

Partnerships in Giving

Collaborating towards
successful partnerships

Partnerships



The Temasek Trust Corporate Giving Workshops bring grantmaking practitioners together to share good practices of grantmaking. Discussions at the workshops have been incorporated into this series of Practice Guides that can help continue the conversation and inform more grantmakers.

Most foundations and grantmakers do their work through partners. They need to be aware of the inherent imbalance in the partnership. This guide offers digestible tips on how grantmakers and grantees can navigate together in a balanced and effective partnership.

In a win-win-win partnership, **grantmakers** and **grantees** collaborate in a respectful and positive environment to create sustainable impact for **beneficiaries** or communities. A win-win-win partnership begins with balance and ends with it.

Exploring Partnerships

How do grantmakers and grantees consider each other?

PARTNERSHIPS ARE OFTEN FORMED IN THREE WAYS:



1 Grantee seeks out grantmaker with a grant proposal



2 Grantmaker seeks out grantee with relevant expertise or networks



3 Grantmaker makes a call for proposals or applications

Grantees usually approach grantmakers to enter into a programme or partnership, but this should not stop grantmakers from initiating!



Considering Partners

Each partnership is different and dynamic. However, there are important criteria to consider that can make a partnership stronger and more effective.

FOR GRANTMAKER AND GRANTEE

1. Credibility

- Is the organisation reliable?
- Is the organisation currently achieving its goals?
- What kind of reputation does the organisation enjoy within its community and beyond?

2. Capability

- Can the organisation succeed?
- Does the organisation have the structures, skills, resources and networks to achieve its goals?
- Has the organisation succeeded in similar endeavours of equal or larger size and scale to the proposed programme?

PROGRAMME BEING PROPOSED

3. Importance

- Should it be done?
- Is the programme the best solution for the issue at hand?
- Will it make a difference in the community?

4. Feasibility

- Can it be done?
- Are the strategy and plan sound?
- Is the budget realistic – does it allocate sufficient resources to execute the strategies and the related tasks?

COMPATIBILITY

5. Alignment

- Do the values of the grantmaker and grantee align with each other?
E.g. Respect for beneficiaries.
- Are the aligned objectives good enough to work towards a win-win-win situation?

SMRT and JurongHealth

AN ALIGNED PARTNERSHIP

In 2014, JurongHealth approached SMRT to work on a mobility park that featured transport vehicles, which could help patients re-integrate into society after hospital care. This initiative is aligned with one of SMRT's three corporate social responsibility pillars: Enabling mobility in society.

The project was highly feasible as SMRT could easily contribute the hardware (vehicles), where only minor, budget-friendly refurbishments were needed for the project. SMRT sponsored the vehicle models and ensured that the details – such as station platform gaps – reflect real-life settings. The park is also complete with safety features such as wheelchair spaces and emergency communication buttons, which healthcare workers can highlight to patients.

Meanwhile, JurongHealth provided the space for the mobility park, which is an open garden within the integrated health care hub of Ng Teng Fong General Hospital

and Jurong Community Hospital. In fact, the mobility park is right next to Jurong East MRT interchange, so SMRT staff such as engineers and operators have found it easy to volunteer their time there.

SMRT staff have attended training sessions at the park, where they learn to identify patients with dementia and offer the right assistance. For example, in 2017, an Inclusive Service Delivery Programme was developed in partnership with NTUC Learning Hub, Lien Foundation and JurongHealth. In this programme, SMRT service and frontline staff undergo hands-on training to assist priority passengers such as those with mobility needs.

Today, the partnership continues to see Singapore's first outdoor rehabilitative space help patients, the elderly and those with special needs regain not just their mobility but also their confidence when they return to daily life. The park is open to all, including the public.

ST Telemedia and Temasek Polytechnic

A CONSULTATIVE, COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

*As shared by Lee Sock Leng,
Senior Director, Strategic Relations*

"At ST Telemedia, our purpose is to ignite enduring change – to maximise potential and create lasting stakeholder value. Our CSR focus mirrors this ethos.

