

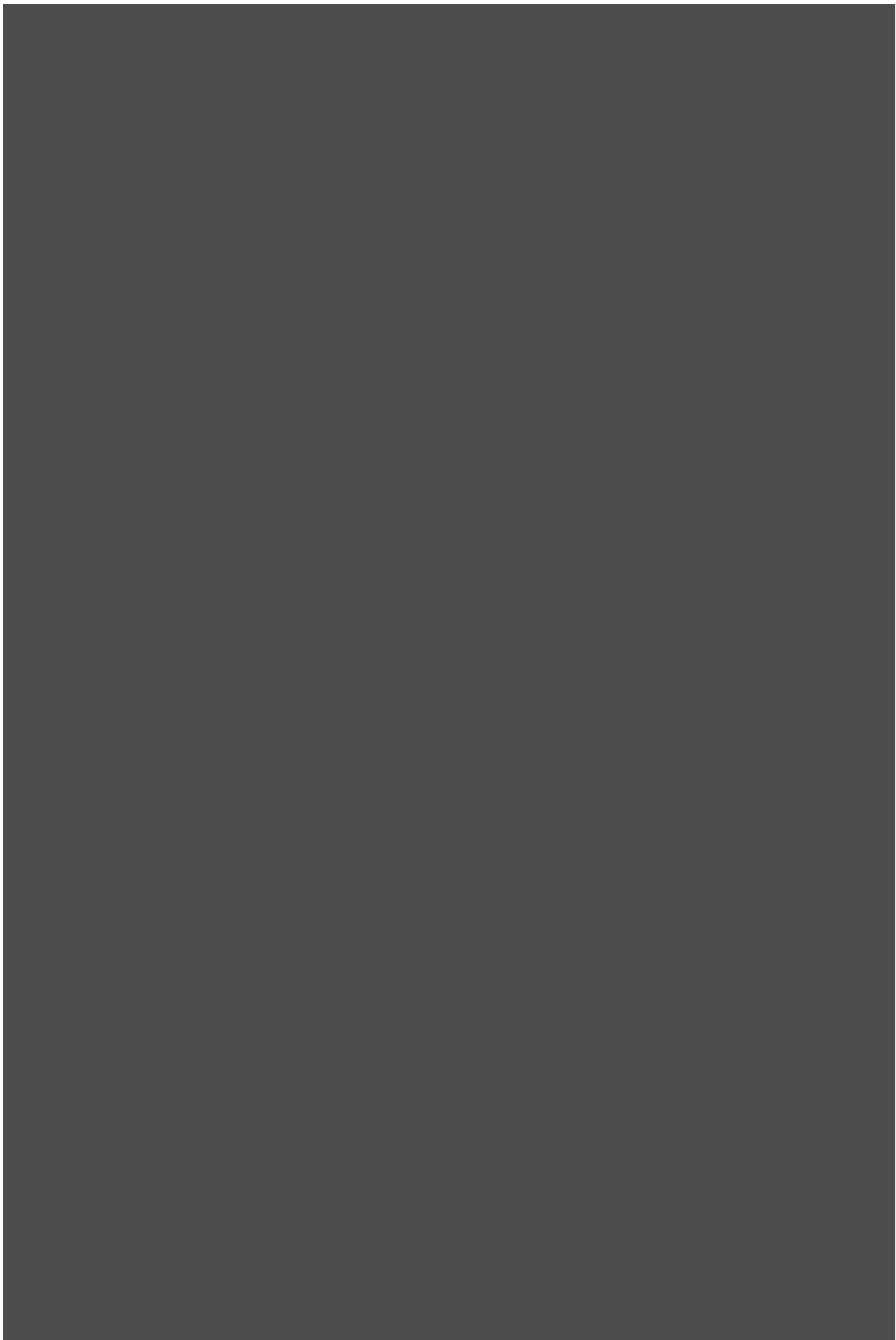
the **Aboriginal-Industry
Partnership Guide**
for the new economy



Human Resources and Skills Development Canada / Ressources humaines et Développement des compétences Canada



VanAsep
TRAINING SOCIETY



the Aboriginal-Industry
Partnership Guide

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This Aboriginal-Industry Partnership Guide reflects current national efforts to link Industry demand to Aboriginal labour market supply.

Copies of this Partnership Handbook are available in French and English from the VanAsep Training Society website at:

www.vanasep.ca

Copies or further information on ASEP may also be obtained from:

Aboriginal Skills Employment Partnership (ASEP)
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/Aboriginal_training/index.shtml

VanAsep Training Society
West Vancouver, British Columbia

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VanAsep Construction Training Program

Introduction

Why a guide on partnerships?

Strong, viable partnerships don't just happen. They need to be understood, properly developed and well maintained. Skills, knowledge and experience are required when we bring people together to form useful and productive partnerships. Many of us do not feel confident in each and every aspect of partnering or, if we do, we may not be able to share our knowledge effectively with others. The objectives of this book are to help people learn more about what partnerships are and to offer suggestions about how to be effective in them. It provides tools and tips to enhance partnerships, and outlines what is needed to move forward together.

This book is about developing partnerships and doing it right. It has been written for all people who want to undertake, maintain or strengthen a partnership. It is designed to build capacity while reinforcing existing skills and should increase understanding of new roles and relationships at a time when opportunity abounds but direction and guidelines may not always be clear.

Canada has had some great partnership successes from the cooperative movement of the early 1900's to the community-based partnerships of today. Through a vast range of partnership experiences, enough learning has been garnered, mistakes made, and ideas shared, to allow this book to be written. Although this handbook was funded by government, it has been designed as a guide or reference book only, not as a compulsory methodology for those involved in government-funded partnerships.

The content of this handbook comes from the knowledge and experience of numerous individuals who have been directly involved in partnerships, organizational transition and community development. As a handbook, it is suitable for people who are either actively involved in partnerships or just starting out.

Partnerships are not new. They have been around for a very long time. What is new is the emphasis being placed on partnerships in so many different aspects of our lives. From community services to employment and economic initiatives, groups who might not otherwise be sharing resources are joining together and forming partnerships. The basis for this is the belief that working together is more effective than working in isolation. This belief is being embraced by organizations that need to consider or connect a wide range of interests as well as by those that have a single focus. Partnerships are becoming a logical and popular way of doing business, particularly when that business is improving our communities or helping the people in them.

Why partnerships?

Experience tells us that partnerships are a good way to reach long-range, encompassing goals. As a result, they are becoming increasingly important. Let's look at some reasons why that might be.

Although the general popularity of partnerships can be attributed to many conditions and factors, there are often specific reasons why certain partnerships are formed. For example:

- They might be the right choice for taking needed action, solving problems or sharing limited resources.
- Some partnerships are the result of a request, often from a funding body, to include a wide range of stakeholders.
- Partnerships are sometimes the logical next step which builds on activities or projects that have already been successful.
- When a commitment is needed from those who can influence success, a partnership might be the appropriate vehicle to attract and keep their interest.
- Occasionally partnerships are formed when government departments or other large institutions merge their mandates, budgets or operations.
- Partnerships are formed when things need to be done and when there is a desire to avoid duplication, to share clients or customers or to simplify access.
- They are also formed when there is a desire to share the load when improving service without significantly increasing cost.
- Very often partnerships come into existence when there is a need for action or activity that would be difficult to undertake on our own.

We like to think that things which can not be achieved alone can be addressed by a partnership group that is dedicated to the cause and has the skills and resources needed to see it through. In the spirit of working together for more effective results, partnerships and the attitudes that are needed to make them successful are emerging and thriving.

What many people fail to realize is that team work, shared leadership and combining our efforts involve different ways of thinking and behaving. Although much good is said about the various types of partnerships and the value of sharing resources and working together, it is equally important to recognize the underlying stresses involved.

Sometimes we believe that partnerships are the answer to all of our problems and that, ultimately, they will save us money, time or effort. This is not necessarily true. Partnerships take time to evolve, may or may not be the right approach for the situation and don't always economize on resources — financial or otherwise. A partnership is one approach to reach common goals but not the only one. After being well thought out, agreement needs to be reached that a partnership is the best choice for those involved.

Partnership handbook overview

The following overview offers a look at what will be covered in the handbook. It may assist in determining what sections will be most useful to you by providing a brief sketch of the contents.

SECTION 1: Why partner?

Section 1 offers a basic introduction to partnerships and outlines the prerequisites needed to begin. It contains assessment considerations that will determine how ready you and your organization are to enter into a partnership.

A partnership is defined as a relationship where two or more parties, having compatible goals, form an agreement to share the work, share the risk and share the results or proceeds. Having the right people at the right time doing the right things together is what we strive for when creating partnerships. Partnerships are about people working together.

There are many advantages to partnering. Finding creative solutions, improving diversity, exploring holistic approaches and increasing or improving business, are but a few. Partnerships build on what is already being done while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of services. Of course, drawbacks also exist in partnering. For example, clashing values or interests, perceptions of unfair advantage or fear of change can be problematic as can issues around displaced power, influence and status.

Before agreeing to be involved in a partnership, it is important to determine your own personal readiness to participate, the organization's interest and ability to be a good partner and the preparedness of the community in which the partnership will operate. Most importantly, however, the partnership group itself will need to determine its interest and ability to partner.

Having a common purpose and starting with willing and able people form the “nuts and bolts” or prerequisites for effective partnerships.

SECTION 2: Types of partnerships

Section 2 profiles four different types of partnerships. It provides information setting the context of the characteristics of each.

The partnerships described in this section are: Community-based Partnerships; Rural, Northern and Urban Partnerships; Government Partnerships; and Regional or National Partnerships.

Community-based partnerships require the partners know the community of which they are working with, such as the people that live there, the major industry, level of employment, community leaders and so on. The pitfalls a community partnership may encounter and solutions to address these pitfalls are provided in this section. Insight is also provided on non-resident and resident members of community-based partnerships.

The geographic location a partnership takes place at is different than government, regional and national partnerships. Each has elements that strengthen and create challenges to establishing and maintaining those partnerships.

Rural, northern and urban partnerships may create challenges due to infrastructure, human resources and skills available, and mobility.

Government partnerships are sensitive to political realities and public perception, while regional and national partnerships need fulfillment of investment and longer term complex issues.

SECTION 3: How to form partnerships

Section 3 looks at the processes or actual operation of a partnership and helps to create the framework to make it work. It includes a planning process that could be useful in designing and operating your partnership.

No matter the reason you are undertaking a partnership (sharing resources, requested by a funder, a logical next step in an initiative, or as a result of change), there are many steps to successful partnering. The partnership model in this book recommends ten tasks that will create a clear process to produce better and faster results, and help avoid some problems. The steps are:

1. Vision
2. Goals
3. Membership
4. Commitment
5. Action Plan
6. Roles and Responsibilities
7. Communication
8. Resources
9. Evaluation
10. Revision and Closure

SECTION 4: Skills and knowledge

Section 4 focuses on skills and training. It reviews what knowledge and skills are needed to be effective in a partnership, and provide a training plan format for both the individual members and the partnership group.

Two types of skills are commonly used when managing a diverse partnership: 1) generic or traditional management skills such as strategic planning, financial and human resource development; and 2) specific skills for working in a team or partnership like facilitation, working with diversity, conflict resolution and building support, energy and motivation. Regardless of whether these skills exist in the group, a plan should be developed to ensure that training of these is part of the partnership design. The basic skills covered in this section are:

- Negotiation Skills
- Group Process and Team Building
- Planning

- Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution
- Evaluation
- Recruiting and Working with Volunteers
- Time Management
- Stress and Transition Management
- Financial Management
- Managing Outside Help

SECTION 5: Maintaining the partnership

Section 5 is a “troubleshooting guide” or a help section. It presents various situations and aspects of partnering that can make or break the relationship. It also outlines some common problems and provides a few solutions.

Certain aspects of partnering lend themselves to difficulties. Power exists, both individual and collective. Although partnerships bring people together with the expectation of achieving better outcomes, issues around roles, attitudes and positions can be problematic. Add to these, diverging expectations of either partner plus other communication issues that create problems.

All individuals, groups and organizations have a culture which they bring into a partnership. This can create a dynamic and exciting environment when supported by open and honest dialogue. It can also cause “culture clash” requiring direction and assistance if it gets out of hand. Leadership holds the group together and ultimately decides its success. Whether shared or not, leadership must be developed and nurtured if it is not strong in the partnership.

There are several other factors that can influence the success of a partnership. For example, the right number of people in the group can affect how the partnership is managed and ultimately its outcome. Providing clear direction, developing good communication systems and maintaining motivation are also key elements. Obstacles may include distraction or getting off track, burnout, ineffective meetings and unresolved conflicts.

Additional guide components

Between each section is a short profile of employment partnerships across Canada. They feature the key elements of these relationships and the expected outcomes.

The conclusion of this handbook has a **glossary** of common partnering terms and **bibliography** of on-line resources, such as reports, agreements, and proposals related to partnership and training development. Several online tools can be used as templates or guides to help you develop and maintain your partnerships.

How to use this handbook

The key elements of this handbook are for community partnerships and any collaborative venture in which you may be involved. It can be used one section at a time or as a complete guide cover-to-cover.



Squamish Nation Trades Centre

Partnership with Kwantlen University College

North Vancouver, British Columbia

The Squamish Nation in North Vancouver and Kwantlen University College signed a partnership agreement to offer certified construction skills training to Aboriginal people. Courses have been offered through the Squamish Trades Centre on Carpentry Level 1 and Pile Driving, resulting in Aboriginal people getting their start in apprenticeship trades in British Columbia. The partnership also links with industry securing employment for Aboriginal students once they have completed training. Nation leader, Chief Gibby Jacobs says, "it is with great pleasure to have signed the agreement with Kwantlen University College. They have proven themselves to be a forward thinking and successful learning institution. We have high expectations of our relationship and to help create successful people of my Nation!"



Cloudworks Energy

SECTION 1: *Why partner?*

What a partnership is

A partnership is a relationship where two or more parties, having compatible goals, form an agreement to share the work, share the risk and share the results or proceeds.

A partnership implies the sharing of decision-making, risks, power, benefits and burdens. It should add value to each partner's respective services, products or situations. In a partnership, there is give and take, but most important, it is based on trust.

Bringing a diverse group of people together, combining their resources, sharing ideas and stretching thoughts into action requires special attitudes, values, skills and knowledge. When they decide to work together, they may form a committee, a task force, or formalize it in a partnership.

A true partnership (in the strictest sense of the word) establishes a formal relationship between the members of the group. Normally the members have their own identity outside the partnership and in addition, are independently accountable to others. Action or transaction occurs in a win-win situation where each party expects to benefit and agrees to share the risk. Simply put, a partnership is an agreement to do something together that will benefit all involved.

Partnerships can vary in the length of time they are in operation from short-term to long-term, and they can be either simple or complex in their design. They could be formed for any number of reasons and purposes; however, partnerships share certain similarities in that they:

- share authority;
- have joint investment of resources;
- result in mutual benefits; and
- share risk, responsibility and accountability

What a partnership is not

A true partnership does not exist when:

- there is just a gathering of people who want to do things;
- there is a hidden motivation;
- there is an appearance of common ground but actually many agendas exist;
- there is tokenism or the partnership was established just for appearances;
- one person has all the power and / or drives the process... there is an imbalance of power; or
- there is no acceptable sharing of risk, responsibility, accountability and benefits

Why a partnership and not something else

Usually, partnerships are sparked by a catalyst. This may be an opportunity that presents itself, a request from someone or even a crisis of some kind. Partnerships pro-

vide a challenge and the possibility to be more than just the sum of the individuals working together. They offer an effective and practical approach to solving problems, seizing opportunities and planning results. They empower people and systems to change for the better, to work together for better solutions!

