



Georgia Rural Hospital Association

Georgia Health Policy Center
September 21, 2010





Sustainability

- Long been an issue for non-profits and grant funded programs
- Particularly challenging in rural areas



GHPC Focus

- Technical Assistance to more than 600 rural communities that have received grants from Office of Rural Health Policy
- Literature review
- Assessment of 100 grantees funded in 2000, 2002, 2004



Sustainability Assessment

- Purposes:
 - Describe the extent to which ORHP-funded community-based demonstration programs have been sustained post-funding
 - Identify recurrent patterns that influence likelihood of sustainability

Sustainability Assessment

- Summary of conclusion:
 - No discrete set of best practices.
 - Each situation has unique context.
Transferability of practices may be limited.
 - There are dynamics, though, that impact sustainability.



Findings and Insights

1. Broadening the Concept of Sustainability
2. Dynamics that Influence Sustainability
3. Archetypes

Framing the Sustainability Assessment

- Broadening the concept of sustainability
 - More than just *whether or not* the grant-funded activities and collaboratives have been sustained - such an assessment understates grantees' long-term impact and misses the opportunity to improve outcomes
 - We must look in a more comprehensive way
 - What has been sustained...for how long?
 - How it has been sustained?
 - Why it has been sustained (or not)?

What has been sustained?

Rural Health
Networks –
formally,
informally

Outreach
Consortia –
formally,
informally

Activities and
services

What has been sustained?

And:

Community
or population
benefits

Assets
created or
purchased

Community and Population Benefits Sustained



- Culture changes
 - Relationships, foundation for working together, trust, resolved conflict
- Practice standards
- Policy
- Public awareness and perceptions
- Capacity

Assets Purchased or Created



- Equipment
- Curricula
- HIT capacity

How Have Activities Been Sustained?



- Absorbed by partners
- Other grants
- In-kind
- Third party reimbursement
- Client fees
- Taken over by newly-formed FQHC

Insights from the Sustainability Assessment



- Sustainability requires a broader definition
 - What gets sustained?
 - How is it sustained?
- For this assessment to be applicable to other rural communities and funders, it must also explain the dynamics that influence sustainability
 - Why (or not) is it sustained?

Dynamics Influencing Grantee Sustainability



- No set of best practices or criteria that determine level of sustainability success
 - Context specific
 - Inter-relatedness of factors
- There are, however, dynamics that seem to influence sustainability
 - Useful in predicting success
 - Can impact some factors to favorably, or unfavorably, change dynamics

Influencing Dynamics

WHO

WHAT

WHY

HOW

WHERE

WHEN

WHO Dynamic

- Primarily about leadership
 - Ability to engage the “right” people
 - Strategic
 - Influential
 - Create shared ownership and commitment
 - Resolve conflict

WHO Dynamic

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

WHAT Dynamic

- Related to the substance of the intervention
 - Designed program demonstrates:
 - Relevance
 - Practicality
 - Value
 - Program is aligned to community context

WHAT Dynamic

Favorable Characteristics	Unfavorable Characteristics
Solution based on clear assessment of community needs	Solution only addresses symptoms and not root causes
Partners have leverage to address the problem long-term	Solution approach does not match partner and provider culture
Stakeholders benefit directly (Network)	Legal barriers – real or perceived – halt progress
Program or service has a value that others would be willing to reimburse and/or purchase	Stakeholders and potential partners do not perceive recognizable value of solution
The solution evolves and adapts as the environment changes and knowledge is acquired	Solution attempts to solve too many issues with too many small, unrelated efforts

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

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

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

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



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

Archetypes and Dynamics as “Drivers”

Archetypes	WHO: Leadership	WHAT: Program Practicality, Relevance and Value	HOW: Strategy, Capacity and Communication	WHY: Strategic Vision and Motivation	WHERE: Place and Culture	WHEN: Timing and Process
Start-up Story		+	+			
Strategic System Changer	+	+	+	+	+	+
One Hit Wonder	+	+	+	+		
Run of the Mill Story						
Do-er vs. O.D-er				-		
Fix that Does Not Fit		-			-	-
Tinkerers and Short- term Thinkers		-		-		
False Start	-	-	-	-	-	-

Stories Provide Windows of Understanding



- 102 grantees interviewed
- Each told a story
 - Insights
 - Examples
 - Reality



