

Learning

Training

Transforming



An introduction to Partnership Brokering



What is Partnership Brokering?

Multi-stakeholder collaboration (aka 'partnerships') is a development approach that aims to bring greater innovation, reach, integration, cost-effectiveness, influence and/ or sustainability. All too often, however, partnerships fall far short of expectation and potential because the partnering process is not well understood or effectively managed.

Partnership brokering involves individuals or organisations working with partners to strengthen the partnering process and ensure that multi-stakeholder collaboration, whether at local, national or international levels, achieves its ambitious and important development goals.

Professional and skilled partnership brokering can, and increasingly does, make all the difference.

Key skills and attributes involved

Effective partnership brokering requires a range of skills including:

- Oral & written communication
- Interest-based negotiation
- Facilitation of complex processes
- Innovative & strategic thinking

Successful partnership brokers tend to have the following attributes:

- Ability to be observant & reflective
- Willingness to carry a level of risk, challenge & uncertainty
- Persistence and determination
- A sense of humour.



Sustaining Outcomes: Brokering roles can include supporting partners in their:

- Discussions on 'moving on' choices
- Recognition and celebration of the partnership's achievements
- Reaching agreement on type of information for the public domain
- Identification of further champions and spheres of influence
- Work to ensure outcomes are sustained
- Management of closure / moving on procedures

Scoping & Building: Brokering roles in this phase can include:

- Initiating the idea of partnering
- Making the case to potential partners / donors / decision makers
- Energising and enthusing
- Scoping the possibilities
- Early relationship building
- Managing expectations
- Initial / outline planning
- Helping partners to reach agreement



Adapted from *The Partnering Toolkit*, Tennyson, R. 2003

Reviewing & Revising: Brokering roles can include helping partners to:

- Agree evaluation procedures
- Assess the impact of the partnership
- Draw out & apply lessons
- Review efficiency of the partnership
- Review the added value to partners
- Brainstorm new ideas / developments
- Make any necessary changes to project or partnering arrangements

Managing & Maintaining: Brokering roles can include working with partners to:

- Secure resource commitments
- Build governance arrangements
- Deepen organisational engagement
- Develop a communications plan
- Build partnering capacity
- Problem solve constructively
- Agree benchmarks for later evaluation

What do partnership brokers require?

To do the job well, those operating in this role require:

- Recognition and endorsement for the important behind-the-scenes work they do
- Clarity with regard to their tasks, responsibilities and deliverables
- Mechanisms for engaging with partners individually and collectively
- Opportunities to reflect on what the partners and the partnership require next
- Time to review their role as things change and as they increasingly hand over to others

Further references

- *What do Partnership Brokers Do? An Enquiry in Practice*
- *Appointing a Partnership Broker*
- *Partnership Brokering Roles & Skills*
- *Betwixt & Between: The Journal for Partnership Brokering*

Training courses, professional accreditation and partnership brokering support services



All available via:

www.partnershipbrokers.org

Principles of Partnership Brokering Good Practice

1. **Keeping up to date** with new developments in the theory and practice of brokering multi-stakeholder partnerships (including adoption of existing tools/ approaches/ frameworks)
2. **Being reflective** and striving for diversity, equity, openness, mutual benefit and courageous practice whilst operating in a partnership brokering role
3. **Being prepared to challenge** partnering assumptions and poor partnering behaviour at any stage of the partnering cycle in ways most likely to bring about constructive change
4. **Taking every opportunity** to build partnering and partnership brokering capacity in others
5. **Sharing knowledge generously** and not holding on to knowledge for personal aggrandizement or gain
6. **Refraining** from promoting a partnering process when aware that an alternative approach is more likely to deliver better outcomes
7. **Avoiding** taking actions as that might involve risk without prior endorsement from those most likely to be impacted
8. **Being** an ethical and responsible practitioner by raising concerns about the partnership or the actions of individual partners
9. **Acknowledging** competence limitations and being open to requesting assistance from others
10. **Being willing** to let go and hand over the partnership brokering role when the time is right

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