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**Inter-organizational networking as a community-based approach  
to adolescent pregnancy and teen parenting: A case study**

**Wilson, Ann M., D.S.W.**

**City University of New York, 1990**

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INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKING AS A COMMUNITY-BASED  
APPROACH TO ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AND TEEN PARENTING:  
A CASE STUDY

by

ANN M. WILSON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
in Social Welfare in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Social  
Welfare, The City University of New York.

1990

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Social Welfare.

4/30/90  
date

Michael J. Smith  
Professor Michael J. Smith,  
Chairman, Examining Committee

4/30/90  
date

Mildred D. Mailick  
Professor Mildred D. Mailick,  
Acting Executive Officer

Dean Harold Lewis

---

Professor Mildred D. Mailick

---

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

## Abstract

Inter-Organizational Networking as a Community-Based  
Approach to Adolescent Pregnancy and Teen Parenting:  
A Case Study

by

Ann M. Wilson

Adviser: Professor Michael J. Smith

Social services, health and education have persistent problems: lack of coordination, duplication of effort, and fragmentation of services. These are serious issues.

There is a need to develop a methodology for assisting agencies and professionals deal with the 'non-system' behavior with which they are confronted. Inter-organizational networking can be an effective mechanism for systems change, joint projects, mutual support and collaborative planning within social services.

Using a case study design, the 10-year experience of a voluntary, county-based systems network will be described as both a model that supports theory-building and can also be replicated. The key events/'key actors' that helped create it, the over-arching principles, the inter-professional membership, the goals and objectives, funding, and the

barriers and obstacles to successful inter-organizational networking will be discussed.

The major findings will be explored, such as the development of the concept of inter-organizational networking and its main functions of mutual support, joint projects and collaborative planning. Also discussed will be three patterns of leadership: 'Grassroots Leader,' 'Rising Star,' and 'Switchboard Connection.'

Theories of networking will be examined in light of actual social work inter-agency networking practice. Such issues as how the network was organized and funded, how agency linkages are fostered and sustained, and the generalizability of this model to other social work issues will be explored.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Having just finished this project on inter-organizational networking, it is now time for me to acknowledge my personal network. The encouragement, support and insight they have given me at every step of the process has been immeasurable.

Deep appreciation goes to the former director of the Center for Community Education of Rutgers School of Social Work and founder of the New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy, Professor Emerita Estelle R. Robinson. She is a person of vision, creativity, and integrity, and is committed to excellence. As a colleague, mentor and friend, we worked together for six years to create the inter-organizational networking that is described in this project. Thanks to Bill Tatum, the present director of the Center for Community Education, and my colleagues there who have consistently supported my activities at the Center. Thanks also to Professor Guida West for her assistance with the in-person interview instrument.

Equally important is the trust, generosity and enthusiasm I received during this project, and continue to receive in my work with the Network, especially Julia Clanton, Mary Dodson, Karen Maxim and Mary-Ellen Mess. The leadership of the County Networks and the people who participate because they are concerned about adolescent pregnancy, teen parenting and prevention has made this work constantly challenging and rewarding.

My career in the doctoral program at CUNY/Hunter has been intellectually stimulating and personally satisfying. I'm most appreciative to my committee--Chairman Michael J. Smith, Dean Harold Lewis and Professor Mildred D. Mailick--for their encouragement and guidance, both with this project, and in the classes I had with them. Thanks also to Professor Harold H. Weissman for suggesting the case study methodology, and to my colleagues in the doctoral program at Hunter, particularly Ellyn, Jackie and Claire.

Without the help of Carol Applegate I never would have finished the manuscript: as an editor, support staff and a friend, she has been there since the beginning. Thanks also to June Penkus, the secretary at the Hunter Doctoral program without whose help with the mechanics of it all doctoral students wouldn't graduate.

I couldn't have done it without the help of my close friends: Mim, Hazel, Kara, Sandi, Lorna, and especially Ro, and my nieces and nephew Susie, Brian and Haley. I don't believe humans should be separated from other forms of living consciousness, and I appreciated the unfailing playfulness and affection from Little One, Moso, Billy and Princess throughout the time I have been in the doctoral program.

Lastly, I dedicate this project to my mother Edith F. M. Smith (1905-1985), who had graduated from Barnard College (Class of 1928) and was on her way to medical school when the Great Depression intervened. She was never able to return.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### Adolescent Pregnancy, Teen Parenting and Prevention

The numbers are staggering. The United States leads the industrialized world in its rate of adolescent pregnancy. Moreover, data in the Surgeon General's yearly report indicate that teenagers are the only age group in the country in which the numbers--for suicide, obesity, sexually transmitted diseases and drug and alcohol abuse--keep increasing.

Adolescent pregnancy and teen parenting are major social and public health issues, with both enormous economic and human costs. The economics span poverty and class issues, intensive pre-natal and neo-natal care, drop-out and special education, welfare dependency and joblessness. The human factors include a sense of hopelessness and despair in some of our youngest adolescents.

For agencies and organizations, there are fundamental problems faced in attempting to provide for the health and social service needs of adolescents and to develop effective preventive interventions. The problems include a service system structured around categorical adult needs, a general lack of attention to psychological and emotional needs, and a failure to develop methods to address the behavioral basis of health and social problems. In New Jersey, as in most states, the basic elements of health and social service systems were developed along categorical lines and are therefore fragmented when there is an attempt to address the

**multiplicity of adolescents needs.**

The needs of adolescents are also not uniform in either geographical distribution or in programmatic focus. The geographical distribution of adolescent's needs in New Jersey by county tend to be associated with minority status, poverty, homelessness and unemployment. These needs are manifested by such youth health indicators as adolescent fertility, low birth weight infants, adolescent child rearing, child abuse and neglect, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, as well as broader public health and social issues, such as drug and alcohol abuse and morbidity and mortality due to risk-taking behaviour. To this, add the fact that adolescents are notoriously reluctant to seek health care and social services.

**This despite the fact that:**

- There are one million pregnancies and 600,000 births to teens under 19 each year at a cost of approximately \$16 million dollars to cover pre-natal care, birth, and Food Stamps/Medicaid/public assistance for the first year of the infant's life;
- Almost 70% of the women on welfare were teen mothers at the time they began receiving public assistance;
- The national drop-out rate for secondary school students is 41%, and may be as high as 80% for Latino youngsters in our cities;
- The suicide rate for teenagers has increased 300% in the past 15 years;

- The number-one cause of death in the 15-24 year-old group is auto accidents, with homicide as the second greatest cause;
- In spite of the continuing concern over drug abuse, alcohol is the preferred substance used by teens and a factor in 50% of the deadly auto accidents; and
- Obesity and other nutritional disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, are particularly prevalent in this age group. (Alternatives, 1988)

Clearly, teens come to agencies with a multiplicity of needs. But each agency serves clients from their own vantage point: health, education, welfare, juvenile justice, substance abuse, and so forth. Since there is 'no single best answer' to these complex and inter-related needs of adolescents, a collaborative, inter-agency networking approach is most useful in serving them.

The New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy (NJNAP) is one example of the creation, development and maintenance of systematic linkages among diverse organizations--social service, educational, health, juvenile justice, recreation, community-based, churches and business and industry--and involving social workers, educators, family planning, health educators, psychologists and counsellors. This project is a case study of the local County Networks of that information- and resource-sharing organization.

### Inter-Organizational Networking as a Community-Based Approach

The Network is a program of the Center for Community Education of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. It is instructive to look at the role of a school of social work and the extension/public service mandate of a state university as it relates to initiating and fostering inter-organizational networking.

The Center for Community Education, in Rutgers School of Social Work, has as its function the provision of a portion of the public service of this land-grant state university. This is accomplished through the support of activities of community groups and the identification of current social issues. The Center acts as a convener to bring people together from agencies, institutions, and community-based organizations--both voluntary and public--concerned with and involved in such issues. The Center further identifies appropriate academic resources--people, publications and research--to support responsive activities of programs, study or action.

Specific functions of the Center are:

- to provide a bridge between the University and the community;
- to promote awareness of emerging social issues and to mobilize resources to assist in seeking solutions;
- to provide a variety of technical assistance, organizational leadership and educational support

programs to public and private agencies and community-based organizations involved in social problem-solving and public policy formulation;

- to design and develop model or pilot programs and methods for replication and to institutionalize successful projects either within or outside the University.

Programs of the Center include large conferences on social issues and public policy affecting the lives of women, children and youth, particularly poor and Black or Latino. The conferences have been attended by from 500-1,000 people on the Rutgers campus. Issues which have been addressed include adolescent pregnancy, adolescent suicide, public policies which affect the lives of youth, school policies on family life education and the like. The conferences were structured to include follow-up actions, often including publications.

A community of people with a focus on youth issues acting as an Advisory Committee to the Center clearly identified the issue of adolescent pregnancy as a priority concern. This identification took place at small meetings, large conferences and follow-up actions.

#### New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy

In response to expressed needs, the New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy was created in June 1979. In 1989,

approximately 3,000 people and agencies affiliated themselves with the Network either by becoming active in a community-based approach--the County Networks, by becoming subscribers to the quarterly newsletter and other publications, by participating in county, regional or statewide conferences, and in regularly-scheduled trainings.

The New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy is a voluntary association of organizations and individuals focusing on the issue of adolescent pregnancy and its ramifications.

- It provides linkages among existing organizations but is not itself a formal organization with membership as such;
- It consists of affiliates and subscribers who are seeking ways to share information and ideas;
- It provides a common focus on serving adolescents in need without limiting freedom of choice in the type of service provision;
- It emphasizes the enrichment of sharing and mutual cooperation, particularly during budget freezes or funding cutbacks;
- It seeks to avoid duplication and competition.

The objectives of the Network, as established June 20, 1979 are:

- A. To identify existing resources, programs, councils, coalitions and networks in New Jersey and to establish where gaps exist within the system.

- B. To establish a system for information-sharing on a state and regional level in order to maximize dissemination of information and minimize duplication, being sure to relate to existing coalitions and information-retrieval systems.
- C. To establish linkages with the appropriate public and voluntary agencies.
- D. To identify funding sources and pertinent current legislation regarding policies and funding.
- E. To develop an understanding of the political implications of adolescent pregnancy and related issues.
- F. To educate professionals, school-age young people and the general public about the issue and the implications of adolescent pregnancy. This includes health, education, psychological and socio-economic issues.
- G. To devise new strategies and programs, being sure to include interested individuals not affiliated with any agency.
- H. To insure that input from school-age young people is an integral part of the Network.

Activities of the Network are carried out through County Networks in all 21 counties of the state, of which 18 are now functioning. The Network office at Rutgers University-School of Social Work/Center for Community Education provides all

operation functions:

- It provides clearinghouse services: retrieves and disseminates information to assist the development of programs services and activities related to adolescent pregnancy, teen parenting and prevention;
- It provides technical assistance and consultation to the County Networks in their organization and development, and provides for a system of inter-relationships between them;
- It provides additional support through seminars, conferences, and an in-service training module on adolescent life/development/attitudes titled 'Changing Bodies, Changing Lives';
- It publishes a quarterly newsletter, Exchanges, and a Resource Book: Programs and Services Related to Adolescent Pregnancy, in both a statewide and county edition, Guide to Networking in 1985, No Easy Answers in 1986;
- It provides a Resource Center of printed and audio-visual materials, with copying facilities;
- It provides policy and planning support for considering the implications of adolescent pregnancy in a broad social context by identifying current public policies and existing gaps.

The Rutgers office of the Network has received grants from seven foundations and three state departments since hiring a director in 1981. Approximately 1/3 of the County

Networks include leadership activities in the County Network in the agency functions of the identified County Contacts.

The activities of the County Networks vary from well-defined groups which meet regularly to informal information-sharing. The County Networks strengthen inter-agency linkages, as well as connections to teens and their parents.

Each County Network has activities which reflect the particular needs of its area:

- Many of the County Networks are creating methods of linkages which will improve a comprehensive service delivery to adolescents who are pregnant, parents, or at risk of becoming pregnant. In fact, many of the County Networks now call themselves networks on adolescent programs, not adolescent pregnancy. This acknowledges the inter-relatedness of such youth issues as drinking, AIDS, drugs, suicidal behaviour, dropping out of school, as well as teen pregnancy.
- Many County Networks have sponsored conferences or other educational forums. Some conferences have been for youth-serving professionals; some have been by and for teenagers themselves. Most County Networks have a shared project which serves as a unifying factor.
- Most County Networks have monthly meetings. Many County Networks vary the sites of their

meetings and use this as a way of learning about each other's agencies.

Strong individual leadership has provided the impetus and momentum for most County Networks. Others have strong leadership shared by two or three people and have found this equally effective. The leaders are called County Contacts.

The role of the County Contact person is to provide leadership in the development, organization and maintenance of a County Network. In addition, County Contacts attend regularly-scheduled statewide meetings, or 'Leadership Seminars.' Held every 6 weeks, these interchanges provide a mechanism for mutual support, sharing of ideas, information- and resource-exchange, case conferencing, and problem-solving. Arrangements are made to have a copy of their meeting minutes of their County Networks forwarded to Rutgers, as well as conference flyers and copies of Network meetings and conference flyers and other material are available to all other County Networks, as well as constituting an archive of the Network. Another major exchange--involving all persons affiliated with every County Network--is the Annual Meeting of the Network, held at Rutgers in June of each year.

The Rutgers office of the Network assists the County Contacts to:

- initiate a County Network by identifying appro-

priate agencies, individuals and organizations, and sending out an invitational letter;

- organize an initial meeting, which are most often a combination of introductions, information-sharing, program ideas, "trouble-shooting" and mutual support.
- maintain a County Network, through regularly-scheduled meetings, joint projects and other activities.

Examples of new partnerships, new funding and new programs have emerged through County Network activities, and demonstrate that networking and inter-organizational relationships--as a guide for action--is a much more powerful tool than heretofore recognized. There are, of course, some serious limitations to the actual practice.

#### Barriers and Obstacles to Networking

While adolescents have their problems, agencies have their own. Even though clients come to them with diverse needs, social service organizations have difficulty linking with each other. Different constituencies, multiple sources of funding, various professional perspectives and values, assorted definitions of the problem, lack of resources to satisfy need or demand--hence competition among agencies--and diverse levels of staffing and competency keep organizations separate and apart from each other.

What Gurin terms "organizational rigidity, self-interest

and resistance to change" (1971) certainly feeds into the elusive nature of inter-organizational relationships, coordination, collaboration and inter-agency linkages.

"Turf and territoriality" are a constant threat to inter-agency networking. Long a staple of organizational life, they especially serve as a barrier to idea- and information-sharing. The fear of being done out of a grant or beaten out in terms of some high-level visibility (appointment to a Governor's council, for instance) becomes an obstructive force in maintaining joint ventures.

Another barrier to collaboration is the "over-achieving older child" syndrome. Often exhibited by accomplished executives, this "rather-do-it-myself-than-wait-on-a-committee" behaviour is particularly destructive to networking, inasmuch as it undercuts the group dynamic so central to effective networking. Where 'Legislative Alerts' or other activities need to be done quickly, a 'telephone tree' serves to activate a response.

"Burn-out," exhausted behaviour and a negative attitude are also important impediments to effective inter-agency linkages. These behaviours are particularly evident in public agency County Network affiliates--child welfare workers, public assistance staff, board of education personnel--who regularly experience departmental reorganizations, wage freezes and program cutbacks, in addition to the continuing case overload.

A negative feeling is also apparent in affiliates stuck

in non-challenging, boring or repetitive jobs or where there is personality conflicts on the job. These professionals are always walking around with a resume in their pocket, and really have no interest in sharing or action steps focused on implementing adolescent programs. This negativity can have a deleterious effect on people working to move things forward.

Another particularly destructive influence on inter-agency networking is the "hidden agenda" of some County Network affiliates. This is quite evident, for example, in the actions and behaviour of Right-to-Life type agency representatives. They come to a County Network meeting with an established "line"--and with fervor to match--and are quite intolerant of other points of view. Like those who can't abide by a group process, these are equally dismissive of the trust and mutual confidence that collaborative efforts need to be sustained. The reverse is also true: much work has been done with family planning groups who dismiss the very real concrete contributions of far right groups.

The attitude of some executives and public agency representatives about the nature of networking as a means of providing services needs to be re-examined. Networking is no substitute for programs for this much under-served population. Inter-agency linkages can serve as a mechanism for identifying, developing and maintaining programs, but not as a service provider in and of itself.

The inter-disciplinary nature of networking also has its drawbacks. Differences in training, education, values,

language, problem identification and definition impinge on the collaborative nature and effectiveness of inter-agency linkages. Logistics, in fact, can be a particularly thorny issue: school social workers with demanding child study team responsibilities are often not available to attend meetings and/or provide leadership to joint projects. In like manner, school teachers or family planning nurse-practitioners are often locked in to class or clinic schedules that preclude their active participation in the County Networks.

