



Challenges of collaboration between partners concerned with the well-being and safety of neglected children

Sarah Dufour

Danielle Lessard

University of Montreal

Louise Lemay

University of Sherbrooke

Quebec (CANADA)



AIDES: WHAT IS IT?

- **AIDES:** Action intersectorielle pour le développement des enfants et leur sécurité.
(Intersectorial action for the development and safety of children)
- An innovative intervention practice (NOT a turn-key program)
 - systematic approach for those concerned with the child's situation;
 - practical tools to discuss, exchange, and share with the parents, child, and partners.
- **Aim:** coherent structuring of the actions of various sectors around the needs of the child
 - taking into account the perspective of the child and parents;
 - supporting their participation in analysing and responding to these needs.



APPROACH AND TOOLS

- Use of a participatory and collaborative approach;
- Use of an ecosystemic analytical framework to analyse together the developmental needs of the child;
- Share information using the appropriate tools depending on the complexity of the child's needs;
- Involvement of the partners concerned in analysing and planning a concerted action plan;
- Evaluation of achievement of expected results, and if required, revision of the service plan.



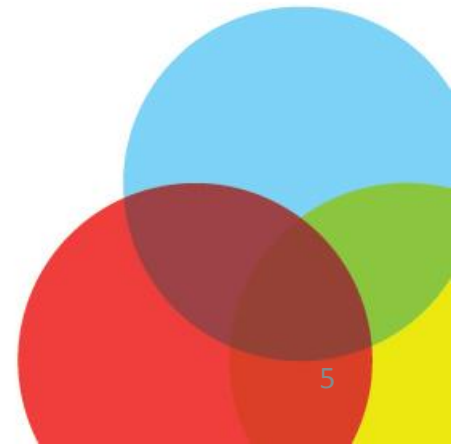
STEPS FOR PLANNING, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE APPROACH WITHIN A REGION

- 2-3 information sessions in interested regions;
- Written commitment by partners;
- Formation of a local coordinating committee in each region to manage the project;
- Selection of a committee representative to liaise with the research team.



ROLE OF THE LOCAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

- Establish links between the research team and partners involved in the project;
- Ensure the planning and monitoring of activities related to the project's implementation and evaluation.



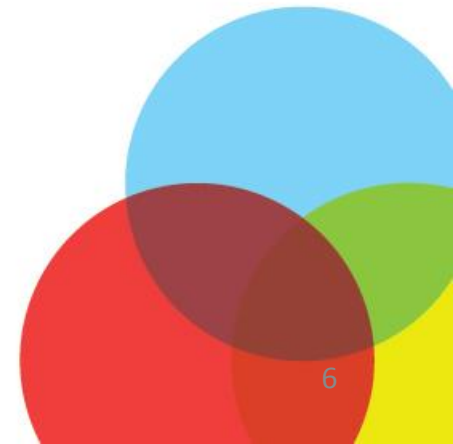


LARGER EVALUATION

Purpose: Better understand the challenges related to intersectoral partnership and its effects on meeting the needs of children.

Case studies:

- 6 regions
- 24 families





ACTUAL PRESENTATION

Purpose: Better understand the challenges related to intersectoral partnership and its effects on meeting the needs of children.

Case studies:

- 6 regions
- 24 families

What elements contributed to inter-organisational collaboration within the initiative and what elements hindered it?



METHOD

- 1 focus group per coordinating committee (n = 6 regions);
- At the very beginning of the implementation;
- 44/59 members in the 6 committees participated;
- Topics discussed:
 - ✓ History of partnerships in the region prior to AIDES
 - ✓ Conditions for effective implementation of AIDES
 - ✓ Actions to be implemented.
- Transcribed verbatim;
- Qualitative content analysis, summary per region, comparison of summaries.



COMMITTEE PROFILES

SIMILARITIES

- Diversity of representatives of member organisations;
- More members from the institutional network than from the community;
- Project promoters and committee members all from the institutional network;
- Presence of decision-making members.

DIFFERENCES



COMMITTEE PROFILES

SIMILARITIES

- Diversity of representatives of member organisations;
- More members from the institutional network than from the community;
- Project promoters and committee members all from the institutional network;
- Presence of decision-making members.

DIFFERENCES

Structural integration of AIDES

- Committees already formed (n = 3 committees);
- Ad hoc committees (n = 3);

Characteristics of committee members

- Only managers (n = 4);
- Managers and practitioners who applied AIDES (n = 2);
- Presence of a member whose mandate was to support partnerships in the region (n = 2);
- Members knew each other (vs. little or not at all);

Relevant prior experience

- Experience in the AIDES project (n = 3);
- Experience in monitoring innovations and collaborating with researchers (n=1).