There are advantages and drawbacks to partnerships but, when there is genuine support for the concept, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. The following outlines some of the opinions that related to the advantages and drawbacks related to partnerships:

Some advantages:

- Change and transition are great places to find opportunity — in confusion, anything that looks like a solid idea might be considered.
- Creative solutions emerge from differing perspectives partnerships offer.
- Partnerships often improve relationships between diverse groups, and extend “buy in” or ownership to more people.
- There is overall support for the notion of doing things together, and gains are expected from the partnership.
- Communities grow stronger with the participation and inclusion of many, and partnerships are a good way to enhance existing strengths and activities.
- Partnerships are often a good response to funding and program requirements as they can be designed to use limited resources effectively and gaining resources that might not otherwise be accessible.
- Partnerships tend to bring about holistic approaches to community or organizational issues as they share the risks, rewards and solutions.
- Partnerships can promote, improve or enhance communication. They can involve people and organizations who might otherwise not participate.

Some drawbacks:

- People do not all have the same values and interests, which can sometimes make agreement on goals difficult.
- We are generally not well trained to encounter or resolve conflict, and most partnerships have internal conflicts of one kind or another.
- In partnerships there can be problematic power and status differences.
- Some partnerships do not have the commitment to hold together under strain.

- The various organizations involved may have differing authority levels and speeds for approval.
- The merging of differing cultural and “institutional cultures” is not easy.
- Budgets sometimes decrease when they are shared.
- There are many disincentives to moving forward or to empowering others.
- Fear of change makes people nervous. There can be a history of mistrust, a fear of the unknown — of everything and everybody.
- Technology, although advanced, is seldom compatible between groups.
- Information and data is outdated even when and if you can get it.
- Partners aren’t always chosen carefully, and it’s difficult to “de-partner”.
- Building partnerships takes time, and maintaining it can be time consuming.
- Differing values and experience can side track decisions and planning.

The single biggest factor, positive or negative, around partnerships is ATTITUDE. It will make or break any partnership faster than all of the above combined.

The best partnerships are formed when everyone involved participates freely and understands why the partnership is being formed. Some of the most frequent reasons why partnerships are formed are listed below.

Some people think partnerships are desirable because they:

- find solutions to complex issues
- combine efforts to share opportunities
- add value to the partners’ products, services, programs or activities
- encourage competition, excellence or market share
- increase lobbying ability, influence, credibility or standing
- enable partners to do more or better with less by sharing costs, resources or skills
- integrate ideas, activities and goals with others
- reduce operational or management problems
- enable the continuation of activities with reduced resources
- make good use of shared knowledge, know-how and ideas

- eliminate duplication or overlap between similar groups
- reduce project risk

Partnerships should be flexible, easy to understand and enjoyable to work in, even though they often require some official or formal agreement. The agreement is not to satisfy legal requirements as much as it is to make certain that everyone involved knows:

- what the partnership is about
- why it exists
- who is doing what, and
- what and when outcomes are expected.

The word partnership may bring to mind legal entities and rigid rules and structures. This need not be the case although, from a legal point of view, a partnership is a single entity and the partners are jointly liable, or responsible, even though they usually exist as independent operations outside the relationship (even during the partnership). This means that they are responsible for each other's commitments (most often this refers to financial ones) and are required to make up any shortfall if one of the partners cannot deliver. Therefore, every group member should have the support and authority required from their organization.

Different partnership activities

Examples abound where the strengths and talents from within a community, organization or industry have come together to produce spectacular results. Groups are pooling their efforts in exciting projects and activities, many of which lead to partnerships. The following models describe most types of partnership activities.

Consultative or Advisory: partnerships that are formed to receive public input around change or to gather ideas for future policies.

Contributory: partnerships that are formed to benefit the work of a community or community organization; however, the funders set the objectives and the partners can agree to them or not.

Operational: work-sharing partnerships where one partner retains control but the others can influence decision-making.

Collaborative: partnerships that are formed to share resources, risks and decision-making. This is the type most often found in community-based partnerships, about which this handbook was written.

Degrees of involvement

One of the strengths of partnerships is that each organization usually has a clear identity outside the partnership. They choose to bring their skills and resources to the partnership. The degree to which they can and will do varies from group-to-group and individual-to-individual. Regardless of the strategies or time frames, most often, partnership work is in addition to the regular work of the group members. People in the partnership, however, are not always involved to the same degree all of the time. Some may have less involvement as the partnership evolves, while others form the core group who are consistently active. Sub-groups, committees or task forces may develop from the original partnership group to undertake specific work in addition to the overall management of the partnership. To keep focused under these conditions the group should always remember what the partnership is about and what is reasonable to expect from people.

Another type of partnership involvement occurs when outside experts are brought into the partnership on an ad hoc basis. Normally these are people whose skills are only needed for a short time or to fill a skill gap in the group. Typical examples are lawyers, engineers, accountants, trainers or resource management specialists. In some partnerships, these people are a recognized part of the group but do not attend regular meetings and usually are involved only when their expertise is required.

In other instances, the expertise exists within the group. When this is the case, avoid making assumptions about the member providing the service or donating free advice or services. A discussion should take place about what expertise the group is prepared to pay for and what can be donated. Also consider what is available from within the group and what might be required from elsewhere.

Working together involves negotiating and reaching compromise on what needs to be done, by whom and in what manner. This becomes very difficult when not all partners are considered to be equal or when their contributions are not readily visible or understood at the onset. Remember that not all contributions will be financial. What we refer to as an “in kind” contribution may surpass the familiar donations of office space, administrative staff support, expertise or equipment.

Although the contribution of every member of a partnership may not be equal, every contribution will help create success. Each partnership should know its partner’s strengths and weaknesses as well as their ability or limitations around involvement and contribution.

It is difficult to say why people agree to be involved in partnerships or why they stay involved. The following ideas have been generated by community partners as some of the most common reasons why people will or will not be involved.

People are often reluctant to join into partnerships when:

- they do not agree with the purpose of the partnership;
- they are busy;
- there is not enough in it for them;
- they do not trust the motivation of all the members;
- they do not fully understand the initiative;
- they have been directed or sent into the partnership without support;
- they feel they do not have the skills to do a good job; or
- they are not sure that the benefits outweigh the risks.

They become and stay involved when:

- they understand and support the cause or purpose of the partnership;
- there is something in it for them or they can see how they can help;
- they trust the motivation of all the members;
- they understand why they have been sent to the partnership and how it will be supported by their organization;
- they feel competent and able to do what is needed; and
- they have the time, interest and desire to participate.

Are you ready for partnership? *— assessments*

Several things need to be considered and in place before you begin a partnership. For instance, partnerships will not usually happen without such things as a common cause or need, people who are willing to do something together and a supportive environment in which the partnership can survive... essentially, there is a “Common Ground” or reason for the partnership to be created. There are usually some initial costs and resources needed including the time and expertise of the people who are interested or involved in the partnership that must be contributed to establish the partnership.

A partnership should start by inviting organizations to share their skills, time and resources for a clear or definite purpose — one that has the support or approval of those it will benefit. There will be a need for some preliminary discussions about relevant issues prior to a decision that a partnership is desirable. Obviously, before entering into the partnership, some thought should take place about preparedness of the follow.

- 1) The various organizations that might be involved.
- 2) The individuals who would be members.
- 3) The partnership group as a whole.
- 4) The organizations, people and initiatives that could be affected, positively or negatively, by the partnership.

Experience tells us that time spent in the beginning, establishing a firm foundation, will be saved in the long run by greatly increasing the probability of success. There is a need to ask if every organization is ready to participate (organizational assessment), if each individual is prepared (self-assessment), and if the partnership group is ready to form the partnership (group assessment). The following might be useful to determine how prepared you are for the partnership.

Organizational assessment

Many organizations have learned that partnerships can be the route to success, and in some circumstances, can be necessary. Before entering into a partnership, it is

important to ensure that the organization you represent is ready, willing and able to be a partner. Being able includes being legally able to partner.

One key issue faced by organizations is who to choose to represent them in the partnership. Usually this will be determined based on what the partnership is addressing and what the organization needs or wants from the person representing it. Selecting someone who is available, has the skills and who will do a good job for both the partnership and the organization is most desirable, as is knowing in advance how the organization will support its representative in the partnership. As partnerships are sometimes considered secondary to the main work of the organization, it is useful to have ongoing communication about how both the representative and the partnership activities are doing, as well as confirmed commitment by the organizations leadership (i.e., Board of Directors, Shareholders) to the partnership.

As an organization, these things should be considered prior to entering a partnership:

- 1) Does the organization's mandate fit with the proposed partnership?
- 2) Are the organization's values compatible with the work that will be undertaken?
- 3) What resources (e.g., time, money, materials, space, equipment) from the organization might be available for the partnership?
- 4) Is there someone who can represent the organization in a responsible way, and can that person be spared at this time? How will the organization support their representative in the partnership?
- 5) How will the partnership benefit the organization? How will the organization benefit the partnership?
- 6) How much time will it take and how will that time connect to the other activities of the organization?
- 7) Is there any reason why the organization would not wish to be involved?

Self-assessment

Everyone has a past, a present and a future. Experiences from our past affect our present and our present has an impact on our future. In partnerships this can be

applicable in both positive and negative terms. Most people are accustomed to having responsibility and recognition for their own actions and efforts, so team work may be a different experience. In preparing to enter a partnership, we as individuals should spend time looking at our own attitudes and values about partnerships and team work. We have to examine our motivation and evaluate our needs and expectations. Part of this is understanding the personalities, operating systems, and protocols of the people and organizations we may work with.

Group assessment

Partnerships are sometimes formed with very little attention given to how prepared the group is to proceed or if the community context has been given appropriate thought. The partnership group and the host community need to be considered from the outset. As appropriate, the community should be consulted on the partnership to understand the community concerns and interests are addressed, as well as to secure their involvement and support that may be necessary to maintain and ensure the partnership's success.



La Corporation Anionwentsae

Tourism training partnership

Huronne-Wendat, Quebec

Cultural tourism is getting a boost in the Huronne-Wendat Nation. In 2008, the Anionwentsae Corporate was set up to administer a tourism training program that would employ Nation members in the hotel, museum and tourism centre. Training was essential to give the Huronne-Wendat tourism activities a true, consistent and genuine flavour, as well as to incorporate tourism industry standards for visitors. The CDFM (Centre de développement et de formation de la main d'oeuvre) delivers the training in collaboration with the le Collège Mérici, who also monitor the jobs and provides individualized training support. Support for wages, training and competency development is provided through the Partenariat pour l'emploi et les compétences des Autochtones (PCEA) for half of the 200 direct and indirect jobs.



Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg's GTR&O Technician Program



SECTION 2: Types of partnerships

There are no “text book” partnerships. Each one is different and has its own characteristics, as well as overlapping traits. There could be difficulty in defining the scope of the partnership, the size of the group and the geographical or other boundaries. Almost all have time and capacity issues or shared jurisdictional matters to consider, but certainly, partnerships are not neat or tidy, and are not predictable.

Community-based partnerships

Community-based partnerships include a whole variety of initiatives. We refer to partnerships as being “community-based” when they take place in a community, have involvement of community members and have a direct impact on a community, rather than within an organization or institution. In these partnerships, the community is actively involved in all aspects of the process including identifying needs and making decisions. Even partnerships between agencies, businesses, governments and institutions can be community-based, provided that the goals and outcomes enhance something outside their own organization. Any time a partnership is formed in a community for the purpose of helping people or for a community cause, it is a community-based partnership. These situations must involve the community in the partnership development, and maintain ongoing community communications.

Community-based partnerships:

- Insist on local participation and empowerment
- Encourage organizational and partnership development
- Have planned inclusion and development of leadership
- Support local entrepreneurs and businesses
- Enhance local and collective skills
- Is the process of partnering, as well as the outcomes
- Are for the community by the community
- Often integrate several areas of development — social, economic, environmental, cultural
- Question the status quo — they have a desire for change
- Focus on the level of benefits to and impact on the local community

Understanding the community context

What should we know about the community in which a partnership is operating? The obvious information about demographics can be useful – how many people live here, what the major industry is or has been, what the current source and level of employment is, what are the skill levels of the people, what community and cultural activities may affect the involvement of the community in the partnership, who the

Community-Based Partnership Pitfalls

Solutions to Pitfalls

Community services versus revenue generation—leads to tension.	Acknowledge the tension, and fulfill both—they can be compatible
Being all things to all people	Focus on the partnership goals
Today's demand versus tomorrow's plan	Attend to the top priorities in the action plan
Fear of failure	Talk about your concerns – stick together and acknowledge fear, failure, hard work and successes
Not fully understanding where individual or group skills fit	Discuss current skill levels, develop group capacity
Too few people carrying the load—leads to burnout	Assign work—delegate—then let them do it
Forgetting where you're heading and why it's important	Forgetting where you're heading and why it's important

elected officials and community leaders are and the potential for change, what the socio-economic conditions are, and so on. These pieces of information are not always easy to obtain but are the foundation for a community assessment.

Partnerships that work in a community context also require information about the pulse or life force of the community. Like people, communities have personality, energy, character and esteem, which fluctuate with the changes it goes through. From

small isolated northern communities to large urban centers, communities have identities and confidence levels. The community's dreams and wishes, its strengths and weaknesses, how it takes advantage of opportunities or responds to difficulties all form the character of the community or neighbourhood. This character usually reflects the values held by the people who live there. These items plus demographic information combine to form a true picture of the community. This is the community context.

Non-resident members of community-based partnerships

Being a resident of the community is not essential to being useful in a community-based partnership, but it helps. However, when you do not live in the community, additional responsibility rests with you to ensure you:

- have a solid understanding of the community and what impact the partnership will have on it
- have understanding for your reason of being there, and it is accepted
- will not impose unrealistic expectations, time frames or direction
- have values and attitude that reflect the community's
- focus on ensuring benefits are set aside for the community, and impacts minimized, and
- will not take over the process.

Outsiders may have the skills and resources needed to move ahead, but the real power and resources rest in the community itself and with its residents. Until there is a bonding or a sense of how the community operates you will not know who holds the real power, what is desired by the community or how they want to proceed. In this situation, keep a low profile and listen—a lot! This does not mean that you should say nothing, it just means to wait until you feel a degree of acceptance or until you have established a rapport. When you reach a point of comfort or acceptance, try to think of it as if it were your own — better still, think of it as the future home of your grandchildren. Personalizing your input draws you closer to the people whose grandchildren really will be the future residents. Native, northern and isolated com-

munities in particular are concerned about outsiders coming to “help” when their help imposes outside values on the community. All communities are capable of turning dreams into reality — it may only require some facilitation to put their ideas into action. Keep in mind that it is not a community-based partnership if the direction is not community driven.