Another dimension of the inter-disciplinary issue is the wide diversity in competency and staffing. There are numerous instances of well-intentioned people working with adolescents who do not even have a rudimentary knowledge of adolescent development, behaviour, attitudes or the multiplicity of issues with which they have to deal. A corollary problem is the divergence between and among agencies, who employ a variety of high-school level aides, bachelor level case-workers, program directors or directors, and masters level staff in similar positions. Nuances of hierarchy, elitism and classism are often present, with the result that very little sharing of a valuable nature occurs.

Lastly, the very necessary ingredient of multiple sources of funding for hard-pressed adolescent programs has its down side. Community-based organizations are so-often "running by the seat of their pants" that just dealing with federal, state, county, municipal, and foundation grants and their attendant reporting requirements and forms takes up tremendous

amounts of staff time. This does not leave much time for developing and sustaining inter-organizational relationships. Equally as important, funding sources themselves--particularly government--are reluctant partners and/or do not see the benefits of inter-agency networking. With that kind of signal from their sources of support, there's not much incentive for an agency to get involved in new collaborative ventures. Luckily, the benefits often out-weigh the costs, and agencies do make the effort.

#### Strengths of Inter-Organizational Networking

There has recently been an increased public awareness of the issue of adolescent pregnancy, teen parenting and prevention. Inter-organizational networks have assisted in this community education effort, which has resulted in:

- o the formation of many local and state task forces to study the issue;
- the addition of adolescent pregnancy and parenting and its prevention to the list of program priorities for numerous agencies and organizations;
- an acknowledgment of the inter-relatedness of youth issues, such as alcohol, drugs, school drop-out, unemployment and AIDS, along with adolescent pregnancy; and
- the development of an array of new materials, curricula and programs.

New partnerships, new funding and new programs have also been forged by the development of inter-organizational networks. The challenge at present is to further enhance awareness of the issue, support and expand effective policies and programs, and, where needed, develop new public policies and programs.

It will prove especially challenging to sustain the programs, service and action initiatives underway after the current wave of public interest and heightened awareness subsides and with the inevitable shift of local and state funding and program priorities to other issues. Networks are a source of support that will enable and empower individuals and organizations to work toward making adolescent pregnancy and parenting a high priority for policy formulation, for funding and for program support.

Increasingly, individuals and organizations are requesting updated information on other state and community initiatives. They want current data and recently-completed research. They want innovative program models, a clearinghouse for available resources, and access to training opportunities. In addition, they want technical assistance in a wide variety of skill-building areas, including public policy advocacy, program evaluation, fund-raising, business/industry outreach, and organizational development. Most importantly, they want technical assistance and consultation which is accessible, affordable and relevant. Again, inter-agency networks are in a unique position to fill these requests.

Inter-organizational networks are also especially equipped to initiate and/or respond:

- giving adolescent pregnancy high program visibility, while stressing the inter-related-ness of adolescent concerns;
- developing a sense of process, which can result in new ways of thinking, sharing and approaching a problem;
- providing for mutual support, encouraging joint projects, and implementing collaborative planning efforts;
- including a "constructive use of information to inform and improve decision-making" (Velasquez et al, 1986) within networking activities.
- bringing an inter-agency and multidisciplinary perspective that provides for a comprehensive approach, as well as a better handle on working with adolescents, who are notoriously reluctant to seek health and social services.
- creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, particularly for ethnic and racial differences and for divergent viewpoints. This intentional bringing together of diverse individuals, agencies, and organizations also helps to demonstrate

how the issue affects the entire community,  
as well as how everyone can be a part of the  
solution.

County Network participants can learn that inter-  
organizational networking is non-threatening to those  
involved. This helps to minimize "turf and territoriality"  
issues. Shared interests and needs may bring people together  
and replace former agency and geographic boundaries. Network-  
ing can further provide a vehicle to explore policy and  
planning issues heretofore not generally addressed by direct  
service providers.

**Chapter Two: Inter-Organizational Networking:  
Concepts and Practice**

Reviewed here is the literature on networking and inter-organizational relationships among social service organizations. Of note is the fact that in the social work literature, networking has most often been seen in a personal context. Such famous studies as Bott's Family and Social Networks (1957), Stack's All Our Kin (1958), Mitchell's Social Networks in Urban Situations (1969), Caplan's Support Systems and Community Mental Health (1974) and Collins and Pancoast's Natural Helping Networks: A Strategy for Prevention (1976) all reflect the direct service providers interest in support systems and personal networks which enhance individual functioning.

In fact, we have to turn to the literature in sociology, business and community psychology to explore the dimensions of inter-organizational relationships (IOR) and systems networking. The focus of this project is to reveal both the strengths and limitations of this process in enhancing the delivery of social work services and fostering positive social change.

Many of the studies cited herein have focused on the lack of communication among agencies, the depth of competition and conflict among agencies, and the lack of information and data in two areas. These gaps include cooperative inter-agency

relationships assessed over time, as well as the involvement of different systems and different disciplines in inter-agency networking.

### Inter-organizational Relationships

Levine and White's (1961) classic discussion focuses on three conditions that are necessary "prerequisites" for inter-organizational relationships: "access, function and domain consensus." From their "organizational sociology perspective they studied 22 health agencies (later expanded to 55.) They indicate, early on, that "few, if any, organizations have enough access to all the (resources) to attain their objectives fully...inter-organizational exchange is essential to goal attainment." This suggests a systems approach, which is clearly important in inter-organizational networking.

From this they further define three categories of exchange. These include client referral, giving/receiving labor, such as support or professional services, and sending/receiving of other resources. On this latter point, it is interesting to note that their evidence showed that organization's interaction rate was not affected by shared Board members, though it was affected by prestige. That increased both the number of exchanges and communications the higher the organization rated.

The authors spend time on the domain issue. This they define as the avoidance of duplication and overlap, an

agency's position in a given system, and its relation to other parts of the system, as well as "outside" systems, such as federal or state governments. An example in a County Network--in which an agency was funded by the state after repeated failed attempts to get local support--confirms Levine and White's observation of the ease in legitimatizing an organization to an "outside" system rather than to its peers/other agencies.

In "Organizational Inter-dependence and Intra-organizational Structure" (1968,) the sociologists Aiken and Hage explore cooperative programming among social service agencies as an indicator of IOR. They measured five areas: innovation, decentralization, lack of formalization, communication, and complexity. The authors proved their hypothesis of joint programming as possible, given these variables within an agency. What the study did not address was a more diverse pool of agencies within the study (there were no public agencies within the study), the agency relationships over time, and the effect on planning (which implies a longer-term, joint commitment than solely cooperative programming.)

Another sociological study explored much the same territory: Litwak and Hylton's "Inter-organizational Analysis" (1962). Many of the buzzwords used in networking--inter-dependent, facilitative, linkages, standardized activities--are Litwak's, the Columbia macro-sociologist known for his research in IOR.

The authors spend considerable time detailing the emergence and growth of Community Chests (present-day United Ways), and their role in coordinating services, ordering behaviour and adjusting differences, as an example of agency inter-dependence. Litwak and Hylton cite three variables as critical to inter-dependence: the number of organizations involved, standardization of activities, awareness of their inter-dependence.

Litwak and Hylton's discussion highlights both an issue and a possible solution to the seemingly elusive goal of IOR. That is the history of a non-service provider "umbrella" organization--such as United Way--controlling IOR. What may, in fact, be much more effective and useful, is a system of linkages and patterns of communication among agencies of more or less equal weight, i.e., not in a subordinate position to one, dominant--and, in the case of the United Way, a funding source--power.

Their study is similar to the earlier Aiken and Hage research on two points. Both are concerned with efficiency and task-centeredness as traits of bureaucratic organizations. Moreover, both studies concluded that joint programming and diverse funding supports do not lessen an agency's autonomy.

Arnold Rose (1955) looked at competition and conflict, as well as at the structure, functioning, and inter-relationships of 91 formally-organized voluntary associations in Minneapolis-St Paul. Rose explored a variety of organizational issues in his study "Voluntary Associations

Under Conditions of Competition and Conflict." These included organizational structure, meetings, flexibility, cohesion and loyalty and direct personal benefit, and leadership.

Rose was surprised on only two measures. He had not expected to find a high loyalty percentage in some bureaucratic-type organizations. Neither did he expect that membership in other organizations would be acceptable, as it was in conflicting groups.

Another view of conflict is provided by Franklin and Kittredge in their study on "Organization Problems in Community Mental Health Centers" (1975). They describe how a new CMHC--like a new network--"needs to define its sphere of activity vis-a-vis other organizations." They define an "offensive" and "defensive" organizational posture, and the consequences of both strategies. Their recommendation is for the former approach, which "confirms the CMHC as an agent of (the) community." This they view as preferable to the survivalist, bureaucratic mind-set of the latter.

The authors use the term "manipulative"--in the positive sense--to describe the CMHC's participation in the community. Franklin and Kittredge also discuss the politicalization and early intervention (consultation and education-type) activities that can ensure a CMHC's being accepted in the community. They feel these activities further determine the "role it (CMHC) will play in defining and meeting community mental health needs."

Another study looking at meeting community needs was the

one commissioned by the National Association of School Boards of Education (1982). It was concerned about the "health and life-planning problems faced by adolescents." As a result, they interviewed leaders in 20 national organizations serving youth to gather and disseminate information on "Networks as a Means of Serving Youth."

These organizations included the Boys and Girls Clubs, the Boy and Girl Scouts, Big Brother/Big Sister, National Commission on Resources for Youth and the United Neighborhood Centers of America. NASBE described the activities of these, and some 75 other organizations. They applauded the efforts of parents, schools and agencies in providing support and services. But they also decried the lack of usable, available and accessible information to assist in developing programs and services for prevention and 'at-risk' youth.

NASBE also isolated six themes common to all the youth-serving organizations. These included concern, cost-efficiency, trust, goals, resource commitment, and "effective communication strategies."

Similar themes emerge in a classic article on organizations, Landau's "Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap" (1969). He strongly argues that duplicating services is not "waste(ful)". Rather, that since we know so little about most social issues, that clients need a mix of service options. In his opening remarks, Landau in fact points out the "paradox" that redundancy means both "liability" and "reliability."

He also argues that many different types of service models should be explored, in the name of innovation. Lastly, Landau does understand the "powerful appeal" of such phrases as "streamlining...consolidating...eliminating" to a cost-conscious public administration. He suggests that "efficiency" is a more common theme than most others, but that it is sometimes bought at a rather high cost: losing a service approach that encompasses diverse values.

In fact, Landau uses the model of most state and local governments in this country to buttress his argument for duplication of services. He rightly points out that they "have brought an extraordinary amount of reliability and adaptability (duplication)...and (overlap): what he calls 'equipotential parts.'"

The thesis that a variety of approaches are needed to address the ever-increasing complexity of modern problems is echoed by Trist in another seminal article, "Referent Organizations and the Development of Inter-Organizational Domains" (1983). He focuses on the nature of current problems in our complex society as "beyond the capacity of single organizations to meet," and, in fact, calls them "meta-problems." One approach to dealing with these issues, he posits, is the development of "network initiatives."

Trist defines networks as "unbounded social systems that are non-hierarchical...(and) not bureaucratic." He goes on to further describe networks as "bring(ing) the most unexpected people into contact...(to) become levers of

change." He calls individual networkers "boundary spanners" and "novelty detectors" who bring a "new appreciation of emerging meta-problems...They learn the art of walking through walls." Hardly as poetic, Hasenfeld (1974) brings a realistic interpretation to inter-organizational networking. He discusses how "difficult (it is) to form" a network, as well as the various "costs." These include organizational costs, communication costs, and responsibility costs. He sees both the strengths and limitations of collaborative efforts: "(as) potent instruments of social change...(however) compromises necessary to support and maintain...may impede its ability to engage in innovative social service."

Another 'hands-on' view of IOR is recounted in Flaherty and Martin's "The Process of Development of Interagency Relationships" (1984). They surveyed 79 staff members involved with a program with a new community agency and seven established ones, at two time intervals. Beyond 'early information meetings and a (shared) project' as documented by a literature search on inter-agency relationships, the authors suggest seven other parameters of connection.

These include goal clarity, agency mission, resources, activities, communication, planning, staff skills. They conclude that the process of IOR is a "dynamic one" and that inter-agency linkages must be viewed in "phases," and with parameters that "vary with a particular stage."

A similar conclusion is drawn by Wineburg as he discusses "defying traditional boundaries" in "Pulling Together." He

describes the various steps in developing "coordinated efforts and creative approaches." He highlights the fact that creating "an environment where discussion can take place and inter-agency rapport flourish" and "progress on the personal level translates into increased trust and cooperation on the agency level." This is an important bridge between the traditional view of the "old boy network" to a systems-change (inter-organizational) network.

This also helps create a "shared and creative use of resources," and (reshaping) "long-range funding patterns...and community policy." Wineburg concludes by describing the "tremendous unleashed creativity...(with) power generated by unified efforts."

### Resistance to Change

Given some clear benefits to networking, why is there so much resistance to incorporate its concepts into everyday social work practice? Why is there still a lack of coordination between levels of government agencies, between private agencies and government, and among agencies? Why is there still no common definitions to categorize services or eligibility criteria, nor consistent data collection on the types of adolescents served, nor common data base among state departments? There are several answers.

William Reid's (1964) thesis is that social service organizations can not cooperate, can not collaborate, and can not coordinate. He cites "duplication," "over-lapping" and

"fragmentary" as "pejorative cliché's" to describe a "chronic" problem: an "integrated attack on the problem (for him, juvenile delinquency) is not possible."

In this early theoretical piece, Reid is emphatic in concluding that without inter-organizational "sharing of goals, complementarity of resources, and an efficient system of control whose cost is commensurate with value received" coordination "may be an enterprise of dubious value" and "community organization resources may be better allocated to other objectives."

Reid follows Levine and White's resource exchange concept. He spends considerable time discussing both the determinants (above), and three levels of coordination. He sees these as "'ad hoc' case coordination, systematic case coordination, and program coordination." Reid points out that scarce agency resources--particularly during funding cutbacks--result in few efforts at coordination at either the systematic or the program level.<sup>1</sup>

The author uses the term "insular self-sufficiency" to describe the norm in social services. Reid suggests that this is due, in large part, to narrow agency goals,

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<sup>1</sup>It is interesting to note, however, that state government agencies increasingly use this second level of coordination -which includes formal, signed 'affiliation' contracts--to support 'purchase of service' or other contracted efforts with community-based organizations they are funding. Our observation of this as a funding mechanism is that it is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it enforces numerical levels of service production (ie., numbers of clients seen per service per month), but it does nothing to enhance the information-sharing, motivation for systems change or good will between grantor and grantee.

specialized personnel, and agency "disillusionment with each other's effectiveness, and resource inadequacy." In point of fact, he is quite clear in suggesting that agencies "need more resources, not more coordination."

Reid's view of coordination--and concern about its utility and contribution to social service effectiveness--is further supported by his depiction of the "costs" of coordination. He cites the Litwak and Hylton finding that "activities that can be standardized can be coordinated most easily." In truth, both case and program coordination "involve activities that are diffuse, complicated and impossible to standardize." They are also "highly complex and difficult to routinize." In Reid's view, therefore, these costs--as well as another, that of lack of staff time--outweigh any coordination benefits.

Finally, Reid suggests that social service planners "confuse wish with reality" in seeking coordination from autonomous agencies which are saddled with scarce resources, insufficient information and unclear case responsibilities. All of these issues can and do lead to areas of conflict among agencies, rather than coordination.

One commentator on the comprehensive aspects of change and the 'rational' school, is Gil (1970). His 'systematic approach' exemplifies planned change. He talks to equality among various status levels, as well as equality in relation to rights. Gil sees social problems as the deviation from these qualities, and so he aims for a fundamental re-

structuring of systems, a genuine change in values and norms.

Gil's assumption is that we really can plan in a society. The question remain: is Gil's model so broad as to be ineffective? Does his inherent ideology limit the change process? In contrast to Gil, Lindblom argues for a more measured approach, for incrementalism, of which his "muddling through" (1959) is the quintessential example.

In sharp contrast to the rationalists is the attention to people and process that characterizes the incrementalists. That includes focus on the 'leverage points' as equally important to the intellectual imbedded in the rational approach. Further, Lindblom assumes that the environment is an ever-changing dynamic, and that within every solution lies a problem. He also acknowledges that human nature changes very slowly, that decision-making includes incomplete information, that new players appear, that there is a lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making process, and that genuine restructuring of a system is almost impossible. The result is that so much social change is only "tinkering at the margins."

Further evidence of the difficulty of change within social services is found in Perlmutter and Slavin's Leadership in Social Service Administration (1980). In the opening chapter, Slavin describes the "organizational life space of social administration." He details the primary, secondary and tertiary constituencies of client/practitioner/organization elements of social services.

Slavin also explores the "complex set of relationships" that impact on an organization. He observes that the executive's function is to "orchestrate" these varied interests and form some type of balance or equilibrium.

He concludes his conceptual perspective with some observations on program advocacy as the basis for "purposive" organizational innovation and change. He closes his chapter with a quote from Machiavelli which cogently describes the impermanence of inter-agency linkages and organizations' resistance to change:

There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things...

Weiner's Human Services Management (1982) echoes Slavin as he spends considerable time describing an organizational environment that combines inter-organizational relationships and the elements of change. This is a comprehensive text on management: from theories through tools, techniques and processes to the "human service manager's value tensions." Included are chapters on accountability, computers, finances, productivity, office management and personnel.

