

2012 LOS Conference Notes

14 June 2012

Workshop: Shared Space Facilities
Note taker: Bonnie Wepler

What you're hoping to get out of this session:

- Very insular – but my area of interest
- Do a lot of community impact work – community impact models – this will help get the conversation going
- Did the C3 Business Plan – learned a lot about shared spaces – working with Heartwood House and helping them to get a sustainable model
- Work in the community with Francophone leaders who work in small grass-roots organizations with very little resources – this might be helpful to maximizing those resources

Why this conference?

- Can do more together
- Observation: language, use of acronyms when we get together can be barriers to others
- Environment is changing – funding becoming more difficult – greater collaboration is becoming a funder criteria
- Heartwood House is working for sustainability – purchasing a property, working through relationships
- Under One Roof – wanted to purchase a building but they are leasing floors with intention to take over whole building – when they're ready, they can purchase. Same struggles re: identifying procedures/processes
- Broaden optics – sit down with others, chat, get other points of view. They are a very small organization. Carve out some connections, build some bridges for possibilities for collaboration
- Organization is discussing alternatives for building – discussing moving into Under One Roof

Did everyone get what they needed?

- Opened my mind
- Got something to take back to the group when they meet tomorrow night

PRESENTATION:

People think about shared spaces in a very linear way – done a lot of time looking at shared spaces – very engaging

- World of non-profits is changing drastically – as brought out by Tim Brodhead
- Space – this is what we can do with space VS collaboration – and this is what we can do with it and these are the things that we used to get out of it
- MTNC: multi tenant non-profit centres – many different models

- One end: colocation
- Other end: collaboration
- Linked – have a lot in common including cooperation
- What we have to think about is this model throughout the sector – forget about space
- “You gotta work together” is the message coming from funders
- MAP: multi-agency partnership – ways organizations could work together (UW Toronto) – to get funding you needed at least three agencies working together on an issue and they were equal partners – complete and utter failure – no one would allow the equality – everyone wanted to be the boss
- MTNCs attractive because if they are treated equally, smaller players have more of an effect in the community – need that kind of leverage (of having a larger player involved) so that you can be more effective/impactful – takes concerted effort on the larger partner to engage with smaller partners equally
- Non-profit Real Estate Problems: serious issues in the community
 - Second largest expense next to staff
 - Economic uncertainty (there used to be very secure agencies in the past, but that is no longer the case – everyone is on edge) and quick changes to economy (funding issues): instability; subject to vagaries of market (no one wants to rent to you because your sector is unstable); declining revenues
 - Location and quality: non-profits live in the worst neighbourhoods because that’s what they can afford; clients have trouble getting to the space; refer to other agencies – need to shuffle clients around – with colocation, people wouldn’t have to be shifted around (move up a floor or down the hall), don’t need transport allowances for clients)
- Programmatic Synergy
 - Cheaper, we get better location together
 - MTNCs: get people who are similarly mandated together – this works better than having a wide variety of people. Similarly mandated: serving the community better; work on programmes together (one agency does one piece, one agency does another piece); increased visibility of non-profits
- What is a MTNC? Buildings that house multiple organizations and provide healthy, efficient, quality, mission-enhancing workspace. More than just offices, these facilities can become sustainable centres for strength for communities to dream together, work together and grow together. MTNS come in all shapes and sizes. Three basic features
- Collaborative space and shared services benefit organization tenants through providing stability, affordability, mission enhancement. They strengthen individuals and diverse communities.

Shared Leadership, Community Capacity Building and Alignment (C3 Centre)

- Learned a lot through the starting and existing of it

- Collaboration is the way of the future – funders are pushing for it, governments are pushing for it, our sector is pushing for it. We all have different agendas as to why we're collaborating
- MTNCs are one of the ways that this can work
- One US city: 11 MTNCs – all non-profits are housed in them – apply to go in, subsidized by City. Each MTNC has a theme: youth, seniors – so the agencies can work together
- We are bad at collaborating – reasons for that (competition for money, staff, resources, etc.). That has to end – it's going to take a different mindset. If we don't collaborate, we won't exist in the future (although no proof of that)

