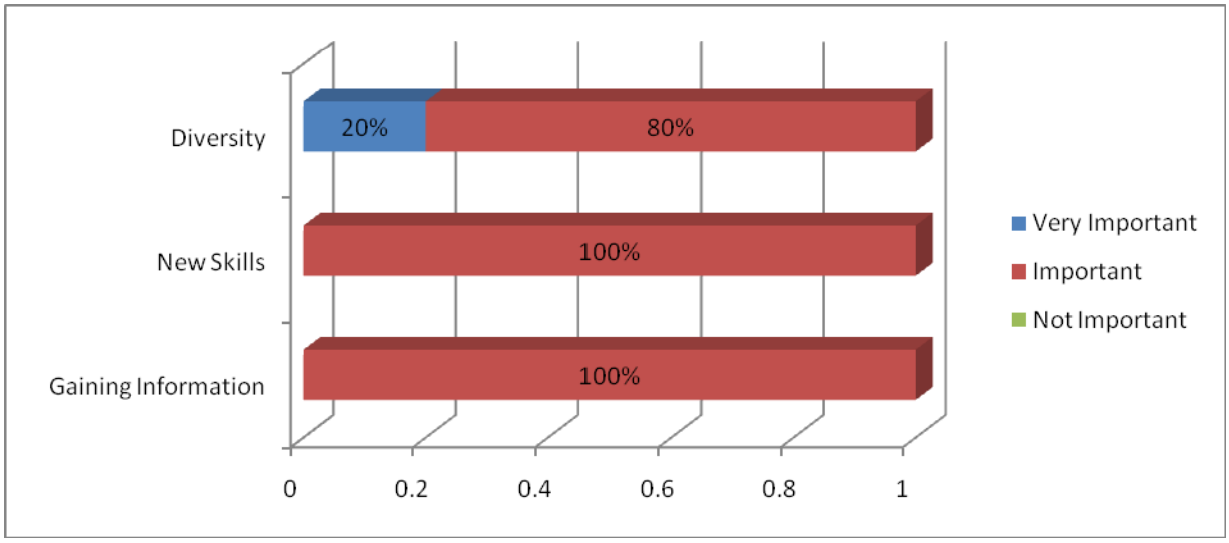


FIGURE 8: INFORMATION, SKILLS AND DIVERSITY: N=25

4.8.2 LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Figure 8 presents findings on whether the participants felt compelled to be in inter-organisational collaboration due to the need to learn new skills, and to describe the extent to which this factor was important in influencing them to partake in partnerships.

All twenty-five (100%) participants believed the need to learn new skills was important in compelling them to work with stakeholders from other organisations; this overlaps with the previous data that described the association between career advancement and participating in a partnership.

4.8.3 DIVERSITY OF SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES

Figure 8 reports data on the extent to which a rich diversity of skills and experience (that can sometimes be found in collaborations, but not all the time) encouraged or motivated the research participants to participate in inter-organisational collaboration. It especially delineates the degree to which this factor

was important in drawing them into collaborative arrangements. A majority of twenty (80%) participants said an availability of a rich diversity of skills and the experience of other stakeholders was important in motivating them to be in collaborations with other organisations, with five (20%) respondents emphasising that this specific factors was very important.

The findings corroborate Clark's (1992) contention that an availability of a diversity of experiences and skills is crucial as it enhances inter-dependence between the stakeholders, affirming the fact that agencies need each other to effect positive and durable change in the clients' quality of life in child and family welfare.

This finding overlaps with the earlier one that demonstrated that participants were drawn into collaborations because of a good cross-section of stakeholders, and that agencies needed each other because protracted social problems can not be solved by one agency operating in a vacuum. Having a skilled convener adds to the value of having a strategic combination of professionals. Open-mindedness allows them to easily adapt and change service provisions approaches and enhance their means to deliver quality social services.

4.9 FACTORS SUPPORTING AND ENABLING COLLABORATION

The following findings indicate participants' responses to some of the factors supporting and enabling collaboration:

TABLE 6: FACILITATORS FACTORS: N = 25

	Not Important				Very Important	
Factors Compelling/Facilitating Inter-Organisational Collaboration	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. A well defined guiding policy	0	0	25	100	0	0
2. A skilled convener	10	40	0	0	15	60
3. Funding	0	0	25	100	0	0

4.9.1 GUIDING POLICY, COMPETENT CONVENER AND FUNDING

(i) GUIDING POLICY

The findings on Table 6 indicate the extent to which having a well-defined guiding policy was important in facilitating and encouraging the participants to be involved in inter-organisational collaboration. All twenty-five (100%) participants said it was important to have a tool to guide activities related to partnerships and that such a resource was significant to the extent that it drew them into participation in collaborations.

Clear guiding policies must cover the following: funding, project management, stakeholder mobilisation, training, information dissemination, communication, marketing, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, resource integration, research, diversity management, conflict resolution and mediation, community outreach and best-evidence-based practice in inter-organisational collaboration.

(ii) A SKILLED AND COMPETENT CONVENER

A majority of fifteen (60%) participants believed having a skilled convener encouraged them to be part of inter-organisational collaboration, while a notable minority of ten (40%) participants said it was not important to be drawn into collaborations because of a skilled convener. There appears to be minimal general consensus on this specific issue. The majority view correlates with Winer and Ray's (1996) assertion that having a skilful convener is important in determining the success or failure of delicate structures - such as multi-stakeholder collaboration, to manage threats like conflict, negative competitive behaviour, lack of communication and other factors that can undermine set outcomes. There appears to be a correlation between having a skilled convener and successful collaboration.

(iii) FUNDING

All twenty-five (100%) participants thought that the availability of sufficient funding was important in motivating them to collaborate with other organisations. Contributing the time of salaried personnel was the most pronounced expression of funding to encourage partnerships. Funding is very important in covering the cost of partnerships development, from transport, stationary, conferencing, communication tools like telephone, emails and faxing, training, consultation with partnership development experts and long term activities, to sustain the life of any partnership.

If managing human relations in collaboration is deemed as complex, managing funding can be regarded as even more complicated (Alter & Hage, 1993), especially when no guidelines exist as to how best to manage budgets and financial matters.

4.10 THE IMPACT OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The following section presents findings on the issues related to the possible impact of inter-organisational collaboration, especially focusing on the extent to which these factors compelled or facilitated collaboration, as far as the research participants were concerned.

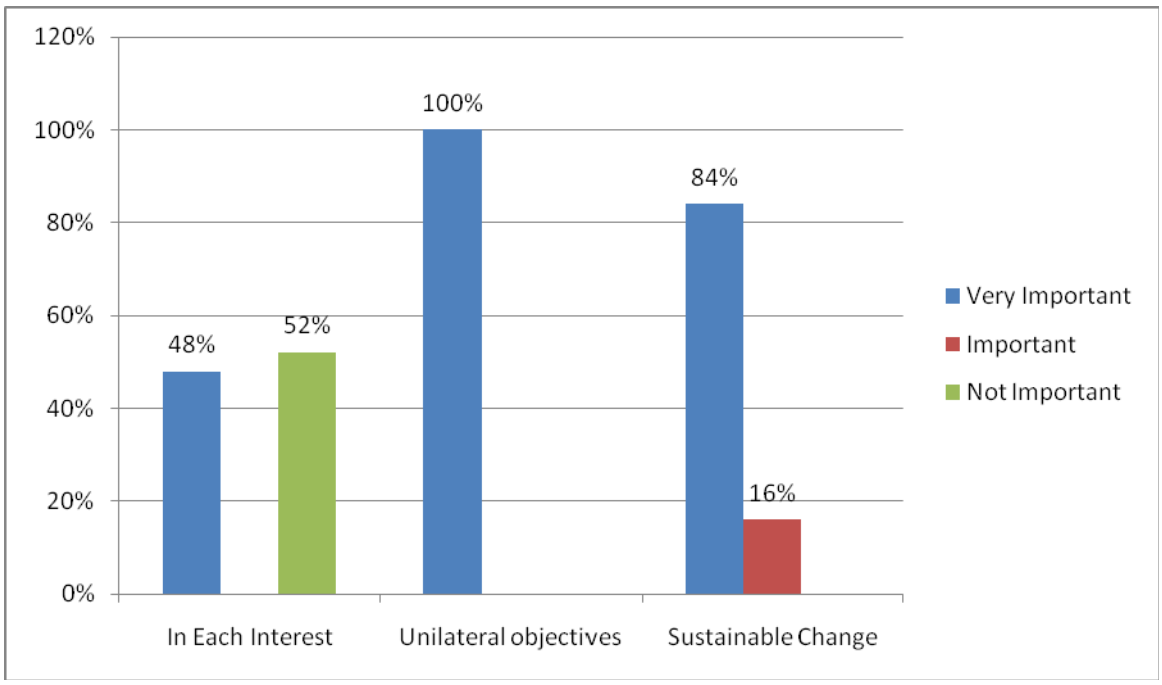


FIGURE 9: IN EACH BEST INTEREST, OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGE: N = 25

4.10.1 ORGANISATIONS' BEST INTERESTS

The findings as reflected on Figure 9 delineate the participants' perception of whether they felt compelled to collaborate primarily to serve their own organisations best interests, as opposed to serving the interests of other organisations who were part of their partnership. The participants were divided on whether their employers best interests compelled them to enter into collaborations, with thirteen (52%) participants indicating that their own organisations best interests were not important in motivating them to collaborate. While another number of twelve (48%) participants maintained that their own

employers' best interests were on top of the list of factors that compelled them to enter into inter-organisational collaborations.

