

Developing Partnerships **headache or happiness?**

Global Connections R&D Forum



PARTNERSHIPS – WHAT CAN WE LEARN AND DO?

In 2004 NCVO launched a new department, the “Collaborative Working Unit”. It says interest in collaborative working has increased due to various reasons.

- Reported public perception that there are too many charities
- Government and funding pressure
- Perceived benefits for both beneficiaries and the charity



PARTNERSHIPS – WHAT CAN WE LEARN AND DO?

Partnership means different things to different people

- Communication at one end, constitutional at the other
- Network at one end, merger at the other

Organisations partner for different reasons

- To find a better way of fulfilling their aims
- To find a way of expanding their own ministry

What is the added value?



Networking

- Added value is the primary question asked
 - For the network member?
 - For the shared vision and mission?
 - Corporate solidarity and increased impact?
- Under estimate what mutual expectations are needed to ensure all gain
- Criteria for joining:
 - Legal requirement
 - Competitive requirement
 - Reputation enhancement
 - Operational improvement
 - Financial gain
 - Service?



Reality Check

- Time consuming
- Relationship building means conflict resolution
- Arrogance (?) – we can do it faster on our own
- Pride – we are able to do it better
- Lack of clarity of purpose and expectations



Possible stages

Type	Dependent Co- Dependent	Independent	Inter – dependent
Reality	Limited partnership	Growth potential (Self interest)	Deep partnerships
Feel	Dominated	Isolated	Shared vision and purpose



Intensity of Partnerships

- Informal: friends, peers
- Network: shared interest and aim to increase effectiveness, efficiency and impact
- Time Bound / **thematic**: join for a specified purpose and time frame
- **Strategic**: shared purpose
- Merger



What does **PARTNERSHIP** mean?

In the end, there are two main types of partnership.

1. **Tactical or pragmatic** - low cost, low risk, easy to start and end, short term goals, low but definable rewards, no major effect on agency if it stops.
2. **Strategic** - higher cost and risk, hard to work through, longer term goals, higher potential rewards, major implications if it breaks down.



PARTNERSHIPS – possible models



Some co-ordination at project level on flights

- Each agency keeps own identity and name
- Similar marketing campaigns and references to each other
- All customers benefit and massive brand loyalty
- Strategic - a formal collaboration type of partnership

Yet not merger - each still separate companies.

Can we learn from the commercial world here?



PARTNERSHIPS – possible models

Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)

Key agencies join together to raise funds from the public for certain emergencies.

- No advertising to general public by individual agencies once appeal launched
- Money divided up on the basis of an agreement, linked to turnover and capacity
- Each agency keeps own projects
- Separate joint marketing venture
- A collaborative joint venture, yet actually tactical for one purpose and not very strategic



PARTNERSHIPS – possible models

Christmas Cards

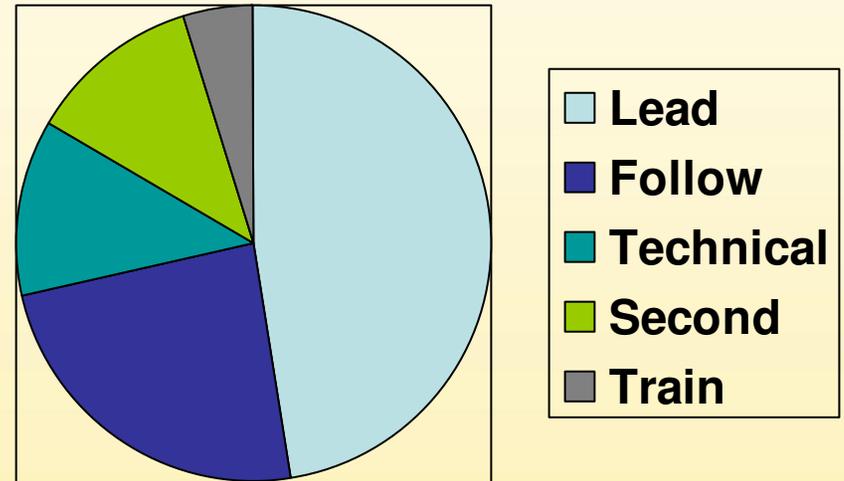
Traidcraft, Christian Aid, CAFOD and SCIAF publish joint Christmas cards

- Traidcraft does the marketing and sales.
- A hassle free run up to Christmas!!
- Money divided up on the basis of an agreement
- No joint projects on the field
- Very low risk partnership
- A joint venture, yet again only a tactical one for one project. They might or might not combine on other issues.



