

WORKING WITH DONORS

to strengthen partnering practices locally & globally



Mobilising multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving many different types of donor, is key to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** locally and globally by 2030. This is because, in times of public sector budget cuts and smaller international aid allocations, there is simply not enough funding available to meet the UN's cost estimate of \$11.5 trillion.

The **term 'donors' used here includes** not just governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, but also private foundations, local and international development NGOs, many different types of public agency, businesses and corporations as well as faith-based organisations. It also includes high net worth individuals looking for meaningful ways to use their wealth for public good, as well as those contributing through crowd-funded initiatives and the many millions across the globe who send money home to their countries of origin (this is known to be one of the largest sources of donor funding for vulnerable communities).

However, **partnering has proved challenging for donors** in terms of both collaborating with other donors and in terms of how they finance partnerships. This is in part due to an outdated system – where funders have too much power and where the true value of **non-financial resource contributions** from partners is largely unrecognised as being of equal importance.

The key is to work out ways of **counting what counts**. Every type of resource needs to be valued – and not just in monetary terms (as in 'monetised') but in terms of its more complex, intangible value in enabling positive transformation and new solutions to complex problems.

"In a partnership, all partners are donors, but not all donors are partners" ¹

How mainstream donors: collaborate more effectively between themselves; mobilise, leverage and properly value non-monetary resource contributions and **invest in ways that enable truly transformational partnerships** is the challenge we are determined to address.

FOUNDING AND PILOT PROGRAMME PARTNERS INCLUDE:

Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy • Open Society Foundations • PBA Associates • UNHCR

¹ Adapted from: Tennyson & Wilde, *The Guiding Hand: Brokering Partnerships for Sustainable Development*

Programme goals

Our goal is to work out **how donors can help** partnerships, consortia, alliances and other forms of multi-stakeholder collaboration achieve greater effectiveness and impact through their:

- Financing, grant making and investing approaches
- Participation as active partners
- Attribution and acknowledgement of partners' non-financial contributions

Programme activities

1. **ADVOCACY – for practitioners, functional leads and decision-makers**

Information and communication activities to increase awareness of how donors affect (positively & negatively) the performance and impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships with which they are involved. Sharing results of action research and evaluations, media campaigns, show-casing good practice, case studies, publications, tool books, awards & challenge programmes. Quarterly webinars to address “hot-topics” identified by front-line practitioners, as well as publications and blogs.

2. **ACTION RESEARCH – commissioned by organisations**

Commissioning and participating in practice-based research and case study work to understand better the barriers and opportunities faced by donors seeking to increase their effectiveness and contributions as a) providers of money – building their strategies and practices in designing & delivering financial support and b) acting as partners in multi-stakeholder partnerships c) working with other donors.

3. **SUPPORT – for individuals and organisations**

Building partnering capacities, skills & capabilities of those operating as ‘internal partnership brokers’ within donor organisations (essentially offering to accompany them on their partnering journey through mentoring, coaching and advising), as well as commissioned workshops (ranging from half-day workshops for 100 people to a 3-day training course designed for up to 24 participants) to build organisational capacities and capabilities.

4. **PROJECTS – for strengthening partnership practice**

Working with donors on specific projects or undertakings that improve the performance and impact of multi-stakeholder collaboration. Undertaking such projects in ways that help donors become more effective partners in specific partnering situations, where commitments have been declared. Such projects include: partner identification / recruitment; review / evaluation / case studies as well as co-creating / animating joint initiatives and programmes.



Monitoring, learning and sharing

We are committed to monitoring all programme activities and to creating new knowledge that emerges from all of the activities enabling us to re-visiting our assumptions and frameworks on a regular basis. We have also agreed with our founding partners that we make outputs and materials available in the public domain so that others unable to join our programmes for whatever reason may be able to access knowledge and practical tools that they can adapt to their own contexts and challenges.

FROM ONE OF THE FOUNDING PARTNERS:

“The donor landscape is changing. It is about investing, giving and a shifting of the roles of the entire ecosystem. Money remains important. But resourcing is no longer just about the money.”

Expected results

Working with Donors will generate a portfolio of **innovative examples** that demonstrate how donors can support transformative partnering approaches at both local and global levels to:



- **Help** make partnerships and partnering practice more effective
- **Become** more effective partners themselves
- **Increase** investment in building partnering capability/capacity
- **Focus** more deliberately on the ‘partnering’ dimension in their programming
- **Work** more effectively with partners’ non-cash contributions to increase reach, impact and sustainability
- **Build** stronger and more genuinely collaborative, inclusive and equitable relationships between the key players

Resources available

The website for this initiative that gives access to the research findings, papers and case studies that underpin this programme –

www.workingwithdonors.org.

Working with Donors – a movement for change

We are using the lessons and insights generated through this programme as a spring-board for building a movement for change in global partnering practice. We believe that by addressing the ways in which donors’ support and engage in partnerships in an intentional and imaginative way we can contribute to challenging and re-defining prevailing partnering attitudes and practices.

Contributing partners and a number of key individuals from different sectors act as:

- **Shapers** of the evolving programme of work
- **Ambassadors** promoting this work to as wide an audience of decision-makers, funders and practitioners as possible and
- **Critical Friends** to the curating team who lead the development and implementation of the programme outlined below.

Programme curators

The Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) has the responsibility for initiating, curating and managing this programme. PBA has a growing global reputation for its flagship vocational training courses, designed for those who manage partnering processes, as well as for its leading edge thinking about transformational partnering practices. All those involved in this programme (whether as curators, trainers, facilitators, coaches or mentors) are fully accredited and qualified partnership brokers with established reputations in this field. For more information about PBA – its activities, track record and impact – please go to www.partnershipbrokers.org

All enquiries about Working with Donors to info@partnershipbrokers.org