C3 Centre

- An experiment in delivering capacity building service to the Ottawa community
- Our shared vision: capacity building agencies partnering, collaborating and co-locating with the purpose of collectively increasing and enhancing the connectivity of our capacities to network, address, challenges, align and support each other towards achieving our mandate
- Side vision: a green campus
- Our end goals/results: Partners increase their ability to serve and deliver on their mission; resulting in an increased affect on the community; partners in the campus share resources, offer joint programming – where possible, and reduce duplication
- Shared principles – key. When you're going to set up an MTNC, this is critical. Original list is smaller than current list – recognized that there were principles that should have been set up earlier so added. Alberta group has standard form as to what you could negotiate as you start colocating (free on the web)
 - Maintaining positive and healthy relationships among partners is central to making this work. Workplace culture: every place has it – when you're colocating you have to make concessions. Examples, different dress codes.
 - Decision making: 1 member, 1 vote, regardless of size of agency
 - Shared responsibility and accountability: this has been the biggest problem. One or two taking on more responsibility, the others don't contribute as much. Who's responsible for changing lightbulbs, buying toilet paper, cleaning out the dishwasher. Lesson learned. One takes it on by default and it becomes permanent. Small things rather than big things are the ones that will cause the most relationship problems
 - Openness to learning (this is new to all of us and requires flexibility, experimentation, and strategy for working and learning together)
- Components
 - Shared spaces: reception, boardroom, kitchen, etc – shared a co-tenant agreement
 - Shared infrastructure and services such as phones, IT, guest parking, business centre services, office supplies. Not all tenants may opt to share in all infrastructure and services mentioned. This is where the C3 fell apart – opting out of the infrastructure. Opting out should not be negotiable. Spent two years on this and haven't got to the programmes yet

- Community space: usable by the general public so that small organizations would have access to those spaces on an ongoing basis
- Shared costs on shared spaces and shared services (square foot) – not everyone does this – some MTNCs charge according to what you do, permanent vs temporary (e.g., festivals)
- Shared benefits; joint programming, planning and policy dialogue; space, equipment and technology sharing
- Shared Services Management
 - Create a separate agreement OR a non-profit to manage shared services functions of the building and provide administrative (HR, benefits, payroll, finance) services to non-profit tenants as well as other non-profit agencies in the community, to spread the cost of shared services and improve efficiencies. Would have been nice to have that staffed – staff person at beginning to do administration, doesn't have to be full-time. Lost admin staff. Affects programme staff
 - Increase bulk purchasing etc.B

Investment vs Degrees of Collaboration (flip chart – table)

- High investment, low collaboration: tech support
- High investment, high collaboration: joint programme delivery – this is where most MTNCs should be - key
- Low investment, low collaboration: parking, accounting services
- Low investment, high collaboration: translation service, receptionist

Tim's speech: Principles of New Operating System

- Cross-sectoral
- Complex problems cannot be solved by any single sector
- High investment, high collaboration contributes to this

DISCUSSION:

How the C3 Centre came into force. One had a vision, driving force. Vision was wrong: idea was pre-formed – should have been brought to the group to hammer out. Maybe not wrong – driven by day-to-day real estate considerations. Physical space was in place before developing necessary pre-conditions.

Problems with one of the partners: role conflict that needed to be sorted out before doing that. Tenant, owner, funder. Affected administration – funding lost. Administrator of site is critical. Someone to administer the centre needs to be there.

Some existing workplans that are out there are critical – go to CSI (Toronto) sites. These are helpful. Toolkits to assess right from the beginning whether you're someone who should be in an MTNC. (Edmonton Non-Profit Shared Space)

Big organization that could partners with smaller organizations. Would broaden visions and be beneficial. How do you make those connections/partnerships? Saskatchewan

model could help. Two really large organizations (UW and the Y) pursued an MTNC – talked about whether it was feasible for the city. They assigned someone on staff to be the contact person on shared facility – made connections in the community who might be interested, focus groups on the topic, got people interested in further discussions, long process (many years; process is very important – critical – start to understand culture, where they're coming from, what kind of collaboration is possible – need to build in time for this – it's a relationship). C3: met at a bar one night, moved in together. Wasn't the way to start a relationship.