We support various social responsibility engagements to bring sustainable positive impact on the community. Nurturing future generations is one of the key themes that guides our community programmes. We believe that education creates a multiplier effect for economic growth and development.

When selecting our educational partners, we consider a number of factors including their track record, support level they offer as well as their flexibility in creating a programme that meets our specific requirements.

We found such a partner in Temasek Polytechnic. They have progressive

initiatives. For example, they were the first tertiary institution to offer full-time courses in big data management and governance. This resonates with our focus on innovation and aligns with our interests as a technology company.

The ST Telemedia Catalyst Award is done in partnership with Temasek Polytechnic. It supports promising students who require financial assistance. This unique award is a hybrid between a scholarship and a bursary with no strings attached – in other words, it's bond-free. We extend internships to these students too, so that they gain practical, real-life working experiences.

Through a consultative and collaborative partnership, ST Telemedia and Temasek Polytechnic ensure that the programme successfully helps students."

Doing Your Homework

Verifying the Partner's Credibility

There are a few ways of making sure that the partner you are considering is a credible organisation:

- **Do adequate checks**, such as desktop research or verifying through third-parties.
- **Check the organisation's financial information** and track record with regulators.
- **Take into account the leadership capacity** of the organisation.

Researching on Communities

It is important for grantmakers and grantees to know the community that they are helping to achieve maximum social impact.

There are two main ways of researching on a community:

- **Primary research**
Conduct surveys, walk the ground and speak directly with the community (such as leaders, residents and store owners) and the potential beneficiaries.
- **Secondary research**
 - a. Find out what others have said about the community and their needs.
 - b. Talk to other grantmakers and other organisations who work in the same space, such as service providers.

Saying “No”

It is never easy to say “no”, but to do so is a good opportunity for a grantmaker to educate others on what it is about and establish its brand.

In fact, there are many ways to say “no” respectfully, responsibly and constructively:



CASE STUDY

Sembcorp

KNOW YOUR GOALS, KNOW WHEN TO SAY “NO”

Sembcorp’s Community Investment Policy comprises a framework that directs their plans and efforts. It also forms the basis of how they choose partnerships.

The organisation says “no” respectfully to potential partnerships for three key reasons:

- When there is a misalignment with the organisation’s Community Investment Policy.** For example, Sembcorp does not partner with religious organisations whose main aim is to propagate a particular faith or belief.
- When there is a misalignment with the organisation’s focus areas.** Sembcorp’s Community Investment programmes are targeted to support five of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); so, the potential partnership has to focus on any of the five SDGs. The programmes also need to show strategic alignment with their business objectives.
- When the funding required for the programme exceeds the budget that Sembcorp has set aside for a particular focus area.** In this case, Sembcorp would offer a lower quantum, give in-kind or volunteer their expertise.

In short, Sembcorp aims to stay very focused and thus, strategic, in their giving. They say “yes” if the partnership aligns with their Community Investment Policy.

TIPS

Partnerships are two-way relationships. It is important to listen to and understand partners.

By getting into a purposeful conversation, both grantmaker and grantee will better understand each other – this is an important ingredient to developing a meaningful and sustainable collaboration.

Getting to a “Yes”

How do grantmakers and grantees collaborate towards shared outcomes?

You have learnt more about each other. Now, you want to see how you can work together.

Begin negotiations with a win-win-win approach, where everyone – grantmakers, grantees and beneficiaries (or communities) – can gain.

The 4Ws and 1H tip sheet here lists considerations for an effective negotiation process.



4Ws and 1H: Tips for Negotiating Expectations

1

Why enter this partnership?

Be clear about everyone's needs

- The partnership is meant to address the needs of a selected community. Clarify these needs and the expected outcomes.
- Essentially, there are three sets of needs in a partnership:
 - Beneficiaries' or communities' needs
 - Grantee's needs

Be mindful of balancing needs

- During negotiations, see how everyone's needs can be met with the resources at hand.
- Be sure that there is no mission creep, where the programme expands beyond the mandate of the partnership and partners, making it unsustainable.

