

What Makes Partnerships Work?

What makes a partnership work?	What makes a partnership not work? Or what are challenges to overcome?
Reciprocity	One-way benefits • Missionary or outreach approach
Clear & defined common goal(s)	Differences about what is needed, intended
Respect for partner and partner's knowledge	Ownership issues • Ownership of the project • Ownership of the issue • Documentation • Art
Trust	Lack of trust • Resistance based on historical injustices • Perceptions of the other • Questions around motivation
Listening and knowing partner's identity • Community, institutional culture, value, realities • One-to-one relationships	Cultural, generational, class, other differences • Lack of time or commitment to learn and talk about such differences
Acknowledge & address inequalities • Staffing, money, power/agency	Inequity • Lack of consideration that the stakes are higher for some
Shared authority, decision-making	Issues of power • Who sets priorities? Who controls resources?
Stretching out of comfort zone	Fear of the other, the unknown, losing control
Critical self-analysis • Perseverance through difficulties	Blinders or blind spots to impact of actions • Not taking time to reflect on one's own and one's organization's actions, relations, etc.
Flexibility	Entrenchment
Open Communication	Assumptions

☼ What you should know about your partners... and what they should know about you!

THINK ABOUT A PARTNERSHIP OR COLLABORATION IN WHICH YOUR ORGANIZATION IS INVOLVED

1. Why are you participating in the collaboration/partnership?

2. What outcomes matter most?

3. In what ways is the coalition/partnership effective?

4. What impedes the effectiveness of this coalition/partnership?

☼ Do You Need a Memo of Understanding for Your Partnership?

WHY CREATE A MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING?

- The process of development provides an opportunity to clarify and quantify vague expectations.
- The process of adoption, by the governing boards of all partners, fosters a deeper level of understanding and commitment.
- The identification of goals helps partners focus on priorities for action.
- The establishment of standards and indicators for performance provides a basis for evaluation.

The following are categories of issues that may need to be articulated sooner or later. Use the following chart to assess your partnership. Ask each partner to mark the chart (as follows) and compare notes as a basis for discussion.

- Mark areas that are clear and functioning with a **±**.
- Mark areas which need discussion with an **X**.
- Use a **√** to indicate those areas that should be part of a written agreement.

		Clear and Functioning	Needs discussion	Written Agreement	Comments
Partnership Boundaries	Purpose and partnership goals				
	Definition of what it means to be a partner/member				
	Areas of joint action				
	Annual action agenda				
Partnership Operations	Leadership roles				
	Decision-making processes				

		Clear and Functioning	Needs discussion	Written Agreement	Comments
Partnership Operations <i>(cont).</i>	Systems for inter-agency communications and information exchange				
	Systems for fiscal/financial management				
	Responsibility for resource development				
	Responsibility for public communication				
	Established success indicators & evaluation measures				
Partner Responsibilities	Executive and/or trustee level commitment				
	Financial contribution				
	Appropriate representation at meetings and events				
	Information sharing				
	Active participation in executing partnership projects and activities				
	Participation in joint planning				
Other					