

Inspiration for Partnership activities in DPOD's mini programme

This catalogue describes ideas for partnership activities in line with DPOD's partnership strategy. Partnership activities are aimed at developing and strengthening a voluntary, long-term and mutually beneficial collaboration between organisations of people with disabilities in the north and in the south.

Who can apply for partnership activities?

Partnership activities can be applied for by north/south partners, and by country groups, who implement the partnership activity in the south. It is a precondition that applicants are familiar with DPOD's partnership strategy, and that the first partnership activity carried out is the partnership workshop described as workshop number 1.

Partnership activities will be funded through the mini-programme budget line 'project support' (format A4 and A4.1, see guidelines for filling in the formats). The maximum amount is DKK 100.000. Please note the brief reporting format that should be submitted to DPOD after the completion of each partnership activity.

The purpose of partnership activities is both to create a cost-effective means of achieving social development for people with disabilities and to strengthen disability organisations' participation in civil society. This kind of collaboration should always build on a shared vision and on respect for each others' contribution towards the realization of that vision. In other words, partnership is not only about *what* we do, but also *how* we do it together. Working together in partnership can be difficult, but it presents a learning opportunity for organisations both in the north and in the south. The partnership activities presented here are means of learning together in a systematic way.

The suggestions in this catalogue have been developed on the basis of results from a questionnaire survey carried out by DPOD among member organisations, their partners in the south, and development workers. The activities are mainly workshops, but can also be visits that relates directly to the partnership relation. The activities can be planned in connection with other project activities (planning and monitoring visits, etc), but the focus on the partnership relation - not project work - should be clear for all. The suggested length of the workshops is meant as a guideline only and can be adapted to specific needs.

DPOD is happy to offer assistance in assessments of what could be relevant partnership activities.

If partners agree on a topic for a workshop that is not described in this catalogue, please consult DPOD before submitting your proposal.

If partners have already completed a partnership activity, but believe that a follow-up activity is necessary, you are also welcome to contact DPOD before you submit your proposal.

1. Workshop: BECOMING PARTNERS (2½ - 3 days)

Who: Organisations in the north and the south who have already worked together for a while and who wants to expand or focus their collaboration in a long-term perspective.

It is important that leaders participate from both organisations. It is also important that other types of members are broadly represented at the workshop.

Why (objective): To discuss and define the kind of partnership the organisations want. To develop a partnership agreement that describes the agreed framework for collaboration and communication. The workshop is not for discussion of existing or future projects as such, but should focus on the overall purposes and principles for collaboration.

One size does not fit all when it comes to building partnerships so it is crucial to be clear about what kind of relation that organisations want and what kind of partnership they can honestly live up to. A partnership should have clear, but not necessarily the same, benefits for all involved. Both organisations should acknowledge their shared responsibility for achieving common goals. Both organisations should respect already existing partnerships and acknowledge these relations in work plans.

What do we gain (output): A more clear idea of our shared vision and values. The discussions in the workshop should lead to improved understanding and trust between partners, which should lead to better collaboration in the future.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): A signed partnership agreement. The agreement will specify who contributes with what, and who is responsible for what. It will also specify how the development of the partnership is to be monitored in the future.

Resources (input):

- Participants' own experience and expectations
- Guidelines for partnership agreements
- Example of partnership agreement (available at DPOD)
- Draft workshop programme (available at DPOD)
- Draft ToR for external facilitator (available at DPOD)
- For inspiration and adaptation by facilitators: Materials for workshop process ('ice breakers', onion skin model etc)

2. Workshop: WORKING TOGETHER WITH A DEVELOPMENT WORKER (2 days)

Who: A set of North/South organisations or country groups in the north or south who have already employed a development worker or who are about to employ one.

It is important that the director, the board, and key staff of the organisations participate with a representative from DPOD as well. The development worker can join the workshop if relevant.

Why (objective): To discuss the terms of appointment for all involved, including the specific job description for the development worker. The terms of appointment should specify the scope of work and the roles and responsibilities of each of the involved parties. Communication, reporting lines and conflict management should be addressed. The job description should specify tasks and the mode of work and relationships. It should also describe working conditions, the host organisation and details regarding health insurance, security and accommodation.

Detailed work plans for the development worker as well as other actors should be developed for the first six months of the appointment.

What do we gain (output): A clear plan of who does what in the future and also how to handle changing conditions.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): The written (and signed, if possible) terms of appointment for a development worker including job description and capacity building plans.

Resources (input):

- Terms of appointment template (available at DPOD)
- Previous job descriptions (available in the partner organisations?)
- Format for work plan (available at DPOD)

3. Workshop: WORKING WITH FUNDERS (2 days)

Who: Pairs of organisations or country groups in the north or south who wish to work towards a more economically independent future of the southern organisation(s). Representatives from funding agencies or other relevant disability organisations or in the country can be invited.