Be realistic about outcomes

- Be reasonable about the immediate, medium-term and longer-term outcomes that are expected in the partnership and discuss possible interventions.

CASE STUDY

Singtel

THE RIGHT PARTNER MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Q&A with Chia Boon Chong,
Director, Group Sustainability

Singtel and SG Enable launched the Enabling Innovation Centre in 2015. Located at 141 Redhill Road, Singapore, the Centre expands employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by tapping technology and equipping them with new skills.

Q: Could you describe the discussion process with SG Enable before the partnership was sealed?

Initial discussions started with a common understanding that many persons with disabilities have employable skills but are unemployed. We shared the common goal of enhancing disability employment, and were prepared to co-develop innovative solutions and approaches that didn't exist at that point in time.

The question, “What will really work on the ground?” continues to drive our partnership. We are frank and open in our discussions, and that helps us understand each other better.

Q: Why did Singtel enter this partnership and programme?

Since 2002, we have been supporting the education of young persons with special needs. Supporting their subsequent transition to meaningful and sustainable employment was a natural extension of our efforts in this space, at a time when corporate support and funding for this transition was still nascent. We are happy to take our support to a new level, as we're constantly looking to widen our impact in the community – especially in innovative ways.

Q: What is Singtel's role in the partnership?

We want to be a strategic partner in such initiatives. It's important in any partnership and community programme that we look to add value beyond providing funding and contribute towards better outcomes and social impact.

In the case of the Singtel Enabling Innovation Centre, we offer expertise in call centre operations. Persons with disabilities are trained in call centre and IT skills, which are valued by businesses. We also developed a showcase of global assistive technologies with SG Enable and run an innovation hub to support new ideas that empower lives.

In recent times, we have expanded our partnership with SG Enable by mobilising other corporates through the Singapore Business Network on DisAbility (SBNoD), which Singtel is a founding member of.

Q: Could you share some tips on having a balanced and successful partnership?

Both Singtel and SG Enable take a long-term view in investing quality time and effort into the collaboration, and share the common objective of helping persons with disabilities lead more independent lives and enhance their employability.

There is no lack of funders in Singapore. What makes for a truly outstanding collaboration and magic to happen is finding the right win-win partnership, where the partners' vision is aligned and they are passionate about creating impact in the community.

Between Singtel and SG Enable, there is trust, regular communication and engagement, cross-sharing of strategy, and complementary capabilities. The willingness to constantly take our relationship further and try new things has enabled both of us to grow and evolve together.

2

What are the expectations?

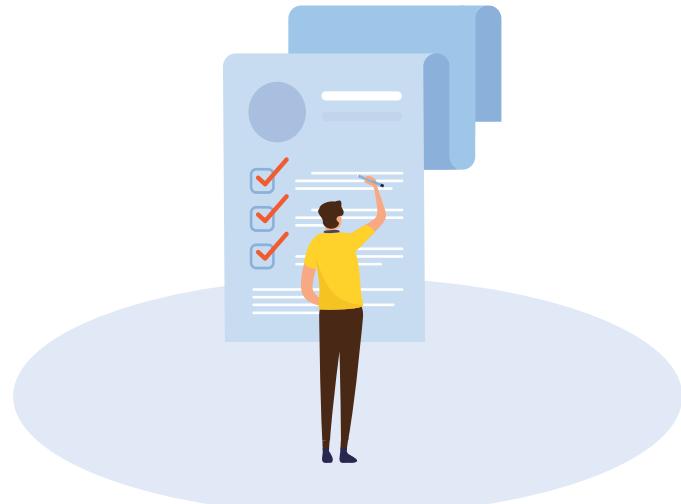
Listen deeply and allow for a two-way conversation to understand each other's perspectives and gain trust.

Acknowledge that grantees can offer much in the discussion and in co-designing programmes. Also consider cultural contexts such as local customs, practices and preferences in the conversations and solutions.