In his chapter on IOR, Weiner discusses the need for a broader definition of human services, and the need for what he calls "socially responsible professionalism." He is also quite emphatic that primary prevention is as important as treatment/rehabilitation. Weiner concludes that advocacy is

as important as treatment and other direct service provision, and that client/consumers are equal "resources" to the professional.

Specialized training of future social work professionals is described in "Educating for Organizational Change" by Patti and Resnick (1971). They discuss the development of a course on organizational innovation and change in the context of educating social work students as change agents in agencies.

They began with the premise that "social agencies are not immune to the same kind of problems and pathologies that beset many types of formal organizations, in our society." The two authors describe how social work students--in a change agent role--can help agencies become congruent with professional values and norms, while remaining consistent with managing for organizational effectiveness.

Their work was based on a two-year experience in developing and conducting such a course. They also had to deal with the (sometimes reluctant) agencies in which students had their field placement. Further, they had to deal with students' "considerable naivete" about organizational behaviour. This included students' approach to organizations from a psychoanalytic viewpoint (i.e., pathological), as well as students' difficulty in dealing with some of the political ("power, conflict, bargaining") issues in organizations.

Some of these power issues are touched on by Alfred Kahn in his "Institutional Constraints to Interprofessional Practice" (1974). In commenting that hospital team members

were "asked to 'act together, not think alike,'" he touches on four areas of systems limitations to change.

He begins, however, with two principles of management that are often overlooked in the rush to coordination:

- "The decision to facilitate collaboration through a new structure does not assure smooth sailing;
- The formal definition of role to assure collegial team relations does not guarantee successful implementation" (both emphases mine)

Kahn cites numerous examples of problem areas among medical social workers, nurses and physicians, most often related to "status, differing conceptual orientations to people and value systems, and socio-economic gaps."

What Kahn suggests as "requirements" in a multi-disciplinary approach includes the fact that "interprofessional collaboration become part of learning throughout professional education." This can be accomplished through "actual exposure" to other disciplines, as well as cross-professional class content. Further, actual "who-is-responsible-for-what" determinations can assist in a multi-disciplinary approach. Kahn also calls for an advocacy focus between and among the various disciplines as a means of both ensuring appropriate client service and tracking programs.

A standard text in social work also touches on the 'people' aspects of resistance to change. In Changing Human Service Organizations Brager and Holloway (1978) define change and innovation (they use the term synonymously, though other

authors, such as Patti and Resnick do not) as occurring among three dimensions: people, technology and structure.

They expand this discussion by exploring, in detail, the economic and political forces that impact on any organization. Brager and Holloway also comment on the interests and influence of the participants and "significant actors" in both usual organizational functioning and efforts at change.

Another viewpoint is offered by Ferguson (1984), who suggests a feminist approach to organizations. Rather than the focus of most social work and 'mainstream' administrative theory-- which centers around how women can learn to operate, and succeed, within traditional bureaucracies--she suggests management look at roles, functions, values, language, and performance from a feminist perspective.

She posits that a "feminist perspective on rationality explicitly connects reason to emotion." In short, that such feminist values as concern for social consciousness, respect for difference, mutual support and process are compatible with vision, task, purpose and change. One drawback she notes, however, is that the decision-making process can be long and arduous. This can be over-whelming to even the most committed change-agent. Ferguson also points out that the research does not yet exist that shows that what works for collectives, coalitions and volunteer-driven groups would work for large companies (500++ employees.)

Her final point is that the concept of power needs to be re-defined. The words "empowerment" and "enable" are much in

vogue these days in community psychology and administrative science. They do not have much meaning, however, unless there is a common value around the issue itself, there is access for women to the power networks, there is inclusion in decision-making, and there is a willingness to re-conceptualize power as shared and facilitative, not dominating and exploitive. Ferguson suggests that resistance to change is most often concentrated on this one issue.

#### Consortium Leadership

How to work toward solutions, and reduce ideological imperatives? Most often, enabling leadership helps this to occur. Edwin Thomas had an early definition (1957) of "facilitative interdependence: a condition that allows or actually helps group members move toward successful role performance or goal attainment." (emphasis mine)

The creators of the famous "managerial grid" of leadership styles, Blake and Mouton (1981), describe the conflict and competition aspects of inter-group relations. They draw on many studies in the psychology and human relations fields. They emphasize the importance of power and control issues in inter-organizational relationships, not discussed by Rose in his study of voluntary associations.

Power, control and leadership issues are echoed by Quinn in his Strategies for Change: Logical Incrementalism (1980). This is another business text that is useful in exploring the factors that influence IOR. Particularly helpful is Quinn's

description of a network as a method for "sensing" needs important in strategic planning and change. His matrix describing "some typical process steps in logical incrementalism" is complex and not easy to understand. Sections of it, however, are directly relevant to inter-agency networking: (among others) "building awareness...broadening support...build buffers...pockets of commitment."

Quinn's examples--from IBM, Xerox, General Motors--indicate the breadth of the consequences of "the actors-the process-innovation and change" as central to productive IOR. He points out that the keys to effective management are communication both ways in a hierarchy, "credible contact points for information," and "decentralized decision-making." These are certainly essential factors in inter-agency networking.

Another important sourcebook on leadership is Henry Mintzberg's The Nature of Managerial Work (1973). In some of the most detailed analyses of 'key actors' work activities--work characteristics, roles, variations, programs--he points out some critical variables in leadership factors. These are very important, because the experience in consortium leadership of the kind seen in inter-agency networking is that leadership--at every level, from direct service through supervisory to executive--is critical to effective networking.

His description of the ten working roles of a manager--three each of inter-personal and informational, and four decisional--highlight some of the attributes of successful

leaders/networkers: "liaison/ negotiator/disseminator/re-source allocator." Also useful is Mintzberg's 'self-study' guide. This 15-part manual details some of the informational requirements necessary to function effectively, both within an organization and between agencies. For example, accessing, storing and sharing information are all seen as equally important. "Scanning" and disseminating to all levels are given high priority in leadership activities. The gaps in inter-agency communication, lack of collaborative endeavors, and fragmented referral and linkage systems is addressed by Seymour Sarason in Human Service and Resource Networks (1977). A community psychologist, he describes--from both a conceptual and experiential perspective--a social services consortium, the "Essex Network" and its leader/activist "Mrs Dewar."

He and his colleagues draw upon the work of researchers in the personal network/support system field (cited above, in IOR). They use those studies as background to a discussion of the rationale, emergence, function, leadership, meaning and distinctiveness of networks that emphasize systems and social change. The book is particularly meaningful to social workers in the commonality of values perspective and weight of professional/collegial "community" that Sarason feels networks offer.

His model of the three 'I's (information, ideas, independence), as well as the 'ego' I are core concepts in the development and maintenance of any system network. Sarason's greatest contribution, though, may be the fact that

his model clearly stresses the complexity of networking. These factors include the profound changes in individual and organizational attitude, thinking and behaviour that have to take place before inter-agency networking can emerge. This is in direct contrast to the chic fashionableness of social service workers who insist they "network" because they refer a client, or go to one meeting, or write a supporting letter for a colleague's grant application, without really understanding what inter-agency networking and collaboration and a 'norm of reciprocity' (Thomas, 1957) is all about.

Leonard Sayles' Leadership: What Effective Managers Really Do...and How They Do It (1979), is valuable in describing the "process," routine and sense of a manager's job. It is a business text suffused with an awareness of exchange, reciprocity, and personal networking as important to leadership. In "Relationship: The Core of Managerial Work," Sayles' says that the best leaders have "extraordinary interactional energy" ...the pace is fast, pressured and demanding...managerial work is hectic and fragmented...demanding of behavioural skill...

the multiplicity of competing values, sub-goals, special interests and perceptual biases requires most decisions to be worked through human problem solvers." About as clear a picture of any child welfare administrator or CMHC executive or tenant organizer in our field! The task of inter-agency networking then becomes, how to engage these harried leaders and what is the pay-off for them in terms of effective

services and policies?

How can inter-organizational relationships assist their everyday "actions, contacts and relationships." Sayles' himself provides one clue, a crisp answer to the hours of cooperative activities and collaborative planning efforts entered into by so many in the interests of client empowerment and organizational effectiveness: "...information gets relayed best, attitudes assessed and problems negotiated in face-to-face confrontations. After all, managers fly thousands of miles, instead of relying on letters, because meetings produce information and results that are far superior in most cases."

### Summary

Popular literature has made much of the "old boy network" and the "new woman network". It is in this context of person-enhancing, job or career-growth and mutual support that most people use and know the term 'networking.'

As used in this project however, it is defined as inter-organizational networking. This reflects a systems-change approach, involving many organizations, shared information, ideas and focus, and a process that emphasizes respect for diversity, valuing of individual experience and contribution, common purpose and effective use of resources.

As theorized by Levine & White, Litwak & Hylton, Aiken & Hage, and Sarason, networks are perceived as a positive response to the continual problem of "turf and territoriality"

in social services. They further note that many agencies share similar values and want to enhance their support of each other. This includes exchanging resources and a commonality in serving clients. This, however, may not be the case.

There are certainly obstacles to agency linkages, particularly in times of cutbacks in federal and state funding of social services. But a values perspective may touch more on core issues in the success--and, more likely, the failure--of inter-agency networking.

The concern of whose values shape a network and what is the trade-off for the other partners in a network is of critical importance to its design, nurturance and expansion. In adolescent pregnancy services, for example, trying to balance family planning and right-to-life-affiliated groups interests is an on-going struggle.

Another assumption in networking concepts is that "politics" has no place. Community people may view this as a serious short-coming, feeling hard-pressed, as they are, in on-going funding efforts. Another view, of course, is that all social work interventions are meant to be empowering, and so by their very nature are "political."

This assumption seems tied to another concern: that of who "speaks for the community." Is it only those who live there, is it those who work there, or can it be both? In some ways, inter-agency networking has elements of a consultant's role. This implies a "walking away" and lack of sustained involvement in the life of a community. Preliminary analysis

of the data and anecdotal reports of the various patterns of leadership is that all three are credible and successful in varying ways.

Another assumption is that agency inter-dependence outweighs agency loyalty. In a "futurist" mode of thinking, a sense of shared community/professional identity supersedes the constituency-building and planned/managed growth of an agency at some point. Certainly Reid's thesis that organizations can neither collaborate nor coordinate pokes holes in the value of creating inter-organizational relationships. However, given the lack of social service resources to satisfy demand--much less need--inter-organizational networking may be one useful strategy.

But this implies a major shift in thinking and behaviour in order to achieve a "norm of reciprocity." This would appear to be preferable to the competition, conflict and dominant/subordinate organizational relationships that now prevail. One implication of this project is that it will focus attention on the need to create, nurture and sustain inter-agency linkages for a variety of social and public health issues.

In addition, there are important implications for social work. For one thing, inter-organizational networking can serve as a catalyst in expanding the "social work" in social services. This can also be done in improving social work's role in the planning, organizing and delivery of social services. Further, inter-organizational relationships often

impel practitioners into the policy and political realms.  
This can serve as a much-needed adjunct to service delivery.

### Chapter Three: Methodology

This project is a case study that seeks to document the process of formation, maintenance and inter-relatedness of diverse organizations. These public and private agencies and schools have been involved on a local level, throughout the state, for the past ten years. They have focused on a single issue--adolescent pregnancy--and its ramifications.

Case studies are an "empirical inquiry and the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin, 1984; emphasis mine). Well-known case studies include Whyte's Street Corner Society, Liebow's Tally's Corner, the Lynd's Middletown, and Jane Jacob's The Life and Death of the American City. These highly-regarded texts span the several types of case study: explanatory, descriptive or exploratory. In some instances, they are a combination of all three.

This project will combine explanatory and descriptive material about this ten-year inter-organizational networking experience that has focused on a major social and public health issue, adolescent pregnancy.

The case study method includes ~~a~~ a combination of data collection procedures, such as the use of personal interviews, mail questionnaires, and written documents, such as meeting minutes showing attendance of representatives of community organizations and schools, letters of support,

list of community organizations and schools which are part of the County Network, newsletters, printed materials distributed to other organizations, archival material of each County Network over the ten years, correspondence showing membership or participation, on-site visits, periodic participant-observation of County Network meetings and conferences, and records of phone consultations. In short, what Yin (1984) terms "multiple sources of evidence," and a necessary aspect of case study research.

The proces of inter-organizational dynamics will be explored. This includes the structure of inter-organizational networking; the obstacles to creating such collaborations, the leadership needed to initiate and sustain such efforts, and the changes such activities have on the health, social services and education systems, policies and programs (see Research Instruments, Appendix A and B), and the potential for replicating this model to other social service issues.<sup>1</sup>

Most importantly would be the development of a conceptual framework based on this model: how it was organized, what principles were utilized, what transpired, why it has been maintained for ten years, what we can learn from this experience which can be replicated. In short, the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Of note is the fact that this model is already being replicated in an AIDS network in one county, and in two districts in two other counties, as part of a 'linking schools and community services' project.

The research design involves a purposeful sampling of three of the 18 County Networks, as well as a survey of the entire County Network system. There are 21 counties in the state: several of the County Networks are joint ventures, and two counties are in the process of reorganizing their efforts. This descriptive study encompasses the entire system.

#### Purposeful Sampling

The results of the County Network responses and the in-person interviews constitute a version of an "embedded, single-case design." (Yin, 1984) This involves looking at inter-organizational networking as a whole, then individual County Networks, in addition to attention to individual leadership.

The purposeful sampling (Quinn, 1980) includes a look at an extreme case, a typical case and a critical case. Within these three examples are enough diversity and variation to be representative of the whole, while also dealing with issues of random or representative sampling. The study is also of particular importance, given the high rate of adolescent pregnancy and related issues, such as the high rate of school drop-out among Black and Latino youth.

All three case examples are, as Quinn suggests, ones that we "could learn the most from," and "manage the trade-off between the desire for in-depth, detailed information and the desire to generalize." The extreme case illuminates

what occurs under conditions of inter-organizational stress and difficulties. The typical case explores the "good" programs--neither in-trouble nor out-of-the-ordinary--that are so often "hard to get a handle on," as Quinn says. The critical case demonstrates the maxim that "if the program makes it there, it can make it anywhere."

### Patterns

In addition, the three case examples are each unique in their own ways, while still reflecting patterns that have emerged over the ten years of the inter-organizational networking experience. The three models can be termed 'the Rising Star,' the 'Grassroots Leader,' and the 'Switchboard Connection.'

The Rising Star has similarities in several County Networks where there is consistent multi-disciplinary and multi-system participation, support from business and industry, and access to policy and funding sources within local and county government and foundations. The Grassroots Leader mirrors a number of County Networks where the leadership (County Contact) both lives and works in the same area, is active and known to local, county and state government and legislators and is grounded in the life of the community, often as a member/chair of the board of education, service sorority or other service provider, community-based organization. Lastly, the Switchboard Connection is the image of the many agency-based County

Network leadership who function in a most effective 'information and referral' manner, who focus on the exchange of ideas and information, case-conferencing and problem-solving, and who nurture and emphasize mutual support. This last characteristic is particularly important for the many caseworkers, counselors and supervisors who may be the only staff in their state agency or community-based organization providing services to adolescent clients.

#### Research Instruments

The two research instruments seek to illuminate the 'how' and 'why' of the success and failures of the inter-organizational networking model. The mail questionnaire--to all the County Networks--elicits specific data on:

- the types, members and content of County Network activities;
- measurements around key phenomena of inter-agency networking: mutual support, joint programs, and collaborative planning;
- the interaction, participation and structure of the inter-organizational activities;
- the obstacles, successes and problems of organizational-networking;
- system changes as a result of the collaborative activities;
- leadership characteristics; and
- relationship to the state Network office.

Also included are opening queries on personal and professional information. This instrument is a combination of both closed questions, and follow-up, open-ended probes. The questionnaire went out to the 20 leadership people in the 18 County Networks (one has a co-leader model), with a cover letter. A follow-up letter was sent approximately ten weeks later. Seventeen (17) answered, for a response rate of 85%.

This mail questionnaire follows the documented method set out by Dillman (1978), and particularly the principle he cites from Homans (1961) work around human behaviour and the latter's "social exchange" concept. These include the notion that people will respond as they see researcher values in congruence with their own values, a sense of trust in the researcher, feel appreciated, and/or receive tangible rewards.

For this mail survey, County Network leaders were alerted that it would be forthcoming. Efforts were made to solicit their suggestions about inter-organizational networking into the design. An attempt was made to reduce their "costs" in responding by keeping the survey as brief as possible, to six pages. This, while still retaining the focus and the need to elicit meaningful data intact. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was also included to ease the response. Most importantly, the surveys are anonymous in an attempt to retain participant confidentiality.

While most mail surveys elicit a one-third response rate, Dillman suggests that a 'total design method' approach--using the above principles--ensures 50% or above participation. He cites some 40 studies, completed from 1971-1977. These had an average 74% response rate, and evidence the validity of a systematized procedure toward mail surveys. For the purposes of this case study, 20 surveys were mailed out. Seventeen (17) were returned, for a response rate of 85%. One conclusion that can be drawn is that the on-going relationship of the County Network leadership to the state-wide office contributed to the extremely high response rate.