Resident members of community-based partnerships

Even people who make their home in a community do not necessarily feel they are part of what the partnership is addressing, even when the partnership has invited their participation. Representation (or the lack of it) is not just a matter of residence. It also includes how the individual people feel about belonging to the partnership and how they feel about speaking for others who are not there and who may not even know that the partnership exists.

STORY: Non-residents in partnerships

A northern group was hosting a partnership training session that dealt with the issue of partnerships being created that included non-residents. The general feeling was that often partners are not community members – usually they were from government or industry. They were people or companies working in the area who lived elsewhere. After much debate, the general feeling was that these people did have a connection to the community and, as such, they would have the community’s well-being at heart, not just their job or company’s profit. Although they were careful to say these outsiders should not control a partnership, they saw no reason why a partnership couldn’t work if the values and vision were shared, and local people had the ultimate control and responsibility for decisions that would affect them.

Community residents in a partnership must give consideration not only to their own involvement and contribution but also to:

- who else needs to be involved
- when the others should be included
- how that should happen
- what those who are not in the partnership will expect from those who are,
- how information will get to them.

The entire partnership group shares these responsibilities, but it is usually the people who are the most visible (such as those who live in the community) who get the questions, comments and resentment directed toward them if the partnership is perceived to be exclusive.

Rural, northern and urban partnerships

Working in partnership in either a rural or urban area will have advantages and drawbacks, depending on the need being addressed. For example, urban areas have the benefit of a larger population from which to draw, and often have better access to resources and influence. Rural areas tend to work more closely together due to their history of community effort, and they usually know what resources are available and how to get them.

Conflict and confrontation sometimes occur in partnerships, resulting in hard feelings or negative experiences. In urban partnerships, we may not have to think about it or see the people involved again until the next meeting. In smaller communities, however, we see each other on the street, at the store or in the post office. Because of the variety and types of relationships that exist in rural communities, it is much more risky to have open discussions about power, self-interest or concerns as discussions around the partnership table rarely stay there in a closely knit community.

Remember that all communities have diverse views and not all individuals are comfortable expressing their opinion.

Although small, rural and northern communities often talk about being isolated, urban partnerships can have an isolation of their own. It's possible to seem invisible or not feel connected to anything when you are a small fish in a big pond. In rural areas, everyone is usually aware of what's going on all the time, which could be good or bad, depending on how prepared the partnership is to share information. Urban information sharing, on a large scale, is complex and expensive, while rural information travels as fast as or even faster than it happens. It's much like the difference between buying an ad in a major newspaper or putting up a notice on the town bulletin board.

Regardless of the location of the partnership, rural and urban initiatives can have similar experiences related to acceptance or rejection of a partnership. They have communication issues, competition for talent or resources and difficulty with reaching goals. In communities of any size, we seem to overuse or burn out the key people and expect that members will balance their own time and participation. In small and isolated communities this problem is greatly magnified.

Technology, improved communication systems and better travel options have narrowed the gap between urban and rural to a certain degree. There are, however, different ways of approaching partnerships in each context. This is often best understood by those who live in or are involved in the particular community.

Government partnerships

Working in partnership with government has begun to replace short-term programs and ad hoc projects. Many of the government staff roles have changed. Individuals, who previously responded to requests for funding with program dollars or grants, are now faced with developing or participating in partnerships. One of the realities around this is that both the government representative and those in the partnership group probably have previous history and associations that are not always consistent with working as equals in partnership. New skills and understanding are required by all in order to appreciate what can be developed in this new type of relationship.

Government is often seen as the source of funding and the maker of the rules related to partnerships that it funds. In community-based collaborative partnerships, the needs of the partnership come first and the role of government or any other funder comes second. Basically, members must shift their thinking from fitting into program guidelines to looking at long-range goals and finding resources that are appropriate. Government representatives must consider what else they can contribute to the partnership besides money. They need to view partnerships for what they are—a sharing of risk, responsibility and resources.

Other considerations about government partnerships include the fact that most government departments are bound by legislation and must be accountable for the use of public funds. This may cause limitations in the use of funds and almost always require audits and monitoring. The particular government audit and monitoring requirements should be included in the partnership's planning, budgeting and evaluation components. Reporting lines within government are structured, mandate specific and often time consuming. Sensitivity is needed to appreciate that no government representative can be all things to all people and that political agendas and

STORY: Different types of partnerships

A Community Futures Board was reviewing a request for assistance from a social enterprise group who wanted to work with three other groups to generate both jobs and revenue. They were very clear about the fact that they wanted to form a partnership in order to create a structure that could accommodate everyone's needs and to ensure commitment. What wasn't clear was what type of partnership should be established. By sorting out the various activities that were to take place, it became less confusing. A lawyer provided legal advice for the parts that required it, and guidance was sought from a similar group in another part of the province. In the end, a partnership was established that housed a not-for-profit venture and a small limited company that generated revenue. One part of the partnership was a government-community partnership and the other was a partnership between community agencies.

realities play a large role in determining the contribution that government can make, and when these can and may occur.

New skills and attitudes must be acquired by all. Neither the government representative nor the other partners have all the answers, all the resources, or all the power. What they do have is an opportunity to use new approaches and different skills to work toward common goals and to help improve the community as a result.

Regional or national partnerships

Although partnerships are most often associated with one community at a time, there are other partnerships that span several communities, a region or the nation. They could cover several or all provinces and territories in Canada. While communities themselves face their own unique challenges, there are many common issues across the country, such as high youth unemployment, health and safety improvements and environmental matters that may best be addressed by a larger scale effort or a broader-reaching partnership.

The economies of scale associated with a national or regional partnership may allow for greater investment in partnership management, support and promotion which ultimately could improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the partnership. It enables communities to address longer term, more complex issues and brings a bigger picture of the opportunities and innovations that are possible, while providing different locations to test or pilot solutions and models. Although bigger is not always better, regional or national partnerships allow for a greater scale and variety of results.

Having a national or regional focus does not preclude having strong local responsiveness. Many national organizations have excellent sub-structures which can ensure appropriate and timely responses to local needs and considerations. At both the national and regional levels, partners need to be flexible, open with communication and dedicated to the partnership goals. In some cases, this may mean modifying procedures; in others, it could mean balancing long-term and short-term considerations. Large-scale partnerships such as these are most likely to be successful if they

are initiated on a smaller scale, to gain operational experience, in advance of developing at a regional or national level.

Onward to partnering

Once the basics of partnerships have been reviewed and assessments have been completed in a satisfactory manner, you are ready to move ahead to the actual forming of a partnership. Consideration should be given to any issues that have arisen from the assessments or from discussion related to the community context. When these matters are addressed, the potential then rests in launching the partnership and operating it in an effective manner.



Unama'k Partnership for prosperity:

Tar ponds cleanup

Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

After years of planning and negotiating, the Unama'ki communities and the Nova Scotia government came to agreement in October 2008 for over \$19 million of work on set-aside projects to clean up the Sydney Tar Ponds. The Tar Ponds are the legacy of 100 years of steel making and 300 years of coal mining in Cape Breton. The long-term commitments Unama'ki secured allowed them to plan and train Aboriginal people for these projects. A steering committee consisting of representatives of the five Cape Breton First Nation communities provides direction for the Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office to maximize the near-term economic benefits through securing meaningful jobs and contracts. The committee also looks for long-term expertise and economic capacity. This group was awarded through the Unama'ki company and MB2 Construction a \$37.6 million contract on the site cleanup. This provides valuable experience helping to build capacity and expertise. Perhaps most importantly, it allowed the Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office to broaden its horizons and explore other economic opportunities and partnerships. Solving the issue of the Tar Ponds have provided a way for the local First Nation to become a leader in the local economy, especially in business and employment.



Northern Career Quest/Winn Bay Sands HEO Partnership

SECTION 3: *How to form partnerships*

Developing effective partnerships

Successful partnerships exist in all industries, fields, regions and organization type. They do not have to be complicated, nor do they have to follow a set formula or pattern of development. Each one is unique and will evolve at its own pace. There are, however, several concrete steps that will ensure a more orderly approach to partnering and, ultimately, improved effectiveness. They resemble, in many ways, a basic formula:

- knowing what we want to do,
- deciding who will do what,
- making a plan to do it, and
- evaluating it as we go along.

Partnerships follow the same type of steps. They may appear to be linear; however, in reality, they can happen in a variety of orders with several things happening at one time. For this reason it is wise to use a clear process that can be understood by all. Defining and using a process such as the following Ten Steps to Effective Partnering encourages organization and planning, as well as provides a way to easily describe the partnership to others.

Keep in mind that different partners have different reasons for supporting a partnership. For example, independent business agencies interests may focus on access to resources and profits, while a community group could be on developing infrastructure and employment for local people.

Ten steps to effective partnering

An effective partnership typically has ten steps or components.

1. VISION — a common picture for the future
2. GOALS — the desired outcomes
3. MEMBERSHIP — those who are involved
4. COMMITMENT — agreement to work together
5. ACTION PLAN — the steps required to reach goals
6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES — who will do what
7. COMMUNICATION — how information will be shared
8. RESOURCES — what is needed and what is available
9. EVALUATION — knowing when you are successful.
10. REVISION AND CLOSURE — how to adjust and move on

1. VISION

An imaginable picture of the ideal future, formed by considering the potential outcomes of the partnership.

Visioning is an appropriate way to start a partnership process. People who come together through a common community interest or concern are prone to simply discuss the problem or issue. Visioning encourages us to look at the positive or ideal and allows a bit of dreaming about the future. We can more easily move to action when we have a better idea of what the future could potentially hold. By describing what the future could look like as a result of the successful efforts of the partnership, we are able to see the need for the effort it will take and it begins to reveal essential elements of the partnership.

Some partnership groups like to capture their vision in a one or two line vision statement which describes what the vision is all about. The vision statement is used to describe the one main theme of the work being done and must be supported by all members of the partnership.

Visioning tips

- Involve as many people as possible in imagining the ideal future based on the partnership's purpose or intent.
- Be as inclusive as possible. Everyone who is interested can be involved. If this is a community-based initiative, it must involve the community.
- There is no right or wrong in visioning — do not look at the problems of getting to the future — just describe it as you would like it to be.
- Concentrate on reaching agreement on the big ideas. Do not get bogged down on the use of certain words.
- Use a variety of methods to capture people's thoughts — words, pictures, skits, flip charts, songs — anything that will help give a sense of how it could look, feel or even smell. Visioning is about all the senses.
- Combine the ideas and thoughts into a clear picture to share with everyone. Then find a simple way of describing it in one or two lines.

After creating a vision, some groups like to discuss what values and principles various members hold that might be desired for the partnership. Principles are statements of belief and form the framework for the way that the group will operate — focusing on what they support or believe in. The following is an example of principles that help to promote working together.

2. GOALS

Clear, easy to understand statements of outcomes that will make the vision a reality. They are measurable accomplishments that can be evaluated.

If the vision paints a picture of where you want to go, then the goals identify the pathway or means to get there. Goals are broad statements of intent created by looking at the vision and asking what the desired outcomes should be. Each outcome or result is the foundation for a goal. Goals address the question of what it will take to

TOBY Principles of partnerships

This principle model is one example. It stands for:

Together we can make a difference; we focus on Outcomes and not just process; we are Blameless of others and we are oriented toward Yes.

Together: We need to talk to and involve others. Partnership means achieving results in a group with a common purpose.

Outcome Driven: All too often, we focus on working together rather than what the results will be. To be successful, we need to share our ideas and look toward the best results we can achieve together.

Blameless: Solutions to problems will only occur if people feel that they can be part of the solution, not the problem. Laying blame doesn't solve problems; it just causes bad feelings. To reach our partnership goals, we need to agree to help each other, rather than blame.

Yes Oriented: Sometimes we get stuck on what we cannot do rather than what we can do. An orientation toward yes means we are open to and able to discuss things in a positive way. Results are greatly influenced by our approach and in a positive environment all things are possible.

make the vision a reality. The simpler the goals the easier it is to understand how to reach them. Later each goal will have a plan for action associated with it, as outlined in Step 5.

Goal-setting tips

- Describe the current situation. Find a common definition of the issue, problem, opportunity or desired outcomes.
- Refer to the vision and decide what has to change or happen to make it possible. What is the gap that exists between the current situation and the vision? Identify the broad-based areas of action that will close the gaps — these are the goals.
- Do not have too many goals.
- Make sure all partnership members support the goals.
- Write the goals down in a way that everyone can understand.
- Make sure that your goals can be achieved in a reasonable amount of time. The goals have to be ‘do-able’, measurable and realistic given time and resources.
- Discuss how you will know when you have been successful, or when your goals have been reached. This will help with progress reports, and will form the foundation for evaluation.

3. MEMBERSHIP

A cross section of people including stakeholders and those with the skills or resources needed to work effectively in the group.

Partnerships should carefully select members based on their “stake” or vested interest in the goals of the partnership. Members need to understand what skills, resources or expertise they can offer to the partnership and what is likely to be expected of them. Motivation to join a partnership, to a greater or lesser degree, depends on what is needed and who can best provide it, as well as what is in it for each member or organization. These factors often determine our interest and ability to be active and effective members.

People in partnerships

We tend to choose people for partnerships based on who we know, who we know about or who we know has resources. There's nothing wrong with this (as far as it goes), however, there are other helpful criteria that might need to be considered. Included are things such as including people who have special skills that are needed, maintaining a good variety to the group's mix, ensuring involvement of stakeholders and any geographic representation that may be required.

The following are considerations for membership:

- Invite people from different sectors who have different backgrounds, interests and abilities. Try to avoid just having non-profits working with non-profits, business with business and government with government. Having a variety of different cultures, values and ways of approaching things makes for a more dynamic partnership.
- Include members who may be the end users or who the partnership will directly affect. They know what they need and involvement in the partnership will help with ownership later on.
- Don't make the group too large as it becomes impossible to get things done. Groups that are too small are easier to get agreement in, but are not usually representative. Somewhere between 10 and 15 people seems to be a good operative size.
- Pick people with commitment to partnerships and who can make a contribution. Some of these people have high-profile positions or are famous. They may be too busy to be a regular part of the partnership, but their initial involvement or endorsement could attract the kind of people the partnership needs.
- Including family members or close friends is neither good nor bad, but it is important to be aware that these types of relationships will have an effect on the group. As an example, the work of the group will be discussed outside of the partnership and those who are closely involved with each other may move at a different pace than the others, or come to conclusions without the group's input.

Changes may take place in membership as the various organizations determine who can best represent both the partnership and the organization's needs. Early in the partnership it can be difficult to tell who will be the best person for a job; nevertheless, all participants in the partnership should be flexible, reliable, and resourceful.

It is important to have a good mix of people involved in your partnership; however, adding people for the sake of variety is not useful or fair to the individuals. These tactics can contribute to a partnership failing. Keep in mind that a group diverse in age, background and gender makes for a much more interesting and dynamic partnership. Ensure that when recruiting potential members you explain why you are asking them to be involved and what would be expected from them. Involve people whose skills, commitment and credibility enhance the work of the partnership.

Does our partnership group appropriately represent those who have an interest in or who will be affected by the partnership's vision?

Are there other interests or individuals who should be involved?

