

Who's a Partner?

In short, anyone with a stake in building permanent infrastructure to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty (see list below) should be involved. Success depends on involving a good mix of people and organizations in the partnership to put together and implement the plan.

Some people who live outside the community may even have an important role to play because they benefit from or have an impact on the culture and economics of the community.

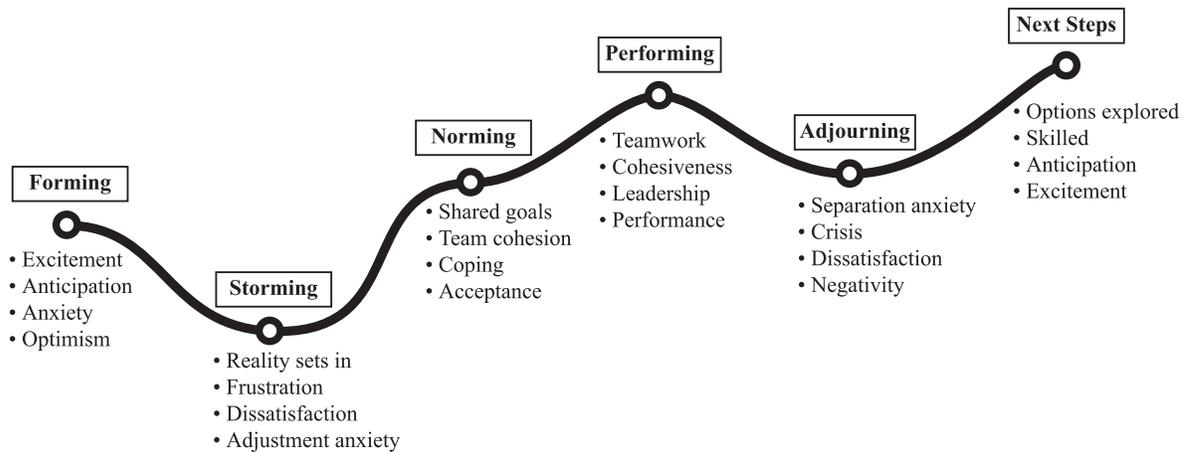
Partners	Contributions
Mass media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage of community events • Human interest stories • Understanding of local information needs • Ability to get information out quickly
Property owners and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthy information sources • Role models • Peer pressure
Financial institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence over management decisions • Linkage with property owners • Prestige for partnership • Funding for programs
Businesses and industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute information and influence decisions • Sponsor service project days • Donate equipment and services • Funding for programs
Environmental and conservation groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of environmental constituencies • Awareness of problems and issues • Committed and knowledgeable memberships
Local elected officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political leadership and credibility • Land use and resource management decisions • Financial support for projects
Local government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and technical support • Policies and decisions that affect the community • Logistics, equipment, and related support • Data collection and analysis expertise

Who's a Partner? (cont.)

Partners	Contributions
Chambers of commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compatible, broader goals for local economy • Concerns and interests of businesses
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence over efforts in the future • Ideas and creativity • Time and energy for “repetitive” tasks
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence over values and beliefs • Ability to shape future generations • Source of information
Women's groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence over family decisions • Interest and concern for health issues • Ability to mobilize and motivate members
Religious leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to stewardship • Ability to appeal to higher values • Credibility and legitimacy
Retired persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and talent for teamwork • Understanding of local conditions • Credibility in community
Civic organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing program activities • Interest in and concern for community • Fund-raising skills
Cultural Groups/Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence over and credibility with different community groups • Role models • Connection to community
Others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

The Stages of Group Development

Charting the Progression of Group Development



There is a tendency for all groups, whether newly formed or experiencing a change in leadership, to go through predictable stages of growth and regression. An awareness of group development stages is important in helping to increase positive results.

Stage 1: FORMING / ORIENTATION

Members try to determine their place in the group along with the procedures and rules of the group.

Stage 2: STORMING / DISSATISFACTION

Conflict begins to arise as members resist the influence of the group and rebel against accomplishing the task.

Stage 3: NORMING / RESOLUTION

The group establishes cohesion and commitment, discovering new ways to work together and setting norms for appropriate behavior

Stage 4: PERFORMING / PRODUCTION

The group develops proficiency in achieving its goals and becomes more flexible in its patterns of working together.

The Stages of Group Development (cont.)

STAGE 1: FORMING / ORIENTATION – Trying To Find My Place

Characteristics

During the forming stage, members discover what behaviors are acceptable to the group. For newly established groups, this stage is the transition from individual to member status. For groups with new leadership, purpose, or members, this stage is a period of testing behavior and dependence on the group's leader for guidance in a new, unstructured environment.

Group begins to experience:

- Feelings of excitement, anticipation, and optimism; also feelings of suspicion, fear, and anxiety about the job ahead
- Identification of its reason for existence
- Self-orientation
- Identification of the task to be accomplished
- Exploration and discovery of how to interact with one another as a group

As the group forms and matures, natural leaders will emerge. The members in these roles will change several times during this phase of group development.

