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A Case Study of NGO Collaboration in the Norwegian Alcohol Policy Arena

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to increase the knowledge base on the processes through which health promotion partnerships function by testing a newly developed model, The Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning.

The project applied a case study design utilising data from in-depth interviews with nine informants from a Norwegian partnership of NGOs engaged in alcohol policy.

The results show that the partners collaborate well and have achieved results in the starting-up phase of the partnership. In collaboration, the partners have created policy platforms, defining common ground, constituting effective tools for effective actions on alcohol policy issues. Input interaction, leadership, good structures and defined roles secure partner independence and integrity, as well as partner values, creating positive cycles of interaction. Sufficient financial resources were found to reduce conflicts, thus affecting partner motivation to invest and find compromises, in addition to finance an effective secretariat. However, resource asymmetry between the partnership and the members, reinforced by ineffective communication encourage the partners to leave partnership work to the professional staff .

The Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning proved a serviceable framework and a guide to analyse this partnership. A partnership with different cultural, ideological, and religious values can avoid conflicts and enhance functioning if partner values are included into the partnership's assets, and transformed into a partnership culture of respect. An effective staff of professionals can enhance partner equity and participation; however, it may also lead to passive partners, compromising the legitimacy of the partnership

Keywords: partnership functioning, collaborative functioning, alcohol policy, synergy, health promotion nongovernmental organisations, umbrella organisation,

NORSK SAMMENDRAG

Hensikt: Studiens hensikt er å øke kunnskapen om prosesser som påvirker hvordan helsefremmende partnerskap fungerer, gjennom å teste en nyutviklet modell for samarbeid, The Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning.

Metode: Dette er en case- studie som bygger på ni dybdeintervjuer med personer som er engasjert i en paraplyorganisasjon for alkoholpolitiske frivillige organisasjoner i Norge.

Resultater: I oppstarten av partnerskapet samarbeidet partnerne godt og har oppnådd gode resultater. Sammen har partnerne skapt politiske plattformer som definerer hva de er enige om og som er gode verktøy for å arbeide effektivt med alkoholpolitikk. Faktorene som har påvirket samarbeidet positivt er: samhandlingen mellom partnerne, lederskap, gode strukturer og klare roller som ivaretar organisasjonenes integritet i forhold til paraplyen, inkludert partnernes forskjellige verdier. Tilstrekkelige finansielle ressurser viste seg å føre til et lavt konfliktnivå som gjør det mulig å finne gode kompromisser, i tillegg til å finansiere et effektivt sekretariat. Gode ressurser i paraplyen, sammen med dårlige ressurser i medlemsorganisasjonene, forsterket av dårlig kommunikasjon, har ført til at partnerne overlater det daglige politiske arbeidet til sekretariatet og styret.

Konklusjon: The Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning viste seg som et godt egnet verktøy og rammeverk for å analysere dette partnerskapet. Et partnerskap bestående av organisasjoner med forskjellige religiøse, politiske og ideologiske ståsted kan unngå konflikter og oppnå synergieffekter hvis man anerkjenner og gjør seg nytte av partnernes forskjellige verdier. En handlekraftig profesjonell stab kan bidra til økt partnerdeltagelse, imidlertid kan det også føre at partnerne blir mer passive, noe som i lengden kan true partnerskapets legitimitet.

Nøkkelord: partnerskap, samarbeid, samhandling, frivillige organisasjoner, synergi, alkoholpolitikk, paraplyorganisasjon

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Bergen, 10. december, 2007

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The incentive to collaborate

Collaboration is about bringing together diverse partners with their strengths and weaknesses, to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency, as well as produce results that would not be possible to achieve by operating as single agents (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Gray, 1989). The social and economic issues society faces today at national, state and local levels cut across traditional boundaries and sectors (Dluhy, 1990), and effective problem solving therefore must involve actors from many arenas of society. Health problems often involve complex socioeconomic and environmental components which cannot be solved by single agents, and the public sector, nongovernmental organisations and the corporate sector need to collaborate to address these issues (Kickbusch & Quick, 1998, Weiss; Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). There is broad consensus in the literature that the collaborative advantage is synergy: the capacity to generate new and better thinking and action by enhancing the capacities of people and organisations involved, and producing results which can not be achieved by working separately or simply adding up the forces (Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001). However, the track record of partnerships display that partnerships produce outputs at a slow rate. Stories of partnership successes are often accompanied by pain and hard grind. When the cost of collaboration outweigh the gains this is described as collaborative inertia (Huxham, 2003), or as Corbin and Mittelmark (2007) describes it when the partnership has a taxing effect on the resources invested, antagonistic outcomes. The third alternative result of partnership is additive outputs. This is when the result matches the results achieved if the partners worked separately, for instance when the resources have a direct impact on the problem bypassing the partnership context.

1.2 Partnership is widespread

Considering the widespread use of collaboration as a way of working, it is surprising that there is no general agreement in the literature on partnership concepts and terminology (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004; Guest & Peccei, 2001; Lank, 2006). Collaborating in partnerships has become so common, perhaps, because it is hard to conceive how partnership could be anything less than advantageous (Guest & Peccei, 2001). In international development work it is argued that there can be no progress without a partnership approach, because the nature and scale of socioeconomic

development problems are too complex to be solved in isolation (Brinkerhoff, 2002). In business, as well as in research and development, agencies have acquired considerable experience in collaborations, through which they seek superior economic performance and quality (Alter & Hage, 1993). For instance, technologically advanced commercial fields, like the aircraft industry, require the collaboration of a vast number of stakeholders and partners over a long period of time (Lank, 2006). A number of other sectors utilize partnerships as well. In Britain, partnerships became a central feature of the British social welfare policy before the turning of the millennium. As an example, partnership in Great Britain became mandatory in many sectors of the New Labour Government policy (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004).

Foundations and government agencies in the United States have invested vast sums of money in promoting collaboration around health issues (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001). Today communities, organisations, businesses, and even nations are involved in health promoting partnerships (Kegler, Steckler, Malek, & McLeroy, 1998). Partnerships are found in fields as diverse as community health, employer – worker relations, human services, international development, and partners may include schools, businesses, the media, the health sector, and government, to mention some (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Dluhy, 1990; Guest & Peccei, 2001; Mitchell & Shortell, 2000; Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005). Much of the health promotion literature on partnerships are related to arrangements aimed to gather individuals and organisations sharing an interest in community health (Mitchell & Shortell, 2000; Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002) reflecting that most health promoting partnerships has been studied at the community level.

1.3 Research is needed

While partnership rhetoric is strong in a host of different research and practice fields, what does the literature report about results of partnership practice? In spite of extensive use of partnerships, their record of accomplishment shows that many are not successful (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Mitchell & Shortell, 2000; Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). Partnership building is demanding in terms of time and resources, and several authors raise concern about the uncertain outcomes of health promoting partnerships (DiClemente, Crosby, & Kegler, 2002; Huxham, 2003; Scriven, 1998). Because the investments are high, and the outcomes are uncertain, partnerships should not be established if a less complex structure is more adequate in

any given situation (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Huxham, 2003). Dluhy recommends assessing whether the payoff is worth the resources that must be invested. Only when each organization alone would be unable to have the impact needed to alter a policy or situation, then joint action seems desirable (Dluhy, 1990).

Recognizing the size and complexity of health issues, the main question is, what makes partnerships more or less successful? Health promoting partnerships seem to face many of the same kind of difficulties as other types of organisations, and yet there are challenges that are unique (DiClemente, Crosby, & Kegler, 2002). Defining partnerships for health as: bringing together “*a set of actors for the common goal of improving the health of populations based on mutually agreed roles and principles*” (Kickbusch & Quick; 1998, p. 69), a key principle in partnership building includes maintaining a balance of power and influence between partners, at the same time as retaining the core values and identity of each partner (Kickbusch & Quick; 1998).

Despite the popularity of partnerships, the synergistic outcomes of such collaborative arrangements are rarely measured or fully articulated in research (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Lasker, Weiss & Miller, 2001). The factors responsible for producing synergy are not well understood. In health promotion, there is a general dearth of empirical research and theory-building on inter-sectoral collaboration (Scriven, 1998). There is relatively little systematic research on how partnerships work (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004; Huxham, 2003), and a need for a better understanding of the factors and processes concerning interagency working and how these affect outcomes (Scriven, 1998; Mitchell & Shortell, 2000).

1.4 The research group Policy Processes for Human development (PPHD)

Based on the idea that human development needs support from inter-disciplinary research for sounder and more effective social policy, and with the goal to reduce the mismatch in the interplay between the arenas of policy, practice and knowledge, the research group Policy Processes for Human development (PPHD) was established in 2006. The research group is located at the Research Centre for Health Promotion, University of Bergen. In the founding document, PPHD states that research is necessary to suggest – and test – remedial action to improve policy processes for human development. PPHD has as one its goals to improve policy processes supporting robust mental, physical and social health as a foundation for achieving human flourishing.

Within the framework of PPHD, this thesis reports a case study of collaboration between NGOs in the alcohol policy arena in Norway (referred to hereafter as the Case), with the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007) as a starting point. The study had two goals. The first was to use the Model as a framework within which to examine partnership functioning in a different context than previously, namely, a partnership of Norwegian alcohol control NGOs. The second goal was to explore possible modifications to the Model, which might increase its utility as an analytical framework for the study of health promotion partnerships in general. The study questions were as follows:

- What are the ways of working, systems and social processes that promote synergy?
- What are the ways of working, systems and social processes that inhibit synergy?
- What are the ways of working, systems and social processes that result in antagonism?

2.0 BACKGROUND

Given the huge popularity of collaboration and the widespread use of collaborative working arrangements, it is not surprising to find a host of literature on the subject. Literature is found in scientific disciplines as diverse as nursing, business, economy, management, development, public policy, organizational development, and health promotion (Alter & Hage, 1993; Babor, 2002; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Guest & Peccei, 2001; Hardy, Phillips, & Laurence, 2003; Rossi, 2000; Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). In health promotion literature, as in practice, there is an abundance of terms used in multiple contexts to label collaborative working arrangements, such as partnership, coalition, cooperation, networks, and collaborations (Huxham, 2003; Minkler, 1998). The research in different fields is based on a wide range of ideas about collaboration. Management research emphasizes collaboration as a means to acquire resources and skills (Hardy, Phillips, & Laurence, 2003). Research in domain theory has found that collaboration helps to pool resources and produce solutions to social problems (Gray, 1989). The field of learning and innovation has contributed with how collaboration can facilitate the creation of new knowledge (Hardy, Phillips, & Laurence, 2003). However, the literatures is scattered, and the various arenas hardly ever refer to each other (Hardy, Phillips, & Laurence, 2003; Huxham, 2003). Different terms can be used by partners of the same partnership, describing their inter-relationship. As Lank (2006, p. 6) puts it: “*one organization’s consortium may be another’s network*”. Furthermore, there is no commonly agreed upon definition or conceptualization of the term partnership (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004; Glendinning, 2002; Guest & Peccei, 2001; Huxham, 2003; Lank, 2006; Ling, 2000). Terms used to describe collaborative arrangements are often used interchangeably (Lank, 2006). For instance, in the health promotion literature, the terms partnership, collaboration, network, coalition and healthy alliances all describe collaborative working arrangements (Dluhy, 1990; Minkler, 1998; Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005). The term ‘healthy alliances’ is used to distinguish partnerships for health as a special form of interorganisational working, however dependent for success they are on the same features as are other kinds of partnerships (Minkler, 1998). In health promotion literature is found on partnerships at the national and global level (Naidoo & Wills, 2000; World Health Organization, 1997, 2005; Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007), the community level (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Scriven, 1998;

Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005; Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002), and the setting level such as in hospitals (Tones, 2001). The same term may be used to describe a great variation of arrangements in terms of legal entities, communication intensity, goals and interaction (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Lank, 2006).

With a basis in organisational behaviour and political science, Gray (1989) describes collaboration as a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. She uses the metaphor of the kaleidoscope to illustrate how different configurations of a collection of colours are parallel to how different partners have their own, unique understanding of the problem relative to where they stand. Collaboration involves building a common understanding among these partners about how these images may appear from the perspective of each partner's point of view. Like others, Gray catalogues the assumed advantages of collaboration, including increased quality, guarantees that each parties' interests will be protected, ownership of the process that makes the parties themselves fashion the solutions to the problem, increased commitment, the potential to discover new and innovative solutions, the potential to reduce costs, and the development of mechanisms to handle future interactions. At the same time, both Gray and other authors underline that expectations of positive collaborative outcomes must be balanced by the fact that there are pitfalls (Gray, 1989; Huxham, 2003; Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001; Minkler, 1998; Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005). These are some examples such pitfalls:

- Stakeholders may be unable or unwilling for different reasons to contribute or participate. Former negative experiences may contribute to this.
- Partnership working demands careful monitoring and nurturing of the partnership process, thereby demanding considerable effort and resources
- Outcomes are uncertain

2.1 Typologies

Various partnership typologies have been advanced to try to bring order to the study of partnership. Based on three questions Dluhy (1990) presents us with a typology of coalitions: 1) Are they one or multi-task organisations? 2) Are they short term or do they strive for permanence? 3) What kind of base do they have? The typology also

addresses how members are recruited, the ideology base, the degree of resources and staff needed, communications methods and organisational structure (Dluhy, 1990).

Community Coalition Action Theory is another typology of coalitions, and makes a distinction based on stages, stating that coalitions progress from formation to institutionalisation, making loops back to earlier stages when confronted with new issues or if a planning cycle is repeated (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). Collaboration types can also be separated by the degree of functioning. Himmelman classifies partnership functioning based on the extent to which the relation is mutual and equal between agencies, describing a continuum ranging from networking through coordinating and cooperating, with collaboration describing the most complex end (Himmelman, 2001).

With her starting point in social science, Gray (1989) distinguishes between coordination, co-operation and collaboration, the two former failing to describe the dynamic and evolutionary character of the processes associated with collaboration. Coordination is a formal institution among networks, co-operation is characterised by informal trade-offs, and the absence of rules. Gray (1989) offers a typology recognising that different collaborative arrangements can be distinguished by how they function and the outcomes they produce. There are four categories of collaborative arrangements: exploratory, advisory, confederative and contractual. Exploratory collaboration is about clarifying stakeholder interdependence, or “*formulating the mess*”, which is aimed at establishing trust among the parties and clarifying the parameters of the problem domain. An advisory type of collaboration incorporates and extends exploratory collaboration and aims to develop agreement on if, and how, to deal with the problem. The outcome of this kind of collaboration is drafting of policy recommendations to be adopted by a partnership. The third type of arrangement is confederative collaboration. This adopts and implements the agreements reached by the stakeholders, either in the form of resource exchange or normative rules. Contractual arrangements are the most institutionalised form of collaboration, where agreements are formal to that extent that they are enforceable by law. Summing up, the literature in the field is dominated by theory-based prescriptive models and frameworks, and by practitioner-based descriptive typologies, and according to some authors many

recommendations seem to be guided more by anecdote than by analysis (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007; Scriven, 1998).

2.2 Partnership functioning

“Partnership is in danger of remaining a “feel good” panacea for governance without obtaining a pragmatic grasp of the “why” and the clearer understanding of the “how” of partnerships” (Brinkerhoff, 2002, p. 2). There is an extensive literature available to practitioners on how to make partnerships successful. However, it is a problem that the definition of success is unclear. The evaluation of partnerships is blurred by problems related to the definition of partnerships, elucidation of what the success factors are, and far from adequate measures of success. It has been argued that partnership success is best measured by outcomes rather than by partnership processes, still most tools available to assess effectiveness focus on processes (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004).

2.2.1 The composition of partnerships

At the core of partnership working is the idea that partners each contribute with key resources like time, skills, contacts, credibility, or money, depending on the aim of the venture. The acquisition of complementary resources in a partnership is a necessary, but seems not to be a sufficient condition for synergy. However, the highest probability for increased value lies in including complementary resources in a partnership (Madhok & Tallman, 1998). The choice of individuals for a collaborative venture seems to be another critical success factor. Partners may have qualities contributing to making the partnership thrive, or they can disrupt or damage the collaborative process. To the member organization, assigning the right person to participate in the partnership may be crucial (Lank, 2006). The diversity and complementarities of the partners parallel the anticipated benefits and risks associated with partnerships. The potential of achieving goals, growing and learning is challenged by the risk of wasting time and resources, conflicts, and for less powerful partners, the risk of falling into dependence and losing organisation identity (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

The power of each partner to influence the partnership demands special attention when composing a partnership. According to Huxham (2003), it is common wisdom that “the power is in the purse strings”. However, he points to other ways of exercising power:

the power to withdraw, the power to involve and power in communication are just some examples (Huxham, 2003).

Not only the choice of partners, but also the way a partnership is lead, structured, as well as roles and communication within the partnership are described as crucial to functioning (Huxham, 2003; Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001; Mitchell & Shortell, 2000; Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005).

2.2.2 Leadership

A host of leadership styles and personal characteristics are associated with partnership functioning. The type of leadership needed in partnerships is not necessarily the same leadership that is most effective in the corporate and management fields (Lank, 2006). Partnerships need a boundary-spanning leadership that effectively facilitates productive interactions between partners by bridging diverse cultures, sharing power, facilitating open dialogue, and challenging assumptions that limit thinking and action (Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001; Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002, Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007). According to the same authors, leadership effectiveness is the partnership feature most closely related to the achievement of partnership synergy. Partnership leaders need to be competent in negotiation, garnering resources needed for the coalition, and have skills in problem solving and conflict resolution. Further, they must have personal resources such as self- efficacy, a high degree of political knowledge, communication and interpersonal skills, and commitment. This should be complemented by skills in setting agendas, running efficient meetings, and being able to delegate responsibilities (Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005). However, partnerships call for an equitable style of leadership, partners in a collaborative setting are not “managed”, they are peers, calling for a consensus-building leadership style more than a traditional hierarchical style (Lank, 2006). Effective partnership leadership is highly facilitative and concerned with embracing, empowering, involving, and mobilizing members (Huxham, 2003).

