



Partnership & Collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration in context

context

Civil society organizations address some of the most complex social, economic and environmental issues of our time. In the same way that civil society organizations are created because people recognize that they must organize themselves with others to tackle these issues, collective efforts among organizations are also necessary in order to have a successful impact. This section of the toolkit takes as its starting point that civil society organizations' public engagement efforts are an important element of bringing about social change, and that successful change happens through collective effort.

By working in partnership and collaboration, organizations are able to benefit from broader perspectives and expertise that are brought to the table. Working with others helps our public engagement efforts to have a greater reach and potentially save resources. The aim of this chapter is therefore not to discuss whether, but how, partnerships and collaboration can contribute to reaching the overriding goal of public engagement in Canada. It offers insights from the reflections of practitioners who have many years of experience working in, and researching, partnerships and collaboration in public engagement in Canada.

The discussions in this chapter refer to both partnerships and collaboration. It was a deliberate choice of the authors to refer to both terms because, although they overlap in meaning, they often differ in practice. When we paid attention to how we speak about them in practice, we noted that when referring to collaboration we tend to talk about relationships between organizations that are more informal. For example, we may collaborate with other like-minded organizations to implement International Development Week activities once a year. Another example may be collaboration that takes place through mutual efforts on a policy advocacy initiative, like Make Poverty History. These collaborations rarely involve a formal agreement, but may be based on discussions with like-minded organizations to keep one another apprised of the progress of individual or joint activities.

Partnerships was taken to describe a deeper form of collaboration, one that is often formalized. They may be prolonged joint efforts designed to achieve mutual, named goals. For example, public engagement efforts that revolve around ongoing linkages between Canadian civil society organizations (e.g. health care organizations) and southern civil society organizations (e.g. HIV/AIDS organizations) are seen as being a partnership between the organizations involved. Partnerships may, however, also be short-term, revolving around a specific time-limited project requiring a more formalized relationship because organizations involved want to identify themselves as partners and want clear roles and responsibilities outlined. These may at times involve relationships between organizations that may not be automatically recognized as being like-minded. These also often involve funding support that requires a formalized contractual arrangement.

As the members of this knowledge hub discussed how these terms are similar and different, we recognized that all partnerships are a form of collaboration, but not all collaboration is a partnership. Some organizations may be more comfortable in a less formal collaboration when first working with another organization. This allows time to get to know one another and to avoid the higher risk involved in a more formal partnership. In addition, opportunities to collaborate may arise quickly, leaving organizations little time to take the steps to formalize a partnership.

Working in partnership and collaboration is not easy and is often more time-consuming than working alone. It requires a particular knowledge and skill set among the individuals involved, and a certain level of capacity within each of the organizations.

Regardless of which form of collective action organizations choose, partnerships and collaboration play an important role in our public engagement efforts. The insights in this section are written to support organizations as they reflect on how their partnerships and collaborations contribute to good practice in public engagement.

Base partnerships and collaboration on shared visions and goals

good practices

Partnerships that are built on shared visions and goals will help promote mutual support and solidarity beyond the implementation of specific programs and projects.

This principle is particularly important when partnering with other kinds of organizations, including those from the private sector. Partnering with a different sector helps to open new opportunities and increase the reach of public engagement initiatives. It also

involves dealing with very different organizational cultures and values that may come into conflict. This makes it particularly important to be open and transparent about each of the organization's values, goals and roles before agreeing to partner. It is easy to make wrong assumptions about why or how either partner wants to be involved in a public engagement effort. Asking key questions at the beginning will ensure you work with partners that help you live your values. It will also help partners avoid conflict later on and even possible loss of trust with your supporters.

Partner and collaborate in the spirit of inclusion

good practices

Partnerships and collaborations that are formed in a spirit of inclusion can better respect and promote the value of diversity. Working with others allows for a diversity of organizations to be part of the conversation, helping to ensure that public engagement initiatives reflect diverse voices, actors and opinions.

Use partnerships and collaboration to enhance public engagement efforts

good practices

Public engagement is the practice of inspiring, supporting and challenging people and groups in dynamic cycles of learning, reflection and action on global issues. Choose partners that will complement your organizational strengths and create synergy to further promote this practice and the transformative process.