Some important expectations to set together are:

- **Roles, responsibilities and resource-sharing**
 - How much funding and other resources can each party contribute?
 - Can grantmakers offer non-programme support such as administrative assistance or financing the operational costs of the programme?

- **Outcomes, milestones and deliverables**
 - Get clarity on outcomes, outputs, targets and qualitative and quantitative feedback while watching out for the legal and financial requirements.
 - Consider how the partnership can bear fruitful outcomes that sustain beyond the programme.



3

Who should be involved in these discussions?

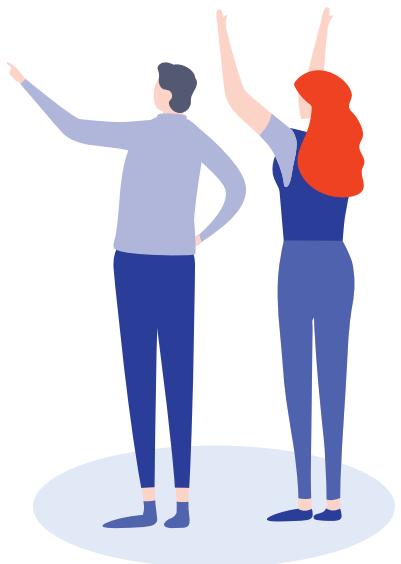
Speaking with different parties is an eye-opening experience filled with insights that can sharpen the programme in the partnership. Important parties to connect with when discussing a potential programme are:

- **Leaders**
Get their feedback early. Encourage them to discuss candidly about what they expect.

- **Decision-makers**
Decision-makers help align the vision and outcomes.

- **Operational personnel**
They ensure that the programme and process are feasible.

- **Beneficiaries**
They offer good first-hand information on what is really needed.



CASE STUDY

SP Group

IMPORTANT TO CONNECT WITH PARTNERS ON THE GROUND

*As shared by Amelia Champion,
Head, Corporate Affairs*

"Our experience shows that when we collaborate with partners, it's not only important to have the understanding and buy-in of the decision-makers and leaders, but of all who will be involved in operationalising the programme.

They could be the operations team and volunteer coordinators of social service organisations. The rationale of the programme and their roles must be explained clearly to them.

For example, if we want to help senior citizens from an activity centre, we may start discussions with programme developers at the headquarters. The operations team at the activity centre itself would have valuable input on the kinds of activities that the

seniors find engaging and beneficial.

If we're rolling out an initiative for public benefit, we must brief the staff of partner organisations who work on the ground about the programme and how it will be implemented. We should also ensure there are sufficient resources for addressing public queries or managing possible issues, so that the ground staff are well equipped to represent the programme well.

Partners on the ground offer constructive insight on implementation – such as how to communicate effectively with beneficiaries, and how to achieve optimal logistics arrangements and resourcing. Often, they are the key touch-point for well-meaning programmes."

4 When should these expectations be discussed?

New partnerships

- Start by strategising with whom to broach the discussion and how; involve partners early in the conversation.
- Pace the discussion by negotiating the big picture and key expectations first, instead of jumping into a laundry list of details.

Familiar partners or renewing a programme

- The right time to re-negotiate expectations would be the period before sealing the partnership.
- Ongoing communication is the best way to understand changing expectations.

Having an Exit Strategy

Grantmakers and grantees may wish to discuss how the partnership can come to a completion after outcomes are met or a timeline is fulfilled.

Here are some key steps on planning an exit strategy if the programme is new or based on legacy funding:

5 How can the partnership be sealed with the expectations that have been established together?

- After grantmaker and grantee have worked out and agreed on a set of expectations, they can put things down on paper.
- A written agreement is not the only way to seal a partnership, but it is a good practice to have.
- The agreement is not meant to tie any party down to a set of legally-binding terms. Rather, it is meant to provide clarity in the partnership.
- Agreements can also state regulatory requirements (such as the Charities Act) and highlight good practices in financial governance. To protect all partners, the agreement may consider indemnification in case any party ends up in a scandal.