- Invite people who have a vested interest and have expertise or skills that will be useful. Remember that being a good group member is a very valuable skill.
- Make sure that it is a group that others would like to be part of.
- Ensure that stakeholders, potential clients or customers are included.
- Clarity should be given to members about what is expected of them and what they can expect to get out of the partnership.
- Discuss the challenges of working as a group. Remind yourselves of the key factors for successful group interaction.
- There should be commitment to working together or in partnership, even when not all contributors are active partners.
- Each member should understand that partnership means shared resources, power, risk and benefit.

4. COMMITMENT

Reaching an agreement to work together.

Agreeing to work together is at the core of a partnership. Often this step is missed because it is assumed that those who have been involved are committed. Creating the vision and goals establishes what is to be done. Forming the membership confirms who will be involved, at least in the initial stages of the partnership. Often this is where we jump right into the action plan or activity of the partnership, without affirming that there is agreement to go ahead. Obtaining agreement does two things: it formalizes the participation of the various members; and it affirms that everyone is committed to move ahead with the goals as outlined. Agreement to move to the action plan indicates a commitment to proceed with the partnership.

Commitment tips

- In order to gain commitment and reach agreement as a group, it is useful to review the work that has been done to this point allowing everyone the same level of understanding.
- Outline the vision and goals in terms of the desired outcomes so people know what it is all about and can agree to involvement.
- Clarify membership and what is expected from each person or organization and affirm interest and contribution.
- If there is no real agreement, return to the vision and goals and clarify any areas that are problematic. When it is clear, if anyone does not wish to be involved, it is best to respect their wishes.
- Formally determine that a partnership is the desired approach to use, what the goals are and determine which people will be involved.
- Write it down. This constitutes the basis of a partnership agreement.
- Identify possible barriers / challenges that may make sustained commitment difficult. Discuss ways of overcoming them.

Encouraging commitment to a partnership

Invite participation from potential members by sharing this information.

- Explain what the partnership hopes to accomplish and why it is important.
- Discuss what would be gained for the organization or individual who may participate.
- Mention who is or who will be involved and how their connections, skills, input or resources would be complementary to the group.
- Discuss the individual's or organization's interest and the match between what they have and what is needed. Then ask for a commitment of interest.
- Provide whatever information is needed to make a good decision.
- Tell the potential member what to expect from the group, and ask what he or she might be prepared to contribute.
- Supporting members of a partnership, once it is established, is a serious and important job. Providing convenient meeting times and places, considering any special needs they might have and not wasting their time, expertise or resources are major considerations and are, interestingly enough, the ones most often ignored.
- Training and skill development should be part of the support members receive, as very few people have all the skills that they need to be effective in a partnership. Offering training makes good sense for the group itself, but also shows an interest in the people involved.
- Equally important is having respect and providing opportunity for members to have input and really share their ideas.

5. ACTION PLAN

The identification of detailed steps that are needed to reach the goals.

The plan is an outline of what is going to be done and how. Action planning involves determining what steps should be taken to reach the goals of the partnership. Sometimes these are little steps that break down large goals into do-able pieces. Using the goals as the desired destination, the action plan serves as a detailed map of how you will get there. It should outline the various steps that must be taken to get from where you are now to where you want to be for each goal. Specifically, they should include what is to be done, by whom, by what method and when, as well as considering any monitoring or evaluation requirements. They may also explain the decision and rationale behind the tasks and methods. Although the plans need not be complicated, you may have more than one action plan for each goal.

Action plan tips

- Assess the current situation.
- Compare the current situation to the goals. Define the gap between where you are now and where you want to be according to the goals.
- Determine how to get from where you are to where you want to be.
- Assess the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers.
- Gather input — search out the information or data needed, understand community and stakeholder concerns, and get their ideas on how to address them.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

- S** STRENGTHS of your organization and partners
- W** WEAKNESSES of your organization and partners
- O** OPPORTUNITIES – internal and external
- T** THREATS – internal and external

- Prepare an action plan or plans for things that have to be done and put them in a logical order. Decide how they could best be done, by whom and when. Action plans are designed to break the goals down into manageable pieces.
- Write down the action plan and get agreement on it.

Some action plans require an assessment of the current situation and understanding of the background. Knowing what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats / barriers that exist can help formulate the action plan. The following analysis framework can be used to produce a clearer picture of a community's situation.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The structure and processes — who will do what and the overall operation of the partnership.

All partnerships need structure and processes, which help to clarify who will be in charge of what and how things will be done. Establishing roles and responsibilities is a natural outcome of preparing an action plan and may also include a discussion about what is acceptable within the partnership group and what is not. This discussion should be a priority early in the planning and should cover not only who will do the things outlined in the action plan, but also how the group will conduct its business.

Roles and responsibilities tips

- Establish roles and responsibilities like chairperson, recorder, treasurer, to organize the partnership group.
- Not everyone needs to have a specific role, and their involvement can be varied. Some may take on the role of an “honorary” member – often these people lend their name and reputation, and are called upon to gain access to decision makers, benefactors and other funders. Honorary members may not attend meetings.
- Based on past experience, determine who has good facilitation or leadership skills. These people may help guide the group initially or they might

agree to help others acquire leadership and group facilitation skills in order to share or rotate the responsibilities.

- Set the ground rules. Establish group norms.
- Share decision-making, responsibility and resources.
- Determine how decisions will be made, when and what happens if some members are absent from a meeting.
- Form any required sub-groups or committees.
- Plan meetings well in advance and keep minutes.
- Get outside or expert help as needed.

7. COMMUNICATION

Information sharing for the group, general public and special interests.

Since partnerships create relationships while reaching their goals, good communication should be emphasized inside and outside of the partnership.

There are three levels of communication that should be considered.

1. WITHIN the partnership group,
2. FROM THE PARTNERSHIP GROUP to the community, and
3. FROM THE COMMUNITY to the partnership group.

Partnerships can also be involved in giving and receiving a lot of information. Appropriate and timely information sharing, while desirable, is somewhat more complicated than it used to be. Busy people often resort to saying “tell me what I need to know, when I need to know it and in a manner that will be useful”. More information is not better, nor is it a measure of appropriate communication. Quality in all things is especially true regarding communication. The skill is in being able to determine, from a large amount of information, what the main points are and what they might mean to various individuals — without telling them what to think.

Communication should be clear, concise, timely and relevant. Providing information in an organized way and having someone in charge of it constitutes the begin-

ning of a communication strategy. Most partnerships require a strategy or plan for communication and information sharing. The strategy should include:

- the day-to-day information for the partnership group;
- overview of information for interested others — such as a brochure or handout;
- specific information as required, for the media or for funding sources;
- very focused information for support and lobbying purposes; and
- information for the public or community at large.

Of course, formal and informal communication will take place with or without a plan. So while concentrating on what should be said to whom and at what time, it is important to be clear about who has authority to speak for the group and about which topics. Assigning responsibility for communication and discussing openly what information will be shared is the way to avoid problems before they start.

Communication tips

- Develop a communication plan by identifying who needs information and what kind; who wants information and how much; and who should know about the partnership who may not be aware of it.
- Identify the key and common messages.
- Identify a spokesperson who will take the lead on all communications, especially with the public and media.
- Do not spend all your time managing paper and data. Keep information limited to what is needed and when it is needed. Where possible, the provider of the information should explain what the information means to the partnership and, where relevant, to the broader audience.
- At the heart of effective communication is trust. If trust is not established easily within your partnership group, get outside assistance to help build it.
- Be concise. Write things so that they will be read. Try to summarize the story or concept so that it can be relayed in less than one minute. Present only the key issues and identify decision points.
- Use a variety of tools if available — website, town hall meetings, special events, newsletters, flyers, posters, social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), media relations, public presentations, etc.

Common ways to hinder communication

- 1) Advice giving.
- 2) Blaming others — e.g. “You should have called sooner”.
- 3) Changing the topic inappropriately. People often change the topic to cope with their own rising anxiety.
- 4) Defensiveness.
- 5) False reassurance.
- 6) Judging the other person.
- 7) Leading statements. Putting words in the other person’s mouth.
- 8) Moralizing — specific form of judging. Occurs when one judges another based on one’s own values.
- 9) Multiple questions — e.g., “Where do you live? Is it an apartment and what is your neighborhood like?”
- 10) Over-use of close-ended questions – which answered in short statements like “yes”, “no”, “left”, “red”.
- 11) Parroting or Mirroring — continual repetition of a person’s phrases in an effort to paraphrase.
- 12) Patronizing the person — talking down to them, voice tones too sweet, using phrases that could be construed as condescending, i.e., “Sweetie, Dearie”.
- 13) Placating the person — agreeing with everything, taking the blame for everything and avoiding “no”.
- 14) Rationalizing feelings — finding an apparently reasonable excuse for having the feelings, to explain away what is felt.
- 15) Stumped silence — both parties are stuck. Try to summarize what took place, comment on own confusion.
- 16) Why questions — imply that others should come up with the underlying motivations of their actions. The other may feel he or she is being tested or may be perceived as accusatory.

Understanding the language—common use of terms

When we bring different types of people together to work in partnership, the desire may exist to partner, but sometimes the cultures or languages are different. This occurs in international partnerships as well as in partnerships having mixed nationalities (including neighbouring communities). It also occurs when different organizational cultures combine, each bringing their own terms, jargon, ways of expressing themselves, communications, decision-making protocols, and values. We should not assume that one word means the same thing to everyone, particularly at a time when new terms are known to the “in group”, or the one group has higher technological knowledge or familiarity with the area.

Take the time to develop a shared understanding of words and terms early in the partnership, and encourage others to ask questions and do the same to ensure there is common understanding. It is like the saying, “I don’t know what I’ve said until you tell me.”

There are three basic rules:

- 1) Avoid jargon.
- 2) Do not use acronyms (or at least explain them two or three times — hand them out on a sheet of paper if they are going to be used often).
- 3) Agree to a “working use” or meaning of commonly used words or terms.

Consider the following words and working definitions for the purpose of reading and using this handbook. A more complete glossary is included at the back of the book.

- **Assessment:** undertaking a formal or planned inventory of self, community, project, venture or the partnership’s environment.
- **Capacity Building** (related to skills and abilities in partnerships): increasing the ability of individuals, groups and organizations to plan, undertake and manage a partnership.
- **Community:** a group of people who have common ties or interests, who have similarity in identity or needs, or who live in the same geographic location.

- **Community Development:** the social, cultural, economic and environmental enrichment of individuals who are identified as a “community”.
- **Prerequisite:** that which is needed first or before you begin, in order to move forward with ease.
- **Environment:** the surroundings and the relationships within them. Normally associated with natural things such as air, water, land, animals, minerals and plant life — it can also refer to a work, community or home environment.
- **Evaluation:** a formal and periodic review to determine whether goals are being met, or that action is leading toward them. A way to measure progress and success.
- **Human Resources:** people seen as a natural and renewable resource to a business, community or venture. Increasing their effectiveness and skills adds to the value and is often called human resource development.
- **Infrastructure:** normally refers to buildings, systems and networks. Can also mean supplies and materials needed to operate in a partnership (e.g. office space, tools or equipment, computers, pens and paper), and sometimes operational systems and decision-making structures.
- **Stakeholder:** a person or group who has a vested interest in the goals and outcomes of the partnership. They are affected in some way and at varying levels by the decisions and the project. Often they are the end users of the good or service.
- **Training:** the acquisition of skills and knowledge in a broad range of ways. Includes increasing awareness, personal management skills, employability and occupational development. In partnerships it could refer to specific partnership skills or the overall experience and awareness gained throughout the partnership.

8. RESOURCES

Plan for human, infrastructure and financial resources.

Resources take on different shape and meaning in each partnership, although typically they involve human, financial and infrastructure considerations. With budget constraints, many of us are doing more with less but this does not mean doing more with nothing. It can mean a bit of borrowing and sharing, or it could mean altering unrealistic expectations and outdated standards that have become the norm. Basically, resources are what are required to get things done. For example, a partnership may or may not need paid staff, office space or stationery. Deciding what is critical to the partnership and its success is the first step. Also, consider the different forms that “success” can be measured in the partnership. Is the definition of and targets set for “success” for this partnership realistic? Formulating a resource plan is the next task.

A resource plan should address the physical, financial and human resource requirements. Human resource needs might include having a skilled facilitator, appointing staff where needed, or acquiring help to put together a training plan for capacity building.

Physical needs, such as a meeting place, an office or building, equipment and operating material, are also important resource considerations. They are sometimes called infrastructure, commonly referred to as overhead, and sometimes core. It is important to decide what is absolutely necessary as well as what would be nice to have and where any of it will come from. If outside funding is required to execute the partnership, costs like staffing and other overhead may be ineligible.

In partnership arrangements there are almost always costs, resulting in the need for revenue. Sufficient funds should be in place. If they are not, a plan to acquire them needs to be developed for both the operation of the partnership itself and the partnership’s goals. Each is separate and distinct but should be addressed as part of the overall resource plan.

Resource tips

- Know what you need and what you have got, not just what you would like to have.
- Do not assume that “the other” partner will bring the money or resources, even if that has traditionally been the case.

- Resources include people, money, space, equipment or other real items needed to operate the partnership.
- Make a resource plan for each area that needs one. Some examples are training plans, funding strategies and plans to acquire meeting or office space or operating materials.
- Set funds aside for unexpected costs, which include expenses for meeting to establish the partnership and secure funding.

9. EVALUATION

Measuring progress and success.

Evaluation is the component of the process that allows a partnership to assess its progress and measure success. Although it usually appears as one of the final steps in the process, it really should be considered and built in right at the beginning. Evaluation should not be seen as threatening but, rather, as a means for ensuring that you are achieving what you want to achieve. When developing the goals of the partnership, there should be discussion about how to know when they have been reached, and if they have not, then what is the cause, and should the targets be revised.

The goals are the foundation for evaluation and for keeping the partnership on track. Being able to clearly define progress and success is important not only for the partnership but for others who are interested in and supportive of the work being done. In some instances there are resources available to hire outside help, although this is not always required when you have clearly defined in advance what success looks like and how you will be able to measure your progress toward it.

Evaluation tips

- Build evaluation criteria right into the goals. That way you will know when you are successful.
- Evaluation is ongoing, not just done at the end of the work – keep records and statistics on indicators related to the goals. Measure and modify the targets as you go along.
- Include measuring the partnership's progress as well as its outcomes.

- If things are not going according to plan, fix the problem or revise the plan and / or targets.
- Use the evaluation results for planning and promotion of the partnership, and in reporting accountability to your partners, community members, stakeholders and funders.

Monitoring

When outside funding is involved, such as with foundation grants or government programs, there are other levels of evaluation that need to be considered. One is in the form of monitoring or overseeing the general activities and goals of the partnership.

Any funder is going to want to know that the things that have been funded are actually taking place. In addition, the funder may have assessment or evaluation criteria that must be built into the partnership design. This usually does not cause any difficulty; however, it should be discussed and agreed to early in the relationship so that there are no surprises and so that data can be collected as and when needed.

With government funding, there are audits and specific or special evaluations that could focus on the use of the funds, measures of success or tracking systems. Try to determine in advance what the expectations are, what systems are to be used for data gathering and what measures of success are important to the funders. Also try to establish what the expectations are related to evaluation, monitoring and audit, based on the funders being partners rather than simply funders. Build the costs of monitoring, evaluations, audits and reporting into your partnership plans.

