

Compassion Capital Fund – National Resource Center
Ask the Expert
Wednesday, October 27, 2004
Building Effective Partnerships
by Sajida Shroff

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 2:55:15 PM)

Welcome everyone -- we are waiting for a few minutes for everyone to get online.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 2:59:47 PM)

Ok - drum roll, please!

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:00:07 PM)

Welcome. My name is Bill Freeman and I am the National Resource Center's Knowledge Manager, and today's Moderator.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:00:21 PM)

We are pleased and excited that you have agreed to participate in our eighth Ask the Expert online training on building effective partnerships.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:00:39 PM)

First off, don't worry - this is an easy thing to do. There are three roles in this session: Sajida Shroff is today's Expert; I am the Moderator; and you are the discussion participants.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:01:02 PM)

Sajida will take the lead and present the session. This includes providing information, answering questions and feeding discussions.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:01:18 PM)

As the Moderator, I am like a switchboard operator. When you ask your questions they are presented to me, (you won't see them). I will then review your questions and send them on to Sajida. For most questions, I will post them live for all of us to see and for Sajida to respond.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:01:55 PM)

You are the discussion participants. This session is for you. When you want to ask questions, just type them in the bottom panel on your screen. Now don't bother taking notes. This session has an afterlife! Following this discussion, we will email you a full transcript of the session (simple edits).

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:03:44 PM)

Ok, Sajida - take it away!

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:03:48 PM)

Hello everyone and thank you again for joining us today.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:03:59 PM)

Intermediary organizations do recognize the value of forming partnerships with faith-based and community organizations, regulatory agencies, or government units. In order

for these relationships to be effective and efficient, there are some key elements that enable capacity-building and these will be discussed today.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:04:20 PM)

A main determinant of effective partnerships is relationship management. There are however other routine elements that also need to be considered. We will discuss these elements as well as barriers and some best practices today.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:04:39 PM)

The first thing to consider is the framework that will enable the development of the partnership. There are several factors to examine and discuss as the partnership discussions evolve.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:04:56 PM)

There must be clear leadership within the respective organizations. The leadership must consist of respected individual(s) who are recognized and empowered by their own organizations and therefore can be trusted by their partners. These individuals are considered "champions" within their organizations, and their credibility is a major component of the partnerships between organizations.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:05:24 PM)

Next remember that a common understanding of the framework, culture, values and approach of partner organizations needs to exist within the partnership.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:05:35 PM)

A shared common vision and purpose that builds trust and openness and recognizes the value and contribution of all members needs to also exist within the organizations and between the partners.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:05:53 PM)

Shared 'can do' values: that is understanding and acceptance of differences (values, ways of working), respect for contributions of all partners, and an absence of status barriers are all vital components of the partnership value system. Both individuals and organizations must promote learning within the partnership through flexible management.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:06:53 PM)

Effective communication at all levels within the partnership and within partner organizations is the most important factor. Evaluation and assessment are also important components of an efficient partnership.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:07:11 PM)

Remember to also discuss the barriers - what are the differences and hindrances? Only by discussing them and actually articulating them will you be able to come up with ways to mitigate potential issues between potential partners.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:07:38 PM)

Once you have discussed the framework, you and your partner have to individually determine if you want to form the partnership. Start by recognizing and agreeing upon the need for a partnership. Then determine the outcomes of partnering -- that is, what do you

wish to accomplish? Also determine the Quid Pro Quo - what makes this situation work for both of you? And decide that "We have succeeded when..." that is - set goals and targets that are feasible, measurable and tangible.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:08:07 PM)

Once you have determined that you do wish to form a partnership, develop operating practices that include: clarity, trust, a working relationship, performance management and learning. There must be clarity of leadership, understanding, and purpose. Emphasize clarity of leadership so that whoever is leading the development of the partnership is empowered to do so by his/her organization. Also remember it is vital that there is clarity in understanding so the partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities as well as "who will be doing what" and "by when." As part of this process, recognize that there are differences in the culture and practice of each organization. Remember if these differences are not acknowledged and respected, they could lead to conflict.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:08:54 PM)