Organizations that work at different stages of the dynamic cycles can help engage a broader base of participants. One organization can't work to fulfill all parts of your theory of change, so be sure to search out partners that enhance your efforts, or supplements what your organization does. Being mindful of the transformation that public engagement is working towards will help guide your discussions with potential partners, and your ultimate choices of actual partners.

Create partnerships and collaborations that embody equity

good practices

Acknowledging that inequalities often exist as a result of power dynamics, especially in funding relationships, partners should strive for equitable partnerships. Think through potential inequalities that could exist in the partnership (from all sides) prior to embarking on the relationship and put structures or processes in place that will ensure that these inequities are easily recognized and overcome.

Be respectful, honest, transparent and accountable with partners and collaborators

good practices

The best partnerships are dynamic relationships founded in respect and honesty, in which partners strive for better understanding and appreciation of one another. Partnership agreements should take into account that over time the partnership needs to be re-examined to ensure that the good fit remains. Ensure that processes are in place to ensure that all partners operate in a transparent and accountable manner, with a common understanding of timelines and results to be achieved. Ensure all partners have a clearly defined understanding of how finances for the activity/project will be handled. Build in processes that encourage and ensure transparency and accountability.

Respect each partner/collaborator's autonomy

good practices

Each partner or collaborator is an autonomous organization. It is important to understand that this brings with it responsibilities and obligations related to structure, governance, accountability, etc. that may differ between organizations. These obligations may create constraints to the way some organizations can work, or how they can be seen publicly.

Some organizations may not be able to provide staff time but can provide monetary funds towards a partnership or collaboration. Some organizations may have proprietary rights over materials used in a campaign and their name must be given prominence. Others may have reporting obligations to funders with strict timelines that must be respected by all parties. It is important to discuss and understand your partner's obligations and constraints upfront and take them into account when making decisions.

Facilitate the sharing of knowledge among partners and collaborators

good practices

While collaborations operate much more fluidly, an effective communications plan with specific timelines for communications among partners is critical to ensure knowledge is shared. A process can be established within the project or activity cycle that requires partners to identify things they've learned as a result of the partnership. These new learnings can be a part of reporting and can provide useful information for new partnerships in the future.

Even for looser collaborations, an informal debrief session at the conclusion of a campaign can help to identify successes and challenges while solidifying positive relations.

Negotiate objectives, expectations, roles and responsibilities for each partnership

good practices

Use checklists or survey tools to identify your own organization's objectives, expectations, roles and responsibilities within the partnership, as well as those of your potential partner, and make certain all partners understand these fully to avoid misunderstandings. Written documentation of the discussions related to the above are critical.

Reflection questions on partnerships and collaboration

tools

General questions:

1. To what extent are your partnerships/collaborations contributing to the broader goals of your organization?
2. Did your public engagement activities include a partner that worked directly in the subject area? For example, did a public engagement activity that spoke to a youth-based project involve youth or youth-based organizations?
3. Considering past experiences, are there times when it is better not to partner or collaborate? What are the advantages of a short-term collaboration? What are the advantages of longer-term partnerships?
4. Think about a collaboration or partnership that did not achieve the expected goals, and list the factors that contributed to this result. Examine how these could have been prevented.
5. What opportunities for partnership or collaboration would you see as strengthening your current public engagement programming?
6. What are the advantages of partnerships and collaborations always bringing a gender analysis to the whole of the work? What factors can make this difficult?
7. How would you rate the capacity of your organization to collaborate with and to partner with other organizations in public engagement endeavours?
8. What are the characteristics that make an organization a good candidate for working in collaboration with others or partnering with them.

Identifying a partner or collaborator:

1. Do you currently have partners in your work that could be brought on as public engagement partners?
2. What audience are you trying to engage? Is there an organization that you can partner with to reach this audience?
3. Think outside the box! There may be some organizations/institutions that you've never thought about partnering with. Maybe these are the ones to pursue if the goals align.