2.2.3 Structures, rules and roles

In partnerships, it is essential that partners be assigned roles matching their particular interests and strength to optimize their willingness to invest in the partnership. Also, the degree of formalization of rules, roles and procedures impacts commitment,

responsibility, satisfaction, and the extent to which partners are willing to invest (Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). If explicitly expressed in documents like mission statements, goals and objectives, bylaws, policy and procedure manuals, rules, roles and procedures will enhance partner involvement (Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005). If roles are blurred, or unclear, this affects trust in the partnership, and increases the potential for conflict (Huxham, 2003). Choosing the feasible structure of a partnership and the processes for governing and managing, depends on the context, the original intent, and motives of the partnership, as well as how it is funded. The overall form of the organisation, the day-to-day governance, the model of allocating costs and benefits to partners as well as the policy of managing intellectual property, are structural themes to consider by a partnership (Lank, 2006). Partners may not be free to design structures and processes; there are often factors outside the partnerships' own control influencing such processes. These include previous actions, or external factors like public and private funding agencies' demand for inter-organisational collaboration as a condition for funding (Huxham, 2003; Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). Changes in any of these factors have impact on the way the partnership is structured (Mitchell & Shortell, 2000). Partnership structures may also relate to accountability issues. Demands from funding agencies related to the documentation of activity or progress evaluation may lay extra burdens on voluntary organisations. Sometimes the demands exceed what the members can manage on a voluntary basis, and consequently the need for professional staff is required to meet such demands (Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001).

2.2.4 Communication

Effective communication between partners, as well as towards external resources, like funding agencies, is vital to a partnership. In a partnership there is an inherent difference between partners, and thus a need to communicate across different organisational, professional, language, and culture barriers (Huxham, 2003). It is also in the nature of many partnerships that members do not meet face-to-face on a daily basis. Face-to-face meetings are valued as the best way of communication between partners (Lank, 2006; Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007), however, in the time between such meetings it is important to maintain communication. With the use of modern technology such as e-mail and electronic newsletters, communication has taken a giant leap forward and the Internet provides partners geographically far apart with the means of instant communication. Interestingly, providing communication technology does not

necessarily imply it will be used, or improve the quality of exchange (Lank, 2006). Not only the intensity, but also the style of communication affects the partnership. A well-developed system of open communication helps the group focus on their common purpose, increasing trust and sharing of resources, and frequent meetings and good attendance is a sign of a viable coalition (Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005; Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007). Research shows that open discussions encourage members to share decision making, and that democratic decision making is associated with more active organizations (Prestby & Wandersman, 1985)

2.3 Partnership synergy

The interest in collaboration in health work stems from the assumption that this way of working enhances the capacity of people and organisations to achieve health and health system goals (Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001). The synergistic outcome of partnership work is often spoken of, yet rarely measured, and even more seldom is the path which leads to synergy identified (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Often referred to as the unique advantage of collaboration, the concept of synergy is used to describe how diverse partners interacting with each other in a collaborative setting may produce outcomes at a level that exceed the capacity of each single agent (Hardy, Phillips, & Laurence, 2003; Huxham, 2003; Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001; Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). Synergy is defined as the power to combine the partners' perspectives, resources and skills in producing "*a whole that is greater than its parts*" (Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001) p 184). Synergy manifests itself, according to Lasker et al (2001), as thinking more creatively about issues, more comprehensively, more practically, and finally in a more transformative way, compared to single agent approaches. Weiss et al (2002) found that partnership synergy was most associated with leadership effectiveness and partnership efficiency - the degree to which a partnership makes optimal use of the partner resources as well as other resources at hand (Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). Using a mathematical metaphor, when two plus two equals five, synergy has been achieved.

In an attempt to explain the pathway from partnership functioning to partnership effectiveness, Lasker, Weiss and Miller (2001) hypothesize that synergy is the proximal outcome of successful collaborative functioning, standing out as the unique advantage over single agents in addressing complex issues, like health issues. Synergy is operationalised in a framework as a product of interaction between diverse participants

(Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001). In this framework, the determinants of partnership synergy are:

- Resources: including money, space, equipment, goods, skills and expertise, information, personal connections, endorsements, and convening power.
- Partner characteristics: including heterogeneity, and partner involvement
- Relationships among partners: including trust, respect, and conflict and power differentials.
- Partner characteristics: including leadership, administration and management, governance, and efficiency.
- The external environment: including community characteristics and public and organisational policies

2.4 Partnership antagony

As the juxtaposition of synergy, partnership antagony is indirectly spoken of in most of the literature on partnership functioning, but the term itself was recently introduced to the field (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007). The many partnerships in diverse sectors failing to produce the anticipated outcomes, or directly producing negative outcomes is the main motivation for exploring partnership functioning in the first place: *“If collaborative advantage is the goal behind both the policy rhetoric of partnership and the ambitions of practitioners who initiate them, why is collaborative inertia so often the outcome?”* (Huxham, 2003) p. 404).

Partnership antagony are results of partnership processes that have a taxing effect on resources and produce insufficient gain towards the partnership objectives. Coalitions have both advantages and disadvantages, and organisations have to prioritise their resources. They must constantly assess when and under what conditions a coalition pays off, only involving in such collaborative activity when the payoff exceeds the cost (Dluhy, 1990). Huxham (2003) goes as far as to state that *“unless the collaborative advantage is clear, it is generally best, if there is any chance, to avoid collaboration”* (Huxham, 2003, p.421). Antagonistic outputs as described is one of two possible negative outputs of partnerships, indicating that the inputs would have performed better without the partnership process (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007). The other is additive

outputs, which implies that the results equal the resources invested by the partners. In other words, resource utilisation bypasses the partnership process.

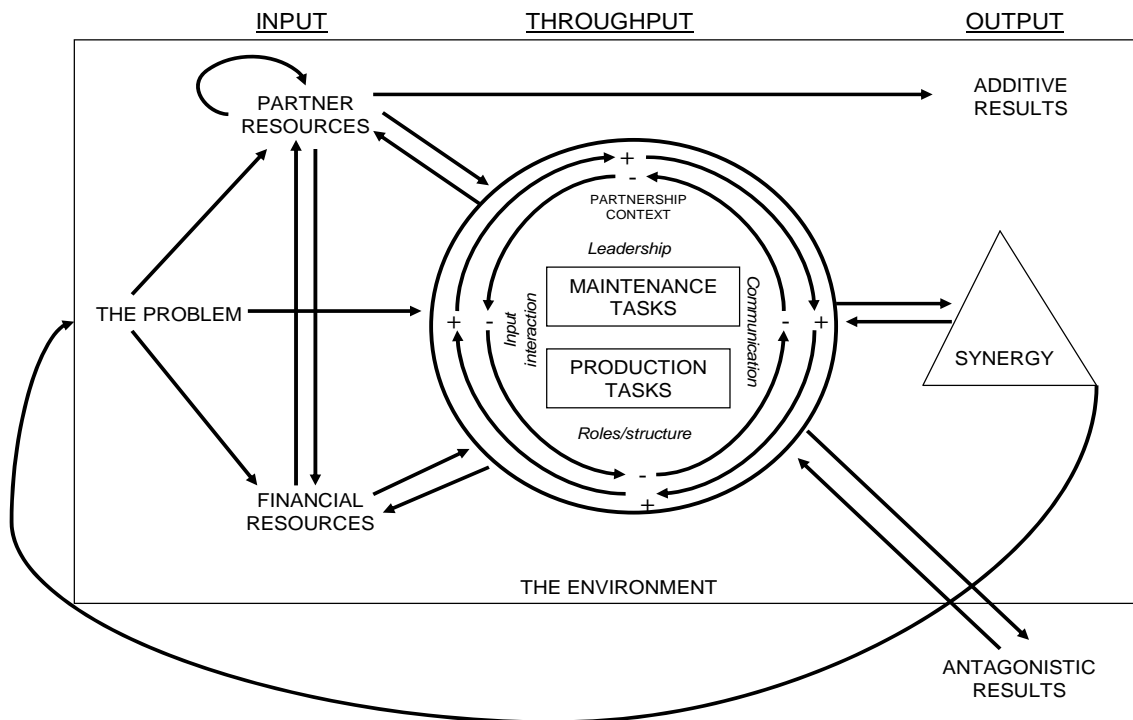
2.5 The Wandersman, Goodman and Butterfoss framework

Many authors have contributed to the understanding of partnerships by describing how organizations function and maintain momentum. Wandersman, Goodman and Butterfoss (2005) view coalitions as a type of organization in need of resources, structures, processes, activities and accomplishments in order to survive. Creating a model based on an open systems framework, they describe how a coalition consists of elements of input (resource acquisition), throughput (maintenance and production processes) and output (producing or accomplishing goals). The functioning is described as input from internal and external resources entering either a maintenance or a production subsystem, resulting in external goal attainment. The inputs from external resources as well as the coalition products interact with the environment beyond the confines of the partnership, thus it is an open systems model. If organizations experience failure in the input, throughput or output parts of the system, this will restrain the coalition, and it may eventually cease to operate. The throughput section of the Wandersman, Goodman and Butterfoss model describes two different subsystems; the maintenance subsystem and the production subsystem, the former occupied with organizational structures essential to support the latter (Wandersman, Goodman & Butterfoss, 2005).

2.6 The Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning

Most of the literature on partnership functioning does not sufficiently take into consideration the highly dynamic character of the partnership context. In the literature, the reciprocal effects between factors and elements outside and inside the partnership context, enhancing or impeding functioning, are not taken sufficiently into account. In a recently published study, Corbin (2007) account for the bilateral impacts between elements of partnership functioning and their effect on the partnership output in a global health promotion partnership. The study has resulted in a model organising key elements essential to partnership functioning in inputs, throughputs, and outputs (Fig. 1).

BERGEN MODEL OF COLLABORTIVE FUNCTIONING



(Fig. 1)

The Model specifies three types of inputs, and how these affect partnership functioning: partner resources, financial resources, and the partnership problem. Partner resources are contributions of time, commitment, personal connections, skills and knowledge needed to support the partnership. Financial resources are essential to support production, but also travel, for instance, for face-to-face meetings between partners, as well as engaging external expertise when needed. The partnership problem motivates partners, uniting them, as well as creating a sense of urgency influencing the time and effort they are willing to invest. In addition to the separate inputs, the study identified interactions between partner resources, financial resources and the partnership problem. For instance, partners may help mobilize financial resources for the partnership, and in turn, financial resources may fund participation of partners, as well as attract new partners.

2.6.1 Positive cycles of interaction

The throughput section of the model depicts how inputs are processed in the partnership context, in turn affecting the production of outputs. Such processes are related to two separate task types: maintenance tasks and production tasks. Maintenance tasks are directed to the maintaining of the partnership itself, whereas production tasks are aimed at producing results directly related to the problem the partnership has undertaken. In Corbin's study, both task types were found to be positively or negatively affected by processes in the partnership context. In common with other models and theoretical frameworks discussed earlier, the elements in the partnership context influencing the process are identified as leadership, formalized roles and procedures, and communication. An element that is unique to the Model is the interaction between inputs, posited to have a key role in the partnership process.

Effective leadership enhances positive partnership interaction by contributing professional efficacy, good values, focusing partners on the task at hand, supporting openness, building trust, respecting autonomy, showing tolerance for diversity, resolving conflicts skilfully, and advancing pragmatism. Inputs like partner resources, financial resources and the partnership problem further enhance positive cycles of interaction by providing skills and knowledge, urge, resources to hire expertise, material support, and energy into the context. Formalized roles and procedures support positive interaction further by giving structure, goal setting, as well as internal and external accountability. Lastly, purposeful, frequent and recognizable communication was found in Corbin work to contribute to positive interaction, facilitating joint decision-making and goal-setting, as well as building relationships, leading to partner-partner trust.

2.6.2 Negative cycles of interaction

The elements mentioned above were found to contribute positively to partnership functioning, constantly interacting with each other, producing synergistic outcomes, as well as interacting with the inputs. However, leadership, input interaction, formalized roles and procedures, and communication also may have a negative impact on the partnership context, creating negative cycles of interaction. Dysfunctional leadership can impede partnership functioning by allowing distrust, unresolved conflicts, unrecognized partner contributions and partner dominance to fester (Corbin, 2006).

This is of particular interest, as distrust has the power to disrupt a partnership. Lack of input, like partner resources or financial resources will limit a partnership's ability to reach its goals, be they related to production or maintenance tasks, because it will not be able to produce or operate effectively. Corbin uses the example of lack of funding for travel, which will restrain the partners' ability to meet face to face, thus affecting communication and possibly impeding trust building, which is essential for partner engagement. Unclear roles and procedures may result from lack of communication, or may be due to different conceptions of how the partnership should work, and can be the starting point of partner conflicts. This, in turn, can reduce the amount of energy and time that can be devoted to production tasks. Communication in partnerships is a central point in the interaction between partners. If communication fails, partners may retract, feeling overwhelmed, left out or confused, and it can severely affect the potential for successful outputs by reducing the partnership's capacity for exchange and synergy. Lack of transparency will affect partner trust, and inadequate communication as well as communication overload may negatively affect collaboration. Loops of negative interaction will reinforce one another similarly to loops of positive interaction. Distrust, conflict, lack of recognition, unclear roles and poor communication has the power to inhibit partner exchange, thereby impeding the probability of achieving synergistic results.

2.6.3 Outputs

The Model describes three kinds of output exiting from the partnership process; additive output meaning that the product is not a result of partnership processes (even though it is claimed to be), synergistic output meaning that the product is a result of positive partnership processes, and antagonistic output, meaning the results of negative partnership processes. According to Corbin (2006), additive output is the outcome when the results equate to the partners' inputs. A mathematical metaphor illustrating such additivity is $2 + 2 = 4$. This means that the partners' contributions have not interacted when producing the output, leaving the partnership unchanged by partner interaction.

Synergistic outputs are the result of enhanced partnership functioning due to positive interaction between inputs, as well as between elements of the throughput process. The mathematical metaphor is $2 + 2 = 5$ or more. Corbin found that synergistic results fed

back into the partnership, enhancing functioning even more, as well as enhancing the partnerships' ability to attract more partner input and financial resources. However, their study did not succeed in detecting effects on the partnership problem, although this is an anticipated effect of partnership synergy.

Antagonistic outcomes are the result when collaboration costs are judged to outweigh benefits. This could be expressed mathematically as $2 + 2 = 3$, or even less than 3. Something is lost in the partnership process due to negative loops of interaction in the partnership process. For instance, wasting time and money may lead to the withdrawal of partners' involvement, commitment and resources.

This study had the intention to build on the existing literature, especially Corbin's study. Initially, the intent was simply to investigate a partnership as different as possible from the one Corbin, to explore the generalisability of the Model, and of their findings.

Through an existing project of the PPHD, the Norwegian partnership for alcohol control was identified a case of interest, as an informant had characterised collaboration in this sector as not being as well functioning as might be hoped. However, in the study of the case two issues emerged that have not featured prominently in the literature.

First, the role that partners' values play in partnership processes has not been previously explored in depth. This may be because many if not most partnerships are organised around common values. For example, a partnership to advocate against land mines is not likely to include participants with radically different values regarding the morality of land mine use in conflict resolution. In the alcohol control partnership that was the object of this study, value dissensus was the rule rather than the exception, as some partners were moved to action by utilitarian motivations, while others were moved by moral motivations.

Second, most partnerships feel they suffer from a lack of funding, and in such cases, much attention and effort may be expended on the vexing task of raising meagre funds just to keep the partnership functioning. As it turned out, the Norwegian alcohol control partnership that was studied in this project had plentiful funding, provided for the most part by the Norwegian government. Thus, the unique opportunity arose to study the effect on partnership functioning of 'removing' an input problem, namely the problem of raising adequate funds to pursue partnership goals. These emerging elements of the

study are partly illuminated in the next section, in which the Case is described, but the implications for the utility of the Model emerge more fully only in the analysis and discussion that come nearer the end of this report.

3.0 THE CASE

From a public health perspective, the burden of suffering related to alcohol consumption is considerable in most parts of the world (World Health Organization, 2004). In terms of morbidity and mortality, alcohol contributed to 4.0 % of the global burden of disease in year 2000, and in developed countries alcohol was the third most detrimental risk factor, accounting for 9.2 % of the disease burden (Babor, 2003). To protect and promote health, prevent harm and address social problems related to alcohol use, there is a call for appropriate policy responses, informed by scientific evidence (World Health Organization, 2004). In Norway there has been a tradition for a strict alcohol policy, to which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have made significant contributions throughout the last century, and they still do (Hamran, 2005; Kolstad, 1992).

3.1 Alcohol facts

Health authorities throughout the world have called for a discussion of alcohol policy because of the constantly mounting evidence of the causal relationship between alcohol consumption and premature deaths, more than 60 types of disease and injury, social harm, lost productivity in work life as well direct health costs (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006; World Health Organization, 2004). Even though the production and sale of alcohol provides benefits to nations and communities, these benefits come at an enormous cost. In the European Union (EU), the measurable costs related to alcohol were in 2003 estimated to be 125 billion Euros (Anderson & Baumberg, 2006). There is a strong association between per capita consumption and the negative effects of alcohol. The highest consumption today is found in Western Europe, Russia, and the non-Moslem states of the former Soviet Union, followed by Latin America. However, there has been a slight decrease in overall consumption in recent years (Babor, 2003). In Norway alcohol consumption per capita has more than doubled since the early 1950's, from 2.76 to more than 6 litres per year, 7.5 litres if illegal alcohol is included. Changes in the alcohol consumption have effects on the harm done by alcohol. The pattern of drinking in Norway has incorporated a continental pattern (drinking daily or almost daily) in addition to traditional Nordic binge-drinking (Sosial- og Helsedirektoratet, 2005, accessed 28.08.2006). Norwegians' consumption of wine has more than doubled since 1980, an increase from 0.75 to 1.84 litres of alcohol per inhabitant per year. The latest numbers from the Norwegian Directorate of Health and

Social Affairs show that in 2001, 378 people died from diseases caused directly by alcohol like liver cirrhosis or alcohol intoxication (Sosial- og Helsedirektoratet, 2005). This number does not take into consideration deaths caused by alcohol-related accidents and violence, or the connection between alcohol and psychiatry- related deaths, like suicide. In addition to globalization and increasing travel across the world, the changes toward a more continental style of drinking in Norway have been affected by the other Nordic countries becoming members of the EU (Denmark since 1972, Sweden and Finland since 1995), and the fact that Norwegian alcohol policy is increasingly influenced by the EU (Ugland, 2002).