The findings suggest the participants were motivated to enter into collaborations by a combination of own agencies best interest, and other interests that had no association, to using a collaboration to serve their own agencies interest. Further studies can shed more light on individual factors that have the potential to compel and facilitate inter-organisational collaboration, because of the difficulties of stakeholders to balance their own interests and the interests of other stakeholders (Smock, 1999; Netting at al 1998).

4.10.2 COLLECTIVE ACTION

The findings as presented on Figure 9 delineate the participants' belief in whether they were drawn into collaborations primarily because they (collaborations) set objectives that no single agency can realise acting unilaterally. This particularly focused on the degree to which specific issues were important in motivating them to be part of collaborations. All twenty-five (100%) participants felt compelled to collaborate with other organisations because they set objectives that a single organisation could not achieve alone. This was one of the most significant factors that motivated the respondents to partner with other professionals from other organisations.

The findings seem to acknowledge that organisations need to act in a more concerted way in order to promote the need to impact on social problems by integrating increasingly unaffordable resources, as directed in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). The challenge seems to lack guidelines for the process of collaboration. Directives in the process of inter-organisational collaboration can assist in bridging the gap between policy and service delivery.

4.10.3 SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

A majority of twenty-one (84%) participants believed that the possibility of more sustainable change was very important in compelling them to get involved in inter-organisational collaborations; four (16%) participants affirmed the need for sustainable change with less emphasis, compared to the majority view. On the whole, the findings suggest the need to effect durable change was significant in encouraging and motivating the respondents to partner with other organisations for better service delivery. The findings on this statement are corroborated by Lombard and Van Rensburg (2001) who

considered collaborations, rather than networks, co-operations or co-ordinations, as more geared towards effecting sustainable change in marginalised communities.

The open-ended part reaffirmed some of the findings reflected on the graphs and the discussion thereof. For instance, a majority of twenty (80%) participants identified the availability of relevant policies, i.e. the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), as one of the most important factors that motivated and compelled them to be involved in collaborations with other organisations. Five (20%) participants said the availability of funding was critical in enabling them to be part of collaborations, an issue that can not be separated from having a guiding policy framework - policies provide for funds.

A substantial number of seventeen (68%) participants said the possibility for sustainable change and opportunities to learn new skills attracted them to be in partnerships with other organisations.

4.11 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS HINDERING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

The following section presents findings on factors that the participants considered as significant in hindering inter-organisational collaboration. Tables were used to present data and explore themes for analysis and discussion purposes.

The participants were required to rate the intensity of statements reflecting possible factors that can hinder inter-organisational collaboration. Ratings of 1 and 2 were collapsed to represent low intense factors that can possibly hinder collaboration; these factors were considered as not important in hampering collaboration between organisations.

A rating of 3 meant participants were neutral on a specific statement, while a rating of 4 and 5 meant the participants considered a specific statement as of high intensity, meaning the statement was very important in describing factors that can hinder inter-organisational collaboration. The ratings were captured on tables for discussion and analysis purposes.

(i) **THE CONCEPT: INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION**

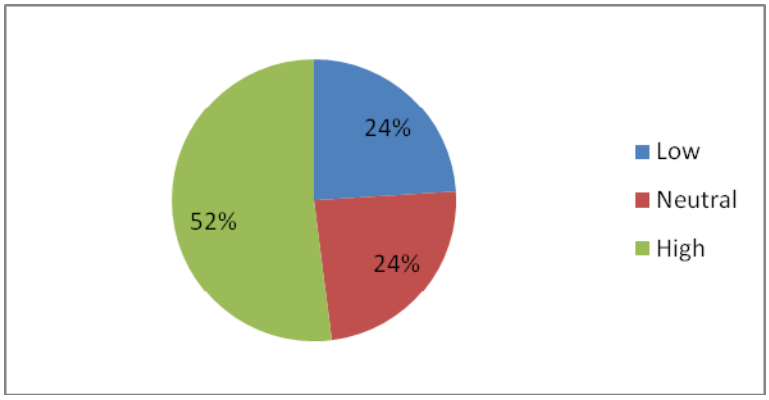


FIGURE 10: PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM COLLABORATION: N = 25

Figure 10 reports findings on whether the participants believed collaboration was hindered if it was not clearly distinguished from related concepts such as networking, co-operation and co-ordination. Thirteen (52%) participants indicated that inter-organisational collaborations can be hindered by lack of limited definitions and understanding. The assumption was that collaborative arrangements can not be applied in an optimal way if they not clearly delineated by those who want to use collaborations to impact on the quality of services. Any skill, approach or service delivery strategy has to be based on knowledge, reliable information and scientific research. Six (24%) participants thought low levels of knowledge and understanding of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration was not significant as a hindering factor. Six (24%) participants were neutral on whether lack of knowledge was a barrier to inter-organisational collaboration.

Abramson and Rosenthal (1995) maintained that poor definitions and descriptions of different forms of partnerships hindered awareness and directly or indirectly undermined drives to promote networks, co-ordinations and collaboration. The activities of state and civil society in the child and family welfare sector in the Gauteng area presents researchers with challenges to convert practice experience into a reliable body of knowledge for social workers to be able to articulate and implement contextually relevant strategies to address social problems that undermine the quality of family life. This process begins with knowledge and understanding.

(ii) **FAILURE TO KEEP STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED ABOUT THE POLICIES AND ACTIONS OF THE COLLABORATION**

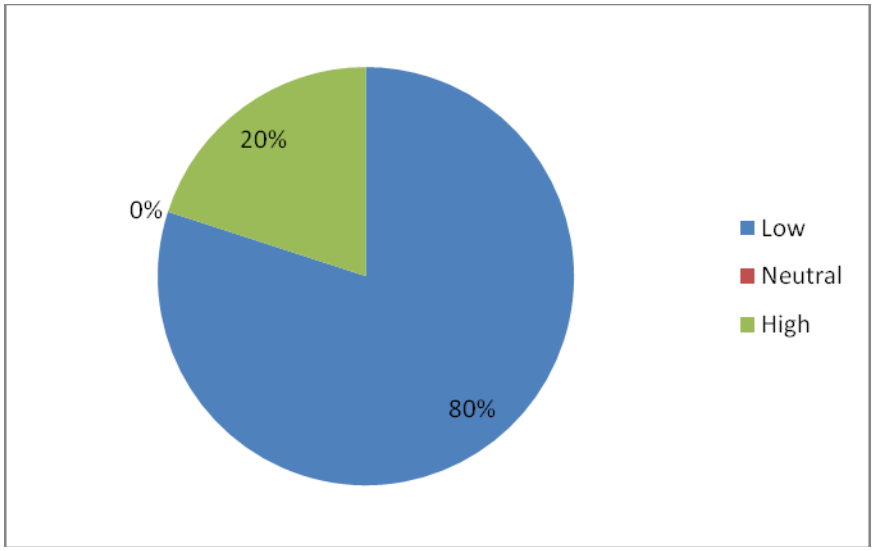


FIGURE 11: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT COMMUNICATION FAILURE: N = 25

Figure 11 reports data on whether the failure to keep stakeholders informed about the policies and actions of the collaboration was important in hindering inter-organisational collaboration. Most of the participants, twenty (80%) in number, thought collaborations could not be hampered by failing to communicate policies and programmes of action to key stakeholders, a finding refuted by theory. According to Smock (1999) and Alter and Hage (1993), regular dissemination of information about policies, regulations and protocol keep collaborations on track, an observation confirmed by five (20%) participants who maintained that failure to communicate vital information was a hindering factor in collaborations.

4.11.1 LACK OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Findings on cultural differences, mistrust and competition are presented as possible barriers to effective inter-organisational collaboration.

