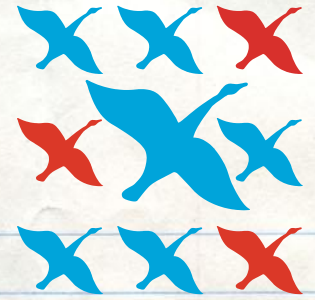


WILDE GANZEN

ONTWIKKELINGSSAMENWERKING



PI-DOC 2: Cross-cultural partnership

PI-DOC 2

Important subjects to discuss regarding collaboration are:

- What is the mutual goal/ the shared interest?
- The interest in and motivation for the project: is this truly the priority of all stakeholders involved?
- The efforts being made: which staff, with what competences, will be available to run the project?
- The duration of the collaboration.
- Will the collaboration be based on equality or will there be a certain hierarchy?
- Who will be part of the collaboration and who will have a say?
- How will the money be collected and what are the expectations regarding the amount to be collected and the time it may take?
- Which local contributions are expected, from the government for instance, and how will local funds be mobilized?
- What are the expectations of the donors regarding the project?
- Which specific knowledge and skills will be brought into the project?
- What are the most important contacts and to which networks does the project have access?
- What about the access to material resources, services, products?
- Who does what in the various phases of the project cycle?

3. JOINTLY SETTING UP A PROJECT, MAKING A PLAN

It is not advisable to jump into action immediately after the decision of working together with the Dutch PI. Taking the time and effort to sit down and set up a project plan with clear activities is a good opportunity to strengthen the partnership and to address cultural differences.

For a first outline of a project plan, there are three steps to be taken:

- A. Make an analysis of the present situation:
 - What are the problems the project should address?
 - Who will play a role in the project?
 - Who are the beneficiaries and stakeholders in the project?
 - Which local organization will be the main responsible?
- B. Formulate clear goals for the project. What does the project want to achieve? Which activities are needed and what will be their cost?
- C. Stimulate the involvement of all stakeholders in this planning process. All stakeholders should be informed about the project and have a voice in it. Cultural differences make it important to discuss how to handle the participation of the various stakeholders in this process. How do women get a voice in the project and which important leaders have to be involved? Which ceremonies have to be considered?
- D. After having agreed on the aim and the activities, it is important to assign responsibilities. What does the local partner (Project Owner) do? And what does the Dutch organization (PI) do? Who is responsible for which activities and how will they communicate?

The result of this joint planning is a project document in which everything is clearly described. During this planning process both partners have the opportunity to discover their own position and role in the project. Are the mutual expectations realistic? Are there any cultural aspects that might have a positive or negative influence on the collaboration and the implementation of the project?

Truth

My truth is not THE truth. THE truth does not exist. We can look at reality in different ways.

Listen to each other. Each and every one uses a pair of glasses to try to set in order and position reality. These glasses might have a very fixed focus that prevents from looking at reality in a different manner. Still no one is able to see the complete reality. We will thus only see part of it and even this is subjective and relative.

6. WHAT TO DO WHEN A PROBLEM ARISES?

Problems in the collaboration are often related with parties who do not stick to agreements; the incorrect use of finances; hierarchical relationships; or inadequate communication between the parties.

In order to solve such problems, it is important always to separate the problem from the person! It is crucial to find the reason(s) of the problems. Understanding why a person does something, helps to create mutual understanding. You can use the following questions to analyze a situation:

- Do the partners understand each other's verbal and non verbal language?
- What is the problem according to the partner?
- Do you know each other's point of view and vision on the problem?
- What are the interests involved?
- Are each other's roles and functions clear to all?
- Are the organizational aspects clear, like responsibilities, agreements, arrangements?

The answers to these questions will give you new insights and thus help with finding a solution.





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