3.2 The development of alcohol policy

The shift of focus in public health in the 1970's, towards chronic disease and an epidemiological, population-based approach, focusing on health behaviour, marks the beginning of the history of alcohol policy as a broad public health strategy (Babor, 2003). The term alcohol policy stems from the Nordic countries in the 1960's (World Health Organization, 2004), and encompasses population-based policies aimed at altering the consumption level of populations, problem-directed policies which are aimed at specific alcohol-related problems such as drink driving, and direct interventions aimed at the individual problem drinker (World Health Organization, 2004). Alcohol policy can be broadly defined as *“any purposeful effort or authoritative decision on the part of governments or non-government groups to minimize or prevent alcohol-related consequences”* (Babor, 2003). The last two decades of research has provided extensive scientific knowledge about the relation between alcohol policies, alcohol consumption and alcohol related harm, and shown that it is possible to develop and implement comprehensive and effective alcohol policies (World Health Organization, 2004). The most common political measures in use are pricing and taxation, regulating the physical availability of alcohol, modifying the drinking context, drinking-driving countermeasures, regulating alcohol promotion, education and persuasion strategies, and treatment and early intervention strategies (Babor, 2003). Decision-makers today have access to a wealth of scientific evidence to help them make informed public policy choices regarding which kinds of measures are more or less effective in reducing alcohol consumption. However there seems to be a gap between knowledge on alcohol-related problems and translating this knowledge into action (World Health Organization, 2004). In order to have an effective and sustainable

alcohol policy all relevant stakeholders must be actively involved, because alcohol strategies need a high degree of public support in order to be successful. In the public arena, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play an important role in creating and maintaining the focus on the fact that alcohol differs from other commodities and deserves special public attention. Besides NGOs, federal and national lawmakers, the mass media, the alcohol beverage industry and health professionals are actors on the public arena of alcohol policy.

3.3 The role of NGOs in a democratic society

NGOs are one of the cornerstones of democracy, alongside the public sector, the civil society sector and the market sector. NGOs represent a major channel for people to influence policy (Hanssen, Helgesen, & Vabo, 2005), and constitute communities capable of influencing a healthy public policy. The term NGO has been used by different actors and in different contexts. From the start it was used to define international societal actors within the UN context, but in the recent decades it also encompasses national and local organisations (Martens, 2002). In a nation, NGOs function as mediators between the individuals in a society and the broader social environment (Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). In a democracy, freedom to form organizations is a basic political right, and the NGO sector has an independent role as a channel to raise concerns about citizens' needs and rights (Hanssen, Helgesen, & Vabo, 2005).

A study of voluntary organizations in Norwegian society shows that they are a consequence of changes in society, and they foster change themselves (Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). The study also shows that structure and activity of organizational life has dramatically changed since the 1960's, and that a new phase occurred after the 1980's. The total number of citizens engaged in organisations has grown, but there has been a shift regarding the type of organisations people support and the way they engage in them. Organizations dealing with leisure time, sports, diseases, disabilities, and special interests have experienced growth, and humanitarian and social organizations, including the temperance movement have experienced a dramatic decline (Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). Adding to this, the membership pattern has shifted from active participation towards members who support the organisations financially without involving themselves actively in organisational life. Since 1980, the former close connection

between local and central parts of voluntary organisations has shown a tendency to dissolve. When the demands and control from their central organisations is diminished, this has led to an extensive cross-organisational activity-based collaboration on the local level, unhindered by differences in ideology. Lorentzen (2007) describes this as a slow change from a hierarchical to a flat coordination of activities, found also in business and public administration sectors.

3.4 NGOs collaboration in the alcohol policy arena in Norway.

The temperance movement was from the beginning a grass roots movement, with local groups and a democratic structure based on grass root participation, training their members in democratic, political and organisational work (Kolstad, 1992; Ugland, 2002). Both the temperance movement and the labour movement historically have had significant impact on the development of alcohol policy in Norway (Hamran, 2005; Kolstad, 1992; Schrumpf, 2003). The rise of a temperance movement in the English-speaking countries found its way to the Nordic countries at the end of the 19th century, and in Norway the development of alcohol policy coincided with the formation of the welfare state early in the 20th Century. Before the First World War, NGOs in the temperance and labour movements were central contributors to alcohol policy in Norway (Hamran, 2005; Kolstad, 1992; Schrumpf, 2003), and both in Norway and in the other the Nordic countries, a strict alcohol policy dominated the 20th century. The term temperance movement is not only used to describe organizations working for prohibition or total alcohol abstinence; it covers also other influential organizations working for drinking moderation, combined with political, religious, or utilitarian perspectives (Kolstad, 1992). In the history of alcohol policy in Norway, organizations with the latter perspective had a strong influence on policy in Norway (Hamran, 2005).

Today, most of the larger Norwegian temperance organizations still exist, but are weakened, as changes in society have had a substantial negative impact on these organizations when it comes to members and funding (Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). The different NGOs in the alcohol policy sector in Norway have a tradition for collaboration going back to the beginning of the last century (Hamran, 2005; Kolstad, 1992). In addition to working together on a campaign basis to reduce harm linked to specific drinking patterns, like drink and drive campaigns, they have collaborated in the

Norwegian Temperance Alliance (AL). In 2003, the Norwegian Temperance Alliance was transformed into the Norwegian Policy Network on Alcohol and Drugs (ACTIS).

3.5 ACTIS

ACTIS is a partnership comprised of all the former sixteen organizations in AL, and when it was founded in 2003, ten more organizations in the alcohol and drugs field joined ACTIS. It was the intention to broaden the scope of organizations in the partnership, including bringing in organizations without a temperance stand. The primary task of ACTIS is to “*mobilize voluntary efforts towards reducing the damage resulting from the use of alcohol and drugs and focus on prevention, treatment and post-treatment care*” (ACTIS, 2006a). ACTIS is the largest umbrella for voluntary organizations in the alcohol and drug field in Norway, and as such is a major actor in the alcohol policy sector. A crucial function for the umbrella is to identify common ground for cooperation among the members (ACTIS, 2006a), or in other words, to develop and represent a common platform for the members on policy issues. The network hosts a broad scope of organizations different in ideology, methods and ways of expression. Members represent the temperance movement, temperance organizations in the trade unions, religious organizations, youth organizations and organizations with foci on policy, prevention, treatment and post-treatment care. The document “*ACTIS’ Common Platform*” emphasizes that the network consists of independent organizations with separate ideological and/or professional platforms. In the document they state that they wish to create trust and good internal working conditions through dialogue, in order to find common ground where they can cooperate (ACTIS, 2006a). In the statutes, ACTIS say they wish to create support for a value-based and knowledge-based drug- and alcohol policy, work towards a reduction of alcohol use and a drug-free society, and work to support a strict public drug- and alcohol policy.

To serve the partner organizations (or member organizations, as they call themselves) and to perform daily tasks for the umbrella, ACTIS has a secretariat with fifteen staff members. ACTIS has a branch office in Brussels, mainly concerned with monitoring and communicating policy developments in Europe. The leadership of ACTIS consists of a Board of Directors of eight to eleven members from the organizations in closest collaboration, supported by the Secretary General and her staff. The member organizations run ACTIS primarily through the bi-annual National Congress Meeting,

as well as participating in dialogue with the staff and board on a regular basis, for instance by collaborating in work groups. The day-to-day policy work is carried out by the secretariat in close contact with the Chair of the Board, and is based on ACTIS' policy platforms. The main office in Oslo provides on-campus accommodation for two thirds of the member organizations in the ACTIS building. The member organizations are different in size and resources, affecting how much staff they have present at the campus. Some of the small organizations have no staff at all, and make use of the office facilities past work hours, others have well-staffed offices open five days a week.

ACTIS is funded almost entirely on grants from the Norwegian government, through the Directorate of Health and Social Affairs. The 2005 annual report shows that just 1.5% of the total budget of 13,950,000 NOK (1,793,436 EUR) came from member fees (ACTIS, 2006b). As mentioned above, ACTIS, and AL before, has a long tradition as a key partner for policy makers at the highest level. Today, ACTIS disseminates evidence-based knowledge about alcohol-related issues, they develop high quality policy proposals for policy makers on all levels, they produce information for the media, and they work to improve the conditions for voluntary organizations in general, specially their member organizations. In order to keep up-to-date with national and international developments, ACTIS participates in several national and international networks, among them EURO CARE, the European Alcohol Policy Alliance, and NordAN, The Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network. On a national level, ACTIS take part in networks like ALKOKUTT, an umbrella for organizations aiming at promoting alcohol-free zones.

Summing up, Norway and the other Nordic countries have had, in contrast to other European countries, a tradition for a strict alcohol policy. This includes an advertising ban, a strict price policy, reducing the availability of alcohol, and strict regulation of the alcohol trade. In later years, there has been pressure on the Nordic countries to introduce a more liberal alcohol policy, more in harmony with the policies of other European countries. However, European public health authorities acknowledge the success of alcohol policies in Nordic countries (Ugland, 2002). The need for a common alcohol policy within the EU was promoted when both Finland (1999) and Sweden (2001) had the presidency of EU. However the Nordic countries are still under considerable pressure to become more liberal (ACTIS, 2006a; Ugland, 2002). The

Nordic temperance organisations have historically been at the forefront in shaping a successful alcohol policy, and if they are to continue to be at the forefront of policy shaping, strengthening partnerships for alcohol control might be a critical factor for success.

4.0 METHOD

4.1 The Case Study method

The case study design is a particularly well-suited method when the task is to obtain knowledge about one person or institution, or to describe general phenomena (Kvale, 1996). The case study design is much used in social science research, in which a researcher explores, in-depth, programs, events, activities, organisational functioning (as in this thesis) and processes (Creswell, 2003). It is a qualitative method and as such differs from quantitative methods in the relations between the data and the researcher, the use of theory, and the collection and analysis of data. Case studies make use of various data sources, including documents and interview data. Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting, it uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic, and it allows for new aspects to change the direction of the study (Creswell, 2003), and thus opens new paths for the researcher to follow. As an example, the research questions may need to be revised during the course of a qualitative study, following unanticipated paths that are illuminated as the data collection and analysis unfolds.

4.2 Rationale

Case studies enable investigating in detail relations between behaviour, events, and the context, and are particularly suited to explore the complex interaction between inputs, throughputs and outputs between individuals and between organizations. Following this, the case study design was preferred because it allowed investigation of how these affected each other in the Case and whether outputs were results of collaborative efforts or not. It is also suited to illuminate the dynamics of the relations between the individual and the situation (Kvale, 1996).

4.3 Data collection

4.3.1 Document data

This study made use of data from documents and interviews. Documents were available for this researcher from the web sites of the partnership. The web sites contain extensive information about the partnership in general and the history of ACTIS. It also has web-links to ACTIS' policy documents and annual reports with budgets. Some documents were available in both Norwegian and English.

Document data provided the researcher with official information on ACTIS' structures and processes, and primarily functioned as a source of comparison with interview data. In addition, the utility of these data was to provide the researcher with background information necessary to be able to discuss issues concerning the partnership at an informed level.

4.3.2 Interview data

The interview data in the present study were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with individuals having different kinds of affiliation to the partnership. Kvale (1996) recommends interviewing as many respondents as needed to reach the level of data saturation, and claims that there is a tendency to include too many respondents in qualitative research. Too many interviews result in vast amounts of data, which could result in poor analysis because of constraints on the researcher's time and resources (Kvale, 1996).

4.4 Participants

The participants were selected by snowball sampling. Nine participants were interviewed, representing a range of member organizations as well as the leadership, staff and board members, and both genders. Some of the respondents had more than one of the mentioned functions, representing at the same time the board and their organization. The list of participants was constantly reviewed in order to supply the case with as rich data as possible. Participants represent both the historical and ideological changes the partnership has gone through, as well as including members from both ACTIS and the former AL.

4.5 Access

All potential participants were approached by telephone 2 – 6 weeks prior to the interview itself. Following this request, they received an e-mail explaining the purpose of the study and the method, along with a letter of informed consent to be signed. After the first telephone call, the researcher made a second call to the informant to make an appointment for the interview. All selected informants accepted to join the study; however, two interviews had to be re-scheduled due to illness of the participant.

4.6 Interview guide

A semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 1) was developed for the data collection, based on the structure of the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007). Prior to the data collection, a pilot interview was undertaken in order to test the interview guide, the equipment, and to adjust the interview questions. The interview guide was centred around the following themes:

1. Mapping of the member organisation, their relation to the other organisations, their goals, and how they work.
2. Mapping of their resources.
3. Questions related to collaboration in the field in general, as well as experience with successful/ unsuccessful collaboration.
4. Questions related to the functioning of ACTIS, results, governing of ACTIS, values, partnership failures and successes.

The interview guide was not used rigorously, the researcher chose to follow new leads, as well as letting the informants change the order of the themes, however securing that the informant touched upon all relevant themes. New knowledge contributed to developing the interview guide under way, as well as expanding the understanding of the research field.

4.7 Interview settings

The interviews were conducted during office hours by telephone between 25th October 2006, and 15th January 2007. The respondents were interviewed once. The interviews lasted from 52 to 80 minutes, and were recorded on a SONY Minidisk. Interviews 1 and 2 were recorded with a device connected directly to the telephone wire. After this device malfunctioned, all the rest of the interviews were recorded directly on to the microphone device on the minidisk, using the loudspeaker on the telephone. The quality of the tapes is good. The Minidisk recorder malfunctioned during a 15-second period in interview 2, and the last minutes of interview 8 were lost. Only minor pieces of data were lost on these events, and these interviews were not resumed. The informants were notified when recording on the Minidisk was started and stopped.

4.8 Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is “*an ongoing process involving continual reflection about the data, asking questions, and writing memos throughout the study*” (Creswell, 2003). The most prominent feature of qualitative research is perhaps how the researcher uses himself as an instrument to understand and translate data into findings. This process starts in the interview, when the researcher chooses to follow up one lead from the informant, and not another, followed by the transcription.

4.8.1 Transcription from tape to text

The interviews were consecutively transcribed from tape to text into a Word document by the researcher. To safeguard anonymity, a written standard Norwegian was utilised in the transcripts, thus removing all connection between the informants’ dialect language and the transcripts. In the transcripts, the informants’ own names were removed. At this stage references to other names, other organizations or incidents were not removed if they did not disclose the informant.

4.8.2 From text to results

The transcripts are not living conversations, like the raw data, and should be treated as tools for interpretation (Kvale, 1996). Further, the process of producing meaning out of the interviewee’s statements involves the researcher, as co-author (Kvale, 1996), to produce a narrative or an analysis of the raw data. The analysis comprised three steps: structuring the material, clarification of the material, and finally the analysis proper, which involves developing the meaning of the informants, together with providing new perspectives of the researcher. Creswell as a first step recommends preparing and organizing the data underlining that interpretation will take place already at this stage (Creswell, 2003). All transcripts were gathered into one master document, each line of this document representing a line in a transcribed interview. The lines were given a unique number for reasons of reference. The master document was scanned for themes emerging from the data, and themes were given a code referring to the respondent. Further, the themes were gathered into clusters according to meaning, compared and contrasted with other themes in the data. When having established a set of themes, these were structured according to the elements of the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning.

4.8.3 From Norwegian text to English quotes

Because the informants in this study are Norwegian, the language of the material was kept in Norwegian throughout the analysis process to the point where the quotes were selected for use in this paper. Every effort was made to avoid distorting the meaning expressed by the informant both when preparing the data for analysis, as well as when quotes were translated into English. Translating verbal Norwegian language to quotes in English has been guided by an intention to be loyal to the perceived intention of the respondent. In order to safeguard translation, selected quotes supporting the findings were revised by the bilingual native English-speaking thesis supervisor.

4.8.4 Ethical considerations

Interviews with elites may represent a challenge regarding access (Hertz & Imber, 1995). It may be difficult to gain access to participants because they may have rigorous time schedules. In addition, there may be resistance in an enclosed group against allowing a researcher insight into the internal dynamic, for instance through participating at board meetings or accessing minutes. Interviewing elites also demands a certain prior level of knowledge of the researcher, so that the respondents do not feel they are “wasting time” on explaining basic issues (Kvale, 1996). One more problem regarding anonymity emerged in this study. Expressed public opinions may be easily identified within a small group in a selected field, for instance in the alcohol policy field. There is also the risk that respondents may recognize each other’s viewpoints formerly expressed in internal forums, like for instance the board, if these are referred to. To avoid the possibility to identify an informant, all names of organisations or other details relating to a specific organisation, situation, or even dialect, have been removed or replaced. This study faced at different levels these challenges, and in handling the material, as well as in reporting the findings, it was imperative to maintain the anonymity of the informants.

The interview situation itself provides another challenge to ethics; it may seem intimate and secluded from the rest of the world, and respondents may say things to the interviewer they normally would have kept to themselves (Kvale, 1996). The researcher must be aware of this, and reflect on whether such data should be used or not. To secure confidentiality, such quotes are kept out of this report, and such issues have been utilised in the report only when generable to a larger group of informants.

In all handling and storing of data it has been essential to secure the confidentiality of the participants, as well as when reporting the findings. The tapes and written documents are kept under lock, and all storage on computers is protected by passwords. Data stored on mass storage devices has been temporary and carried only by the researcher. The study was approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) in October, 2006.

5.0 RESULTS

The data collection in this study has followed the structure of the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning of input, throughput and output related to partnership functioning, and is reported accordingly.

5.1 Input

Three distinct groups of input emerged from the material: the problem, the partner resources, and the financial resources.

5.1.1 The problem

The partnership problem is the reason for why the members of ACTIS initially sought to collaborate with other organisations with the similar interests. Given that the member organisations represent a broad scope of diverse political and value stands, have very different ways of working, different ways of expressing themselves, as well as being directed against different parts of the population, the problem is what binds them together. Great diversity could constitute a threat to the partnership because they the view problem from different positions. In spite of this, the informants described that there is a consensus in the partnership, that the alcohol problem unites them:

...the alcohol problem in Norway, it is growing day by day we are very concerned with trying to reverse that trend...

..... alcohol is one of the greatest problems we have in society, drugs get the headlines and alcohol somehow seems to be sort of left out (I-4)

....there really is no controversy when it comes to what is the alcohol policy problem . It is somehow complex, but the most central (issues) , like the price issue and availability, .there is very little controversy about the problem and what kind of action to be taken...(I-1)

As reported in the Case section, the primary goal of the partnership is to represent their members in providing leverage on Norwegian alcohol policy. However, ACTIS' basic policy document: "ACTIS' Common Platform", displays that the umbrella has at least one more goal. The second goal is to work to protect and improve the general conditions for voluntary organizations, specifically their member organisations, as ACTIS states on their homepage:

6. Voluntary Organisations

ACTIS wishes to create an understanding for the importance of voluntary

*organisations for the society in general and in prevention and treatment of alcohol- and drug-related problems in particular because:
The individual's voluntary commitment and compassion is the strongest force society can muster for prevention of alcohol- and drug-related problems as well as for helping individuals recover from addiction
Voluntary organisations are not just an efficient factor in dealing with alcohol and drug problems. Voluntary organisations are just as important as providers of scientifically founded approaches that represent a supplement and alternative to what the professional and public sectors represent*

(<http://www.actis.no/> accessed 02.09.07)

Furthermore, the data show that ACTIS is involved in a third task, dealing with the legitimacy of the members' organizations as actors in the field. During the last few years of AL it became clear that the organisations had lost legitimacy because: 1) the member numbers had been in decline for a number of years and, 2) they had developed a distance to the alcohol problem.