Why (objective): To prepare the southern organisation for independent fundraising. To explore possibilities for financial support from local, regional and international sources.

To be successful in fundraising an organisation needs to be very clear in their presentation of themselves as an organisation, what they apply for funding for, and how they will report on progress.

What do we gain (output): A fund raising plan for making the organisation(s) more self-sustainable in the future

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): A plan of action that specifies who does what with regard to fundraising.

Resources (input):

- Participants' previous experience with funders.
- Existing project documents (available in the partner organisations)
- For inspiration and adaptation by facilitators: 'Working with funders' - Chapter 9 in 'The Partnership Toolkit: Tools for building and sustaining partnerships'. By the Collaboration Roundtable, 2001 (available at DPOD).

4. Workshop: MEN, WOMEN, HIV/AIDS AND THE RIGHTSBASED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT (1 day)

Who: Pairs of organisations in the south and in the north or country groups in the south, who wish to explore the links between disability, gender and HIV/AIDS within and outside the partnership relation. Guests from organisations that already have experience with gender and HIV/AIDS policies could be invited to share their experience.

Why (objective): The purposes for having this workshop can be several, for example:

- To explore gender issues in the daily work and how barriers to equal representation can be minimized internally in the organisation and externally in project activities.
- To look through central policy documents and amend the texts for increased gender equity.
- To explore possibilities for a work place policy on HIV/AIDS as well as guidelines for the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in project activities.
- To make strategies and action plans for the inclusion of disabled people in national and local initiatives for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.

In many countries gender relations, the risk of HIV/AIDS and barriers to accessing prevention and treatment are closely connected. Stigma and discrimination related to this complex is pervasive. Disability organisations need to be well prepared to address this issue in internal as well as external relations.

If necessary, the scope of the workshop can be reduced to only dealing with either disability and gender relations or disability and HIV/AIDS.

What do we gain (output): More clear ideas of what disability, gender and HIV/AIDS means in our daily work and lives, and how we can address it as disability organisations.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): Among others the indicators could be:

- Proposals for amending policy papers and other documents at the next coming general assembly.
- An action plan for addressing disability, gender relations and HIV/AIDS internally in the organisation.
- An action plan for mainstreaming disability, gender relations and HIV/AIDS in project activities

Resources (input):

- Participants' own experience with discrimination.
- Central documents in the organisations (regulations, project documents etc).

5. Workshop: CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION (1 day)

Who: Partner organisations or country groups in the north or south.

Why (objective): To improve communication and collaboration skills of member organisations. Another purpose could be to strengthen the ability to manage potential conflicts within and outside the partnership relation.

This workshop will assist in clarifying communication routines in the collaboration between partners. It will look at differences and shifting tensions as windows of opportunity rather than as barriers to partnership. Differences and tensions are not a problem in themselves, but the way they are handled can become a problem. Interest based negotiation is best served when those involved listen carefully, ask open, rather than closed questions, summarize what has been said to see if they have understood correctly and agree to disagree when necessary in order to move the discussion forward. Conflicts are opportunities to become clearer on partners' roles, capacities and priorities.

Preferably, this workshop should be held before conflict arises, but it can also be held as a way of remedying existing conflict. An external facilitator, who knows the negotiation styles of both Denmark and the country in the south well, should be hired to run the workshop.

What do we gain (output): An agreement on communication routines and possibly a procedure for handling negotiations and conflicts to be used in and outside the partnership relation.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): A brief written and signed statement on communication that can be added to the partnership agreement.

Resources (input):

- Participants' own experience of successful and less successful communication.
- Compatibility checklist (for inspiration and adaptation by the facilitator see page 56 in 'The Partnership Toolkit: Tools for building and sustaining partnerships'. By the Collaboration Roundtable, 2001. The checklist is available at DPOD).
- Role plays will be very useful in practicing negotiation styles.

6. Workshop: BUILDING A STRONG DISABILITY ORGANISATION (1 day)

Who: Pairs of organisations or country groups in the north or south. Can be combined with an exchange visit, where partners join board meetings in the south or in the north.

Why (objective): To explore differences and similarities in organisational culture, including the roles and functions of boards, secretariats, members and volunteers.

This workshop provides an opportunity to discuss different structures and processes in a democratic organisation that ensures the equal representation of poor and rich, women and men, persons with and without disability, etc. Topics will include the establishment of elected boards, what should be described in an organisation's rules, what it means to represent a constituency, and how to make decisions in a transparent way. The different roles and responsibilities of decision-makers, secretariats, members and volunteers should be addressed explicitly.

The workshop will focus on ways of strengthening both partners in terms of organisational capacity, including how to balance the partnership relation with the acknowledgement that both organisations have the last word with regard to their own activities.