Establishing partnerships and collaborations:

1. How do the potential partners support the aims of your public engagement program and/or project? What added value does the partnership bring?
2. What compatibilities exist between the goals and vision of your organization and your potential partner? How do your goals and visions differ? Could these differences lead to conflict?
3. What groups, communities or individuals have a stake in the public engagement topic? Whose voices should be included?
4. What strategies are in place to ensure every partner has a voice at the table? How will the partnership be structured to allow equitable participation?
5. What mechanisms are in place to reflect on and adapt the partnership as necessary throughout its lifetime?
6. What procedures do you have in place to deal with conflicts? What form of decision making has been agreed upon between partners?

7. What processes have the partners agreed to in order to ensure that everyone operates in a transparent and accountable manner?
8. What constraints, either internal or external, may affect the work of the partnership?
9. Does your organization have the capacity to do good partnership/collaboration?
10. What are some ways you've managed to foster a climate of mutual trust?
11. Have you put in place a process, for the conclusion of the partnership, to reflect on what the partners have learned from each other and what knowledge they've gained?
12. What is the expected time frame to evaluate learning, both midway and at the end?
13. Have the partners developed a common understanding of timelines and results to be achieved? How have the partners agreed to handle finances (revenues, expenses, reimbursements) for the activity/project?

Evaluating a partnership or collaboration:

1. To what extent did the partnership or collaboration successfully meet the objectives originally set out?
2. Identify the factors that contributed to positive results.
 - Consider the factors related to logistics.
 - Consider the factors related to the public engagement content.
 - Consider the factors related to the relationships within the partnership/collaboration.
3. Identify the challenges that occurred to hinder meeting your objectives.
 - Consider the factors related to logistics.
 - Consider the factors related to the public engagement content.
 - Consider the factors related to the relationships within the partnership/collaboration.
4. Did this collaboration strengthen your public engagement goals or would those goals have been better met working alone?

Partnership agreement template

tools

This basic template can help ensure clear communication occurs when embarking on a partnership. The listed sections can be modified to be more specific to your needs.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

List of partner organizations:

Title of activity or program:

Purpose of the partnership:

Objectives:

Activities to accomplish objectives:

Responsibilities of all partner organizations:

(for example – attendance at meetings, contributions of money or in-kind contributions, participation in planning and evaluation, agreement on conflict resolution processes and withdrawal from the partnership if necessary)

Responsibilities of individual or particular organizations:

(for example – completing agreed upon tasks related to activities, what people or organizations are responsible for what tasks etc.)

Signatures of partners:

Date:

Model “Principles of Partnership”: ACIC

tools

The Principles of Partnership section of the ACIC Code of Ethics document, reproduced below, helps to outline the areas to consider regarding initiating, maintaining, strengthening and ending each and every partnership your organization is part of.

Principles of Partnership

Excerpt from the ACIC Code of Ethics document

3.1 Partnerships

Partnerships with civil society organizations should be established based on the ACIC's Guiding Principles as provided in 2.0 and may be enriched by additional principles proposed and agreed upon by common accord.

3.1.1 Initiating a partnership

- a. Partnerships shall be backed by mutually acceptable agreements, demonstrating that all parties have negotiated objectives, expectations, roles, responsibilities, and contributions to the partnership. Agreements shall specify processes for evaluating the partnership. Formalized agreements may be necessary depending on the nature of the partnership.
- b. Agreements among partners shall ensure shared responsibility for attaining the negotiated goals, objectives and stated outcomes.
- c. Partners shall agree upon how conflicts shall be resolved.
- d. When a transfer of funds is expected to occur within a partnership, there shall be a negotiated and jointly signed contract within which there are mutually agreed-upon reporting requirements to ensure that all parties use development funds as agreed.
- e. All parties should negotiate a mutually agreed upon contingency plan to be implemented in the event of catastrophic circumstances, such as major shortfalls in funds available within a funding partnership.

3.1.2 Maintaining and strengthening a partnership

- a. Partners shall strive to deepen their understanding of one another through transparent sharing of information. The activities relating to the partnership shall be open and accessible to the other parties, while respecting the right of individuals to privacy.
- b. Respect for differences – including cultural, religious, socio-economic and political differences – shall be a hallmark of every partnership.
- c. Partners shall engage in regular and open communications for the general health of the partnership and to ensure that all partners are properly represented and that no organization unilaterally speaks on another's behalf.
- d. Organizations shall give credit to their partners' contributions, respect intellectual property rights and acknowledge appropriate ownership of products and results arising from partnership initiatives.

