



THE REMOTE PARTNERING WORK BOOK

Issue 1: February 2018

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1. REMOTE PARTNERING MATTERS

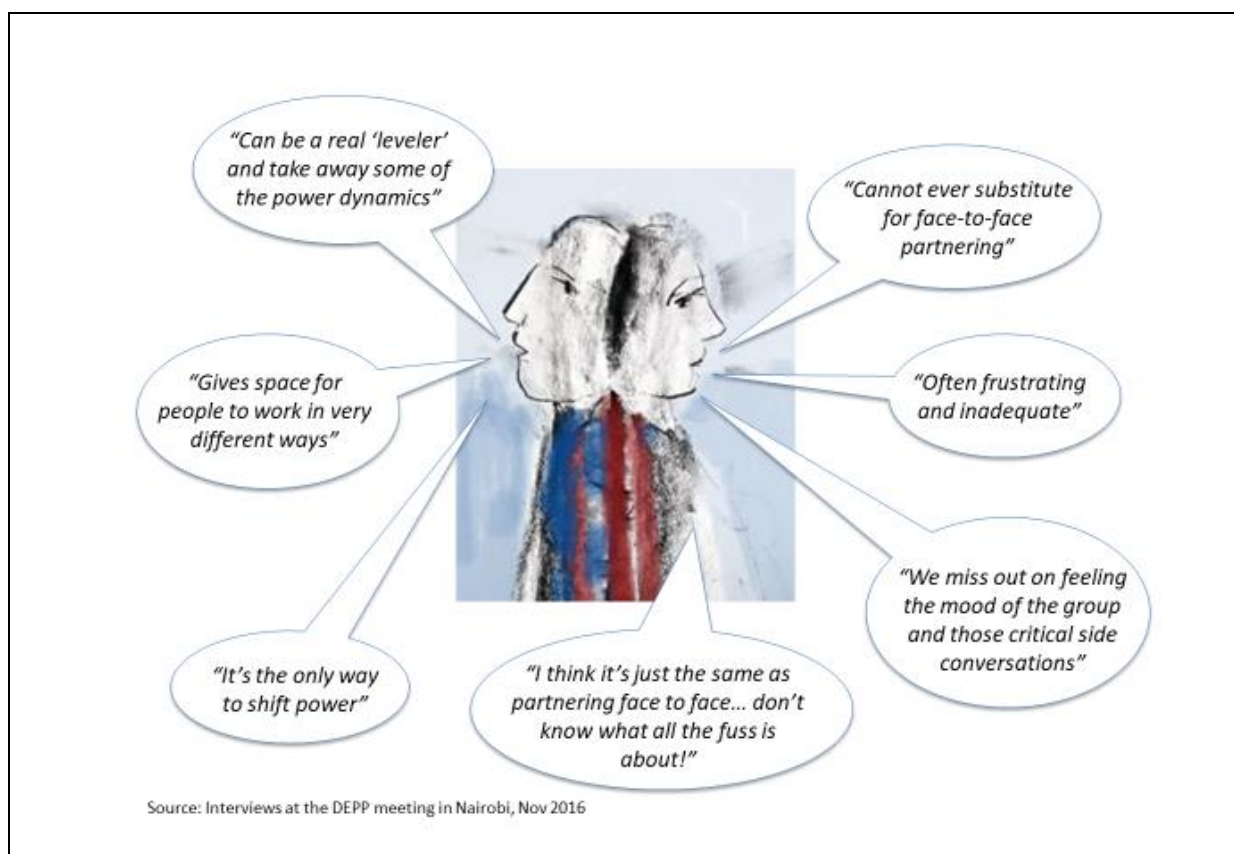
*“My work is here, their work is there.
Why would I go there to do my job?
Why would they come here?”¹*

In September 2016, the Remote Partnering Project² was launched. It was created to explore and build capacity for partnering effectively long-distance. The founding partner organisations (see page 43) shared a suspicion that the issue of ‘remoteness’ had not, till then, been explored as a key feature in partnering. An early literature review, together with a global survey, webinars and 1-2-1 interviews with practitioners, confirmed that this was indeed the case.

It is surprising given that partnership has recently been positioned as absolutely central to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – even being cited (as SDG 17) as a goal in its own right – and it is clear that a very high percentage of partnerships linked to the SDG are being developed and delivered, to a very considerable extent, ‘long-distance’.

Having said that, once we started our exploration of the subject, it quickly became clear that partnership practitioners (by which we mean those involved as partners and/or as partnership coordinators/brokers/managers) were quite mixed in their views about whether or not remote partnering was a problem or an opportunity – some even questioned whether it was an issue at all.

Box A: Different Views of Remote Partnering



So it seems that for at least some practitioners, partnering remotely is just ‘business as usual’ – much like any other way of partnering – and not worthy of being singled out for special attention. Whilst on the other hand, many more of the practitioners we contacted had a lot to say – in fact simply asking questions about remote partnering experiences seems to have unleashed strongly felt views (both of

¹ As with all quotes (in orange font) throughout this Work Book, this is a direct quotation from a partnership practitioner working remotely

² www.remotepartnering.org

frustration and excitement). The range of views is in itself interesting and played its part in shaping the development of the Remote Partnering Project in its 2nd phase (January to September, 2017).

We started by setting up a (face-to-face!) Practitioner Design Lab – to consider what it might take to turn remote partnering into a rigorous and creative way of working that could transform systems and operational approaches. We considered: different ways of ‘knowing’ and ‘learning’; how we might better hone and use our senses to gain more understanding and insight; what it would take to embed core partnering values and principles long-distance; how games, stories and imagery might help turn on-line business meetings into rich and imaginative communication and more... Much of what was explored has been incorporated into this book (see section 5 and 7) and into other on-line practitioner resources (see page 41 for details).

The Design Lab helped set the stage for remote partnering itself becoming a laboratory for exploring, challenging and invigorating the partnership paradigm.

This Work Book is, we hope, a useful starting point for considering how remote partnering can become the prompt for better (more inclusive, more transparent, more transformative) partnering approaches and practices.

Box B: Objectives of the Work Book

This Work Book has been developed to support and encourage practitioners who are involved in remote partnering by:

- **Stimulating** new thinking about the challenges and the potential of partnering remotely
- **Sharing** some initial ideas on what it takes to partner remotely creatively and effectively
- **Providing** practical tools to assist in designing and implementing fit-for-purpose approaches
- **Building** momentum for system change and transformational collaboration

Before we go on, we should explore what constitutes ‘remote’ in the term ‘remote partnering’. Clearly it is not just a question of geographic distance, though that is the obvious starting point, but, based on what we have learned from practitioners, it can also include:

- **Inaccessibility** – due to hard to reach areas and insecure locations
- **Political or cultural divergence** – partners not working with the same operational norms
- **Differentials in social/economic status** – elitism at local as well as global levels
- **Active conflict** – practitioners having to work ‘under the radar’
- **Sense of isolation** – having to make and hold to difficult decisions without support

However ‘global’ we are in our ability to communicate and connect, and however much we have in common as human beings, there are huge differences in terms of cultural diversity, values, languages, expectations, infrastructure, capabilities, priorities and needs.

“Where we have most struggled in partnering remotely is to take proper account of the considerable cultural diversity. Partners from one culture are more disposed to frank and open dialogue, while those from another tend to be more conservative/deferential/hierarchical. There is a lot of work involved in bringing very different cultural norms together and to ensure that the preferences of each partner are acknowledged, respected and incorporated.”

It is of fundamental importance, we believe, that our remote partnering efforts should always be geared towards celebrating and building on diversity rather than seeking to contain or control it. Whilst we can share our partnering experiences and learn from each other’s endeavours, each of our partnerships will be unique and each of us will have to learn first-hand what works in our specific set of circumstances.

Box C: Location of Those Who Provided Information for This Publication



This Work Book has been constructed from the first-hand experiences of many practitioners working in long-distance partnerships, whether out of choice or necessity. The specific challenges and opportunities that arise in this partnering genre are only now being explored seriously even though remote partnering has been a reality for a while. In fact, as far as we are aware, the Remote Partnering Project (from which this Work Book is a product) is the first systematic attempt to understand the attributes of remote partnering and to provide ideas and support for those who partner but who never (or only rarely) meet face-to-face.

This is written by practitioners for practitioners – it is a modest contribution to building global capacity to partner long-distance in ways that will be impactful and sustainable. We hope you find it stimulating and useful and we look forward to this (the first edition!) quickly becoming supplanted as we incorporate new knowledge and experiences from practitioners sharing what they are learning in the multiplicity of circumstances in which they are each operating.

We don't know what we don't know – this Work Book is not a 'how to do it' manual. It is the first step into what we hope will become an on-going enquiry and a global movement.

2. EMERGING DEFINITIONS & FRAMEWORKS

Remote partnering refers to working mostly long-distance as part of a structured collaborative relationship. Groups of people working from different entities share a common social or environmental purpose and are accountable to each other, but they largely work long-distance, across different locations, cultures and time zones, rather than face-to-face.

The definition above was coined in September 2016 as a starting point for a research project into the particular characteristics, challenges and opportunities associated with partnerships or other multi-stakeholder collaborations that operate long-distance, and we continue to use it in this Work Book until it is replaced by something better.³

It seems to be the general mind-set that face-to-face is the default mode of partnering. We believe, however, that the time has come to challenge this and to re-frame our partnering mind-sets accordingly. Practitioners exploring this issue⁴ suggest that there may be three key questions to be addressed:

1. Do the same approaches and principles apply equally to both partnering modalities?
2. How different are the experiences of these two types of partnering and what needs to change?
3. Are there new ways to make remote partnering a robust and transformative experience?

Our underlying premise is that, for a number of reasons, remote partnering is a reality whether this is for cost saving/efficiency/environmental protection reasons or because many of those needing assistance are simply inaccessible to non-local actors. As discussed earlier, whilst some see remote partnering as an unfortunate necessity, others see it as an exciting and preferable alternative. Our understanding of remote partnering is emerging, but for now, the frameworks that we share in this Work Book are based on the following hypotheses:

- a. **Remote partnering refers to those partnering processes that are predominantly conducted remotely**, but it does not mean that those involved do not have any face-to-face contact. It is difficult to determine at which point we can describe an engagement as predominantly remote. Face-to-face and remote partnering can perhaps be placed on a continuum, with some experiences being largely remote, and some being largely face-to-face.
- b. **The same Partnering Principles⁵ apply to any partnering process**, though different contexts are likely to generate different kinds of challenges to the principles. Each partnership has to find its own context-appropriate ways to meet its challenges.
- c. **The partnering processes envisaged in the partnering cycle⁶ are relevant for any kind of partnering** – with remote partnerships bringing distinct nuances within the same generic process.
- d. **Innovative use of technology is crucial for partnering effectively long distance, but this often does not address the challenge of including local partners, who may be in areas of poor internet connectivity**. The question: how to partner remotely in areas where access to technology cannot be taken for granted, remains a challenge that does not seem to have an immediate means of resolution.
- e. **Remote partnering requires significant amounts of time and discipline**. It may save on travel time and costs, but it cannot compromise in terms of investment in partnership

³ Research report is available from: www.remotepartnering.org

⁴ In a practitioner workshop in the Philippines in July 2017

⁵ See Section 5

⁶ See Section 6

building. Remote partnering is not a quick fix to meet challenges of time or funding constraints.