This instrument will be coded, and ABstat data-base software will be used for the quantitative data. With an N=17, the numbers are too small for cross tabulations or correlations. The qualitative data (probes, Discussion sections) will be examined, analyzed and described.

The second phase of the case study will be a structured, in-person interview of the leadership of three of the County Networks. It includes four components. (Appendix B) The first section solicits information about the identification of adolescent pregnancy as a critical social and public health issue, the identification of the 'key actors' in the formation of the County Network, and the beginnings of the process.

The second unit elicits such information as the actual process of inter-agency networking: who participates, how

the process has evolved through the years, tangible and intangible results. The third section focuses on securing material on the policy and legislative activities and perceived system changes because of the County Networks' efforts.

Lastly, the final set of questions explore nuances of sameness or difference if the County Networks were to start anew, replication suggestions and new arenas of practice. The entire in-person interview is structured so that probes are built in on a regular basis. These include such points as "could you give me an example of that?," "what do you think?," and "what do you mean by that?."

As it tracks the inter-organizational networking over time, it is anticipated that the use of the structured interviews, direct observation, and multiple sources of evidence will illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of inter-agency networking. Most importantly, it may suggest a new theoretical framework in which to examine such efforts. These insights may then be generalizable to other voluntary, single-issue networking arenas.

### Emerging Themes

Another aspect of this case study is the evidence from the archival data of this inter-organizational network, particularly those items from the County Networks explored in the in-person interviews. This is material collected from on-going projects of the Network over the past ten

years. Certain themes have been identified around inter-organizational networking concepts. They could prove useful as an alternative source of data to corroborate and compare to this case study.

This material includes findings from the 1982 survey taken at the Annual Meeting; another survey in 1983; No Easy Answers, the 1986 research study of 140 agency personnel around linkages, access, training and evaluation; and Alternatives, the 1988 report of the Governor's Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy. This Task Force held three public hearings and heard testimony from 150 people, including teenagers.

These emerging themes suggest new concepts about inter-organizational relationships:

- the County Networks are "single issue," though stressing the inter-relatedness of adolescent concerns;
- adolescent pregnancy is an issue which remains critical as a social and public health issue;
- inter-agency networks are concerned with process the result of the energy and interaction of the participants, who stimulate each other to think and share in new ways, which results in new approaches;
- human service workers--often the only ones in their agency to deal with adolescents-- have a place to share ideas, needs, and plans,

experience group support for their activities, and are strengthened in their own efforts to include adolescent pregnancy in their individual agencies program priorities;

- that money is more important than ideology: family planning and far-right groups can work together around common issues involving pregnant adolescents
- what Velasquez et al. terms the "constructive use of information to inform and improve decision-making" becomes apparent in a review of county human service plans, which now include programs and services for adolescents, a heretofore underserved population.

These themes, then, form another facet of the multiple sources of evidence for the basis of the case study, and can be validated or re-formulated with the data from this case study.

#### Limitations of the Case Study Method

There are several constraints to the case study method. Such limitations include:

- self-reporting;
- anonymity;
- reliability and validity;
- representativeness;
- interviewers; and

● response rate.

Self-reporting, response rate and representativeness are inter-related but distinct issues. Individual differences and biases do color respondent's answers to the mail instrument and the in-person interview. However, the participants have all been involved in County Network activities for at least two years. This should reduce any errors in reporting, particularly when compared to each other.

The representativeness of the sample is intriguing in that the three patterns of leadership have emerged in the preliminary analysis. These include the 'Rising Star,' the 'Community Activist,' and the 'Switchboard Connection.' While certain levels of education and experience may preclude replication to a broader-based sample, these characteristics may be identifiable to other agency linkage efforts. In that case, they are reflective of broader concepts of leadership.

The mail questionnaires were conducted in the fall of 1988; the in-person interviews in the spring of 1989. This was planned to avoid summer vacation schedules and heavy agency workload schedules over the winter. It appears that issues of participation were minimized. This may, in part, be due, again, that the county leadership has regular contact with the NJNAP and has participated actively in NJNAP programs.

For instance, the response rate to the 1982 Annual meeting questionnaire was 54% (68/200), and a total of 102 local agencies in 14 of the then 18 County Networks responded to the 1983 survey. Also, given the uniformity of information requested, reliability and uniformity may not be problems in this study. The information solicited includes needs of adolescents, programs available, and gaps in service.

The validity issues should be addressed by the fact of multiple sources of evidence and a chain of evidence, described above. The reliability issue relates to internal consistency. Certain findings of this study replicate those with similar populations in New Jersey: reliability measure should be met by the fact that this is the latest in a series of queries to County Network participants over the last 10 years.

No foreseen problems, may in part, be due to the fact that this is not 'human subject' or 'case record' research 'per se.' Of importance also is that this research is not-- and is not perceived to be--as evaluating intra-organizational functioning and effectiveness.

The difficulties of self-as-interviewer are more difficult to gauge. There are several factors that may play a role here. One is the relationship of County Networks to the NJNAP office. Each of the counties is an autonomous unit, and does not receive funding from the state office.

This independence should be an important variable in how participants respond.

Another factor is that the case study is of the network, not of individual agency programs, policies or procedures. All of which are emotion-laden issues.

A further troublesome issue is anonymity. While the mail instruments are coded for research purposes, the issue is particularly pressing for local participants. For instance, most of the County Networks include representation from right-wing organizations, as they are part of the service delivery system. This has meant, though, that mailing lists often have limited circulation. This has been effective in retaining members privacy, especially where home addresses are used.

### Summary

This chapter has identified a methodological plan which will be used in this study to explore the issues in inter-organizational networking.

The methodology presented includes the case study design, the mail survey, the in-person interviews, and the use of secondary data, as well as the limitations of this methodology.

Chapter four will present the findings, analysis and replicability of the study based upon the methodology presented in this chapter.

#### **Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis: Counties Survey and In-Person Interview**

This case study has looked at theories of networking, and will now look at actual social work networking practice, at how a network is organized, and how agency linkages are fostered and maintained. Two methods of data collection were used.

The mail instrument was comprised of 46 questions, of which three were open-ended. The mail research instrument was designed to solicit several types of information: basic identifying data; county network involvement--including the strengths of, and obstacles to, inter-organizational networking; agency resistance to change; inter-organizational relationships; the leadership necessary to initiate, sustain, and motivate participation; and the impact of a statewide support center for the activities of the local networks.

The in-person interviews centered on the formation and maintenance of the County Networks; changes or results in policies, programs and services because of the inter-organizational networking; replication possibilities; similar or different approaches if the Network were to start today; and new arenas of practice. Three in-person interviews were conducted, and posed 19 questions. Twenty

(20) mail surveys were mailed out to the County Network leadership: 17 responded. Numerous themes emerged, as well as three primary strategies for inter-agency networking. These are a community-based approach, 'Grassroots Leader'; a leadership-based pattern, 'Rising Star'; and an agency-based model, 'Switchboard Connection.'

### Historical Context

The results of the in-person interviews and the mailed instrument provide a rich and complex portrait of inter-organizational networking. Agency linkages, strengths and limitations are part of the larger environment, and it may be instructive to ask why 1979?: what was occurring at that time in creating a climate in which inter-agency networking was one answer to social work issues.

In an informal interview with the co-founders of the Network, it turns out that the major influence was the publication of Joy Dryfoos' work 11 Million Teenagers: The Epidemic of Teenage Pregnancy in 1976. Dryfoos is a nationally-recognized health/family planning/population researcher/author, who has done work for the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations, as well as the Alan Guttmacher Institute. The co-creators--both faculty at a major state university, and active in linking (public/community service) practice to scholarship--both knew Dryfoos personally, as well as her work.

In addition, other well-respected authors in the field-

-Martha Burt at the Urban Institute, Theodora Ooms at Temple University, Kristen Moore of the Family Impact Seminar of George Washington University, and Betsy McGee of the Ford Foundation--were also engaged in research, presenting testimony and giving consultation to organizations and agencies providing services to children and adolescents and their families on pregnancy and parenting adolescents in the middle and late 70's.

There were also changes in public child welfare law around foster homes and adoption homes. As a result of several court cases and the establishment of federal guidelines, mechanisms were established for 'child placement review' committees. They were to analyze, report on and make decisions in order that no child spend their entire life in foster care. These impacted on how community people and professionals viewed adolescents.

There was also a push to 'cutback management,' to 'do-more--with-less' within an agency setting. One example is the creation of sex education policies in public school: in many instances, these were added to the school day, without additional financial or staff resources. This type of management became exacerbated, of course, with the advent of a new federal administration, nominated in the summer and elected in late 1979. Thus, all these events came together, almost spontaneously, to form a new interest in adolescent issues, and particularly, in adolescent pregnancy, teen parenting, and prevention.

In New Jersey, this meant the creation of 'Child Placement Review Teams,' new efforts at welfare reform, planning activities to create intensive casework-homebuilders-type units, and evaluating the efficacy of sex education in the schools. Inter-organizational networking efforts and activities, such as the New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy, formed in June 1979, was one response to the issue.

### Themes

In looking at the data from this case study, certain themes emerge. One is the inter-organizational relationships among various systems, agency linkages, and their increased interaction as a result of the inter-organizational networking process. Another is the limitations of systems networking--obstacles, barriers and resistance to change--that were constantly stated by the various respondents.

#### A. Inter-Organizational Relationships.

##### Agency Linkages, Interaction

### Characteristics of Sample

There was a diversity of professional affiliations of the leadership cadre in the County Networks. Of the 17 questionnaire respondents, six of them are from family

planning clinics or Planned Parenthoods. Four were from a mix of agencies: two from a school; one from the regional office of the state education department; and two from local health departments. Two each were from social service agencies, hospitals and community mental health centers (CMHC.) Twelve (12) are mid-level Program Directors. Two each are supervisors, or caseworkers; one is self-employed. Eight of the respondents were in the 25-44 age range; nine were over 55 years old: the median was in the 45-54 age range. All of the County Network leadership are women (though there have been male leaders in the recent past); 14 are white. (Refer to Table I for a summary of the sample characteristics.)

The great diversity within the County Networks is evidenced in the leadership, by the variety of professions represented and highest degrees obtained. Three of the respondents are social workers; five are nurses; four are health educators; one is a clinician/therapist; two are educators; one is a criminal justice administrator. Levels of professional training include: 12 of the respondents have a Master's degree; two of these have an MSW. Of the remainder, one is a high school graduate; one has an Associate's degree; two have their Bachelor degrees; and one has her doctorate. Twelve (12) are members of professional associations representing their varied disciplines.

CHART I: Characteristics of Sample  
N=17

Organizational Affiliation

6 Family Planning/Planned Parenthoods  
2 Social Service Agency  
2 Hospital  
2 Community Mental Health Center  
2 Local Health Department  
2 School  
1 Dept. Education Regional Office

Age

8 25-44  
9 45+

Race

14 White  
3 Non-White

Professional Affiliation

3 Social Workers  
4 Health Educators  
5 Nurses  
2 Educators  
1 Clinician/Therapist  
1 Criminal Justice Administrator  
1 No Response

Professional Roles

12 Program Director  
2 Supervisors  
2 Case Workers  
1 Consultant/Self-employed

Educational Level

1 High School Graduate  
1 Associate's Degree  
2 Bachelor's Degree  
10 Master's Degree  
2 MSW  
1 Doctorate

Member of professional Association

12 Yes

### Inter-Organizational Relationships

Mapping the agencies involved in the County Networks shows as wide and diverse a cross-section of providers as is evident in the leadership. While it is to be expected that family planning clinics/Planned Parenthood agencies would be represented, it is significant that 94% and 88% of the mail respondents (and all three interviewees) indicated that public child welfare and the schools, respectively, are involved.

The public child welfare involvement could be a ripple effect of a four-year old affiliation between the Network and the state child welfare services, and funded by the state division on youth and family services. The first year, 1985-86, included staffing for a 'community education specialist' within the Network, and available to CWS staffs around the state. That position was lost the second year, but 'resource development specialists' within local CWS offices, have remained involved in County Networks, and continue to receive specialized mailings from the state Network office, are part of Network trainings and conferences, and receive the Network's quarterly newsletter.

At a typical monthly meeting of a County Network, anywhere from 5-50 agency representatives participate. Of the 16 respondents to the question on County Network participation, 100% indicated that family planning clinics/Planned Parenthood attends. Ninety four percent (94%) said that a representative of the public child welfare

services attends; 88% said schools, and private agencies attend; 75% indicated that representatives of the county welfare board, the local health department, the CMHC, and the family counseling agency attend; and 63% said that a state-funded nutrition program was represented.

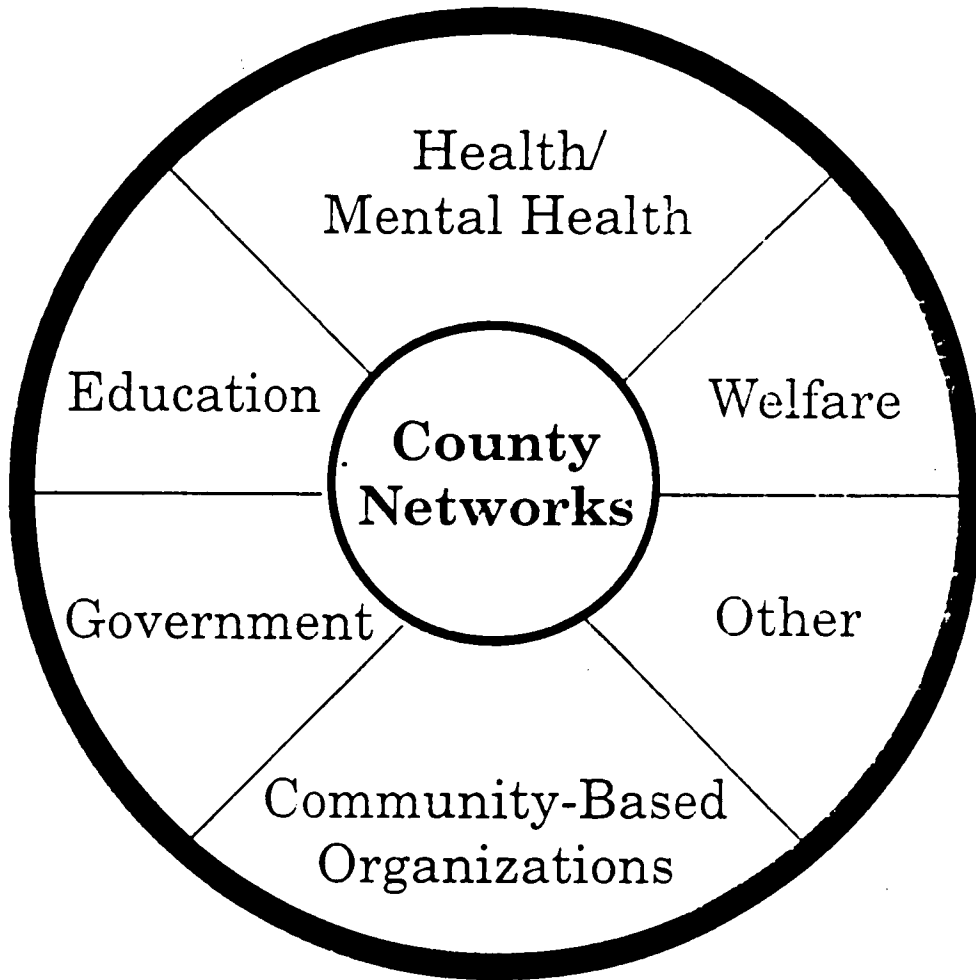
Diagram I depicts the various 'players' in the inter-organizational networking process, as described by the mail respondents and interviewees. A close look at the types and variety of agencies and organizations involved with County Networks illuminate this comprehensive, voluntary approach:

<b>Health/Mental Health</b>	<b>Education</b>
family planning/Planned Parenthood	public schools
hospitals	private/parochial
local health departments/centers	colleges/
March of Dimes	universities
community mental health centers	PTA/PTSO
<b>Welfare</b>	<b>Government</b>
child welfare	municipal
municipal/GA	county
public assistance/AFDC	state
adoption agencies	federal
<b>Community-Based Organizations</b>	<b>Other</b>
community action programs	foundations
YW-YM-C/HA's	child care
Boys/Girls Clubs	Churches
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	business
Girl/Boy Scouts	fraternities/
Urban League	sororities
Police Athletic League	employment/
	training
	legal
	volunteers

It is important to note that the most often-cited reason for the "success" of the County Networks is this inter-system involvement, meaning the representation from

DIAGRAM 1:

# Interagency Linkages



health, education, welfare, recreation, and so forth. Additional outreach needs to be done in certain areas: churches (25%), business and industry (13%), and juvenile justice (31%) were involved to a much lesser extent in County Network activities. The first two have traditionally been locked out of certain types of community-based service activities, so it is not unexpected that there are not involved in the networks.

