

**Evaluation of Year I**  
**The Model Project to End Domestic Violence**  
**in the District of Columbia**

**Just Associates**

**October 2006**

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.- How shared understanding of the Model Project has evolved .	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.- The Role of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence as the Coordinating Agency	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>Bookmark not defined.</b>	
3.- The Functioning of the Model Project Advisory Board (MPAB).....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>defined.</b>	
4.- The Functioning of Model Project Working Groups.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.- Balancing Systems Analysis and Strategy with Tangible Advances .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>defined.</b>	
6.- Engaging Survivors .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Considerations for Year 2 .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix 1: Evaluation Interview Questionnaire.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## Executive Summary

Participants in the Model Project agree that this is a valuable opportunity to bring together the various agencies working on domestic violence in the city around a systems change agenda. As the project enters its second year, this is a critical moment for taking stock and clarifying the way forward based on the experiences to date.

The *goals* for year 1 of the project were to:

1. Complete a design and pre-implementation process to define and guide the development of the Model Project.

In this regard, members of the Model Project Advisory Board (MPAB) have come to a shared understanding of the Model Project's purpose (to both address systemic gaps and challenges faced by survivors of domestic violence and to strengthen collaboration among the community of service agencies). Working group members have less clarity on the over-arching purpose of the project and their role in it, and would benefit from greater information.

Yet, while there is general agreement on the purpose, there are differences of opinion and concerns as to whether the Project can achieve those aims. The current project design has resulted in concrete actions to fill some of the identified needs facing the target populations/issues, but has not adequately facilitated progress towards addressing systemic gaps. With regard to strengthening collaboration, all of the participants agree that there has been more communication among the participating agencies and this is a valued result of the process thus far. At the same time, some people note the need to move beyond increased communication, to building deeper levels of trust among the agencies.

While their assessment of the Project is generally positive, there is a relatively low level of "ownership" among many of the participating agencies. This has to do with the extent to which Model Project activities fit with their own organizational goals, as well as a still-unclear sense of *how* the project will meet its ambitious goals. Given that these agencies are already overstretched in their workload, there is also a question of what more "ownership" could feasibly look like.

2. Develop the infrastructure needed to support the Model Project

The infrastructure established for the project: a coordination function by DCCADV, the MPAB as a general oversight body, and three working groups, has functioned reasonably well. Participants say they are very satisfied with the support and coordination role that DCCADV has played. In the case of the Advisory Board and Working Groups, while these spaces have been useful and productive, there is a need for greater clarity in the roles, leadership, and decision-making of both. Some Advisory Board members say they are now fulfilling a "reporting-back function", hearing progress reports from the working groups, but with little opportunity to address systemic issues, as was originally intended. There is also a need to build stronger, inclusive leadership to keep the group on track.

Some, working group members say that while they are pleased at the concrete advances they have been able to make, they are concerned that their activities may not have a real impact on the

problems they are trying to address. The populations/issues the groups are tackling: LGBTQ Youth, Immigrants, Housing/Homelessness are huge and cannot be systematically addressed by these small groups. At the same time, there was a sense that because so little is being done on the intersections of these issues with domestic violence, that *anything* the working groups can do is of value.

3. Harness the collective capacity of working group members and other individuals with expertise in the Project's focus areas to coordinate best practices in the development of a model that can be piloted to dovetail with systemic and policy change recommendations. This process is ultimately designed to ensure more seamless information and access to services for underserved and at-risk populations in the District of Columbia

As mentioned above, there is some concern among participants that the “systemic change” agenda is reduced to the activities of the working groups. There is interest in stepping back to reassess this balance. Doing so will aid in further clarifying the roles of the MPAB and working groups. Survivor engagement in the Project is also considered a priority by many of the participants. This report includes their ideas for how this might be structured. A plan should be put in place to ensure that survivor engagement is a part of the Model Project activities in year two.

The Model Project clearly provides an important space for Executive Directors and agency staff to come together, take action on underserved populations/issues and potentially build stronger strategic collaboration. Yet there is a sense that its full potential is not being realized. The project appears to be facing important choices about how to continue in a way that ensures the investment of resources has a significant impact in line with the overarching purpose. At least two options seem clear, each with different implications for the future project structure:

1. Identify a shared “big goal” (see the ideas mentioned on page 10) that all of the participating agencies would actively collaborate on.
2. Identify particular systems issues or weaknesses that the MPAB would like to task DCCADV with addressing. For example, protocol development, technical assistance and training, curriculum development, or other tasks related to the target populations/issues or other priorities identified by the MPAB.

Whatever path the MPAB chooses (of the above options or others), it should continue to support the successes of the working groups—the progress of the LGBTQ Youth group has been highly valued, though the other groups appear less certain of their impact and future possibilities.

Following its review of the evaluation, the MPAB should also convene an open meeting with the working group participants to allow for their input and build a common vision for the future project direction.