The second important operating practice is trust. This means that there should be fairness in regards to the conduct of the partnership and equality as it pertains to the distribution of partnership benefits and gains. Also ensure the partnership is able to sustain a level of trust when faced with external pressures and ensure that the trust built up in partner organizations is protected from any issues that may arise in the parent organizations. There must also be trust for the leaders so that their respective partners have confidence in them.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:09:16 PM)

Then there is the working relationship. Ensure there is value in the contribution of all members and emphasize clarity in the roles and responsibilities of the partners. For a good working relationship to evolve, try to develop a focus on process and outcomes and not structure and inputs.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:09:48 PM)

Performance management is the key component. Knowing what is being measured enables success, so set out the measurement techniques for the goals and outcomes. Also be sure and include arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how effectively the partnership itself is working. And try to resolve accountability and governance issues through performance management as well.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:10:18 PM)

And finally recognize the opportunity for learning experiences and sharing best practices. Try to set up regular sessions to share your learnings and happenings. Be sure to agree to a range of success criteria and ensure feedback flows to and from parent organizations. Also try to celebrate and publicize local successes and most importantly continually revise the partnerships aims, objectives and arrangements.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:10:59 PM)

Are there any questions up to this point?

Joseph_null (Oct 27, 2004 3:12:19 PM)

I have established partnership with other organizations before, and one of the biggest obstacles, or should I say frustrations, is that although both sides understand the value of the partnership, because we are small organizations, last minute emergencies come up (a lot more often than we anticipate), and meetings get cancelled. What can you suggest we do to prevent some of these cancellations? Are there communications strategies or infrastructures that can accommodate partnerships that have limited human resources?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:13:10 PM)

Joseph - thanks for your question - it is an issue that we often see especially within smaller to midsize organizations.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:13:32 PM)

Often larger organizations have a specific individual assigned to be the communicator between the partners.

If this is a strategy you can implement then it might mitigate the issues being faced.

However, given the small size of your organization, try setting up communication paths using technology.

For example, set up a weekly email report template that lets each partner update the other on goals and action items.

Ensure the meetings you arrange are off-site for both partners and schedule them around working hours if possible to avoid cancellations.

Joseph_null (Oct 27, 2004 3:15:40 PM)

I also find that MOUs are helpful, do you have sample MOUs? What should be included in the MOUs?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:16:19 PM)

Unfortunately I don't have anything with me, however the Guidebook has some questions that could help to form a MOU.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:16:44 PM)

In fact you have brought an important point to everyone's attention - this is a vital component of a partnership.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:17:35 PM)

Just quickly back to the MOUs... there are several versions available on the Internet as well that can help to frame appropriate language.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:18:03 PM)

Also do check the partner Web sites that we have listed as best practice examples in the Guidebook, as they might be able to provide some insight for this process.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:18:12 PM)

Okay, now back to some more information.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:18:22 PM)

Now that we have discussed the framing principles, we will discuss the key categories of partnerships. They are as follows:

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:18:32 PM)

Federal - these are often in the form of grants or concessions.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:18:50 PM)

State - these are often in the form of source provision.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:18:57 PM)

University - these are community-focused or research-based.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:19:05 PM)

Corporate - these are great for PR purposes and a category less explored than it could be.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:19:13 PM)

Non-profit - the most common and definitely a successful mode - however one that is constantly searching for funding and other resources.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:19:20 PM)

Community-Based - a very strong category as it capitalizes on inherent resources.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:19:29 PM)

Cross-Sector Relationships - again a strong category as it can take into account various needs as well as utilize a number of different resources.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:19:40 PM)

Which brings us to the various modes of partnerships. And by modes, we mean the various types possible. First we need to know about the players -- these are the people and organizations involved. Once you determine who you want to partner with, you can best determine the mode of this partnership. Remember partnership is all about relationship building and relationship management so while the partners are important, it is often the structure that leads to success.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:20:08 PM)

And the type of partnership determines its structure.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:20:15 PM)

Collaborations -- these provide for greater autonomy without permanent organizational commitment.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:20:23 PM)