As evidenced throughout this Work Book, there are wide-ranging responses to remote partnering, from those who experience it as far more equitable to those who feel deeply frustrated with the lack of face-to-face contact. There are, however, four questions that seem to stand out across all testimonies on remote partnering:

- The idea of devolving/transferring control for different aspects of the partnership to those partners who are best placed to lead on them. To this end, building openness and reliance on each other is not only critical, it is one of the fundamental premises for building remote partnerships. **How can this be built into the scoping phase of the partnership and into partner assessment processes?**
- Since partnerships entail co-creation and co-evolution, **what, in a remote partnering scenario can and must be co-created and what will require critical friendship rather than co-creation?**
- Partners miss the informal side of conversations, non-verbal expressions as well as the ‘touch and the feel’ when they partner remotely. One of the key challenges that the Work Book tries to address is: **how to create approaches that enable partners to come alive to each other even if they are located long distance?**
- In a partnership that is largely developed and run remotely, **when are face-to-face contacts and/or visits essential and how can they best be planned and conducted to optimise their value?**

With these four questions in mind, is it possible to work towards a vision of what the impact of really innovative and effective remote partnering might be? The partners and practitioners involved in the Remote Partnering Project to date hope that the answer to that question is a resounding ‘yes’. As a contribution towards this, here is our collective first attempt to articulate that vision:

In an effective remote partnering system, partners get beyond the disadvantages and explore new ways of working together long-distance that give space for understanding each other's constraints and building opportunities for innovation and breakthrough. They operate in a principled way through giving and receiving feedback, exploring how to work well together and being prepared to challenge and to change.

Diversity and distance become productive, as the separation gives time for individual reflection, imagination and re-framing that leads to new insights and collective action.

Within the partnership, each partner can work at their own pace, according to their own capabilities, whilst focusing on the needs of their constituencies and on supporting the needs of others. Sharing this common thread of connectedness and consciousness, each partner feels genuinely empowered to weave an original story, embedded within their local culture, history and environment, that enables themselves and their community to evolve context-appropriate ways of doing new things.⁷

⁷ Developed during the Design Lab of the Remote Partnering Project (2017) by a group of partnership practitioners

3. UNCOVERING CRITICAL ISSUES

All partnerships experience challenges of one kind or another, but it seems from the input received from practitioners and partners to date that there are four important challenges that are rather specific to remote partnering so these have been singled out for some detailed consideration.⁸

Context:



“The context defines both the limitations and the opportunities for a partnership. It is a matter of both history and context – in some countries, where there is a strong culture of collaboration, partnering comes naturally.”

The issue of context – by which we mean all aspects of the environment in which the partnership is operating – is very significant since the challenges (and opportunities) are so dependent on external factors over which partners may have little control. This raises a number of questions. When the situation is such that partners are rarely able to meet, how is it possible to convey the realities and complexities of each of the, often very different, contexts? How can partners keep up and adapt their partnering approaches when some contexts are particularly volatile or rapidly changing? How often is ‘context’ (perhaps presented as ‘cultural norms’) used as an excuse for resisting change – even when it is clear that without some adaptation the partnership won’t work?

“I often hear people push back by saying “this won’t work in our context” which can be hard to counter and I suspect that this is often used as an excuse for not examining a suggestion and/or being unwilling to change.”

The issue of context is usually thought of as a problem of understanding from ‘North’ to ‘South’ but some INGOs report issues of their own contexts (pressures, constraints, external changes impacting their funding etc.) being misunderstood and not taken account of by their local partners.

“Partners in the field often complain that INGOs do not understand their constraints well enough. And, of course, this may well be true. But my experience as an INGO is that those we work with in the field find it equally hard to recognise that we also have many constraints that they don’t understand. This leads to considerable tension and sometimes even breakdown in the relationship.”

Food for thought:

It is probably quite critical to partnering remotely to help partners understand each other’s contexts as vividly as possible. This will enable partners to construct partnerships that are able to take full account of diversity as well as helping them to assess when it is necessary to go with things as they are and when it is more important to challenge “business as usual”.

Language:

“Language makes what we feel and think visible. Only when we speak in our own language do we really speak from the heart.”



Closely linked to context is the issue of language. Many feel that their language is central to defining who they are, and in global partnering arrangements, all too often partners are required to communicate in their second (or even fourth or fifth) language. This is a challenge when writing but even more so when speaking by phone or Skype without the advantage of visual communication and time to collect thoughts or to clarify issues.

⁸ For a more detailed exploration of context, language and time see: www.defyingdistance.org (Doing Different)

“We use English as the nearest we can get to a common language, but English is seen by some as a less direct language making it hard to get the real message. Do those who are not native English speakers always understand what is (and what is not) being said? It is clear to all that people who are fluent in English have a big advantage in our remote partnering communications and those who are not, often withdraw from the conversation and just feel marginalised.”

In partnering, understanding each other is critical. Knowing one can convey things that are important, feeling that one has been heard and understood are both essential to feeling acknowledged, respected and valued. Each partnership that crosses language boundaries probably needs to consider the language issue far more carefully than is normal practice.

“An additional issue is our great dependence on interpreters/translators. Translators are not regarded in the countries in which we work as in any sense ‘high status’ so they are easily belittled and put under subtle pressures. This means no one is ever quite sure exactly what has and has not been communicated. This is quite serious and potentially quite dangerous because decisions are often made based on misunderstandings and unsubstantiated assumptions.”

Food for Thought:

If those involved in remote partnering can take a lead in working out how to work better across different languages, this will be a significant contribution to the global partnering movement really taking root with partnering activities far more strongly located in the language(s) and cultures of those whose lives they impact.

Time:



“Taking time to do things carefully especially when working long-distance, as well as committing quality time to partnership building, is a mark of respect for other partners.”

Time is a key feature in partnering whether because of external time pressures (for example, in conflict or emergency responses) or because those involved in less urgent (but nevertheless important) partnerships for development are not able to dedicate enough time to partnership building amongst other pressing priorities.

Time is the excuse most frequently cited for partnerships being slow to deliver results or for working sub-optimally. It seems that time constraints may be even more of a feature in remote partnering.

“Operating remotely seems to put partnerships under even more time pressure. For example, it’s hard to schedule calls when everyone is available over different time zones and therefore, when we do talk, there’s such a lot to cover and many key issues have become more pressing by the time we finally connect. It’s not that emails/instant messages are not used, but it’s difficult to resolve many issues without real-time input from everyone involved.”

What are our options for overcoming ‘time poverty’? What will it take for partners to make their partnership a priority and give it the time it requires?

“On-line meetings have to be efficient and they require all concerned to give the time to being really well prepared. If partners are obviously not well prepared, I simply postpone the meeting.”

Food for Thought:

As partnership practitioners, how assertive do we have to be? How much discipline do we need to bring to the table? What new behavioural and attitudinal norms do we need to establish?

Technology:

“When online communication is intentionally designed and facilitated to be participatory in all aspects, it can have a strong partnership-building impact.”



Remote partnering has been transformed by the extraordinary developments in technology that make communication across distance easy and immediate. But technology also raises questions of equity since in many of the areas of the world where partnering is most needed, connectivity can be extremely unreliable and/or electronic communications are subject to surveillance. Even where it is both safe and relatively reliable, on-line communication can be experienced as frustrating and inadequate.

“I think remote partnering is very hard to do on-line. It so quickly becomes more about sharing information rather than relationship building. People seem to be far more disrespectful on-line – coming to meetings unprepared and not actively contributing (probably even working on other things during the conversation). This leaves those with a greater sense of responsibility to carry disproportionately more.”

So how do we approach technology in new ways that enable effective and empowering partnering processes?

“Certain technological tools are hugely helpful in building and reinforcing partnering principles and equitable approaches. There can even be greater openness through sharing documents and online spaces for collaborative work. We just need to build confidence and a willingness to explore on-line options to optimise these possibilities.”

The pro-active use of shared documents and on-line spaces for collaborative work can open up a whole new arena of potential for exploration of both content and process of partnerships but they do need thinking about in relation to each partnership. In order to truly benefit, thought needs to go into thinking about what is needed for each particular context of a partnership. Technology can be a powerful enabler for partnering remotely in a number of the following ways:

Video conferencing can bridge the divide between being remote and face-to-face as it provides a type of remote face-to-face and by seeing each other, builds relationships, cultural understanding and appreciation of diversity. Where this is an equity issue because of poor connectivity, low bandwidth options can be explored. However, it should be remembered that some people are still uncomfortable with using video.

An additional issue is whether it is reasonable to use video conferencing whilst people are at home – it can be felt by some to be an imposition and/or too exposing. It shouldn't be assumed video conferencing outside of a day-to-day work environment is easy or acceptable to all. Conversely, video conferencing away from the work environment may provide opportunities for creating a more personal atmosphere where people feel more comfortable in sharing because it is from a more private context, and this can contribute to greater group cohesion and openness.

The important thing is to check – both context and timing are all important.

Maximising audio only: Audio can be used far better than it is – there are lessons to be learned from talk radio and how to engage people and acknowledge when people have spoken. The silence

experienced when someone has spoken can be counteracted for example, with active responses from the rest of the group to mitigate the lack of body language to show having heard someone.

Shared editing of documents is becoming more and more commonplace – examples are Google Drive and Dropbox. The value of keeping live on-line minutes is a transparent way of recording views and ensures that those involved see their inputs are being recorded/respected. Protocols can jointly be developed for editing and deleting such as naming one or more people to write notes during the meeting with others verifying the notes as they're being written to ensure all voices are being captured.

Shared knowledge management: Dropbox, Google Drive and many other shared document sites are being used increasingly to ensure every partner has access to all documents in real time.

Collaborative project management: Using on-line tools for partners to work together e.g. Slack, a collaborative platform used by many as it has built-in team and project channels and integrates Googledocs, calendars etc. Specific platforms support partnerships because standard communication channels such as email and WhatsApp limit the accessing and archiving of documents.

Shared decision-making: Increasing on-line tools to help people come to decisions transparently and collaboratively as well as track reservations/concerns e.g. Loomio, Glass frog. These tools are particularly good for large groups of people and to get quick feedback on decisions or issues being raised by the partnership.

On-line dialogue: Social media, messaging and networking sites such as Twitter, Whatsapp (increasingly used in many places as the default mode of conversation between groups), Mighty Networks, Discourse, Viber etc. are being used to great effect. For example, Facebook Workplace, is an attempt to break down barriers and find a hybrid between personal and professional.

Food for Thought

How can some of these on-line tools be introduced within partnerships without increasing anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed by technology? How can they be used in ways that build a more equitable and open partnership? How can they help to re-invigorate a partnership that has lost its creativity and drive?

4. IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

“In my culture and experience, 80% of communication is through eye contact and getting a sense from visual clues about what impact the conversation is having. Without this it takes much longer to gain confidence and build genuine trust. All my partnering decisions require me to make a judgement call on my own – this is a lot of pressure on me as the person who ‘signs off’ on the country-based partnerships and the one who will be accountable if/when things go wrong.”

In the last section we covered four key challenges that are particularly relevant to partnering remotely. There are further 5 key issues that have been identified over many years as applying to most partnerships (even where partners meet regularly face-to-face) that have given rise to key partnering principles. These are:

1. Anxiety about difference
2. Power imbalance
3. Hidden agendas
4. Competitiveness
5. Uncertainty about partnering

In the Section 5, we explore how these challenges and principles apply in remote partnering scenarios.

There are, however, several other challenges that, whilst they occur in all partnerships, may be further impacted by the additional factor of distance. By raising these as ‘challenges’ this is not to imply that they are simply problems to be addressed, but rather that they may be prompts for reflecting, re-thinking and re-framing partnering approaches.