CASE STUDY

DBS Foundation

AGREEMENTS = TRANSPARENT RELATIONSHIPS

DBS Foundation supports various social enterprises in Asia with grant funding and business opportunities. These partnerships with social enterprises are made official with agreements, which are communicated and discussed, and then signed.

The agreement is meant to encourage transparency in the partnership by putting everyone on the same page. For example, it states in clear terms the grant amount, intended outcomes, milestones, relevant timelines and metrics.

At each milestone, DBS Foundation and the social enterprises reflect on what has been done. They also consider external circumstances that may affect outcomes. Then, they review their next milestones and outcomes – these are adjusted in the agreement after getting the necessary approvals.

Thus, while the essence of the agreement remains unchanged, other elements are flexible. Ultimately, the agreement is meant to help – rather than hinder – partners.

Communicate clearly to the relevant people on the exit strategy

Make recommendations of alternative funding for grantees

Explore ways that grantmaker can further strengthen grantee's capacity such as in the marketing narrative or materials

Discuss how and when to phase down



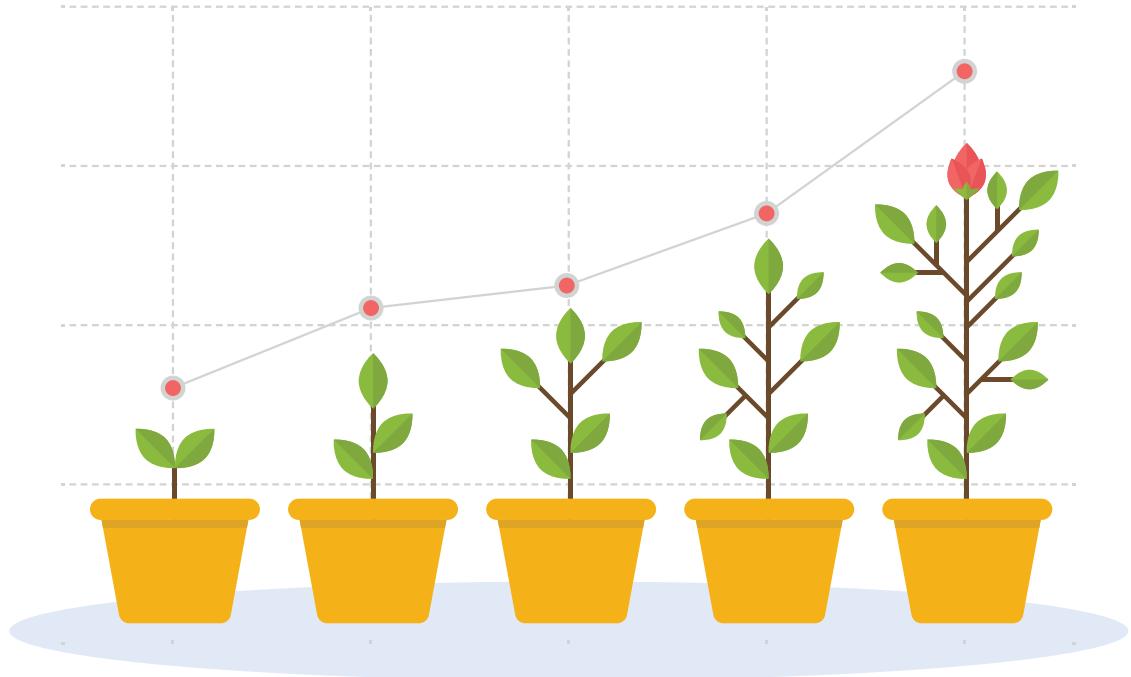
TIPS

The key principles of an effective partnership are:

- Clear communication with a consistent message
- A win-win-win mentality
- Having a sense of togetherness, such as engaging and learning with each other
- Co-designing solutions and co-investing in sustained results rather than simply offering a cheque – this encourages co-ownership

Sustaining a Partnership

How can grantmakers and grantees make a partnership last?



