

Evaluation of East5ide Unified | Unido's Collaborative Process (Year 1)

Introduction

Collaborative partnerships including alliances among community stakeholders and organizations from multiple sectors working together to improve conditions that promote and sustain community health are becoming an increasingly prominent strategy for addressing community health needs (Feinberg et al. 2004; Berkowitz 2001; Roussos and Fawcett 2000).

East5ide Unified | Unido (EU) implements collaborative partnerships as a key strategy for achieving its goals. EU holds itself to a high collaborative standard and seeks to go beyond traditional coordination of partners and aims to create a shared vision and joint strategies by focusing on implementing processes that enhances key 6 elements of collaboration.

1. Inclusivity: The network does not exclude participation on the basis of organizational membership, access to resources, or political affiliation.
2. Equality: All members of the network have an opportunity to act as leaders, to forward ideas, and to issue objections.
3. Trust: The network promotes trust.
4. Authenticity: The network has the requisite authority to not only formulate strategic plans but has the power to implement their vision.
5. Transparency: All members of the network have access to the information used to make decisions, know who has influence and can point to the status of any proposal.
6. Focus: The efforts of the network are directed towards the goal set by the collaborative and not on simply keeping the project going.
7. Co-creation: The members of the network participate in decision making and can revise decisions as needed, and if they feel the process is off-track, can call for a redesign.

To determine if EU's process successfully contributes to key elements of collaborative work within the 80205 community the following analysis to answer three evaluation questions was conducted in Spring 2019.

Evaluation Question

1. To what extent is EU's process contributing to key elements of successful collaboration?
2. What EU processes contribute to key elements of successful collaboration?
3. What opportunities are there for EU to enhance its collaborative process?

Method

EU stakeholders were asked to complete an online survey consisting primarily of Drs. Carl Larson and Darrin Hicks' Process Quality Rating Scale and their Working Together index of collaboration. The surveys assessed the quality of EU's collaborative process.

The analysis of the survey focused on descriptive statistics. As well as highlighted the items with the highest scores, lowest scores and the most variability.

Results from the survey were shared at an EastSide Unified|Unido strategic planning meeting in April. Fourteen members of EastSide Unified|Unido gathered for a full day strategic planning session. During the session the team took a deep dive into the collaborative processes implemented by EastSide Unified|Unido. Data placemats were created (see figure 1) and small groups were asked to reflect on how the results resonate with EU's process and how the results could inform future planning guided by the following questions:

1. There is more variability in the items in the top right quadrant. What does that mean to you? Is it important? What should we do with this information?
2. Looking at the highest scored items: what are your initial reactions? What is EU doing to that is contributing to these scores? What should we continue?
3. Looking at the lowest scored items, what are your initial reactions? What items or themes are the most important to work on as a group? What should we do?

A facilitated conversation with the whole group identified activities, routines and processes that contributed to strong collaboration as well as areas of potential improvement.

Both the results of the survey analysis and the group reflections and next steps are described in the results and discussion sections below.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Sample Characteristics

The project management team identified 32 individuals consistently involved in EU work through meetings, events or community activities. Of the 32 individuals invited to participated, 23 completed the survey. All work groups were represented in the survey, 40% of respondents identified as community members, and 40% indicated that they represented a community organization in the neighborhood.

Members of all action teams and the council participated in the survey.

EU Work Groups	Participants	Community Member	Community Organization
Council Member	9	3	3
Movement Maker	3	1	2
Eval and Learning	4	1	1
Anchor Institution	7	1	1
No Affiliation	--	3	2

*All Work Groups include individuals who represent community organizations and/or community members.

