**Common Roles and Tasks Associated with Building Teams**

***Adapted from Mindtools.com***

How can you select the right team for a project?

Having the right core team can make or break a project. Therefore, great care should be taken when selecting team members. It might be very useful to consider the following elements:

* Team size
* Overall team composition
* Team member selection and exclusion criteria
* Member recruitment process

Team Size

Recommended size is a team of 3-12 members. A team of 5-7 members is the best.

Small teams (3 or 4 members) work faster and tend to produce results quickly, but there is less diversity.

Teams greater than 7 or 8 members require an expert facilitator and the creation of sub teams to operate effectively. They have the potential for generating more ideas and being more diverse.

Overall Team Composition

Ensure that the team represents the stakeholders involved in the project. A well-rounded team includes a mix of members from relevant units/organizations involved in the project having a wide range of experience and skills. Consider members who:

* belong to relevant partners organizations or organizational units of the project
* have different abilities such as:
  + technical expertise and skills,
  + administrative skills (e.g. problem solving and decision making skills),
  + interpersonal and communication skills.

The Team Could Include:

* People who understand the project very well, for example, those already working in cancer control (e.g. public health specialists, HIT institutes program managers, informatics societies, professional associations, and patient groups),
* People who are technical experts (e.g. health care providers from HIT services),
* People who can provide objectivity in the process and outcome (e.g. NGOs, community leaders, cancer patient self-help groups, non-health professionals),
* Suppliers (e.g. pharmaceutical department at the ministry, funding agencies).

How to begin team building?

There are three main components in any team's work:

1. Goal: Result-oriented tasks or content aspect (e.g. team goals and objectives). These are usually developed through interaction with team members;
2. Methodology: Process aspect, which includes the team's interactions and how members work together (e.g. leadership, team roles, etc.) Teams, especially technical teams, frequently struggle more with process issues than with task issues;
3. Resources: Time, budget, computer facility, educational tools and administrative support.

Useful Questions for Team Building:

* Who are the team members, team leaders and team liaison members?
* What is the reason this team exists? What is the common vision, what are the goals and targets?
* What are the norms that will guide how the team will work together?
* What results are expected for this team? What are the outputs expected from the team and by when? To whom should they be given?
* What is their agreed upon strategy?
* What are the steps to be followed by this team?
* What are the team roles and who will play them?
* Who is responsible for these roles?
* What are the norms and methodologies about:
  + decision making
  + problem solving process
  + conflict resolution
  + communication, cooperation and responsibility
  + task management
  + meetings
  + rewards
* What are the resources available to support the teamwork?
* Who will support the team if needed?

Responsibilities of a Team Leader

* Assign clear tasks to each member.
* Regularly review and monitor progress of work.
* Ensure that the team meets deadlines.
* Discuss and agree on the timetable for major activities with the team.
* Motivate team members.
* Resolve conflicts.
* Give guidance when needed.
* Helps members overcome barriers.
* Regularly assess team performance using a checklist.

How to Sustain Team Effectiveness

Team effectiveness means the degree to which the team achieves the expected end result(s) of the teamwork in the available time period. The following aspects are the most relevant to maintain short and long term team effectiveness.

Clearly stated and commonly held vision and goals: team goals are developed through a group process of team interaction and agreement in which each team member is willing to work towards achieving these goals.

Role Clarity, Particularly at the Beginning

* Leadership is distributed and shared among team members and individuals willingly to contribute their resources as needed.
* Team norms are defined
* Workload sharing during the team’s lifespan to facilitate the accomplishment of tasks and feelings of group togetherness.
* Team decision making involves a process that encourages active participation by all members during the team’s lifespan. It helps to build commitment.
* Problem solving, discussing team issues, and assessing team effectiveness are encouraged by all team members.
* Team leader has good interpersonal skills and is committed to team approach. Each team member is willing to contribute.
* Performance monitoring: the team members need to monitor each other's task execution and give feedback during task execution. Feedback is freely given as a way of evaluating the team's performance and clarifying both feelings and interests of the team members. When feedback is given it is done with a desire to help the other person.
* Team self-correction is the process in which members engage in evaluating their performance and in determining their strategies after task execution. When the group is not working well together it devotes time to find out why and makes the necessary adjustments.
* The social environment is open and supportive with a focus on learning. Conflict is not suppressed. Team members are allowed to express negative feelings and confrontation within the team which is managed and dealt with by team members. Dealing with and managing conflict is seen as a way to improve team performance.

Common roles and Responsibilities:

Common roles and responsibilities for a team will include several guidelines and principles to keep the team aligned and directed toward the same mission and vision. Different responsibilities and components will be described below.

* Present your position as clearly and logically as possible and listen to the others members’ reactions and consider them carefully.
* Do not assume a win/lose attitude when you come to a stalemate. Instead look for the most acceptable alternatives to all team members.
* Be aware when agreement seems to come too quickly and easily. Be sure everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict. Yield only to positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.
* Avoid voting, averaging, and bargaining. If a dissenting member finally agrees, don’t feel that s/he must be rewarded by being allowed to “win” on some later point.
* Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the team’s decision because with a wide range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the team will find an improved (not just adequate) decision.