...the second problem is that there has been a kind of alienation from the initial problem. A member of (one organisation) maybe had a grandfather with alcohol problems, while (the members) themselves, or their parents, never touched any alcohol at all, so...they are for one, not very interested in the issue, and second, they have developed a distance to the problem making them quite another kind of organisation...(I-5)

This informant describes how reasons for being engaged in the field needs to be in direct relation with the alcohol problem more than a mere general interest in alcohol policy:

...I have always felt that to gain support for an alcohol policy, it should be presented not just by people who associate alcohol problems with their drunk great-grandfather(I-9)

Most respondents report that there are few conflicts within the partnership, in spite of the members representing very different, sometimes opposite ideological and political stands. To these respondents it seems that the member organizations respect each other when working together in the umbrella:

...this came as a surprise to me. There have been very few cases of controversy on ideological issues within the umbrella. In many ways it seems to me like there is, within the umbrella, a mutual respect between the members...(I-3)

There has been conflicts through the years, however they seem to be related more to other issues than policy matters, this informant believes this has contributed to consensus among members of the partnership:

...even though they are so different and have been doing this for such a long time, it is my impression that conflicts have been based on priorities and personal differences, more than on political differences... (I-7)

...pretty much everybody has pursued the same line of alcohol policy...(I-7)

Some expressed that this is a result of the change from being a partnership based on the temperance stand of each individual member to an evidence-based partnership, and has resulted in the partners having the same starting point when they view the problem:

...professionally there is little divergence between organisations. We say that we are evidence based, meaning that we mostly use the same sources ... (I-7)

EE: ...do you know why there have been so few conflicts about policy matters?

...because there has been a common basis, that's one, and the other is that one has pursued commonness, working and working, meeting, discussing issues, having conventions, discussing platforms, research, the basic stuff...also the element of being a group on the (out-) side of society, a minority...one must stick together, and not fight internally... (I-7)

However, the partners realise that it is crucial to the functioning of ACTIS that the members unite in a clear understanding of the problem undertaken, as well as the goals of the partnership:

...ACTIS knows so well what people think, they know what the members think, they know where they stand, and sometimes they have to adjust things a bit, when they meet (with the) politicians,... (I-3)

5.1.2 Partner resources

Input from member organizations, inputs from the umbrella, represented by the Board and the Secretariat, as well as input from different individuals, is referred to as partner input in the following section. In the process of making ACTIS' policy documents, much preparatory work has been done by work groups in the partnership, the board and the member organisations, before a policy document is presented to the National Congress for final approval. The procedure is time- and resource consuming, reflecting that the democratic nature of voluntary organisations calls for a much slower procedure

of decision making than corporate businesses. The value and importance of these documents to the partnership is reflected in the will to finalise the processes:

We had one work group on alcohol policy, and another one on treatment and rehabilitation. This means that we have had work groups in all our primary fields of interest... (I-7)

Contributions of knowledge, skills, time and energy

When establishing the network, much work was done by the partners to build a common platform to express in policy documents. The process of producing these documents started long before they became subject to voting in the National Congress Meeting, and involved different levels of the partnership. When developing and preparing a policy document, ACTIS established a work group, encompassing resources from member organizations, the Board, the Secretariat, and sometimes even supplemented by external resources. The informants described the process of producing the policy documents as very hard on all levels of the umbrella, demanding considerable resources from member organisations, board members and secretariat:

*...through the dialogue with the different members ACTIS realises that it is just this input, the knowledge of the organisations...making ACTIS able to produce an even better policy...
... policy documents must be passed by the National Congress. Work groups and the board have been working on such big documents for as long as two years, finally resulting in a document which is presented to board, which in turn presents it to the discussion and final approval of the National Congress...(I-3)*

The members of ACTIS have invested considerable resources in creating and supporting the structures of the partnership, being represented on the Board, taking part in work groups together with the Board and the professional staff of the secretariat, and thus infusing their contributions into the policy documents created:

As an example, I could mention (org), which has participated in laying the foundations for ACTIS' drug policy programme, this organisation contributed in this group when drafting the treatment and integration program ... (I-8)

The informants were very clear when referring to the need for such policy documents:

....yes, if ACTIS didn't have it under their skin what the members think, what kind of policy to lead, they could easily go wrong...(I-3)

Most of the informants described how the skills and knowledge of the organisations as well as individuals were vital in the process of making policy documents::

*...in many cases ACTIS contacts the members saying: can you help us with documentation in this (particular) field?
...when ACTIS recently produced their tool kit for alcohol policy, many of their member organisations had access to much more documentation in their special field...(I-3)*

Working in voluntary organisations can be very time-consuming. Most of the member organizations of ACTIS have relatively few staff, and rely heavily on the efforts of voluntary workers using their leisure time to work for their organizations and the partnership. Some informants described how demanding this can be:

...it comes to the point where it stops. Like when (person) prior to taking on the full time job as leader of staff (person) was second in charge and worked fifty percent as a volunteer... (I-2)

...those engaged in such groups are the kind of people engaged in meetings around the clock... (I-7)

Motivation

In the absence of monetary rewarding, motivation is a cornerstone of voluntary work, making people and organisations willing to contribute time and energy. The respondents reported that establishing of ACTIS in 2003 evoked a new drive and positive emotions about sharing a cause; motivating, uniting and energizing the members:

All the members as well as others were so motivated to make ACTIS a success, and ...everyone has expressed strongly that we will unite to make this happen...so there has been such a positive spirit about it...doing so that even though we have had our differences we have been able to find solutions without hurting peoples feelings, or being excluded...(I-3)

Many of the respondents describe how the alcohol policy in Norway was under pressure for liberalisation, coinciding with the temperance movement losing influence on policy. Following a period of decline when the temperance organizations had lost support and members, resignation put its mark on the movement. Standing up against the wall, the future of the alcohol control policy was at stake, motivating the partners to collaborate in the creation of ACTIS:

*...this feeling of being marginalised, or losing influence...
EE: it became clear?*

Yes, it was very clear, and this resulted in a feeling of loss of power....and at the same time the organisations were in a state of discouragement...(I-5)

The motivating factor may be different for each member and each issue at each time, and can be connected to more than just solving the problem; some informants describe it as a somewhat diffuse basic good feeling of being part of a crusade:

....so I think that it is a kind of reflex. They used to be members of a great temperance movement, in its time of glory, and....that good feeling of being part of a righteous crusade and so forth....(I-5)

Motivating emotions may also relate to other things than “the good old times”.

Describing how members take pride in the umbrella, this informant tells how it matters to them that their participation shows:

...there is no doubt that there is a great deal of prestige in being visible in ACTIS...

EE: ...do you have any particular organisation in mind?

Yes,. but I'd say that also other organisations also take pride in their umbrella...

(I-1)

However, participation may also be motivated by the need to be in “the right place at the right time”. To some partners, it is of importance to be present on the central arenas of ACTIS like work groups, to be in a position to have knowledge about, and influence on ongoing processes:

...to have first hand information about things going on in ACTIS (and be in the position to) influence the ongoing processes (I-8)

Day-to-day partner contributions

In an inter-organisational partnership, the key aspect is that the organisations have experience from different areas of the field, allowing the partnership to take advantage of a great range of knowledge and skills of both specific and general character. ACTIS utilised the skills and knowledge of their member organisations when the partnership was founded. However, quite a few informants expressed that the member contributions also are essential in the day-to-day work:

...when hearings come up, ACTIS turns to the member organisations to ask whether they have any input for the response from ACTIS... (I-8)

...provide answers when (ACTIS) calls for input, response to hearings, an opinion, whether or not to agree with a statement...(I-1)

Contrasting the above, lack of member participation was an issue raised by a majority of the informants. However, some informants expressed a duality on this issue, both

claiming that ACTIS depends on contributions from members, and at the same time expressing that member contributions are minor in the day-to-day work of the partnership. Both the members and the leadership of ACTIS are familiar with the problem, but seem to have accepted the explanation that low participation is caused by a lack of member resources like time and energy:

...some think like this: Let ACTIS do this work; they can afford to use people and money on these things. We totally agree with ACTIS, but we have to focus on doing our own thing. It is great that ACTIS can do this...(I-7)

...ACTIS would prefer to have a closer dialogue with (the members), however, they acknowledge how busy daily life is, so hectic, that it is beyond reach of the members...(I-3)

To the member organisations, being a member of an umbrella means they have to divide their scarce resources of time and energy between the partnership and working with their own organisation; this may be quite demanding, and sometimes beyond their capacity:

I don't know if (that organisation) have that kind of capacity at the moment. Capacity is an important issue at all times, it seems clear that this represents quite a (burden) to (the organisations)...(I-1)

Partner values

In the study, partner values were considered a resource in line with other partner contributions such as motivation, time, skills and knowledge, and were identified as the political, religious or other ideological basis separating the individual member organisations from each other, providing them with identity. The member organisations of ACTIS bring with them their different organisational background and value basis into the partnership. Some organisations are based on a personal stand against alcohol among the members:

The members of (this organisation), those who are members, have taken a temperance stand, or totally abstain from alcohol (I-1)

Others organisations stem from the political left

...however, if you should ask them (in that organisation) who they vote for, and if you see what kind of organisations and parties (that organisation)

supports, they are political left, but ... (now that) the political left (side) care less and less about alcohol policy, these links are getting weaker....(I-2)

And yet other organisations have their background from Christian values:

Yes, on the one hand you have the Christian (organisations), and (this organisation) is located on the left wing...the working class...(I-2)

...sometimes I have felt...between the Christian and the non-Christian organisations, there has always been a kind of transparent wall. I don't like it ... (I-5)

In the data, partner values were found to be partner resources in line with other input. Partner diversity is recognised as an asset by ACTIS, which is reflected in this quote from the document “ACTIS’ common platform”, displayed on their web site:

“The member organisations in ACTIS are independent and perform their work based on their own ideological and professional platform..... The member organisations are different in terms of ideology, methodology and way of expression. This is the strength of the umbrella and its fellowship... The member organisations wish to stand together across individual differences in important common issues”.

(ACTIS, 2006a)

Collaborating across organisational borders has a long tradition from the time of the Norwegian Temperance Alliance (AL). The informants confirmed the diversity that characterises the member organisations:

...absolutely, both in religious and political terms, and in cultural terms ACTIS is a broad movement, there is a broad span of political (views) represented, on a pretty high level...(I-6)

The respondents expressed that by taking in new partners in 2003, ACTIS gained a broader base of representation. The new members not only contributed with their knowledge and skills, they represented something new to the partnership:

... I would say that including organisations like(org) has expanded the knowledge of all members and given insight into other values,... this is something new ... (I-3)

To most informants, contributing to the partnership was experienced as presenting and sharing their resources like skills, knowledge, networks and so forth. One informant

also described how the differences and conflicts between the members represent a resource to the partnership:

...they bring along their resources, but also differences and antagonism, and if you are patient and work these out, you in a way, benefit enormously from this... (I-2)

However, the occurrence of fractions in the partnership does not seem to have a consistent impact on how the different organisations act according to specific issues of alcohol policy. Several informants report that organisations on occasions can agree across traditional ideological and political borders:

...this is not altogether consistent. In (one organisation), the (central) leaders have (certain political views), at the same time as the local groups in (an other geographical part of Norway) have (other strong beliefs) you see... (I-9)

5.1.3 Financial resources

The third major source of input to a partnership is its financial resources. Having access to such resources is crucial to partnership functioning. ACTIS is a well-funded partnership; the main source of financial support is block grants from the Department of Health and Social Services. The informants reported that member fees are low in ACTIS:

*EE: is ACTIS funded by the members, do they get their financial resources from their members?
...the membership fee in ACTIS is very, very low for the member organisations, it varies with the size and financial situation of the member...
...of a budget of fourteen fifteen million a year, ACTIS gets two hundred and fifty thousand from their members...(I-1)*

Because the partners are responsible only for a minor part of the finances, this puts ACTIS in a unique position. The member organisations also receive block grants from the state, however these are relatively small and there is a constant surge for financial means because of a considerable decline in member funding. This means that the partner organisations themselves rely heavily on externally funded activities and projects to remain on the scene. Still, the members appreciate that ACTIS has financial resources to do the policy work they cannot do themselves:

...the member organisations don't mind, really. ACTIS gets so much more state funding, and they have so much more financial resources, so they have the capacity to do this, at the same time as only four or five of the organisations have this capacity, and as long as they don't have it they probably are really happy if someone else can do this...(I-2)

The state has access to ACTIS' substantial knowledge about alcohol policy, from the specific fields of the organisations, from relevant up-to-date information on national and international policy developments, at the same time as they support the organisations in doing an important job in the public arena. Several respondents report on how the state funding is a reciprocally beneficial relationship between the state and ACTIS:

...no doubt the authorities appreciate the activity of ACTIS. They might feel that ACTIS has a kind of competence they lack, or is complimentary to their own (competence), and I guess they would hardly turn ACTIS down...(I-8)

... The political environment recognises how incredibly important this kind of contribution is to society. (I-6)

...I think this is the best way of doing things, the major part of the budget is the branch office in Brussels, this is what the Norwegian authorities and the political environment profit from, and need...(I-3)

The issue of state funding is constantly discussed within the partnership, whether this is a limitation to the umbrella agenda or a strength. However, most informants had no objections to this arrangement:

*...most of (the members) totally depend on the state support to survive.
EE: ... does the state funding affect this, I think about ownership in ACTIS, or partner contributions, or partner engagement in ACTIS,?
No, I would not put it like that. After all, (the members) pay member fees...
(I-4)*

However, one respondent pointed to the fact that the members were left without the option of financial sanctions:

...as long as ACTIS get most of their financial resources from the authorities, they might be considered independent from their members, so financial sanction is no option (to the members)...(I-8)

An other informant reflected on the finance issue, commenting that the size of the member fees could influence on member commitment:

*EE: Do you believe that (the fact that) the members do not finance ACTIS influences...for instance the feeling of ownership, or ...willingness to contribute, or other things?
Today, that is not an issue...but I would imagine they would, if they paid half a million, they would have...kept a much closer eye (on ACTIS)...(I-7)*

5.2 Throughput

The throughput section describes the partnership context, in which the processes affecting functioning take place. The focus of this section is on the findings related to elements of the partnership context: input interaction; leadership; structures; roles and procedures; and finally communication; and how these interact with each other. These processes are associated with either production tasks concerned with the production of outputs related to the partnership problem, or maintenance tasks related to operational activities concerning the maintenance of the partnership itself.

5.2.1 Input interaction

The sources of input entering the partnership process are described elsewhere in this report, and will not be repeated here. However, input-input interaction was identified in the partnership context as having impact on the elements of partnership process.

The partnership problem was found to interact with the partners within the partnership context. One informant described how positive feelings are enhanced by sharing a mutual cause, and how this creates a drive:

*EE: could you tell me what this feeling is about?
...the feeling of temperance you know, is some kind of lodge-phenomena, it is a kinship with the others, having taken the same stand...they have signed the vow of temperance ... (I-6)*

Partner-partner interaction was found to be a pillar in the early stages of the partnership, when they created the policy platforms. As described in the previous section it was a long and exhausting process to develop the platform. The informants described partner motivation to work hard and long together in spite of their differences, in order to find a compromise that works:

...they have three, four, five meetings where they discuss and exchange opinions, talking and talking and talking, discussing and discussing things through before it is released and sent on hearing to the members. This is how the document texts are produced. And when the hearings are finished, the board works on the document, before presenting it to the National Congress, which in turn has their comments before approving on it...(I-7)

...people were really motivated, there is so much support for ACTIS, they want it to work well, that's why it has been so easy to build this organisation, because the members have been positive (I-3)

The expanding of the partnership in 2003 included ten new member organisations in the umbrella, as part of a plan to give the umbrella a broader platform, including organisations with a non-temperance ideology, like organisations against drugs. One informant reported on how the inclusion of new partners did not stop them from finding common ground, but rather infused the partnership with inspiration and energy:

EE: when the platform or umbrella expanded, did it change a lot, or was it much the same?

I think.... it brought a great vitalisation along... (I-5)

Sufficient financial resources have an impact on partner efficiency and focus by allowing the umbrella to have a secretariat of well-educated, experienced staff. The work of the secretariat relieves the members of preparatory work on issues such as white papers, hearings, and enhances the members' access to complex political processes. Several informants described how finance – partner interaction gives the members the possibility to take part in policy work at a high level, without having to compromise working with their own organisations:

...the members do get documentation and analysis results that they otherwise would not have the capacity to work with... (I-8)

I do think that this is good use of time, for instance hearings, when ACTIS has done the preparations, we mainly relate to their draft, and find out whether we agree or not. This saves us the time to dive deep into things (I-1)

5.2.2 Leadership

In any partnership context, the role of good leadership is evident. Elements of good leadership are: professional efficacy, taking initiative, skills for conflict solving, stimulating open communication, being visible, motivating, and implementing good structures. Leadership is central in shaping the partnership context, the goals, the ways of working, the structure, roles and procedures, as well as the spirit of collaboration within the partnership. The Board, on a day-to-day basis represented by the Chair of the Board, together with the Secretary General constitutes the leadership of ACTIS.

The data show that ACTIS benefits from their leaders' professional efficacy. Following the political development in the 1980's and the 1990's, the conditions for influencing alcohol policy from a temperance stand changed dramatically. One informant described how the leaders at the time realised that it was imperative to alter the course if the movement was to survive:

...(they) had realised that the temperance movement didn't hold any position any longer, that more partners were needed to influence the public debate, to try to increase political leverage...and ... new partners were found in the drug sector

...most crucial was that (they) realised that changes had to be made, changes in focus, changes in how to pass it on, changes in what one wanted to achieve in the sector and in policy... (I-3)

To have a more effective impact on alcohol policy in the broader society, the umbrella could not remain based on the temperance stand, but had to broaden its base:

...one realised that a broader basis was needed because...the organisations in the former Norwegian Temperance Alliance were member organisations based on the members personal commitment to temperance...(I-9)

Such a dramatic change could easily result in conflicts with the potential to destroy a partnership. However, the informants report that this was not the situation. When it happened, the process of changing from a value base to a knowledge base was surprisingly smooth:

EE:how was this process?