Grantee Stories

1. Groups of 2-3 people in each
2. Read the story
3. Reflect individually
 - What was sustained? Why?
4. Discuss in small group
5. Prepare to share with large group

Community Stories

- Sustainability cannot be attributed to any one factor or type of intervention.
- While all communities are unique, there are, however, some basic patterns that emerge from the stories.
 - Archetypes are a way to illustrate these patterns

Sustainability – 8 Archetypes

Start Up Story

Strategic System Changer

One Hit Wonder

Do-er vs. O.D.-er

Fix That Does not Fit

Tinkerers and Short Term Thinkers

False Start

Run of the Mill

Start-Up

- Program leaders are intentional and strategic
- Grants used to seed a new program or service built on a pre-existing coalition or network
- Assumptions exist at beginning about how the new project or service will be sustained
- Generally, business model used to sustain through income generation

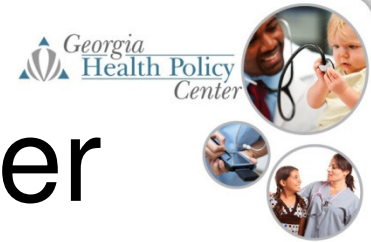
Outreach grantee: Non-profit organization in the Mountain West

Purpose: Provide training for EMT Medical Directors

Approach: Outreach grant funded the development of a web-based curriculum

Sustainability: Sustained through fees charged for course; have added new modules

Consortium: Disbanded after grant period



Strategic System Changer

- Leaders are systems-thinkers; they see the relationship of many components and know the “levers” of highest value
- Builds a strong, diverse coalition of like-minded leaders
- Approach program with a strategic mindset
 - Aligned, adaptable, and focused on key needs and outcomes
- Sustainability of program considered



Network Development grantee: A Community Health Center in the Northeast

Purpose: formalize network for data sharing, resource sharing, program planning; members include health care and social service agencies

Approach: Network Development grant used to establish cross agency teams of care managers, standardize format for data gathering, joint training, regional needs assessment

Sustainability: all activities still in place, expanded into other areas, formal agreements, in-kind, ED is volunteer, other grants

Network: 12 agencies, 12 municipalities

One Hit Wonder

- Narrowly focused program around a specific, timely issue in community.
- Typically very successful in addressing the issue and no need to sustain program.
 - Gap filler – another program is ready
 - Need is removed
- Coalition typically didn't previously exist – formed just for this program. Typically disbands when program is over.

Outreach grantee: County Fire District in the Pacific Northwest

Purpose: Establish a primary care clinic in an isolated community

Approach: Used Outreach grant to rent a space in the fire department, buy medical equipment and hire a nurse practitioner

Sustainability: Clinic still open 3 days/week and visited by mental health clinician 1 day/month; fully funded by tax payer dollars through a hospital taxing district

Consortium: Led by a group of citizens, disbanded

Do-er vs. O.D.-er

- A Network grantee acting as an Outreach
 - Vision tied more to program implementation than organizational development (OD)
- Typically a new Network
- Programs may be successful and even sustained, but network typically not successful in strategic goals and not sustained

Network Development grantee: School District in a Plains State

Purpose: Implement a prevention- focused, school-based identification referral system for access to health care

Approach: Network Development grant used to conduct assessment and create a resource library

Sustainability: Data from needs assessment used to access funding for mental health, FQHC, and preschool

Network: Formed for grant with 22 partners, was never formalized, served more as advisory board. Partners more interested in providing services than in becoming a network. Did not sustain beyond grant period

Fix that Does Not Fit

- Mismatch between intervention and context/root cause of the issue
 - Trying to tackle big issues with systemic problems
 - Context/environment can be insurmountable barriers
- Coalition partners do not have leverage to affect needed change
- Right idea at the wrong time or with the wrong partners
- Program typically successful and partners committed during grant period, but program not sustainable

Outreach grantee: An AHEC in the Pacific Northwest

Purpose: Provide access to primary care for poor, uninsured residents

Approach: Grant used to reimburse local physicians for treating uninsured (1/3 paid by grant, 1/3 paid by patient, 1/3 absorbed by physician)

Sustainability: Program died when grant funds ran out; physicians would not continue without payment and no other resources secured

