

Collaborative partnerships evaluation tool

This tool is designed to be used as one way of evaluating the processes and outcomes of working in partnership. It is best used in combination with other data sources such as minutes of meetings, informal feedback from partners and consumers and other things such as documents, media and other reports. The tool is divided into three sections: preparation for partnership, partnership processes and partnership impacts and outcomes.

1. Preparing for Working in Partnership Questions (adapted from University of Wisconsin Co-operative Extension, 1998)

These questions could be answered, either in survey form, in one to one interview or as a group of partnership participants (individuals or agencies) who are considering forming a partnership. The questions ask potential partners to examine their reasons for considering partnership along with the context in which they are operating and potential strengths and barriers. Depending on the context, the answers could be either kept confidential as part of each individual's considerations about the partnership or collected and discussed in the early meetings of potential partners.

Questions include:

- Is a partnership needed for this project/program?
- Should I/my agency be involved in this partnership? (am I the most appropriate person in the agency to be involved?)
- Is this involvement going to be supported by my agency? (Who do I need to talk to about this? What time commitment is involved? What will happen if there are changes in staff?)
- Have we worked in partnership previously and what were the outcomes? (do we share the same values?, have a common goal/purpose?)
- What will my role be? (supporter?, facilitator?, initiator? major stakeholder?)
- What can I/my agency contribute? (time?, resources?, services?, contacts?)
- What can I/my agency gain?
- What potential enablers/barriers to partnership exist at this time?(time?, resources?, workloads? previous experiences?, relationships with other members?, competition for funding?)
- Does the partnership have access or potential access to the resources and expertise that it needs?
- What potential issues are there around the sustainability of services/programs resulting from the partnership?

2. Partnership Process Questions

These questions are designed to evaluate the functioning of the partnership in its current state. They could be asked at a key point in the project eg half way through or as part of the endpoint assessment and use a survey/rating format.

1. What is your role in the partnership?

- How involved have you been in the partnership? (supporter?, facilitator?, contributor?, major contributor?, driver?)
- What percentage of regular partnership meetings have you attended in the past 12 months?
- How much time is spent on partnership activities? (attending meetings?, flow-on work from meetings? Partnership activities?)

The following questions ask respondents to tick one box with space provided for any clarifying comments

2. Functioning of the partnership

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Unsure/NA |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Meetings of the partners are at a convenient time and place | | | | | | |
| There are clear agendas, minutes and clear communications among partnership members | | | | | | |
| Everyone get a chance to give their input | | | | | | |
| Partners contribute to the meetings | | | | | | |
| The atmosphere at meetings is positive | | | | | | |
| The appropriate people are involved in the partnership | | | | | | |
| There has not been a large amount of turnover among partnership members | | | | | | |

Please write comments here

Clarity of goals/direction

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Unsure/ NA |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| All partners agree on and understand the purpose and goals of the partnership? | | | | | | |
| The partnership group have terms of reference that are reviewed and everyone is aware of and agrees with them? | | | | | | |
| There is regular review of the partnerships achievements/direction | | | | | | |
| If changes are made, everyone is consulted about them? | | | | | | |

Please write comments here:

Capacities of partnership

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Unsure/NA |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| There is someone whose job it is to ensure the smooth running of the partnership | | | | | | |
| Leadership is consultative | | | | | | |
| Tasks get assigned and completed | | | | | | |
| There is enough time to accomplish the goals of the partnership | | | | | | |
| The partnership is able to adapt to changes in staff | | | | | | |
| All the key agencies/people are involved | | | | | | |
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Unsure/NA |
| All the partners have the support of their managers/agencies in the work they are doing | | | | | | |
| The partnership is able to deal with conflict in a positive way | | | | | | |

Please write comments here:

5. Current achievements and future aims

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Unsure/NA |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| The partnership has made progress toward achieving its goals | | | | | | |
| There are tangible outcomes from the partnership to date | | | | | | |
| There is agency/community recognition of what the partnership is trying to achieve? | | | | | | |
| The partnership is continuing to grow and progress | | | | | | |
| There is potential for other things to arise from the partnership | | | | | | |
| The partnership is likely to make an impact on service provision in the community? | | | | | | |

Please write comments here:

6. Benefits of the Partnership

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Unsure/NA |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Getting to know other agencies and their staff? | | | | | | |
| Developing collaborative relationships with other agencies? | | | | | | |
| Gaining access to resources (expertise, services, people) outside my agency? | | | | | | |
| Different perspectives on issues of interest? | | | | | | |
| Gaining recognition for myself and my agency and the work we are doing? | | | | | | |
| Promoting awareness of important issues among other agencies and the community? | | | | | | |
| Achieving goals that would not be possible without the partnership? | | | | | | |
| Developing new programs/projects aside from the partnership? | | | | | | |

Please write comments here:

Partnership Impact and Outcomes Questions

These questions evaluate the impact and outcomes of the partnership and would likely be asked at the endpoint of the partnership or before proceeding to a new stage. As with the preparation questions, these could be asked by an evaluator in a one to one interview, as part of a group interview or as a written survey. Responses could be shared as part of a group exercise or reported as a summary without identifying individual respondents.

Questions

- What impact did my/our involvement have for the outcomes of the partnership?
- What would have happened if I/we had not been involved?
- Have there been changes in practice or service provision as a result of the partnership?
- What if any were the benefits for my agency?
- What happened or changed as a result of the partnership
- Was what happened aligned with the goals set?
- If something different happened, was this positive or negative?
- Were there any unintended effects of the partnership?
- What are the tangible impacts or outcomes of the partnership?
- Are people outside the partnership, including the community, aware of what's been achieved?
- Is the partnership going to continue in some form?