TABLE 7: DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: N = 25

	Low		Neutral		High	
Cultural differences, Mistrust and Competition	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Cultural differences among the stakeholders	12	48	0	0	13	52
2. Mistrust among the stakeholders	0	0	2	8	23	92
3. Competition among the stakeholders	0	0	5	20	20	80

(i) **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

The participants were divided in two nearly equal numbers on whether cultural differences among the stakeholders could hinder in some way inter-organisational collaboration, with thirteen (52%) participants confirming that differences in culture hampered collaborations among agencies. Twelve (48%) participants did not consider cultural differences as critically important in hindering collaborations, suggesting lack of general consensus on this specific theme. Cultural differences in the child and family welfare sector need to be investigated further because of the history of racially exclusionary policies and fragmented welfare services. Partnerships based on a shared vision and common identity need to be formed to allocate resources where they are needed the most. The intention will be for cultural differences not to be a stumbling block to effective collaboration, as no single social welfare can solve social problems unilaterally.

(ii) **MISTRUST AMONG STAKEHOLDERS**

The findings on Table 7 delineate the participants' opinions on whether mistrust among the stakeholders could hinder inter-organisational collaboration, clarifying how significant mistrust can be in hindering collaboration.

Nearly all the participants, twenty-three (92%) of them, indicated that lack of trust among the stakeholders was a critical barrier to collaborations between organisations, while two (8%) of the participants were neutral on this particular matter. Resentments and anger over the history of exclusion of the majority of South Africans from quality welfare services feeds mistrust between social welfare service providers and most of the clients. The integration of state and civil society resources should not only impact on protracted social problems, but should also build trust among adversaries. Pooling resources of "black" and "white" civil society bodies to solve common social problems can transform the

social welfare landscape in a significant way. Evidence-based approaches to deal with mistrust in partnerships need to be explored further in the South African welfare system.

(iii) **COMPETITION**

Table 7 reports findings on whether the participants thought competition among the stakeholders was another barrier that can hinder inter-organisational collaboration. It determines how significant competition is as a hindering factor. The competition among the stakeholders was considered by a majority of twenty (80%) participants as one of the important potential barrier to inter-organisational collaboration, while a minority of five (20%) participants were neutral on the theme of competition between stakeholders. Managing competition posed challenges that require skills informed by psychology and group dynamics, as the nature of relations among stakeholders can hinder or facilitate the process of working together. Healthy competition that ensures that tasks, processes and relationship goals are achieved must be encouraged and conveners of partnerships need to be equipped with skills to deal with destructive competition that undermines progress.

4.11.2 LIMITED COMPETENCIES IN MANAGING COLLABORATION

The following findings centre on possible conflicting agendas among stakeholders; and lack of leadership as two factors that can hinder inter-organisational collaboration

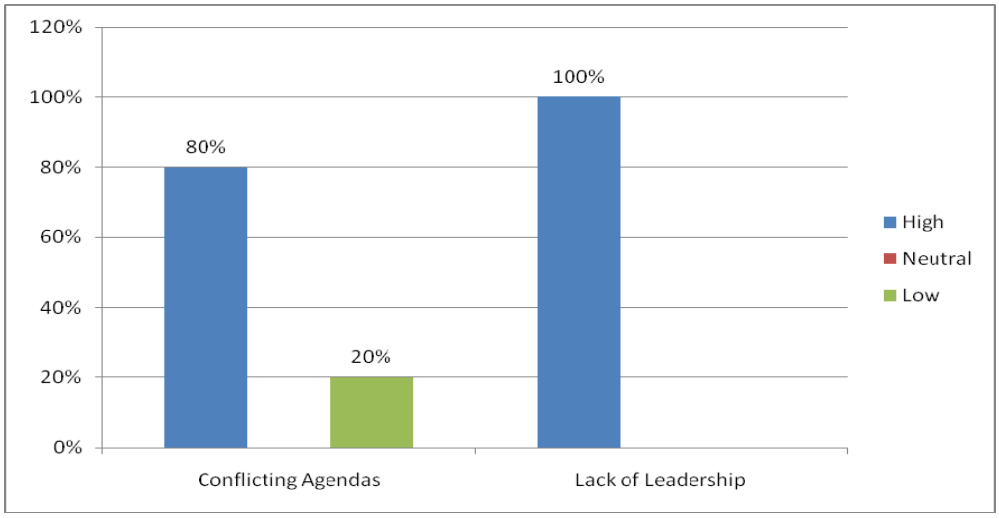


FIGURE 12: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LACK OF LEADERSHIP AND CONFLICTING AGENDAS: N = 25

(i) **CONFLICTING AGENDAS**

Figure 12 reports findings on whether the participants believed inter-organisational collaboration was hindered by stakeholders harbouring possible conflicting agendas, and to determine the extent to which this factor hampered collaborations between organisations.

A big portion of twenty (80%) participants thought inter-organisational collaboration was hindered by the conflicting agendas of the stakeholders, a barrier that was considered high risk. On the other hand, five (20%) participants maintained that conflict agendas were insignificant in posing a barrier to inter-organisational collaboration.

The main findings overlap with Winer and Ray's (1996) assertion that conflicting agendas present a serious barrier to parties from having a common vision. A common vision should be like a glue that should hold them together while navigating the process of collaboration. Partnerships can fall apart should conflicting agendas linger without resolution. Skills and approaches to align the stakeholders agendas need to be examined to minimise threats to partnering across agencies.

(ii) **LACK OF LEADERSHIP**

Figure 12 further reports findings on whether the participants thought lack of leadership was a hindering factor, and to determine the extent to which lack of leadership was considered important as a hindering factor. All twenty-five (100%) participants were in agreement that lack of leadership was an important factor that can undermine collaborations across different organisations.

Winer and Ray (1996) said competent and effective leadership is the driving force behind successful collaboration, an observation supported by the research findings. The quality of leadership can make or break partnerships, therefore efforts must be dedicated to capacity-building as far as leadership is concerned. Capacity-building efforts need to be channelled to all participating role players, so that many leaders can be cultivated so that facilitating roles can rotate within the stakeholders. This can ensure all stakeholders take ownership of the process and outcomes.

4.12 LIMITED IMPACT

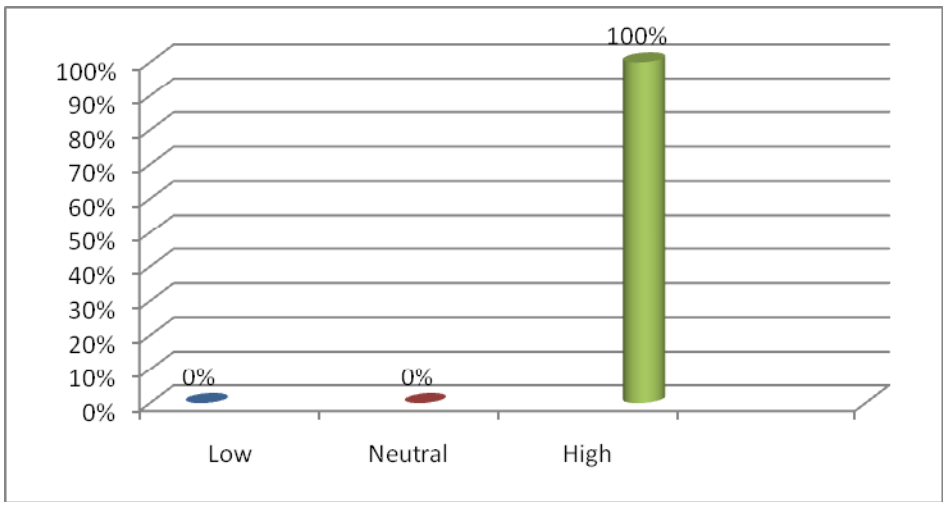


FIGURE 13: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE LACK OF RESULTS: N = 25

The findings on Figure 13 delineate the participants' belief in whether the lack of concrete results hindered inter-organisational collaboration, especially reporting on the extent to which a lack of concrete results hindered collaboration.

(i) LACK OF CONCRETE RESULTS

All twenty-five (100%) participants were unanimous in indicating that lack of concrete results was one of the most significant barriers to inter-organisational collaboration. Lack of concrete and tangible results will discourage any agency from investing time, money and personnel to fruitless initiatives. Scarce and limited resources cannot be wasted while social problems continue to undermine the quality of child care and family life.

The process of pooling resources from different organisations is not an end in its self, the ultimate goal is to impact of social problems in a meaningful and sustainable way, something that the participants have not observed as far as their response to this statement seem to suggest. The ability to secure concrete results would draw people into collaborations, while the lack of results may frustrate people to the extent that they may not want to participate in partnerships. The attainment of outcomes is associated in the way a partnership is managed, an area in which more research can contribute, to improve the quality of child and family services.

