Positioning Your Program for Sustainability
Sustainability

• Long been an issue for non-profits and grant funded programs
• No agreement on what it means
• No “magic bullet”
• Continuous learning process
Sustainability

Programs or services continue because they are valued and draw support and resources.
Georgia Health Policy Center Focus

• Technical Assistance to more than 600 rural communities that have received grants from HRSA’s Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP)
• Literature review
• Sustainability assessment of past ORHP grantees
• Sustainability Framework ©
Sustainability Assessment

• Assessment of 102 ORHP grantees funded in 2000, 2002, 2004

• Purposes:
  — Describe the extent that programs have been sustained post-funding
  — Identify recurrent patterns that influence likelihood of sustainability
Insights

I. **What** was sustained

II. **How** it was sustained

III. **Why** it was sustained
What was sustained

• No set of best practices
  – Certain programs not more likely to sustain
  – No step wise process for sustainability

• Programs rarely sustained as originally conceived
  – Services are expanded
  – Services are scaled back
  – New program approach evolves
How it was sustained

• Combination of Methods
  – absorbed by partners
  – in-kind/volunteerism
  – other grants
  – third party reimbursement
  – client fees
  – government/public subsidy
  – earned income
**Why it was sustained**

- Dynamics that influence sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHY</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>HOW</th>
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WHO Dynamic

• Primarily about leadership
  – Ability to engage the “right” people
    • Strategic
    • Influential
  – Create shared ownership and commitment
  – Resolve conflict
## WHO Dynamic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorable Characteristics</th>
<th>Unfavorable Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engaged leaders with strategic mindset</td>
<td>Partners sense struggle for control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widespread sense of trust among partners</td>
<td>Lack of consistent presence by partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key decision makers and influencers are involved or easily accessed</td>
<td>Conflict left unresolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners share passion and purpose for the program</td>
<td>Belief that each partner has own agenda first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision for program is shared</td>
<td>Partners are informed about activities not engaged in leading and planning</td>
</tr>
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</table>
WHAT Dynamic

• Related to the substance of the intervention
  — Designed program demonstrates:
    • Relevance
    • Practicality
    • Value
  — Program is aligned to community context
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Unfavorable Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solution based on clear assessment of community needs</td>
<td>Solution only addresses symptoms and not root causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners have leverage to address the problem long-term</td>
<td>Solution approach does not match partner and provider culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders benefit directly (Network)</td>
<td>Legal barriers – real or perceived – halt progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program or service has a value that others would be willing to reimburse and/or purchase</td>
<td>Stakeholders and potential partners do not perceive recognizable value of solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The solution evolves and adapts as the environment changes and knowledge is acquired</td>
<td>Solution attempts to solve too many issues with too many small, unrelated efforts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHY Dynamic

• About the motivation for partners to work together
  — Well-defined vision for working together
  — Shared vision and understanding of roles
  — Use HRSA grants as a means to an end versus being an end unto itself
## WHY Dynamic

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<tr>
<td>There is a clear focus to the vision</td>
<td>Sense of fear and desperation among partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts are aligned and prioritized to vision and goals</td>
<td>Many partners believe that others are just “looking for money”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners have formed a strong sense of group identity</td>
<td>Partners believe they’ve come together just to deliver on grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused both on system change and meeting partner member needs</td>
<td>All goals and plans are short-term without alignment to a larger vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear understanding of need based on evidence</td>
<td>Partners can not clearly explain why they are at the table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW Dynamic

• Relates to the way programs or networks are operationalized
  – Effective strategies employed
  – Adequate capacity built
  – Impact and value is documented and communicated
### HOW Dynamic

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<tr>
<td>Capable and skilled staff are employed to deliver solution</td>
<td>Sustainability is a topic of discussion late in the grant period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact and value is documented and communicated</td>
<td>Organization lacks staff capacity to fully implement solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner assets are utilized to integrate program components</td>
<td>Spend resources on unreasonable and unwarranted overhead expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>into existing infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused both on system change and meeting partner member needs</td>
<td>Value of program is communicated only to partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear understanding of need based on evidence</td>
<td>Coalition fails to begin with the end in mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHERE and WHEN Dynamic

• Factors typically beyond the control of grantees
  ─ The legal, social, cultural, and economic environment at the time of program implementation
  ─ Coincidental trends at the time of program delivery
  ─ Makes each situation unique and prevents application of universal best practices
## WHERE and WHEN Dynamics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Factors</th>
<th>When Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State policies and mandates</td>
<td>Economic pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography of program location</td>
<td>Receipt of multiple grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of technology</td>
<td>Length of planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursement climate</td>
<td>History of working together &amp; turnover of key staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture – university, FQHC, PH</td>
<td>Idea surfaces before its time – acceptance, technology, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile or competitive environment</td>
<td>Ability to collect timely results to demonstrate impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity

• Read the case studies
• Think about your answers to the questions
• Discuss at your table
• Report out
Want to read more?

The Dynamics of Sustainability: A Primer for Rural Health Organizations

http://www.raconline.org/pdf/sustain_primer508.pdf
There is More

• More than continuation of services
• Need to broaden concept of sustainability
• Long term sustainability requires an expanded view of sustainability planning
Sustainability

vs.

Sustained Impact
Sustained Impact

Long-term effects that may or may not be dependent on the continuation of a program.
Sustained Impact

New Ways of Serving
• Culture changes
• Relationships
• Practice standards

Policy, Systems, Environment change

Public awareness, perceptions, and behaviors

Capacity Created
• Training
• Assets purchased or created
POSITIONING vs.
FUNDRAISING
Fundraising

• Predominate thought that sustainability is just a matter of finding the money

• Organizations chase grants and morph to fit the opportunity

• Ultimately, grants run dry
Positioning

• Understand why or why not organizations sustain
  — There are dynamics that influence sustainability
  — Organizations must understand these dynamics in order to position themselves for sustainability

Are you an organization that people want to support?
GHPC Sustainability Framework

• A framework for:
  — Positioning organizations and programs for sustainability
  — Identifying resources for sustainability
GHPC Sustainability Framework

Positioning for Sustainability

- Strategic Vision
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Relevance & Practicality
- Evaluation/Return on Investment
- Communication
- Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Capacity

Positioning for Sustainability
GHPC Sustainability Framework

- Funding strategies

- Indirect funding
  - Events
  - Grants

- Earned income
  - Contribution/sponsorships

- Government budgets
Applying the Framework

**Strategy**
The Way You Think

**Capacity**
The Actions You Take

**Sustainability**
The Results You Get
QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?