3.1.3 Ending a partnership

- a. Terms, conditions and appropriate procedures for concluding or redefining the partnership as required shall be included in the partnership agreement.

Model policy for partnership: Oxfam

tools

This excerpt from Oxfam Canada's Partnership Policy showcases Oxfam Canada's work with partnerships. Section 3 outlines the key principles it aspires to achieve. That list can be useful to consider when creating or reflecting on your own organization's principles or policy around partnership.

Excerpt from Oxfam Canada Partnership Policy

Approved by the Oxfam Canada Board of Directors, 25 February 2011

Section 3: Partnership Principles

Oxfam's partnerships are based on six core principles. Whilst recognizing that these principles are not equally applicable to all types of relationships along the partnership continuum, we nonetheless aspire to follow them in all our working relations with others.

1. Shared vision and values

Partnerships between Oxfam and other organizations are built on a shared vision of a fair world, free of poverty and injustice, which implies solidarity beyond the implementation of specific programs and activities.

Whilst recognizing and respecting differences – and welcoming dialogue and debate – sufficient common ground must be found for our partnerships with others to be viable. At a minimum, Oxfam and partners with which we work must share both a belief that people living in poverty should enjoy their fundamental human rights and an organizational commitment to gender equality and respect for diverse identities. Our shared understanding of change processes should encompass the agency of poor and marginalized people and the importance of movements and organizations representing their interests, while affirming state institutions as ultimate duty bearers.

2. Complementarity of purpose and value-added

Oxfam works in partnership with a variety of actors in a diverse set of relationships. Across the partnership continuum, the emphasis will be placed on identifying the common goal to which we are working, whether in long or short term relationships, looking to build on the distinctive contribution of all actors and ensuring that our combined efforts bring about change.

We recognize that each partner brings different capacities and resources to an interdependent relationship. We believe that working with others towards common objectives creates synergies and the potential for real collaborative advantage. For this potential to be realized the diverse knowledge, experience and skills which each partner brings to the relationship must be valued and acknowledged as essential to ensuring the success and sustainability of joint efforts. The value-added Oxfam brings to the relationship will vary across our continuum of partnerships as well as our diverse roles, and must be clearly stated. Funding is understood as only one aspect of partnerships, however determinant, with Oxfam increasingly engaging non-funding relationships

with a variety of partners and allies.

Partnering processes must create opportunities for partners and for Oxfam to articulate what is important to them and what they believe they can contribute to the partnership, and to arrive at a common understanding of shared purpose, mutual benefits and interests. In making decisions about with whom to partner, Oxfam will always consider the contribution the partnership will make to bringing about positive outcomes for people living in poverty.

3. Autonomy and independence

Our partnerships will strive for mutual respect for institutional integrity and autonomy. We are aware that, in many of our partnerships, particularly in funding relationships, power imbalances exist that may undermine the principle of autonomy and independence. Oxfam will work to manage this tension through our partnering processes and accountability systems.

Oxfam must not impose its views on partners. We take responsibility for clearly communicating our positions to partners. We are open to being challenged and will create opportunities for dialogue and debate around goals, values, results and impact. While there must be some commonality in vision and values in order for the partnership to be viable, we accept that partners may not share all our views. The right of each partner to determine their own institutional identity, directions and priorities should be respected. In our capacity strengthening work with partners, we must be attentive to the challenge of balancing respect for institutional autonomy and independence with program support for institutional growth and development.

We are open, within the limits of our mission and mandate, to being influenced as to where, how and with whom we work, and on the messages we convey through our campaigns. This includes being open to learning from different experiences of, and approaches to, development, campaigning and humanitarian work which may challenge us to question our own assumptions about effective practice – and to change the way we do things. Every effort is made to build mutual respect for different viewpoints, values and beliefs within the partnership.

