



The Benefits of Working in Partnership and Ideas for Good Practice

Benefits

- Non-HEI: time + money to do research, chance to get something done which wouldn't otherwise
- HEI: chance to engage with resources + processes
- Exchanging expertise
- HEI: A new confidence from managing a complex project
- Ripples of benefits, planned + unplanned
- Non-HEI: Delivering Local Authority service objectives
- HEI: Student profile raised outside of organisation, improves employability (CDA)
- Improves academic understanding of how museums work
- Non-HEI: promotional, intellectual, strategic, financial
- Incentives, business needs
- Investment capital and intellectual capital exchange
- Longer term relationships with HEIs / non-academic organisations
- Uniqueness of projects / research
- Can result in resources for both partners
- Academics may have access to student volunteers

- New ways of working:
 - Broader horizons, new perspectives, outside the box, new left-field research methodologies
 - Break out of the traditional disciplinary frameworks of HEIs
 - Learn how other institutions' and fields' people ask different kinds of questions and find different ways of working
 - Gives people time and space to step out of normal environment

- Brings different resources and audiences, different knowledge or perspectives to a shared project
- Stimulate new ideas / research / thinking

- Greater impact:
 - Profile-raising, including with Local Authority (non-HEI)
 - More fundraising clout
 - Tourist impact, sense of place
 - HEI: Influence policy outside HEI
 - Perception of academic research being detached, not useful; this could raise the profile of applied research
 - HEI: reach out to wider audience
 - Partnership working reaches out to others working in sector, providing support + stimulus
 - Collaboration can lead to greater understanding of impact of research
 - Make sure that people who aren't university students get access to research and learn why it matters
 - Wider mission – benefit to UK; shaping national debate
 - Create bigger impact, for bigger projects that can't be done alone

- Outside perspective, criticality:
 - Learning from one another
 - Catalyst to change of attitudes
 - Self-awareness, constructive criticism, self-esteem, value beyond own base
 - Self-awareness – collaboration with other organisations increases awareness of own strengths/weaknesses

Hints & tips / Good practice

- Practicalities in setting up project / proposal:
 - Clarity of expectations regarding purpose of project, i.e project aims + outcomes
 - Safeguard student interests (CDA)
 - For all schemes, establish whose code of practice is being worked to – HEI's or partner's or both
 - At application stage, clearly state benefits & make clear value for all partners
 - Agree parameters and protocols for contact
 - Clarity of roles, agree division of labour at the start
 - Issues to be resolved at planning stage: management structure for life cycle should be robust, transparent + flexible
 - Decide how to manage issues and problems as and when they arise, have set mechanism to resolve issues – conflict management
 - Important to think and plan before submitting proposal, otherwise may find that only have a clear idea of what / who want from partner once have started working on the project.
 - Bear in mind IP / copyright issues – partner organisation may want to use results
 - Partnership agreements are important
 - Establish expectations
 - If conducting research about a partner organisation / their collection, there is an assumption that findings will be welcomed; consider the possibility that findings will be negative & unwelcome
 - Clear timescale + milestones + project management – plan at application stage
 - Awareness of risk management
 - Include realistic costings in a bid
- Qualities which will help a partnership work:
 - Clarity on each other's bottom line
 - Develop relationship, strong lines of communication; relationships that allow for regular dialogue
 - Open-minded to different work cultures and ways of working between organisations; adaptability to organisation's developing culture is important
 - Willingness to collaborate

- Willingness to pursue funding together, e.g agree project champion(s) + leader(s)
 - Common language, shared interest + agenda
 - The interests of both parties should be central, there should be benefits for both
 - Keep in mind the importance of self-reflection
 - Need to be open to change, use creativity
 - Trust between organisations is important
 - Flexibility, re-evaluation, reflection, review
 - Bear in mind different factors/risks/potential for changing parameters when devising timetable
- During the project / project management:
 - PhD student & academic onsite at partner organisation (CDA)
 - Mediation role of Research Office between academics and partner organisation, need good communication between HEI Research Office and Admin dept in the partner organisation
 - Make all staff in partner organisation aware of work
 - Sharing process rather than just end product
 - Quarterly review of projected outcomes
 - Advisory board with regular meetings, membership from across different sectors
 - On really big projects, consider use of outside project manager
 - Include adequate admin support - less stressful for academics + non-HEI partners if someone else deals with some/all practicalities
 - Use recognised project management methodology
 - Using web 2.0 technologies - twitter, facebook, e-networks/communities
- Use a stepped approach to building partnerships from smaller to longer term + larger scale projects: maybe Research Network, then CDA or Knowledge Catalyst, then Research Grant
 - For CDAs, establish clearly how much freedom the student can have over the direction of the research; is it fixed? Preferably be open-minded to idea that in most cases the CDA student is the project manager, they will 'own' the project and take the research in their own direction.
 - CDA days for networking have been invaluable

- Exploring differences & then coming to shared understanding
- Start with partner organisation – what research do they need, what are their strategic aims, think about who could work together on this & which funding call would be appropriate
- May be barriers to starting partnerships because of established frameworks and old-fashioned thinking
- Be confident about what your organisation has to offer
- Maximise on strengths of various organisations / collaborative partnerships
- Idea-led collaboration