The real work of a partnership begins after the expectations are set and the plans are made. It is important for both grantmaker and grantee to understand and encourage each other during the course of the programme.

Here are four tips on maintaining a positive partnership.

Empower Each Other for the Long-Run

Being a good partner is truly an art and a science. The key is to stay engaged and give breathing space. Constantly finding this balance makes a partnership healthy and dynamic.

BALANCE CAN BE ACHIEVED BY:

Staying curious and engaged in the partnership

Keeping key stakeholders informed on the progress and key issues, possibly with regular reports – these reports also help partners review themselves

Empowering partners to run the programme without being too meddlesome – give one another the latitude to operationalise the programme and make decisions within the relevant scope

Avoiding micro-management



Cheer Each Other on

Running a programme effectively means ensuring that the milestones set have been met as much as possible. Two tips for the marathon:

- **Develop a habit of good reporting**

When done on a regular basis or at appropriate intervals, good reports come in handy to evaluate how effective the programme is.

- **Create a positive environment**

Each time the partnership achieves a milestone, celebrate! If a milestone can't be reached, guide each other towards improvement.



Ask Good Questions to Help Each Other

These useful questions help grantmakers and grantees assess the sustainability of a partnership. They also demonstrate care and concern for a partner.

- 1. Do we need to adjust the terms and conditions?
- 2. How, when and who do we communicate changes to?
- 3. Are we getting correct inputs from the relevant parties, including practitioners, decision-makers and beneficiaries?
- 4. Are our internal processes enabling and supportive of our partners?
- 5. Do we avoid causing work or unnecessary pressure on any partner?
- 6. Have we clearly communicated set times for reports and review discussions?



Make the Partnership a Learning Experience

Each programme is a planned solution to a community need. So, it is really an experiment of sorts that everyone can learn from. Here are three ways to nurture the partnership into a greater learning environment.

• Create a safe environment

Grantmakers can create a safe environment for grantees by encouraging them to be candid and open when discussing pain points. Frequent communication to talk about challenges and helping to solve them will encourage a more transparent partnership.

• Take healthy risks together

Partnerships need to be dynamic. Both grantmaker and grantee must stay updated on the latest developments to innovate and ensure that the funding focus is relevant to society. Partners should work together to push boundaries.

• Share resources as much as possible

There are many creative ways to put current resources to good use. For example, grantmakers can offer their expertise in niche areas and even equip grantees in managing volunteers or other grantmakers.

CASE STUDY

Standard Chartered Singapore

TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING

*As shared by Winnie Tan,
Head of Sustainability & Chief Executive,
ASEAN and South Asia*

"Standard Chartered Bank has a uniquely Singapore community initiative to address issues related to our ageing population. The Bank works with South East Community Development Council (SE CDC) to create a seniors' befriending model to address issues of social isolation and create a community amongst our seniors.

The befrienders reach out to senior citizens regularly and act as 'eyes and ears' to address issues when they are still nascent – for example, when the seniors are in good health, taking their medication accordingly or simply have general questions or needs that need to be resolved. It is a 'neighbours looking after neighbours' programme to ensure the seniors are not left alone or left behind.

Since 2013, up to 431 volunteers have been matched to seniors in this programme. By having someone check in on them regularly, the programme has also helped seniors cut their re-hospitalisation rates by 50% and shortened hospital stays from about seven to four days.

Creating this model is important as befriending is a highly intensive activity. It requires a high level of commitment

over a long tenure. Through a 'test and learn' approach, SE CDC is able to refine a volunteer management model that is viable and replicable.

To strengthen the partnership, the Bank works closely with SE CDC. By complementing each other in our strengths and weaknesses, we have been able to contribute our best in the project. For example, the Bank has specific requirements on governance and reporting, and this enables SE CDC to hone their project management and bring this to their collaborations with other partners.