Perhaps the first thing to consider is the mind-sets of all those involved (including our own!). One contributor to this publication when asked what their organisation’s main partnering challenges are produced the following list:

- ***Dealing with ‘dinosaurs’*** (usually older men that have a high status within their communities)
- ***The ‘transactional’ pitfall*** (where bureaucracy and accountability procedures breed dependency and reduce equity)
- ***Keeping the relationships flexible with sufficient room to manoeuvre*** when need is great and expectations are high
- ***Avoiding partners claiming exclusivity*** and behaving badly to newcomers
- ***Ensuring partners are open*** to other options and they don’t get ‘blind spots’
- ***Security concerns*** when working with new partners in high-risk contexts, where trustworthiness and mutual accountability are key
- ***Setting up new entities*** that function well and can become our partners over time
- ***Creating time*** to discuss complex partnering issues like the struggles regarding power imbalances

As a remote partnering practitioner where would you start to transform these challenges into opportunities for change and transformation?

What follows are those further challenges reported most frequently by practitioners working remotely.⁹

⁹ Our informants for the Remote Partnering Project came from across the globe (see map on page 5). Their challenges appear to be surprisingly similar across cultures and the North/South divide

Relationships with Donors/Funders

The relationship of partnerships to external donors (e.g. bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies) and/or funding intermediaries (e.g. INGOs) has proved time and again to be problematic specifically around the tension between horizontal and vertical accountability. Many report that their 'partnerships' feel very much like conventional project management and sub-contracted work than co-created and co-owned collaborations.

This is most strongly felt in terms of: the amount of bureaucracy involved; the lack of programmatic flexibility and the one-way reporting arrangements. These features are experienced by practitioners as in stark contradiction to the core principles of partnering and as negatively impacting the ability of partners to optimise their partnership.

Practitioners well understand that donors have obligations to ensure 'zero tolerance' to aid diversion and to other forms of corruption, but how can this be done without jeopardising either the partnership or the commitment to relocating power to local actors, which donors also claim is a key priority?

Quality Assurance

Linked to this is the issue of quality assurance. Who determines 'quality' in a multi-stakeholder venture? What does 'quality' mean for different stakeholders and who has the right to determine whether or not the efforts of partners are achieving 'quality' standards? Some practitioners suggest that this may need radical re-thinking or judgements will remain in the hands of a few who may be relatively remote from the local context and/or unaware of other aspects of the partnership's achievements.

Managing Expectations

How do practitioners working remotely manage the many expectations and pressures from those who 'smell the money'? This may be governments at national or local levels, or local NGOs wanting access to funds on almost any terms. How do practitioners manage their partnerships with the appropriate level of independence from political manipulation? And how much harder does this become when partnerships are multi-country and/or operate largely remotely?

Local Ownership

Whilst the potential of a greater level of local ownership is seen as a major advantage of remote partnering, what will it take in terms of how the partnerships are set up and managed for this to become a reality. What is the risk of INGOs creating a 'mini-me'¹⁰ at local level rather than standing back and seeing what types of entity emerge?

Internal Silos

It is not just external partner relationships that are experienced as challenging. Many of those working as partnership practitioners in INGOs report some serious disconnects within the entity – especially with recent moves towards more federated structures. *'You are too far away and live in an HQ bubble to know what it's like to...'* and *'You don't send information, reports and other data when we need it so we can report to donors and make effective funding decisions'* are common complaints from either end of the humanitarian aid and development 'supply chain'. Added to this there can be quite varied and inconsistent approaches to the very idea of partnering within the same entity.

Internal silos and unsystematic approaches can undermine partnerships and risk partners simply 'playing a partnership game' rather than seeing partnering as a principled approach that provides a strong foundation for challenging and changing 'business as usual'.

¹⁰ A term coined by one of the Remote Partnering Project INGO partners

Individuals and Risk

Last (but possibly first in importance) is the issue of the sole responsibility and personal risk that individuals working in partnerships carry in their day-to-day work – made considerably more stressful by operating in isolation and away from colleagues.

“Our work depends on key relationships that have to be ‘hidden’ as many of those we work with are at serious risk if their relationship to us is exposed. It means we have to work very hard and in subtle ways to understand, know and trust each other unconditionally. Our work depends on the power of the ‘heartfelt handshake’.”

“There are some partners I have literally never met. I am expected to invest resources in organisations and people with whom I have no established connection or sense of mutual respect or obligation. My overriding feeling as a manager of these partnerships is one of fear.”

There are many factors to consider and to become more sensitised to when partnering remotely – but it is not all struggle and adversity... partnering is an opportunity to do things differently and remote partnering may have a special contribution to make to many typical partnering dilemmas.

Box D: Possible Advantages to Partnering Remotely¹¹

- **Building greater equity** – everyone has to work equally hard to overcome challenges
- **More devolution** – de-centralisation and wider distribution of roles and responsibilities
- **Greater individual autonomy** – leadership taken at local levels that models a new way of working
- **Providing unexpected opportunities** – by having space and liberty to do things differently
- **Relocating control** – opens up possibilities to build locally grown/locally owned partnerships
- **Supporting constructive disruption** – by incorporating different voices and perspectives
- **Giving more space** – for people to work in very different ways (e.g. introverts who enjoy working alone)
- **Celebrating diversity** – by co-creating a range of ways of working that reflect different values and contexts

There may be two over-riding considerations here.

The first is about being willing to challenge anything that is not working and that is holding the partnership back from achieving its goals:

“The main thing is to have (and help others to have) the courage to speak and the capacity to say things in ways that those listening can hear.”

The second is accepting that we don't know what we don't know. We don't know, for example, what underlying drivers and constraints our partners (or donors) may be facing or what triggers a particular behaviour.

Food for Thought:

Perhaps a useful ‘golden rule’ for partnership practitioners – particularly when they are working remotely is: don't make assumptions, they may well be wrong – when in doubt, check it out!

¹¹ Ideas generated by a group of practitioners from Africa, Asia and Europe at a workshop (November, 2016)



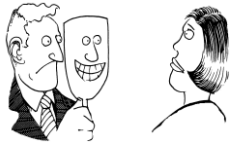

5. APPLYING PARTNERING PRINCIPLES REMOTELY

“To achieve an open, unbiased and fair partnership between very different entities requires us to take proper account of each other. This means on-going dialogue and the establishment of respectful working relationships. Doing this remotely can take more time and is more vulnerable to misunderstandings and operating at cross purposes so perhaps working remotely we need to make sure we work harder at it.”

Partnerships that work most effectively are those where the partners have pre-agreed some key partnering principles that will govern their behaviour, help to create a shared approach and can frame and underpin their work together. Some organisations bring their own partnering principles to their partnerships and, increasingly, partners spend time at an early stage of their working relationship to co-create the partnering principles that will best reflect their specific scenario and serve their needs.

Over time (drawing on more than two decades of partnering experience), five core principles have emerged and subsequently been used by partnerships and other forms of collaborative activity. These principles have evolved in response to specific partnering problems that are regularly identified by partners worldwide – they are outlined below.¹²

Box E: Five Core Principles in Effective Partnering

Problem	Principle
 <p>Anxiety about difference</p>	<p>Diversity</p> <p>Many go into partnerships with real anxieties about how possible it will be to work with those operating in different sectors and a fear that any difference of views will quickly lead to divergence, conflict and, possibly, relationship breakdown. A commitment to exploring each others’ motivation, values and underlying interests will build understanding and appreciation of the added value that comes from diversity.</p>
 <p>Power imbalance</p>	<p>Equity</p> <p>Power comes in many forms and is a valid aspiration for those who feel powerless, but all too often partnerships can be held hostage by individuals or organisations wielding power inappropriately. A partnership in which some partners are, or feel, marginalised has serious problems that need to be addressed. Equity is built by truly respecting the views, attributes and contributions of all those involved.</p>
 <p>Hidden agendas</p>	<p>Openness</p> <p>Partnerships quickly get stuck where there are (or are perceived to be) hidden agendas. There is a difference between information that needs to be confidential (for commercial or legal reasons) and information that has a bearing on the partnership and is intentionally kept secret. Whilst trust is not necessarily a precondition for partnering, it is an important aspiration. This is especially true where doing things differently are seen as high risk.</p>
 <p>Competitiveness</p>	<p>Mutual Benefit</p> <p>Competitiveness seems to be the modus operandi for many – particularly for those working in the same sector – and this can easily become highly destructive in partnerships. Agreeing to explore and build on the added value of collaboration and understanding the right of all partners to gain from their engagement in the partnership is an important commitment to the shared goals.</p>

¹² Table reproduced from *Brokering Better Partnerships* published by the Partnership Brokers Association (2017)



Uncertainty

Courage

Perhaps the only thing that all partners have in common at the start of any partnership is their uncertainty about each other, the partnership itself and what it will demand of them. Even a well-planned and prepared partnership has many unknowns in relation to the complex issues it seeks to address that require partners to be bold rather than tentative if they are to achieve breakthrough results.

To explore how to embed these key partnering principles when working remotely, we need to consider how different individuals respond to things and how we can use an approach that incorporates thinking, feeling and willing to make our partnering work more holistic in intent and in application.

Recent neuroscience findings¹³ have revealed that we have complex neural networks – or ‘brains’ – in our heart and gut as well as in our head, and that these other two are just as critical to understanding and to effective decision making as our minds.

We believe that there can be a significant advantage to engaging all three centres of intelligence and becoming more aware of the power and potency of each of their specialist functions:

- **Head (mind)** for analysis, creative thought and decision-making
- **Heart (feeling)** for empathy, relationships and values
- **Gut (will)** for motivation, will power and action

However, rather than making use of all three intelligence centres, there is a tendency to overemphasise (and over value) the ‘head brain’ over the other two. This is, thankfully, not true of all cultures and a real added value of partnering remotely is that we may be able to tap into other ways of knowing and understanding.

“All partnerships should be based on trust. Trust comes from understanding each other. Sometimes our remote partnering has created real trust issues that have affected the quality of the outputs and outcomes of our partnering work. Understanding each other is the key for good partnerships. Clarity about our different ways of knowing is the key to achieving real understanding.”




Can we reflect on the three ‘brains’ and use this three-fold approach to generate ideas about how best to embed the key partnering principles when partnering remotely?




The table below was developed by practitioners¹⁴ building on their own remote partnering experiences with a view to collecting and sharing their insights with peers.




It is a work in progress offering suggestions not instructions!




¹³ *mBraining - Using your multiple brains to do cool stuff* - Soosalu, G., Oka, M. April, 2012




¹⁴ At the Remote Partnering Project Design Lab (January 2017)

Overcome concerns about differences...	...by CELEBRATING DIVERSITY
 <p data-bbox="288 439 360 472">Mind</p>	<ul data-bbox="504 215 1394 501" style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage endless and boundless curiosity about what is different/unique about each partner and what unexpected value each could bring to the partnership – for example, ask each partner to use technology to share something about themselves or their organisation they think other partners might not know about them. • Change and reframe from an ‘economy of scarcity’ (what we don't have) to one of seeking and valuing what is available as ‘abundance’ – for example, by inviting each partner to articulate what they appreciate and value about the other partner(s). • Research into each partner’s organisation/sector and drivers and find the ‘hook’ or the ‘sweet spot’ on which to build that optimises the differences and creates new value.
 <p data-bbox="288 752 360 786">Heart</p>	<ul data-bbox="504 524 1385 810" style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate empathy by partners being invited to challenge their own assumptions, preconceptions and perspectives to open themselves to new insights and empathy for another’s point of view – for example, each partner presents the particular constraints and challenges they are facing in their organisation or country of operation. • Recognise that none of us know what we don't know, and encourage each other to be willing to learn about each other – for example, partners feel open to being asked questions and giving fulsome answers when questioned. • Be positively inclined to try and understand – engage warmly and with genuine interest.
 <p data-bbox="264 1019 386 1052">Will (gut)</p>	<ul data-bbox="504 833 1382 1059" style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways of bringing a real insight into the conditions and realities of each partner’s context – for example, by finding ways to bring the situation to life using stories, images, descriptions that will give as vivid as possible a picture. • Don’t rush to agreement at the cost of fully exploring and relishing differences of opinion – for example, airing very different points of view may lead to unexpected and better actions/activities. • Focus on being responsive rather than reactive and ensure there is ‘space’ for people to change and do the unexpected.