10. REVISION AND CLOSURE

**Re-adjustments, fine tuning, assessing and making changes to the partnership.
Closure of the partnership.**

Revision

There would be no point in assessing progress or evaluating success if we were not going to act on it. Revising any aspect of the partnership can happen at any time; however, it is important to make sure that the opportunity exists to make changes.

Adjusting various parts of the action plan, when it is required, is possible and even encouraged; however, bigger changes such as to the vision or goals require careful thought and should only be done based on concrete data and when there is a serious need. Discuss major changes with your partners, and funding agencies as required.

Revision tips

- Revision can take place at any time, although it generally takes place after an assessment or evaluation.
- Once you know what is happening, revise the area that needs to change, not the whole partnership.
- Reaching the goals of the partnership is cause for celebration and the time to determine whether the partnership should continue or disband. Revision can involve either terminating the partnership or deciding to move to new goals, which would require a new agreement and process.

Closure—ending a partnership

Partnerships have endings, which are most often positive and satisfying. Some partnerships go on for a very long time, having far-reaching or long-term goals. They might need to consider points of closure or milestones along the way, in order to feel that progress has been made. Having phases or different intervals of completion will allow for a sense of accomplishment and opportunity for celebration. Normally this happens when goals have been reached, the project has been completed or the purpose of the partnership has been satisfied. At this point, the partnership, as it was designed, will end or be revised. This does not mean, in every instance, that the partnership will terminate; it does, however, provide for recognition and closure.

Changes will occur whether you are terminating or moving on to other goals. Before moving on, review the partnership's impact. Meeting goals is cause for celebration, but there is more to it than that. Over the course of a partnership, people change and relationships are built. Understanding the need for a marked ending is fundamental to creating a sense of satisfaction for having been involved, or to prepare the ground for further or different involvement together. Sometimes people who have been completely involved in the partnership may return to their regular work and to an organization that has not been directly involved in the partnership. Having a

formal ending to the partnership allows a free return to regular duties, with a feeling of completion and appreciation.

Throughout the life of the partnership, strong bonds are formed between various individuals and with the group as a whole. It helps to acknowledge that the initial basis for the friendships, the partnership itself, may be ending, but the friendships do not have to. People, who have worked together in one partnership, will often work together on another one, or be important in promoting or facilitating new partnerships for other parties. They will bring with them their skills, experience and the knowledge that they can work together.

Endings should have the same attention paid to them as beginnings. Care should be taken to acknowledge the results of the partnership, the various individuals who have made a difference, and the effort that the group itself has made. Recognition and celebration are the order of the day, probably involving some tears and some laughter. Look in Section 5 for tips about celebrations and endings.

The following are some suggestions about formalizing and recognizing closure and endings to partnerships. Ask the members of the partnership to consider recognizing the achievement of a milestone or completion of a partnership in some manner.

- What have been the major successes of the partnership?
- What can be done to acknowledge the hard work?
- Recall what each person or organization contributed.
- Who needs to be recognized within the group and outside?
- What needs to be conveyed outside the partnership regarding the ending or closure of the partnership?
- How will you capture the history of the partnership?
- Solicit ideas about a celebration or recognition party or ceremony, ask some of the stakeholders and community members for ideas.
- Pick a time, place and event to which all can agree.
- Who should be included? Should there be different events for different groups?
- Celebrate and prepare to move on!

Other partnership considerations

When to join partnerships

There are different times that an individual or organization might enter into a partnership. Depending on the circumstances, the partnership might be new or you might join an existing partnership. An existing partnership could also go through a revision or restructuring resulting in new members. Each circumstance has its own characteristics, advantages and drawbacks. Regardless of when you enter a partnership, the emphasis should always be on the vision and goals of the group, and as well, that your goals are being met. The goals act as an anchor and can be reaffirmed when new people join and want to know what the group is all about. When to join a partnership should provide first the opportunity to join. This is when there is an unmet need such as knowledge, network, resources, and when there are common goals that are better fulfilled through a partnership.

Forming new partnerships

New partnerships have the advantage of starting fresh with opportunities and potential in abundance. There is an excitement about coming together to create or work on something that all the partners find valuable and mutually beneficial. Some people feel very enthused about working in a situation where there is not a firm footing, while others are uncomfortable and prefer to have more certainty than what new partnerships can offer. If you are forming or joining a new partnership you can look forward to excitement, challenges and a great deal of learning about the partners involved and the goals of the partnership. If, however, you are the type of person who likes stability, predictability and clarity about what you are involved in, a new partnership may not offer those qualities and you will need to be prepared for that.

Joining an established partnership

Being the new person in a partnership is much like being the new kid on the block. If you have been asked to join a partnership because of the skills, expertise or resources you have, there may be some pressure on you to produce or perform. As a newcomer, you won't know the history or the inner workings of the group, and it may take a while until you are sure about what is being said and done. On the other hand, having someone new brings an outsider's perspective to the group and a chance to have objective input and new ideas.

New people and ideas should always be welcomed, and partnerships should make an effort to have a way for people to join after the partnership is started. Remember, though, that any change in the personalities in the partnership will change the dynamics of the group. Care must be taken to acknowledge that not only is the new member perhaps a bit uncomfortable at first, but so is the group. A key difference is the group has its familiarity with each other to rely on; while the new person or people do not.

Restructuring partnerships

A partnership, like any other entity that has a purpose and membership, will occasionally have to look at itself and make changes. Some are minor in nature and do not cause a great deal of concern to the overall partnership. Other times the changes are very significant and involve a major transition. Being involved in a partnership that is reinventing itself can be a challenge and an opportunity.

Stress is one of the natural reactions to change and transition; partnerships are not without it even when they are not restructuring. During a restructure; the advantages of having some history with each other and familiarity with the work helps balance the uncertainty of change. When the partnership is a full-time initiative, restructuring becomes the day-to-day business of the group in addition to the actual activities of the partnership. For partnerships whose members or partners are only involved on a part-time basis, restructuring can take longer and be disjointed. Joining a partnership in transition offers the comfort of stability of history and the excitement of new potential.

Factors for success

Partnerships involve more than just goals and people putting them into action. There are aspects of partnerships that influence the success or failure of the relationship. The following is a brief overview of some of them. You may wish to discuss each of them and jot down notes about the ones that are most significant to the group.

- Power
- History
- Resources
- Competition
- Leadership
- Values and ideology
- Self-Interest
- Perceptions
- Community benefits

Power

Partnerships are about power – individual and collective. For some, the word power has a negative connotation and implies control, force or undue influence. Some think of power based on gender, race or rank. Power also has a very positive side in the sense of strength, wisdom and ability. Partnerships combine powers and direct them in the best way possible for the benefit of all. Power is always present and is rarely equal. We should value and acknowledge, openly and honestly, the different types of power that each individual or organization brings. By acknowledging it, we are able then to deal with any issues or conflicts that arise from the use of power, and can harness it to create greater strength than would exist apart.

History

Having a history with various members of the partnership will affect the current partnership. A positive or a negative history may carry over into the new relationship. It is a good idea to discuss any previous history, good or bad, with partners to make good use of the experiences gained and to avoid negative experiences in the future.

Resources

Everyone has resources, although being willing or able to contribute them to the partnership is another matter. Sometimes members or potential members are unable to provide what is needed when it is needed, regardless of the expectation. It is important to do a “reality check” about reasonable expectations in a partnership. Time, expertise and funds are not automatically contributed when a partnership has been formed and people have agreed to be included. There may be resources that are provided or available to the partnership that are restricted by legal agreement, others by values. Assumptions need to be articulated as part of the partnership agreement so everyone is clear about what is or is not a resource that the partnership can use.

Competition

In some situations, competition is healthy. Unfair advantage, on the other hand, is not. Community-based partnerships may displace others providing similar products and services who may perceive that the partnership has an advantage not available to them. This situation could be unfair if the partnership has resources such as grants or program dollars that it would not have if it were not in a partnership. Competition takes other forms with partnerships. Government often asks groups to work in partnership in order to receive funds. False partnerships or those set up simply to access

resources are rarely healthy and can cause imbalance and dissatisfaction all around. Partnerships can, however, also create positive competition when they encourage others to become involved in improving things. Minimize the negative actions that could be created by competitors by understanding your potential competitors concerns, needs, history and background.

Leadership

All groups need leaders. Good ones will pull the group together, see it through the tough spots and encourage others to take on the role. Poor leadership usually causes a partnership to ineffectively use resources, can cost money, disband or fail in its efforts. Leadership is a skill which should be nurtured and developed in a partnership. Selecting the proper leader, facilitator or chairperson, even when that role is on a rotational basis, is critical to the future of the group. If your partnership does not have strong leadership, acquire it or get some training. Long-term effectiveness is dependent on building in a leadership development role or a mentorship program for others who may lead components of the partnerships, or eventually take over.

Values and ideology

Describing the partnership's values is describing its strength and character. People have differences in values and beliefs, and they bring them into partnerships. Debates about values and differences in belief often leave little room for compromise, so it is important to establish the partnership's values at the start of the relationship. Each individual has a set of personal values, the companies themselves will have values, a combination of which may be reflected in the partnership's values; however, they rarely are a direct reflection of the values of any individual member.

Start a partnership with discussion and agreement on the values and principles the partners would like reflected and adhered to in the partnership. These will guide the decisions and promote a greater understanding by all parties of each other during planning, decision making and execution of the partnership.

Self-interest

Partnerships should and do serve our self-interests, whether on a personal or professional level. There is always something in it for us, and knowing what it is ahead of time, and being able to talk about it openly, helps build a partnership. Self-interest is the primary motivation of people and should be acknowledged. What each individ-

ual may gain as a result of the partnership will vary, but it could include things such as recognition, financial reward, connections, advancement, good will, influence or inclusion. We should encourage discussions about how the partnership serves our own personal interests as well as our organizations. If you ask each person in the group why they are really there, the answers will go a long way to building trust and mutual understanding within the partnership.

The self-interest of the partners and individuals, however, should also ensure there are practices in place to prevent “Conflict of Interest”.

Perceptions

What the partnership is and how it is perceived by others may be two different things. We should be sensitive to the fact that others, outside the partnership, will be interested and watching what is happening with the joining of forces in a partnership. They are watching from a different vantage point than others directly involved. Things can seem magnified to an onlooker. If the partnership is having difficulties, or results seem to be taking a long time to occur, those anticipating them may become needlessly concerned. Others who may view the partnership as unnecessary or having an unfair advantage may jump to conclusions about imminent failure or success. Negative or inaccurate perceptions can be avoided by clear communication and inclusion. Positive perceptions are what we strive for and they can be influenced in the same way, with transparent communication and inclusion.

Keep your community, shareholders, and stakeholders informed and up-to-date on the partnership activities, decisions, and successes. There is value in maintaining good relationships with these groups as they can support or hinder the partnership.

Onward to skill development

Having a clear and flexible process and an awareness of the factors for success may not prevent all the problems that could occur. It will, however, help your group to anticipate and avoid difficulties while providing a structure for working together. What is also required are the skills, knowledge and abilities to make the most of the opportunities that partnerships present.

Skill development could include workshops on team building, decision-making, as well as practical courses on business management, financial planning, and governance.



Kimberlite Career and Technical Centre Mine Training Society Partnership

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

When Yellowknife's Giant Gold Mine was closing in the early 90s, and the north was undergoing major shifts as the territory and new government of Nunavut were being created, and unemployment rates increasing. During this time, NWT enjoyed a mineral exploration boom when BHP Billiton started the first diamond mine, later joined by Diavik Diamond Mine and DeBeers Canada. All required skilled labour. This led to the creation of the Mine Training Society (MTS) consisting of the three companies and Aboriginal communities participating as equal partners on how to make local people employable. In response, the Kimberlite Career and Technical Centre (KCTC) was setup in 2003. Today it provides more than 500 grade 7-12 students with training in a variety of trades. Despite a global economic downturn, the long term need for a trained and skilled mining workforce is at an all time high with a projected demand of 5,000 new industry workers required by 2012.



Gateway Supply Chain Training Program

SECTION 4: *Skills and knowledge*

4

Skills and Expertise

Partnerships are an excellent learning environment, a factor that often encourages people to join in or participate. Learning by experience and having a comprehensive training plan for both the group and for certain individuals is a sign of a healthy, growing partnership. As a matter of fact, building capacity and strengthening leadership are essential to success.

As skills and expertise are required for all aspects of partnerships, training is almost always identified by partnership groups as a high priority. It is difficult to know in advance exactly what types of skills are going to be required throughout the life of the partnership; however, knowing what area the work is going to be focused on will give some indication of what might be required. Typical training requests from partnerships include facilitation skills, recording or bookkeeping skills, group or teamwork techniques and any specific knowledge related to the goals of the particular partnership.

People come into partnerships with skills of their own and valuable experience that can be applied to the partnership process. Sometimes it is necessary to help make the connection between past experience and the skills that might be useful in the partnership's work. Assumptions can get in the way of seeing things as they are. For example, we forget that stakeholders may also have strong process or facilitation skills. On the other hand, those who work with groups all the time, and who seemingly have good process or operational skills, may not be committed to doing the work or, for whatever reason, are not able or willing to use those skills. As a result, there is a need to look at what skills the group already has and what skills people are willing to use for the purpose of the partnership. It is possible then to determine what training is required.

Complimentary to skills and expertise, is also knowledge of the cultures of the parties involved. Different communities in a Nation and different departments of a company can have different values, skills and expertise, as well as processes. The knowledge and experience people bring in a partnership in working in these environments or similar environments is of great value to a partnership. Two ways a partner can help the other partners is to provide information sessions on understanding the operating environments, cultural and corporate values through Cross-Cultural Training Sessions, and hosting special events.

Tips for effective training

- If training is new for your group, start small.
- Get advice from others and learn from their successes and failures.
- Make sure you have the skills needed to manage the training process. If you do not have them, build them into your training plan.

- Make sure you have the right people doing the right jobs — match people’s values, interests and skills to the tasks that need doing.
- Some people find training easy and fun, but others are afraid of it and will need encouragement and support.
- Training does not work as an isolated event. It has to be connected to whatever comes next.
- If you need outside help, hire it! Try to build into the contract arrangements to transfer some of the trainer’s skills to local people.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions and change directions when trainers, content or delivery methods do not go the way you expected.
- Make sure you evaluate the skills acquired in a training event — not just whether people liked it or not.
- Shop around for prices, tools, courses, content and trainers. There are lots of “experts” around! Find the ones with whom you are comfortable.
- Find a balance in what you expect from trainees. Overburdening people is as detrimental as under burdening.
- Training does not have to be a big, strenuous deal or serious event. Some of the best training occurs with so much laughter that it looks like play. It should be a positive experience.
- Try to maintain a good mix in the way training is delivered. Not everyone learns the same way, so have a variety of delivery styles and methods.
- Training can be a long-term process. Training activities take time to set up and undertake. Make sure to celebrate your progress and successes along the way.
- As possible build into training sessions, cultural and fun activities.