#### Agency Linkages, Interaction

The findings indicate that contacts with County Network agencies occurs most often around direct service activities, rather than other types of organizing or planning efforts. Respondents reported that inter-organizational networking increased the referral mechanism (81%, 13/16 respondents). This occurred because participants became aware of, got to know, and became knowledgeable about other agencies and their staffs, through their County Network participation.

Reciprocal relationships showed marked increases due to participation in County Network activities. Ninety four percent (94%) cited both cooperative activities and communication as the most important areas of reciprocity. Eighty-one (81%) cited referrals as the second area. Tied for third were joint programming and collaborative planning. One respondent commented that the most important factor was the development of a "more holistic approach in addressing the needs of adolescents," in that the multi-disciplinary

and inter-system process provided a comprehensive view on serving adolescents.

The 'reciprocity' responses illustrate some major tenets of inter-organizational networking, and experiences of this 10-year, statewide activity. These include such principles as a concern for process (as greater than, or at least equal to, outcome or product); diverse leadership and facilitative styles; a continuum of inter-organizational networking that includes mutual support, joint projects, and collaborative planning; focus on sustained effort; and patterns of networking that reflect local community needs, as well as linkages with other agencies.

One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents said that they have contact with the staffs of other agencies at times other than County Network meetings. The contacts were around:

Agency Contacts

- 88% client referral
- 82% joint programs
- 76% program development
- 59% case conferencing
- 47% legislation

Four other areas of interaction were cited in comments by individual respondents: these include advocacy; resource development; planning; United Way budget meetings; foundation-funded agency meetings; health coalitions.

Of interest is the fact that direct services and

program issues were about evenly distributed as the primary reason for contact outside of County Network activities.

Further, 94% of the respondents said that they have increased their interaction with agencies since participating in the County Networks. This increase is around:

Increased Interaction

- 76% client referrals
- 59% joint programs
- 59% program development
- 53% case conferencing
- 35% legislation

Two other respondents specified increases as part of foundation-funded efforts or health coalition activities, as well as involvement with youth service commissions. In contrast to the results of regular contact with other agencies, these increased interactions focus on client-centered activities.

B. Obstacles, Barriers and Resistance to Change

The philosopher/theologian Thomas Merton has said that "change is not so much moving forward as it is letting go." The evidence from the responses in this case study support that conclusion. So very often, agency executives give only token support to networking. An important finding is that County Networks have 'no time and no money' to sustain their

inter-organizational networking efforts.

The "major problems of your County Network" of the 16 respondents were overwhelmingly 'lack of a paid coordinator' (75%) and 'no money for support/secretarial services' (56%.) Part of the conclusion is that while agency cooperation and coordination are persistent social service issues, the assumption is that inter-organizational networking will occur on its own and require no funding. As one County Network leader commented, "networking is often viewed as a luxury and not essential to service delivery. It is also seen as something that happens spontaneously, yet leadership is the key to continuing the process."

In fact, what happens in some situations is that well-meaning, responsible people begin to do some of the inter-organizational networking tasks on their own time. "I was trying to handle too many things at once, the Network was exploding. It was very hard, so I said I'll do it on my own time, and that exhausts you." In other situations, particularly where an inter-agency network coordinator is part-time, the problem of lack of time and paying for inter-organizational networking services is even more acute. "Everything fell on my shoulders to coordinate. People were still trying to (deal) with earlier issues of coming together, learning how to work together, dealing with turf issues. You know, be willing to give up some duplication." There are also difficult implementation issues to sort out, particularly when attempting to involve the public

agencies. "Yes, we'll send somebody," (is the child and public welfare response) but when they sent that person, they knew very little what was going on in their agency to share with us. They were there basically to gather information from us, rather than to come and share. They weren't a decision-maker either..their (agency) problems impacted so much on what we could do and it is frustrating." The very limited capability of public child welfare agencies is apparent. While their mandate encompasses the entire realm of social services (adoption, foster care, child care, child abuse and neglect, Social Services Block Grant pass-throughs) so much of their actual service delivery is limited to protective services/crisis intervention. Certainly, maintaining inter-organizational relationships through inter-organizational networking is not high on their list given more immediate child/family life-threatening and/or service delivery funding imperatives.

'Turf and territoriality' and staffing cutbacks/funding constraints were seen as the major obstacles to inter-organizational networking. This is instructive in that it updates the comment in Sarason of 10 years ago that networking is "no substitute" for needed services. The intervening time, of course, has seen one of the most dramatic dismantling of human services since Social Security and other programs began 50 years ago. Two other respondents said that inter-organizational networking was not an agency priority: lack of support from agency

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directors' and no understanding of the value of inter-organizational networking are also critical stumbling blocks.

Other critical barriers are the ever-present problems social service of coordination and accountability. "I would have kept trying, push(ing) for some community structure of the county government to coordinate issues," said one County Network leader, "because nobody was really accountable. We really had no way of tracking which teenagers went to services, who really needed them."

Financial constraints cut both ways: it means no paid staff for almost all of the County Networks, as well as no technical assistance nor monitoring capability on the part of state agencies or local human service advisory councils (the 'pass-through' agency for SSBG funds). This, in turn, contributes to the lack of accountability on the part of both state funding agencies and the community-based organizations which receive funding.

The support for the Network was minimal. A small grant for start-up funds came from a major statewide private foundation and were for a statewide part-time coordinator, part-time secretary and office supplies, and lasted three years. Office space, equipment, phone and utilities were provided by the state university. This was followed by a small grant from the state Department of Health, and another private foundation. The statewide Network has been supported by public child welfare funds for the past six years, which

funding now supports a full-time director, part-time secretary and operational funds. Separate foundation and state government funding has supported the publication of the quarterly newsletter.

Funding was an important part of the recommendations from the Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy. They suggested it should include a statewide Office on Adolescent Pregnancy in the state Department of Health, as well as funding for each of the County Networks. A companion funding strategy is that Human Service Extension Agents (modeled on the Agricultural Extension Agents) be established in each county, as part of new funding for the state university. The start-up funds for this would come from a major national foundation, which has already committed itself to seed money to institute a 'community service' requirement for graduation for bachelor-level students from the state university.

"Lack of funds" was cited by four as a major barrier. "Time" was also mentioned by four respondents as a major constraint. "Time, money and finding an effective coordinator;" "having the time and resources;" "funding for a full-time coordinator;" "money: the lack of which limits member's involvement;" and "overall funding cutbacks for social service agencies, resulting in fewer people to do the jobs, and reducing the 'luxury' of meeting attendance. As a result, I don't have time to donate to any projects outside of my particular full-time job," were the responses relating to resource (time, money, people) scarcity. In addition,

"no money for remedial programs;" "fund-raising takes up a lot of time to continue the coordinator position. Secure, on-going funding would be a plus" were commented upon.

Other responses focused on public-private conflicts: "conflicting values held by public and private agencies, because it creates distrust, suspicion and general reluctance to share and work together." In the same vein was this answer: "the county human services department is in a constant state of flux and change, thus networking is not encouraged. County and local officials who should be involved in the networking do not appear to be enthusiastic or encouraging."

A sidelight to the public-private conflicts are the fact that right-wing groups continue to pose problems. While they provide concrete services (emergency housing, baby care equipment) they will not discuss pregnancy prevention with adolescents. Further, they are strident and dogmatic in their opposition to family planning agencies, and often cut off discussions in the County Networks. "How do I deal with these people: (other Network) people said that if such a person came back, they weren't going to be part of the Network anymore...(if you don't have) mutual sharing, mutual respect going on, you're just defeating the purpose." Several County Networks have successfully dealt with this problem through one-on-one discussions, negotiations and group meetings.

Burn-out was suggested by two responses: "the same

people are involved in so many committees, organizations, etc., that there is little time for active involvement in any! We are spread so thin!" and "the networking model is being adopted by other organizations that are closely related in services. These organizations are calling on the same agency members of the County Network for participation in their meetings and programs, thereby causing burn-out among our County network members. I'm beginning to see low participation and a lack of volunteering among the members in terms of our own Network programs." Three other barriers listed were "turf" issues, "personalities of individual members," and "people lose interest if it does not lead to program development."

Two final comments addressed the scope and context of inter-organizational networking: "lack of support, interest and understanding on non-participants (i.e. executive director.) Thus, unwillingness of some agencies to support in-depth participation. Where there is duplication of services, competition for clients and funding is present." Lastly, "the value of networking is not immediately apparent to most agencies. Lacking an immediate and direct benefit, networking does not appear to have any innate value to many agency directors. The 'intangible' benefits need to 'marketed' better and made to seem tangible. Also, in (this) county, the most serious problems are in the major city, which has a model (alternative school) program, but little networking--and a (smaller) urban town, which has a

strong 'mini' network, but no model programs. In between is an amorphous remains--with no focus, 19 towns--and scattered problems and programs."

This last example crystallizes many of the inter-organizational networking issues. The concept is given lip service by executive directors, who themselves are under pressure to produce. It may be difficult to exactly track referrals, and so forth, so directors are reluctant to commit staff time and energy to what they construe as an amorphous activity. Added to these issues are the specters of politics, race and money: urban centers with poor, people-of-color populations competing with affluent, suburban communities, who have equally troublesome problems, and who deal with it by throwing money at social issues, or denying the issues exist.

Of interest also is that the negative aspects of personal networking intrude themselves into a systems networking approach. Such characteristics as a negative attitude, aggressive competition and skepticism take their toll on inter-organizational networking efforts. Strident ideology or dogma also reduce the extent to which people will become involved in networking. "Their (right-to-life) arguments...and individual personalities turned other Network people off." Certainly the failure to be able to deal with the length of time required to work in a group, or inability to delegate--being an "over-achieving older child," as one of the County Network leaders admitted in an

informal interview--militates against inter-organizational networking values.

Going back to the 'burn-out' syndrome, it is clear that trust is not magic, and it takes time to get the measure of a colleague. In public agencies particularly, workers and supervisors are so over-loaded that County Network activities become just one more burden, rather than the community-building resource they can be to deal with the challenges ahead.

**C. Inter-Organizational Networking Strengths,  
Support Center, Dimensions of Leadership**

Respondents' perspectives on the strength of inter-organizational networking is instructive, as it shows the factors necessary for the inter-organizational networking process to succeed. The mail participants were given 11 choices on the question: Why does networking succeed?

1. Communication among agencies
2. Trust between agencies
3. A pattern of cooperation among agencies
4. Planning for future projects
5. A neutral environment where all perspectives are encouraged
6. Facilitative leadership
7. Multi-level participation (direct services, supervisory, executive)
8. Inter-system involvement (health, education, child

welfare, juvenile justice, recreation,  
religious, mental health, and so forth)

9. Respect for diversity
10. Multi-disciplinary (health educators, social workers, teachers, youth workers, public administrators, and so forth)
11. Other (specify)...

The respondents rank-ordered five characteristics as critical:

Primary Importance (in rank order)

- #1 Inter-system involvement
- #1 (tie) Communication among agencies
- #2 Mutual problem-solving; Personal Relationships;  
Staff Support
- #3 Facilitative Leadership; Multi-disciplinary  
approach
- #4 Trust between agencies

Secondary Importance (in rank order)

- #1 Neutral environment where all perspectives are  
encouraged
- #2 A pattern of cooperation
- #3 Trust among agencies
- #4 Communication; Planning; Facilitative  
leadership; Inter-system involvement; Respect for  
diversity

Of interest is the fact that all the choices were

selected as of either primary or secondary choices, with the exception of 'multi-level participation.' Clearly, the inter-organizational networking proceeds without the involvement of directors. It must be indicated, however, that many of them attend their own-level associations, that serve, in most instances, to further both personal and professional networking.

Of interest, too, is the fact that number 11, other, was selected as the second choice in the primary category. Respondents indicated that "mutual problem-solving, personal relationships, and staff support" were second only to communication and the inter-system involvement as the strengths of inter-organizational networking.

An unsolicited comment indicates the strength of inter-organizational networking: "professionals supporting one another in realizing that we're working towards the same goal."

Of significance is that the above responses may also reflect the fact that the strength of inter-organizational networking rests on the fact that the activities are consistent with members' values. The founding principles rest on a common focus in serving adolescents in need, the enrichment of sharing and cooperation and new ways to look at problems and exchange information and ideas. Reality and practice have converged with principle within the County Network experience: the attention to divergent perspectives, understanding the necessity for a variety of

service options and the commitment to empower adolescents and their families in decision-making, problem-solving and negotiating service systems on their own behalf, serve as common ground among County Network affiliates.

Figure I suggests the three processes that have become apparent in this type of inter-organizational networking. They are mutual support, joint projects, and collaborative planning. Inter-organizational networking is a fluid process and each phase has a scope of activities, certain dynamics peculiar to it, and barriers that impede it. For example, the mutual support phase illustrates the inter-personal dynamic involved in inter-organizational networking. The activities, dynamics and barriers reflect the relationship process so important to the larger view of networking.

One process is not seen as better than another: rather, they are different phases that represent the totality of the inter-organizational networking approach. Some County Networks stay in one phase for a long time; others move among the three phases, depending upon expressed needs and leadership ability. The inter-organizational networking also acts in a complementary fashion to bureaucratic organizations: it illustrates what can be accomplished by attention to person, process and task, without the accompanying hierarchical constraints.

Joint projects define cooperative ventures so often engaged in by the County Networks. It has often resulted in

Figure I INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKING

PROCESS	SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES	DYNAMICS	BARRIERS
<p><b>mutual support</b></p> <p>(contacts)</p>	<p>info-sharing exchange of ideas case conferencing problem-solving trouble-shooting</p>	<p>trust respect for diversity active listening enthusiasm sense of humor self-confidence 'norm of reciprocity' multi-disc/level/sys neutral facilitative</p>	<p>sceptism burn-out negativity competitive ideology</p>
<p><b>joint projects</b></p> <p>(cooperative)</p>	<p>teen conferences teen resource guides professional conferences in-service training</p> <p>community/agency-based FLE agency/school projects other</p>	<p>team-building problem-solving attitude conflict resolution roles and responsibilities generosity of spirit cultivate/nurturing mentors/colleagues mutual ownership flexibility coordinated</p>	<p>noX-no\$ no paid coordinator lack of CEO support turf/terr.</p>
<p><b>collaborative planning</b></p> <p>(integrative)</p>	<p>strategic plng./ 3-5 year plan grantsmanship on-going trng./ technical assistance outreach: B&amp;I churches, schools policy formulation other</p>	<p>vision choices/no 'single best answer' holistic inter-rel. issues sustained effort 'care-commitment -concern' comprehensive</p>	<p>similar to above/joint projects</p>

a variety of different conferences, resource directories, workshops and seminars. Most often, such dynamics as mutual ownership, team building and conflict resolution have emerged from these cooperative activities. However, the lack of a paid coordinator to pull these projects together and/or the lack of time or money for the affiliated agencies in a County Network can stall such ventures.

The collaborative planning phase defines a somewhat sophisticated level of political and community interaction whose goal is new programs. Most often seen in those County Networks that have access to large agencies with many resources, they show the depth of knowledge of both program and policy development needed to create initiatives.

An important element in the success of inter-organizational networking is the personal characteristics and leadership style of the County Network leaders. An inducement to linking together in an inter-agency network is the fact that many members find it less authoritarian than a usual agency setting. "I think the key is for the coordinator to be a facilitator, rather than a chairperson," said one respondent. "It's that facilitation, rather than 'I'm the boss'...you really get the most out of people when they feel that ownership."

An additional motivation in participating in an inter-agency network is the opportunity for both professional and personal satisfaction. "You develop, you get so much further. Shared, good relationships with people are

valuable." Often, these satisfactions are not available, nor produced, in regular agency bureaucracies. "...even today, I will see people I worked with at the Network...who have taken off in their careers...it's always so exciting...then I, in turn got it (major career advancement), and passed the gift on."

So much of this type of growth and development is highlighted because of the inter-system approach in the Network. One County leader put it this way: "(the Network) has been a steppingstone to other agencies...not just with other health educators." Another advantage of the multi-disciplinary approach of the Network was suggested by the another County Network leader in that "everybody was happy with the individuals involved in the Network because it gave each agency greater visibility as well."

Inter-organizational networking also decreased the feeling of 'going it alone' so often faced by workers in large bureaucracies. "People can link together and work together and that way you don't feel so isolated...when you know contacts at another agency, and they know you, and you've got these contacts so you can help keep things moving and working."

Another, important measure of the success of inter-organizational networking is the sense of change in the system. One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents indicated that "cooperation between systems" and "a more comprehensive view of the issue" ranked as the most

important elements in changing the system. These views reflect a holistic perspective, as dealing effectively with adolescent pregnancy/teen parenting, drugs, alcohol, suicide, drop-outs, and illiteracy among youth, requires the collaborative efforts of all provider systems.

Of significance is the part that inter-organizational networking can play in the development of new thinking and new programs, and how these programs are implemented statewide. A new wrinkle in working with youth has been developed by such youth psychologists as Stephen Glenn, nationally-known youth researchers as Joy Dryfoos, and nationally-known organizations such as the Children's Defense Fund and the Center for Population Options. Their ideas and programs have been used by numerous local agencies, and are now being picked up by state agencies willing to fund such projects. These programs emphasize 'positive youth development' through enhancing their self-esteem, developing 'problem-solving skills,' and creating 'life options.' In some instances, these new approaches--focusing as they do on primary prevention-- have attracted new members to inter-agency networks.