4. Transparency and Mutual Accountability

Oxfam and partners have multiple accountabilities to a variety of stakeholders, including supporters and donors, and – most importantly – to those women and men living in poverty who are engaged in and benefitting from our programs. We will strive to achieve a balance between upward and downward accountability in our own systems and processes, and improved mutual accountability within our partnerships. As part of the process of developing partnerships, we explicitly discuss how Oxfam is accountable to partners and how we and our partners are accountable to people and communities with and for whom we work. In funding relationships, Oxfam and partners recognize and are committed to high standards of financial management, as we hold in trust money which others have offered in good faith and for which we are jointly responsible. Oxfam also acknowledges and strives to address accountability issues associated with all our partnerships, including those involving non-funding relationships.

Oxfam and partners have a mutual interest in demonstrating impact and in designing accountability systems that support this need. Within the limits imposed on Oxfam by back donor requirements, Oxfam will not oblige a partner to adapt its own planning, management and evaluation systems to those of Oxfam. Oxfam will attempt to coordinate financing and reporting requirements across affiliates and with donor agencies. We will support partners to develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) approaches that reinforce the partner's accountability to their communities, giving women and men living in poverty 'voice' to provide feedback on partners performance. We will lead by example by putting in place feedback mechanisms that enable partners (and other stakeholders) to assess Oxfam's performance. Such systems will be supported by formal grievance procedures or complaints mechanisms. We are committed to openness and transparency about how decisions are made regarding partnership, and will establish regular consultations and communications with partners.

Oxfam has an obligation to ensure that our partners are aware of various international accountability charters and quality standards to which we have adhered and to clarify how these codes and principles are applicable to partners' work.

As part our power analysis, Oxfam and partners discuss the power imbalances that exist between us, created by funding discrepancies, size, experience, access to information, and North/South dynamics. Where we are in the position of power, we will act with humility and aim to reduce such imbalances. We acknowledge that such power relations have often led to women's civil society organizations (CSOs) being marginalized or side-lined and will fulfill our commitment to strengthen partnerships with women's organizations, networks and movements.

5. Clarity on roles and responsibilities

Partnerships are built on clear understanding and robust partnership agreements. For funding partnerships, all the elements of the partnering process and decision-making are discussed and agreed by partners (partnership appraisal and assessment processes, contractual and financial arrangements, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation, joint learning and exit). Oxfam understands that the credibility and trust required to sustain healthy partnerships comes from good communication, competence and reliability.

Oxfam and partners are co-strategists of programs and activities on which they jointly work, though the extent to which they are co-owners of program will vary according to the nature and maturity of programs and partnerships themselves. Whatever the nature of the relationship, Oxfam will create opportunities for regular consultation with partners, ensuring that such spaces enable all partners to voice their issues.

Partner relationships, and with them the roles and responsibilities of each party, will evolve over time. The understandings and agreements that define a particular partnership shall need to be revisited at regular intervals. This evolving reality will require flexibility and responsiveness on all sides as organizational circumstances and social contexts change.

Oxfam will discuss its understanding of its roles (see Section II) with partners and clarify the ways in which we will work together within and across these dimensions. At all times we will work with local and accountable organizations and/or towards

strengthening or facilitating the establishment of such organizations or structures. Whatever can be done with sufficient quality, effectiveness and efficiency by local organizations must be done by them. We will support efforts to increase partners' visibility across all areas of our work and will explicitly acknowledge the work they have done.

Every effort will be made to live up to the aspiration embodied in OI Program Standard 6 which states that "effective partnering is a fundamental strategy through which Oxfam seeks to become redundant". We will deepen, by discussing with partners and amongst ourselves (being particularly attentive to the perspectives of Southern-based Oxfams) our long-term vision of partnership and related to this how we can contribute most effectively to strengthening local organizations and a sustainable civil society.

6. Commitment to joint learning

Oxfam, as a learning organization, promotes continuous and systematic learning. In partnerships this requires upfront agreement on how Oxfam and partners can learn from their joint work, and from each other, with the aim of incorporating learning, communications and knowledge sharing into the relationship. How program results and learning will be shared outside the partnership will be agreed by Oxfam and partners so that no misunderstanding arises.

Our learning agenda with partners will explore both partnership processes and outcomes.

As Oxfam works primarily through partnerships, we have an interest in understanding the factors, including ways of working, that condition successful partnerships. We will work with partners to ensure that joint learning is used regularly to adjust our strategy and plans as we strive for increased impact.