Skills needed for partnering

A brief description of some of the most common skills needed for partnerships is outlined below. Discuss each area related to your group’s skill level and add any new ones. Consideration should be given to the needs of the partnership group in total, as well as to various individuals who require training to fulfill their role in the partnership.

- Managing Partnerships
- Negotiation Skills
- Group Processes and Team Building
- Strategic Planning Skills
- Evaluation Skills
- Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution
- Time Management
- Financial Management
- Managing Outside Help
- Recruiting and Working with Volunteers
- Stress and Transition Management
- Governance Skills

Managing partnerships

Management of a partnership involves a number of different skills. In order to effectively start, maintain and conclude partnerships, traditional skills such as strategic, financial, human resource and operational planning are required. Good management is good leadership which means understanding group facilitation, having the ability to work with diverse interests, collective decision making, conflict resolution, anticipation of issues and opportunities, plus the skills needed for building support, energy and motivation at the right time and level.

These skills in and of themselves may not be enough. Depending on the partnership, a solid knowledge of the environment or the context in which the partnership is operating can also be crucial. Any individual may have many of the management skills listed above; however, using them in a partnership context could mean using them in a different way. Acquiring management skills for partnerships is very different from acquiring management skills for other situations and can best be sought in training designed specifically for partnerships, teams or boards.

Negotiation skills

Negotiation skills will serve you well in a partnership. When diverse groups or interests come together to decide on common goals and processes and to take action

together, negotiating is fundamental to reaching agreement. Negotiating requires effective communication and joint problem-solving skills. The desire in negotiation is to create a “win-win” situation or, if that is not possible, to create a situation where all members can live with the decision or action taken. Partners who perceive that they have been forced to concede, or who feel that they have not been listened to, generally do not serve the partnership well – i.e., can lose commitment to the relationship. To be effective in negotiating you must have the ability to execute the following skills.

- Identify the issue or problem
- Look at options and alternatives
- Listen and ask questions as needed
- Help individuals understand the views of others
- Break the impasse if discussions get bogged down
- Manage conflict when it occurs
- Help find common ground
- Assist members to recognize agreement when it happens
- Ensure that everyone understands the agreement

Group process and team building

Partnerships are built on good relationships and group dynamics, which take skills such as facilitation, listening and conflict resolution. Strong partnerships create an atmosphere where team building and trust will flourish. There is no one process or approach that will be right for all situations, and there is a very wide range of techniques that can and should be used. Team building is inclusive and helps people feel comfortable and that they belong. The more experience you have in working with groups, the better your skills will be in this area. Being able to “read” the group or knowing what is going on without being told are skills that come with experience and is essential to building healthy relationships.

Strategic planning skills

Strategic planning is a tool that assists in managing and directing change, of which help move the group from general intent to actual action. Planning occurs at many levels in partnerships, right from creating the vision to evaluating success. There are all different types of planning. For example, long-range planning, as in visioning, is

sometimes called strategic planning. Turning goals into action and deciding what you are going to do is operational planning.

Planning takes time and must be valued in order to do it properly. Often, in our hurry to get things done, we do not pay enough attention to planning. That is like starting off on a trip to a new place without a map. Having a plan helps us see where we are going and how we will get there. It's a good thing to fall back on when things get tough or confusing. Referring to the plan is like looking at a map to make sure we are where we wish to be or to decide where to go next.

Sometimes, when things are not going according to plan, it is because there never was a plan. Partnerships require many plans and making plans involves skill. If planning skills do not exist in your partnership, acquire them. Remember to use planning as a tool, not a straight jacket that prevents action. Although planning is a very good thing, it is possible to spend all your time planning and not enough time executing the plan.

Evaluation skills

As evaluation is an important aspect of partnerships, knowing how to do it and having the skills to do it well are important. Evaluation determines what success should look like, what information is required to measure success, what process is needed to collect and analyze the information and how to present it in a useful way. Evaluation requires strong research, analytical and technical skills as well as the ability to synthesize information. Even if you are not responsible for the formal evaluation, having the skills will help ask key questions about the progress of the partnership and to participate in structuring the evaluation when it occurs.

Problem solving and conflict resolution

Where there are people, sometimes there are problems, making conflict resolution a critical skill in partnerships. Problems related to sharing resources, power and decision making and where or how to allocate funds all require advanced problem solving skills when there are disagreements. There are four basic steps to problem solving and conflict resolution.

1. Define the problem.
2. Understand the problem and who is involved.

3. Identify possible options.
4. Pick one and act on it.

What can happen in partnerships, if you do not address problems?

- Problems will persist or get worse.
- Individuals will push their will or make their own decisions.
- Individuals may seek legal remedies.
- There will be increased cynicism and divisiveness.

Get to the cause. Do not just deal with the symptom!

Understanding problem solving and conflict resolution techniques is important to group dynamics and should be included in the training plan for the partnership. Typical causes of conflict stem from one or more of the following six factors.

1. Power Struggles

Causes: usually created by an individual's personality or character, beliefs (real or perceived) about the other partners, or when expectations are not being met.

Recommendation: address underlying issues like loss of control or history of conflict and take time to understand expectations and each other, and deal realistically with what can and cannot be done. Remember that the right solution might be that somebody leaves, hopefully without hard feelings.

2. Low Trust

Causes: can occur when leadership lacks skills, self interests are not being disclosed or communication is poor.

Recommendation: get a new leader or provide skills to the existing one(s) discuss self interests and open up communication. Practice good communication habits and discuss trust as one of the topics.

3. Loss of Focus

Causes: can occur when the members or leaders are not clear about the direction or vision.

Recommendation: go back and review the vision, remembering the difference between people who want small steps and immediate results and those who prefer to deal in the bigger picture. Link what is being done and “why”, to the vision. Plan to review the plan on a regular basis.

4. Lack of Leadership or Authority

Causes: occurs when partnerships are forced or demands are made that cannot be met, or when people come and go within the partnership, causing a lack of continuity. This can also occur when the partnership is not valid.

Recommendation: clarify authority and reason to be, ensure that the partnership is wanted and needed, insist on consistent representation and attendance at least until the partnership’s foundation is solid, provide or give evidence that the leaders have been recognized by their constituents to be in that leadership position.

5. Picking the Wrong People

Causes: when people are chosen or volunteer for the wrong reasons, or are sent and do not really wish to participate.

Recommendation: this is risky, but must be dealt with — ask each member to review why they are involved, what they expect and what they will provide as well as where it fits in their priorities. Seek replacement for those who cannot or will not live up to the group’s expectations and needs.

6. In-Fighting Over the Goals or Processes

Causes: occurs when people debate about the goals or methods of operation even after agreement has been reached. Sometimes happens when people cannot see success in the future, and did not agree with the process used to arrive at those goals and processes.

Recommendation: review the goals for attainability. Can they be achieved? Revise to smaller steps if needed. Look at how things are planned to be done, and gather specific and concrete input if things need to change. Do not simply accept that it won’t work — look for suggestions about how it could be better. If it is really going off the rails, bring in outside expert help to facilitate.

TIPS: When an outside expert is needed

If the conflict is deeply entrenched and there is no neutral party to help resolve it, or if the skills are not available in the group, a skilled outsider is useful.

Use a mediator when leadership is directly involved in the conflict; when there are matters of cultural or gender equity that need to be addressed and the ability to do so has not been demonstrated in the past, and when there are disagreements about whether or not there is a conflict.

Outside help is also a good idea when the group wishes to acquire the skills and can use a model conflict as the example to work through.

Time management

Time management means using our time in an effective and fulfilling manner. Too often we see time management as something beyond our control. We hear people say in frustration “if only I had more time”. The assumption in time management is that we take enough time for the truly essential tasks. The problem isn’t that there isn’t enough time, it’s more about how we use the time we have and how we sort out our priorities.

Like any other resource, financial or human, time can be managed or mismanaged. Time is a very valuable resource in a partnership, especially when we are balancing different people’s schedules and levels of involvement. One of the fastest ways to damage a partnership is to cause people to feel that their time is being wasted. Another way is to fail to provide enough time for the relationship to develop and take hold. Still another is to fall behind on schedules on commitments. Obviously time management plays a critical role in partnerships and is therefore important to consider as a training area.

Financial management

One of the most critical areas of responsibility assigned in a partnership is financial management and budgeting. Staying within a budget and efficiently managing financial resources are often the most important criteria used to measure the success of a partnership. Even if the partnership has achieved great things, the perception that resources are not well managed or used wisely may undermine support for the partnership. Partnerships have a responsibility to set a budget, live within it and be able to demonstrate that resources are being used efficiently.

The bottom line in good financial management is to:

- Establish a budget and keep within it.
- Get as much purchasing power as you can from your resources.
- Be able to clearly demonstrate where and how you have used your money.
- Identify kind contributions as having value.
- Meet any reporting or accounting requests required in the partnership.

Managing outside help

Regardless of the skills and expertise in the partnership, there may be times when outside assistance is required. Making the right decision about when to contract someone from the outside involves knowing:

- What you want done.
- What skills, knowledge or expertise are required.
- That it is not available from within the group, or that it is not possible or appropriate to use whatever does exist within the partnership.
- What the work should look like when it is finished.
- How much time and money it should take to get it done.
- Where and how to locate and recruit someone to do it.
- How to prepare a schedule and contract that spells everything out clearly for all parties.
- When things are not going according to the contract and schedule, and being able to discuss and alter that which isn't acceptable.
- If too much is unacceptable, and when to revise or terminate the contract.
- When to get legal advice for the partnership.

Recruiting and working with volunteers

Partnerships sometimes involve a mix of people both from organizations that pay them for being involved in the partnership and from the community, where their contribution may be voluntary. At times, the total membership of the partnership is voluntary or some of the work is done by volunteers. As a result, knowing how to recruit, support and work with volunteers is an essential set of skills needed in partnerships. Some of the most common skills are sensitivity, respect for time, the ability to value skills developed outside the workforce, appreciation for different motivations as well as skills related to providing feedback and retaining interest and enthusiasm.

Stress and transition management

We all have stress — some of it is good, some of it is not. Too much of it can cause health problems, so it is important to not dismiss stress. Each person has different levels of stress, ways of responding to it and methods of reducing it. Partnerships can cause additional stress for the leaders who are usually managing several processes and activities at a time within a diverse group of individuals, often with few resources and very little time.

Being irritable, having difficulty sleeping and experiencing feelings of fear or panic can all be signs of stress. Recognize that having a role in a partnership may result in stress, so be aware of it and manage it if it becomes a problem. Training or professional help may be required when stress is a major concern to the partnership members, or if any individual is experiencing real difficulties with it. It may also require reorganization of operations, or additional resources.

The following are a few tips to help manage stress in partnerships:

- Assess what exactly is causing the stress.
- Identify what part of the stress is related to the partnership.
- Determine which things are within your control to change and which ones are beyond it.
- Recognize achievements and milestones, and host team building and social events.
- Handle stressful situations as they happen — they get worse if you do not address them.

- Make a plan to reduce stress and develop skills to do so.
- Discuss activities that will alleviate stress.
- Talk about stress openly and recognize the impact on everyone.

Governance skills

Establish a strong system of governance. It is what will oversee the operations and decision-making, and planning for the partnership and is ultimately responsible for monitoring the execution of the plan. The type of governance will be structured to suit the partnership.

The people involved in the governance of the partnership need to understand difference between the roles and responsibilities of the Board or Directors, and those charged with the responsibility for carrying out the everyday tasks of the partnership. Typical skills and knowledge required are: understanding financial statements, legal responsibilities, Roberts Rules of Order, and strategic planning.

Specific skills for community-based partnerships

Community-based partnerships are like other partnerships. They require similar skills to be effective; however, their outcomes are not only important to the success of the partnership but also to the future of the communities in which they are operating. At the community level, the absence of skills such as planning, organizing, cooperation, courtesy and forward thinking can have repercussions beyond the partnership group.

Training plans for partnerships

Training plans are comprehensive overviews of the skills and abilities desired to operate the partnership itself and those required to reach the partnership's goals. Training plans address individuals who need the skills and how they will acquire them.

Although training is a high priority in most partnerships, the actual development of a training plan rarely is. There are several reasons for this.

One is that so much work is done creating a vision and action plan that training is pushed to the side, or seen as a luxury for the partnership members, not as a direct cost of reaching the goals.

Another reason for not developing training plans is that putting together good training plans also requires certain skills. Partnership skills are often difficult to describe in a way that makes them distinct from any general management and planning skills — which are similar, but applied differently in the team environment of a partnership.

Regardless of the difficulties associated with describing the skills, a training plan should be developed as soon as the partnership can identify what skills are required. If it is not possible for the group itself to produce a training plan, outside help should be sought to determine what roles need to be in place and what skills are necessary to perform in those roles.

The following tips might be useful when thinking about training.

- Training should always focus on what skills will be acquired, not on what topics will be covered.
- Be able to provide examples of where the desired skills might be used, and try to use these skills soon after they have been acquired.
- Consider a variety of training methods as people learn in different ways and there are many options to choose from.
- Find trainers with whom you feel comfortable, and ask lots of questions to ensure that there is a fit between what is needed and the trainers' skills.
- Specialty skills may need custom-made training.
- Training should be appropriate, cost effective and timely; do not settle for anything that is not right for your needs.
- Use partnership members as a resource.

Training specialists are focusing on partnership groups and, as they do, better training becomes available. If your group is having difficulty in finding suitable training, consult a trainer or training institution about your situation. Talk to several until

you find a good match between what you need and a trainer with the skills, knowledge and attitude that fits. Having a training plan simplifies the discussion as it will identify the skills that are needed and reveal information about preferred delivery methods. Partners may wish to do a skills inventory within the group to determine what skills exist and if there is a possibility to train each other or serve as mentors or facilitators.

Sometimes the cost of training or the location where it is offered make it unaffordable or unrealistic, given financial or geographic restrictions. Do not give up on the training plan; instead, look for other ways to acquire the skills and expertise the group needs. Partnership training is still relatively new but, none the less, it is becoming increasingly important and efforts are being made to have it more accessible.



Meadow Lake Tribal Council

Partnership with Shell Canada

Saskatchewan / Alberta

This partnership between Meadow Lake Tribal Council in northern Saskatchewan and Shell Canada has brought together three training institutions to train and secure employment in apprenticeable trades. To qualify, applicants go through an extensive selection process of which 15-20 will enter a 7-week pre-trades preparation course with North West Regional College in Meadow Lake, or Northlands College in Buffalo Narrows. At the end of training, students challenge the Alberta pre-trades exam with successful ones relocating to the Shell Canada site to complete 12-weeks of training at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) mobile lab in 2-week shifts. Upon completion, all students are offered employment with Shell or one of its affiliate companies as apprentice welders, electricians or plumbers.



Yukon Mine Training Association



SECTION 5: *Maintaining the partnership*

Maintaining the partnership is about recognizing common difficulties that partnerships encounter and understanding how to prevent them, minimize their impact, and respond to them. Every partnership will encounter problems. This section covers many of the common ones. The information provided is offered as a starting point for discussion. The experience that your partners have will be the most useful when avoiding or solving situations.