(ii) **INABILITY TO CONTROL FLOW OF REWARDS**

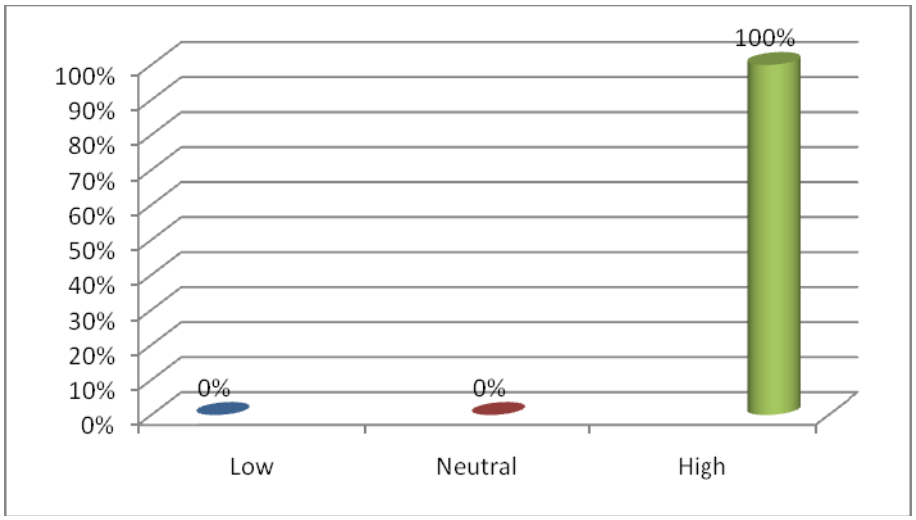


FIGURE 14: PARTCIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE INABILITY TO EQUALLY DISTRIBUTE REWARDS: N=25

Figure 14 reports findings on whether the participants considered the inability to control the flow of rewards as important in hindering inter-organisational collaboration.

All twenty-five (100%) participants maintained that the uneven distribution of whatever rewards that one can accrue from inter-organisational collaboration, presented a threat that can definitely hamper collaboration.

The fair distribution of rewards and benefits seems to be a factor that can draw people in collaborations, while unfair flows of rewards can have the opposite effect of pushing people away from collaborations with other organisations.

(iii) **RESOURCES NOT SHARED PROPORTIONALLY**

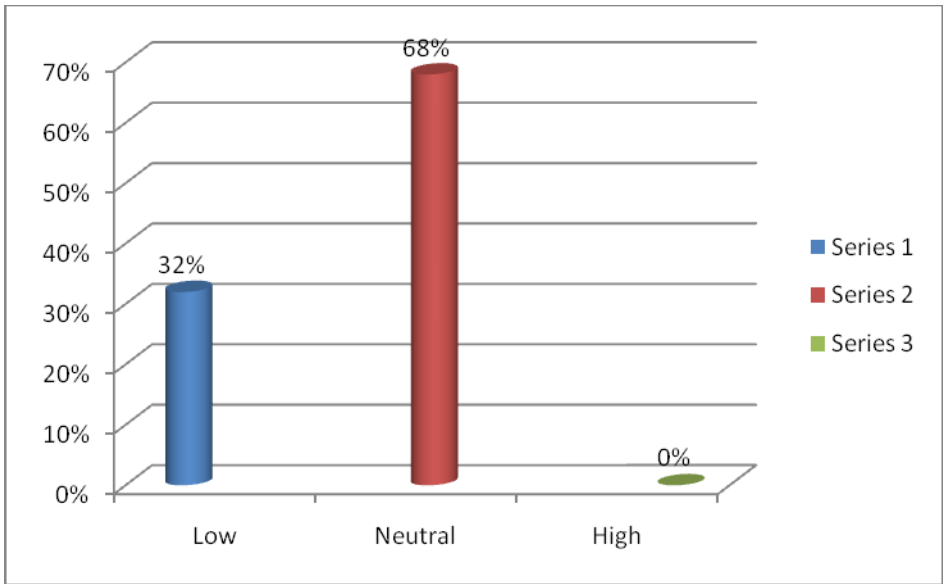


FIGURE 15: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT RESOURCES BEING SHARED DISPROPORTIONALLY: N = 25

Figure 15 reports findings on whether the inability to share resources proportionally hindered inter-organisational collaboration, and to determine how important this factor was in hampering collaboration.

Eight (32%) participants believed that the disproportional sharing of resources was of low significance in hindering inter-organisational collaboration, while most of the seventeen (68%) participants were not sure and elected to be neutral on this particular statement.

The ability for the stakeholders to integrate resources is one of the main defining features of inter-organisational collaboration (Lombard & Van Rensburg, 2001) and the resources will have to be shared in a fair way for stakeholder retention purposes.

(iv) **LACK OF INCENTIVES**

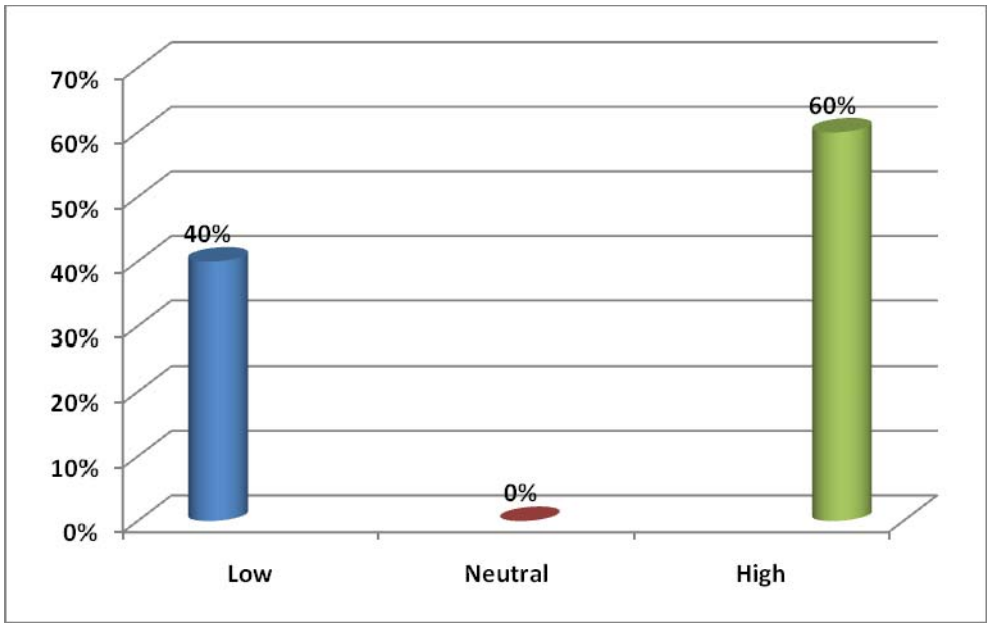


FIGURE 16: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LACK OF INCENTIVES: N = 25

Figure 16 presents findings on whether the participants thought a lack of incentive hindered inter-organisational collaboration and to determine how a lack of incentives hampered collaboration.

A majority of fifteen (60%) participants maintained that lack of incentives were significant in hindering collaborations with other organisations, in that people were not probably motivated enough to enter into, or sustain their participation, in partnerships. Ten (40%) participants said the lack of incentives was not very important in hindering them in working with other organisations; therefore lack of incentives was not a notable factor that could hamper inter-organisational collaboration.

Abramson and Rosenthal (1995) support the view above by maintaining that key incentives - like training, acquisition of new skills, recognition within and/or beyond ones organisation and professional development - may motivate greater participation in collaboration. Therefore, incentives have to be enhanced at agency level as they may encourage greater collaboration between agencies, a point attested to by the findings and the cited literature.

(v) **LACK OF SUPPORT**

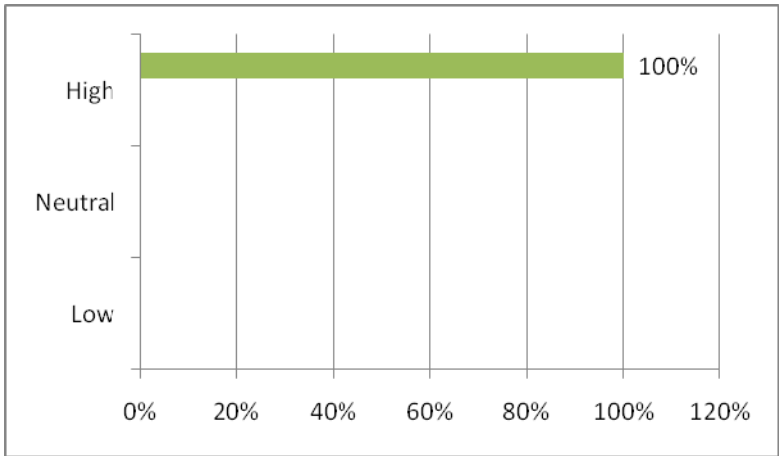


FIGURE 17: PARTCIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE LACK OF SUPPORT: N=25

Figure 17 reports findings on whether the respondents believed lack of support from ones organisation hindered inter-organisational collaboration. All twenty-five (100%) participants maintained that their participation in collaborations would be hindered if their respective organisations did not support them. The overwhelming number of responses on this statement suggested that lack of support was of high significance in hindering inter-organisational collaboration. Mechanisms have to be investigated in how to support stakeholders involved in partnerships, as threats for failure may be high, while the process of achieving outcomes difficult. Social workers directly involved in cross-agency partnerships need training, guidelines, skills, and incentives as forms of support in integrating services for the benefit of children and families in poor communities.