This stage is also characterized by the following:

- Attempts to identify tasks in terms of relevancy and decide how the group will accomplish the tasks
- Decisions on the type of information needed and how it will be used
- Hesitant participation
- Initial feelings about the group
- Complaints about the organizational environment
- Suspicion, fear, and anxiety about the new situation
- Little work is accomplished

In this stage, the leader needs to encourage members to get acquainted with each other. Close supervision and direction are needed.

Common Concerns

- What role will I play in this group?
- How do I want others to perceive me?
- What can I contribute to this group?
- What will I contribute to this group?
- What kind of group will we become?

The Stages of Group Development (cont.)

STAGE 2: STORMING / DISSATISFACTION

Characteristics

During the storming stage, members become hostile or overzealous as a way of expressing their individuality and resisting group formation. Members recognize the extent of the task needed and may respond with animosity or apathy.

Some group behaviors and attitudes:

- Negativity
- Dissatisfaction
- Hostility
- Crisis mode
- Adjustment anxiety

Differences and suppressed tension begin to surface. Members further define the energy level they dedicate to the task or project at hand; questions arise:

- Do I feel passionate about the purpose of this program?
- Do I like how they are planning to meet the needs?
- What am I going to do or say that will get my opinion heard?

Other characteristics of this stage include:

- Infighting, defensiveness, and competition
- Disunity, increased tension, and jealousy
- Polarization of group members
- Sharp fluctuations in relationships and reversals of feelings
- Concern over excessive work
- Establishing a pecking order
- Little work is accomplished

The leader can help the group move through this stage by encouraging and supporting members and emphasizing areas of agreement.

Control and Influence Questions

- Will I be able to influence others?
- How much will others try to influence me?
- Will I be a respected member of this group?
- Will the group's goals include my own goals?
- Will the group leader be effective?
- What kind of conflict will we have in this group?

The Stages of Group Development (cont.)

Common Behaviors Displayed

- Trying to influence or control
- Forming subgroups and coalitions
- Resisting leadership
- Conflicting with others

STAGE 3: NORMING / RESOLUTION

During the norming stage, members accept the group norms, their own roles, and personality traits of fellow members.

Characteristics

“We’re all in this together!”

Some group behaviors:

- Cohesion around shared goals
- Resolution of conflict
- More acceptance of diversity in the group
- Reconciliation; show of affection
- Re-evaluation

Members have seen the coming together (forming), the semi-separation (storming), and now they have reconciled themselves to working together (norming) despite their differences with a new definition of purpose.

Other characteristics of this stage include:

- An attempt to achieve maximum harmony by avoiding conflict
- A new ability to express emotions constructively
- A sense of cohesiveness with a common spirit and goals
- Establishing and maintaining group boundaries
- Developing effective decisionmaking techniques
- A moderate amount of work is accomplished
- A sense of connection characterized by confiding in each other, expressing opinions, and discussing team dynamics

As the group assumes increased responsibility, the leader continues to encourage and support participation by all.

The Stages of Group Development (cont.)

Relationship Questions

- Will I be liked?
- Will I like the other members?
- What roles do I know others play in this group?
- What can I predict to be true of each issue?
- What do others expect from me?
- What are the unwritten rules that influence the way we operate as a group?
- What do and don't we discuss?

STAGE 4: PERFORMING / PRODUCTION

Now that the group has established its own norms, it becomes capable of diagnosing and solving problems and making decisions.

Characteristics

- Interdependency
- Have a sense of ownership
- A great deal of work is accomplished

“Getting Things Done!”

- Cohesiveness
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Performance

The group is starting to utilize its newly found “norms of trust,” and can begin focusing on the service to be done; there should be enough drive, creativity, and cohesiveness to take on most tasks.

The leader provides minimal input to the group.

GROUP EFFECTIVENESS QUESTIONS

- What can I do to help the group accomplish its task more effectively?
- What can I do to help maintain and improve relationships in the group?
- What can we do as a group to become more effective?

Help members evaluate the group and realize that the group is not an end in itself—that most of the work takes place outside the group

The Stages of Group Development (cont.)

STAGE 5: ADJOURNING

Characteristics

“Now What?”

Possible group feelings or reactions:

- Negativity
- Dissatisfaction
- Hostility
- Purging
- Crisis

The group is realizing the end of service is near; it has been a year of sharing and growing with each other and now members are going to separate. For many, the group has been a safety net and truly has become their community.

Partnership: Good for Everyone

It is important to remember that both parties entering into a partnership require something in order to make the partnership worth their time, effort, and resources. With every partner you work with, think about what each of you can get out of the relationship that will serve as a “win.”

Partner	What does the partnership contribute to this partner?	What does the partner contribute to this partnership?

