

PARTNERSHIPS AND TEAM BUILDING

What is a partnership?

A partnership is intended for joint solving of problems, resource exchanges, mutual cooperation, as well as coordination and coalition building. The relationship among partners can be temporary or permanent.

A partnership brings together institutional capabilities and human resources in the form of skills, experiences and ideas to tackle common problems that are often beyond the capacity of a single institution.

TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS

Networks – The relationships among partners within networks are often informal. The main purpose of most networks is to exchange information among the members of the partnering institutions.

Coordination – Relations among participating institutions are more closely linked. The definitions of specific tasks among institutions, which requires resources (for representation related to tasks, management, and the fulfillment of specific tasks) beyond information sharing.

Collaboration – Relations among partnering institutions are strong with functional and broader ranging areas defined for joint activities (e.g. NSPAA).

PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP

Trust

Trust is the most important if the partnership crosses many boundaries – interpersonal, interinstitutional, and cross culture – at the same time. In such conditions, partnerships are open to risk of misunderstanding and there is a need for a clear expression of interest and aspirations on both sides. Transparency among partners is the basis for a solid and honest relationship. A relationship that involves the transfer of resources requires that strict business practices be followed, such as reporting, accountability, and good stewardship. Yet, in the

final analysis we have to depend on trust rather than legal conditions and threats of punitive action.

Mutuality

The partnership relations must be open to dialogue and exchange of views. Respect is of utmost importance.

Solidarity

Solidarity means sensitivity and commitment to the problems, efforts and constraints of the other partner. It implies a readiness to respond appropriately and in a timely manner to various needs.

Accountability

Any partnership involves rights and obligations. It is a major challenge when one partner has the resources and the other has to ask for it, or one has the power to decide who gets funds and how much, and the other is accountable for their use. There is no fully satisfactory answer to this dilemma. That fact, however, does not make partnerships a less desirable ideal. It is an ideal worthy of much effort.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN A PARTNERSHIP

1. Value disagreements
2. Personality conflicts
3. Communication misunderstandings
4. Doubts about priority need for partnership
5. Confusion over differing degrees of institutional authority
6. Different power interests

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE

Three Truths and a Lie

Each participant should receive four separate sheets of paper. On each sheet each participant is to write one lie and three truths about themselves on each of the four sheets. It is important that the lies must be believable.

Once everyone has their list, and each participant is to read all four of their statements in random order. The other participants are to guess which of the four statements is the lie, and why.

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