Supporting collaborating agencies in the child and family welfare sector can deliver the following outcomes: improving the quality of welfare services, impacting meaningfully on protracted social problems, integrating scarce and expensive human and material resources, resolving conflict and competition among stakeholders, mitigating the effect of constrained social welfare spending and assisting in the implementation of White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

(vi) **UNILATERAL ACTION BY ONE ORGANISATION**

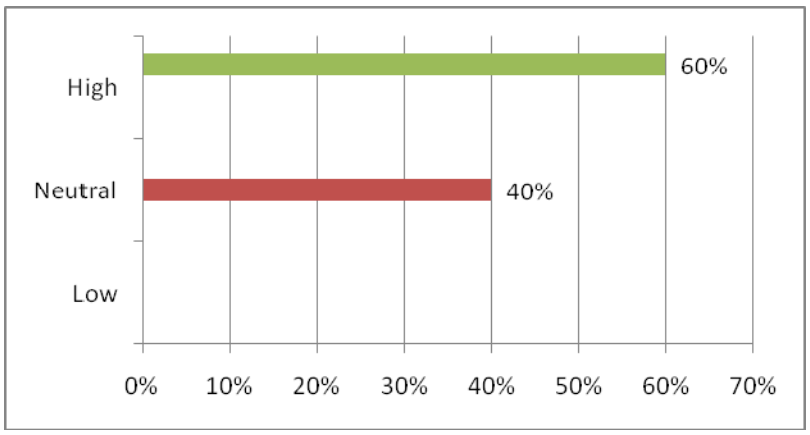


FIGURE 18: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT UNILATERAL ACTION: N=25

The findings on Figure 18 reflect the participants' views on whether unilateral action by one organisation can hinder inter-organisational collaboration. Fifteen (60%) participants maintained that unilateral action by one agency was of high importance in hindering collaborations with other organisations, because collaborations essentially means collective action, not one imposing over the rest.

Ten (40%) participants were neutral on this theme, an unexpected finding as this issue can be very contentious to stakeholders. Unilateral action seems to be against the spirit of any type of partnership and stakeholders may find it difficult to own the process, therefore unilateral action needs to be dealt with as it appears closely associated with failure.

Active stakeholder participation should be genuinely facilitated from inception of partnering - to planning, organising, chairing of sessions, monitoring, budgeting and evaluation of activities that relate to the process of collaboration.

The letter and spirit of partnership rests on teamwork, communication, consultation, peer review, input from relevant parties, quality assurance and wide ranging appraisal, which all move away from unilateral action by one agency. Unilateralism can be a hindering factor.

(vii) **LIMITED SPACE FOR FLEXIBILITY**

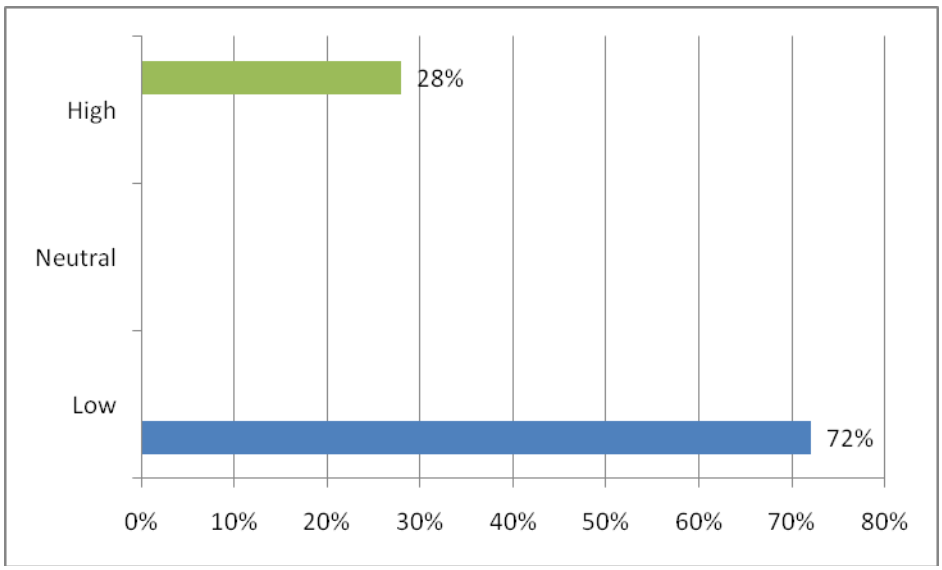


FIGURE 19: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LIMITED SPACE FOR FLEXIBILITY: N=25

Figure 19 reports on the participants' belief on whether the limited space for flexibility can be a hindering factor if it was manifested in their experience of partnerships; and to determine the extent to which this factor was significant as a hindering factor.

A majority of eighteen (72%) participants thought the limited space for flexibility was not important as a hindering factor - presumably they experience partnerships as flexible. Seven (28%) participants said limited flexibility would definitely hamper collaboration.

According to Winer and Ray (1996) lack of flexibility breeds slow action and that on its own can impede the progress of any form of collaboration.

The open-ended section further revealed that twenty (80%) participants highlighted the failure to deal with conflict as one of the most important factors that can hinder inter-organisational collaboration, while five (20%) participants identified lack of time and leadership as crucial hindering factors.

High costs in staff time was identified by nineteen (76%) participants as a factor that can hinder inter-organisational collaboration, six (24%) participants maintained that too much work outside the collaboration presented a barrier to active involvement in the activities concerning the collaboration.

A majority of twenty-three (92%) participants perceived all or most of the hindering factors as stressful issues that could exceed their coping capabilities and no suggestion has been forthcoming in dealing with the above-mentioned challenges. Two (8%) participants said hindering factors were challenges that forced them to grow and develop skills and new approaches in dealing with partners from other organisations, rather than being stressful.

5 CONCLUSION

The presentation and analysis of data revealed interesting and challenging views about the participants' perceptions of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration. The researcher found some views consistent with theory, while other views were inconsistent with the relevant theoretical perspectives. As no social worker who participated in this study indicated to have received formal training in developing partnerships in their area of work, there was a gap between some participants' perceptions and what certain authors suggest about the key elements of inter-organisational collaboration. Collaborations in child and family welfare have been working on addressing the needs of clients. Aspects of collaboration covered in the literature can be applied to build on and enhance partnerships within and beyond the Gauteng area. A theme that emerged from the data is as follows: a conducive policy environment that has been cultivated in the last few years needs to be supplemented with relevant skills at agency level, in order to implement quality child and family welfare services. The following chapter presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Inter-organisational collaboration, referred to as multi-sectoral collaboration in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), and social services integration are prominent elements in the drive to transform the South African welfare system from an exclusionary residual one, to one based on an integrated developmental paradigm. Social workers involved in service delivery partnerships represent agents of change in that they are well positioned in their professional philosophy, skills base and research orientation to translate aspects of the white paper into reality. An apparent lack of practice guidelines to ensure competencies in managing the relationships of all multi-sectoral role players in the Gauteng area may pose a challenge to the actual integration of resources in order that service delivery can impact positively on the quality of child and family life. A gap in policy and implementation can hamper efforts to enhance child and family welfare services. This challenge concerns the translating of practice experience in casework, group work, community development, social development policy and social research, into applicable, easy available and contextually relevant guidelines. The scale of social problems since the promulgation of the White Paper for Welfare (1997) seems to have exceeded available resources in the state, private and civil society sectors. As a result, a concerted collaborative effort from national to community levels seems a logical response given such a context. An enabling policy framework in the form of the White Paper for Welfare has been put in place - an exploration of evidence-based best practice in partnership development which will contribute in the implementation of policy.

This chapter presents the summary of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations for theory, practice and research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The overall aim of this research report was to gain greater understanding of the experiences of social workers working collaboratively with other organisations in the child and family welfare in Gauteng. The main findings address the five objectives. This was done in light of the overall aims of this research

report. Each objective was discussed in-depth with reference to the findings collected using the research instrument and conclusions were then made.

Objective 1: To explore the participants' knowledge and understanding of the nature and purpose of inter-organisational collaboration.

All twenty five (100%) participants concurred that their direct involvement in partnerships was not supplemented with formal preparation, none received training to enhance their competencies and skills in making partnerships more effective in their pursuit of sustainable change. Responses concerning the nature of inter-organisational collaboration were largely consistent with theoretical perspectives which described the essential elements of cross-agency interaction.