Address power imbalance...	... by BUILDING EQUITY
 <p data-bbox="288 1415 360 1449">Mind</p>	<ul data-bbox="504 1191 1394 1478" style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage partners to explore the (im)balance of power in the partnership. For example, this could be done by conducting an anonymous on-line survey with partners to determine how they perceive the power relationships and what they each need to promote a more equitable relationship between partners and share the findings openly. • Discuss and agree what is negotiable and what is non-negotiable and work to build as much equity as possible by reducing the ‘non-negotiables’ to the minimum. • Consider what each partner contributes uniquely to the partnership – build the idea that it is not just those bringing money that contribute to the effectiveness of the partnership – put a value on non-cash contributions.
 <p data-bbox="288 1706 360 1740">Heart</p>	<ul data-bbox="504 1500 1385 1762" style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a discussion on the issue of power and encourage people to be honest about feelings of powerlessness and discomfort. • Acknowledge that there are many different kinds of power (visible, invisible, economic, political power, financial, personality etc.) and explore how each feels and how it impacts the partnership. • Address feelings around change and uncertainty and the difficulties such feelings (usually unvoiced) create – for example, encourage the sharing of ideas on how each partner reacts to and works best with change so that they can support each other as and when needed.
 <p data-bbox="264 1971 386 2004">Will (gut)</p>	<ul data-bbox="504 1783 1394 2036" style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the rules of the game – for example by ensuring that roles are shared and too much power does not reside with one or two people – for example, rotate the role of chair and record-keeper. • Make it a requirement that each person has the opportunity to comment on a key issue – for example, don't take silence as consent. • Never let the loudest voices rule and find ways of including those who are quieter or feel less ‘important’ – for example, suggest each partner has a ‘buddy’ who will check in with them, support them, represent them and help them to become acclimatized to the partnership’s culture and way of working.

Deal with hidden agendas...	... by CREATING A CULTURE OF OPENNESS
 <p data-bbox="296 400 368 434">Mind</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 232 1390 412" style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask partners what they expect to contribute to the partnership (in the widest sense) and what they hope/expect to get from their engagement partnership. • Create opportunities (a 'safe space') for probing to check out if there are any other issues that need to be aired or that may be unacceptable. • Use the best technologies to have difficult conversations in relative safety focus on the interests and well-being of the partnership rather than personal agendas.
 <p data-bbox="293 701 368 734">Heart</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 441 1406 792" style="list-style-type: none"> • Devote some time on-line to non-work activities but such things that will enhance the relationships and make the partnership work better – for example, ask a different partner each time to start a meeting with a short game, ice-breaker or creative activity. • Use images, metaphors or mood pictures (emoticons) to enable partners to reveal something about themselves and their feelings about the partnership – for example, invite everyone to bring an object that describes how they see the partnership. If no video, then send images via Skype or email. • Work with stories – for example, set a theme and invite one partner to tell a story with just one word and each partner adds another word until a story starts to emerge. Then discuss what the story has revealed about the different views of/feelings about the partnership.
 <p data-bbox="268 1037 395 1070">Will (gut)</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 806 1390 1099" style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate by example how to be open and honest in ways that strengthen rather than de-stabilise the partnership. • Invent some 'games' or approaches that are used regularly as a quick 'check in' with partners – for example, asking each partner to share how they are managing right now by choosing one of three key words: Swimming, Surfing or Sinking – shorthand for 'Things are great', 'Things are OK', 'Things are going downhill' – then explore what people have said and why. • Be persistent, if things still feel 'hidden' – perhaps agree to some one-to-one discussions if people are nervous about bringing hidden agendas into the group – especially on line.

Getting beyond competitiveness...	... by WORKING FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT
 <p data-bbox="301 1417 376 1451">Mind</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 1234 1385 1444" style="list-style-type: none"> • Work out what is 'fair' and what each partner needs to be able to engage with the partnership rather than sit on the fence or insist on being 'competitive'. • Establish the idea that all partners are entitled to 'receive' as well as 'give' and encourage them to be honest and clear about their expectations. • Ensure that every player has an active role in the partnership and make this explicit, visible and accountable so that all stakeholders understand the commitment and mutual obligations involved (especially important long-distance).
 <p data-bbox="301 1653 376 1686">Heart</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 1464 1401 1675" style="list-style-type: none"> • Find good stories/examples that will share experiences and feelings that come from a really mutual benefit partnership. • Illustrate how 'value' and 'benefits' can be very broadly defined and very specific to different partners/people. • Always acknowledge and warmly appreciate <u>all</u> contributions and check out how different partners feel about each others' contributions (or lack of them) and level of engagement.
 <p data-bbox="274 1861 402 1895">Will (gut)</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 1704 1385 1883" style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate the partnership's achievements and the specific benefits to each partner • Cross promote the partnership and projects on each others' websites and networks, giving further endorsement/support to the causes close to each partners' interests/priorities. • Build activities that support the 'moving on' process so that when the partnership ends, the benefits remain in place.

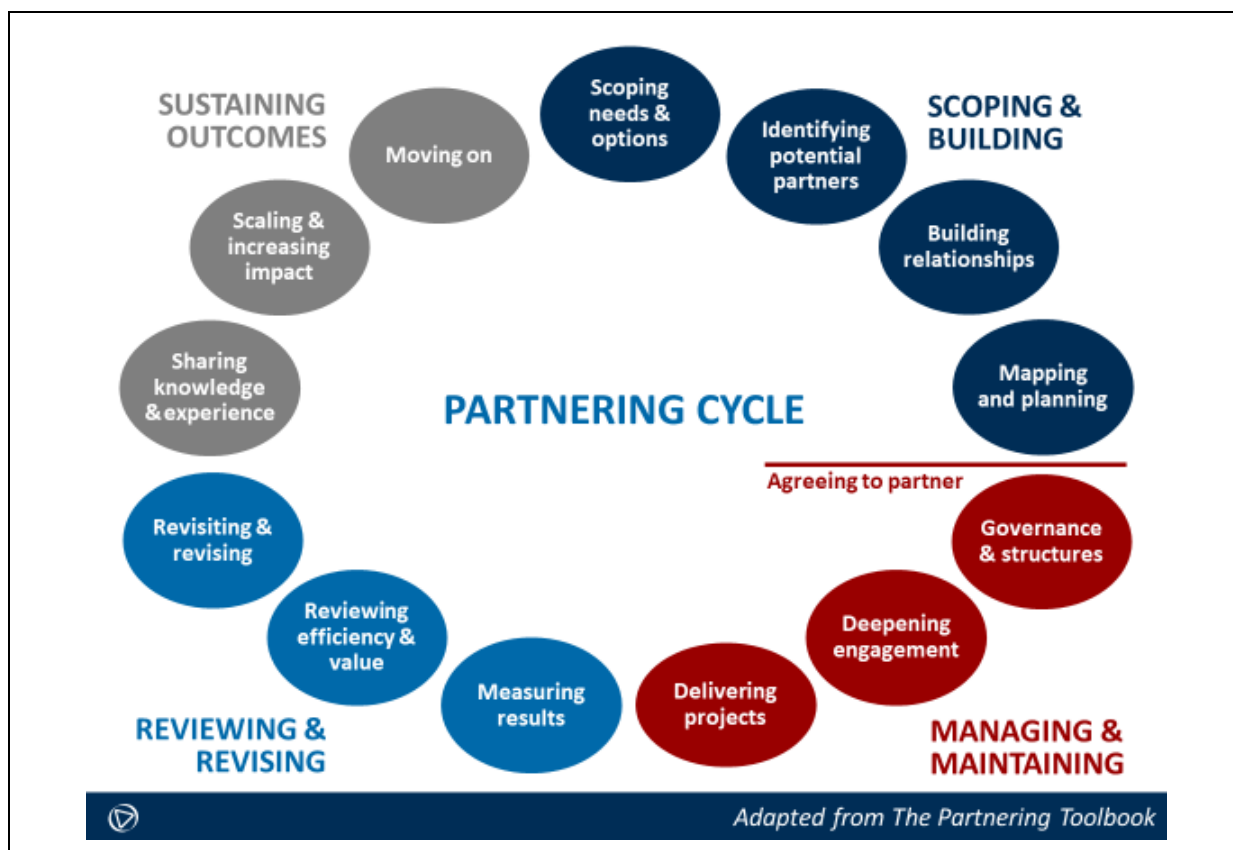
Tackling uncertainty and anxiety...	... by BEING COURAGEOUS
 <p data-bbox="300 398 373 427">Mind</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 230 1430 409" style="list-style-type: none"> • Build understanding of what each partner needs to know to be able to build a foundation of trust (essential for risk taking). • Encourage each partner to take on leadership roles in their own context, within their organisations and/or with their other important stakeholders. • Encourage frank exploration and discussion of risk factors and work out how to mitigate and/or what level of risk is acceptable/necessary in order to have desired impact.
 <p data-bbox="300 631 373 660">Heart</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 450 1430 651" style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest about fears – possible that many partners in most partnerships are really quite fearful of what will be expected and/or how hard it will be to deliver, being open with others can help create a supportive climate. • Build a sense of psychological safety – for example, by asking what it is possible and not possible from each partners' perspective to achieve working remotely and online. • Be prepared to give each partner as much autonomy as possible so they feel trusted and supported even when working remotely and in relative isolation.
 <p data-bbox="277 860 400 889">Will (gut)</p>	<ul data-bbox="512 674 1430 902" style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a 'fit for purpose' relationship and contact management system. Even more important in remote partnerships as there are less opportunities to clarify things (especially in big organisations). • Capture the experiences (good and bad) – for example in a log book or a case study. • Insist on honesty about what hasn't worked so that lessons can be learnt and shared more widely – as a conscious commitment to building a stronger and more productive partnership (as well as contributing to shaping partnering as a paradigm that is central to global well-being).

“I have become acutely aware of the difference between ‘rules’ and ‘principles’. A system built through rules (largely because of grant-makers’ requirements) makes everyone compliant, whereas working principles that emerge from the group over time help to create the notion of the ‘collective individual’ where everyone contributes to the common good but also ‘steps up’ to take on their specific areas of responsibility.”

6. BUILDING & MAINTAINING MOMENTUM¹⁵

A partnership has a life cycle (see below) that runs in parallel with a project cycle – though is often given less priority. When the partnership itself is given quality attention over time, the likelihood is that it will be stronger and more resilient as well as having added value that is beyond the project deliverables. What we mean by ‘quality attention’ may merit closer examination.

