
DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING

taking stock of learning needs for partnership working

Use this tool to assess your learning needs relating to partnership working.

You can choose to look at (a) your personal or team development needs, or (b) those of the partnership - against the key themes for effective partnership:

- 1) **Leadership:** skills and knowledge for leadership in partnerships
- 2) **Trust:** skills and knowledge for cultivating trust in partnerships
- 3) **Learning:** skills and knowledge for promoting learning & improvement in partnerships
- 4) **Managing for Performance:** skills and knowledge for managing effective partnerships

Often, pursuing opportunities for partners to learn together provides a foundation for partnership working that can be lacking, where the individuals concerned do not know each other well and have little mutual understanding or appreciation.

Always keep in mind your organisational or partnership objectives - and think hard about the evidence you have to back up the view you take.

The separate file, “Developing Skills for Partnership Working: Suggestions” can be used to prompt your ideas and discussion on how best to meet the needs you identify. It also explains some of the terms used on the pages which follow.

1) Leadership: skills & knowledge in partnerships for partnerships where partners share a vision and harness their energies to achieve more than they could on their own

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	comments	satis- factory	scope to improve	critical need	ACTION NEEDED	By whom?
skills						
▪ coalition building	helping partners come together on common ground					
▪ vision & consensus building	helping partners determine the difference they want to make and how to work towards it					
▪ communicating	expressing ideas and concepts - especially in lay terms; listens attentively & responds					
▪ consultation	asking others for their views & involving them in decision making					
▪ managing change						
▪ delegating	giving someone responsibility & authority					
▪ influencing						
▪ negotiating roles & contributions						
▪ assertiveness	sure of one's own needs but willing to give to gain					
knowledge						
▪ needs & opportunities which provide the basis for common ground						
▪ policy & funding developments						
▪ partner roles, contributions, constraints, motivations						
▪ potential benefits, costs & risks for individual partners						
▪ forms of partnership added value	how partnerships can achieve more than partners acting individually: more, better, faster results					
▪ interdependencies between partner activities	how success for one partner depend on the actions of others					
▪ how to overcome barriers to partner engagement & commitment						
▪ use of performance management systems to reinforce partnership	systems relating to how resources are allocated and how (individual or organisational) performance is rewarded					

2) Trust: skills & knowledge for partnerships where partners are mutually accountable, share risks and rewards fairly, and behave in ways which support successful outcomes

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	comments	satis- factory	scope to improve	critical need	ACTION NEEDED	By whom?
skills						
▪ building robust relationships	seeking to ensure that others don't anticipate things which may not be delivered					
▪ managing expectations	encouraging genuine two-way communications and improved mutual understanding					
▪ promoting dialogue	listening actively, clarifying & checking understanding					
▪ listening	putting yourself in someone else's shoes					
▪ empathy						
▪ managing disagreement & conflict						
▪ giving constructive feedback	soliciting views & keeping people informed, while minimising demands on time					
▪ managing communications	seeking to ensure that others don't anticipate things which may not be delivered					
▪ coping with the unfamiliar & unexpected	encouraging genuine two-way communications and improved mutual understanding					
knowledge						
▪ group dynamics	how people behave in groups					
▪ cultures, values & ways of working of others						
▪ how partners can hinder the contribution of others						
▪ forms of partnership agreement						
▪ methods to build the capacity of partners	formal and informal ways of helping partners play a full & effective role					

3) Learning: skills & knowledge for partnerships where partners continuously seek to improve what they do in partnership

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	comments	satis- factory	scope to improve	critical need	ACTION NEEDED	By whom?
skills						
▪ problem solving/ creative thinking						
▪ systems thinking	holistic understanding of forces which shape behaviour and outcomes - intended & unintended					
▪ networking	getting to know others & sharing information					
▪ diagnosing performance issues	identifying what gets in the way of greater success - & scope for improvement					
knowledge						
▪ benchmarking & process mapping	techniques for analysing & comparing critical performance requirements					
▪ partnership review & evaluation						
▪ how to promote learning in partnerships/ groups	formal and informal means of encouraging reflection & learning by doing					
▪ learning needs analysis	how to review individual & team development needs					
▪ facilitation techniques	methods to enable group learning & decision-making					
▪ powers, motivations, constraints, potential of other partners						
▪ nature & implications of the partnership life cycle	stages as partnerships develop and mature - and how to help manage change					

4) Managing for Performance: skills & knowledge for partnerships where partners put in place necessary practices and resources, and manage change effectively

SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE	comments	satis- factory	scope to improve	critical need	ACTION NEEDED	By whom?
skills						
▪ negotiating						
▪ entrepreneurial	identifying & realising opportunities					
▪ setting objectives & performance measures						
▪ project team building	applying partnership development principles to joint team working					
▪ project planning/ management	applying project management disciplines to joint projects					
knowledge						
▪ partnership structures	different models of partnership (formal and informal) & how these fit the partnership purpose					
▪ accountability mechanisms	how partners are accountable to each other & to local communities, funders, etc					
▪ functions required for successful performance	roles & tasks which partners need to carry out to achieve objectives					
▪ co-ordination methods	planning & programming for joint working					
▪ managing meetings	how to run different kinds of meetings to ensure objectives are met					
▪ partnership evaluation methods	how to assess partnership processes and impact					
▪ sources of financial & in-kind resources						
▪ ways of making better use of resources						
▪ collaborative use of ICT	applying ICT to enable partnership working/ build common knowledge					