Influence Model

1. Fund
2. Lead
3. Follow
4. Technical
5. Second
6. Train



Ingredients

- Agreement that a partnership is needed / wanted
- Relationship based can strengthen initial success
- Development of a shared vision and purpose
- Good communication - transparency
- Sharing of resources
- Respect – mutual, especially of leaders
- Collaborative way of decision making
- Time
- Handover – staff change



PARTNERSHIP – EPRO experience

In 1995 Sheryl and I helped set up the European Partnership of Relief Organisations (EPRO) - CORD, Tearfund UK, TEAR fund Netherlands, ZOA Refugee Care and Medair.

It was committed to:

- Joint training and leadership development
- Sharing policies and handbooks
- Joint representation to government
- Seconding staff to each other
- Cross funding of projects
- Working in relief projects alongside each other if possible



PARTNERSHIP – EPRO experience

It lasted for 6 years and then came to an abrupt end.

What did we learn?

1. We had started to work together without thinking through the consequences.
2. We thought it was the right thing to do, but it wasn't clearly written down.
3. It worked better on the field than at HQ.
4. It was too based on personal relationships of a few key staff.
5. Some partners thought it was tactical and other strategic. Even so it was NOT integrated into strategies.
6. Some of us feared that we would lose our identity and control.
7. Different sizes mean different agendas



EPRO – Field perspective

Lessons:

- Explanation of who, how, why and main aim was not explained.
- No time was given to introduce staff to each organisation, their structure, vision etc.
- Clarification of reporting lines was left to separate organisations
- Staff patriotic to own organisational identity and culture
- Purpose was seen only as achieving goals on ground

Positives:

- Sharing skills worked well
- No competitiveness on field
- Friendships developed
- Increased output
- Learnt from one another
- Shared resources
- It was wanted – but we were also constantly cautioned – rumour and concern increases as it filters down



Lesson learning - PARTNERSHIP

1. Partner on the issues that you feel strongly about!
2. Ensure that is a clear goal that all partners agree to in the context of the collaboration
3. A partner needs to bury its own agenda, whatever this is, for the good of the people we seek to serve together. "I must decrease that He might increase" must be the heart felt cry
4. Each partner must understand the benefits the other partner brings



Lesson learning - PARTNERSHIP

5. Partners need to agree at which level the partnership is founded – tactical, financial or strategic. The more strategic it is, the more whole organisation needs to buy in at different levels
6. Partners need to be open with each other
7. Agreements need to be written down, constantly revised and ultimately evaluated



Where does **PARTNERSHIP** work?

Most partnerships seem to be at project level, rather than at HQ level.

- Why do partnerships at HQ level seem so hard?
- What are the reasons to partner or collaborate together at HQ level?
- What should help us work together and what prevents us?
- Are there distinctives that make Christian partnership easier - or more difficult?



PARTNERSHIP

Is there anyone here whose ministry has some synergy with yours?

Are there areas of ministry or support that you could seriously look at doing together with someone?

Let's dream together.



Feedback and Questions and Answers



Summing Up

Closing thoughts



Philippians 2:1-4

- ¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look out not only for your own interests, but also the interests of others.



Biblical Perspective

- The release and presence of the Holy Spirit is greatest when we work together (Psalm 33)
- Increases productivity and good stewardship (Matthew 5:14-30 – parable of the talents)
- Witness and demonstration of our message strengthened (John 17:20-23)
- Strong support base created (Ephesians 4:1-6; Ecclesiastes 4:12)
- Gifts and skills are drawn together to work effectively and have greater impact (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12)



Lessons from Nehemiah

- Let **us** build the wall
- Chapter 3 – each has a part
- Each inter dependent
- Protect and defend one another
- Cover resource gaps
- Ability to stand when under attack
- Decision making ability increased
- Ownership and success shared



Just because a contract is there...

Each day requires input and
commitment to be renewed

Dedicated time

Sharing, accountability,
transparency

Selflessness

Fruit!



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