International Women's Day partnership scenario

case studies

Imagine a scenario where five organizers have come together to plan a public engagement activity for International Women's Day, March 8. They represent a cross-section of the education sector: a public high school teacher, an international NGO supporting women's projects in Africa, a local women's organisation that runs a shelter for abused women, a professor of Women's Studies at a local university and a small business owner.

They are being brought together by the international NGO with the understanding that the objective of the activity is to raise awareness of the issue of violence against women and girls worldwide, and the search for solutions. There is an acknowledgement that this issue has been a focus for a long time but has somewhat fallen off the radar of people's consciousness given some of the positive changes that have occurred in women's lives over the past thirty years.

All have agreed with the objective of the activity as outlined above. The activity will involve presentations from women involved in the issue of violence against women, including a Zambian woman whose organization is supported by the NGO.

The partners next outline what they have to bring to the table to ensure a successful outcome. The international NGO is bringing some funds to support the activity, plus a guest speaker from Zambia. The high school teacher has no funds but can ensure an audience and some volunteers to help with logistics. The local women's organization has no funds but can provide speakers who are willing to speak directly to the issue. The academic can support with funds in a limited way and also some student volunteers and potential audience members. The business entrepreneur is new to this kind of activity but is willing to learn and also to support the activity financially. It would seem that all is in place for a successful outcome.

Issues of equity arise, however, when it comes to making decisions about the following. (*Note: These are not meant to be a comprehensive list of issues that may arise – you might think of others.*)

Budget: Who will contribute, and how much? Obviously some will contribute more than others – will this allow some participants to exert influence over the others? How will the funds be accounted for? Do partners representing organisations have particular demands to meet from their organizations that others may not have?

Program of the activity: Given the backgrounds of the partners, there may be power dynamics at play. For example, the academic may see herself as the expert in the group. There may be a difference of opinion as to the importance given to different presenters.

Logistics: Who will take on responsibilities for communications and publicity? Who will secure a venue? Is insurance an issue? How often does the group of partners have to meet? How will differences of opinion be handled?

There are other issues of equity involved that may have more to do with the personalities of the partners rather than the tasks at hand. For example, a successful entrepreneur may not be familiar with consultation processes that NGOs use as a matter of course. Meeting face to face and getting to know one another will help open channels to resolve these issues. Being open to discussion of processes goes a long way toward achieving success in a collaboration and leaving the partners with a desire for future collaborative work.

Identifying the various ways to contribute to a partnership can help to overcome inequality. Different organizations may be able to contribute different aspects of a public engagement campaign: funds, staff time, audience reach, facilitation skills, varying experience. These aspects are all required to create a campaign that is far-reaching; identifying these needs and determining how best to address them equitably can help ensure a productive and fulfilling partnership.

The Great Earth Society (Success case)

case studies

Putting the partnerships & collaboration principles of good practice into action

Scenario:

Your organization, The Great Earth Society, has some great ideas for public engagement during the upcoming International Development Week. Not only that, you've just received some extra funding to implement public engagement activities related to environmental awareness, which is this year's International Development Week theme.

However, being a small organization, you could more fully implement your ideas if you were able to partner with other organizations that could not only augment the money available but could also help with the organizing and marketing of the event.

Your organizing committee knows some of the individuals involved in the international office of the local Happy Valley College, but in previous dealings with that group, you have come away feeling completely overwhelmed, powerless to make your own case or to stand your ground when decisions are made. You also know the College is already partnering with the local International Council of Good Works, which further complicates the picture. You feel that the three organizations could have a real impact building on the shared goals of each of your organizations related to international development and public engagement, but you are leery of being 'swallowed up' by the other organizations and therefore unable to meet your own organization's goals.

You aren't certain that the two organizations realize that your group has often felt excluded and disrespected in past collaborations. You bring good organizational skills and huge grassroots support to the table, while they are bigger organizations with more experience and more money to put towards activities. You all share similar goals related to public engagement and international development, as well as a passion for protection of the environment both at home and around the world.