What do we gain (output): Clearer ideas for strengthening the partner organisations internally.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): An action plan for each of the two organisations, which specifies the next steps towards becoming stronger organisations.

Resources (input):

- Participants' own experience of power relations in organisations

- DUF organisational handbook (only available in Danish at <http://www.duf.dk/web/data.nsf>)

7. DEMOCRACY AND DECISION MAKING (2-5 days)

Who: Members of partner organisations or country groups in the north or south who have a specific learning purpose for visiting their partner organisation.

Why (objective): To expand the opportunity for shared learning between partners or country groups through visits with a specific focus on organisational issues - particularly styles of decision making, democracy and transparency. Elected board members, and other relevant parties, should be involved to ensure broad engagement in the organisations and to facilitate mutual understanding and respect between partners.

The visits can include participation in annual meetings, where elections take place, in working group meetings, visits to local branches, participation in country group meetings, or in national advocacy events or campaigns, etc.

What do we gain (output): Experience with other forms of organisation which should be fed into one's own organisational development according to recommendations in a travel report.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): A travel report with observations and recommendations of relevance for one's own organisation. The report should be shared widely in both organisations and include a suggested time schedule for the implementation of recommendations. The recommendations and the time schedule for the implementation of recommendations should be discussed and endorsed at board level. The visit could be followed up by a workshop on organisational development in one's own organisation.

Resources (input):

- Central documents in the organisations (regulations, project documents etc).

8. Workshop: JOINT MONITORING OF PARTNERSHIP (2-3 days)

Who: Pairs of organisations or country groups in the north or south.

Why (objective): To stimulate joint learning and reflection through monitoring of the partnership relation.

It is important that monitoring of the partnership relation is on-going and regular. This workshop opportunity forms a forum for sharing experience and to make agreements on how to further improve the relationship in the coming year.

If a partnership agreement has been developed, the workshop forms an opportunity to adjust or refine the section on monitoring of the partnership.

What do we gain (output): A clearer idea of monitoring methods and how they can assist organisations in continued learning and strengthen partnerships.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): A monitoring plan that includes a time schedule and specifies who is responsible for what part of the process. The plan can be added to the partnership agreement as an annex.

Resources (input):

- Participants' own experience of important learning moments
- The partnership agreement
- For inspiration and adaptation by facilitators: Partnership Self-Assessment Toolkit by Anna Frearson (Available at DPOD).

9. Workshop: MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST (1 day)

Who: Pairs of organisations or country groups in the north or south.

Why (objective): To discuss and define what is meant by accountability in general and to funders and members specifically. To discuss and define what is meant by transparency in the organisation.

Accountability is the principle that individuals, organisations and the community are responsible for their actions and may be required to explain them to others. It is the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in light of agreed expectations. There is a difference between responsibility and accountability: responsibility is the obligation to act; accountability is the obligation to answer for an action. An organisation is accountable to both funders ('upwards') and members ('downwards').

The workshop should specifically address what it means for accountability that the Danish donor brings the funding and the southern partner needs this funding. What are the consequences of this fact for accountability? Mechanisms to strengthen accountability and transparency could be discussed, such as the election of staff members outside the board and the administration to be responsible for internal auditing.

What do we gain (output): A clearer idea of what accountability means for our daily work.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): A brief statement summarising decisions regarding accountability and transparency, which can be signed and added to the partnership agreement.

Resources (input):

- Participants' own experience with demanding or living up to norms for accountability.
- Rules of the organisation.

10. Workshop: ADVOCACY AND ATTENTION (1 day)

Who: Pairs of organisations or country groups in the north or south. This workshop may be particularly useful in a south-to-south exchange of experience.

Why (objective): Disability organisations often need to mobilise political support for their work (which is different from financial support). This work-shop offers an opportunity for partners to be introduced to advocacy as an activity in its own right and to receive training in advocacy techniques. Partner organisations that already have experience with advocacy can exchange ideas and develop stakeholder analyses and new advocacy plans together.

Advocacy to mobilise political support is different from other information and communication activities on disabilities etc. But some of the same media can be used for both advocacy and information. The workshop will introduce partners to drama, radio, TV and other media that can be used for advocacy activities.

An example of a successful advocacy event in Denmark is the Green Concert events organised by the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Denmark.

What do we gain (output): Clearer ideas about what advocacy is and how it can be used strategically to strengthen the organisations.

How can we keep track of what we learned (indicator): A simple advocacy plan that states what advocacy activities partners will carry out, and how they should be coordinated.

Resources (input):

- Participants' previous experience with 'getting messages across'
- Examples of advocacy plans (may be available with facilitator).
- Guide for stakeholder analysis (available at DPOD).