It was surprising how smooth it went...

EE: ...why?

...it had matured... there was wise leadership in the organisation...they realised the advantages with this...one can reach further on behalf of the goals of the umbrella...by handling things differently...(I-7)

The leadership acknowledged the importance of a new platform to give the umbrella a base to work from, and has been persistent in seeing these through. The work with policy documents started before the foundation of ACTIS. This informant describes how such documents provide the staff and leadership of ACTIS with a firm base as well as tools when action is needed:

... ACTIS has ...been very concerned with developing these political platforms...so that ACTIS, together with the members... in every situation...knows exactly what are the bounds...what they can say and not say...what to do next...you see? (I-3)

If the partners represent a broad scope of different backgrounds and ideological stands, the potential for conflict is present. Conflicts between individuals and groups have the potential to disrupt a partnership. If the leadership seeks to avoid and attempts to bypass conflicts without addressing them this may have equally disastrous effects. The process of creating the new policy documents included contributions from all the

members of ACTIS. According to several informants, it was a demanding process to merge the opinions of the member organisations into common policy documents:

*... the ideology of some members, crash with that of others...
Through the political platforms we have sought to find some good
compromise ...of course there are vivid discussions, so people do not refrain
from saying what they mean...(I-3)*

Conflicts are potentially destructive, require substantial energy and resources to resolve, and have the power to disrupt a partnership. Because of this, conflicts often are avoided in partnership practice. However, conflicts reflect diversity, and can be beneficial to the partnership if handled well by the leadership. One informant describes how tension mirrors that the partners are engaged, and states that the partnership needs the energy unleashed by such tension:

*...it is a challenge to include people with much skills and knowledge, but
(one should) rather take up that fight ... this kind of setting require a certain
level of tension ... (I-9)*

Leadership communication style is important, the leadership must be able to connect with the members. The way the leadership communicates with the partners has impact on the kind of feedback they get and the dialogue of the partnership. An open and transparent communication style sets the stage for meaningful information exchange. This informant gives a typical example of how the leadership approaches the member organisations, reflecting that ACTIS is at the service of the members, not the other way around:

*...ACTIS is only what the member organisations want ACTIS to be, a sum of
the member organisations...(I-3)*

The leadership of ACTIS recognised the value of partner diversity, and has worked to implement structures and roles that safeguard respect for partner autonomy. One informant described how an umbrella organisation risks developing a distance between the partners on one side and the staff and leadership on the other:

*. ...the most central challenge is that both the management as well as the
staff in an umbrella must have empathy for the interests of the member
organisations...to prevent ...(the umbrella) from developing into... the
sixteenth member...you see what I mean?
EE: ...it was like, them and us, in a way...
Yes, exactly ... (I-9)*

... the people working there now, if we speak of the administration... they are not just professional, they have much broader skills, every one of them...or at least most of them have background from organisations ... (I-6)

5.2.3 Structure, roles and procedures

ACTIS depends on a high degree of formalised structures, roles and procedures being an umbrella for 26 voluntary organisations and employing a staff of 13 persons. A democratic structure secures all member organisations equal opportunities and access to the processes and governing structures of the umbrella. This informant described how this works in ACTIS:

...all the organisations ... are represented in the National Congress of ACTIS where they decide on the plans and the priorities of ACTIS. All the organisations in ACTIS ... (both those located at) and those outside Torggata, have in one way or another given authority to ACTIS ... (I-1)

A structure reflecting respect for partner autonomy ensures that the member organisations will be heard, that their organisational integrity will be respected, regardless of size and level of functioning. This informant describes how it is deeply rooted in ACTIS' tradition that the structure should reflect respect for member autonomy:

...the independence of each member organisation of ACTIS is deeply rooted. ACTIS is not a over-organisation, it is an umbrella, a collaboration, and members can pull out at any time, if they conclude that they don't gain from the partnership... (I-8)

Concerns related to member autonomy are central issues to the partners, and are rooted in the situation of decline. Many of the member organisations are small, have experienced a substantial decrease in support and number of members, and are more or less virtual organisations. The partners were very clear that it would be out of line for ACTIS to suggest mergers between organisations:

*EE: are those conflicts gone?
Yes, that kind of conflict is... (about) the organisations being on their death bed... vanishing... might as well close down... and rather merge into one organisation (I-6)*

It would be unheard of if ACTIS suggested that two organisations should merge into one... ACTIS simply has no role in such things... (I-8)

ACTIS has a flat structure, and has the character of a network, leaving for each member organisation to decide at all times whether or not they will act consistently with the rest of the umbrella:

...we are not a hierarchical organisation, in the sense that ACTIS does not decide what the members should do... the members do not have the kind of reciprocal commitment as they would have in a regular member organisation. (I-5)

Too much focus on structure may draw attention away from the main problem undertaken by the partnership and can impact the partnership focus. One informant described how many small organisations and too much structure could be an obstacle to effective action:

...if you access the ACTIS' website, you will see that there are more than fifteen different temperance organisations. I mean, it is a waste of time and energy...having one organisation with two hundred members and another with fifteen hundred...

EE: so these organisations are rather small then...?

Yes...combined with the heritage of history...you have lots of structure and a minimum of action...(I-2)

The democratic process does not necessarily lead to equal distribution of power and influence between the member organisations. Several informants expressed how a small, energetic organisation or an active person in a work group might exercise considerable influence on the direction of the developing process. This represents a challenge to partnership democracy:

...there are organisations that are small but active, for instance [org], a small group of active and skilful people...Because of that they are in the management...they may deliver valuable input, representing a huge resource in relation to the number of members they have. (However, this raises) important issues about legitimacy ... (I-5)

The umbrella logic

As described in the Case, when ACTIS was founded, leadership knowledge and experience from similar networks was crucial for establishing the basic rules, structures and roles, as well as policy platforms. Not only must the leadership assess the partners' resources, they also have to know and recognize their needs, history, and values. The data revealed that the latter are important factors influencing a partnership. The main body of informants pointed out that if a partnership is to succeed, they must do certain things, as well as avoid doing other things. One of the informants labelled these factors

the “umbrella logic”, and thought of them as a set of rules to be observed by the leadership.

*...there is this umbrella logic you need to recognise if you want to succeed as an umbrella
...this describes how the umbrella and the organisations should relate to each other...it says what ACTIS should do...and what the organisations expect from ACTIS...this has led to ACTIS becoming a more distinct umbrella...(I-7)*

ACTIS and the member organisations do to some extent act on the same arenas, and could potentially pursue the same projects and funding sources. This has been the case on some occasions, and eventually has led to ACTIS handing these projects over to member organisations. ACTIS has realised that in order to avoid conflict of interest, the role and agenda of the partnership must stand out from that of the members.

*...ACTIS must not compete for campaigns or projects that could be run by the members...
...it is part of the umbrella logic that one must not overshadow the organisations, nor...threaten their ...particular field of interest...on the contrary one must strengthen these areas of interest and do the kind of things which are out of reach to the organisations, or the things they do not wish to be involved in...(I-7)*

The structure and roles must reflect how respect for partner diversity and autonomy is deeply rooted in the partnership, and that ACTIS has a separate agenda:

... if a facilitator is needed...one must order ACTIS to become such a facilitator, however ACTIS could never, as an umbrella and a partnership...force anything down on the organisations against their will...(I-8)

...an umbrella must base itself on the legitimacy of their member organisations ...and this must be very clear: The umbrella must have a field of interest that has clear delimitations versus the (fields of interest of the) member organisations...(I-7)

Clarifying what the members want ACTIS to be, ACTIS has approached the members, asking them to define the role of ACTIS versus the members. There must be a very clear division between the roles of ACTIS and member roles:

...we had many rounds on this when ACTIS was founded...it found its way into a document...describing how the umbrella should relate to the organisations...it states what ACTIS is supposed to do...and what the organisations expect from ACTIS...(I-7)

The members want ACTIS to do the things they, for different reasons, can not, or will not do:

...(the members want)... ACTIS to be the political actor they are at the moment, taking care of the members' interests, setting the agenda with the authorities and ...in public, which is beyond the capacity and possibilities of the member organisations alone...(I-3)

The members want ACTIS to be a provider of knowledge and information. Having a defined role as service provider to the members, this includes that ACTIS respects partner autonomy and values:

...influenced by the member organisations, ACTIS has realised, all by themselves, that it is not their business to interfere with their members organisational matters. They should rather be in the position to offer service to the organisations. (I-6)

When it comes to ideology, there is a clear difference in the roles of ACTIS and of the member organisations. As reflected in their policy document “ACTIS’ common platform”, a main role of ACTIS is to represent the common ground:

*EE: so (you) have defined the common ground very clearly?
Yes, as clearly as we felt was needed... at the time we worked on these things...(I-7)*

Making diverse partners work together is a question of involving the partnership in certain issues – and not addressing some other issues. The experience and knowledge of the leadership when ACTIS was founded is reflected in ACTIS’ policy platforms. If the member organisations and the umbrella should resemble each other too much, it would represent a threat to both. Several informants highlight that it is a crucial point that the common platform of ACTIS represents a moderate ideological basis versus society:

...the value documents of ACTIS are pretty clear...ACTIS is a sum of its organisations, but they have a much more distinct ideology than ACTIS . It was decided when ACTIS was organised, that the ideological profile of ACTIS should be different... (from that of the members)... (I-3)

Having a common platform as well as creating policy platforms, like for instance a ACTIS policy platform on alcohol, implies that this platform is somewhat diffuse compared to those of the member organisations when it comes to taking ideological, moral and religious stands. ACTIS has to choose carefully which issues to address in these documents, and which issues should be addressed by the member organizations:

...you cannot be too clear...on issues related to values...for instance when ...working on the platform for treatment, and the discussion came up...is alcoholism an illness or not?...this was a question ACTIS chose not to relate to, because...ACTIS and the member organisations in fact disagree on this issue

... ACTIS does not have ...to provide answers on all issues as long as we agree on the main things...then it is left to each organisation to pursue their own goals in the areas which they disagree with ACTIS... (I-8)

How diversity is handled may have substantial impact on partnership coherence and functioning. In ACTIS, diversity is seen as an asset, reflected very clearly in their documents. This informant explains how the partnership manages to include and encourage diversity, by recognising that the unique features of the members strengthen and complements both the knowledge base and the value base of the partnership:

*EE: If these organisations agree so much, what keeps them as different organisations instead of merging into one organisation?
...it is crucial that ACTIS has different organisations with different ways of working, in different areas. Their different experiences strengthen ACTIS, and gives ACTIS the opportunity to use knowledge and skills from many organisations... (I-3)*

5.2.4 Communication

It is clear that the functioning of a partnership will suffer without effective communication. It needs partner-partner communication, as well as communication between leadership and partners, and between the partnership and the external environment. Communication has to facilitate a two-way information exchange. The data show that ACTIS uses such communication channels as telephone calls, email, web site, newsletters, and face-to face meetings as in work groups, contact meetings, board work, and the national meetings. Information exchange follows formal as well as informal channels, the latter because of the common partnership campus of ACTIS in Torggata 1, Oslo. Communication is about being in the right spot at the right time, and some members have realised that the best means of accessing and giving information is to be present at the central structures of the partnership. The members of work groups have major influence on the production process. These are selected through an open and transparent process:

...as you say, ACTIS can ask them: who would like to join in? This way anybody may get involved, either by writing, or by participating in work group meetings...The board may also, as they did when they drafted the platform for treatment directly ask member organisations with the relevant knowledge and staff, appointing these... (I-7)

There was extensive and intensive communication between ACTIS and the members in the period when ACTIS was established. The process of producing policy documents made use of face-to-face communication in work groups and the board, as well as telephone and electronic communication:

...they have three, four, five meetings where they discuss and exchange opinions, talking and talking and talking, discussing and discussing things through...before it is released and sent on hearing to the members. This is how the document texts are produced... and when the hearings are finished...the board works on the document, before presenting it to the National Congress, which in turn has their comments before approving on it...(I-7)

Another quote demonstrates how communication cannot happen in a vacuum, participation and a willingness to share is vital:

...they must contribute with information, they must share (with the others) what do...as well as passing on information which might be useful to others... they have to participate...(I-2)

For communication to succeed it must be extensive and frequent. In ACTIS the main flow of communication on a day-to-day basis seems to go from ACTIS to the members instead of the other way around, as was intended. Several informants described this:

...ACTIS issues newsletters, they send invitations to meetings, they conduct meetings, they keep the members updated...as well as documentation...(I-3)

*...provide input when ACTIS needs response on hearings ...or...maybe see if we agree with the statement ACTIS has prepared...
...there is a pretty extensive communication on these matters...there are lots of hearing documents to be read... in one year...(I-1)*

The ideology of ACTIS is that the flow of initiatives and information should go from the members to ACTIS, but some informants claim that it mostly goes the other way:

...the communication goes from ACTIS to the organisations more than the other way around... this (is not) because the organisations don't see the benefits of it...nor because they don't need it...but simply because they start on number one priority that day...

...no feedback means that they agree on this issue...of course it is also a question of resources, how often such feedback is given...(I-2)

*...the ideology is that impulses should go from the organisations to ACTIS ...
EE: ... is this more rhetoric than... practice?
Yes...well, it also happens in practice in the way that ACTIS try to engage the organisations ... to work together... if possible...(I-8)*

Some members profit more and others less from the communication flow, depending on how active they are, or whether they are located on or out of campus. Widespread use of internet and email facilitates communication:

*...email is fantastic, don't you think...
...this has meant a lot, this feeling of being close...the organisations receive daily updates...all the latest news on the Wine monopoly, alcopop, alcohol and stuff,...much of this is done by email...and the ACTIS homepage is fabulous...(I-6)*

Even though most informants emphasize the importance of dialogue, some respondents express that talking about dialogue and communication in the umbrella is more rhetoric than practice:

*EE: ...how is this communication, how does it work?
...except from the newsletter every morning, from the reception, there is no initiative...
EE: ...is there any dialogue?
Not unless (the organisation) itself makes contact with... ACTIS...(I-4)*

The campus allows for face-to-face meetings, which is the most powerful way of communication, exposing partners to each other, providing the opportunity to get to know each other better and to build sustaining relationships. The data do not reflect that ACTIS utilises this communication strategy. The main communication points between partners are work group meetings, board work, the annual national meetings, and contact meetings open to all members - arranged three or four times a year. Even though they realise that face-to-face communication is effective, several informants report that the main part of the communication goes by email and telephone due to busy schedules, and low capacity:

*...it is ...effective to talk to people up there in person, people you have met before...
...the communication (often) goes by telephone and internet these days...
(I-1)*

*EE: ...do they use Torggata as a medium for communication?
Oh yeah...yes...
EE: In what way?
Well...most of it goes by internet...(I-2)*

However, the campus does facilitate informal information exchange between in-house partners, for instance in the copy room:

...what is crucial for collaboration in ACTIS, is the fact that many of (the organisations) are located in the same campus. This makes a huge

*difference. They see each other at lunch, they meet and talk, and they get to know the other people working there...
...when you share the same photocopier, you meet other people by the machine, and while you wait for your copies to finish, you talk to them...,
and all of a sudden you get to know what the others are doing...(I-2)*

5.2.5 Partner values

The data points to two different levels of functioning. The process of creating structures, like ACTIS' common platform and later ACTIS' policy platforms, engages a majority of the members in resource-demanding collaborative processes where they make huge contributions in terms of skills, knowledge, time and energy. However, when it comes to the day-to-day participation in the work of ACTIS, the data show that the members fall into two different categories: a small group, which are active and have much influence, and the majority of member organisations that are less involved in the partnership activities. The following sections will address both levels.

In the process of creating the documents required to establish and run the partnership, partnership diversity has been a core issue. As described in the background section of this report, partner diversity is the rationale for, and the most prominent feature of collaborative working arrangements like ACTIS. However, the informants described ACTIS as a partnership with a great degree of consensus and few conflicts:

*...(one) expected there to be huge differences in culture ...(between the) organisation leaders ...however, when the National Congress meets, and when ACTIS works on common political documents, there is very little controversy...
(I-3)*

ACTIS, in 2003, expanded the partnership to bring in ten new organisations with values different from the sixteen original temperance organisations. This was further underlined when a collaborative effort involving the member organisations, the board, and the secretariat, implemented integrated partner diversity into ACTIS official documents. The documents explicitly acknowledge partner diversity regarding ideology, methodology, and ways of expression as assets for the ACTIS.

*The member organisations in ACTIS are independent and perform their work based on their own ideological and professional platform
The member organisations are different in terms of ideology, methodology and way of expression. This is the strength of the umbrella and its fellowship.*

(ACTIS, 2006)

Several respondents spoke about respect as crucial for the existence of this partnership:

...I'd say that the time in ACTIS has been dominated by respect for the organisations. This is part of the bedrock. (I-6)

In umbrella organisations, it is a risk that a distance can develop between the leadership and the members of an umbrella. Respecting partner diversity on paper is not necessarily the same as being successful in implementing this in organisational culture. To enhance partnership diversity and make it work it needs to be more than a popular phrase if it is to influence functioning positively. The informants described how an appropriate structure must be accompanied by a leadership, willing to identify with the ideals and goals of the member organisations:

ACTIS cannot force the organisations to do things, you see...they have their own legitimacy...and not the least, there is a huge scope of ideologies. This balance, it demands not only knowledge, but also a predisposition for,...a talent for empathy...(I-9)

Democratic and transparent structures, as well as defined roles based on respect for the diverse values of members and their organisational autonomy foster partner –leadership trust, as well as partner –partner trust:

...(the members) trust those working at the ACTIS administration in every way... and I think this is quite widespread...(I-6)

Trust is itself a powerful catalyst of positive interactions within a partnership. The majority of the informants report that members have trust in ACTIS, as well as trust in the other members. The structures and clear roles of ACTIS clearly foster trust internally in the partnership, both in partner - partner relations as well as in partner – umbrella relations:

...(the members) have trust in ACTIS, and they know that ACTIS works on their behalf... without crossing the crucial line between umbrella and primary organisation...(I-7)

Communication has great influence on the quality of interactions, and includes not just the practical means necessary for communication, but also the ability and the willingness to communicate. This can differ greatly between members of a partnership depending on their focus, resources and functioning, as well as the degree of trust in the partnership. It is a leadership responsibility to take this potential for communication into consideration, depending on the kind of organisation and the resources. The data

show that the structures and the leadership of ACTIS encourage all member organisations to use their voice if they wish to use it, regardless of their ideological stand, size or power, as this informant describes:

...I do think people feel that there is room to speak up in ACTIS...to the extent (the members) have the energy to do so...one part of the umbrella logic is that one must pursue a kind of openness ...and dialogue...so that people dare to share their concerns...(I-7)

5.2.6 Sufficient financial resources.

As described in previous sections, ACTIS has sufficient financial resources. Based on experience from similar networks, the leadership and the members of ACTIS have used this to keep the membership fees low. Thus, the members need not use their own scarce resources to support the umbrella. As previously described, despite the diversity and value issues, the partnership is characterised by consensus. According to most informants, having sufficient financial resources has great impact on this, reducing the level of conflict. Conflicts can potentially take huge tolls on a partnership, consuming resources in terms of time and energy used to resolve or avoid conflicts. In its most aggressive form, partnership conflict has the power to distort the partnership agenda or even disrupt the partnership. These informants underline how conflicts on money issues can be devastating:

*ACTIS has decided not to...bleed the organisations for money...because this is an issue which could destroy an umbrella...
(I-7)*

...it means we don't have to fight much over money (issues)...nothing stirs a (good) fight as much as if you are in financial trouble...