In discussing the situation, your International Development Week Planning Committee decides to put into practice some of the new ideas you've learned related to public engagement partnerships and collaboration. The Planning Committee decides to approach the other two organizations with your ideas regarding a possible collaboration for International Development Week activities – specifically, a large joint display and activities related to the environment.

Before you approach them, however, you write up your own 'rules of engagement,' which identify the common goals you believe you share, the strengths of each of the partners and the type of activities you believe the three organizations could undertake. You also identify the funding that you are able to bring to the event and the parameters and guidelines around that funding which your organization must utilize. You also determine that planning for consensus building is important and identify ways that this can be done in meetings so that everyone feels respected when decisions are made.

The Great Earth Society organizing committee also decides to identify in advance some of the areas for possible conflict and determine your own stance in these areas so that you can feel prepared when the discussion comes. You also outlined some ideas for timelines and a communication protocol. Because your funding is tied to results, you also have a draft of an evaluation tool you'd like to see agreed upon for the activity by all three partners. In this way, you've been able to outline your own objectives, expectations, roles and responsibilities as well as what you are able to contribute to the activity.

You meet with the other organizations, and the first meeting turns out surprisingly well. They're grateful that you've already put in time preparing your own goals, objectives and expectations and are ready to assist them in determining how best to work together and how the work of the College and Council could help achieve the Great Earth Society's goals while still achieving many of their own goals. There are a few sticky issues, but having identified them in advance you're prepared to discuss them and come to a consensus. The group is excited to organize a super International Development Week event. More meetings are planned.

Analysis:

The Great Earth Society is like many smaller organizations that feel they sometimes have to struggle to be heard when partnering with other organizations. Having had some negative partnership/collaboration experiences in the past, the organization determined that the best defence is to be very well prepared when wanting to form partnerships. The organization followed good practices related to establishing partnerships by:

a) Reviewing their own goals, vision, guidelines and organizational structure to make sure they well understood their own organizational parameters. They also reviewed the goals and aims of potential partner organizations to ensure that shared common ground in terms of public engagement.

b) In trying to be very clear about the type of activity they wanted to implement, they prepared the objectives, goals, timeline and parameters of the activity they expected to undertake together, along with what their organization could contribute. They also identified what they hoped the other organizations could contribute while leaving the opportunity for them to bring their own ideas forward.

c) To avoid conflict in which they felt they had no voice, they identified a number of effective consensus-building practices and were ready to implement them during meetings should the need arise.

d) The organization also identified any issues that might occur around funding – and knew explicitly what their organization required of them and what they hoped the other organizations could contribute. They were aware of restrictions and knew that they also had to be sensitive about their partner organizations' funding restrictions.

e) They established good communications timelines for their shared activity.

f) They also identified a way of evaluating both the activity and the collaboration/partnership process itself to provide information for their next event.

Additional resources on partnerships & collaboration

resources

[UK Public Engagement Toolkit website](#)

Interested in Public Engagement? Want to know what it is and why it matters? Check out this online toolkit from the UK that lists case studies, methods of engagement, tools, training and much more, from a higher education and research point of view.

[CCIC Code of Ethics- Operational Standards](#)

This Code of Ethics sets out the basic ethical principles that CCIC (Canadian Council for International Cooperation) and its Member Organizations must accept and promote. It's a good list of ethics and operational standards to strive toward.

[Istanbul Principle 6: "Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity"](#)

Listing the definition of this principle along with resources, examples and guiding questions to fulfill it, the Istanbul Principles for CSO (civil service organizations) Development Effectiveness are a set of mutually shared values guiding the development work of CSOs worldwide.

The CSO Development Effectiveness Web Portal is an open online platform where civil society practitioners interested in and working towards improving the impact of their work can access and share tools, resources and case studies with others also working on improving their effectiveness.

[VSO and Programme Partnerships \(VSO and Programme Partnerships\)](#)

The VSO and Programme Partnerships document outlines VSO's approach to working with organisations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, showing how, why and with whom VSO forms partnerships and sets out a set of core shared principles.

[VSO's Path of Partnership](#)

This resource on partnership (designed with the VSO Core Principles of Partnership in mind) is designed to provide a framework for planning, implementing and reviewing VSO's work with partners to advance their progress towards the programme area plan objectives. It provides a great list of principles of partnership that can be used as examples.