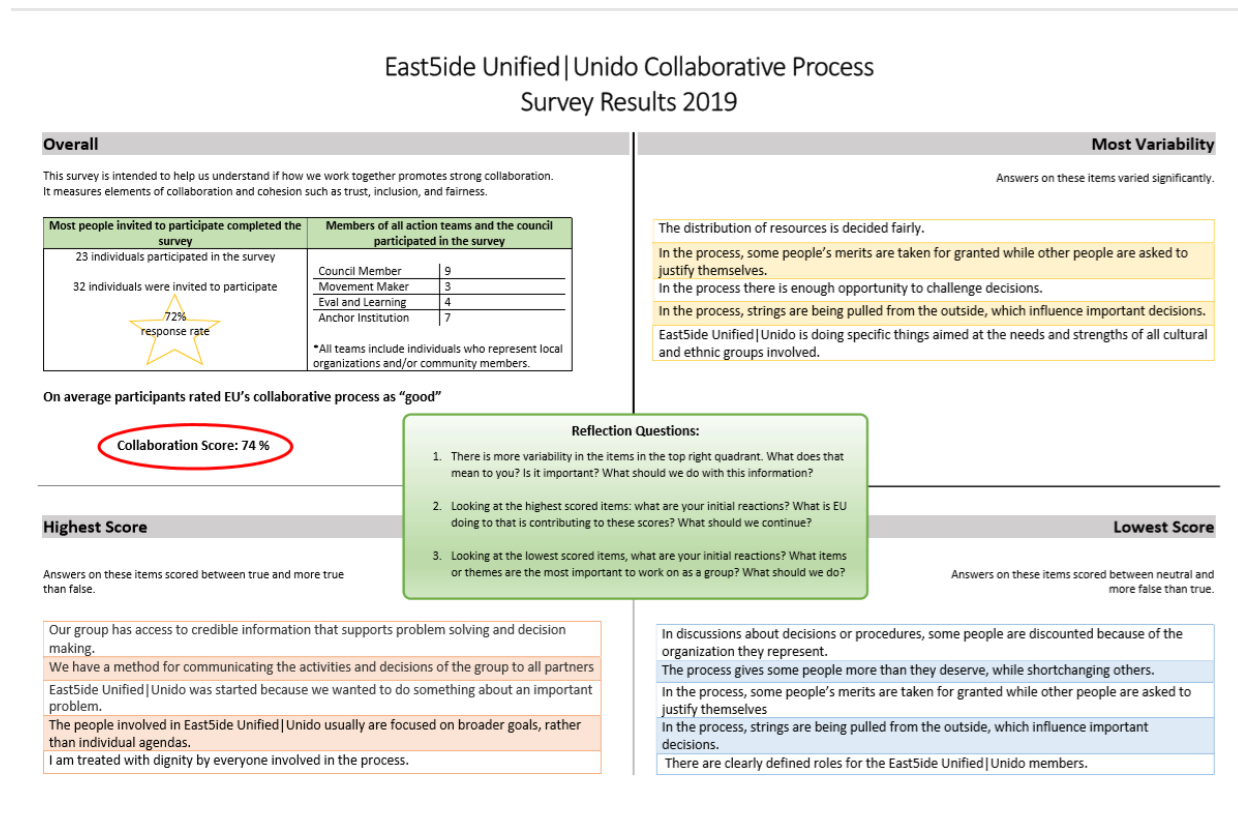
Survey Results

The evaluation team reviewed the means, range and std of items in the survey as a collective and individually. The means of both surveys resulted in a combined score for collaboration of 74 out of 100, where 100 is the highest score possible on the survey. Separately process quality results scored 68 and working together scored 80. The subject matter difference between the two surveys was minimal with

the working together survey focusing on motivation and interagency collaboration, and the Process Quality Scale highlighting perceived fairness and authenticity of the collaborative process (Hick et al. 2008).

Diving deeper into the surveys the team identified the outliers in each survey, presented below. Ultimately, the team decided to present the 5 lowest rated items, the 5 highest rated items and the 5 items with the most variability to the participants for discussion and interpretation (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Data Placemat.



Process Quality Survey Results

	Mean (out of 5)	STD
Average:	3.37	0.8

The lowest 20% of scores includes items rated within "disagree (2)".

Question	Mean	STD
13. In discussions about decisions or procedures, some people are discounted because of the organization they represent.	2.4	0.93
5. The process gives some people more than they deserve, while shortchanging others.	2.5	0.86
8. In the process, some people's merits are taken for granted while other people are asked to justify themselves	2.71	1.0

9. In the process, strings are being pulled from the outside, which influence important decisions.	2.9	1.14
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The highest 20% of scores includes items rated as “Neutral (3)” and “Agree (4)”.