EE: So ACTIS benefits from this?

Yes, I'd say so, we kind of (have the cake and eat it too) here. We get to have this (organisation), which is entirely our own, of which we are very pleased ...at the same time as it is financed by state funds, because the politicians also recognise how important it is to get (this kind of input into the public arena) ...after all, ACTIS represents a grass root, not a very substantial grass root, but it is there.. (I-6)

....that means we do avoid much internal fighting...bad economy may contribute more than many other things to fighting... (I-6)

The financial resources also allow ACTIS to engage a professional staff with a high level of skill in political work, knowledge of alcohol and alcohol policy, as well as a wide political and organisational network. In the process of creating policy documents, as well as in the day-to-day work, the board, in collaboration with the secretariat, work

with complex documents such as white papers. Comprehensive political documents and bureaucratic language pose a challenge to voluntary organizations, especially the smaller ones with little or no staff, and this can keep them from responding. The secretariat at ACTIS does much preparatory work on such policy documents, and takes these to a level where it is within reach for the members to relate to the content, thus making them more available, according to this quote:

...One could complain over capacity deficits, but...accepting that, it is so good that there is someone who can do things, facilitate things, so that we are able to keep ourselves updated at the same time as it allows us to play a part...(I-8)

Even though the data report on member participation in specific projects, lead and coordinated by ACTIS, for instance the annual drug-focus event week, protest actions against under-age youth alcohol sales, or collaborating on media stunts, a majority of the informants expressed that only a limited number of the members have either ambitions or the capacity to invest resources in the day-to-day policy work of ACTIS:

...there are... twenty-five member organisations in ACTIS, out of them maybe seven or eight try. Let's say that four of them take active part ... (I-2)

... it is clear that some organisations don't engage much in...the political...their focus is more on...the kind of work aimed at keeping their own organisation alive...offering something to their own members...(I-8)

The financial resources enters the partnership context, allowing ACTIS to keep a well-staffed and well-educated secretariat with a great capacity for producing high quality policy products. The next informant describes the kind of contributions and influence the secretariat has, and what this means to ACTIS. However, the staff having time, resources, and knowledge to be active and successful reflects a resource asymmetry between the secretariat and the member organisations:

... the skills in ACTIS, the secretariat has increased over the last years...so that those people working at ACTIS are good at what they do...and it goes beyond a doubt that these people will... working full time there, greatly influence ACTIS...(I-8)

At the same time as an effective staff increases the partnership impact on alcohol policy, there is a downside, described by this informant:

Some think like this: let ACTIS do this job, ACTIS has the people and they have the money to do this...we totally agree, but, we appreciate that ACTIS does this... (I-7)

Several informants reported that ACTIS does not rely on partner contributions to produce day-to-day policy outputs, and that most of the member organisations need to use resources on their own organisations, thus leaving most of the political work to the secretariat, as described by this informant:

...for a long time, it has been really hard to be a temperance organisation...and some things has been abandoned...instead of maybe renewing (themselves), the (organisations) went on doing the same things, leaving policy to ACTIS. They could have, and this would have benefited both them and ACTIS, become even more engaged (in the policy arena)... (I-5)

As described in the input section, a strong and effective secretariat is partly what the members want. However, besides having positive effects on the partnership problem (having impact on alcohol policy), several informants also described how low member capacity could enhance asymmetry, as well as lead to less member participation:

*...there is a lot more communication from ACTIS to the members than the other way around...this is not because the organisations don't see it would be useful, but...simply because they have to attend to the (things on) top of the list each day, the most urgent issue each day comes first...
EE: are you talking about capacity now?
Yes, they would like to participate more I think, it's just...they are so content that there is someone there.(to meet the department of Health and Social affaires)...then they don't have to do it (themselves)...(I-2)*

Several informants report about a majority of the member organizations appearing to be passive in the partnership. To explain why this happens, one of them describes that this is due to low member capacity combined with a well functioning secretariat:

... members are so busy working with their own organizations, so if they know that ACTIS can do this part – they are happy that way – disturbingly happy, I would say...(I-2)

ACTIS leadership is aware of this and wants the partners to be more active, as described by this informant:

*... it would be most welcome if the member organisations were more critical to ACTIS, more persistent...that they had more expectations...in meetings the members tend to say to ACTIS...nice work...this is how (the members) wants things...
Get on with the good work, (the members) are content with their share of work...this is the kind of feedback ACTIS gets...(I-7)*

However, even though the leadership of ACTIS recognises and accepts the lack of partner feedback and initiative in the day-to-day policy work, however, the data does

not report on leadership measures attempting to counteract this situation. One informant describes feedback as when how partners stir things up, reacting to an issue, and how this contributes with energy even though it is demanding:

*There has been some energising processes, like when (one organisation) woke people up, (people) had to focus, they started the discussion over again.. ... this is how an umbrella should function.
Still, (if) you don't get the required tension, some energy is lost...
(I-7)*

As reported in the input section, the data display how the resource asymmetry between members and ACTIS also result in a one-way directed communication overload. This informant describes how the communication flow can become too intense for comfort:

...maybe the member organisations can get this feeling that ACTIS communicates much...one tries to avoid this, there are people in ACTIS who are capable of communicating non-stop... (I-7)

Another informant complained about the lack of energy in the communication between ACTIS and the members, even though it is extensive:

...the communication is...maybe too terse, there should be more energy in it...I know that (the staff) would like...more challenges, take initiatives, ask us to do things...(I-7)

Some members are more active than others are. The data show that there is a division between a few, active member organizations and the other members. Some of the more active member organisations are small organisations with very few members and almost no staff. This group of members continues to be active within the umbrella, influencing the agenda of the partnership. On the other hand, the less active members choose to relocate resources, allowing them to focus inwards on their own organizations. This informant describes how this is not related to organisation size::

*EE: are there some that are very engaged (in ACTIS)?
Yes, there are many examples of organizations with few resources and few people who are very engaged in the umbrella...and there are big organizations with lots of member and staff who are less engaged (I-7)*

Another informant described how this is a balance act between being an expert driven organisation and a still representing the grass root:

*EE: what role do the members play in ACTIS? Because, in many ways, ACTIS is an organization in itself?
Yes, that is right, and wrong at the same time. And this is a core issue ACTIS deals with all the time...it is a concern of ACTIS , and is constantly debated...*

EE: does this have to do with representativity?

Yes, of course... we are in a kind of intermediate position, but we do tend to touch upon the BELLONA-concept at times...

EE: I am not familiar with that term.

Well, BELLONA is an organization...very expert oriented, without any grass root movement...those who are members pay a member fee, but (except from that they) are passive, they get this newsletter...it is a very professional staff, well educated and so on (I-5)

Even though most informants did not dwell on the possible outcomes if this scenario should become a long-term situation, this informant describes how it might impact both ACTIS and the members:

...in the long run this will weaken both the cause as well as the member organizations, reducing the legitimacy of the umbrella work...(I- 5)

5.3 Output

Outputs refer to the results emerging from the partnership context, reflecting either positive or negative cycles of interaction in the partnership process, or may be the result of resources bypassing the partnership context resulting in additive outputs.

5.3.1 Synergistic outputs

Synergistic outputs refer to results of partnership processes being characterized by positive interactions, results that would not have been possible to achieve unless the partners collaborate. The concept of synergy is described in detail in the theory chapter, and will not be further explained in this section. However, one informant gives a description of how synergy manifests itself:

...with a good plan, you can take advantage of everybody's strength. And when this works it is fantastic...because then...you double the results, or maybe more...you get much more back than you could get by working separately... (I-2)

The most prominent synergistic output of the partnership process is the policy documents. ACTIS has produced policy documents on platforms, in the form of various documents on alcohol policy; drug policy, as well as treatment and rehabilitation. "ACTIS' common platform" (Appendix 3) describes how the member organizations relate to each other as well as to the umbrella. The best way to describe how the partnership works, according to this informant, is to see it as a platform for the pooling of resources:

...it is supposed to be a...kind of platform, onto which you step when there is an issue, a matter you agree upon ...something you wish to do in collaboration, ...and then you enter the platform into the collaborative setting...and when you leave from the platform, you are not any longer in partnership...and may work on (the) other things...

...I really feel that the most crucial, ...the rationale for ACTIS is the pooling... of resources in one field ...the political field...in which all the organisations are weak. (I-5)

The respondents reported that the partnership impact on the public arena, on politicians, and on alcohol policy, exceeds that of the former Norwegian Temperance Alliance (AL) in the late 1980s and 1990s. According to data, ACTIS has become a more attractive partner for policy dialogue:

...the genius with ACTIS is...it has done so much by reducing suspicion. Many politicians felt reserved when confronted with activists from the temperance movement...

...the temperance movement used to be very strong in this country, it was a stronghold, both cultural and in many other ways...it toppled over so to say...there was a kind of dogmatic way of thinking...

...it can't be denied that it was a somehow life-denying phenomena having a hard time communicating with the rest of the world. One simply had to find a more pragmatic approach.

EE: ...and this...I understand it was a change for the better?

Yes...you see... ...I can't recall AL ever having that kind of influence (that ACTIS has) ... (I-6)

Having influence is more than having the knowledge; access to the networks is vital to make changes happen. The partnership has succeeded in this, as these data illustrate:

... ACTIS is involved in informal processes, this is not just by simply sending an answer as response to a hearing, but...they are summoned to informal meetings to check out issues with the leaders of the ministries,...they are consulted before drafts for law texts are presented to the government and stuff...these are signs that one is taken seriously...that they wish to check out...relevant issues with experts before taking a stand...(I-7)

...today ACTIS attends the interests of the members by being the kind of actor they are on the political scene...they contribute to the political agenda, both in the public, as well as among the politicians...in a way which is beyond the reach of the members...(I-3)

...a second factor of success is that ACTIS for years worked to establish a network with politicians and has also direct contact with other official levels...securing a direct line...the members never had this...this means that (ACTIS) has a very favourable position...(I-3)

The change from an ideological to a knowledge-based approach has meant that the skilled and experienced staff and leaders are crucial. Having access to general knowledge about policy work provides the partnership with the political expertise used as well as access to the political environment:

...in spite lots of talking about participation and ...openness and democracy, politicians don't really mind how many members you represent, their primary concern is ... what do you want to say...is it interesting, new, innovative...do you have expert knowledge...whether you have good contacts, and that sort of things...(I-5)

The secretariat together with the member organizations of ACTIS has produced information and recommendations for community politicians, a so-called toolbox for alcohol policy. Having access to a relevant political network allows ACTIS to feed and support politicians with such knowledge produced by experts and the grass root of the umbrella, as this quote illustrates.

...this is a good example of what I think is umbrella success...ACTIS has been working for a long time on a tool kit for local alcohol policy, aimed at politicians at the local and central level. (The politicians) will find...all the documentation and facts from ACTIS and the members in documents aimed to support politicians...(I-3)

All the respondents reported that the umbrella to a larger or smaller extent has influence on alcohol policy in Norway. Most frequently when this theme was discussed, they said that the influence and contributions from ACTIS are noticeable. This can be seen in public, in media, as well as in alcohol policy such as enacted laws:

*EE:...the topic of alcohol policy was for a long time out of the public eye. I understand that this is changing, is this thanks to the work of ACTIS?
...I think ACTIS has played an important part in this change...(I-5)*

For politicians to get involved with a policy theme, it is an advantage to present them material that is easily accessed and easy to use. Many of the informants underline that ACTIS, by serving the political environment, has become a significant contributor in the alcohol policy arena:

...when they see the quality material coming from ACTIS, (they) realise that these are worth using, useful to politicians... (I-6)

... ACTIS produces texts which are used in committee proposals, or they may surface in an interpellation, these are very specific outcomes, it is

possible to trace the work of ACTIS in such documents. Even though this is rarely done... but if a member should ask, it can be done... (I-5)

...the political work of ACTIS today has high quality. ACTIS monitors political processes,(they)know what's going on, (ACTIS) is at the forefront of things, prepared when things happen. (ACTIS) produces relevant material, (they) know at least as much as the other actors in the field. These are some of the things required to be an effective political actor...(I-7)

The policy arena is not restricted to the life and work of politicians; it includes the public, as well as the media. ACTIS has succeeded in having impact on the public arena with networking

...yes, there is no doubt ACTIS can prove that they have made major contributions to this policy sector through their efforts in the field... (I-3)

How to handle journalists, how to appear in front of a camera, how to make a sound impression in a TV debate, all media performance at a high level requires media training. Few of the member organizations have the resources to do this; however, the secretariat has this kind of skill on behalf of their members, and they provide the partnership with good media coverage:

...it is demanding to be in the media, and this requires certain skills, many try to avoid it, because it is a tough job...quite a few of the members appreciate that ACTIS is out there doing this job...(ACTIS) tries to involve the members when required on specific issues...because there is more to it than simply to enter the stage with a cry for attention ... (I-3)

5.3.2 Antagonistic outputs

As described previously, ACTIS experiences a degree of such as partner withdrawal. Such outputs represent a cost to the partnership giving less than the value of invested resources back, draining the partnership of resources. Partner contributions are the main resource of a partnership, and if withdrawn, this will impede partnership functioning severely. As the next quotes illustrate, several respondents were quite concerned about this development:

I have said, between us, too little...it would be better with more criticism, it would have been preferable with... more persistent partners with expectations to ACTIS . When (they) meet (they) say, fine, that's the right way to do things, this is what we want, lets keep it that way. That is the kind of feedback ACTIS gets ... (I-7)

A successful umbrella means that someone does the job, still there are pitfalls, as the next quote illustrates. It is a risk that ACTIS could become the reason for not investing too much of the member organisations' resources in policy working:

If it was not for ACTIS, I believe that we would have gone public on a much larger scale

EE: so then...ACTIS may become an excuse for not going public?

Well...this is a danger...and...it is on our agenda ... (I-6)

5.3.3 Additive outputs

Additive outputs are not really outputs of the partnership process, but are results when partner resources bypass the partnership context. The participation and contributions of the partners were not needed, this way the result does not represent added value neither to the partnership or to the environment. For instance, when issues related to alcohol policy have received increasing media coverage over the last years; this is a result of a long term, conscious strategy, and the hard work of ACTIS' staff. This example is taken from a situation where ACTIS achieved positive media coverage thanks to their expertise:

...there is an abundance of information...and often it is crucial to direct your high quality documentation against those who are thought to be more susceptible to argumentation...

EE: ...looking at the ACTIS, the partnership, ACTIS the network, the member organisations of ACTIS...do they have any part in this success, or was this thanks to the skills and knowledge of the experts in the staff of ACTIS?

I should say it was...the experts...in this particular case... (I-8)

Summing up, outputs were found to be results either of processes taking place in the partnership context, or bypassing the partnership. Positive cycles of interaction utilize the resources of the partners, the problem and the financial resources, enhanced by elements of the partnership context, resulting in synergistic outputs. Antagonistic outputs are results of negative interactions between the inputs and the elements of the partnership context and may impede or even threaten the existence of the partnership per se. Additive processes are not affected by the partnership context, have no effect on partnership functioning, and may lead to results affecting the same problem as the partnership has undertaken.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The organisations in ACTIS represent very different, sometimes opposite ideological and political stands. Partnerships aim to bring together diverse partners, with their strengths and weaknesses, to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency, as well as produce new solutions (Brinkerhoff 2002; Gray,1989). Resource acquisition is closely linked to the selection of partners, and when choosing partners, they may be prescribed potential roles according to the anticipated needs of the partnership and potential advantages they may contribute with (Brinkerhoff, 2002). In addition, diverse partners see different aspects of a problem and offer the opportunity to expand the vision of the problem, as well as how to solve it (Gray, 1989). Different perspectives, resources and skills provide the basis for the creation of partnership synergy (Lasker et al, 2001). Including complementary resources in a partnership gives the highest probability for increased value in a partnership venture. Still this is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for partnership synergy (Madhok & Tallman, 1998).

The findings of this case study will in the following be discussed according to the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning. However, the importance of partner values and sufficient financial resources has not been studied before, and will be given special attention. The elements of input interaction, leadership, structures and roles, and communication were found to affect partnership functioning in the case. Leadership, structures and roles were most correlated to positive cycles of interaction, whereas communication was most correlated to negative cycles of interaction, and are discussed accordingly. Input interaction was found to influence both.

