

Planning for Sustainability: Framework and Process

Endowment for Health
2009 Program Year Kickoff
October 6, 2008

[Victoria Wegener](#), The Finance Project



About The Finance Project

- The Finance Project is a specialized non-profit policy research and technical assistance organization for public and private sector leaders nationwide
- Mission: To support decision making that produces and sustains good results for children, families and communities



Our Work

- Technical assistance on financing and sustainability issues
- Capacity-building through Sustainability Training Institute
 - Training for facilitators and users
 - Online learning network and Help Desk
- Policy tools and materials
 - Funding Guides
 - Strategy Briefs



What is Sustainability Planning?

- The process of sitting down to develop *specific strategies* and an *action plan* to help ensure the long-term sustainability of an initiative
- Includes considering a full range of resources and competencies – financial, political, administrative, managerial– needed to meet long-term goals



Why is Planning for Sustainability Important?

- Many funding sources supporting initiatives serving children and families are short-term in nature
- We operate in a rapidly changing environment (political, economic, and demographic changes)
- **We can't afford to lose quality programs and important innovations**



Why Do Sustainability Planning?

- To clarify where you are and where you want to go
- To develop strategies for long-term success
- To provide benchmarks to measure progress
- To demonstrate to partners and other stakeholders the value of your work



Key Elements of Sustainability

1. Vision
2. Results orientation
3. Strategic financing orientation
4. Adaptability to changing conditions
5. Broad base of community support
6. Key champions
7. Strong internal systems
8. Sustainability plan



Vision

- Know what you want to sustain
- Know what you mean by sustainability
 - Scope of activities
 - Scale of operation
 - Timeline
- Know how your initiative fits within the larger community



Results Orientation

- **Define success, measure progress over time & share your results**
 - Adopt a results framework
 - Use data to “prove” and “improve”
 - Communicate your results to stakeholders and funders
 - Utilize national data to inform and persuade



Strategic Financing Orientation

- **What resources do you need to support your work?**
 - What are the expected fiscal needs?
 - Make the best use of existing resources (funding and in-kind)
 - Maximize available sources of revenue
 - Create greater flexibility in categorical funding
 - Create public-private partnerships
 - Explore new state and local revenue sources



Adaptability to Changing Conditions

How do you respond to changes in your funding & policy environments?

- Monitor announced opportunities for funding
- Consider new ways to frame your work to interest different funders
- Identify opportunities to improve policy climate
- Participate in collaborative advocacy to encourage change
- Work to improve ability to participate in these efforts



Broad Base of Community Support

Whose support is critical for you to achieve your vision?

- Develop a plan to create a desired identity
- Nurture a community presences and support
- Encourage family involvement
- Support public education and engagement
- Build partnerships that foster collaboration rather than competition



Key Champions

Leaders who can use power & influence on your behalf

- Identify key decision makers and opinion leaders
- Develop an effective outreach plan
- Cultivate a broad base of champions
 - Elected leaders
 - Business leaders
 - Clients (youth, parents, others)
 - Peers
 - Community leaders
 - Philanthropists



Strong Internal Systems

- **Do you have the organizational capacity to accomplish your goals?**
 - Know & involve the people you need to carry out your mission: *staff, board, volunteers, etc.*
 - Develop strong *fiscal management, accounting, information & personnel systems*
 - Use those systems to review strategies, make changes as needed

Sustainability Plan

- A written plan that describes the initiative's priorities & action steps
 - Develop a comprehensive plan that takes account of short- & long-term needs
 - Identify challenges and/or obstacles
 - Identify strategies to garner needed resources & overcome challenges
 - Identify & communicate with key partners





Planning for Sustainability

- Planning to Plan
- Module I: Building a Sustainable Initiative
- Module II: Creating a Vision and Results Orientation
- Module III: Creating a Strategic Financing Plan
- Module IV: Building Organizational Capacity and Community Support
- Module V: Writing the Plan



Module I: Building a Sustainable Initiative


- Goals:
 - To introduce the sustainability framework and planning process
 - To benchmark progress by identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Tools: Sustainability Self-Assessment



Module II: Creating a Vision and Results Orientation

- Goals:
 - To clarify “What do you want to sustain?” “What do you mean by sustainability?” and How you will measure progress toward those goals?