Twenty (80%) participants corroborated literature by affirming inter-organisational collaboration as a distinct type of partnership that required a more intense and formal relationship between the stakeholders.

Harding and White (2002) identified the ability to pool different stakeholders' resources as the main defining feature of cross-agency collaboration, which in turn requires the stakeholders to interact in a more intense manner.

There was a general belief among eighteen (72%) participants that by forming a distinct structure would distinguish a multi-sectoral collaboration from other forms of partnerships, i.e. networking, co-ordination and co-operative partnerships.

There was general consensus in that twenty (80%) participants understood that the purpose of collaboration concerns the need to leverage resources among social services agencies and to facilitate sustainable change.

The purposes identified by the participants reflected a close link with the mission statement in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), which highlighted the need to integrate state, private and civil society services to eradicate widespread poverty, and to improve the quality and impact of child and family welfare delivery mechanisms (Lombard, 2008; Vorster and Rossouw, 1997).

Overall most participants understood the concept of inter-organisational collaboration, but some did not - an area to be addressed by more research, training, guidelines and models on best practice.

Objective 2: To explore participants' views as to when to consider working with other organisations. What were the compelling and facilitating factors?

The national legislation in the form of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) represented the most significant factor that motivated all twenty five (100%) participants to be involved in child and family welfare partnerships. The majority of the participants served in senior positions in their respective organisations, thus were in positions of authority and positioned to implement policy. The legislative framework provided a specific legal mandate for social workers, whether they worked for the state, civil society or privately, to utilise partnerships in service delivery mechanisms.

It can be concluded that a favourable socio-political environment was considered to be important in influencing the stakeholders to work together. Exclusionary welfare of the past had its own policy framework that enabled it to thrive, the current developmental welfare paradigm has the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) as a significant source of legitimacy, twenty (80%) participants indicated that the current socio-political environment was important in compelling them to collaborate.

Eighteen (72%) participants were drawn into multi-sectoral collaboration because of practical considerations, for instance the ability of some collaborations to be more flexible in service provision strategies, and the ability to set concrete objectives and adaptability in changing service delivery strategies. These factors were found to have been significant in motivating some participants to be involved in partnerships.

Twenty one (84%) social workers went into collaborations to gain more information about relevant issues in their respective fields of practice, all twenty five (100%) wanted to effect more sustainable change in communities, while fifteen (60%) wanted to gain influence as notable role players in their areas of practice.

The factors that compelled social workers to consider working with other organisations ranged from the need to promote self interests, to serving public interests - a holistic assessment that seemed consistent with the social work attention in achieving tasks, process and relationship goals (Compton and Galaway, 1999; Specht, 1985).

Objective 3: To explore participants' views of the factors that hinder inter-organisational collaboration.

All twenty five (100%) participants indicated a general lack of preparation, training and support as the main stumbling blocks to effective and efficient collaboration between different organisations. The participants went further to indicate that their active involvement in partnerships would have been hard to retain when the costs outweigh the benefits.

On close examination the factors that were thought to have hindered collaboration were the opposite of the above-mentioned compelling factors. The history of apartheid-inspired welfare practices can not be eradicated overnight, hence most participants cited deeply ingrained mistrust among the state, civil society and private practitioners as the main stumblings block to multi-sectoral collaboration. Mistrust undermined the key ingredients to effective collaboration, for instance it undermined consistent communication, integration of resources, the development of a shared vision and difficulties in transforming the social welfare landscape (Siegel, 2008; Abramson and Rosenthal, 1995).

Competition among the stakeholders in the child and family welfare sector, coupled with mistrust between those favoured by the past dispensation and those determined to redress, spelled misfortune for any multi-sectoral initiatives, twenty (80%) participants indicated. Seventeen (68%) participants highlighted the lack of leadership as an important factor hindering multi-sectoral collaboration, which would facilitate that trust, as well as constructive competition and as a result ensure the benefits outweigh the costs.

All twenty five (100%) participants thought it was important to be informed by specific guidelines in order for the stakeholders to be able to minimise all the factors that may hinder inter-organisational

collaboration, and to ultimately realise their objectives, as outlined in the current social welfare dispensation.

Improved service delivery through partnerships centred on managing relationships among the stakeholders, for instance the participants cited issues around difficulties with partners relating to each other. Cultural diversity, ideological differences, irreconcilable differences, unilateral tendencies in teamwork and conflicting member agendas, present interesting research subjects in the future of partnerships as a service delivery strategy in the South African contexts.

Objective 4: Exploring the extent to which participants believed inter-organisational collaboration to have had an impact on service delivery.

The question whether multi-sectoral collaborations had any meaningful impact in child and family welfare services was the most interesting one for the participants, in that it was difficult to answer in unambiguous terms. At the same time it was a very critical question in justifying their participation in partnerships. The participants' interpretations of the impact of collaborations varied in many respects. Some focused on meeting task goals, while a few cited the achievement of certain process goals, which was inconsistent with a holistic assessment that incorporated tasks, relationship and process goals.

The impact of partnerships was measured against the task goals of providing social services to children and families as a designated clientele group (Mullen, 2008). Their evaluation of progress in meeting task goals focused on improvements in clients lives in quantitative and qualitative terms. For instance, twenty (80%) of the participants said the impact should be assessed based on the number of children and families reached as a result of social services agencies collective actions, and in the monitoring of longer term improvements in physical, material, emotional and psychological wellness. The impact therefore was outlined in quantitative and qualitative terms.

A number of participants found it hard to cite direct outcomes as a result of activities associated with multi-sectoral collaborations. Fewer than ten (40%) of the participants were confident in reporting progress in quantitative and qualitative terms. Future research in this area of study can benefit collaborative work in child and family welfare services by examining the processes that enable some

partnerships to have a tangible impact, and examine further the factors that prevent some partnerships from having a measurable impact in improving the clients' wellbeing.

To have a meaningful impact, twenty three (92%) participants highlighted the need to facilitate collective action that is characterised by efficient management and guided by evidence-based processes. Collective action in the townships, squatter camps, slums and crime-ridden suburbs may be vital because the nature of social problems affecting most areas can not be solved by independent social agencies acting in isolation. Clear benchmarks, practice models and assessments need to be developed further to assist social workers to be more effective collaborators. This capacity building must be focused on realising the tasks, process and relationships goals associated with partnership development.

The pooling and integration of resources, a distinguishing feature of cross-agency collaboration, was associated by twenty (80%) participants with the will to exert greater impact on protracted social problems - for the service delivery strategies to match the nature of the problem. In some communities in the Gauteng area, or any other urban area, the inability to integrate resources, in other words the fragmentation of resources, would render welfare services wanting in their ability to impact on social problems in meaningful and sustainable ways.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The researcher achieved the objectives of exploring and describing the concept of inter-organisational collaboration as perceived by the research participants. What emerged from the research was that social work practice experience in partnerships in the child and family welfare sector needs to be researched and documented in more detail for future reference, so that lessons in service delivery strategies that have had an impact in resource-deprived areas can be enhanced where possible. The need that emerged from the research study centred around the development of more structured benchmarks, assessment tools and models to improve the way social workers integrate resources, with the view of impacting longer term on social problems.

The social work professions' skills and knowledge base can be an effective resource that can add value to multi-sectoral collaboration, ensuring partnership efforts have a lasting impact on protracted social problems. Schools of social work, social development, government departments, non-governmental

organisations and private practitioners have a role in motivating and supporting social workers to create and nurture effective partnerships. Competencies in casework, group work, community development, social policy formulation and scientific research can therefore be used to close the gap between policy and implementation. The problems and challenges in getting people to work together across agencies can not be denied, while the need to use inter-organisational collaborations to effect social change cannot be overlooked. The question should be how to make collaborations benefit more children and families in need of social services.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS: THEORY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The following section presents recommendations in terms of theory, practice and future research.

5.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEORY

A theory is a presumption, a set of concepts and ideas that are intended to describe a certain phenomenon (Neuman, 1997). This report makes recommendations for more theory development in the area of child and family welfare partnership development from a social work perspective. Social work as a human services profession is concerned with enhancing how people interact with their social environment - a theoretical orientation needs to be developed further in the area of best practice in partnership development. The challenge is essentially around aligning social work theory to have more relevance to multi-sectoral collaboration at the point of service delivery.

Casework: Social workers competencies in theories related to casework or individual intervention need to be investigated further with the view of increasing capacity building in effective management of human relations, a factor that determines success or failure in multi-sectoral collaborations. The management of human relations centre on enhancing interactions at interpersonal level, a critical area to focus efforts in developing theory.

Social work abstracts and models in delineating human behaviour, transactional analysis, emotional intelligence and social justice need to be examined further with the view to applying them in collaborative processes. The challenge for social work theory lies in empowering collaborating stakeholders to actually blend commonalities in order to translate goals into a common vision and to get

partners to be dedicated to the mission of the collaboration and retaining the active partner participation.

