Pan American Health Organization
Regional Office of the World Health Organization

International Business Leaders Forum

Partnering Basics
The Art and Science of Cross-sector Partnership

the partnering initiative

About

International Business Leaders Forum

International non-profit organization working with 100 multi-national companies on collective, cross-sectoral action to maximize the societal benefits of business and the sustainability of companies.

Website: www.iblf.org
Contact: Audra Jones, Americas Director (audra.jones@iblf.org)

the partnering initiative

A specialist programme of the IBLF dedicated to helping companies, NGOs, governments and the UN work effectively together through capacity development, services to organisations and partnerships, action research and facilitating the sharing of experience and good practice.

Website: thepartneringinitiative.org
Contact: Darian Stibbe, Programmes Director (darian.stibbe@iblf.org)

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Partnering Toolbook Collection

Training to build partnership skills / understanding

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

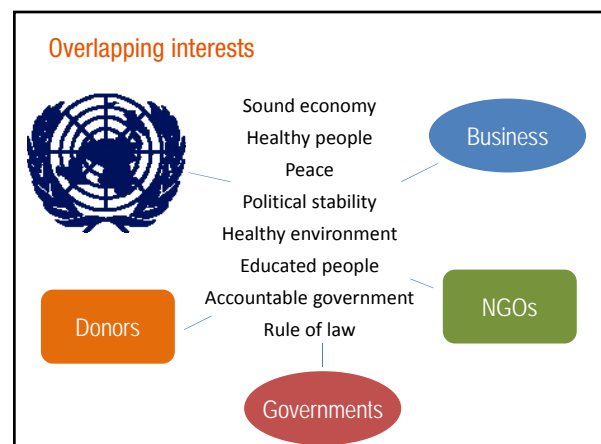Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme

Partners in Action

Tailored trainings around the world for organisations from all sectors and for individual partnerships

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Why partner?

- Organisations partner when it becomes clear they cannot achieve their goals by working as a single entity…
- …and that by working cooperatively with others they can achieve greater efficiency, innovation, impact, scale, reform and / or sustainability.

Partnerships can provide…

1. **Innovation**
2. **Power of combined resources**
3. **Sustainability**

Overlapping interests

UN

Sound economy
Healthy people
Peace
Political stability
Healthy environment
Educated people
Accountable government
Rule of law

Business

NGOs

Donors

Governments

Different sectors can bring different resources…

PUBLIC SECTOR
Regulatory framework
Human resources
Strategic co-ordination, long term planning through development plans
Public finance budget for provision of public services
Policies affecting the enabling environment
Democratic legitimacy
Land / buildings / office space
Infrastructure and scale

DONORS
Funding
Experience
Political connections
Knowledge and ideas
MDG focus

BUSINESS
Access to customer base
Trusted brands
Human resources
Business planning and project management
Generation of new products / services
Supply chain management
Technical skills and infrastructure / logistics
A market-based approach
Access to customer base

UN AGENCIES
Experience, brand, mandate and strong values
Global network
Trust by government and good government contacts
Technical expertise
Ground level presence and operational capacity
Legitimacy and impartiality
Accountability

CIVIL SOCIETY
Independence and legitimacy
Local knowledge, connections, social capital
Capacity to mobilize communities
Emphasis on livelihoods and sustainability
Technical knowledge
Passion and commitment
Alternative voice

But can also have their challenges…

PUBLIC SECTOR
Bureaucratic?
Inconsistent?
Inflexible?
Election-focused?
Not joined up?
Controlling?
Dogmatic?

DONORS
Self-serving?
Intrusive?
Micromanaging?
Time-scale limited?
Politically-motivated?
Uncoordinated?

BUSINESS
Profit driven?
'Quick fix'?
Hard-nosed?
Self centred?
Greedy?
Inconsiderate?

UN Agencies
Bureaucratic, wasteful and boring?
Unfocused?
Too close to government?
Inconsistent?
Not walking the talk?
Inefficient and ineffective?
Budget focussed?

CIVIL SOCIETY
Uncoordinated?
Bureaucratic?
Unprofessional?
Unrealistic?
Lacking accountability?
Narrowly focused?
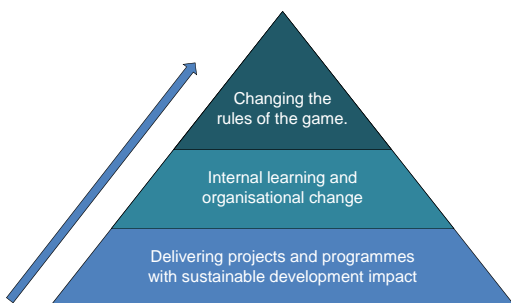Self-righteous?
'Point scoring'?