Box F: The Partnering Cycle



Phase 1: Scoping & Building

It is not uncommon for those involved to sign an agreement almost before the partnership exists – often under pressure to apply for funding as a partnership. This has many potential repercussions arising from the fact that the ‘partners’ know relatively little about each other including their different values, motivations and possible types of contribution. In an ideal scenario, agreement would be reached only after considerable scoping had taken place and relationships have been built.

There are three specific considerations for remote partnering in the scoping phase:

1. How best to make partner assessments? Are the existing ‘due diligence’ processes appropriate when you are trying to ‘know’ your partners remotely? What needs to be different?
2. Deciding when (and where) there should be face-to-face contact – if that is an option. How should it be timed/positioned in order to optimise its value? In a pre-partnering phase, to get to know each other? Just before finalising and signing a collaboration agreement or contract? As part of a partnership review at the end of the first year of operating as a partnership?
3. Initiating a discussion about the specific challenges and opportunities of remote partnering from the very beginning in order to help partners to best prepare for working remotely as they are initiating and building the partnership itself.

¹⁵ The material for this section is drawn from *Brokering Better Partnership* published by the Partnership Brokers Association (July 2017)

Typical process tasks during phase 1	Quality attention in a remote partnering scenario
Scoping the partnership's potential	Under whatever conditions the partners have come together, partners will need opportunities to understand each other's contexts – especially where these are unfamiliar. It is important to build the aspirations of partners on the realities they each face.
Exploring drivers, expectations and underlying interests	Getting to know each other across geographies, time zones, languages and cultures takes more sensitivity, imagination and careful management when undertaken long-distance (see section 7 for ideas on how to do this creatively).
Embedding key partnering principles	Partners may have very different expectations and underlying interests but at an early stage it is important to help partners agree how they are going to work together in an acceptable and principled manner (See section 5). Working long distance may make it harder to check out that partners are adhering to agreed behaviours and ways of working. Regular reminders may be important.
Enabling partners to differentiate the partnership from its projects	The projects/programmes of work that partners agree to undertake are, of course, of primary importance but all too often take precedence over the wider potential and aspirations of the partners. This is even more the case when long-distance communications tends to drive partners to focus on project issues (see section 3).
Negotiating a detailed agreement to underpin the partnership	It is tempting for agreements to be developed by one partner on behalf of the partnership (often the partner responsible for managing project funding) but this may lead to some partners feeling less important. Co-creating agreements can be done on line using programmes designed specifically for this purpose. It may, in fact, be a very good way of building partner engagement and commitment.

Phase 2: Managing & Maintaining

Once an agreement has been reached, it is tempting to assume that the partnership will take care of itself and that the focus can shift entirely to delivering programmes of work. This is a common mistake and leads partnerships into trouble – especially when programmes do not go according to plan and the partners find they are out of touch.

Typical process tasks during phase 2	Quality attention in a remote partnering scenario
Co-creating appropriate governance arrangements	How will partners working away from each other build and sustain governance arrangements that are fit for purpose for their specific partnership's needs? How will they set up decision-making protocols and implementation arrangements that are fairly shared/mandated in which absent partners can have confidence?
Helping partners to work through complex internal and external challenges	Each partnership will have its own set of challenges some of which are innate to partnering as a paradigm and others which are more to do with operating remotely (See sections 3 and 4 for some examples). It is important not to ignore challenges but to bring them to the group to address and resolve collaboratively. In a partnership that operates remotely challenges left unaddressed may lead more quickly to an unravelling of the partner relationships.
Building partner capacities to strengthen and optimise the partnership	Many people come into partnerships with relatively little partnering experience – most simply 'learn on the job'. But for the partners to grow/mature in their partnering capability, it is important to provide opportunities for building partnering skills and competencies. Those with more experience (for example of partnering remotely) can coach/support others so that key roles do not continuously land on the shoulders of just a few (See section 8).

Enabling partners to explore new ways of transforming systems	Having really got to know and understand each partners' organisational priorities as well as their context (potential as well as constraints) in phase 1, it may be quite clear what needs to change in terms of systems. Allocating on-line meeting time for an exploration of this on a regular basis will ensure it is top of mind for partners and not lost in the more immediate issues of project delivery.
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Phase 3: Reviewing & Revising

An invaluable element in the (often invisible) process management of a partnership is that of providing opportunities for reflection on how the partnership is working and whether it is optimising its potential to the partners, to the programme beneficiaries and to the wider environment. Encouraging partners to be reflective in the midst of their inevitably busy schedules can be a challenge, but those who adopt more reflective practices see a return on investment.

There are some good examples of co-designing a review process remotely, particularly where a partnership review is positioned and understood as a learning process. Exploring with partners who needs to learn what may help to determine who needs to meet face-to-face (and why) and who can participate remotely in a review process (and how).

Reviewing the partnership (in addition to evaluating the partnership's projects) can take many forms ranging from regular 'health checks' – perhaps at the end of every meeting – to far more structured in-depth approaches. Writing up the partnership's story (a kind of learning case study) is another way to enable partners to be reflective and to build on their work to date.

Typical process tasks during phase 3	Quality attention in a remote partnering scenario
Supporting partners in reviewing added value and effectiveness	There is no reason why a partnership review cannot be undertaken perfectly well long-distance. It may suit partners to undertake a review in their own time and in ways most suitable for their own context and culture. The review is for their information and benefit as a partnership, and it should be up to them to determine the most appropriate approach.
Assisting in revising the collaboration agreement	The findings from the review can be used to re-visit and, if necessary, revise the collaboration agreement partners co-created at an earlier stage of their partnering cycle (if they have one). If not, this may be a good opportunity to develop one – designed to take account of the particular issues arising from working long-distance.
Helping partners implement changes needed to improve the partnership	If the partnership has successfully worked out how to navigate the management of decision-making, carrying out different roles and responsibilities long-distance, implementing changes should be relatively straightforward. If not, this may be an opportunity to spend some on-line time agreeing more effective partnering arrangements.
Guiding partners to plan for sustaining outcomes and moving on	Begin to ask individual partners and the group as a whole what plans they have or what they want to agree about moving on when the time is right. Different partners may have very different expectations and needs that will be due to their local contexts and/or their organisational priorities. An early on-line conversation will ensure there are no surprises.

Phase 4: Sustaining Outcomes

Partnerships are a means to an end, not an end in themselves, so most partnerships are date stamped – they are designed to conclude at a certain stage unless, of course, they become permanent structures by re-forming as a new entity. When a partnership ends, for whatever reason, it is of considerable importance both that it ends well (in other words, that the closure process is managed with as much attention to detail as the scoping phase) and that the outcomes of its

endeavours (whether in terms of project activities or impacts on partners, policy and systems) are secured and maintained.

Typical process tasks during phase 4	Quality attention in a remote partnering scenario
<p>Exploring moving on options and supporting decisions</p>	<p>Discussions about what happens next should start as early in the partnering cycle as possible. There are usually a number of options for partners to consider and with partners working remotely it is important to consider the impacts of those decisions for each of them carefully and not to make 'decisions of convenience' where these may rebound badly on others. Once agreed, partners need to be involved and informed throughout the moving on process and be discouraged from using distance as an excuse for not being supportive.</p>
<p>Managing closure/moving on processes collaboratively</p>	<p>How this plays out in a remote partnership will depend on the specifics of the situation – many operating in particularly fragile, unpredictable and/or volatile contexts. Closure decisions and processes should be agreed and jointly executed wherever possible.</p>
<p>Helping partners celebrate and learn from their partnership 'story'</p>	<p>Ideally partners will want to share their experiences and lessons from partnering remotely since many others also working remotely will be eager to know what has worked, how and why. See section 7 for some ideas on storytelling and learning case studies.</p>
<p>Ensuring outcomes are able to be sustained/embedded/scaled/transferred</p>	<p>What happens as a result of a partnership will be the basis on which its value will be judged. How will the partners ensure the best possible outcomes when their activities have been relatively dispersed? How can they best build in detailed plans and arrangements for a post-partnership future? And who will carry responsibility to ensure those plans are carried through with energy and rigour in the different contexts where the partnership has been operating?</p>

Partnerships require energy and enthusiasm to ensure active engagement of partners and to drive a sense of momentum and progress over time. Ideally partners themselves take on more of the process management and support functions over time. Where this happens, the collaboration is likely to thrive and to achieve more far-reaching results.

7. CREATING NEW APPROACHES

“Being genuinely inclusive is a major challenge – allowing space for introverts, addressing the power dynamics, breaking through habitual practices. Keeping everyone engaged over the life of a partnership is also a big challenge. Both require time, energy and imagination – even more so, when operating long-distance.”

It is clear that remote partnering requires some dynamic interventions if these types of partnership are to avoid being trapped in the (perceived) limitations of having to partner without actual face-to-face contact. Even remote partnering can incur high transaction costs, even though the fact that they are cheaper to manage is an oft-cited excuse for working remotely. If remote partnerships are to achieve their, often highly ambitious, goals it is important to do all we can to help them to operate optimally.

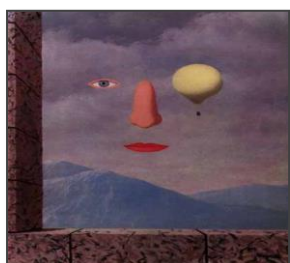
This is, probably, far more than ensuring they are managed efficiently – though that is very important. It is also a question of ensuring they are really engaging those involved as individuals (rather than just as representatives of their organisations) who have unique perspectives and will bring diverse insights, values and contributions. In other words, partnerships work optimally when all those involved find their place within them and see the benefits from an inclusive and engaged relationship.

Many report that their on-line interactions slip all too easily into project-focussed business meetings and fall back into business-as-usual hierarchies and behaviours with the all-important notions of ‘co-creation’ and ‘shared ownership’ becoming more rhetoric than reality.

How can this be avoided?

In this section we consider a number of ideas for how to engage more creatively with far away partners through igniting the senses, using imagery, storytelling and holding space so that unexpected things can emerge.

Igniting the Senses¹⁶



How many senses do we have – is it really only five? What do we mean by our ‘6th sense’? How important are our senses in positioning us in our world, in guiding our decisions and actions or our feeling of connectedness? Can we deepen our experience and understanding of the senses?

We might start by considering how often we use senses in our daily language: “I was **touched** by...” “This **sounds** about right...” “That left a **bad taste**...” “I **see** what you mean...”. Perhaps we rely on our senses far more than we think, perhaps one of the biggest challenges of remote partnering is to do with sensory deprivation and our over-reliance on just one sense, our sense of hearing.

Can we ignite our senses in new ways to help to bridge distance?

Some suggestions to assist creative exploration and deeper understanding:

- Use all your senses in your investigations
- Always be ‘sensing’
- Everything is interesting – look closer/listen more carefully
- Notice the many elements that surround and influence you/others
- Look for patterns and make connections
- Sense movement/changes/transformational moments
- Find imaginative ways to chart the journey

¹⁶ Image below by Rene Magritte

Building Image Literacy

Some cultures and individuals are more comfortable with using visual data and imagery as a means of conveying information, feelings and insights than others. For instance, some of us read graphs quite easily whilst others need text explanations to understand them. Some of us respond dynamically to pictures and are eager to share what they evoke in us whilst others find this daunting and uncomfortable. Some of us learn and think visually, others learn and think verbally. This kind of diversity has potential, but it may need to be navigated with some sensitivity!