Social workers practice experience in contracting with individuals, assessing human needs, social action, reflection of feelings, contracting, planning, challenging skills and making practical plans have a place in making partnerships work, further research in these areas can add value in informing theory and practice.

Group Work: Theories and models in group dynamics places social workers in an advantageous position to make partnerships work by managing group dynamics better. The need is to align group work-related concepts, like group member screening, group work facilitation, membership composition, group contracting, group cohesion, progress reporting, monitoring and group termination, to discover more evidence-based best practices in effective management of people, in collaborative arrangements.

Group work theories need extra attention because threats to collaboration revolve around how stakeholders interact, especially when conflict, competition and unequal power relations inhibit progress. Further research in the association between group work and multi-sectoral collaboration can contribute in a significant way to the enhancing of welfare service delivery strategies.

Community Work/Development: The alignment of community development theories and multi-sectoral collaboration presents challenges in generating more detailed knowledge from practice experience. Concepts within the community development arena offers opportunities for collaborations to be oriented and grounded in community needs. For instance, community profiling and surveying can contribute in a significant way towards ensuring that service delivery strategies are measurable and contextually relevant.

5.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Recommendations for practice concern the following issues: training, capacity building, consultation and models to guide multi-sectoral collaboration:

Training: Qualitative and quantitative research studies in collaborative processes must be intensified to prepare and support stakeholders, to ensure that their participation is retained and for results to be achieved. Training can ensure social workers have a more standard conception of partnership development, points of reference, mechanisms to mitigate hindering factors and tools to evaluate collaborative efforts.

Training and teaching can be offered at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and for social workers in practice. Auxiliary workers and lay officials involved as partners may stand to benefit more from professional and evidence-based references. According to Majumdar (2005) training is intended to expand knowledge, skills, values and attitudes aimed at enhancing the capacity of professionals, like social workers, to render quality services to individuals, families, organisations and communities.

Professional Consultation: Skills in partnerships development are oriented more towards field practice, in that they deal with what happens at the point of service provision. Training is recommended to be supplemented with ongoing consultation, from the inception of a collaboration to termination. The aim for all stakeholders to be supported to deal with challenges, problems and dynamics that can result from stakeholder interaction, for hindering factors to be minimised and enabling factors to be enhanced. Professional consultation, combined with skills training, research, documentation and publishing, is recommended to provide intellectual capital for social workers to build capacities in areas of networking, co-ordination and collaboration.

Guidelines to Facilitate Collaboration: Social work theories, training and consultation need to be translated into guidelines to enable social workers to facilitate multi-sectoral collaborations in more effective ways. The guidelines should enable facilitators to achieve their objectives, by managing conflict, competition and any other factors that can hinder progress.

Framework to Assess the Effectiveness of Collaborative Strategies: It is recommended that social workers have specially designed frameworks to highlight the primary functions of those that facilitate and those that participate in partnerships. The framework for collaborative practice should examine factors that are most likely to hinder successful collaboration across agencies, by having inbuilt mechanisms to deal with lack of communication, mistrust, competition, uneven distribution of results and passiveness on the part of key stakeholders.

5.4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made for future research:

Research in Multi-sectoral Collaboration: "Social research aims to generate knowledge about the social world. In the instance, all research is aimed at improved understanding by describing, explaining and evaluating phenomena in the social world" (Mouton, 1996: ix). The recommendation will be for the most significant aspects of partnership development to be investigated further to inform theory, policy and practice in this special area of interest. The experiences of social workers since the early 1900's need to be explored and described in more detail through research in order for social workers to learn from past challenges and to be better prepared for future partnerships. Quantitative and qualitative research is recommended at national, provincial and local levels of social services formulation and provision.

Research in Key Aspects of Inter-Organisational Collaboration: Guidelines need to be generated from research into the key aspects of cross-agency collaboration, especially focusing on the aspects that may hinder and facilitate successful collaboration. For example, key factors to be examined include the impact of collaboration, ways to enhance inter-dependence, mechanisms to rotate roles, co-chairing of meetings, shared ownership of the process and the delicate tasks of integrating resources.

Child and Family Welfare: It is recommended that more detailed research be conducted around sectors that can contribute to improving child and family welfare services. The relationships between child and family welfare services and sectors like health, education, housing, poverty alleviation and social development need to be researched to identify areas of alignment and convergence. Research into ways to provide comprehensive services is a challenge for social workers and all those involved in community development, specifically to enhance the way social services are delivered.

Multi-disciplinary Approaches: It is further recommended that research be conducted into how other professional in human services organisations manage multi-sectoral collaboration. For instance, learning from psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists, doctors, sociologists, lawyers, community development practitioners and other relevant stakeholders, the accumulated knowledge and practice experience should assist in improving partnerships.

Inter-organisational collaboration is a *process* to achieve an *outcome*. Social services organisations across South Africa have an ongoing challenge of developing creative solutions that address the needs of many, while securing the needs of the few.

The transformation of the social welfare system should go beyond bringing together resources, but facilitating relationships based on openness, trust and an understanding that complex issues require a common vision, joint activities and a commitment to resolving issues.

Collaboration across organisations in the South African context must be based on humanist philosophy of Ubuntu, an ethical orientation focused on people's allegiances and relations with each other. Ubuntu and inter-organisational collaboration speak about our inter-connectedness, particularly the fact that most social problems can not be solved in isolation.

5.5 TEN STEP MODEL FOR BEST COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES IN HUMAN SERVICES PARTNERSHIPS (Adapted from Mullen, 2008)

1. **HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE AND RATIONALE**
- The reason to collaborate must be rooted in the White Paper for Welfare (1997). - Stakeholders need a legitimate reason to participate in the process. - A common understanding of the issues facilitates the development of a clear purpose for a potential or existing group of stakeholders.
2. **INVITE ALL THE RELEVANT AND INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COLLABORATION**
- Ensure that all stakeholders in the collaboration have an interest in the issues and come to the table in good faith, committed to full participation, which includes sticking with the collaboration until tasks are achieved.

- Encourage stakeholders to acknowledge where the past has created mistrust and to commit to going beyond it.
- Ensure stakeholders obtain executive support of their respective organisations.
- Ensure stakeholders agree to communication processes that ensure their accountability to the constituencies they represent.

3. SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES AND PASSION OF THE CHAMPIONS

- Collaboration thrives when top-level leaders of the participating organisations champion achievement of the group goals by being actively involved and encourage collaborative practices.
- True champions are individuals who are passionate about the collaborative's mission and objectives.
- Follow the lead of impassioned stakeholders.

4. SHARE LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATTAINING GOALS

- Support stakeholders with skills and roles to build trust and inter-dependence.
- Establish mechanisms to facilitate shared ownership of the collaborative process.
- Ensure each participating organisation has at least one participant with skills to facilitate joint problem solving and shared decision making.

5. DEVELOP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN SUPPORT OF THE COLLABORATION

- Facilitate the process of designing own organisational structure and related policies and procedures.

- Embrace group processes such as consensus building, shared decision making and conflict resolution.
- Ensure decision making processes are transparent and clear in how the collaboration operates.
- Agreements on the process to ensure that all stakeholders accept how the collaboration operates.
- The participants must be enabled to take charge and make significant decisions.

6. CREATE WORKABLE SOLUTIONS AND IMPLEMENT THEM

- Make sure processes are in place to ensure participants understand the needs, concerns, and aspirations of all members of the group.
- Group cohesion must translate into creative solutions that address the needs of many, while taking care to balance with meeting the needs of the few.
- Mutually agreed upon solutions is a powerful tool and clear information is a keystone of success.
- Make sure information is equally available to all stakeholders.
- Develop communication systems to support implementation of decisions made by the participants, and continuously documents and circulate agreements.
- Balance short and long term actions that members of the collaboration can actively support.

7. ENSURE ADEQUATE RESOURCES

- Motivate and make sure funding, staff time, infrastructure, contacts, and other essential resources are available.
- Pool resources for long term activities that are managed by the collaborative structure.
- Share resources, expenses and rewards among stakeholders.

8. **TAKE TIME**
- Acknowledge and expect that the process of collaboration takes time, but must be time bound. - Allow the process of collaboration to evolve.
9. **FOSTER A COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT**
- Communicate clearly that it is collaborative relationships that make collaboration work. - Relationships must be based on trust, openness, and an understanding that complex issues require a common vision, joint activities, and a commitment to resolving issues for social workers clients.
10. **CONSOLIDATE AND CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS**
- Collaboration is a process to achieve an outcome. - Being engaged is an important fact to celebrate. - Regularly share and celebrate progress by consolidating and by acknowledging incremental successes. - Build on successes by facilitating member contributions to the overall mission of the collaboration.