OBSERVATIONS

SIMILARITIES

Prior experience with partnerships

- Many partnerships with diverse stakeholders already active in the region;

Recognition of the role of parents

- Diverse views as to the relevance of having parents involved (enthusiasm, ambivalence, scepticism);

Mobilization of new partners

- Other stakeholders should be involved;
- Ambivalence as to the timing of their involvement;

Joint project to support AIDES

- ***Project view:*** AIDES seen as a project with predetermined components (especially research);
- ***Current conditions for effective partnership:*** Too early to comment on the relationships of power and the co-construction of the joint project.

DIFFERENCES



OBSERVATIONS

SIMILARITIES

Prior experience with partnerships

- Many partnerships with diverse stakeholders already active in the region;

Recognition of the role of parents

- Diverse views as to the relevance of having parents involved (enthusiasm, ambivalence, scepticism);

Mobilization of new partners

- Other stakeholders should be involved;
- Ambivalence as to the timing of their involvement;

Joint project to support AIDES

- **Project view:** AIDES seen as a project with predetermined components (especially research);
- **Current conditions for effective partnership:** Too early to comment on the relationships of power and the co-construction of the joint project.

DIFFERENCES

Project view

- Good understanding of AIDES and added value (or: mixed knowledge)

Current conditions for effective partnership

- Imbalance in the relationship of power to the disadvantage of community groups (or: not addressed)
- Consideration of all views expressed (or: not addressed)



DISCUSSION

AIDES as a social innovation

Steps:

1. Exploration of needs and options
2. Decision to introduce an innovation
3. Site preparation and program set-up
4. Initial implementation
5. Full operation
6. Sustainability



(Aarons et al., 2011; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Rogers, 2003)



TASKS

SET-UP STAGE AND INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

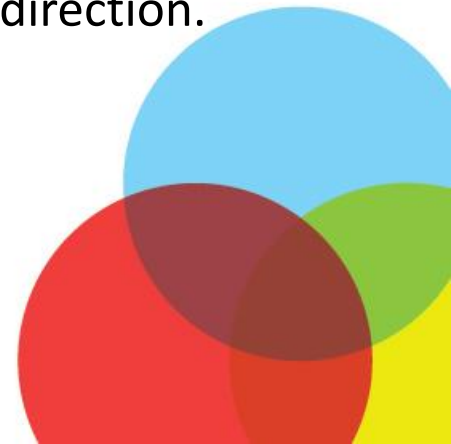
1- Active preparation of the implementation

- Structure to put in place
- Human resources (e.g., realign current staff or hire)

2- Establish a quality partnership

- **Results in:** the ability to maintain and extend the network of stakeholders involved in the project;
- **Anchored in the community:** relevance of the project in the eyes of the stakeholders, and appropriateness to the context and problems identified;
- **Efficient:** potential to improve situations in the desired direction.

(Aarons, 2011; Bilodeau, 2010; Fixsen et al., 2005)





Committees concerned with the mobilization of stakeholders

1- **Effective mobilization of a variety of stakeholders.**

An effective partnership covers all perspectives on the situation in order to broaden the zone of convergence between the stakeholders.

2- **Need to integrate other strategic and critical stakeholders.**

All stakeholders without whom an action cannot be completed and who are necessary for encouraging the participation of other essential stakeholders must be mobilized.

3- **Discussions about the place given to other stakeholders and when to recruit them.**

In a quality partnership, stakeholders are mobilized based on strategic choices, not only operational aspects.

(Bilodeau, 2010)



Committee characteristics that seem to have facilitated the implementation:

- Members knew each other and had already worked together (pre-existing relationships);
- Ability to make decisions because of their status as managers;
- Members had prior experience with AIDES, so the relevance of the project was already understood;
- Prior experience of uniting around a common project, and for some, collaborating with researchers.



CLOSING REMARKS

Almost two years later, the committees:

- Will be met again this fall (T2; focus groups; same topics)
- Have had regular contact with the research team
- Face challenges and opportunities that vary depending on the region and implementation phase.

Some questions emerge:

Is it possible that the conditions favourable to implementation and partnership are necessary but insufficient to support the implementation of innovations such as AIDES?

What are the winning conditions to meet the challenges of intersectoral partnership and its impact on responding to the needs of children?