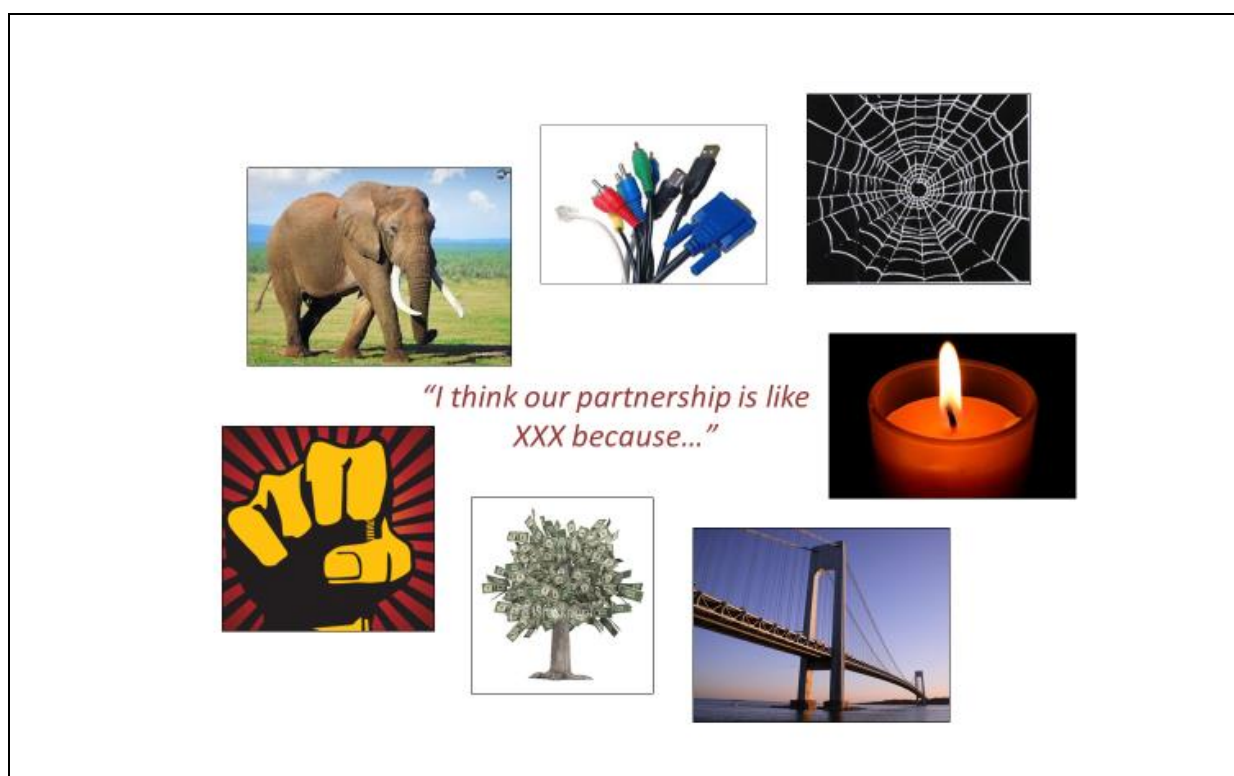
It is relatively easy to use imagery as a communication tool long-distance but often this is an unexplored area. Images can be quite a liberating way to explore sensitive or hard-to-access feelings. At their best, using images (like stories) is an imaginative entry point into exploration and discussion.

Some imagery ideas that have been used successfully to date are outlined below.

Metaphors

These can be a useful (and relatively un-intrusive) way to help individual partners to reveal and explore their underlying views, feelings and emerging insights.

Box G: Example of Metaphors Used by Partners to Describe Their Partnership



The example above illustrates metaphors related to the partnership, but metaphors can also be used in relation to individuals in response to questions like: *What is my image of myself in relation to this partnership?*

Vision Building¹⁷

The word 'vision' suggests seeing a future that is yet to become a reality. It requires us to think creatively and to get beyond the day-to-day. It is about projecting our hopes and aspirations for what we are doing and to exercise our imaginative faculties. In applying 'vision-building' to a partnership – is it possible to use on-line tools to co-



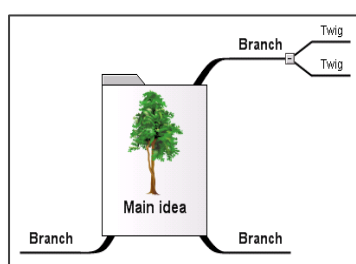
¹⁷ The following images in this section are from the internet

create the ideal picture that partners are collectively striving for? Perhaps this could involve inviting each partner to create their own image and then combining them into a poster?

Whilst wanting to keep options as wide open as possible, it may be worth setting some guidelines that keep partners focused and aligned. These might include, for example, asking partners to consider contributing to a shared vision that:

- Summarizes/evokes the key qualities of the partnership
- Deepens understanding of why the partnership matters
- Conveys something of its diversity
- Captures the different contexts of the partners
- Communicates the partnership's boldest aspirations
- Helps to engage and enthuse others

Action Mapping

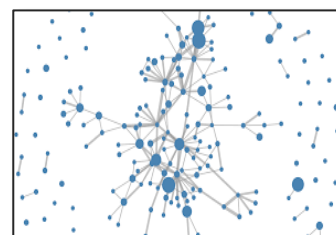


This is a simple but effective way of capturing different elements of a potentially complicated activity or relationship. It puts words into a simple image thereby helping to clarify relationships between larger and smaller issues and their relationships to each other and to the whole. There is mapping software that makes this very appropriate for remote working. An action map can capture hopes, new ideas, actions, outputs, outcomes, flow, timelines and much more.

Information Cascade

Building a 'cascade tree' or a series of micro-networks may be a particularly effective way to enable information sharing and decentralised/distributed decision-making. Perhaps especially where technology is problematic or there are risks associated with working on-line. Key elements to effective information cascading are:

1. Ensuring **clarity** about what is being shared and what is required as a result of sharing
2. Providing specific **timelines** for action/responses
3. **Sequencing** the process to ensure that one thing builds from another
4. Providing necessary **information** to assist the process
5. Encourage people to take **responsibility** for their part in the cascade



Stories & Storytelling

Stories come in many shapes and sizes, with myths and legends at one end of the spectrum and micro personal anecdotes at the other. They are embedded (as far as we know) in all cultures and experienced as vital connectors to our own and each other's cultures and communities.

In relation to storytelling in a (remote) partnering context, it is always informative and encouraging to hear stories of where a partnership has achieved real breakthroughs and goals – especially when those stories give insights into how this has happened. However, there may be many other uses of stories in a partnering context – especially where the stories give insight into context, culture and/or values.

Storytelling may be particularly valuable in remote partnering since we depend so much on ability to hear (not just facts but nuances and emotions) that it can be very helpful to have opportunities in which we can hone our listening skills. Tips for effective story telling include:



- Being intentional about your choice of story and what the key point is
- Speaking concisely and clearly so those listening don't get distracted by unnecessary detail
- Encouraging listeners to be in an environment where they can listen undistracted
- Creating a descriptive picture to stimulate feeling, imagination, empathy
- Checking out whether the story is achieving your intended purpose

Perhaps sharing stories also sets the tone for seeing the partnership itself as a story that is worth capturing and sharing with others.

Holding Space



We talk of 'giving space' when someone is agitated or distressed and they need unpressurised time to come to terms with their situation or feelings. It is also used when there is no easy answer to a problem and/or when next steps are unclear.

In partnering (or other forms of group process) the concept of 'holding space' is where those brokering the partnership (or facilitating the group) suspend activities or decisions to enable the group to pause, take stock, reflect and take a broader/deeper view of an issue or an aspiration.

Many elements of partnering are complex – often because they are unpredictable or not yet understood – and the way forward is not obvious. Rather than rushing on and risking taking the wrong step, a structured opportunity is provided for a more open exploration and, with any luck, for a more imaginative, thoughtful or transformational way forward to emerge.

There is a skill to holding space and it is also worth remembering whilst some partners may relish this kind of opportunity and respond very constructively, others may find both the concept and the practice rather strange. Sometimes the need to have some space is identified by the partners/group but more often an individual just has a 'hunch' that this is necessary. In other words it is an intuitive response to a mood or situation and/or is a judgment call.

Examples of partnering scenarios where 'holding space' can be helpful include when:

- There are unexpected challenges from within the partnership
- External events/changes in the context are having an impact on the partnership
- There are unexpected developments in one of the partner organisations
- Where there are different visions for the partnership's future
- It is important to explore critical issues that have been left unspoken

When working remotely it can be harder to sense the mood of individuals or of the group so it becomes even more important to check things out by framing some open questions. If it becomes clear that it would be useful to 'hold space' for the partners to work through an issue then it is important to think carefully about how this can best be done long-distance. It may be helpful to consider how to:

1. **Create** a 'container' for deeply-felt emotions
2. **Guide** the group thoughtfully
3. **Avoid** overloading with too much/unhelpful information
4. **Enable** people to give voice to their intuition and wisdom
5. **Communicate** that everyone's contribution matters
6. **Encourage** silence – giving time for the group to reflect together
7. **Focus** on what emerges from the partners (not what you may want to emerge)

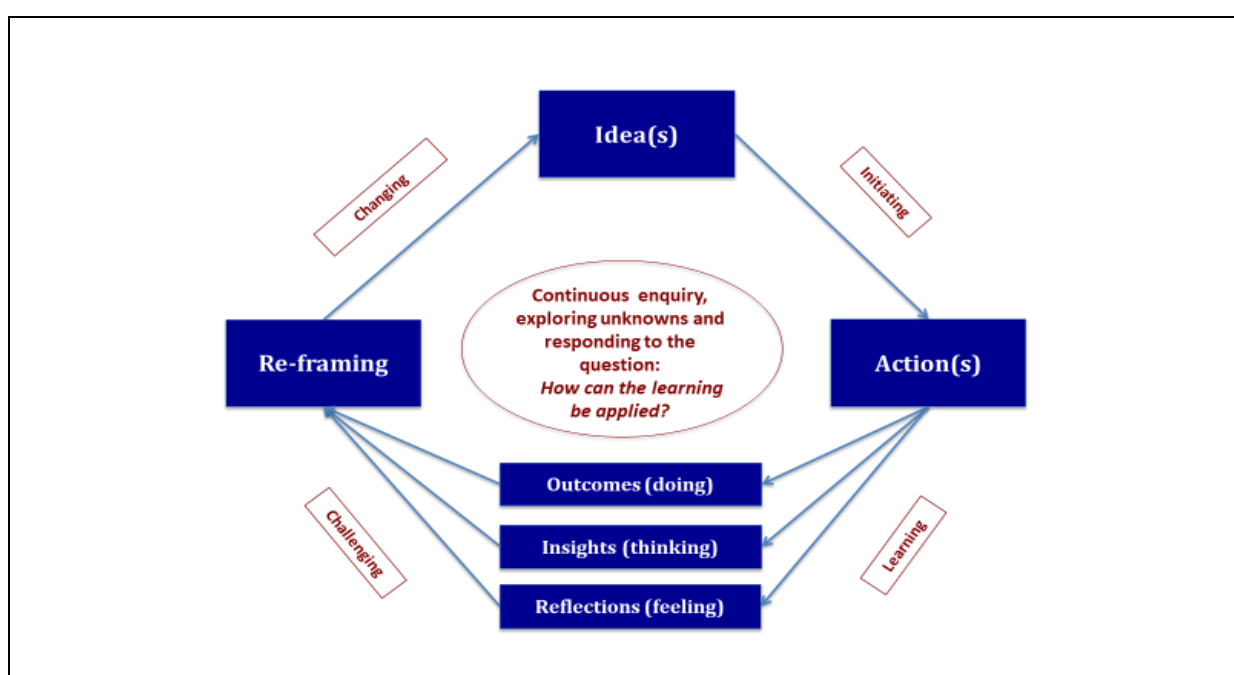
8. KNOWING WHAT IT TAKES TO BE EFFECTIVE

Partnering is a journey not a destination. But it is a journey which can itself foster growth, development and transformation and which, by the way it is undertaken, can impact and perhaps even change the destination. It is, at least, a mechanism for potentially doing things in better ways. At its best, it can provide an opportunity to re-frame our approaches to intractable and challenging situations.