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INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION:

SOCIAL WORKER'S PERCEPTIONS REGARDING COLLABORATION

IN CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE

Informed Consent Form

Greetings

My name is Madoda Sitshange and I am currently studying towards my Master's Degree in Occupational Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am required to conduct research and submit a research report to successfully complete the aforementioned degree.

The focus of my research is to gain greater understanding of the concept of inter-organisational collaboration, as experienced by social workers who got together with their counterparts from different organisations to deliver social services. In order for me to study this concept (inter-organisational collaboration) I hereby invite you to participate in this research study.

If you are willing to participate in this study it is important for you to be aware of the following:

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary;
- All information will be kept confidential;
- You have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage;
- Participating or not participating in this study will not affect your career in any way and will not have an impact on promotions;
- No personal particulars or identifying details are documented on the research interview guide;
- The interviews will be conducted using an interview guide and will take approximately two hours of your time;
- The raw data that will be collected, analyzed and stored in a secure place, it will be destroyed after six years;

- A copy of the results of the research study will be submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand in order to complete my studies;
- The research findings will hopefully be used to train social workers and other professionals to better manage inter-organisational collaborations;
- Should you need to contact the researcher, here is my cell-phone number: 073 070-8312

As a participant in this study I understand all the above information and give my consent to participate in the study.

_____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INFORMATION REGARDING THIS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The overall purpose of this study is to gain greater understanding of the experiences of social workers in working collaboratively with other organisations, with specific reference to:

(i) The extent of the participants' knowledge and understanding of the nature and purpose of inter-organisational collaboration;

(ii) The participants' views as to when to consider collaborating with other organisations. What are the compelling factors?

(iii) The participants' perceptions of the factors that facilitate and hinder inter-organisational collaboration;

(iv) Establishing the extent to which participants' believe inter-organisational collaboration has had an impact on their work.

On the basis of the data gathered, to make recommendations relating to:

- How inter-organisational collaboration processes could be better managed.

SECTION A: IDENTIFYING DATA AND PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

A.1 Your age …….years

A.2 Your gender …….male …….female

A.3 Your Professional Title (please mark only one)

1. Chief Social Worker_____

2. Senior Social Worker_____

3. Manager_____

4. Social Worker_____

5. Other (please specify)_____

A.4 Your Professional Sector (please mark only one)

1. Government/public sector_____

2. Private_____

3. Non-governmental_____

4. Community based organisation_____

5. Other_____

A.5 Your Field of Practice (please mark only one)

1. Child and Family Welfare_____

2. Other (please specify)_____

A.6 The Name of Your Organisation

1._____

A.7 Please complete the following schedule with regard to all your participation in partnerships. Please indicate with **Who, Why, How** and **When**.

WHO?	**WHY?**	**HOW?**	**WHEN?**

SECTION B: KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

To what extent do the following statements reflect your views regarding the nature and purpose of inter-organisational collaboration?

NB: Please indicate whether you (1) **Strongly Agree**, (2) **Agree**, (3) **Disagree** or (4) **Strongly Disagree**.

(Please choose only **one** option per statement)

1.	Inter-organisational collaboration refers to a short-term informal relationship.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
2.	Inter-organisational collaboration refers to a long-term informal relationship.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
3.	Inter-organisational collaboration refers to a short-term formal relationship.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
4.	Inter-organisational collaboration refers to a long-term formal relationship.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
5.	Having a clearly defined mission is one of a characteristic of inter-organisational collaboration.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
6.	Group work on a specific programme is one of a characteristic of inter-organisational collaboration.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
7.	Having a well-defined structure is one of a basic characteristic of inter-organisational collaboration.	(1) (2) (3) (4)

8.	The authority structure, i.e. chairmanship rests with one organisation.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
9.	The authority structure rests with few agencies.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
10.	The authority structure rests with all agencies.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
11.	Each agency keeps its resources separate.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
12.	All agencies share/pool resources.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
13.	Each agency keeps its own separate identity.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
14.	The group forms its own distinct identity.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
15.	Each participant has a special and unique role and functions in a collaboration.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
16.	Roles and functions are shared.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
17.	Collaborations are formed through a policy directive.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
18.	Collaborations are formed through a legal mandate.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
19.	The main purpose of inter-organisational collaboration is to leverage resources.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
20.	The main purpose of inter-organisational collaboration is to build power.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
21.	The main purpose of inter-organisational collaboration is to strengthen the	(1) (2) (3) (4)

democratic process.

22.	The main purpose of inter-organisational collaboration is to achieve sustainable development.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
23.	The core business of each agency and the goals of the collaboration are in-separate.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
24.	The core business of each agency and the goals of the collaboration are separate.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
25.	Each agency displays dependence.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
26.	Each agency displays independence.	(1) (2) (3) (4)
27.	Each agency displays interdependence.	(1) (2) (3) (4)

28. In your opinion what are the **five** basic characteristics of an inter-organisational collaboration?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

29. In your opinion how can you classify the structure of a collaboration? (Please mark only one)

1. Bureaucratic-hierarchical_____
2. Organised around fields of practice_____
3. Organised around programmes_____
4. Organised around teamwork_____
5. Other (please specify)_____

SECTION C: FACTORS COMPELLING AND FACILITATING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

1. The following are a number of possible factors that can compel and/or facilitate inter-organisational collaboration. Please indicate the level of importance that you consider each statement.

FACTORS COMPELLING/ FACILITATING COLLABORATION	**VERY IMPORTANT**	**IMPORTANT**	**NOT IMPORTANTT**
1. There is a history of collaboration in my organisations.			
2. Because there is a favourable socio-political climate.			
3. I want to know more about other organisations.			
4. It is an opportunity to be part of a group.			
5. Because there is mutual respect and trust.			
6. I partake because there is an adequate cross-section of members.			
7. I see it to be in my organisations best interest.			
8. To reach compromises with			

competitors.			
9. To share in funding for programmes.			
10. Because there is more flexibility in inter-organisational collaboration.			
11. Collaboration is another interesting challenge.			
12. Collaborations encourages communication between organisations.			
13. Collaborations achieve concrete and attainable objectives.			
14. Collaborations develop a shared vision.			
15. Collaborations develop adaptable objectives.			
16. For there are objectives that one organisation can not achieve alone.			
17. Because there was sufficient funding.			
18. For was a skilled convener.			

19. For there was an adequate diversity of skills and experiences.			
20. For there was a clear guiding policy.			
21. Because there was a beginning and an end.			
22. To gain information.			
23. For there was a career advancement opportunity.			
24. To acquire new skills.			
25. To achieve more sustainable development and change.			

2. Please rank in order of importance the **five** factors which you consider the most significant in compelling and/or facilitating collaborations between organisations.

(i)_____

(ii)_____

(iii)_____

(iv)_____

(v)_____

SECTION D: THE FACTORS THAT HINDER INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION

On the scale below, please rate the **intensity** of possible factors that may hinder inter-organisational collaboration. (1) **Very High**, (2) **High**, (3) **Neutral**, (4) **Low**, and (5) **Very Low**. (Please mark only one).

1. The concept of inter-organisational collaboration is not well understood.

---

1 2 3 4 5

2. Mistrust among the members/stakeholders.

---

1 2 3 4 5

3. Conflicting agendas of the participants/stakeholders.

---

1 2 3 4 5

4. Cultural differences among the stakeholders

---

1 2 3 4 5

5. Competition among the stakeholders

---

1 2 3 4 5

6. Time is limited.

---

1 2 3 4 5

7. Lack of human and material resources.

---

1 2 3 4 5

8. Lack of leadership.

---

1 2 3 4 5

9. Lack of incentives.

---

1 2 3 4 5

10. Resources are shared proportionally.

---

1 2 3 4 5

11. The inability to control the flow of rewards.

---

1 2 3 4 5

12. Failure to communicate policies and activities.

---

1 2 3 4 5

13. Lack of concrete results.

---

1 2 3 4 5

14. Irreconcilable differences.

---

1 2 3 4 5

15. Limited concrete results.

---

1 2 3 4 5

16. Ideological differences among the stakeholders.

---

1 2 3 4 5

17. Differences in values and beliefs.

---

1 2 3 4 5

18. Limited space for flexibility.

---

1 2 3 4 5

19. Unilateral action by one organisation.

---

1 2 3 4 5

20. Unequal power relations.

---

1 2 3 4 5

21. Historical differences among the stakeholders.

---

1 2 3 4 5

22. Having a convener with limited skills.

---

1 2 3 4 5

23. The costs outweigh the benefits.

---

1 2 3 4 5

24. Lack of support from own organisation.

---

1 2 3 4 5

25. Please rank in order of importance **five** factors that hinder inter-organisational collaboration.

(i)_____

(ii)_____

(iii)_____

(iv)_____

(v)_____