Motivation — Thoughts to be considered

- In order to discuss motivation in partnerships it is beneficial to have a fundamental understanding of motivation in general.
- People feel motivated about life, ideas and activities to the degree that we feel we share in them, have a contribution to make or can be useful. We all need to feel included and valued.
- Recognition, praise, and reward, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, will go a long way to keeping us interested.
- Mostly we stay motivated as long as we feel satisfied about our involvement or the quality of the job we are doing.
- We particularly like to do things that use and build on our existing skills and help us to acquire new ones.
- Food, fun and companionship work well as motivators.
- So does the intrigue of the project — whether it is building a sandbox or putting the world back in order.
- Negative motivation is equally real and is usually caused by fear, guilt, pressure or someone pushing our buttons to get us to do things.
- States of “almost motivated” or “recently motivated” exist and should be acknowledged. Sometimes just mentioning it helps to move it along in the direction you want.
- People have phases of high and low motivation about life in general, relationships or the work in which we are involved.
- We cannot stay highly motivated all the time nor can we be indifferent for extended periods.
- The responsibility for motivation is both others doing the right things to keep us encouraged and the personal “do it yourself” approach.
- What we eat, how we sleep and our relationship with ourselves and others, our gods and nature all play a role too.
- Successes related to the partnership are also great motivators.

What makes or breaks a partnership

Common factors that could make or break your partnership are:

- Facilitation and leadership
- Motivation
- Managing transition
- Making good deals
- Marketing, promotion and communication
- Recognition and celebrations

Facilitation and leadership

Objective facilitation and strong leadership is very important in partnerships. In their absence we flounder around without direction or accomplish very little because either no one or everyone is taking the lead on matters. Being a good facilitator or leader requires skills and experience; it does not just happen. Lack of direction, loss of control or power imbalances can occur when a partnership does not have adequate or appropriate leadership.

Establish a process for your partnership and determine if the required leadership skills exist in the group. If not, make a plan to acquire them and continue to develop these skills within the group. Do not hesitate to change a coordinator, chairperson or facilitator if the group is not achieving the anticipated and desired results from their efforts.

Motivation

Motivation is ordinarily about two things: one is what our interest or reason is for being involved in the partnership; and the other is the amount of energy or enthusiasm we will bring to it. Motivation, or the lack of it, can be a large concern in partnerships. It is important to be very clear about what is motivating each individual's involvement in the partnership thereby allowing everyone to know and understand the direction from which each person is coming. Equally valuable is discussing what is needed to keep members interested and motivated to continue with the partner-

ship's work. It is much more difficult to get re-motivated after burning out or losing interest than it is to consider it right from the start. Motivation, much like attitude, is infectious.

Managing transition

Change is a big part of life these days. Everything changes and often more than one thing changes at a time and at different paces. How we respond to, cope with or handle change is known as managing transition. Situations change while people alter as they are affected by the change. Some people manage transition very well most of the time, others handle it poorly all of the time and many of us are somewhere in between. Transition is serious business. If not managed properly or acknowledged in a partnership, either damage to the partnership or to specific individuals may occur. It isn't just the transitions related to the partnership with which people are coping. In most cases they have more changes going on than they would like to have; remember that everyone has a breaking point. Get expert help to acquire the skills needed to manage transition, and encourage stressed-out people to seek professional help.

Making good deals

Often the difference between success and failure in a partnership depends on how well we negotiate and make deals. We are conditioned to accommodate other people's interests and needs (often before our own), and we like to have win-win situations. This is great when it can happen; however, there are times when an agreement has to be made resulting in winners and losers. Being able to come to agreement, compromising while ensuring that everyone is satisfied (really satisfied, not just able to live with whatever has been negotiated) is the art of making good deals. Sometimes arrangements are not equitable for all involved — therefore it takes time, skill and experience to get them right. When there is an imbalance in the outcome it is important to be able to acknowledge it and move on without damaging relationships or the opportunity to work together in the future.

Marketing, promotion and communication

What is the sense of doing something important, good or useful if others do not know about it? Marketing, promotion and communication serve many purposes in partnerships and need to be done properly if the image of the partnership is to stay positive. These activities are also vital to showing shareholders, community members, stakeholders and others that the partnership is accountable.

Marketing is much like advertising and can be effective for recruiting members, explaining the goals or purpose of the partnership or for soliciting support or resources. Promoting what you are doing is advantageous to the future of a strong partnership. Communications through media and public relations activities provide chances for people who are not directly involved in the partnership to stay informed, and feel they are part of the initiative.

If people do not know what you are doing, why you are doing it or what has changed because of it, they are not likely to care whether or not the partnership continues, and can be influenced to speak against the initiative.

Marketing, promotion and communication activities should be well thought out in advance, not just put together in a hurry when there is a need or a crisis. Develop a Marketing and Communications Strategy. The acceptance of the partnership rests in how it is presented or relayed to outsiders. Get help with it if the skills do not exist in your partnership group.

Recognition and celebration

No one likes to be taken for granted. We all like to feel that what we do is valued and that we have accomplished good things. Being recognized and celebrating not just successes, but other important times, will make the difference between a close and comfortable partnership and an “all work, no play” group. Motivation and future involvement are dependent on how well members in a partnership are treated and whether or not they feel recognized. The one problem that seems to come up is that everyone thinks that someone else should be doing the recognizing or suggesting and organizing the celebrations. In a partnership arrangement, make sure that genuine recognition takes place and those celebrations are part of the shared business of the partnership. You may also include these events in the partnership work plan.

Common problems and solutions

There are problems that occur in partnerships that show-up in any relationships. These are common, and because of that, there are proven solutions to clearing these up.

Staying on track

Many partnerships are clear about what it is they are doing and how they are going about it. Others have difficulty organizing themselves and remembering what they are doing and why. Keeping on track is a matter of following the process steps while establishing a strong understanding of the goals and the plan of action, as well as monitoring the execution. When this fails, we normally seek direction from partnership leaders to bring the group back on track. When leaders are not first capable of recognizing problems before and when they have occurred, or are not capable of bringing the group back on track, the result is fragmentation and confusion. Staying on track requires a clear direction, good leadership and discipline.

Sometimes we take partnership activities for granted or drift away from the focus of the work. We need to remember that partnerships take constant effort; group team building is ongoing. Keeping true to the vision and values of the partnership will bring focus, while being attentive to member's interests, needs and motivations will add momentum.

Asking questions

Challenging questions such as those about expectations and roles, when only one person is questioning the appropriateness of them, can be difficult. Because of the sensitivity about such things, questions of this nature are often only partially addressed. The questioner may be made to feel they are being too picky or pushy or not a real team player.

As a result, those people who have the confidence to ask a clarifying question may refrain from pushing for a clear answer. If the question is asked a second time in a different way and there is still no solid understanding, the questioner probably will give up. It is very common in new partnerships to be unclear about many things (even roles and expectations).

Regardless of the fact that we are not very comfortable with asking these types of questions, they should be clarified and not left in the “unresolved pile”. It is up to you to keep track of the things that are personally relevant, making sure that you ask enough questions to make things clear. You can be sure that if you do not understand something, there are others who do not either, and they may not be able to ask the first question.

There is a saying, “I don’t know what I’ve said until you tell me what I’ve said.” If more robust discussion occurs, the outcomes are more likely to be stronger.

Holding effective meetings

Holding effective meetings is one of the factors that will move a partnership forward or hold it back. People will allow for a certain amount of growing pains in any new initiative, partnerships included; however, time is important to all of us, and almost everyone is busy these days. The best advice about what actually constitutes a good meeting will come from the people involved in your partnership. Asking them what they need and then providing it will keep meetings effective, valued and worth attending. It also will show that the partnership can and will respect input from the group. The difference between a good meeting and a poor one is that a good one fulfills to the participants’ expectations and goes beyond. To do this though, you have to know what the expectations are.

The following are suggestions that have improved meetings:

- Handle conflict as it happens. Do not let things build up.
- However long you think the meeting should be — cut that time in half.
- Provide the agenda in advance and, as possible, stick to it. Prioritize things, and assign each item to someone so everyone knows who will take the lead on it.
- Keep paper to a minimum, but make sure a record is kept – point form is fine, and so are neat handwritten notes.
- Set ground rules and enforce them.
- Have a skilled chairperson or facilitator — even when you are rotating or sharing this role.
- Take discussions off-line at the end of the meeting if it is taking too much time to complete.
- Acknowledge contributions, including comments or ideas. Do not leave things hanging as if they were not heard.
- Initiate a “buddy” system for members who cannot attend.
- Have food and refreshments at every meeting.

- Do not have an in-person meeting if another way of communicating will suffice. Determine what communication form will work – i.e., fax, email, conference calls, on-line meetings – and consider factors that will assist with special needs (such as Braille, large print, audio, translation).
- Attend meetings prepared – read background information, complete activities committed to in other meetings and discussions.
- At the close of the meeting, summarize the discussion and review the follow-up action items and who is responsible for ensuring their completion.

Burnout

Burnout is a term that we all know and understand, at least to some degree. There are multiple causes for it. The most common factors related to burnout are having too much to do, little or no support to do it and feeling inadequate or unappreciated while doing whatever it is we are doing. Partnerships often create additional work on top of an already busy schedule — a situation which is not always well understood by those in our organizations who are not directly involved. This may be stressful for all involved. As partnerships are a relatively new approach to how we do our work, we can feel uncomfortable with our ability to be effective, as well as having concern about how much extra time it takes. Combined, this is a formula for burnout. Proactive initiatives that help reduce stress are also helpful.

Partnership groups may not be the cause of burnout, but they often include many people who are in the throngs of extreme stress or over burdening. It seems that those people who have a reputation for getting things done are always the ones who are selected to do more things. Partnerships are no exception. They are usually made up of the busiest people around and burnout is a reality that requires discussion. Every partnership should discuss burnout and look for ways to avoid or modify its impact. Open and ongoing communications will help, giving praise, hosting celebrations, and lending support can help to alleviate it. Professional help may also be necessary; be prepared to seek or offer it when and if it is required.



Northern Career Quest ASEP Project

Laronge, Saskatchewan

The partnerships between Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Winn Bay Silica Sand is an industry-driven initiative designed to provide on-the-job work experience and long-term employment opportunities in the natural resource sector, including mining, oil sands recovery, mineral exploration and oil and gas exploration. The program will train and secure employment of 20 to 30 PBCN members in full-time positions with Winn Bay. The partnership involves four to six 12-week training sessions of five people in each intake. The students are chosen by a Selections Committee consisting of Industry, NCQ, and AHRDA holders from the five PBN communities. A training session begins with 4-weeks of on-the-work-site life skills and job readiness training, then 4-weeks of simulator training using Nuna Technologies services, and finally 4-weeks of mentorship training on actual equipment. All successful candidates are guaranteed full-time positions with Winn Bay as Heavy Equipment Operators or Rock Truck Drivers.



VanAsep Construction Training Program

Conclusion

There is other information available about partnerships. Contact community sources such as Chambers of Commerce, government offices, libraries and community agencies.

In the preceding five sections of this handbook, we have looked at what partnerships are and how to make them effective. There is no absolutely right way to approach partnerships; however, there are lessons that have been learned along the way and new ones occurring right now. Hopefully, your experience in a partnership will add to the positive ones that are happening across Canada. Partnerships are not about organizations, they are about people. The very idea of working together rather than independently is cause for optimism, tempered with some caution about doing bigger and better things and having the skills and ability to do them well.

Together people can make a difference, and working in partnerships is a good way to bring people together to reach common goals. This handbook and the facilitator's guide, which is also available through Human Resources Development Canada, are two of many resources available to you and your group as reference material or as training tools. Additional information on partnerships is available in book stores, through colleges and universities and from various government offices.

The very best reference material and expertise comes from others who are working in partnerships who have firsthand experience. Don't hesitate to contact people. Finding them might be as easy as calling your local Chamber of Commerce, an employment office, or a community agency. It may take one or two calls but someone will be sure to know of existing partnerships that fit your interests. Use your network and resources to find out what is going on and how you can share your learning and experience or gain that of others.

A summary review

Conditions for effective partnering

Remember that effective partnerships have some common factors that lead them to success. They know why they are together and what to expect as an outcome of their work. In other words, they have a clearly defined purpose and goals. They know when to be together and when to be apart so that the partnership role and the members' other roles do not get too mixed up. This ensures identity as a partnership and as separate organizations. Partnerships need to have support and community involvement as well as clarity about what they are doing. They need to know who is doing what and how it will be done. Combining resources and ideas, taking the time needed to form relationships, communicating well about what is going on in the partnership and following a good development process all form the conditions for effective partnering.

Very few people like to be involved in something that uses their time and resources without knowing what the benefit or advantage is for them personally or professionally.

What are the partnership's goals?

Good partnerships acknowledge that there are losses and gains in partnering. When power, roles and resources start shifting around, with them sometimes goes confidence, motivation and esteem. Recognizing that all sorts of power issues are in play and working through the changes together can help create a foundation of trust.

What roles have been established?**Are there any changes or power shifts?**

Trust also flourishes when there is honest, considerate and open communication. In order to create this type of environment, there must first be agreement to operate that way. To hold in confidence conversations that are shared in that manner within the group is an excellent start. Having good manners and acknowledging everyone's opinions and contribution seems simple enough, but is often forgotten when we get into the heat of discussions.

What are you getting out of the partnership?**What are you giving?**

Every partnership should be able to be explained easily. If the partnership's goals and desired outcomes cannot be written down and understood by a twelve year old, they are too complicated.

What efforts have been made to ensure good communication?

Leaving your biases and politics at the door is a difficult but effective way to ensure a more productive group. Some individuals bring a history that needs straightening out or images and expectations that need adjusting. If problems from the past are left to fester, they could cause problems for the group as a whole. The best partnerships don't ignore these things, they work toward resolving them.

Have all problems from past history been resolved?

Many specific issues come up when the "who's in charge" question gets asked. Knowing what the various roles are and who is in charge of what not only makes good sense, it avoids wasting valuable time, resources and skills.

Who's in charge of what?

Accepting a partnership as a "learning vehicle", or a place where skills and experience can be acquired, adds to the partnership's credibility. Training increases support

from the partnership members and the community. Building capacity and encouraging leadership development from within a partnership is thought to be the single most important human resource consideration.

Does the group have a training plan?

What training will you receive?

The very best partnerships chart their own destinies. They create their own futures and opportunities and don't just respond to issues or requests. Even in a rapidly changing environment, they create their own image and market or promote themselves as part of a positive force. This is done even when things are not clear, completed or tidy. They are models for the new way of building community relationships and working together.

What is your group's image? Who supports your partnership? Why and how do they support it? How do you know that what you are doing is worthwhile?

Having completed the above summary, if there are any outstanding issues or questions that could not be answered, return to the original partnership design. Ensure that the purpose, vision and goals are clear and that the reason the partnership was initiated is valid. Take the time it requires to discuss the various aspects of partnership development. Critical to the success of a partnership is a solid foundation and the ongoing time and effort it takes to keep information, resources, energy and ideas flowing.

Tips for successful partnerships

- Use clear and appropriate communication.
- Learn to do good planning and assessment.
- Develop confidence, pride and identity.
- Trust your instincts.
- Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability.
- Show appreciation and encourage each other.
- Listen carefully.
- Take from the past to enhance the future.
- Effective partnerships are built on a clear understanding and respect for each other.
- Give the partnership time to evolve and establish relationships.

