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GMI Insights on Partnering – a guided tour

Over the past few years, partnering has become a focused area of work of the Global Mentoring Initiative. Our developing learning is captured in various GMI Insights. While some attention or learning points are mentioned in several, each also has a distinctive focus. Here a quick guide to what could be a 'logical' sequence.

1. You partner for a purpose. You partner because you see complementarities and the ability for your combined effort to be more than the sum of its parts ($1+1 = 3$). You don't need to agree on everything, but must be sufficiently aligned, perhaps not only on a broad vision but also some more specific objectives. (GMI Insight 2)
2. If there is a feeling of sufficient complementarity and alignment, do a value-exploration. What can each bring to the collaborative effort? Don't just consider money and other tangibles. Interested agencies will also consider what they can get out of the collaboration? Some of the gains from partnering will be shared (win-win), some of them will be more particular to one or other of the participating agencies (e.g. new knowledge that another participation agency already had). Both can be OK. What you do want to avoid is 'free riders' (takers but not givers) or partners who do not fulfil what they committed to. (GMI Insight 5)
3. A next step can be a joint risk assessment. Consider different types of risk and acknowledge that partnership means 'shared benefits' and 'shared risks'. Manage them together. (GMI Insight 4)
4. Being more convinced and confident now that you want to and can partner, jointly articulate principles and practices for how you will behave towards each other during the collaboration. Anticipate moments of tensions and possibly even strong disagreement and conflict, and proactively elaborate a conflict-protocol. (GMI Insight 2)
5. Spell out your principles, practices and conflict-protocol in a partnership agreement. If there is also a transfer of money from one of the participating agencies to another, complement it with a grant agreement. (GMI Insight 6)
6. Whatever the formal and written agreements, partnerships live, or enter into crisis and rupture, based on behaviours. Develop solid relationship competencies. (GMI Insight 3)
7. Many interactions between partners will take place between a very few people in the respective entities. But others, in each entity, at times will also need or demand something from a partner, to meet their own needs or priorities. Beware of conflicting attitudes and behaviours: ensure coherence in the relationship management. (GMI Insight 3)

All GMI Insights on partnering are available at

<https://www.gmentor.org/facilitation-and-partnership-brokering>