- Tools: Logic Model



Module III: Creating a Strategic Financing Plan

- Goals
 - To identify the range of fiscal resources needed to achieve your sustainability goals and to develop strategies to access those resources

- Tools: Fiscal Worksheets

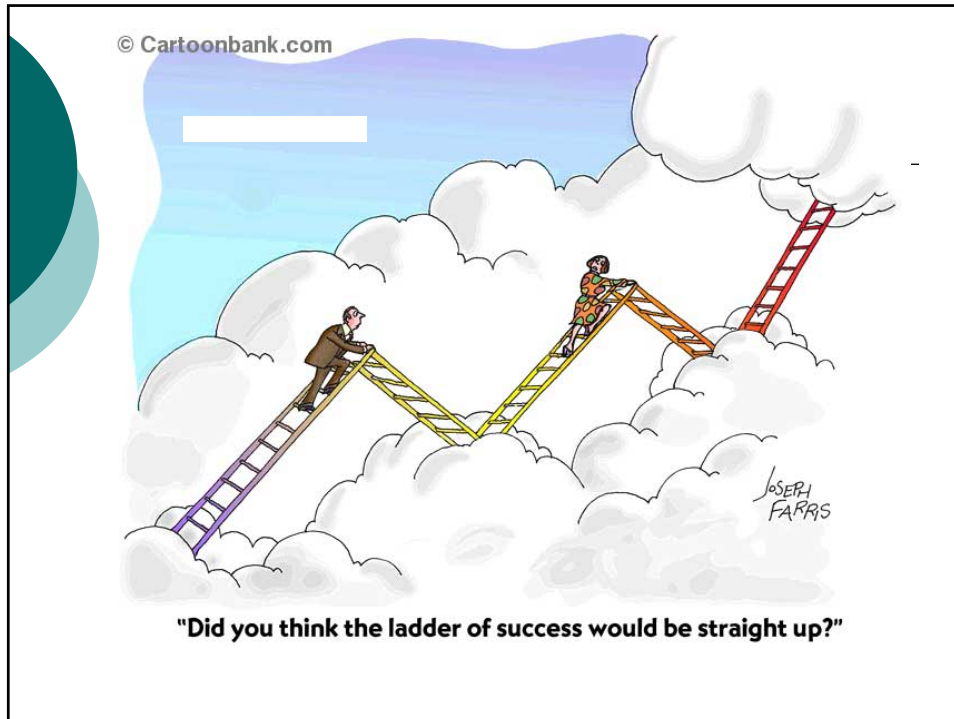
Module IV: Building Organizational Capacity and Community Support

- Goals:
 - To identify resources and design strategies related to:
 - Adaptability to changing conditions
 - Community support
 - Key champions
 - Strong internal systems
- Tools: Environmental Scan, Assessment Summary, Design Worksheets

Module V: Writing the Plan



- Goals:
 - To assist in constructing a written sustainability plan
- Tools: Sample formats, Workplan worksheets



Sustainability Planning: Success Factors



- Start early!
- Determine available resources
- Involve diverse group of stakeholders
 - Big/creative thinkers
 - Decision makers
 - Key partners
 - Users of services
- Integrate into management routine



Self-Assessment Tool

- Diagnostic tool to help you:
 - assess progress
 - identify strengths and weaknesses
 - determine where to target scarce resources
- Organized by elements; rank your progress toward a desired state
- First step in developing a sustainability plan



Completing the Self-Assessment

- Define “initiative” and “initiative’s leaders”
- Create a parking lot
- Options for managing discussion
 - Read each task together – poll on rank and discuss
 - Participants rank individually – then poll and discuss
 - Participants rank individually – then poll and only discuss items with wide variation



Facilitation Tips

- Remind them that this is not a critique – “embrace the one”
- The goal is not consensus – allow for diversity of opinion
- Make use of a parking lot
- Change techniques if the process gets bogged down