- If you have big goals, take little steps toward them.
- Ensure each partner is comfortable to participate and grow with the partnership and that the group stays inclusive and flexible with each other.
- Ask others for assistance when you need it.

A few words in closing...

This handbook was initiated at the request of several different groups in Canada who are working in partnerships at the community level. Some are involved in government-funded initiatives, others are not. Some are at the beginning of the partnership process while others are more established. Each one is unique. What they have in common is a desire to be effective in forming and operating partnerships and an interest in sharing information, knowledge and experience within their partnership groups as well as with others.

The request was that a handbook be developed containing information, and tools to assist with community-based partnership development. The described need was for a “user friendly” guide that could be easily copied and shared; one that would encourage people to actually use it, and work through the process.

Obviously, the information provided in this handbook is not all that there is to know about partnerships. It is simply the basics, along with a process to work through the development of a partnership and some guidance about common problems and issues. What is significant about The Partnership Handbook is that it has been written with the input of many individuals representing organizations in a wide variety of partnerships across Canada. Their work is having a significant and positive impact on how things are being accomplished in communities and within their organizations. It is from their experience and their ideas that this handbook’s content evolved and the ideas took shape.

It is on behalf of them that you are offered, “Good wishes for success in your partnership ventures.”

GLOSSARY

Brainstorming: a discussion technique that encourages people to generate the maximum number and variety of possible solutions to a problem.

Capacity Building: increasing the ability of individuals, groups, and organizations to plan, undertake, and manage ventures and other initiatives.

Career Development: a process that helps people figure out who they are, what their skills are, and which roles they wish to pursue. Usually associated with personnel management, employment or occupational choices, it also includes volunteering, family life, and leisure activities.

Community Assessment: an inventory of community assets or information required for community planning. Sometimes associated with surveys for human resource needs or to get a statistical picture of the current situation.

Community Economic Development: a body of expertise and practice which connects social development and economic goals in a holistic, community based approach.

Community Development: the social, cultural, economic, and environmental enrichment of individuals who are identified as a “community”.

Economic Development: the process which encourages the establishment of entrepreneurial ventures and cultivates the environment in which they thrive.

Evaluation: a periodic assessment to determine whether your actions are moving you toward your goals or to determine that goals have been met.

Environment and Ecology: natural surroundings including air, water, land, animals, minerals, plants and their relationship to each other’s sustainability.

Human Resource Assessment: determining the base of knowledge, skills, and abilities within a community and the current or upcoming economic and employment opportunities that people need to fill.

Human Resource Development: the movement of people towards greater well-being of self, family, and community in every aspect of life: the spiritual, cultural, emotional, and physical.

Human Resource Planning: a way to organize people, things, and money in order to promote human resource development. It includes career planning, training and matching people with their skills, potential, and interests to activities which benefit both community and individual.

Infrastructure: the materials, supplies, systems and structures needed for effective operation (equipment, tools, office space, computers, phone, fax etc.).

Labour Market: the dynamic created by the supply of and the demand for human resources and economic opportunities. Geographically, this market place could be a neighbourhood, a whole community, a region, or even a country.

Labour Market Supply: people who are able or willing to be employed, or are active as paid participants in enterprises or initiatives.

Labour Market Demand: the jobs or opportunities available for pay within the labour market.

Stakeholder: a person or organization with a vested interest in the goals or outcomes of the partnership. Often they are the end user of the product or service.

Structural Unemployment: when the skills of the people do not match the needs of the community.

Training: a broad range of activities focused on skill development which improve a person's ability to participate meaningfully in family and community life and employment. Among other things, training can be used to enhance awareness, healing, personal wellness and management, career planning, employability, and occupational skills.

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Occupational Analysis Series for Mobile Crane Operator

www.sceau-rouge.ca/Site/english/pdf/Mobile_Crane_Operator_2006.pdf

Accreditations and Partnerships

www.academycanada.com/about/accreditations-and-partnerships/

Accreditation to well known partnerships for apprenticeships.

British Columbia

BC Transmission Corporation

www.bctc.com/about_bctc/vendor_opportunities/Aboriginal_business_development/

Includes success stories about partnerships and opportunities

Aboriginal Development Program

www.bctc.com/vendor_opportunities/Aboriginal_business_development/success_stories.htm

Homeowners' Protection Office

www.hpo.bc.ca/Research/Training/Trades.php

Data and links about apprenticeship, skills and trades training programs and ITA BC trades information.

Enform

www.enform.ca/assets/files/pr_oil_and_gas_rig_technician.pdf

Information on oil and gas rig technician training.

Go 2 HR

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Overview of programs and opportunities provided.

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A proposal helping Saskatchewan obtain funds for rural training.

Unique Partnership

www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sk/newsroom/2004/nr05074.shtm

Government program to connect Saskatchewan Aboriginal people to the workforce.

Government of Canada

www.canadabusiness.ca/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1102419630553&lang=en&pagename=CB

[SC_SK%2Fdisplay&c=GuideInfoGuide](#)

A guide on programs in Saskatchewan.

Manitoba**Canada-Manitoba Labour Market Partnership**

www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/epb/lmd/lmda/manitoba/partnership.shtml

Manitoba Advanced Education and Training

www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/documentos/TRABAJO/new_portfolio/Canada-FPC-Manitoba%20Advanced%20Education%20and%20Training-Apprenticeship%20Branch-ING.pdf

Information on how becoming and learning a skilled trade can improve a person's skill in the work field.

Manitoba Home page

www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/index.html

Shows past success stories, and information on training provided.

Manitoba Training Society

www.manitoba.ca/tce/docreports/trstrat_en.pdf

Newsletter on Manitoba's training aspects and the effect on jobs for youth.

Assiniboine Community College

campaign.assiniboine.net/Portals/0/user_images/June%20Newsletter.pdf

Newsletter on Manitoba success stories.

Careers in Construction

www.careersinconstruction.ca/apprenticeship/index_e.asp

Information on apprenticeships.

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training

www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/future/Aboriginal_apprentice.html

Apprenticeship training for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Construction Careers

www.Aboriginalconstructioncareers.ca/apprenticeship/index_e.asp

Information on programs and funding.

Ontario**Ontario Chamber of Commerce**

occ.on.ca/Communications/Speeches/70

Speeches on Ontario's education and diversity in workplace.

Government based

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/nr/05.11/nr1123.pdf

A labour market agreement with Ontario and Canada.

Skills Canada (Ontario)

www.skillswork.com/new/pdf/School-to-Apprenticeship_Programs.pdf

School-to-apprenticeship programs offered in Canada.

Northern College

www.caf-fca.org/conf2k6/pres/MonJune5/CS_201_C.pdf

OYAP(Ontario youth apprenticeship program)

www.oyap.ca/index.php

Information on youth programs and apprenticeships.

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

www.osstf.on.ca/Default.aspx?DN=405c73c4-3c4b-483d-a83e-8ca1340c09d1

A bibliography on apprenticeship and industrial training programs.

The Toronto Training Board (2006)

ttb.on.ca/downloads/RenewingApprenticeship4.pdf

Innovative practices in apprenticeships and training.

Quebec**Emploi Quebec**

emploi.quebec.net/anglais/individus/qualification/apprentissage.htm

Apprenticeship program offered in Quebec.

Red Seal Quebec

www.sceau-rouge.ca/Site/english/pdf/Mobile_Crane_Operator_2006.pdf

Occupational analysis series for mobile Crane operator in Quebec.

New Brunswick

Government of New Brunswick

www.gnb.ca/CPSE-CEPS/EN/docs/New%20Brunswick%20Apprenticeship.pdf

New Brunswick government program for apprenticeship partnerships.

Nova Scotia

Provincial Apprenticeship Board

<ftp://ftp.ednet.ns.ca/pub/educ/apprenticeship-board/annual99-00.pdf>

Nova Scotia provincial apprenticeship boards proposal for apprenticeship partnerships.

Labour and Workforce Development

nsapprenticeship.ca/refoc.shtml

Apprenticeship training at Nova Scotia community college.

Skills Nova Scotia

skillsnovascotia.ednet.ns.ca/documents/SkillsAnnualReport05-06_web.pdf

Report on partnerships 2005/06.

Nova Scotia Come To Life

www.novascotialife.com/node/334

Community program for teens, Halifax Public Library and CKDU community radio

Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island apprenticeships

www.gov.pe.ca/infopei/index.php3?number=14943

PEI apprenticeships programs.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador

www.edu.gov.nf.ca/division/ineducat/apprenticeship.pdf

Newfoundland and Labrador apprenticeship system.

Newfoundland Department of Education and Training

www.cdli.ca/Community/prospects/v2n3/apprenti.htm

Information on history of and experience in apprenticeship training how it is being brought back.

Academy Canada

www.academycanada.com/about/accreditations-and-partnerships/

Largest independent career college in Eastern Canada / accreditation and partnerships

Northwest Territories

Northwest Territories

www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/cs/comm/hrsd/news/2004/040518.shtml

Announcement of funding for training programs and partnerships in the Northwest Territories.

Mine Training Society

www.minetraining.ca/mts_partner_prof_list.php

Profiles of partners / partnerships.

Nunavut

Nunavut

www.careersintradec.ca/reports/pdf/Regional_Consultation_Nunavut.pdf

Skilled trades a proposal for trades training to work in Nunavut.

Yukon

Yukon Territory

www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/Aboriginal_apprenticeship.pdf

Example of a proposal on Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship.

Yukon First Nations

www.yesnet.yk.ca/firstnations/programs_funding.html

Yukon First Nations programs and partnerships unit.

CBC News Item (2007)

www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2007/11/27/yk-labour.html

Labour market agreement between the federal government, the Yukon's 14 First Nations and plumbers union.

USA

Indian Education

www.indianeducation.org/userfiles/file/Session%207_10%20Interagency%20Partnerships%20NWREL%20Nelson.pdf

American partnership for native American career and technical education.

Employment and Training Administration / US Department of Labour

wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/booklet/tegl/2007/tegl_0207.pdf

Leveraging registered apprenticeship as a workforce development strategy for the workforce investment system

Learning and Skills Council

readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/NorthEast/LSC0809_197.pdf

News release: Creative Apprenticeship programme / partnership with Gateshead College.

The Gap

www.thegap.com.br/en/modules/tinycontent2/index.php?id=1

Global apprenticeship program.

By State**Allbusiness Alaska**

www.allbusiness.com/north-america/united-states-alaska/1180402-1.html

An editorial printed in the Alaska Business Monthly on "Building Alaska's Future" through apprenticeships.

Alaska Native Science Research Partnership for Health

www.ichs.uaa.alaska.edu/projects/posters/ansrph-success.pdf

Native Alaskans, Alaska University, Schools partner to train health researchers

Alaska Works

www.alaskaworks.org/aboutus.htm

Alaska works partnerships.

Sacramento Area Electrical Training Center

www.340jatc.org/regkit/

Partnership: Union, Contractors and Colleges

Iowa Workforce

www.iowaworkforce.org/apprenticeship/122007newsletter.pdf

Office of Apprenticeships "OA update" newsletter.

ABT Associates / Report to HUD Michigan

www.abtassociates.com/reports/ES-D19960017.pdf

Youth apprenticeship program final report Executive Summary.

JJ Heldrich Centre/ Rutgers University New Jersey

www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Apprenticeship%20Proceedings.pdf

Building partnership and apprenticeships 2005.

South Carolina Technical College

www.sctechsystem.com/apprenticeshipcarolina/news.htm

South Carolina technical college.

South Seattle Community College, WA

dept.seattlecolleges.com/duwamish/Safety.htm

Washington safety and health training institute.

Texas Bioscience Institute

www.texasbioscienceinstitute.com/prospective_apprenticeship.html

Texas bioscience institute.

Port Jobs, Seattle WA

www.portjobs.org/knowsearchprogram.asp?kpid=143&FormsButton2.x=3&FormsButton2.y=8

Not-for-profit action tank, develops practical programs, brokered partnerships

Port Jobs, Seattle WA

www.portjobs.org/resources/presentations/gd_app_models.ppt

Power Point / vocational training and apprenticeships in Germany and Denmark.

New Zealand**New Zealand Qualifications Authority**

www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-maori/index.html

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/explore/field-maori.do

Social Services ITO

www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-maori/mqs.html

New Zealand Government

www.tkaito.co.nz/AboutUs/tabid/470/Default.aspx

New Zealand Ministry of Tourism

www.tourism.govt.nz/Our-Work/Maori-Tourism/Maori-Tourism-Mentoring-Programme/

Australia**Dept of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/vet/aitac.htm

Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council / Partnerships

Australian Apprenticeships

www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/documents/Indigenous_kit/Kit%20Version%208%2026%20June%202008.pdf

June 2008 / updates info, broadens scope / Making Indigenous Australian Apprenticeships Your Business

Australian Apprenticeships Training Information Service

www.aatinfo.com.au/inakit/part_a.htm#top

Indigenous Australian Apprenticeships Resource Kit

Japan

Apprenticeships on dual study program.

www.infineon.com/cms/en/corporate/career/students/vocational-training/apprenticeships/

Japan is using the dual system Germany has implemented.

United Kingdom

Sussex Training Group

www.sussestraining.co.uk/

A good apprenticeship an job coaching program in the UK.

Training Partnerships - Country studies

www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/training/publ/uk.htm

A study on training in the UK and other countries.

United Kingdom juniors

www.airbus.com/en/careers/airbus_for_juniors/uk_juniors/apprenticeships/index.html

Information on training for air bus apprenticeships.

Germany

Germany to push Innovation with business partnerships

www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2180686,00.html

Learn how Germany is pushing to innovate and grow helping local and international initiatives.

Training and Jobs

www.jobsletter.org.nz/jbl04110.htm

What makes Germany one of the front runners for job training.

A German-Arab partnership

www.imove-germany.org/images/Duennhaupt_VT-in-Northern-Iraq.pdf

Shows how countries can come together to make job opportunities.

The German 'dual system'

eric.ed.gov/

Have to search eric under 'dual system'. Or refer to "ED450264"

Port Jobs Germany

www.portjobs.org/resources/presentations/gd_app_models.ppt

Power Point on vocational training and apprenticeships in Germany and Denmark

France

Essec Business School

econtent.essec.fr/mediabanks/ESSEC-PDF/Groupe%20ESSEC/Relations%20entreprises/Recrutez/CFA_MS_DAIM_GB.pdf

Partnerships between school and law firms.

European Union

European Association for Education of Adults

www.eaea.org/events.php?k=15564&aid=15564

Understand how Europe is blending the old with new generations.

Africa and Europe in partnership

www.africa-eu-partnership.org/

Insight into a huge partnership that is a world changing.

EU partnership to help car industry adapt to change

www.eubusiness.com/Transport/eu-partnership-to-help-car-industry-adapt-to-change/

A site based on how the car industry offers many jobs and how they help workers adapt to change and keep jobs.

A renewed EU tourism policy

www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/MainIssues/Tourism/2005/SPEECH-05-626_EN.pdf

Learn how to update tourism and offer new jobs.





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TRAINING SOCIETY

cover photo courtesy of Cloudworks Energy

Copies of this Partnership Handbook are
available in English and French from the

VanAsep Training Society
www.vanasep.ca