Question	Mean	STD
19. I can influence the decisions made	3.7	0.83
6. The process responds fairly to the needs of its members	3.8	0.69
1. The people involved in East5ide Unified Unido usually are focused on broader goals, rather than individual agendas.	3.9	0.59
17. I am treated with dignity by everyone involved in the process.	4.3	0.79

Items with the most variability are as followed:

Question	Mean	STD
10. The distribution of resources is decided fairly	3.1	0.97
8. In the process, some people’s merits are taken for granted while other people are asked to justify themselves	2.7	1.00
12. In the process there is enough opportunity to challenge decisions.	3.5	1.10
9. In the process, strings are being pulled from the outside, which influence important decisions.	2.9	1.14

Working Together Survey Results

	Mean (out of 4)	STD
Average	3.264033	0.738909

The lowest 20% of scores includes items rated within “More False Than True (2)” and “More True Than False (3)”.

Question	Mean	STD
10. There are clearly defined roles for the East5ide Unified Unido members.	2.7	0.58
23. East5ide Uified Unido has a clear way to monitor progress towards outcomes.	2.9	0.76
15. East5ide Unified Unido members are willing to devote whatever effort is necessary to achieve the goals.	3	0.65
16. Partners are willing to devote the necessary resources (e.g., staff, time, funding, supplies) toward achieving sustainability goals.	3	0.77
21. The time and effort of the collaboration are directed at obtaining the goals rather than keeping the collaboration in "business".	3	0.91

The highest 20% of scores includes items rated within “More True than False (3)”

Question	Mean	STD
2. Our group's top priority is to have a concrete impact on the real problem.	3.6	0.68
5. Our group has access to credible information that supports problem solving and decision making.	3.6	0.50
9. We have a method for communicating the activities and decisions of the group to all partners	3.6	0.50
7. We have agreed to work together on this issue.	3.7	0.67
1. East5ide Unified Unido was started because we wanted to do something about an important problem.	3.8	0.50

Items with the most variability are as followed:

Question	Mean	STD
21. The time and effort of the collaboration are directed at obtaining the goals rather than keeping the collaboration in "business".	3	0.91
26. We are currently planning for the sustainability of East5ide Unified Unido beyond the period of grant funding.	3.1	0.93
6. We have agreed on what decisions will be made by the group.	3.2	0.94
4. Our membership is not dominated by any one group or sector.	3.1	0.94
27. East5ide Unified Unido is doing specific things aimed at the needs and strengths of all cultural and ethnic groups involved.	3.2	0.97

Discussion

High-level reflections:

- It is important to understanding how current processes can support buy-in and build a more inclusive and constructive environment. Folks need the freedom to be engaged in way they want to be engaged while receiving the recognition and feedback that makes them feel valued.
- Transparency and communication are important and foster participation. Two-way communication opportunities enhance buy-in and allow folks the opportunity to continue to provide voice, reflections, learning
- As a group we are very ambition and expect a lot from our group with regards to inclusivity, collaboration, equality etc. It will be interesting to see how the scores change as we continue to talk about these things.
- Naturally our process shifts between "action" and "process" we recognize that each member has different needs and interests – it's a tension but a necessary balance that changes how members of the team engage.
- The results are positive, and 70% participation seems high, but should we expect everyone to respond to the survey or participate in all our activities. As a moving entity, we should be on same page and participation level.

Reflections based on themes:

- **Focus:**
 - Members of EastSide Unified|Unido believe in the mission.
 - We don't really have formal group agreements because EastSide Unified|Unido is very organic and that could be confusing for new folks.
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Moving forward EastSide Unified|Unido should continue routines and activities that keep mission front and center, so we continue to know why we are here.
 - It may be helpful to explicitly state our purpose and how we work together each time we come together to continue to focus current members and inform new members.

- **Inclusion**
 - We are continuously working towards changing the power dynamics between residents and anchor institutions. However, our membership's lack of monolingual Spanish speakers indicates that we do not have full representation from the neighborhood.
 - Sometimes when someone new comes to join our efforts. We may discount them if they aren't in 80205 area and that can be a missed opportunity to create partnership and growth.
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Moving forward EastSide Unified|Unido should continue to have conversations about power dynamics and test our assumptions about how we make decisions and create activities.
 - We should be more intentional about welcoming new individuals, groups, and organizations. We need to ensure a welcoming nature filters through and across action teams, community council, etc.

