

Building sustainable partnerships

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Building sustainable partnerships

Aims for the session

To develop skills in partnership building and networking by considering:

- the importance and benefits of partnerships
- pitfalls of partnership working
- building successful partnerships

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A Partnership

- is formed when two or more people or organisations have mutual interests and agree to work together for mutual benefit;
- is based on common values and trust;
- often starts as a result of networking

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Emerging partnership models

- alliances & networks (not a partnership!)
- delivery partners “working through”
- joint-working partners “working with”
- contractor partners “working for”
- referral partners “working through or for”

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Benefits of partnership working

- Prevents duplication
- Potential to provide improved services
- Increased effectiveness/resilience
- Addresses external needs e.g. funders
- Reduces competition
- Financial
- Different perspectives/skills/experience

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What makes a good partnership?

- A formal long term relationships
- Collaboration
- Clarity about needs, capacities, responsibilities and expectations.
- Regular communication and evaluation
- Equal say in the design and delivery

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BUT Partnerships are.....

- Time consuming and labour intensive
so it is...
- important to be selective and only set up partnerships which add value

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Barriers to effective partnerships

- Lack of resources
- Not knowing who to work with or how
- Lack of clear aims and expectations
- Not knowing what success is
- Competition - cultural reluctance
- Sometimes not a level playing field for VCS
- High risks - insurance/reputation

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10 steps to effective partnerships

1. Know your organisation's key objectives
2. Map objectives against existing/potential partnerships
3. Network and build alliances
4. Checked potential partners systematically for suitability
5. Only work with those who share your vision
6. Decide on how to work with partner (the model)
7. Formalise the agreement
8. Manage the partnership
9. Review and evaluate the partnership
10. Have an exit strategy

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Remember:

You can choose your friends but you can't choose your family.

Choose your partners wisely!

Good Luck!