Strategic Alliance -- these enable shared or transferred decision-making power.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:20:42 PM)

Integration (The question often asked is does integration include a blending of corporate identities or just program initiatives? And really the answer is up to you) -- this type includes changes to structure and control.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:20:57 PM)

Funding Alliance -- this is when separate organizations come together to share a donation either as collaborators or as a recipient/donor. This mode is often rife with issues of fiscal and administrative management. The key of course is to ensure that appropriate working practices have been clearly laid out.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:21:10 PM)

Cost Sharing/Grant Matching -- this is one of the healthiest modes as both partners (all partners) take significant roles within the partnership so that one partner provides the grant and another provides a match in services or resources. In this way, both partners share the benefits and both partners share the costs.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:21:47 PM)

Then there are the Practical Steps to Forming and Managing Partnerships. Be sure to include: clarity of obligations: this is part of the discussion that determines if the partnership is necessary and viable. Feedback is also important to review. Try to gain feedback both from within your organization as well as external sources that could tell you if the partnership would be favorably received. And reciprocity is key. Remember qui pro quo because that is what your partner will be considering.

Joseph_null (Oct 27, 2004 3:22:14 PM)

Under performance management you suggest that we include arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how effectively the partnership is working. What kinds of data or indicators do you suggest we collect so that we can do that?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:22:16 PM)

We will take another question.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:22:28 PM)

Joseph - thanks again for a great question.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:22:41 PM)

The fact is that your data needs to be partner- and project-specific.

It should be based upon the goals and objectives you have set out in the MOU.

So, for example, if there are goals a, b, and c with appropriate deadlines, what you can measure is the actual achievement of these goals.

A further way to break this down is to work through the process to achieve these goals and set metrics that measure progress. Therefore those metrics can also be part of the measurement tools.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:24:21 PM)

Thanks, Sajida.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:24:42 PM)

Pleasure. Now for the specific steps to Forming and Managing Partnerships

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:24:55 PM)

Defining Need (in terms of outcomes). The goal in partnerships is to achieve more than individual partners can achieve on their own, in other words "the whole of the partnership add more than the sum of the individual parts." A key message here is, "What are the benefits of developing a partnership?" Bearing in mind that the partnership should not be the end in itself but a means to an end and a 'partnership' may therefore not be the appropriate route.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:25:19 PM)

Starting the Process with Conversations is vital. It is important to ensure members of the partnership participate from the earliest opportunity to help determine the structure, process and priorities. Ensure aims and objectives are clear at the outset and that they link to targets/strategy of partner organizations and the main body of accountability.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:25:34 PM)

Partnerships, like life, can be difficult. Partnerships have to be developed and nurtured, developing and sustaining respect and recognition of each individual. The whole concept of partnerships is very much based on the ability for the group working as a team who ultimately want to achieve the same goal no matter how or what it takes to achieve it. The process for building and developing relationships within the partnership is not just the responsibility of the person(s) who lead the group, but of everyone in that group.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:26:15 PM)

The stages of developing a partnership could be based on the analogy of project management "team building" - forming, storming, norming and performing. Forming the group by bringing people together is part of the initial stages of starting the process of building the partnership. The next stage, when the group has met on two or three occasions is when people start to question the purpose of the partnership, i.e. "why am I here, what is my role?" It is important to work through this stage of storming and for the group to be open and honest about what their perceptions are, and their definitions of what the overall goal/vision is, as this generally turns out to be very different! Therefore, clarity of purpose is vital and it is important to ensure every member of the group has the same understanding of the vision and ultimate goal of the partnership.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:27:05 PM)

It is important at the initial stages to agree a set of ground rules for the partnership. This may seem obvious, but very few groups do this exercise and it is important and

fundamental basis for valuing and respecting the individuals within the organizations as well as the organizations themselves.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:27:39 PM)

Always form Partnership Agreements by agreeing on: the structure, process and support mechanisms for the partnership; the main purpose/priorities; and the Performance Management process. And identifying a work program.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:28:21 PM)