The Bank recognises that there are many areas in which partners excel in. For example, SE CDC has a strong grassroots network and executional ability in outreach and engagement. Given time, they are able to resolve any new project's teething issues and operationalise effectively. This requires building of trust between partners and giving each other sufficient time and space.

Learning from one another can be challenging at first, but ultimately worth the while and beneficial for all."

TIPS

A great partnership grows. This happens when partners stay engaged in a two-way relationship that is mindful of power imbalances.

Every partner deserves respect for the unique strengths that it brings into the programme.

Managing When Things Aren't Smooth

What can grantmakers and grantees do when programmes flounder?



IN GENERAL, THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF RISKS IN A CORPORATE GIVING PROGRAMME:

Risks related to grantmaker

Such as early termination due to a change of strategy or a lack of funds.

Risks related to grantees

Such as being unable to complete the programme, or changes in leadership and staff leading to changes in priorities and values.

Risks related to landscape

Such as changes in community needs and service gaps.

These are just a few possible scenarios. Sit with partners and identify risks before implementing the programme. Openly communicate and discuss risk mitigation plans together. Consider the pros, cons and costs to see if rescuing the programme is worth it.

✓ How to know when things are going off track

- When it looks like partners are going through the motions, but the work or outcome is not being accomplished
- When the funds are not used in the ways that they are meant to
- When the values and principles that the programme was built upon are no longer aligned

Factors to assess when the programme hits a roadblock:



1. Outcomes:

- How will they be affected? Will they be realised sooner or later?
- Is there skewed reporting, with perceived outcomes covering up actual ones?



2. Alignment:

- Will the programme still fulfill the shared vision of the grantmaker and grantee?
- Are there different opinions between the top and operational leaders about carrying out the programme?



3. Resources:

- How will resources such as funding, manpower or volunteers be affected?
- Is there wear and tear of physical infrastructure or equipment being used in the programme?



4. Timing:

- When and who should flag out the issue?
- When should grantmakers intervene while maintaining the relationship and minimising losses or liabilities for all, including the beneficiaries?



5. Severity:

- Is the issue an isolated or systemic one?
- Is there reputational risk, where the situation may blow up into a public scandal?



6. Justification:

- Is the programme worth rescuing; if yes, at what costs?
- How will decisions from now affect future giving efforts?

TIPS

- Many partners agree that **close communication and trust** help to mitigate risks and manage crises.
- An **exit strategy** – planned early – becomes useful.

Ultimately, partnerships involve working through various challenges. Just like a marriage, the partnership becomes stronger after overcoming difficulties and innovating new solutions together.

Creating a Successful Partnership

What makes for good relationships between grantmakers and grantees?

There is no one partnership that is perfect. Every partnership differs. But some common ingredients go into the recipe of great partnerships.

Commitment

- Work towards sustainability of the programme. Its impact should go beyond the grant instead of being a one-off success.

Communication

- Always communicate clearly with a consistent message, so that everyone knows what to do. Check that everyone has understood each other's expectations.

Empathy

- Don't create unnecessary work or pressure on partners. Be approachable, responsive and helpful to enable partners.

Focus

- Always keep the eventual beneficiaries or community cause in mind – especially when things get tough.

Openness

- Be open to new ideas and ways of working. Treat the partnership as a learning journey. Acquire new knowledge, skills and experiences as much as possible.

Respect

- Recognise that different cultures and considerations go into the decisions that each partner makes. Recognise the dignity of grantees – they have much to offer – and note of any power imbalances in the partnership.

Results

- Jointly develop, design and track tangible outcomes and celebrate achievements together.

Synergy

- Look for complementary interests and skills, where the programme can meet the needs of grantees while tapping the capabilities of all partners.

Trust

- Believe in each other. Have a positive, win-win-win mentality for all, where everyone can benefit from the partnership. Transparency is also key in fostering trust – share information and concerns in a timely manner.

Understanding

- Take time and effort to understand partners, their goals and their strategies. This strengthens relationships.



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