Arlene's report contains a lot of process learning pieces. Written two years ago – after space had been delegated. Moving in before business plan was in place. Couldn't go back and fix issues at that point. Some decisions driven by funding opportunities (or lack of) – instead of thinking about what you really need, then going out to get the funding to get it – this was a backward process. Funding is a key element in MTNCs. Looking for sustainability and what would work best for organization – plan first and then get funding, etc. But lots of MTNCs go backwards because donors are ready to donate pieces.

Donations: building not in good condition, not in good location, not suitable for everyone.

Margie Zydeller (??) architect. She and her sister are involved in “good” in the community – MTNC ideas for building.

CSI Building #1: social enterprises, incubators, hot desks (get desk and phone, you bring in your computer – use resources, get connections), no agencies which have clients coming for services

VS

London example: agencies – similarities in services – so client can come into one building and see everyone

MTNC can look like anything – together you need to decide what you need, how it looks, etc.

The Hub: social enterprises – no offices, all hot desks and some meeting space. Good for one-person – bounce ideas, get help. Good synergy. Helps to incubate an issue until you're ready to move on to the next step. International movement.

Another model (Scotland): organizations are separate with separate services but shared personnel (admin and programme). People delivering programmes for two different organizations – part salary from one, part salary from the other. Health care MTNC. Nurse delivering service to elderly plus young moms' programme. Roundtable determining what services are necessary for children's health – educational agencies, health, homeless agencies

Lots of ownership models around the world, some don't work in Canada because of legalities. One created a new entity and each ED is a Director of the new entity. Can purchase or rent buildings. TIDES Canada owns building but has given it to organizations to run an MTNC together. Etc.

Has space and wants others to use it. Do you want to be the landlord too? No. But ineffective how it is currently. If other services can be offered, it becomes even more attractive to organizations. Watch that there are no financial limitations by government and/or funder.

City Summit. If we're going to have this discussion, we can't have it amongst these people. City needs to be involved – decision makers (including provincial and federal funders). Need to have discussion together. Working on putting together a version of what the City Summit could be. What's the summit on? Pilot project: what are the topics that people in the community are interested in talking about? Maybe a series of small summits. Citizen's Academy.

Francophone ethnic grassroots groups: want a shared space because they are doubly minoritized by being immigrants and by being Francophones (almost exclusively Francophone – they were told that you could get along in Canada with French only). They are underserved or not served or served culturally inappropriately. Problems accessing funding. Looking at social enterprise models. Discussing the financing shift. Short-term plan: put together a platform of shared services – low investment, low collaboration to lower infrastructure costs. Fantastic principles, awesome work. Long term: looking at shared space – get it out of their homes. Need to look even further as to what shared space might be – maybe more like The Hub (a drop-in space). More ad hoc could work better for people who aren't there on 9 to 5 basis. Trying to ward off: hey we met in a bar, let's move in together. Working on compatibility issues. Sometimes organizations aren't aware of what their workplace culture is. Good to have inhouse first – who are we, what is our workplace culture, are we looking to collaborate, are we a collaborative kind of organization. Some aren't in that mode. But they need to be. Yes – but a lot of energy required.

C3: over time, some of the partners definitely knew their culture, others didn't. Those who don't, don't understand that they can be disruptive to others because of their culture.

Francophone hard to access skills-building information. Had a workshop – a lot of connections made. First chance at working together – was an experience. People's working habits are idiosyncratic. 15 people. Learned a lot from working together. Not entirely fun but everyone got a lot out of it and will do things differently next time. Moving forward, a lot to be learned. Not holding the cards close – hard one to do. People are desperately afraid of idea stealing. Said you want to do this – put your heart into it. As a culture, we really need to work on this with integrity and authenticity. Not just with the head, but with the heart too – giving without fear. Being vulnerable. We're

all too intent on holding the cards close to our hearts because of competition. As long as we're competitors is that we can't collaborate.

Social enterprise participant recap: discussion there around three questions. Is there a common vision of social enterprise in Ottawa? No. Should there be? No. Organizations with different focuses. How does our thing contribute to the bigger picture?