But what does it take to be an effective partnership practitioner working remotely? How can we get beyond basic competence to being able to operate within our own sphere and context in ways that can also be inspirational? What will it take from us to help build: genuinely shared ownership of the partnering process; ways of operating so that new forms of collective leadership can emerge and partnering approaches that are both robust and resilient?

Trying to do things in new ways requires an open mind, a willingness to learn and a determination to keep trying.

Box H: A Framework for Applying Learning in a Partnership



In this Work Book the focus so far has been on two things: an understanding of partnering as a process and an exploration of the skilled engagement of partners specifically when working remotely. A third key element to consider is what personal and professional competencies are necessary for each of us to operate optimally in a remote partnering scenario. On what foundations do we build, reflect and challenge our own remote partnering practices? Where do we find the confidence to support partnering endeavours in an ethical and courageous way?

How well do we know ourselves in terms of both our limitations and our untapped potential for this work? The self-assessment questionnaire¹⁸ on page 34 is designed to help practitioners to address that question.

Knowing ourselves as practitioners is important and so is being willing to change and grow in our role as practitioners. With limited time available and perhaps, when operating remotely, limited access to professional training opportunities, how can we further deepen our understanding and skills as partnership practitioners? There are four suggestions outlined below.

¹⁸ The questionnaire is available in downloadable format as a word document from www.defyingdistance.org

Critical friendship



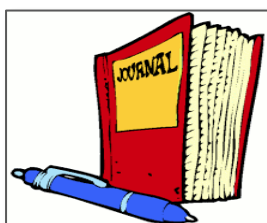
We can identify an individual (face-to-face or on-line) whom we know to have comparable experiences and who is willing to listen to our professional concerns/issues in an open and non-judgmental way and who will give us feedback and/or ask us helpful questions with 100% good intent. It may also be someone for whom we can also provide the same support in a warm-hearted and confidential manner.

Reflective Practice

We can make a habit of giving ourselves some space and time on a regular basis for just being quiet and allowing ourselves to see what emerges when we still our chattering minds. This may take some getting used to and feel strange at first when there is so much to be done – we may even feel a bit guilty for ‘taking time off’... but it really is ‘time on’ because we are trying to touch a deeper level of understanding and insight that will enable us to make more considered deductions and decisions.



Capturing Lessons



We can try and capture our insights in a way that will help us to grow our partnering practice. Whether we use images or words or, more likely, a combination of the two, keeping some form of journal is a useful way of recording our insights. A journal can provide us with a semi-structured way of reflecting, learning, sharing (what we choose to share) and assisting in our aspirations to be change-makers.

Paying Attention

Above all, we can train ourselves to become more observant, better listeners and, generally, to be far more attentive than we often are in day-to-day situations. Even more important when distance means it is easier to take things at surface value. Asking ourselves questions can assist us in being more penetrating in our understanding. Such questions could include:



- *What is happening/happened/might happen?* (‘reflecting’)
- *Why might this be significant for others in and beyond the partnership?* (‘sharing’)
- *How might I best respond and share my understanding?* (‘learning’)
- *Is there specific relevance to how we partner remotely?* (‘change-making’)

As indicated elsewhere, we know what we know by using different centres of intelligence and our senses. Becoming an effective remote partnership practitioner we need to be alert to both the details and the wider picture.

“It is by watching, listening and feeling – by paying attention to what the world has to tell us – that we learn. Learning to learn... means shaking off preconceptions that might otherwise give premature shape to observations. It is to convert every certainty into a question, whose answer is to be found in what lies before us. No genuine transformation in ways of thinking and feeling is possible that is not grounded in close and attentive observation”¹⁹

¹⁹ From: Tim Ingold, *Making* (2013) published Routledge

9 FINAL THOUGHTS... FOR NOW

Our early work exploring the issue of remote partnering seemed to focus on the challenges and difficulties of working remotely. However, it wasn't long before it became clear to those of us involved in project that the unexplored creative potential of remote partnering was significant and exciting. With the help of a Design Lab that was focused on the issue of creativity, a whole new world of possibilities unfolded and we found ourselves imagining new ways of conceiving and managing our partner relationships in ways that could transcend culture, geography and diversity.

The successes of remote partnerships, we have discovered since then, can be unleashed if we allow ourselves to invest imaginative and penetrating approaches. And, equally importantly, that technology need not always be a hindrance but can be harnessed to facilitate whole new ways of engaging if we can see it as an enabler and facilitator of working more intentionally towards creative and sustainable change.

We now pass the baton to remote practitioners around the world who are at the forefront of evolving this emerging discipline. With our deepening understanding and pushing our mental models, we can do better than 'business as usual'. We believe that this will play a significant part in re-visiting our assumptions about partnering and help us all to create partnership approaches that are context-appropriate, inclusive and flexible – all of which can become realities by effective long-distance partnering. Only in this way will we achieve our personal and collective ambitions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and more.

This is new territory and early days in exploring what makes remote partnering different and as early pioneers of this discipline (which you are, if you are reading this Work Book!) your experiences, your thoughts and your creative ideas can be of great value to your peers.

Box 1: What Next?

Your experience matters – if you have some immediate experiences you would like to share you can do so by:

- **Contributing** new ideas/insights to the next version of this Work Book
- **Writing** a learning case study (can be quite brief perhaps 3-16 pages) that can be published on the Remote Partnering website
- **Recording** your story for use on the PEP (Promoting Effective Partnerships) website or as part of the source material for the Certificate in Remote Partnering
- **Initiating** a webinar with other partnership practitioners working remotely
- **Reporting** on your personal experiences of remote partnering, trying out some of the ideas in the Work Book, and/or developing some new ones.

If you have something to share – especially examples of successful and impactful remote partnering practice – there are many others how would like to hear about it!

Get in touch: info@partnershipbrokers.org

Appendix: Tools and Contacts

- A. Remote Partnering Self-Assessment Questionnaire – pages 32-33
- B. Action Planning Template for Remote Partnering – pages 34-36
- C. Critical Success Factors for Remote Partnering – pages 37-38
- D. Further Resources and Connections – pages 39-40

Acknowledgements

A. Remote Partnering Self-assessment Questionnaire

This is designed to enable those working as partners to take stock and reflect on their own partnering roles, skills and approaches.

Note: A word version can be downloaded from www.remotepartnering.org



Your current role in the partnership:

What term(s) best describe your current partnering role?

(Circle as many as you think are appropriate)

Administrator Advocate Ambassador Animator Bridge-builder Broker Coach Communicator
Coordinator Disrupter Educator Evaluator Facilitator Guardian Innovator Interpreter Manager
Mediator Monitor Negotiator Organiser Pioneer Record-keeper Researcher

Are there other roles you play? If so, what are they?

How well do you feel you fulfil them? What could you do differently? How could others assist?

Your contribution to the partnership:

What is your unique contribution to your partnership? (Try and summarise in 50 words!)

What more (or what different things) could you contribute?

General partnering skills and attributes:

Skills:	How do you rate yourself?	What would it take to do better?
Active listening		
Precise speaking		
Giving feedback		
Good time-keeping		

Attributes:		
Empathy		
Sensitivity		
Honesty		
Commitment		

Partnering long-distance:

Attitude to/feelings about long-distance partnering (Put an 'X' somewhere along each spectrum)

Absolutely hate it	←—————→ WORKING ALONE	Absolutely love it
Very unconfident	←—————→ WORKING WITH ON-LINE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS	Very confident
Extremely challenging	←—————→ EXPERIENCE OF REMOTE PARTNERING TO DATE	Extremely exciting

Are there any other reflections on your partnering challenges and opportunities?

Check list of possible actions/resolutions resulting from completing this questionnaire:

- **Ask** other partners to consider your perspective/context more carefully
- **Invite** constructive critique from partners/colleagues
- **Request** help where you feel you need it
- **Offer** help where you think you can
- **Learn** more about partnering from reports, papers, case studies and/or project visits
- **Seek** advice/guidance from someone with more partnering experience
- **Take** a specialist training in partnering or related skills (face-to-face or on-line)
- **Keep** a partnering journal

B. Action Planning Template for Remote Partnering

This tool is designed to raise issues that you may want to consider in putting a practical plan together. As with all partnering interventions, the assumption is that you will seek to actively engage partners in the development, design and delivery phases. This is a prompt for thinking rather than a set of instructions!



Note: A word version can be downloaded from www.remotepartnering.org

1. Scene setting

Context:

Consider your partnering context (your location and operating environment) in some detail. This is to ensure that you are basing your plan very closely on specific scenario considerations and any key external/influencing factors.

- What are the key context challenges?
- What are the potential context opportunities?

Partnering Operations:

- What is the vision/focus of the partnership?
- What are the shared and individual objectives of the partners?
- What are some specific characteristics of your partnership's diversity (in terms of sector, drivers, priorities, contributions) in the partnership?
- What are the decision-making and accountability arrangements?
- What is your role in the partnership?

Remote Partnering Considerations:

- What is 'remote' about this partnership (in terms of time, geography, language, culture and/or any other factors)?
- How does this remoteness impact the partnership's day-to-day operations?
- Do your partners work with an explicit recognition that the partnership operates 'remotely'?
- How do they feel about it?
- How have you made the remote aspect of the partnership work so far?

The Roles and Contributions of Others:

- What is the range of contributions that partners make?
- How do you/will you capture and acknowledge the value of non-financial contributions in the partnership?
- Identify examples of the roles required in the partnership and how they are, or could be, shared or allocated to others.
- Who in your partnership might take on existing or new remote partnering activities or roles?
- What might they need (from you or from others) to take on these activities or roles effectively?

2. Understanding of your own role

Consider:

- Your mandate – is it proactive or reactive?
- Do you operate as an individual or on behalf of one of the partner organisations?
- What is your level of experience in dealing with remoteness?
- How do the partners perceive your role?
- How much authority do you have to shape and drive the partnership – especially with regard to its remote aspects?
- What limitations do you face with respect to taking on the remote partnering issue in your current remit?
- What potential do you see for you to make a real difference to how the partnership works remotely?

Your attitude towards technology:

- What is your relationship to the technology that you use to work with partners remotely?
- Do you believe that this technology is a barrier or an enabler to remote partnering? Why?
- How would you self-assess your degree of comfort in working with Internet-based tools?

- In practice, how often do you use the Internet in your work?
- Any other technology issues to be considered?

Becoming a more reflective practitioner:

How could you integrate more reflective approaches to remote partnering by asking yourself questions such as:

- What is/is not happening in this partnership?
- What is the impact of remoteness on this partnership?
- What can I/we learn from this?
- What role have I played in this?
- What can I learn from what I have done?
- What can I do with what I have learnt?
- How can more reflective practice help support better remote partnering?

3. Aims of the Remote Partnering Plan

Your reasons for creating a remote partnering plan

- What are you aiming to achieve with respect to creating a remote partnering plan?
- What will success in working remotely look like for you? For your partners? For other significant stakeholders?