Research suggests there can often be ambiguity (or even conflict) about the division of responsibility between partnership and individual partners, the distinction between strategic and operational decision-making can often be the most difficult to resolve, with a reluctance by key partners to delegate authority to the partnership. Clear procedures are needed for everyone to understand how agreements on action will be taken, and a clear sense of shared responsibility for achievements and failures of the partnership.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:29:20 PM)

These procedures should take the form of documents that are agreed and signed up to, which sets out the key aims, objectives and outcomes of the partnership. These documents could take the form of a legal 'constitution', contract or terms of reference. It is also essential that this document reflects the 'Business Plan or Strategy' that forms the basis of the work of the partnership, in order to give the partnership structure and boundaries to work within, allowing flexibility to change and grow as the partnership changes and grows.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:29:49 PM)

This is basically the MOU we referred to earlier. Goalposts are forever moving, and the partnership needs to constantly review its purpose, goals and targets. In order for members of the group to have an idea of what it is meant to do, an agreed work program/action plan needs to be set out. Examples of these are in the workbook.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:30:21 PM)

Setting up the partnership and building the team is now reaching the "storming" stages, where the group will be finding consensus, debating the boundaries, addressing conflicts, getting personal and dropping down the barriers, and leading to the "norming" stage. This is where the group will be reaching shared agreements, developing protocols, delivering synergetic responses and avoiding duplication. It is important that these stages of team building are recognized and dealt with as after the "forming" stages the group could reach a level of frustration and just not move on, leading the group to fail.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:31:02 PM)

All partnerships need to ensure they have an ongoing program of monitoring and revising aims and objectives. This should also provide the opportunity to learn what has been successful and what was not, building these lessons into revised plans.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:31:31 PM)

It is important for any partnership to build into its plan performance management

processes to allow monitoring and evaluation to take place. It should set periodic reviews to check whether its aims and objectives have changed and what is required to make the change.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:31:56 PM)

Remember that as the term of a partnership increases, the original vision and goals may become blurred. Existing members of the partnership may leave and new ones join it.

Joseph_null (Oct 27, 2004 3:34:00 PM)

Is there a list of indicators? For example, our grant focuses on board development, staff development and program development. What are the appropriate indicators for those things? I have used logic models before, but find that I need more assistance in identifying the right indicators. In managing a relationship, is it the number of meetings? The content of the meetings? How quickly people are able to finish their assigned actions steps? A ratio regarding the amount of FTE time that is spent on meetings vs. doing the work? The proportion of time that each organization uses to accomplish the defined task?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:34:15 PM)

Joseph - another great question.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:34:32 PM)

The first thing I would consider as I approach the board development is what are the overarching goals.

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That is, what do I want the board to develop into? ==

Is it just a cohesive body? Is it an operating body? What are the specific objectives that have been set for the board?

)

Is it project-focused or people-focused?

Once these questions have been answered... then we can develop the appropriate framework to develop the board and measure progress.

The amount of time spent in meetings is an appropriate measure if a goal is to have more meeting time.

On the other hand, if a goal is to become a cohesive board and network with other contacts then time spent meeting as a board may not be well spent.

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So I would suggest that you first examine the goals for the board, set out the strategic plan for the board and once you have outlined the development plan. You will find the

appropriate measures and metrics that not only help manage progress but actually facilitate the achievement of the respective goals and objectives.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:38:18 PM)

And now some more guiding principles.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:38:20 PM)

When starting the partnership, pilot initiatives are very important. Start small and slow so that you can determine if the processes are working. Once there is some success, then go ahead and expand out to include a more comprehensive list of goals and milestones.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:38:42 PM)

Resource allocation can be a major issue, so try to evaluate the strengths you both bring to the table BEFORE you start. Once these strengths are established - outline the perimeters that will guide you and then examine the added value that will be provided by the formation of the partnership. Then adequately distribute the resources so that each group is able to complete their necessary goals.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:39:03 PM)

Once a partnership is underway, the question of modus operandi deals with how the partners should behave in their relationship. Obviously, mutual cooperation is the ideal. But what should one partner do if the other does not cooperate by fulfilling its commitments in a timely manner? Not responding promptly to an uncalled for defection risks sending the wrong signal. The longer defections go unchallenged, the more likely it is that the other player will draw the conclusion that defection can pay. And the more strongly this pattern is established, the harder it will be to break it. The importance of provocability is increased when the relationship is being observed by others who are or may become partners with either of the participants. The reason is that reputation matters. This gives a recipient some leverage over a donor. For example, if a recipient is provoked, it cannot only withhold part of its contribution to the partnership, but it can also threaten to criticize the donor in forums that are important.