6.1 Positive cycles of interaction

The study shows how good values management can positively affect partnership functioning. As depicted in figure 2, partner values enter the partnership context and are considered as partner resources in line with other partner resources such as partner skills, knowledge, time, energy, and motivation. When establishing ACTIS, the partnership chose to define partner values as an asset, as well as to encourage the members to stay with their organisational identity. In a partnership consisting of partners with diverse ideological, religious, and political values, this represents a potential for conflicts. Based on former experience with similar work, the leadership of

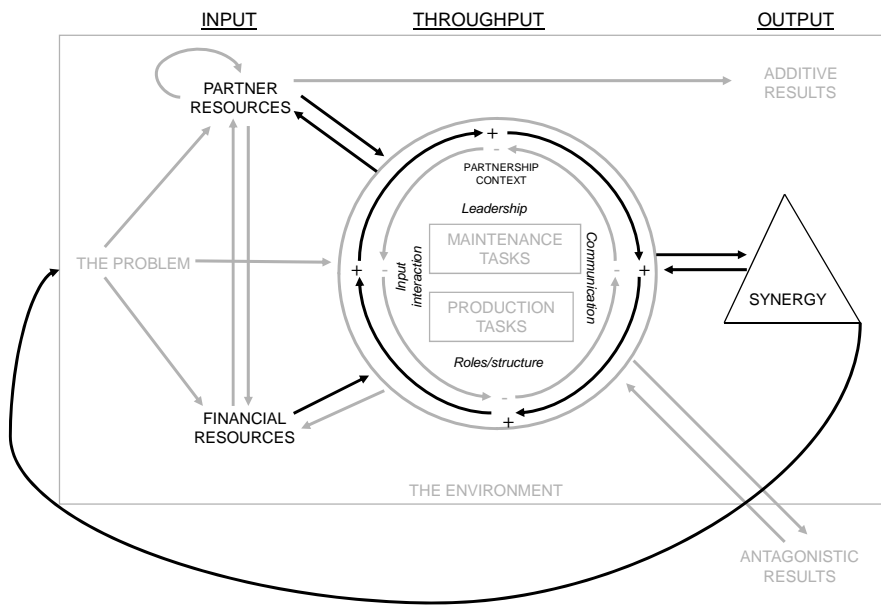
ACTIS chose to include partner values as a partnership asset and to support partnership diversity, thus initiating a positive spin to the interaction cycle. Together with the leadership, the partners have in early stages of the partnership put much resources into defining their common ground in policy platforms, reflecting what they agree upon. The structures and roles safeguard the identity and autonomy of the partners. Further, ACTIS actively supports partner values when they encourage the member organisations to work to influence policy outside the umbrella, utilising whatever resources their individual organisations might have, including organisational values. The different partner values are also acknowledged by the partnership as complementary resources in the partnerships' pursuit of a better alcohol policy, however most efficiently utilised when the partners operate outside the partnership.

The way partner values are acknowledged and safeguarded by ACTIS further enhances the cycle of positive interaction, fostering respect and trust among the partners, having crucial effect on partnership functioning, enhanced by an open communication. Positive partner-partner interaction is a result of a high degree of consensus, low level of conflict, thus increasing partner trust.

The term input interaction was introduced to health promotion partnership literature by Corbin & Mittelmark, (2007), describing how inputs affect each other in the setting of the partnership. For instance partner resources, financial resources and the problem can contribute positively by providing energy, expertise, material support, and a sense of urgency. As described, the present study found multiple input interactions in the partnership context, confirming the utility of the concept.

As in the study of Corbin (2006), leadership was found to be of critical importance for the functioning of ACTIS. The type of leadership needed to resolve partnership issues is not necessarily the same as leadership attributes most effective in the corporate and management field (Lank, 2006). Further, partnerships call for an equitable style of leadership, partners in a collaborative setting are not "managed", and they are peers, calling for a consensus building leadership style more than in a traditional hierarchical led organization (Lank, 2006). In a network, leadership is a quality distributed among all participants, the qualities of the partners should be complementary to each other to match such complex demands as listed above (Lank, 2006, Wandersman, 2005).

BERGEN MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE FUNCTIONING (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007)



(Fig 2)

Lasker, Weiss and Miller emphasize that partnerships need boundary-spanning leaders, able to understand and value diverse perspectives of partners, and able to bridge partners’ perspectives and share control, resources, ideas, and not the least, power (Lasker et al 2001).

Corbin (2006) claims that in partnerships, professional efficacy, good values, a desire to promote openness, trust and autonomy, and skills for resolving conflict are among the critical elements of successful leadership. Further, she states that a certain degree of pragmatism can come in handy. These elements were also found to enhance the functioning of ACTIS, however, the element of empathy must be added. According to the present study, a certain degree of empathy with the very diverse causes of the members of an umbrella is required. This is to counteract a development of a “them / us”-attitude between the leadership and the members, and to enhance the feeling of a common identity within the umbrella.

The cycle of positive interaction was enhanced by the creation of structures safeguarding some of the principles most crucial to the member organisations. The experience and knowledge of the leadership as well as the legacy of the temperance

organisations indicated that not every kind of partnership structure is suited for ACTIS. These principles are labelled, “The Umbrella Logic”, reflecting that an umbrella should be governed by the members, respect the autonomy and integrity of the member organisations, do the things the members will not or can not do themselves, and not compete for projects or funding with the member organisations.

Further, Corbin (2006) states that formalised roles and procedures benefit partnership functioning, giving structure to the partnership context. In her study, the structure of the case was uniquely designed for a partnership of poorly funded, geographically diverse partners. The present case represents the juxtaposition to that study, being a well-funded, national partnership of organisations with a central location in a common campus. Choosing the feasible structure of a partnership as well as the processes for governing and managing depends on the context, the original intent and motives of the partnership, and how it is funded. Changes in any of these factors would have impact on the way the partnership is structured (Mitchell and Shortell, 2000).

However, partners may not be free to design structures and processes; there are often factors outside the partnership control influencing such processes. These include previous actions, or external factors like public and private funding agencies’ demand for inter-organisational collaboration as a condition for funding (Weiss et al, 2002, Huxham 2003). There was no indication that ACTIS had their structure imposed by external demands. On the contrary, respect for the autonomy of the partners, the historical legacy they have in common, as well as the experience of the leadership were found to be the pillars the structure is built upon.

Partnership structures may also be related to accountability issues. Demands from funding agencies related to the documentation of activity or progress evaluation have laid extra burdens on voluntary organisations, sometimes the demands exceed what the members can be expected to do on a voluntary basis, and consequently the need for professional staff is required to meet such demands (Lasker, Weiss and Miller, 2001). The members of ACTIS have with the help of the financial resources created a central secretariat with knowledge and resources, aimed to service the member organisations when issues of accountability come up.

Wandersman et al (2005) point to the structure and processes of governance when they recommend coalitions to adopt a structure of shared leadership and shared decision-making, encourage open discussions, and recommend single-issue coalitions to use a decision-by-consensus method. The use of work groups and task forces increases partner mobilisation and the implementation of partnership strategies (Wandersman, Goodman, Butterfoss, 2005), as found in this case.

Also, the degree of formalization of rules, roles and procedures impacts commitment, responsibility, satisfaction, and the extent to which partners are willing to invest. If explicitly expressed in documents like mission statements, goals and objectives, bylaws, policy and procedure manuals, rules, roles and procedures will enhance partner involvement (Wandersman, Goodman & Butterfoss, 2005). If roles are blurred, or unclear, this affects trust in the partnership, and increase the potential for conflict (Huxham, 2003). In a situation where the partnership can afford to keep a professional staff, it is crucial that roles are defined and clear between staff and volunteers in a partnership, for instance which daily tasks staff members are meant to deal with. Different volunteer roles like board member, a committee chair or plain member, may have different challenges, benefits and costs in relation to the staff (Wandersman, Goodman & Butterfoss, 2005). The umbrella logic reflects the specific roles assigned to avoid unclear roles in ACTIS.

Financial resources were also found to engage in cycles of positive interactions. In the process of creating structures and policy documents, these resources were found to enhance partner capacity to engage in policy processes at a high level.

As described previously, sufficient financial resources allow ACTIS to have a well-educated and well-staffed secretariat. They service the member organisations by preparing and adapting documents before these are presented to the members, inviting them to respond on issues of policy. Thus, ACTIS provides all member organisations with access to complex political processes, creating equal opportunities for the members to influence policy on a high level, in a way they never could have done without the work of the secretariat. The financial resources also allow the secretariat to take care of partnership tasks, many of them related to organisation maintenance that often requires much energy and resources from a partnership. This has two major consequences: 1)

sufficient financial resources in the partnership allows the partners to be involved in alcohol policy without having to jeopardise their own organisational activities, and 2) partner equity is enhanced by allowing all partners equal access to policy processes, regardless of size and power. Therefore, the production of policy documents are reflections of the diversity in ACTIS, and the outputs truly synergistic.

The amount of financial resources also was found to reduce conflicts in partner - partner relations and partner -umbrella relations by removing the problem issue of how to fund partnership activity related to both maintenance and production tasks. Relieving the partnership of this resource consuming and potentially destructive issue should have a positive effect on partner-partner relations, and the informants reported that there are few conflicts in ACTIS.

Sufficient financial resources, as in ACTIS, are the exception more than the rule in the partnership literature. Corbin (2006), describes a low-funded partnership in which the search for funding is a resource-consuming activity in itself. Lack of financial resources can reduce funds for travelling to meet face-to-face, and make a partnership more dependent on voluntary efforts, which, in turn can make it difficult to make progress on the production process (Corbin, 2006). Sufficient funding allows ACTIS to keep the membership fees low, which in turn means that member organisations do not have to use their scarce resources to keep the umbrella going. This, in turn relieves the partnership of potential conflicts over money. The low level of conflict has a beneficial effect on partnership communication and positively influences the climate for collaboration within ACTIS, allowing the partnership to focus their resources on addressing the partnership problem, alcohol policy.

Representing a rare case of an NGO almost entirely funded by the State, the character of the relation between ACTIS and the funding agency needs to be addressed. In the case of ACTIS, this translates to whether the partnership, being almost entirely funded by the Norwegian state, has the distance and integrity necessary to maintain its own agenda. Emphasising the role of NGOs in societal change and development, especially in developing countries, Hulme and Edwards (1997) attract attention to the fact that NGOs never have received more funding, at the same time as their influence on policy issues, as well as visibility in media and the public is at the peak. Based on experience from

development work they raise the question whether NGOs are getting too close (in terms of interests, values, methods an so forth) to the funders (i.e. Northern-government donors), weakening important elements of potential contribution to development. “...Are NGOs losing the ‘special relationship’ with the poor, with radical ideas, and with the alternatives to orthodoxies of the rich and powerful...?” (Hulme and Edwards, 1997, p. 3). The data showed that ACTIS is characterised by a high level of independence. As described in the background section, there is more than one hundred years of tradition in Norway for state funding of the political actors among the organisations in the alcohol policy sector. The study shows that ACTIS, by defining the partnership problem, agreeing on goals and ways of working, was found to be independent of the financial resources. However, several informants described a constantly ongoing discussion within ACTIS concerning the way they are funded, and how this affects the organisation.

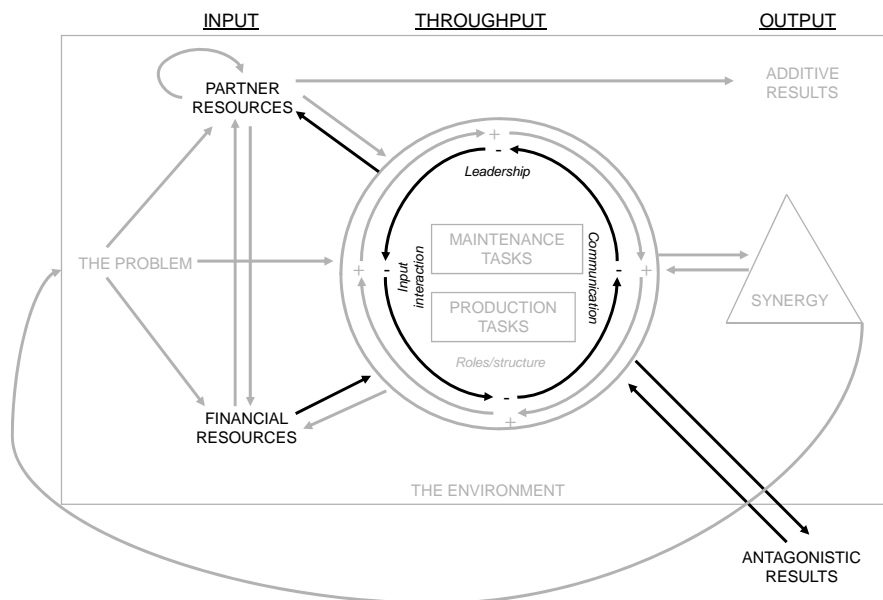
Summing up this section, partner values and sufficient financial resources enter the partnership context, constituting cycles of positive interaction, influencing, and influenced by, leadership, structures and roles, communication, and not the least, other input. In ACTIS, values are explicitly acknowledged as an asset by the partners, and integrated by a collaborative effort into policy platforms. Financial resources contribute by allowing the partnership to hire expert staff, providing the resources to support partnership maintenance, and by reducing level of conflict. The synergistic outputs are the policy documents, platforms defining the common ground of the partnership on all main areas of policy ACTIS is involved in, as well as recognising partner diversity. The platforms are powerful instruments, allowing the secretariat and board to react precise and swift on behalf of the members on matters of alcohol policy, securing the full support of the member organisations at all times. In turn, when this results in successful actions, this has impact on the partnership problem, as well as energising the members.

6.2 Negative cycles of interaction

Sufficient financial resources were also found to influence partnership by interacting with the partners (input interaction), enhanced by leadership and communication, ultimately leading to partner retraction from day-to-day policy work.

As described above, in the day-to-day work, the secretariat does much preparatory work before a matter is forwarded to members. However, the member organisations do not engage in these issues, the response rate to initiatives from ACTIS is low, and few initiatives come from the members. A majority of the member organisations are passive, and do not use their chance to influence policy for different reasons. The informants reported about low capacity, being engaged in their own activities, organisations with no ambitions in policy work, or simply that they are so happy with the work ACTIS does. A well-qualified and active staff at the secretariat, along with a small group of active member organisations, accounts for a great part of ACTIS' day-to-day policy work.

BERGEN MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE FUNCTIONING (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007)



(Fig.3)

This negative cycle is enhanced by an asymmetry in communication in ACTIS, characterised by communication overload and a one-way information flow going from ACTIS to the members.

The financial situation of ACTIS has made it possible to invest in and service updated communication technology, which is in frequent use. Even though the majority is located at the same campus, the member organisations reported that tight schedules and lack of capacity was the rule more than the exception, explaining why they do not meet so often. Due to tight schedules, technology like telephone and email communication is

chosen over face-to-face meetings as means of communication. Surprisingly, it was not found that ACTIS make use of face-to-face meetings as a communication strategy.

According to Corbin (2006), communication must be purposeful, frequent, and recognisable to facilitate information exchange in a partnership. Further, she claims that face-to-face communication is the mechanism most positive to partnership functioning, allowing “*immediate, unfettered exchange that is conducive to synergy*” (Corbin, 2006, p.60). This facilitates joint decision-making and goal setting, as well as the building of partner-partner trust. In a partnership, there is an inherent difference between partners, and thus a need to communicate across different organisational, professional, language, and culture barriers (Huxham, 2003). It is also in the nature of partnership that members meet with more or less regularity and do not meet face-to-face on a regular, daily basis over time. Face-to-face meetings are valued as the best way of communication between partners (Lank, 2006, Corbin, 2006); however, in the time between such meetings it is important to maintain the communication between partners. With the use of modern technology such as e-mail and electronic newsletters, communication has made a giant leap forward and provides partners geographically far apart with means of instant communication. Interestingly, providing communication technology does not necessarily imply it will be used, or improve the quality of exchange (Lank, 2006), also the use of modern communication technology is associated with a risk of communication overload which may impede partnership functioning (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007).

In the far more meagre-funded partnership described by Corbin (2006), restricted financial resources were found to limit the outcomes produced, and affected operational activities negatively, for instance, funding for travel to ensure regular face-to-face meetings between partners (Corbin & Mittelmark, 2007). The leadership of ACTIS recognises the asymmetry in participation and communication, but has not succeeded in taking effective action against it. According to Weiss et al (2002), leadership effectiveness was found to be the dimension most closely related to partnership synergy. Partnerships need a leadership that effectively facilitates productive interactions between partners by bridging diverse cultures, sharing power, facilitating open dialogue, revealing and challenging assumptions that limit thinking and action. Leaders need to understand and appreciate partners' different perspectives, empower partners and

perform boundary-spanning functions (Weiss et al, 2002). Interactions cannot take place without effective communication, and ultimately this responsibility belongs to the leadership.

In the case of ACTIS, the financial asymmetry, combined with asymmetry in capacity between the partnership and the member organisations, was found to contribute to impaired partnership functioning, even though the partnership has access to sufficient financial resources.

6.3 Output

As described in this report, the achievements of ACTIS are remarkable, resulting in a marked influence on Norwegian alcohol policy, as well as a support and service for the member organisations. The level of influence in setting the public agenda by networking and offering quality products to media and policy makers confirms that ACTIS has chosen a good strategy, getting far better results than AL ever did. This indicates that ACTIS' way of functioning one way or another is effective. By analysing the partnership processes of ACTIS with the help of the Model, these results clearly are synergistic outputs, results that combine the partners' perspectives, resources and skills in producing "*a whole that is greater than its parts*" (Lasker, Weiss, & Miller, 2001)

Few antagonistic outputs were identified in this study. This indicates that the partners get back more than they invest, in terms of influence on the problem pursued by the partnership. This may be right, given that they do not have to use much of their scarce resources to keep the partnership going. In return for low member fees, the members get much more than just influence on alcohol policy. In addition, they have access to low-cost offices and technical infrastructure, organisational support and protection, and a significant knowledge base through the secretariat and the branch office in Brussels.

Even though it is difficult to differentiate between additive and synergistic outputs when discussing the results of ACTIS, there is good reason to conclude that ACTIS' progress and influence on alcohol policy is a result of the expert knowledge as well as the networking of the secretariat, and as such must be considered additive output. Strictly speaking, additive inputs are not partnership inputs, except insofar as the partnership

claims them to be. In the data it was evident that the informants recognise these outputs as results of the partnership working, suggesting that additive outputs do “add value” to this partnership. Further, it can be argued that such outputs of ACTIS are results of a well-funded expert organisation, more than being results of partners collaborating. ACTIS today bases its legitimacy on that of its partners; however, the way the partnership operates today might affect the legitimacy and functioning of the partnership in the long run.

To function as a partnership, input from partner resources is essential to keep the partnership process going. The combination of a professional staff, the partnership problem and external financial support will fail to produce synergistic outputs if there is a lack of partnership input and that could eventually threaten the existence of the partnership.

Corbin & Mittelmark (2007) describe the path through which partnership resources engage in partnership processes, and are reinforced by cycles of positive or negative interaction, thus, affecting synergistic or antagonistic outputs exiting from the process. Similar to the Model, this study confirms that partner resources and the elements of the partnership context engage in cycles of positive and negative interactions. Further, the study confirms that such cycles do exist simultaneously in a partnership. However, the study also illustrates how one specific resource may affect partnership functioning both positively and negatively, as demonstrated by how sufficient financial resources may both reduce and enhance partners’ engagement.