4. Building your remote partnering approach

Building a remote partnering vision:

- How can a shared vision for remote partnering be collaboratively developed?
- How can partners best be engaged in developing this shared vision and aligning with it?
- Are there shared principles and values of the partnership that can support effective remote partnering? If so, what are they? If not, what could they be?

Partnering Cycle:

Identify the phase in the partnering cycle where you would currently situate your partnership. Reflect on how working remotely currently hinders and/or potentially enhances the partnering process and its effectiveness. Consider which of the four phases will be your focus in this Remote Partnering Action Plan.

Building greater inclusion and engagement:

- How can partnering remotely support the partnership to become more inclusive, equitable and reflective of its diversity?
- How can remote partnering support enable partners to reshape their relationship, grow their work together and improve partnering practices in response to feedback, sharing, learning and dialogue?
- How will your remote partnering plan help ensure that all key players (especially those on the receiving end of the partnership, the least-franchised, most marginalised or vulnerable) are included in its development and implementation?
- How can the remote nature of the work improve the balance of power between partners?
- How will the plan enable informal contacts and opportunities to get to know and value each other?

Using Technology:

- What options are available for regular and effective communication?
- What new approaches/on-line platforms and tools can you use?
- How creatively can you use technology?
- What other forms of communication can you employ to complement the technology?

Building creative/imaginative/innovative responses to remote partnering

- What new creative approaches can you build into your plan?
- What new ways of working, planning and co-creating opportunities could you explore in the partnership?
- How will a new focus on partnering remotely enable you to try innovative approaches, reconsider/question prevailing assumptions?
- How will you see and seize on unexpected opportunities and build on positive outcomes?

Next steps in engaging partners

- Do the partners have views or ideas about the remote partnering plan? If so, how does this manifest?
- How can you engage partners more fully in all aspects of the remote partnering approach and implementation?
- What aspects of remote partnering could be led well by other partners?
- How will remote partnering inputs help to ensure that communication is a genuinely two-way and equitable process?

5. The Plan

Proposed interventions

- How will you model and promote key partnering principles? Which principles?
- Describe the interventions you propose to lead to support effective remote partnering.
- Describe how you will organise remote sessions for your partners (reviews, meetings, brainstorming etc.) that bring together the partners for the purpose of dialogue and decision-making.
- How will you help potential partners to get 'unstuck' when working together and get to breakthrough in ways of working and/or decision-making?
- What technologies will you use in your remote partnership depending on whether they are synchronous (need to be connected at the same time) or asynchronous (anytime, anywhere), networked (for group communication) or individual (self-initiated or self-guided)?

Tool adoption:

Examine the challenges and benefits of any tools you may use.

- Can you adapt existing tools or do you need to invent new ones?
- How can you use tools as enablers and conversation-starters rather than a means of control?
- What tools will help to push boundaries and achieve deeper penetration and more innovative outcomes?

Approaches, tools, and technology

- List your approaches and tools and how you plan to employ them to successfully address your partnering challenge.
- What assistance may you need to build your confidence/capabilities in using technology? From whom?

Beyond technology

- How does your plan consider and include new dimensions to support partnering, such as stories, imagery and other approaches that are not dictated by technology?

Partners learning from each other

- Will your remote partnering plan support partners in learning from each other? If so, in what ways?

6. Having an impact

What is the potential of your remote partnering plan in making a serious difference to the partnership and its goals? How will you assess its effectiveness?

- What is/is not feasible?
- What will constitute evidence that is compelling to partners and other key stakeholders?
- How will you measure progress in terms of your remote partnering aspirations?

7. Other key issues/approaches

Are there any other elements you feel you want to include in your plan that are specific to your particular partnership and/or your own partnering practice/approach/values?

C. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR REMOTE PARTNERING

“The biggest bonus of working remotely is the opportunity it creates to foster local ownership and independent ways of working for partners.”

The list below²⁰ is a guide to help remote partnering practitioners consider the many factors that are likely to influence how successful and effective their remote partnering work is. These are suggestions and should be modified/added to rather than simply adopted!

Efficiency & Effectiveness

Clear, well-articulated shared vision about the partnership and how to optimise that vision when working remotely.
Partnership/collaboration is well managed with clear roles (distributed appropriately across locations, hierarchies and contexts), mutual accountability and regular reviews.
Partnership/collaboration has strong/appropriate communications in place and the most appropriate tools to ensure engagement and access to all partners.
Senior management buy-in to partnering as a paradigm and understanding of the specific constraints and opportunities of partnering remotely.
Systems in place to support a long-distance collaborative approach.

Approaches & Processes

All those involved understand and acknowledge what each partner brings to the collaboration – locally and/or globally.
Individual expertise and preferred ways of working are incorporated consciously and constructively.
Those involved are flexible whenever they can be and clear about their constraints.
Collaboration processes are understood , shared and incorporated into day-to-day work.
Programmes of work are co-created and undertaken on behalf of the partners by agreement/mandate.
All partners have a genuine voice in the partnership and their contributions are heard, recorded and respected.

Attitude & Competencies

Individuals involved strive to adopt a collaboration mind set taking account of the challenges and opportunities of partnering remotely.
Individuals involved build the necessary knowledge and skill sets for partnering remotely.
There is tangible evidence of each individual’s/organisation’s engagement, commitment and contribution .
Willingness to devote enough time to understanding each other’s contexts and to relationship building and maintenance.

²⁰ Adapted from work by Hundal & Tennyson published in *Brokering Better Partnerships* (2017). The list is designed to consider critical success factors for effective partnering rather than the more common practice of assessing a partnerships solely from its project outcomes and outputs

Results & Productivity

The partnership is always highly action/results oriented, working for effective project implementation and results.
The goals of each partner organisation are achieved whilst also achieving individual and shared goals.
The partnership is adding value to each organisation/individual involved as well as delivering project/ programme goals .
Through joint advocacy and a common voice the partnership is achieving wider impact and influence in each different context in which the partnership is operating as well as more widely.

“Losing the face-to-face dimension can slow down the development of a relationship, but a remote relationship can make other dimensions more intense (e.g. listening, or having to write things down and communicate by email) and they can even be more effective or powerful. It can help individuals from different backgrounds, sizes of organisations and levels of 'power' to work on a level playing field because everyone shares remoteness as a common challenge.”

D. FURTHER RESOURCES AND CONNECTIONS

As the boundaries expand for this area of work, the creative landscape widens with it and it is up to each one of us to boldly try new approaches that will serve our partnerships in ways that can bring richer and more meaningful relationships to bear. We hope you will find some inspiration from the following sites and be motivated to try new ways of working in your remote partnerships.

On-line Resources Developed by the Remote Partnering Project:

Defying Distance Toolbox:

www.defyingdistance.org

This was developed as a partnership between the Partnership Brokers Association and Action Against Hunger with a modest grant from the Start Network. It draws on the rich experience of the DEPP Programme and offers downloadable tools developed by practitioners specifically for those working in remote partnerships.

REFLECTIONS	Getting Beneath	<i>Key thought: Questioning and animating partnering approaches by drilling beneath the surface.</i> Tool: The 'What?' and 'Why?' Prompt Sheet
	Getting Better	<i>Key thought: Considering how partners get beyond the limitations of current constraints to breakthrough and transformative outcomes.</i> Tool: Partnering Self-assessment Questionnaire
	Getting Beyond	<i>Key thought: Taking an overview of the bigger picture by asking: What is needed next? What future do we hope for?</i> Tool: The Leading Change Check List
TOOLS	BEING PREPARED	Tool: Developing Mindful and Reflective Practices Tool: Practitioners as Learners and Teachers Tool: Guidelines for Giving and Receiving Feedback
	BUILDING CONNECTEDNESS	Tool: Remote Partnering Approaches to Simple and Complex Tasks Tool: Managing On-line Meetings and Workshops Tool: Virtual or Face to Face Meetings: A Decision-making Tool
	DOING DIFFERENT	Tool: Holding Space: Language, Context and Time Tool: Igniting the Senses Tool: Partnering and the Importance of Play
	ACHIEVING RESULTS	Tool: Embedding Partnering Principles (when working remotely) Tool: The Leading Change Check List (as above) Tool: Critical Success Factors for Remote Partnering

Remote Partnering Project:

www.remotepartnering.org

For access to all the original research and subsequent materials that have been developed since September 2016 and that underpin the Certificate in Remote Partnering Practice.

Further On-line Resources from Remote Partnering Project Partners:

Humanitarian Leadership Academy – Kaya Platform:

www.humanitarianleadershipacademy.org

Kaya is the Academy's on-line learning platform. Here you will find on-line e-learning and in-person workshops that will help you learn what you need to take you where you want to go, whether you are a professional humanitarian looking for career development, or a community member supporting the response to crisis in your own country. The courses are grouped into learning pathways - combinations of on-line and in-person learning opportunities. What you will find here:

- On-line e-learning content
- Videos

- Documents and files
- Information and registration for in-person events such as workshops, talks and webinars.

Partnership Brokers Association (PBA):

www.partnershipbrokers.org

PBA is the international professional body for those managing and developing collaboration processes. Its **primary aims** are to:

- **Challenge and change** poor partnering practices so that multi-stakeholder collaboration can become truly transformational;
- **Ensure** those operating in partnership brokering roles are skilled, principled and work to the highest standards;
- **Promote** the critical importance of partnering process management to decision-makers in all sectors.

On the website practitioners will find resources, training opportunities, action research and publications on all aspects of partnership brokering. PBA also offers a range of vocational training options and services that are tailored for both individual and organisational support in all areas of partnership brokering such as mentoring, coaching, assessments as well as organisational strategies and reviews.

Promoting Effective Partnering (PEP):

www.effectivepartnering.org

This site was created by five organizations with an established track record in partnering and designed to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). PEP aims to help strengthen partnering for the SDGs and act as a change-making initiative to optimize the SDGs. The website is a self-service resource which provides access to state-of the-art and curated knowledge, insights and real-life examples about routes to, and conditions for, effective partnering.

A navigator consisting of 17 effective partnering factors is presented on the site. Each factor is accompanied by guiding questions and recommended practices in order to support practitioners in their partnering endeavours. In addition, there is a 'resource centre' where a wide range of reports, blogs and news are shown and practitioners can find details about support for organizations and join in the global partnering conversation.

Acknowledgements

This Work Book brings together the collective learning and creativity of a range of individuals working in varying partnership contexts around the world. None of this could have happened without the enthusiasm and funding of the founding partners (see below) who saw the potential and importance of this work back in September 2016 when this project started.

It is hoped that the content will stimulate thinking and further ideas for readers and that they in turn can contribute to the evolution of new content and thinking on this issue. Remote partnering is only just starting to be recognised as a practice in its own right and practitioners have a unique opportunity to influence the ways in which partnering remotely can be enhanced. By continuing to evolve and share new and creative practices, we add fuel to a movement that can act as a catalyst for more empowered ways of partnering.

Partner organisations

This Work Book has been made possible through the enthusiastic engagement of, and ‘crowd funding’ from, the following partner organisations:



Two additional contributors without whom...

Geneva Learning Foundation with whom we have been working on the development of the on-line Certificate in Remote Partnering. The opportunity to evolve findings and ideas and to translate them into a structured learning programme has been invaluable in further shaping our thinking on the whole topic of remote partnering.

<http://learning.foundation/>

Humanitarian Leadership Academy who awarded the Remote Partnering Project an innovation grant to develop, deliver and follow up the Design Lab (January to May 2017) that has contributed significantly to the wider work of the Remote Partnering Project, the On-line Certificate in Remote Partnering Practice and this Work Book.

www.humanitarianleadershipacademy.org