People are also motivated to join the Network because "different aspects of teen pregnancy" are also addressed in many of the inter-agency networks. Numerous County Networks have expanded their focus to include special emphasis on involving parents, primary prevention, teen fathers, school-based infant day care, mental health services, and school

completion for the teen mother.

'New programs developed' was the seen as the third most important outcome of inter-organizational networking by 65% of the respondents. Creative projects include both special seminars at regularly-scheduled County Network meetings, as well as new services in the community, and statewide planning activities. The exchange of information, sharing of ideas and problem-solving in planning and developing new programs also greatly helps in working with groups with different ideologies.

This is apparent in the type of in-service seminars that have been used very successfully by County Networks. "We did a really good program on adoption, private versus agency adoption, that really awakened people, even in the Birthright group. When they realized what the implications were for private adoptions, they put that aside and started to work with agencies...and (to) understand that our intent was to protect the young mothers, and to do this in an above-board manner."

Many new programs still struggle to define their approach in working with adolescents. They feel under tremendous pressure from parents and funding sources to provide a staid, traditional approach that reflects community values when working with adolescents around sexuality issues. In another inter-agency networking seminar, a "Catholic diocese program came in. They did an all-day workshop. It was very good because most of the

groups tend to be 'middle-of-the-road' where they're not really very liberal. Agencies also want very conservative programs. We took the best of both worlds, put it together, and had a really good turnout."

Other programs instituted by various County Networks-- that show the value of the County Networks and have been institutionalized through successive years activities-- include professional conferences funded by the March of Dimes, 'male involvement' conferences, parent-teen communication workshops held at a local public library, family life education courses provided by agency personnel to supplement that of the mandated school-based curriculum, 'teen mom' support groups, 'teen father' peer groups, and grandparent support groups. The development of teen resource directories have long been a popular function of County Networks. The benefits derived have been numerous, and more than justified the time and effort expended. Business and industry have donated expertise and layout and printing costs, state agencies have paid for some of the teen resource directories, county voc-tech high schools have used them as apprentice jobs for their students, and agencies have used them to empower young people in their knowledge, decision-making and use of community resources.

Most responses on inter-organizational networking strengths related to a "neutral environment where all perspectives are encouraged." This particular inter-agency network was established as a program of a state university,

within the community organizing unit of the school of social work. This is significant, because it is in a neutral environment--with a statewide focus--rather than being the creation of a local agency or organization that itself would be competing for money, staff or other resources.

#### Statewide Network/Support Center

Both questionnaire and in-person respondents were asked to comment on the services of the statewide office of the Network. These services include: technical assistance and consultation; seminars, conferences, and training; publications, including a quarterly newsletter, and resource directories, in state and county editions; a resource center of printed and audio-visual materials; clearinghouse services; and statewide planning, policy and program development.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the above services in terms of their importance to them. In descending order, they indicated the following as important services:

- 100% Quarterly newsletter
- 88% Inter-county/regional networking
- 82% Annual Conference and Regional meetings
- 71% Technical Assistance; Resource Center;  
Resource Directories
- 65% County Contact/Leadership Seminars; Training
- 53% Program Development

Secretarial support services and copying facilities were not

viewed as important. This is in contrast to the earlier finding that 56% of the respondents need support services for their County Networks, and suggests that more information about this service needs to be circulated.

From these responses, the whole issue of information-sharing and the exchange of ideas with their peers appears most important to the County Network participants. This is accomplished in two ways, through meetings, and the printed word. The newsletter serves as the vehicle of this information flow; the county, annual and regional meetings and the County Contact seminars provide the in-person connections. As another source of information and assistance, the Network provides technical consultation, resource and clearinghouse services from the state level.

Another important aspect of the state office is the participation at the commissioner and director level in statewide planning and policy formulation. The Network is called upon by the staffs of the major state departments for technical assistance and consultation; is a member of half-a-dozen governor's councils, task forces and committees; and has written the statements, reports and chapters regarding adolescents for several recent studies, including adolescent pregnancy, prevention of developmental disabilities, and HIV. It is an important reciprocal process: the activities and experience of the County Networks reinforce the statewide planning and policy activities. The reverse is equally true.

A statewide center can provide many positive, successful activities. One respondent sees the statewide office as very important in doing her job: "the resource center, the technical assistance, the clearinghouse (services) are fantastic. You just call and get whatever you need. The newsletter is a big help, (in that) you get all the new books, and other resources...ditto the periodic mailings, like the fed RFP's, the AFDC regs, and so forth."

Respondents were also asked what additional services from the state Network were needed by them: specialized training--on computers, model programs, politics and legislation, grantsmanship/fund-raising--was the number one priority from the eight participants who responded. In addition, one respondent indicated the need for "more contact with school policy-makers" on both the local and state level in regards to pregnant and parenting adolescents.

Several respondents had some final comments on the workings of the state Network office that provide insight into the process of inter-organizational networking, and their perception of its strengths and limitations. Said one: "the Network has provided me with insights into how other professionals view their responsibilities. It has also challenged me to facilitate good working relationships among a variety of agencies." Two others indicated a type of concrete help the Network provides: support services in running mailing lists, sending out minutes and meeting

notices, and use of the tax number for the bank account of a County Network.

Lastly, one respondent indicated the dilemmas faced by so many of them in working at the local level, and with--sometimes--not much support from agency executive directors. She said that "networks are very important--not only for adolescent pregnancy--but for all social service agencies and issues. All counties should strive for consistent communication among services. Front-line staff are the backbone of networking because they can pass information directly to clients and see the benefits. Executive's involvement is secondary since information doesn't always trickle down."

The respondents noted that the benefits of a statewide support/resource/training center serve as a central source of information, assistance and publications has proven of benefit in most areas of social service activity.

#### Dimensions of Leadership

Three strategies for inter-organizational networking have emerged in this case study. Of the 17 respondents, including the three in-person interviews, six reflect a 'Grassroots Leader,' style, four operate in a 'Rising Star,' manner and seven operate in a 'Switchboard Connection,' leadership framework. (Figure II)

Before illustrating these three models, it is illuminating to see the responses to the question of "what

characteristics make a good County Network leader?" One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents, including the in-person interviewees, cited "facilitates meetings and allows for divergent viewpoints" as their first choice. Eighty two percent (82%) of the respondents chose (multiple responses were encouraged) five other dimensions as their second choice:

- \* facilitates exchanges among agencies
- \* enthusiasm (starred by two respondents)
- \* knows how to involve all of us
- \* respects diversity
- \* follow-through

Sense of vision and energy shared the third place choices, scored by 65% of the respondents.

#### Grassroots Leader

These people are the activists who both live and work in their local communities/counties, are perceived as leaders in their communities, are members of civic and community associations and involved in political activities, and are sought out in decision-making and problem-solving efforts by other community leaders. The inter-organizational networking has helped to expand the activists connections: "it's been a stepping-stone for me to other agencies, and to statewide meetings and access to materials, not just with other health educators."

Within the inter-organizational networking, their

activities most often focus on two of the three-identified arenas, mutual support and joint projects. For instance, Grassroots Leader has been a prototype in embracing teen parents and their families in the County Network activities. Of particular importance is the fact that she is able to garner widespread community support for the network activities. She is one of the few County Network contacts to include local associations, fraternities and sororities, municipal and state politicians, and churches in the County Network efforts. These have included a 'Teen Male' conference, Teen-Parent seminars at the local library, and 'Awareness Days' at the local community school. "Doors are opened to you first-hand through the Network that otherwise you'd never know about."

The "Grassroots Leader" is one of only six respondents who both lives and works in the same community, in this case a southern rural county, with a major urban center. She is also one of only three Blacks in the cohort of 20 respondents (this parallels the statewide norm of 17% Black population.) Grassroots has had a long career in working with adolescents, both as a Community Health Educator and as a former staff person with the YWCA. She has been with a hospital/medical center Family Planning program since its inception. She is a high school graduate, and has participated in numerous sex education, health education, family planning and adolescent development training seminars over the years. Grassroots Leader organized the local

County Network in January 1981, and has focused on mutual support and joint projects in the inter-organizational networking activities. (Figure II.) "The Network is a community resource, and I've grown in my job," said Grassroots Leader, "and in the community because of the Network."

The inter-agency networking has served as a catalyst in identifying gaps and developing programs for adolescents. "There never would have been as many prevention programs and service programs for adolescents," said Grassroots, "(the) Rutgers (connection) made it authentic: people stopped and listened, it opened doors, and everybody joined in. Previously, adolescent pregnancy, sex education and adolescent sexuality had been swept under the rug. With the Network, people began to pay attention."

While this seems overly optimistic, the state does now have a major commitment to adolescents: \$1.3 million dollars is provided under Title IVA/child welfare for services to pregnant, parenting and at-risk adolescents; a Governor's Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy was legislatively empowered; a half-million dollar teen mother residence, and a half-million dollar teen father program were initiated with foundation funding; the state is one of two involved in a federal demonstration program for teen parents receiving AFDC assistance; the state is one of thirty participating in a national effort at reducing premature and low birth weight infants called "Healthy

Figure II: Leadership Dimensions

Continuum of Inter-Agency Networking	Networking Patterns		
	Grassroots Leader	Rising Star	Switchboard Connection
Mutual Support	XX	XX	XX
Joint Projects	XX	XX	
Collaborative Planning		XX	

Mothers/Healthy Babies;" and has a nationally known and respected educational policy in grades K-12 in the public schools for 'Family Life Education,' which encompasses inter-personal relationships, family dynamics and personal growth, as well as sex education.

While the inter-agency networking has been quite successful in program and policy development, it has been less useful for political change. "I don't know how many of the 'liberal-minded' people actually wrote," said Switchboard Connection, "but I can tell you there were a lot of people who wouldn't hesitate to write, and get involved, and get down to the hearings, especially right-wing groups." With continued threats to abortion rights, this type of 'write/call/join/vote/march' activism has seen a resurgence in the liberal participants in County Network activities.

This Grassroots Leader--like the others she typifies-- is heavily involved in the educational, social, cultural and political life of her community, is sought out as a community leader, and has received numerous honors from educational, civic and community-based organizations. Grassroots is over 65 and widowed, and has been involved in community affairs for over 30 years. She belongs to, attends meetings of, and has presented papers/conducted workshops at the professional association of which she is a member. Most recently, she designed parent-teen communications seminars and arranged to hold them at the public library; and developed teen male conferences and

secured the involvement of the local chapters of Black fraternal organizations, the state university and a known Black male scholar/community activist from out-of-state.

### Rising Star

'Rising Star' is the up-and-coming version of a charismatic leader. They most often embody such personal characteristics as energy, enthusiasm and vision that gets translated in County Network activities by participation in the three primary arenas of inter-organizational networking: collaborative planning, as well as mutual support and joint projects. This leadership style is compatible with five of the survey respondents, as well as two of the leaders of municipal task forces on adolescent pregnancy not included in this case study.

For instance, Rising Star designed and implemented a 'Day on Campus' for teen mothers, where the young parents had an opportunity to meet with physicians and social workers and talk about infant development, child care, parenting education and community resources. This involved mobilizing some 30 agencies, securing city and county school superintendent support, identifying a state university site and involving and training undergraduates as facilitator-mentors, and getting funding from city and foundation sources. The program was so successful, it was later expanded to all 9th graders, then 7-8th graders, and built in a workshop for teachers and administrators, with the

local school system footing the entire cost, as a major primary prevention effort, "doing something for the girls before they're pregnant."

This major collaborative effort paid off in the sense of these agencies and organizations having a future together, around this one project, (the program was picked up and continues to be funded by the local school system), as well as other efforts, such as sexual/health education classes to augment mandated Family Life Education/Sex Education courses. Rising Star has included all three scenarios in this inter-agency network: mutual support, joint projects and collaborative planning.

The regularly-scheduled meetings--a combination of topical presentations and inter-agency sharing, and rotated at agency sites among the membership--are an example of the mutual support phase. The 'Day on Campus' represents the joint project phase, and her efforts to get comprehensive programming within the county--including work with the local human services advisory funding council, and development of a program for teen fathers--illustrates the collaborative planning phase.

The 'Rising Star' model is different from 'Grassroots Leader' in that it represents a more professional orientation, with accompanying credentials, and perhaps distance and 'detachment' of someone not tied to the locale. One such Rising Star is an oldest child, is married with two college-aged children, in her late 40's, and has her

Master's degree as a Nurse/Clinician. She is a Project Coordinator in a Community Mental Health Center in center state, with an urban-suburban mix, where she has worked for the last 11 years. Though trained as a clinician/therapist, this Rising Star presently works in the 'Consultation & Education' unit of the CMHC. As part of her C&E functions, she has served as the half-time Coordinator of the local County Network, which she organized in June 1981. Her other responsibilities have involved work with suicide "survivors," those family and friends who are left after their relative or friend commits suicide.

After she returned to work after raising her two children, Rising Star has had the advantage of a very supportive executive director/mentor who has helped move her along in the system and the profession. This has become apparent in that Rising Star belongs to, attends meetings of, has presented papers/conducted workshops at, and is an officer of several national professional associations of which she is a member. She is also an author and co-editor in the area of suicide and its aftermath, and is gaining national recognition in that field.

Further, within the County Network system, she was the first to initiate a variety of activities which have since been replicated by other County Networks. These include a "Day on Campus" for middle school students within a sexual/health education seminar; major multi-disciplinary participation; securing substantial 'release time' for

County Network activities from her agency; design and implementation of a support service/home visits/parenting skills/therapeutic nursery for 'high-risk' teen parents; and development of and support for an alternative school program for pregnant adolescents and teen parents.

### Switchboard Connection

The 'Switchboard Connection' style is seen in seven of the respondents as well as three of the city task forces not included in this case study. 'Connection' is most often seen in those County Network leaders who work in large bureaucracies and still manage to provide a major portion of the continuum of inter-organizational networking--mutual support--despite the constraints to which hierarchies are prone. In most instances, though, the county network leader acts as a "telephone operator" in providing information and referral, and mutual support, rather than being involved at another level, such as joint projects or planning activities. (Figure II.)

In many of the agencies represented in a County Network, the worker or supervisor is often the only person in that organization working in adolescent pregnancy or teen parenting programs. For them, the sense of isolation can be overpowering. The mutual support they receive in the County Networks are one effective means of reducing that feeling. While the support often emanates from the 'old boy/new woman' personal networking, it evolves into such systems

networking dynamics as the exchange of ideas, information-sharing, and case conferencing. (Figure II)

'Switchboard Connection' and the six other similar County Networks have remained focused on that arena of inter-organizational networking. This occurs, in part, because the amount of material crossing their desks and coming to their attention so often results in an 'information explosion' with which they can't deal. County Network affiliation and access to divergent viewpoints allows them to sort through, understand, prioritize, and manage the information.

Focusing on mutual support also permits them to take the time needed to develop the trust and confidence needed to move into joint projects or collaborative planning, if they so choose. It is instructive to note, however--in a review of County Network meeting minutes, newsletter articles, correspondence, grants, and participant-observation at County Network meetings--that these County Networks have not moved into the other two arenas.

This may be due, in part, to the perception that County Network participation uniquely meets personal and professional needs of its members. Meeting attendance is an opportunity to see how members think and feel they are contributing to social change--development of the Family Life Education policy, or Social Service Block Grant funds earmarked for adolescent programs, for example--as well as being warmly attentive to each other, respecting diversity,

and valuing each others experience.

The 'Switchboard Connection,' while agency-driven, is comparable in professional orientation to 'Rising Star,' though not yet at Rising's level. Being in an agency bureaucracy, they are acutely aware of the tremendous needs for mutual support, sharing of ideas, case-conferencing and problem-solving: all of which they focus on in their Network activities.

She is in her early thirties and is one of the youngest County Network leaders. She is the oldest of eight children, is married with two small children and has her R.N., and a Master's degree as a Family Nurse Clinician. She has coordinated a grant-funded adolescent pregnancy project within a major medical center/teaching hospital in a rural county for the past six years. She does not belong to a professional association, and in fact, strives for an equal balance between her professional and personal life. This often precludes her from extensive, time-consuming, after-work participation in professional and work-related activities.

A variation of 'Switchboard' was found in three counties. The county leadership works in major bureaucratic institutions, and struggled to organize and maintain County Networks on adolescent pregnancy. Instead, the County Network activities have been subsumed under either county youth services commissions or health coalitions. The commissions focus on all youth issues; the health coalitions

focus on adult and youth services. In effect, the County Network members have become the 'adolescent specialists' for these already existing, successful--and well-funded--coalitions. They maintain a presence for and provide visibility to the issues of teen pregnancy, parenting and prevention and the agencies involved in service delivery.

### Summary of Findings

Many advantages to inter-organizational networking were found. These include respect for diversity, the creation of positive, successful programs, the development of school and agency linkages, increased reciprocity and communication, and the participation of representatives from all the service systems concerned about pregnant adolescents, teen parents and those at risk.

