

Finding the Right Partner

In a meeting of the Health and Business Roundtable Indonesia (HBRI), representatives from corporations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were asked to identify the key characteristics of a preferred partner. These are shown in the grid below. While companies and NGOs had some characteristics they sought in the other that were not shared, most of these characteristics were considered important by both. These are therefore meaningful attributes to think about when considering any type of partnership, not just ones between companies and NGOs.

Participants agreed that, as the underlying basis, partners should share values and concerns. As the partnership develops, they will also need to identify a shared goal and objectives. Preferred partners have a track record of positive impact, partnership experience, and work in a common geographic area. Both should have a reputation for integrity. Corporations found the quality of the work of the NGO most important while NGOs found the corporation's reputation for corporate social responsibility key. Other shared characteristics have as much to do with the organiza-

Preferred Partner has	Preferred NGO Partner has
Shared values	Appropriate finding expectations
Shared concern	Collaborative reputation (including with local government)
Track record of positive impact	Reputation for quality work
Partnership experience	Willingness to start small and grow
Common geographic area	Appropriate absorptive capacity
Integrity	Innovation-replicability and scalability
Responsiveness	Preferred Corporate Partner has
Patience	Access to target group
Flexibility	Willingness to extend programs beyond the workforce
Commitment	Reputation for social responsibility
Learning attitude	Public reputation that does not negatively outweigh the benefit of partnering
Trustworthiness	Compassion
Transparency	Acceptable and not overly onerous policy requirement
Cooperative attitude	Top - level support for project
Available concise information about the organization readily available	
Ability to help partners build other relationship	
Willingness to compromise	

tion's own attributes: integrity, learning attitude, trustworthiness, and transparency, as with the attributes that will be specific to the partnership: responsiveness, flexibility, commitment, and cooperative attitude.

Two other attributes noted were the availability of concise information about the organization and the ability and willingness to help the partner build other relationships. The first of these is particularly important when the partners are from different sectors and need to be able to build and share internally an understanding of the other partners' everyday activities and relevant projects. The second signifies that for both corporations and NGOs there is a hope, or even expectation, that a partnership will lead to additional opportunities and relationships.

From the corporate perspective, there are some attributes of a partner that were identified as particularly important. Two of them, which are related, are that the NGO should have appropriate funding expectations and a willingness to start small. Another key characteristic, and not unrelated, is the absorptive capacity of the NGO.

From the NGO perspective, a company partner will provide them not only with resources but with access to their own target groups. For a health provider, this often begins with access to the workforce of the company. NGOs also find the reputation of the company very important. Another key element is that the partner does not impose onerous administrative procedures or policy requirements. And finally, NGOs have recognized that it is very important for there to be high-level support within the company for the partnership.

This document and others to support partnerships are based on learning at the Health and Business Roundtable Indonesia (HBRI) and available at www.ACCESShealthworldwide.org. HBRI is an activity of CCPHI (Company-Community Partnerships for Health in Indonesia), an affiliate of ACCESS (Advancing Company-Community Engagement for Sustainable Societies) Health Worldwide.

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