Joseph_null (Oct 27, 2004 3:40:06 PM)

That is great guidance, thank you for that suggestion.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:40:22 PM)

Establish the plan for dealing with conflicts beforehand. Set up a structure specifically to deal with potential conflicts so that if the situation does occur, there is a neutral path that can be taken to mitigate the negative effects.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:41:12 PM)

There are a number of key challenges or barriers to the sustainable partnerships. These include turf battles among stakeholders; burn out; clashes with a different culture reflected in institutional reward systems, and rigid policies regarding intellectual property, startups, private sector engagement, and other matters; maintaining an ability to learn from other participants; having the right people in the right place at the right time; and the vagaries of politics.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:41:39 PM)

Common Problems include:

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:41:57 PM)

Organizational Issues. How was the partnership formed? Is the leadership team in place? Is the leadership structure of the partnership settled? Can it be easily described to others so that they understand how the partnership is organized and how it works? Are the necessary administrative arrangements in place (e.g., budget, IP, support staff, etc.)? Are information, infrastructure, personnel, other resources 'integrated' in the operation of the partnership (integration needs to be measured)? Are policies and rules sufficiently flexible?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:42:23 PM)

Finances. Have future funding needs been identified? Have sources of support been identified, including internal resources (including, e.g., "skunk works"), grant funding (federal, state, and local), philanthropy, private sector (angels, VC, corporate)? Have sales and other revenue sources been identified? Are budgets and finances transparent, and able to be tracked? Is there flexibility in moving funds? Have processes been established for managing in-kind and matching funding, and for linking in-kind support to hard cash?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:42:46 PM)

Plans. Is there a project plan? Is there a business plan that assesses the market and the demand for the innovation? Have potential testing/beta sites been identified in the business plan? Is there a financial plan? Is there agreement regarding the processes for modification of these plans? Do the plans reflect reasonable expectations? Is there a risk analysis scheme?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:43:19 PM)

Communications. Are the partners actively engaged? Does the partnership hold regular meetings? Is there a process for communication? Are partners communicating well? Are there provisions for talking to top management to resolve problems? Have measures for outreach activities been established? Does the partnership produce products for dissemination?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:44:05 PM)

Please note that these questions are very useful as you norm and storm and also as you develop your MOU and action plan. Be sure to ask yourself and your partner these questions to mitigate future issues.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:44:21 PM)

Successful partnerships often exhibit certain common characteristics in that they define how work will be accomplished to include addressing roles, responsibilities and ultimately organization structures.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:44:37 PM)

Provide clear links between strategy, capabilities, structure and processes.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:44:44 PM)

Determine those organizational capabilities required to successfully implement a partnership strategy that facilitates the desired structure and process.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:44:52 PM)

Achieve organizational buy-in. Internal advocacy is required to promote teamwork, which fosters employee satisfaction and in turn creates satisfaction.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:45:11 PM)

AND Create and develop comprehensive and successful goals.

Joseph_null (Oct 27, 2004 3:46:01 PM)

I understand your suggestions as it relates to the sub-grantees, but how would I review and evaluate the partnership relationship? What kinds of indicators should I use to inform me whether the relationship is successful?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:47:13 PM)

Joseph, evaluating a partnership relationship is often NOT a case of hard metrics but of what I like to call soft metrics.

It's the "feel good" factor to some extent.

Does the partnership enhance your work?

Does the partnership effectively challenge you to be better?