- **Transparency:**
 - EastSide Unified|Unido members have a good process for keep others updated on progress. However, there is more opportunity to explore transparent and inclusive processes around management activities such as the budget and making decision about deploying resources.
 - **Next Steps:**
 - Take steps to clarifying budget and how money is used, who moves it, how can members of EastSide Unified|Unido can manipulate it. Perhaps opportunities to use more pictorial version of describing budget and avoid spreadsheets.

- **Co-creation:**
 - EastSide Unified|Unido operates with a flat structure and does not have a hierarchical model. This provides the space necessary for folks who want to take it to share their voice, step into leadership roles and to participate in activities. However, individuals who are not as forth coming may feel they are not being invited into the co-creation space.

- Clarity of roles between members is somewhat ambiguous. In the flat structure there is not a designated leader or decision maker. This can cause some confusion about roles and responsibilities. It was stated that there is a feeling of if it is everyone's job it's no one's job and if it's no one job's it's staff's job: laying a lot of planning and decision-making burden on program staff and Civic Canopy.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Focus on clarifying roles so members of East5ide Unified|Unido can confidently articulate: 1) what the group's ask is of me and 2) what my commitment is to EU. Hopefully this will support individuals participate more fully and provide a foundation for individuals to participate in planning and decision making more fully.
 - Add routine check-ins during conversations and meetings to create space to invite all members into the reflect, conversation and decision making.
- **Equal:**
 - Next Steps:
 - Begin a routine of introductions that do not include titles or affiliations. Instead, we will introduce ourselves by our name and the gift(s) we are bringing to this work.


Conclusion

East5ide Unified|Unido is highly committed to creating an inclusive, cohesive and collaborative space for members to fully engage and participate towards a common goal of a healthy and connected 80205 for families and children. The evaluation activity created space to intentionally reflect on the way we work together and take a critical look at how we "walk our talk". Overall, results from the survey were positive and validated that East5ide Unified|Unido has a good collaborative process. Diving deeper into the outliers within the survey results helped the team identify our strengths and areas for improvement in order to continue to create a deeper collaborative process. Several practical next steps were highlighted during the group discussion. It is recommended that East5ide Unified|Unido use this evaluation activity or a variation to review their process on an annual basis.

EastSide Unified| Unido Collaborative Process Survey Results 2019

Overall

This survey is intended to help us understand if how we work together promotes strong collaboration. It measures elements of collaboration and cohesion such as trust, inclusion, and fairness.

Most people invited to participate completed the survey	Members of all action teams and the council participated in the survey
23 individuals participated in the survey	Council Member 9
32 individuals were invited to participate	Movement Maker 3
	Eval and Learning 4
	Anchor Institution 7
 72% response rate	*All teams include individuals who represent local organizations and/or community members.

Most Variability

Answers on these items varied significantly.

- The distribution of resources is decided fairly.
- In the process, some people's merits are taken for granted while other people are asked to justify themselves.
- In the process there is enough opportunity to challenge decisions.
- In the process, strings are being pulled from the outside, which influence important decisions.
- EastSide Unified| Unido is doing specific things aimed at the needs and strengths of all cultural and ethnic groups involved.

On average participants rated EU's collaborative process as "good"

Collaboration Score: 74 %

Highest Score

Answers on these items scored between true and more true than false.

- Reflection Questions:**
1. There is more variability in the items in the top right quadrant. What does that mean to you? Is it important? What should we do with this information?
 2. Looking at the highest scored items: what are your initial reactions? What is EU doing to that is contributing to these scores? What should we continue?
 3. Looking at the lowest scored items, what are your initial reactions? What items or themes are the most important to work on as a group? What should we do?

Lowest Score

Answers on these items scored between neutral and more false than true.

- Our group has access to credible information that supports problem solving and decision making.
- We have a method for communicating the activities and decisions of the group to all partners
- EastSide Unified| Unido was started because we wanted to do something about an important problem.
- The people involved in EastSide Unified| Unido usually are focused on broader goals, rather than individual agendas.
- I am treated with dignity by everyone involved in the process.

- In discussions about decisions or procedures, some people are discounted because of the organization they represent.
- The process gives some people more than they deserve, while shortchanging others.
- In the process, some people's merits are taken for granted while other people are asked to justify themselves
- In the process, strings are being pulled from the outside, which influence important decisions.
- There are clearly defined roles for the EastSide Unified| Unido members.