Definitions

A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP is an ongoing working relationship in which all partners:

- Have overlapping (or at least complementary) interests and **agreed objectives**
- **Co-create** projects and programmes
- **Share risks** and **receive benefits**
- Are mutually **accountable**
- Contribute **resources** to the partnership

Forms of relationships

Transactional / contractual ———————→ **Partnership**

- One party decides the programme, which is limited by their own knowledge / experience
- One party purchases (or donates) a particular resource
- Contract with clear deliverables
- Inflexible contracts / expectations

- Co-creation of programme based on complementary knowledge thereby leading to more appropriate / implementable solutions
- Partners bring together a range of complementary resources and competencies leading to innovative solutions
- Ongoing discussions with organic deliverables much more adapted to local, changing realities
- Trust and understanding of the partner leads to greater flexibility on arrangements as on-the-ground realities change or unexpected events

Aspirations for partnership impact...

Changing the rules of the game.

Internal learning and organisational change

Delivering projects and programmes with sustainable development impact

Partnering is an 'Art' and a 'Science'

- Insight / imagination / feeling
- Vision (of the future)
- People skills
- Relationship building
- Personal engagement

- Knowledge / analysis / thinking
- Understanding (of the past)
- Measurement
- Admin / project / financial management
- Technical knowledge

Principles of Partnering

Experience suggests there are a few **core principles** that are central to effective partnerships and are therefore – to a greater or lesser extent – universal, transferable and 'non-negotiable'…
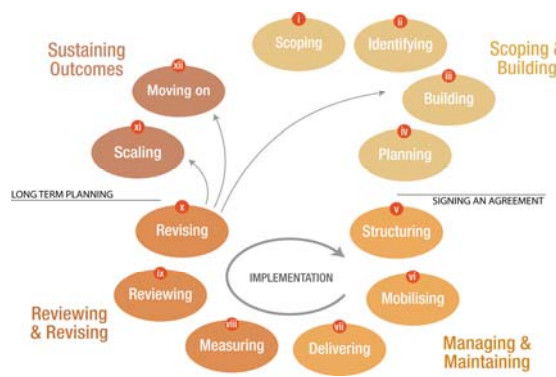

Core Principles of Partnering
Equity

because it leads to

RESPECT
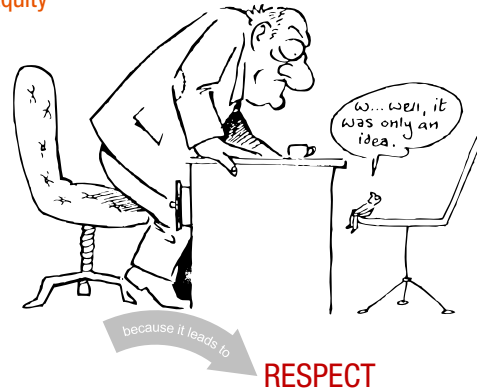
Core Principles of Partnering
Transparency

because it leads to

TRUST
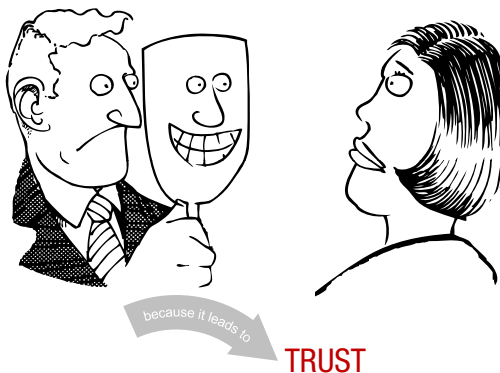
Core Principles of Partnering
Mutual Benefit

because it leads to

SUSTAINABILITY

The Partnering Lifecycle

Partnership most likely to succeed when…

- Partners have the necessary **skill set** and **mindset**
- Partnering **process is well understood** by all partners
- Programmes are **jointly designed and implemented**
- Partners are **flexible** wherever they can be and **clear about their constraints** / non-negotiables when they can't
- Partnership is **well managed** with **strong communication**
- Partnership is **outcome** and **output oriented**
- Partners are achieving their **individual goals** as well as shared goals
- Partners have a **respected voice** at the table
- Partnership (relationship) and the project **both** get attention
- Enough (and not too much) **time** is given to partnership-building