Does the partnership add value to your organization, your human resources and capital?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:48:31 PM)

These are some of the suggestions that may help develop a mindset to evaluate that relationship.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:49:03 PM)

One thing we often forget is that while we engage in partnerships to achieve some concrete goal there are many intangibles that are often more important byproducts of the relationship. And it is these intangibles that often determine if the partnership is "worth it."

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:49:49 PM)

After a period of growth and maturity, successful partnerships inevitably enter into a declining stage where community development and the value of the partnership decreases. As a CBO manager, it is important to understand where your partnership currently lies in the lifecycle so that you can act appropriately to prolong the success of your partnership. Failure to act appropriately in a timely manner could lead to premature entrance of your partnership into the decline stage and lead to the disintegration of the partnership. Timely intervention could lead to the redevelopment and restructuring of the partnership that evolves into a regenerated revitalized relationship.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:50:08 PM)

In order to determine if a revitalization of the partnership is important, you should assess the impact of the partnership. Use the evaluative tools provided to determine if the goals have been met and if the partnership is evolving in a manner that is conducive to

continued community growth. Once you have determined if it is valuable to renew or conclude the partnership, develop a road map for the next phase so that the partnership can either evolve with a new focus or organizational mandate or gently dissolve, so as to cause the least amount of dissension and disenchantment.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:50:30 PM)

Partnerships do fail. Warning Signs that indicate when to bail out include: a failure to report finances; unmet goals; administrative brick walls; a lack of communication; the lack of effective leadership; and a lack of trust.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:51:03 PM)

Extricate your organization by first determining how quickly the project is slated to end. If it is a relatively short time frame then let the partnership wind down. If there is a longer time frame, then meet with the partner or parent organization and suggest that the situation is not working. Be sure to complete documents to dissolve the partnership in a fair and professional manner.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:51:26 PM)

Handling the press is an important part of the dissolution. Scenario 1 lets you just state that the partnership has concluded. Scenario 2 means you have to provide a statement. A clean way to extricate yourself is by stating that as the partners have enabled their own development, they have come to realize that their goals and paths have also evolved. So in the interests of the constituents they serve, they felt it best to end the partnership now.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:51:54 PM)

From the exciting birth of a partnership to the satisfaction that comes from seeing real outcomes emerge from teamwork, community partnerships are constantly changing. No matter what stage you find yourself at now, your partnership can have a stronger future if you become explicitly aware of where you've come from and where you're likely to be going. Understanding the maturation process, from launch through the life cycles, can help community partnerships become more deliberate about their best bets for making strong progress in each stage of their maturation.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:52:21 PM)

Remember partnerships can be valuable as well as beneficial. Always clarify the following factors BEFORE entering into the relationship:

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:52:34 PM)

Leadership.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:52:41 PM)

Common Understanding.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:52:47 PM)

Purpose.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:52:53 PM)

Culture and Value.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:53:00 PM)
Learning and Development.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:53:06 PM)
Communication.

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:53:13 PM)
Performance Management.

Joseph_null (Oct 27, 2004 3:53:18 PM)
That is helpful, so if the answer is that the partnership does not enhance my work, then the relationship is not effective? Even if deadlines and actions steps are being met?

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:53:32 PM)
Joseph - another great question!

Guest Speaker (Oct 27, 2004 3:53:53 PM)
I would venture to say that it all depends on what you are trying to achieve out of the partnership.
For example, a partnership that is project-based may not enhance the partner organizations but if the project goals are being met -- then is that not effective?
On the other hand, a partnership that is development-based may not be effective if there is no development/enhancement happening.
The question to ask is, what is the real goal of the partnership? That in effect determines what you measure and how the success of the partnership is measured.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:55:54 PM)
Our time is getting short; let's have just one more question. Any burning questions?

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:56:45 PM)
This was awesome!

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:57:01 PM)
Sajida has authored an outstanding guidebook on building successful partnerships. If you would like a copy of the document (free) or a copy of this session's transcript, please send me an email to ymg@daremightythings.com and request these documents.

Moderator (Oct 27, 2004 3:57:38 PM)
Thank you for participating in today's session. Good-bye.