Heartwood House: existed for 12 years – 18 charities living together in old school/community centre. Pay very low rent – because that's all they can afford. Building sold for condos. Within six months need new place. Nothing in market that was affordable. Looked at some buildings – one would work with a lot of renovations. Trying to get money through loans, donations, mortgage. In the meantime, 18 organizations having great faith that we will succeed, and helping as much as they can. Difference: they have been around for a long time, doing this, excellent ED – not starting from scratch but have to relocate. Rents keeping them going. Now they are in position of borrowing millions of dollars – they have a source of revenue coming in to pay off those loans. Easy to get money (community loans) – but really need to be aware that there is a way to pay them back. Have to look forward to the future and make plans. Too often in the sector, we are gun-shy. Feel that we are responsible for the organization. In order to collaborate, we need to take risks. This sector is not one that takes risk – but it should be. We are a big sector – we should be taking risks – look at other sectors which routinely take risks. We have to remember – we need to be a lot more innovative, thinking outside the box. Important to have people help them make this shift. Being outside of your comfort zone is one thing. Being outside of the knowledge zone is another thing. That's where consultants and others help.

C3 Learnings (on flip chart):

- Start small
- Put it in writing – have a “pre-nup”
- Be realistic – what you can afford, what you can do, what you are able to bite off
- ...
- Be clear on your financial investment
- Be prepared to take the time – all of the above has to be in place before you start talking about real estate. All discussions with all partners finished – okay, now where are we going

It's not always going to be 50-50 depending on organizations, capacity, the stuff you bring to the table. Everyone is not equipped the same, with same skills, resources, etc. Navigating through that that's respectful, equitable and workable – that's the big challenge. It's not worth doing unless you're really talking about some kind of programme synergy – that's where the energy can have a big effect on what's happening at the community level. To work on community capacity, it's looking at what you can do together through programming. We worry too much on financial benefit to individual non-profits. Look at larger issue: the large collective impact comes from the programme itself.

Heartwood House: members group which meets regularly to discuss issues. Board is made up of some members and some outsiders. A great deal of interaction – but a crisis does bring people together.

QUESTIONS:

1) Do we have a shared vision locally around shared space facilities?

No.

Depends on how you think about a shared vision.

Interesting, Ottawa has a lot of MTNCs for a population of this size. There is a movement towards shared space by a lot of players.

There's a recognition that there's something missing and MTNCs are growing – do they fill that gap? Calgary has fewer MTNCs than Ottawa. There seems to be a desire to do this – share facilities and work collaboratively.

2) What needs to be in place? Financing – purchasing buildings.

There are a number of agencies who need support before you get them to the building stage. Education, mentoring, being connected. Keeping on track, working on the steps. Encouraging and supporting to get to the place before you even consider finances. Some of the larger agencies need to be stepping up to the plate to guide smaller agencies. The stories need to be told – the successes which are already in the community. Case examples – what worked, what didn't.

Also need trust – trust in ourselves, trust in the community (writ large – not just the social services sector). The city has already funded one community space – that should be a model that they work with. Needs engagement. City offers training and support to the private sector – why wouldn't they do that for our organizations.

Getting private sector aware and involved – they have a lot to offer. They should be happy that the charities are trying to do this, to get more entrepreneurial. This sector also has a lot to teach them. Cross-sectoral involvement, education, engagement.

3) Who are the leaders?

How big does the leader have to be? The big leaders need to step up. Community leaders. But in a non-exploitive way. Need trust and respect. People with truly collaborative agendas not other agendas.

People with an interest/vision.

All the stakeholders have to be involved – to be truly collaborative.

If the mandate of Invest Ottawa became greater, that could be a building block. Are they the people to do that? How do you expand on them? But they are so business-focused – do they bring the right mix to the social sector/non-profits. Are there other options? United Way? OCBO (chamber) – it's meant to be a think tank. Hire Immigrants Ottawa? No – they are issue-specific.

Last week, there was a community consultation – held at Fun Haven. There's an example of business working with others – they rent their space cheaply to others.

People with money.

Governments. But there are so many provisos when you talk about governments. Do we want them involved with setting up MTNCs? Don't want their involvement, policies, rules, exploitation – but you do want their money.

People with space. Empty churches. In kind donations. Property managers.

Washington: Non-profit gave the building. City gave them the infrastructure (janitors, etc.).

4) Take back to the main group vis-à-vis “Leveraging our Strengths”

Preparation. Don't shack up lightly but a very viable possibility.

Need support of whole community.

This is a means to get to whatever the higher goal of the community is.

Needs checking of egos.

Sharing Space is really a good example of collective impact, leveraging our strengths.

Programmatic synergy.