Consortium: AHEC, local physicians formed for grant, disbanded

Tinkerers and Short-term Thinkers



- Have a short-term, “complete-the-work-plan” orientation
- Efforts focused on previously defined outputs, often in scatter-shot approach
- Coalition may have been on paper only. Many “fizzle out” over time as partners fail to see value in program or identify with its efforts
- Lack of early planning for sustainability
 - Typically look for more grants to sustain activities
 - Parts of programs may be absorbed by others

Outreach grantee: School District in the Midwest

Purpose: Provide services to children and families who need basic medical, dental and vision care

Approach: Grant funded dental care, suicide prevention and community education, traumatic head and neck injury program, school based counseling, health screenings, domestic violence prevention education for 8th and 10th graders, inhaler clinic for middle school students

Sustainability: A domestic violence coalition still provides community education; a dental hygienist tries to find grants for some dental services for children; school system did not sustain any of the other activities and could not support nurse and two coordinators hired with grant funds

Consortium: School system and several health and social service agencies; formed for grant and disbanded

False Start

- Coalition not aligned to common vision or purpose
- Partners may have conflicting agendas
- Lacks leadership and commitment to start or complete implementation of program – nothing happens
- Original plan typically not feasible
- Little, if anything, sustained

Network Development grantee: Mental Health Agency in Mid-Atlantic

Purpose: Develop a tele-network for the region's mental health providers

Approach: Grant was to be used to form a network of mental health and primary care providers, public health department, and the hospital

Sustainability: Partners could not agree on how to work together. No tele-mental health services were provided during the grant period

Consortium: Formed for grant and disbanded

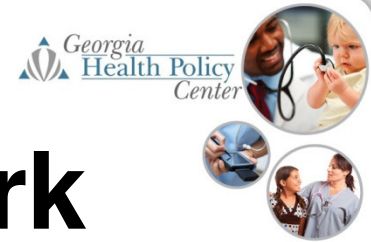
Run of the Mill

- They do what they proposed to do... and nothing more, for better or worse
 - Not trying to change the world, project is limited in scope
- Some sustain, some don't
 - Nothing remarkable that would help predict success or failure

Archetypes and Dynamics as “Drivers”

Archetypes	WHO: Leadership	WHAT: Program Practicality, Relevance and Value	HOW: Strategy, Capacity and Communication	WHY: Strategic Vision and Motivation	WHERE: Place and Culture	WHEN: Timing and Process
Start-up Story		+	+			
Strategic System Changer	+	+	+	+	+	+
One Hit Wonder	+	+	+	+		
Run of the Mill Story						
Do-er vs. O.D-er				-		
Fix that Does Not Fit		-			-	-
Tinkerers and Short-term Thinkers		-		-		
False Start	-	-	-	-	-	-

GHPC



Sustainability Framework

- A framework for
 - Positioning organizations and programs for sustainability
 - Identifying resources for sustainability

The Sustainability Framework, pt 2

Strategic Vision

A clearly defined vision for what you hope to achieve

Everyone shares the vision

All activities are related to the vision

Communication

A detailed communication plan for interacting with primary and secondary customers and potential funding sources

The communication plan is used to define perceptions, leverage successes, and create awareness

The Sustainability Framework, pt 3

Evaluation

Evaluation measures include outcomes that validate the impact of the program

Return on Investment

Ability to demonstrate social, economic and health benefits to the community it serves

The Sustainability Framework, pt 4

Organizational Capacity

A proven history of success

Adequate personnel with relevant
experience to staff programs

Efficiency & Practicality

Funds are managed wisely by operating
efficiently

Programs and services are delivered in such a
manner that those being served can reasonably
participate and respond

The Sustainability Framework:

Funding diversification



Indirect Funding

- In-kind Contributions
- Volunteerism
- Institutional Support

Earned Income

- Fees charged for services provided
- Reimbursement from second party payers
- Product sales
- Consulting fees
- Membership dues

Events

- Lunches and dinners
- Golf tournaments, fun runs, etc

The Sustainability Framework:

More Funding Diversification



Contributions & Sponsorships

- Businesses
- Social and civic clubs
- Faith-based organizations
- Individuals

Grants

- Government
- Private foundations

Government Budgets

- Inclusion as line item in local, state or federal budget

Sustainability

- No agreement on what it means
- No “magic bullet”
- Continuous learning process



Thank you

For more information, contact:

Amanda Phillips Martinez

aphillipsmartinez@gsu.edu

404-413-0293