It is also clear that there are major limitations to inter-agency networking. These include the lack of involvement of agency executives, little impact in the political system and no funding to support inter-organizational networking activities.

The most important finding is that inter-organizational networking does exist, can be maintained, and has many positive characteristics which strengthen the capacity for agencies and organizations to more effectively do their jobs. The concept of inter-organizational networking,--as opposed to personal, support system networking--is a viable entity.

Secondly, that within this concept have emerged three major functions. These are mutual support, joint projects, and collaborative planning. These arenas are not mutually exclusive, and County Networks operate between and among them at various stages in the life of the network. The scope of activities in mutual support include idea- and information-sharing. The dynamics include trust, enthusiasm and respect for diversity; the barriers are skepticism, competition and hidden agendas.

In like manner, the team-building, mutual ownership and problem-solving attitude that are built into the 'joint projects' process result in real 'products:' conferences, resource directories and linkages. The obstacles can be formidable, however, and include 'turf and territoriality,' and the simple but complex "no time and no money" problem of most County Networks.

The third phase--and again, one is not better than the other, only different, and many County Networks move back and forth among the phases--talks to 'future together.' Most often seen in those networks which have lasted for more than three years, they exhibit a sustained, comprehensive approach to dealing with adolescent issues. They still have to deal with the same barriers that impinge on the joint projects. Local needs, leadership and programs dictate what type of functions the local County Network's concentrate their activities.

The last major finding is that three leadership

scenarios illustrate the most common patterns in inter-organizational networking. They are **Grassroots Leader**, **Rising Star**, and **Switchboard Connection**. The respondents are about evenly divided among the three patterns.

Grassroots is the community activist model, utilizing mutual support and joint projects within the County Network; Rising exemplifies the up-and-coming charismatic leader, employing all three functions within the County Network; and Switchboard typifies those working in, and constrained by, major hierarchical bureaucracies, to the point where mutual support and 'information and referral' become their main County Network activities.

Other findings include the fact that many of the County Networks--having begun as a 'single-issue' entity, focusing solely on adolescent pregnancy--have enlarged their activities. They now include all inter-related issues of youth in their mission. This is a result of their finding that adolescents are a particularly under-served population. So many of the County Networks address teen parenting, adoption, prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, AIDS, drop-outs, literacy, primary health care, family life education, school completion, and youth employment.

This is a real substantive change, but one that appears to have been accepted and integrated into the inter-organizational networking concept. This is due, in part no doubt, to the fact that the County Networks still remain the place for pregnancy/parenting issues to be resolved. In

addition, there has been real support from the statewide resource and support center at Rutgers for this change.

Another important finding is that differing ideologies can come together under one auspice to address youth issues. The neutral environment of the County Networks has accomplished this. The County Networks have provided both a setting to examine other viewpoints, as well as the mechanism to work with different ideologies around dealing with youth issues.

In fact, it was found that money is more important than ideology in terms of maintaining the County Networks. The major obstacles are resource issues: lack of both time and money. The lack of time (to attend meetings, to work on County Network projects, to plan and conceptualize) and the lack of a paid coordinator were much more important to the respondents than ideological persuasion. Seventy five percent (75%) said that the lack of a paid coordinator was a real barrier to their inter-organizational networking functions.

Another barrier was the lack of effective political participation, as a result of County Network activities. Inter-organizational networking proved far less useful at political change than at program development. Unlike "political" coalitions concerned about the environment, wildlife or nuclear power, the inter-organizational networking has thus far been focused around client service, system change and professional development, rather than

political shifts.

The range of inter-organizational relationships was another finding. Everybody is involved in the inter-organizational networking. Not just the expected participants--from family planning, schools, public assistance and child welfare services--but private agencies, mental health, community-based organizations, county government, employment services, and business and industry, among others. This approach really validates the systems change focus so many of the County Networks emphasize.

The mix of agencies represented in the study led to two additional findings. The inter-system approach and communication are two strong characteristics of inter-organizational networking. These were tied as a first response by the survey participants. These are important in that the County Networks activities offer satisfactions not produced by normal agency bureaucracies. County Networks are also less authoritarian than most agencies and organizations.

The significance of a centralized resource and support center--with capacity for county and regional outreach--is highlighted in the finding that 100% of the respondents find the quarterly newsletter useful in their work. Eighty eight percent (88%) express the same satisfaction regarding regular meetings, and 2/3 have a positive response to the regularly-scheduled Leadership Seminars held for the County Contacts.

Another outcome of the inter-organizational networking is the finding around agency visibility, knowledge and trust. Eighty eight percent (88%) increased their client referrals as a result of inter-organizational networking activities. Eighty two percent (82%) engaged in program development with other agencies because of their participation in the County Network.

Other positive outcomes of inter-organizational networking include publications. These include a guidebook to starting a local network; a 140-person survey on linkages, accessibility, training and evaluation developed into the study No Easy Answers; the quarterly newsletter has been published for 10 years; and a dozen teen resource guides have been developed over as many years, as part of different County Networks joint projects.

They range from plastic, wallet-sized cards to book covers that include agency information as well as telephone tips for teens on how to contact organizations. Funding has been secured from local March of Dimes affiliates, health departments and voc-tech high school 'in-kind' contributions. These efforts incorporate the essence of team-building, mutual ownership and problem-solving required in cooperative, joint projects.

Collaborative planning, the third characteristic of inter-organizational networking, talks to 'a future together.' While most County Networks have not been able to engage in real strategic planning because of fiscal and

staff constraints (remember that except for two counties, the leadership is all carried out by people with full-time agency jobs), there clearly is a sense of being involved for the long haul.

At the recent Annual Meeting of one city-wide Network, the retiring chairperson admitted to recent struggles in maintaining the Network. She also said emphatically that, in reviewing the last two years, the 50-member group decided that a health coalition was on its way out, and that the Network was the "only sustained effort in town for teenagers." So while sophisticated planning efforts may not be realistic in these local networks, the sense of serving adolescents well, recognizing the inter-related issues of youth, and bringing an integrative sense of 'care-commitment-and concern' to their present and future work is evident.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

This case study focuses on how agency and community-based organization people come together, stay together, and work together in an inter-organizational network. What have we learned from this example, and can this model be replicated to other social work issues?

The recent report of the Governor's Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy has only one highlighted comment: "There is still a lack of coordination between levels of government agencies, between private agencies and government, and between agencies." (Alternatives, 1988) This is reminiscent of Reid's dictum of a quarter century ago (and echoed by Kahn, Brager and Litwak) about the lack of cooperation and collaboration among agencies. Information gleaned from this study indicates this need not be so.

This problem persists today because health, education, welfare and other social service systems are still prone to fragmentation in services, a reduced federal role in social services, greater complexity in the populations at risk, duplication of effort, gaps in programs, lack of local/regional/statewide/or national planning activities that are integrated, struggling to learn computer technologies, 'turf and territoriality' problems, overwhelmed with masses of complex information, and ineffective means of transmitting

any kind of information. These are serious deficiencies in these systems. They leave adolescents and the professionals, community people and their parents attempting to work with them at an extreme disadvantage in trying to negotiate these systems.

There is a need to develop a methodology for assisting adolescents, their parents and professionals deal with the dysfunctional system behaviour with which they are confronted. The Network on Adolescent Pregnancy explored in this case study is one such mechanism. Now in its eleventh year, the Network has focused on process, on information-sharing, exchange of ideas, community development, mutual support, joint projects, collaborative planning, training, publications, systems change and advocacy.

The activities of the Network occur on the local level, in County Networks. In addition to the eighteen (18) County Networks now organized, no less than five municipal networks have also been created in the last four years. An important element of this inter-organizational networking is the existence of a statewide support and resource center, located in the state university.

The County Networks and the statewide Network center have produced tangible results, including the development of new policies around alternative educational programs for pregnant students, creation of school-based infant child care, and care for HIV positive adolescents. In addition, residences for teen mothers, primary prevention efforts in the form of family life

education programs in schools and community agencies and programs for parents and teens together have been developed, and quarterly statewide newsletters, a handbook on starting networks and two research studies have been produced.

The Network--formed 10 years ago--has gone from creating social awareness and action responses to on-going 'community-building:' as a vehicle for empowering professionals, as a statewide resource center, providing a methodology for statewide planning and policy formulation, and as a mechanism for linking scholarship with practice. Direct service issues remain problematic.

### Theory

Theory was the basis for this case study. Theory and research have shown that inter-organizational relationships are fraught with difficulty. Reid, Rose, and Patti and Resnick all comment on the problems of developing and maintaining agency linkages, organizational conflicts, and resistance to change. This case example shows that inter-organizational networking can be done, but that it needs supports to sustain itself.

Theory shows that systems linkages are necessary to effective social services functioning and provision of services to clients. Levine and White, Litwak and Hylton, Aiken and Hage, and Trist all discuss the absolute importance of cooperative programming, communication, access to resources by all agencies, and awareness of inter-dependence in social

service organizations. This model supports these organizational traits. Further, it also shows that long-term efforts do pay off.

Theory demonstrates that agency executives can and do relate well to each other. Sarason, Franklin and Kittredge, Flaherty and Martin, and Wineburg all suggest a new way of executives "doing business" by re-defining agency activities, developing creative new uses of resources, and re-shaping traditional funding patterns. These, in turn, would re-mold agency environments for all staff. One result of inter-organizational networking is that supervisors and line workers can enjoy the same type of collegial and inter-agency relationships as executives.

Theory shows that so often agencies and workers feel they have no voice in policy formulation or systems change. Perlmutter and Slavin, Landau, and Weiner each illustrate the problems of large, hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations. This project shows that agencies can do business in a different way, can create a forum and a voice through linking scholarship and practice, and can create changes in the social service environment that empower clients and professionals alike. In short, inter-organizational networking can be a powerful tool for more effective services to clients in need, as well as a force for social change. For changes in the bureaucracy, we have to look for genuine restructuring of hierarchical organizations. Some of the processes identified in inter-organizational networking can help.

### New Concepts

Based on the findings of this case study, several new concepts emerged. These include new language and several scenarios illustrative of both actual practice and a process continuum.

Of major significance is the fact that this type of community organizing is not properly accounted for by the much-used term 'networking.' This has traditionally been utilized in describing personal relationships, as in 'old boy network' or 'new woman network.' While personal relationships were an important part of the activities, this type of activity is focused on systems, on change, and on process.

The time is at hand for agencies and organizations to rethink the 'business as usual' mode of operating: clearly this has not worked for so many of the clients with whom we provide services. Lack of coordination, duplication of effort and fragmentation of services have plagued social services for three decades. New methodologies are needed to deal with the complex, complicated technologies with which we are confronted. So, this study suggests the term **inter-organizational networking** as one of these mechanisms. The use of this term separates it from the personal networking as well as the time-limited coalition approach.

This case study also points out several phases of inter-organizational networking employed by the various county entities. These include mutual support, joint projects and

collaborative planning. The phases are not seen as better than one or the other, or as a stepping-stone from one to the other, although they may be. Rather, they are merely different from one another. Mutual support, for instance, is construed as being of assistance in creating contacts with other agency personnel, particularly when dealing with large bureaucracies, such as child welfare services. Joint projects are seen as developing a cooperative nature between and among the various agency players. Collaborative planning is most often integrative of the efforts of such a continuum, and speaks of a future together.

The inter-organizational networking grid as described in Chapter Four depicts the process, scope of activities, dynamics and barriers involved in inter-organizational networking as reported in the interviews and surveys, and culled from the archives of the County Networks. For instance, the mutual support phase is more personal than the other two, as the dynamics and barriers indicate. The experience in this case study is that it takes three years to develop the level of trust and confidence that may move a County Network into the joint project or collaborative planning phase.

It is interesting to note that with the amount and complexity of information transmitted to professionals on a daily basis however, many County Networks choose to stay in the mutual support phase. Not only is the crush of information from all the systems involved in County Networks

too much for any one individual or agency to handle, there is also the issue of staff and financial resources with which to act upon the information: to move into the joint project phase may be too costly in both people and money terms.

Another concept suggested by this case study is that of 'scenarios,' or patterns of community-based inter-organizational networking practice. These include the 'Grassroots Leader,' or community activist, the 'Rising Star,' or emerging charismatic leader, and the 'Switchboard Connection' or worker embedded in a bureaucracy. The three models operate in different phases in the inter-organizational networking continuum. For example, 'Grassroots Leader'--by dint of involvement in and leadership of local organizations and community activities--is able to operate in both the mutual support and joint project phase.

On the other hand, 'Connection' has severe constraints on how they relate to other agencies, in as much as they are enmeshed in a traditional, hierarchical organization. The experience of these last types of County Networks is that they often remain in the mutual support phase, focusing on exchanging information, sharing ideas and case conferencing. Meanwhile, 'Rising Stars'--by virtue of their own personality, their ability to motivate others and their use of resources--is able to move back and forth among the three phases, and accomplish each equally well.

Of note is the fact that while most of the County Network leaders are not social workers, many of the skills they

utilize are basic social work skills. Respect for diversity, facilitates, and allows for divergent viewpoints reflect core social work values. 'Rising Star' and 'Switchboard Connection' may have had access to some social work education in their health training; most likely 'Grassroots Leader' has none in her background. Of the three, it is most likely that social work skills would be an enhancement to her own natural gifts.

Lastly, inter-organizational networking shows the extent to which the various service systems can be involved in mutual efforts. While the obstacles to this are real and can be daunting, this case study shows that it can be accomplished. These barriers, of course, point to the need for further research.

#### Implications for Policy and Practice

There were numerous surprises. These related to the lack of social work involvement, the diversity of the networks, their fragile nature, the long-term nature of this network, the lack of social work interest in community organizing, the need for more primary prevention activities, and the need for practice to be more closely linked with scholarship, particularly in publications that merge theory with community-based activities.

Another unexpected response was the extent to which local networks use the connection with the state network--which is a program of the school of social work of the state university--to add to their own credibility, legitimacy and

authority in dealing with local officials, school superintendents, state representatives and agency executives.

The fact that only three of the 17 respondents are social workers (two have MSW's) is troubling, because it illustrates the severe lack of social workers in community organizing/development or in the health field, other than hospital-based medical social work. The social workers in this sample are not in family planning, sex/health education nor in community-based health centers or local departments of health.

This is cause for concern, since a trend analysis of youth services in the '90's and moving toward the 21st century indicates the need for more health-trained professionals. AIDS, preventive social and health services, occupational health and employee assistance/wellness promotion programs and sex education can be new arenas of social work practice. Social workers are in a unique position to fulfill these provider roles, if the profession can create more of an emphasis on public service.

This emphasis can include new attention to public child welfare services. The state Network office is funded through CWS support, and the first year of the project focused special attention on their local District Offices. It became quite clear that adolescents receive very little attention the way services are now structured. In addition, children under 10 receive scant attention if they are not in child abuse or neglect situations. As noted before, inter-organizational

networking cannot make up for the lack of needed services. This points up the need to take a fresh look at the provision of child welfare services, and social work involvement, in general.

Another concern that this case study raises is the lack of social work involvement in community organization/community development. Inter-organizational networking is a classic example of community organizing, a traditional focus of social work. Again, like health care, until the profession can create more of an interest in the public arena, we will continue to be under-represented in these arenas of social change, and denied access to opportunities to shape social policy.

It may be fruitful to think in terms of some kind of certification or licensure for community organization/development specialists (presently, social work licensing only covers therapists) to help build stature and recognition for this particular branch of social work. A part of C.O. focuses on primary prevention, and certification would give prevention the attention it also needs.

This case study also points up the importance of the link of scholarship to practice, in this instance, community organizing practice. This needs to be strengthened if social work is to be involved in policy and planning dimensions of such major community issues as homelessness, illiteracy, school drop-outs, domestic violence, and job development and training. But as with the two preceding issues, not much can

be accomplished until the profession pays more attention to public service.

Short of a fundamental restructuring of society and elimination of poverty, what do the study findings suggest about practice issues in dealing with adolescent pregnancy and inter-organizational relationships? Major funding by the Ford Foundation in MDRC's Project Redirection has shown, for example, that comprehensive and coordinated services and sustained effort make a difference in the lives of young people. One year projects are meaningless: it is the long-term Head Starts and Manpower Development and Research Corporation-type programs that have the most chance of success. Again, the importance of public CWS in working with adolescents, for instance, cannot be underestimated. But public assistance and CWS illustrate the problem of continued fragmentation of social services. Added to that is the lack of any services in some neighborhoods and areas. Inter-organizational networking could be one method to bridge this gap.

We also know there is "no single best answer" to the multiplicity of problems which adolescents face. Two methods that could be considered to address these problems include the stipulation that all agencies applying for Social Services Block Grant or Community Development Block Grant funds be participating members of their local County Network. This could initiate the process of knowing, utilizing and trusting other agencies that serve youth. Thus, the system of linking

and coordinating agencies to serve adolescents in a comprehensive manner would be created.

In addition, efforts must be centered on restructuring government agencies to link social services to schools and to health agencies for improved services to adolescents. This should include re-allocation of funds and joint budgeting, not just improved communication.