When gathered in ACTIS, the partners have agreed that evidence should guide their actions, not their values. According to Lorentzen (2007), this is in line with a general trend in civil society. The democratic structure of the classic voluntary organisations, like the temperance movement, representing a huge number of citizens once was the basis for influencing society. Lorentzen (2007) argue that the way these organisations are governed and influence policy has changed. “*Votes count, arguments decide*”, implies that organisations and movements formerly based on ideological, religious, or political values had to move away from a hierarchical towards a more flat structure, and best practice replaces top-down directives and instructions based on values. ACTIS are aware that cannot gain support for their political views unless they put their merits and

advantages on display. In political issues concerning health, the environment, culture, and so forth, the numerical size of a voluntary organisation does not count as much as if the arguments for policy are scientifically proven, or evidence based.

6.4 Methodological considerations

In all research, the question of validity should be addressed. Other terms used are “trustworthiness”, “authenticity”, and “credibility”, describing to which extent the findings are accurate (Creswell, 2003). A good qualitative study is about more than catching the words, it is about constructing meaning from an array of contextual information, by getting to the core of the informants’ perspectives, capturing tacit knowledge, and expressing this in a way that reflects the hand of the researcher (Denzin & Norman K., 1994). It goes without saying that measuring accuracy by objective instruments is not the quest of a qualitative inquiry. However, validity is seen as the strength of qualitative studies, investigating whether “*the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account*” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196).

The role of the researcher

The author of this report is a novice in this kind of research, and the quality of qualitative research is connected to the experience and skills of the performing researcher. Consequently, information and incidents may have passed un-observed by the researcher. To counteract this, the author has exercised ongoing self-examination, and engaged in regular dialogue about the study with supervisors.

The way the interview is performed may confine the scope of information or incline the researcher not to explore paths of information, which possibly could have contributed with new insights to the study questions. The interview guide was based on the Model, consequently the questions asked related to themes taken from the Model, which in turn might have confined the range of questions. In the interviews, leading questions were avoided, and open questions were used to guide the respondents in the interview situation, which should to some extent counteract the confining effect.

For reasons of utility and limited resources, telephone interviews were chosen by the researcher to collect data. This may have provided the researcher with less information than face-to-face interviews by missing visual or non-verbal information, which could be of importance or could be the subject of follow-up questions.

The data

Failing to deal with, and presenting negative or discrepant information, represents a threat to validity. The data display lopsidedness towards the positive sides of ACTIS and the way the umbrella functions. Even though there were just nine informants in the study, they were sampled with the intention to represent the broad scope of knowledge about the partnership. They represent different kinds of partners with different kinds of relationship to the partnership. In the sample, five of the informants represent the member organisations, representing a span of members, both in ideology, as well as affiliation history. The board is represented with four persons, two persons have staff functions, and some of the respondents have more than one kind of affiliation to the partnership. Even though every effort was made to get information from different perspectives of the partnership, this may have affected the results. Even though the data showed very much consensus around the positive sides of the umbrella, still a few informants were more critical than the others were. This issue is addressed in the section below.

Another explanation to the overall positive tone in this report can be a presence of rhetoric in favour of ACTIS in the material. The participants included people founding, operating and leading the partnership. Rhetoric must therefore be taken into consideration because it can lead to inconsistencies in the material, for instance about partner contributions. For instance, one informant, when describing the day-to-day work in ACTIS, reported that partners contribute with responses to hearings and white papers. Later the same informant described how the flow of information and initiative seems to have a one way current from ACTIS to the passive member organisations. Such apparent inconsistency appeared during the interviews with several informants. Sometimes during such interviews, the researcher had a feeling that informants were to some extent spouting rhetoric. To counteract the study from being biased by rhetorical data, the interviews reporting on positive functioning were compared with the other interviews in the study in order to make a conclusion. A more comprehensive data collection method and data triangulation might have disclosed a larger amount of

contrary data as well as the specific influence of rhetoric on the data. Given limited resources and time available to this study, this was not an option. Even though every effort was made to rule out this threat to validity, the occurrence of rhetoric in the data may still bias the conclusions.

The material also contains data reporting a clearly more negative description of ACTIS, and this was also subject to analysis. These data gave the impression that ACTIS is not generally characterised by respect, trust, and effective communication, and described that there are obstacles to partner-partner communication and project collaboration. However, upon closer examination most of this contrary data do not relate to processes within ACTIS, they refer to direct partner-partner collaboration, describing how member organisations fail take common action on projects when stepping down from the platform. Consequently, it would not be surprising to find collaborative antagonism if studying the same organisations in another setting, outside ACTIS. However, there is substantial support to claim that the member organisations collaborate well when stepping onto the common policy platform.

Researcher bias

The researcher has no previous affiliation with either the organisations in ACTIS, with ACTIS itself, or possesses any position in any political or ideological related organisation involved in the field of alcohol policy, and all informants were unknown to the researcher prior to this study. Nor is there any bond between the researcher and the alcohol industry.

The problem of translation

Even though every measure possible has been taken to deal with language issues, the quality of translation will affect the validity of the findings. To prevent the data from being distorted in the translation process, selected translated quotes were cross-checked by the bilingual supervisor of the thesis for correct translation. However, without the resources to check all quotes that are used, the primary researcher is alone responsible for the translation of most of the quotes. To the extent that this affects the quality of translation, it may impact the validity of this thesis. However, utilising Norwegian data throughout the analysis process should limit the language issue from having influence on the analysis process.

Translation has been guided by translating for meaning, not by verbatim translation.

6.5 Conclusions

In ethnographic and other qualitative research the voice of the researcher is reflected the final product, so also in this report. To the extent that the researcher has failed to account for his actions or failed to take actions that should have been taken, this would reduce the validity of the findings. However, every effort has been made to account for such events in this report. Consequently, the results and the interpretations presented by this researcher are rooted in research ethics, as well as grounded in other research, which allows the researcher to conclude:

Conclusion 1:

Studied in a new context, it was possible to replicate the findings leading to the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning in almost every aspect, identifying elements of input, throughput, and output, and interaction between elements of partnership functioning resulting in either synergy or antagony. The Model proved to be a serviceable framework and a guide to analyse partnership functioning in the Norwegian Policy Network of Alcohol and Drugs (ACTIS).

Conclusion 2:

The present Case provides new knowledge on how partner values affect partnership functioning. A partnership including partners with different cultural, ideological, and religious values, can avoid conflicts and enhance functioning and produce more synergistic outputs if partner values are included into the partnerships' assets, and transformed into a partnership culture of respect.

Conclusion 3:

Probably for the first time in health promotion literature, this study illuminates the consequences of an externally well-financed partnership. In this partnership, sufficient financial resources reduced the level of conflict, thus affecting partner motivation to invest and find compromises. Further, sufficient financial resources were found to increase partner involvement in the partnership problem by hiring expertise, support maintenance tasks, thus increasing partner resources available to work with the

partnership problem. However, in the case of resource asymmetry between the partnership and the members, sufficient financial resources were found to encourage partners to leave the partnership work to professional staff members, compromising the legitimacy of the partnership.

Conclusion 4:

Even though almost entirely funded by the state, the present partnership has managed to have its own priorities and actions. However, this may be a result of a national culture and a long history of state-NGO collaboration more than partnership functioning. A partnership very dependent on state funding does not necessarily entail unhealthy bonds and constrictions to the partnership. However, this was not the main focus of this research.

6.6 Implications

There is a surge in the literature on partnership functioning, for studies of practice aimed at gaining insight into the inner workings of partnerships, why they succeed, or why they do not. This study provides new insight about partnership functioning by confirming the utility of the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning as a research framework, and by providing new knowledge on the impact of partner values and sufficient financial resources.

However, being a new approach to describe and analyse partnership functioning, the Model needs to be tested in a range of different settings. At the community level, public-private partnerships have been implemented as a common way of working in many countries, and it is not surprising that a host of literature discussing partnership functioning focuses on such partnerships. Ideology, values, and a basic concern for the partnership problem entails motivation as a core drive in organisations based on voluntary work, whereas the motivation to collaborate in a public-private or intra-organisational setting may be quite different, or maybe not present. Given that both the work of Corbin & Mittelmark (2007), constituting the starting point of the Model, and the present study focused on voluntary organisations, it would be illuminating to use the Model to investigate functioning of both public-private and intra-organisational health promoting partnerships.

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Interview guide for “A Case Study of NGO Collaboration in the Norwegian Alcohol Policy Arena”

Person x, interview x
x December 2006

Even Endresen

MAPPING ACTIS

ACTIS is called an umbrella, a network, a platform, a collaboration. What does this mean?

What is the goal of ACTIS?

ACTIS' ROLE IN COLLABORATION

How well do the member organisations know each other, and the agendas?

How well do they know the agenda of the other organisations?

Values:

The member organisations of ACTIS seem to have very different value basis (ref. ACTIS common platform) Can you tell me more about this?

Antagony and collaboration:

The history of the temperance movement contains elements of both collaboration and antagonism. How is this today?

- Probe: Why are there few conflicts today?

Is there competition between members of ACTIS?

- Probe: Why is there so little inter-organisational competition?. Are the intentions to collaborate more about intentions than practice? Why

Trust:

Historical, organisational and personal relations may not automatically lead to trust between the members of ACTIS. How would you describe this today?

- Probe: Why is there trust? Does ACTIS stimulate trust building between the organisations?
- Probe: Are there disagreements between the member organisations? How does ACTIS act in such situations?

Communication:

Tell me about the communication between ACTIS and the member organisations?

- Probe: Does it work? Why?
- Probe: Tell me about the contact meetings. (Remember to ask about the processes, both formal structures and informal ways of socialising, creating trust, confidence, and exchange of knowledge and information)

Torggata 1:

Tell me about Torggata 1.

- Probe: Is there an inside/ outside issue?
- Probe: How does Torggata affect the feeling of identity, of standing together, being in a network, the relation to the other organisations.

INPUTS/ INPUTS

Participation:

What do the member contributions mean to ACTIS?

Funding:

ACTIS receives only small financial contributions from their members. Does this affect ACTIS?

Governing ACTIS:

How is ACTIS governed? Who sets the agenda for ACTIS, and how is it done?

- Probe: Tell me about the National Congress, work groups, Torggata, other ways of influencing ACTIS?

OUTPUTS/ SYNERGY/ ANTAGONY

What does ACTIS produce?

The document “*ACTIS common platform*” says: ” *The member organisations are different in terms of ideology, methodology and way of expression. This is the strength of the umbrella and its fellowship*”. In what way is this put into practice? Is member diversity explored and utilised to strengthen the partnership? Examples?

About ACTIS’ common platform. Are there downsides to having a common platform? Is there room enough for all the members on the platform?

Describe a case when ACTIS was successful because they are a partnership. What made this collaborative effort a success?

Do you have any final comments anything you want to add,?

Actis' Common Platform

Actis - Norwegian Policy Network on Alcohol and Drugs comprises a set of organisations that wish to encourage voluntary efforts towards reducing alcohol- and drug-related problems. The network is politically and religiously independent. Actis was founded 31 January 2003 on the following platform:

1. The Problem

Alcohol and drugs represent our biggest social problem today. At the same time these problems are less pronounced in Norway than in most other Western countries. Alcohol and drug problems intensify and cause many other serious social problems like crime, unsafe environments for children, poverty, marital problems, vandalism, accidents etc. A reduction in alcohol- and drug-related problems will therefore be beneficial in several areas, both for the individual in particular and for society at large.

Alcohol and drug problems can be found in all social layers and social settings. Most people are familiar with such problems from their own family or neighbourhood. For that reason we all have an obligation and are in a position to contribute towards solving these problems.

In a global setting alcohol and drugs represent one of the most serious obstacles for development, health and welfare.

2. Aims

Actis - Norwegian Policy Network on Alcohol and Drugs wants to:
Gather support for a value-oriented and knowledge-based alcohol and drug policy
Work for a drug-free society and for reduction in alcohol consumption
Work for popular support for an alcohol- and drug-free lifestyle
Work for adequate treatment capacity for people with alcohol and drug problems
Support a restrictive public alcohol and drug control policy

3. Strategies

Combine popular knowledge and attitudes and efforts from voluntary organisations with an active governmental policy
Find a broad, cross-professional approach to the causes of alcohol and drug problems, and work for a similarly broad approach to finding means of reducing and solving the problems
Improve the relations between efforts in prevention, treatment and post-treatment care
Work for treatment and post-treatment offers for all people who are suffering from alcohol- and drug-related problems, including their families, and as far as possible adapted to the needs of the individual
Pay heed to the developments in the alcohol and drug area internationally, build alliances with similarly minded organisations and institutions in other countries and ensure that voluntary organisations participate in international forums dealing with alcohol and drugs
Counterweight the economical forces behind production and trade in alcohol and drugs and work in order to convince governments on all levels to give priority to peoples' health rather than profits
Build alliances with organisations and parents working towards the same goals as the organisations under the Actis umbrella
Contribute towards creating arenas where children, youth and adults can grow up and flourish without the use of alcohol or drugs

4. Society

Actis wants to:
Contribute to a society that gives each individual the opportunity of personal freedom and growth
Ensure that the freedom and way of life of the individual does not entail other peoples' slavery
Promote solidarity and consideration in alcohol and drug policies by rallying support for limits and restrictions for the sake of those who need it the most

5. People

There is great potential in committed citizens and responsible fellow human beings. The organisations in Actis want to unleash this potential. Many good forces are lost when people end up as passive clients and consumers.

6. Voluntary Organisations

Actis wishes to create an understanding for the importance of voluntary organisations for the society in general and in prevention and treatment of alcohol- and drug-related problems in particular because:
The individual's voluntary commitment and compassion is the strongest force society can muster for prevention of alcohol- and drug-related problems as well as for helping individuals recover from addiction
Voluntary organisations are not just an efficient factor in dealing with alcohol and drug problems. Voluntary organisations are just as important as providers of scientifically founded approaches that represent a supplement and alternative to what the professional and public sectors represent

7. Cooperation

Actis - Norwegian Policy Network on Alcohol and Drugs is to a resource for voluntary initiatives in the field of alcohol and drugs

The member organisations in Actis are independent and perform their work based on their own ideological and professional platform

The member organisations are different in terms of ideology, methodology and way of expression. This is the strength of the umbrella and its fellowship.

The member organisations wish to stand together across individual differences in important common issues. The role of Actis as an umbrella is to identify common grounds where the organisations wish to cooperate.

Through dialogue the member organisations wish to create trust and good working conditions within the umbrella.

8. The Tasks

Actis' work will focus on three main areas:

Knowledge: Actis will provide value-based and well-founded knowledge about prevention, treatment and post-treatment care of alcohol and drug problems.

Policy: Actis will present well-founded proposals for political measures to governments locally, nationally and internationally and contribute to the public debate.

Commitment: Actis will organise voluntary initiatives so that they can contribute effectively towards solving alcohol and drug problems, both individually and in cooperation.

INFORMASJON OM MASTERPROSJEKTET
"Samarbeid mellom frivillige organisasjoner i norsk alkoholpolitikk"

Masterstudent: Even Endresen
Ansvarlig veileder: Professor Maurice B. Mittelmark
Forskningsinstitusjon: HEMIL-senteret, Psykologisk fakultet, Universitetet i Bergen

Prosjektet vil foregå i perioden august 2006 til juni 2007, og er et ledd i en mastergrad i helsefremmende arbeid der jeg skal se på hvordan de frivillige organisasjonene i Norge som er engasjert i norsk alkoholpolitikk samarbeider.

Jeg tar utgangspunkt i Verdens Helseorganisasjons helsedefinisjon slik den finnes nedfelt i Ottawa charteret (1986), og som legger vekt på:

- Sosiale betingelser for helse.
- Forhold som på internasjonalt, nasjonalt, lokalt og individuelt nivå skaper økende og unødvendige helseforskjeller.
- Prosesser som kan føre til utjevning av disse urettferdige helseulikhetene.

De frivillige organisasjonenes sentrale rolle i norsk alkoholpolitikk er å frambringe og formidle kunnskap, skape press på myndigheter, og aktivt engasjere mennesker i forhold omkring sin egen helse. Graden av, og effekten av organisasjonenes samarbeid (bl.a. gjennom ACTIS) har betydning for hvorvidt de får gjennomslag for sine synspunkter, og får dem omsatt i virksom alkoholpolitikk. Jeg vil gjennom dokumentanalyse og intervjuer med enkeltpersoner se på dette slik det fremstår i ACTIS, og vil anvende en modell som nylig er utviklet og testet på en internasjonal frivillig organisasjon. Målet er å identifisere prosesser og faktorer som skaper synergieffekter i slike samarbeidsrelasjoner.

Jeg forventer at studien vil bidra til kunnskapsfeltet på to måter:

1. Den vil øke vår kunnskap om hvordan samarbeid mellom frivillige organisasjoner fungerer.
2. Den vil bidra til å øke forståelsen om den utviklede modellen.

I hvilken grad vil prosjektet bli til nytte for arbeidet i ACTIS og nettverkets medlemsorganisasjoner? Håpet er at studien skal stimulere til økt fremtidig synergi gjennom å vise hvilke faktorer og prosesser som skaper en merverdi utover bare det å samkjøre sine ressurser. I tillegg ønsker jeg å belyse hvordan det motsatte skjer: der hvor samarbeid medfører at man bruker mer ressurser enn det man får igjen, og således ikke får den forventede effekten av samarbeidet.

Bergen 25. september 2006

Even Endresen



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Vår dato: 19.10.2006

Vår ref: 15493/GT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 17.10.2006. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

15493	<i>A case study of NGO collaboration in the Norwegian alcohol policy arena</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Maurice Mittelmark</i>
Student	<i>Even Michal Endresen</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstillende kravene i personopplysningsloven.

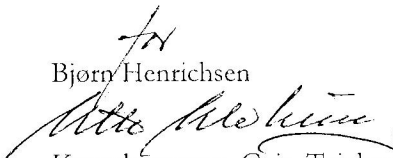
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/endringskjema>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/database/>

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.05.2007 rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen


Bjørn Henriksen


Geir Teigland

Kontaktperson: Geir Teigland tlf: 55 58 33 48

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

✓ Kopi: Even Michal Endresen, Søvikneset 12, 5251 SØREIDGREND



Personvernombudet finner informasjonsskrivet tilfredsstillende etter revisjon.

I prosjektperioden skal direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger (navn) holdes atskilt fra det øvrige datamaterialet.

Ved prosjektslutt anonymiseres datamaterialet ved at direkte og indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger slettes, lydopptak destrueres.