Partner Profile

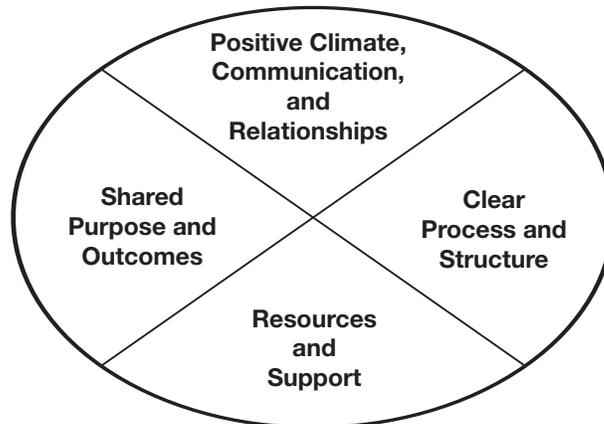
This *profile form* will help you document your partnerships for current and future work and to record vital information.

Contact Information
Partner – Organization or Individual:
Key Names and Titles, as applicable:
Physical Address:
Phone Numbers:
Fax:
E-mails:

Partner Profile (cont.)

Basic History Information
Partner History With Community:
Partner History With Your Organization:
Contact History:
Current Relationship (Includes notes about strengths and challenges):
Other Special Notes:

Keys to Successful Partnerships



POSITIVE CLIMATE, COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Establish relationships first and continue to focus on positive relationships throughout and in the end.

It is important to remember to first understand and then be understood. Know your community – politics, norms, values, history, people, etc.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Time is taken to build trust and relationships; resolve issues; and build common ground
- History of collaboration or cooperation in the community - Things that happened in the past can either help or hinder an effort – preparation and research are essential in this area
- Collaborative group seen as a leader in the community
- Political/social climate is favorable
- Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
- Appropriate cross-section of members - diversity of members are chosen that represent the appropriate stakeholders and types of individuals needed
- Ability to compromise
- Open and frequent communication

Keys to Successful Partnerships (cont.)

- Established informal and formal communication links
- Competition - Too often, organizations come together simply to obtain resources for existing efforts i.e. funders requiring collaboration, likely to get a grant, etc. – so basically, the organizations are still competing - not truly collaborating
- Conflicts are addressed within collaboration as soon as they arise, allowing for all to be heard
- Appropriate members are retired, while new members are added
- Celebration is initiated at all stages

SHARED PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

Know where you are and where you want to go – have clarity of purpose and goals – create a common understanding of why the partnership is worth pursuing.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Shared vision - all stakeholders are involved in creating a shared vision statement that tells everyone where the group is going
- Unique purpose
- Concrete, attainable goals and objectives leads to an understanding of accomplishments the group wants to make
- Ideology – Shared values and beliefs
- Members see collaboration as in their self-interest - group obtains information that gets at individual/organization gains; powers; commitments; and availabilities

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Partnerships must be supported by individuals who can facilitate the process and responsibilities. In addition, other resources such as money, skill sets, people, and time are also required.

Keys to Successful Partnerships (cont.)

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Skilled convener - Convener is chosen that has needed skills and qualities to facilitate a diverse group of stakeholders
- Leadership - If no one has enough power to bring the needed partners together, people will quickly disband – if the wrong person leads meetings, the group might fail
- Power - Rarely equal, yet we can equally value different powers. Successful collaborations find ways to balance the inequities among all members
- Resources - Potential partners may be unable to contribute what is needed i.e. representatives cannot be sent to meetings, time required causes a hardship to organization, lack of skills, etc.
- Initiator - collaboration begins with an initiator that presents the vision and results that attract others, but are open to include input from others
- People who have access to resources are identified
- Authority is obtained from home organizations of all stakeholders through letters of commitment
- Staffing is determined, if applicable, that help to move collaboration onward
- Sufficient funds - Both in-kind and cash resources are identified and plan to secure them is created
- Decisions are made as to what role home base agencies play

CLEAR PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

Create clear and written systems that allow partnerships to move forward. However, recognize that community work is full of surprises and as such partnerships require flexibility and patience.

Keys to Successful Partnerships (cont.)

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Structure for collaboration is determined that illustrates roles and authority and determines how work will be done
- Members share a stake in both process and outcomes
- Multiple layers of decision making — Decision-making protocol is decided upon that outlines who can make decisions and what type of decisions can be made
- Adaptability and flexibility are constantly promoted
- Joint agreements are created and signed that outline agency partner responsibilities
- Effective meetings are held that include beginning and ending time; agendas; refreshments; action items; relationship building; success showcasing; etc.
- All stakeholders are involved in the meetings
- Planning is valued and process taken along the way is well documented
- Authority is clarified within the collaboration
- Roles are assigned for all stakeholders based on interests and strengths of the members
- Communication plan is created that addresses both informal and formal communication required to keep stakeholders informed
- Action plan is laid out that is specific; sets responsibilities; produces a budget; communicates with all people; and starts small to ensure success
- Evaluation is valued by all stakeholders and involves a variety of methods
- Evaluation plan is created
- Feedback is constantly requested, leading to continuous improvement