The involvement of the schools in this inter-agency network cannot be overlooked. Most students are still in school, and social service agencies must continually reach out to schools and involve them in community activities. The schools participation in the County Networks is truly remarkable when considering the constraints under which schools operate. Different training, values, logistics, language and problem definitions often conspire to exclude teachers and other school personnel from involvement in community-based activities. One answer to this on-going dilemma is, of course, to increase the numbers, role and function, and authority of school social workers. Barring that, there is the new development of school 'crisis workers.' Their role is to work with the student, family and neighborhood to enhance the youth's opportunities for success. These are brand-new positions, created by one large urban school district with a high drop-out rate. As part of their job, these workers regularly attend County Network meetings, since "this is the only place where I can find out what's going on." The initial impression is that these crisis

workers have made an impact on the drop-out rate, and could be a model for other districts.

The need for more active outreach and inclusion in County Networks is shown by the few numbers of religious, business and industry, juvenile justice agencies, media and mental health centers involved. Church participation is particularly critical in terms of increased awareness, parental involvement and the use of a multi-cultural approach by service providers. This is especially important within the Black and Latino communities, and in major urban centers.

Juvenile justice participation is also pertinent, now that mental health facilities are being shut down and with the child welfare system overloaded. Adolescents are now appearing in greater numbers in other systems, like the justice system. Business and industry are important because of 'work force' issues, training and job opportunities, and the creation of the next generation of productive employees.

Business can be--and in some localities already is--a major player in providing in-kind services, management expertise, and/or funding for adolescent programs. In some County Networks they have provided office equipment, in others they have given technical and creative expertise to joint projects, and in others they specifically fund certain youth programs. Current efforts at welfare reform--and school reforms also--point up the need for public/private 'partnerships' in working with young people.

Lack of mental health involvement in inter-organizational

networking is also a concern. In many states, health and mental health agencies are split. Lack of funding for adolescent services make it difficult for many CMHC's to be involved in community-based activities, like inter-organizational networking.

The participation of child care providers in the County Networks may become more active. This can occur for two reasons. First, teen parents need child care in order to remain in school and/or work. As important, child care is a critical primary prevention measure, in providing both Head Start opportunities for pre-school children, or after-school care for pre-teens. Both of these type of child care arrangements are now seen by many professionals as major adolescent pregnancy prevention measures.

A policy consideration in improving services to adolescents is to consider the experience of other countries. Not much has been done in the four years since a major international study found that the United States leads the industrialized world in its rate of adolescent pregnancy. While there are certainly cultural and social differences between America and the European and Scandinavian countries that were studied, there are still policy initiatives that do pertain to us. These include the provision of school-based health services, access to contraceptive devices, universal child care and development of family life education/sex education curriculums in both schools and community agencies. All of these could help develop healthy, educated and

productive adolescents.

While we know that sustained effort is needed by schools and agencies in working with adolescents, the fact that the Network has lasted this long is a surprise. Coalitions--and many networks--are generally short-lived. Experience has shown that once an issue is dealt with, a consortium generally outlives its usefulness. This network continues to function--and meet clearly-defined needs--as a technical assistance, planning, policy development, training, resource, information and referral, publications and clearinghouse service for professionals, community leaders, and government officials around all adolescent issues.

An important aspect of this case study is that it shows how fragile inter-organizational networking is. Without a 'point person' and some funding, inter-organizational networking remains elusive. It is also considered a 'luxury' in times of funding cutbacks or 'status quo.' Further, there is often the expectation that inter-organizational networking will make up for the lack of available services.

This last perception--coupled with the fact that 'process' is as important to inter-organizational networking as 'product'--continues the unfair notion that networking is 'all things to all people.' Inter-organizational networking is no substitute for needed services. Similarly, the mere fact of getting agency representatives from health, education, welfare, government, and community-based organizations to come together, work together and produce is in itself a major

'outcome.'

This is not to deny more traditional definitions of 'product' as examples of inter-organizational networking. The ten years of this county and statewide network have seen innumerable teen, parent and professional conferences, seminars, workshops and in-service training; teen resource directories; three editions of a statewide resource book for professionals; a 140-person research study on linkages, accessibility, training and evaluation; a report to the governor on adolescent pregnancy, teen parenting and prevention; and 10 years of a quarterly newsletter distributed to 3,000 people. All of this accomplished with minimal funding.

Increased attention to adolescents, with resulting new services, can also be attributed to inter-organizational networking efforts. These include two national foundation-funded school-based clinics; 29 state-funded school-based youth services programs; participation as one of thirty states in the 'Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies' coalitions; and initiatives around AIDS and adolescents; and \$1.3M in public CWS funding for programs for pregnant, parenting and at-risk adolescents.

But process remains the main 'product' of inter-organizational networking. Probably it also accounts for its elusiveness: new faces, a shifting political climate, funding constraints, a murky community organizing concept, and a traditional focus on pathology--rather than community

strengths and problem-solving--often mitigate against understanding of process and of effective inter-organizational networking. This case study shows that inter-organizational networking is both a powerful tool and an elusive goal.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

The case study method, employed in this study, is an appropriate approach to eliciting the in-depth qualitative data required to learn about this phenomenon. The 'chain of evidence' required to corroborate interview and survey material is a unique vehicle to further enhance first-person information. In this case study, this evidence included minutes of meetings, correspondence, conference material, publications and archival material from the County Networks. The participant-observer role in a case study approach is comparable to the classic case recording/progress notes approach in casework. It may not, however, approach the in-depth "psychological" profiles employed by analysts-therapists.

Some further issues regarding the active participation of this researcher in Network activities should be noted. Though there are issues with the self-as-researcher, already acknowledged in the Methodology section, they are difficult to assess. Since the County Networks are autonomous units, and do not rely on the statewide Network for funding, there are no political or financial ramifications from having participated in the study. Furthermore, since the study is of

the County Networks and not individual agencies, vested interests are minimized. On the other hand, the participant-observer researcher did have an added benefit: access to names and addresses in order to carry out the study. Due to the confidentiality of the Network mailing list, they would not have been readily available to others interested in researching the Network.

The limitations of the case study, however, are also noticeable. It would be instructive, for instance, to compare this study with one in which there was more male involvement and more financial support. It would appear these factors would make considerable difference in both the process and outcome of inter-organizational networking. Another approach could be to re-do the study from a feminist framework, and contrast that with previous research on leadership, such as Erickson's and Levinson's studies of male leaders.

It might also be useful if the sample was larger. The numbers here were 17 mail surveys and three in-person interviews, representing an urban, suburban and rural mix, and a Black-white ratio reflective of this state's population. A study of an urban center network--with a fair mix of Blacks, whites and Latinos--might prove to be a very different study, as might one in which targeted funding--as in AIDS issues--was a factor.

Lastly, it would be instructive to evaluate the extent to which social work is involved in the 'public service' of land-grant, state universities in such social policy arenas

as the issues focused on in this example of inter-organizational networking. Again, this might prove to be a new field of practice for social work involvement.

### Summary

The findings of this case study are generalizable to other arenas of social work practice. The patterns that were shown, and inter-organizational networking continuum that emerged, can be replicated in other spheres. Already the inter-organizational networking model is being used to develop a county-based AIDS service organization network, a statewide child welfare collaboration around state budget initiatives, and health-focused peri-natal cooperatives.

This case study looked at one organization that is a microcosm of so many other social service efforts. It points up the nature of inter-organizational relationships, the way service providers from different systems are linked to each other and the way this affects the delivery of services.

A major challenge for inter-organizational networking is to secure the resources with which to do the job. Of interest is the fact that inter-agency networks remain fragile entities, because of the limited resources now available to them. Discussions with the half-time paid coordinator of one County Network--a 'Rising Star' type model--indicate that a change in leadership left the group in a position in which they had to re-constitute themselves. The change occurred over the summer, a 'down time' in many agency activities. The

fall and winter schedule became a time of 'catch up' for this particular group. It is clear that sustained effort and consistent leadership are crucial to effective inter-agency network functioning. It may also be that professionalization of some community organizing functions could help solve the turnover problem.

Barriers to inter-organizational networking are not settled issues. Power and control, turf and territoriality, lack of both a comprehensive approach and coordination among agencies are long-standing problems in social services. They are also reasons why inter-organizational networking has such a risky quality to it. Attempting an empowering, non-judgmental approach can be threatening to some of those involved.

This is also why inter-organizational networking continues to be a discovery: a belief that real power in the community organizing arena is collective; that diversity can change attitudes and behavior; that process, new language and a new way of thinking can help agencies operate more effectively for clients; and that advocacy, empowerment and systems change will occur in communities as a result of inter-organizational networking.

Research Instruments  
Inter-agency Networking

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

A. Type of Agency \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
(i.e., Social Services, Family Planning, School)

B. Position in Agency \_\_\_\_\_

C. Years with Agency \_\_\_\_\_

D. Profession \_\_\_\_\_

E. Highest degree: H.S. Graduate \_\_\_ BA/BS \_\_\_ MSW \_\_\_  
MA/MS \_\_\_ PH.D. \_\_\_

F. Do you live in the community in which you work? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

G. 1) Do you belong to a professional association?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

2) Do you attend meetings of the professional association?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

3) Have you presented papers/conducted workshops at the professional association?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

4) Are you/have you been an officer in the professional association?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

H. 1) Age: 0-24 \_\_\_ 25-34 \_\_\_ 35-44 \_\_\_ 45-54 \_\_\_ 55-64 \_\_\_ 65+ \_\_\_

2) Sex: M \_\_\_ F \_\_\_

3) Race: Black \_\_\_ White \_\_\_ Latino/a \_\_\_ Carribean \_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_ Other(specify) \_\_\_

4) Marital Status: single/never married / ~~married~~ \_\_\_ separated/divorced \_\_\_ widowed \_\_\_

5) Living Arrangements: live alone \_\_\_ w/spouse/partner \_\_\_  
w/children( ) \_\_\_ w/other relatives \_\_\_  
w/friends, roomates, etc. \_\_\_

II. COUNTY NETWORK INVOLVEMENT

A. Approximate date joined County Network: \_\_\_\_\_

B. How often do you attend meetings? Always \_\_\_ Often \_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_ Never \_\_\_

C. How many other people generally attend those meetings? 0-5 \_\_\_ 6-10 \_\_\_ 11-14 \_\_\_ 15-20 \_\_\_ 21-25 \_\_\_  
26-30 \_\_\_ 31-35 \_\_\_ 35+ \_\_\_

D. What other agencies are represented at the meetings? (Check all that apply)

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ___ DYFS                | ___ VIC                       |
| ___ CMB/BSS             | ___ Churches                  |
| ___ Health Department   | ___ Courts/Juvenile Justice   |
| ___ Family Plng./PP     | ___ Private Agencies (such as |
| ___ CNHC                | YN-YMCA's, Birthright)        |
| ___ Family Counseling   | ___ Other (specify)           |
| ___ Business & Industry | _____                         |
| ___ Schools             |                               |

## APPENDIX A

E. 1) Do you have contact with the staff of the agencies in 'D' at times other than the County Network meetings? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

2) Around what areas: (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ Client Referral                      \_\_\_ Program Development  
 \_\_\_ Case Conferencing                \_\_\_ Legislation  
 \_\_\_ Joint Program                      \_\_\_ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

3) Have you increased your interaction with any of the agencies in 'D' since participating in the County Network? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

4) Around what areas:

\_\_\_ Client Referral                      \_\_\_ Program Development  
 \_\_\_ Case Conferencing                \_\_\_ Legislation  
 \_\_\_ Joint Program                      \_\_\_ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

5) Have any of the other agencies in 'D' increased their interaction with your agency as a result of County Network activities? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

6) Do you feel a more reciprocal relationship has developed between your agency and those listed in 'D' as a result of your county Network participation? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

7) Around what areas: (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ Cooperative activities              \_\_\_ Communication  
 (with more than 2 agencies)        \_\_\_ Client Referral  
 \_\_\_ Collaborative Planning            \_\_\_ Client Treatment  
 \_\_\_ Joint Programs                      \_\_\_ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

F. What do you see as obstacles to interagency networking? (check all that apply and rank order your first and second choices)

\_\_\_ Competition among services  
 \_\_\_ Duplication of services  
 \_\_\_ Staffing cutbacks/funding constraints  
 \_\_\_ Ideological differences  
 \_\_\_ Dominance of one agency/director  
 \_\_\_ "Turf" issues  
 \_\_\_ My agency won't let me be involved in the network  
 \_\_\_ I don't have time to be involved  
 \_\_\_ Interagency networking is not a priority in my agency  
 \_\_\_ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

G. Why does networking succeed? (check all that apply and rank order your first and second choice)

\_\_\_ Communication among agencies  
 \_\_\_ Trust between agencies  
 \_\_\_ A pattern of cooperation among agencies  
 \_\_\_ Planning for future projects  
 \_\_\_ A neutral environment where all perspectives are encouraged  
 \_\_\_ Facilitative leadership

## APPENDIX A

- Multi-level participation (direct services, supervisory, executive director)
- Inter-system involvement (health, education, child welfare, juvenile justice, recreation, religious, mental health, etc.)
- Respect for diversity
- Multi-disciplinary (health educators, social workers, teachers, youth workers, public administrators, etc.)
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## H. What are the major problems of your County Network? (check all that apply)

- Lack of a paid coordinator
- No funding for support services
- No funding for joint projects
- Lack of support from agency directors/executives
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## I. What characteristics do you think make a good County Network leader? (check all that apply)

- Good listener
- Facilitates exchanges among agencies
- Facilitates meetings and allows for divergent viewpoints
- Sense of vision
- Enthusiasm
- Energy
- Knows how to involve all of us
- Supportive
- Respects diversity
- Constructive problem-solving
- Constructive conflict resolution
- Follow-through

## J. Have there been changes in the social services system as a result of Networking? (check all that apply and rank order your first and second choices)

- Policy formulation
- Involvement in the political process by professionals/clients
- Cooperation between systems (health, education, child welfare, etc.)
- Involvement of business and industry
- Legislation
- Innovative funding services identified/secured
- New programs developed
- Existing services improved
- A more comprehensive view of the issue
- Less competition among agencies
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## K. What barriers do you see as impeding the process of networking?

III. STATE NETWORK

A. The following are provided from the state Network office at Rutgers. Please evaluate its importance to you and check all that apply:

- |  | <u>Important</u> | <u>Somewhat Important</u> | Not Important |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| <u>--Technical Assistance</u>            |                  |                           |               |
| <u>--Circulating resources (journals</u> |                  |                           |               |
| <u>books, A/V's, articles)</u>           |                  |                           |               |
| <u>--County Contact meetings</u>         |                  |                           |               |
| <u>--EXCHANGES newsletter</u>            |                  |                           |               |
| <br>                                     |                  |                           |               |
| --Support services (typing               |                  |                           |               |
| & mailing minutes, etc.)                 |                  |                           |               |
| --Xeroxing                               |                  |                           |               |
| --Conferences, Annual & Regional         |                  |                           |               |
| meetings, other                          |                  |                           |               |
| --Training ("Changing Bodies,            |                  |                           |               |
| Changing Lives")                         |                  |                           |               |
| --RESOURCE BOOK directory                |                  |                           |               |
| --Program Development                    |                  |                           |               |
| --Grantmanship                           |                  |                           |               |
| --Networking with other counties         |                  |                           |               |

B. What additional services do you need to be provided, in order of priority:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Other Comments:

## Appendix B

**NJNAP CASE STUDY:  
IN-PERSON INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT**

- I.
- 1) How did you get involved in the Network?
  - 2) What factors lead to the identification of adolescent pregnancy as a critical social issue?
  - 3) How were 'key players' identified in terms of developing the network?
  - 4) What would you say is the most important characteristic in continued inter-agency networking? Another factor? A Third characteristic?
  - 5) Why do people get involved in the network? What motivates people to stay together in the network?
  - 6) How would you describe services for adolescents before the networking began? Now?
  - 7) What occurred in the first years of the network that you remember as being very successful for the network? As being destructive? GIVE EXAMPLES...how did these act to continue, or terminate, the network?
  - 8) What issues has the county network focused on recently?
- II.
- 9) How does the network function in terms of exchanging ideas? Sharing information? Resources? Does this happen on a regular basis? Or irregular? GIVE EXAMPLES...has this process changed in any way in the last few years? GIVE EXAMPLES...how do you evaluate the changes?
  - 10) What changes, if any, have occurred in the interchange between public and private agencies as a result of networking? What direction or change do you see occurring?
  - 11) Tell me about the networks work with DYFS...with hospitals...with schools...when did this exchange start? What happened? Why?
  - 12) Looking back, have there been so-called "tangible" results of networking? GIVE EXAMPLES...intangible? GIVE EXAMPLES...

## III.

- 13) How politically active were you prior to joining the network? How has this changed, or not changed, since joining the network?
- 14) What social policies have changed, or not changed, since the formation of the network?
- 15) What specifically has the network achieved? For adolescents? For the system? For yourself?

## IV.

- 16) If you had to do it again, what would you do differently, or the same, in the network?
- 17) What was the original purpose of the network? Has this changed? How?
- 18) What can other coalitions/networks/consortiums learn from the AP network experience?
- 19) What new arenas do you see for the network?
- 20) Closing comments...

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