

Great Partnerships Planning Tool 1

Are We Ready to Partner?

Drivers and Goals

The idea of partnerships has a strong appeal. They evoke fresh energy, strength and opportunity. However, it is important to recognise that partnerships must always be purposeful. It is critical to identify clear goals that align with your purpose for partnering. The partnership should enable or increase capacity in areas you cannot impact alone.

Project drivers are the reasons you or your organisation want to pursue a partnership. When you are clear why you want to partner, it will direct your choice of partner and project design.

### Creative Professionals and Organisations - are you planning to:

• Expand or direct your career/programming into arts education?

• Influence arts teaching and experiences in schools?

• To develop, test or create new work for that target audience (young people/students)?

• Explore a long-term/capacity building relationship with a particular school?

• Learn more about curriculum to improve your education program offer?

• Cross-pollinate your work with other areas? (science, technology, history?)

• Address a perceived disadvantage in access to the arts?

### Teachers, Principals and Schools - are you planning to:

• Position your school with a specialisation in the arts?

• Increase achievement in the arts and critical and creative thinking?

• Reduce disengagement or address disadvantage?

• Positively impact student wellbeing?

• Deeply explore a theme or idea through a cross-curricular unit of work?

• Develop and support innovative arts teaching practices?

• Deepen family or community engagement in your school?

• Target a particular cohort of students in *Project Based Learning*?

• Model a new way of making and presenting a school event/performance/festival?

### Students - are you planning to:

• Learn contemporary industry skills in the arts?

• Share leadership of a creative concept?

• Have fun and do something different?

• Work with students you don’t normally interact with?

• Develop your portfolio and creative arts experience?

• Find out how ‘real life’ creative professionals make and showcase their work?

Your reasons for initiating a partnership may be different to the examples above but it is important that you identify your biggest priorities for partnering, share them with your potential partners and work together to create one or two *shared* goals.

Task – project goals

List the goals of your project in the table that follows

1. **For Creative Professionals and Organisations**
2. **For Teachers, Principals and Schools**
3. **For Students** (You may want to ask students to write down their personal goals and then gather some group drivers to document)
4. **Your shared goals**

**Our Goals**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Creative Professionals and Organisations** |  |
| **Teachers, Principals and Schools** |  |
| **Students** |  |
| **Our shared goals** |  |

Capacity

Successful partnerships require time and resources.

Who will take the lead in getting the project started and making time to talk? When and how often will you meet with all the people who need to be involved? What are the areas or work and planning that need to be done, who will do them and which tasks will need to be shared? How will you communicate with one another, with your broader community…?

Once you have determined all partners drivers for undertaking a partnership, the next step is to make sure you have the capacity to deliver it.

Check you have:

* **Confirmed interest** from participants, other teachers and support staff, creative personnel, or other project partners
* **Support of management** (if you are partnering on behalf of an organisation) that you are authorised to negotiate and make offers and commitments. If not, that you are clear on necessary steps and processes to do so.
* **Identified/secured funds** to cover the costs of the project
* **Established and blocked out a clear time frame** that doesn’t coincide with important people being absent or other major events, programs, or disruptions
* **Confirmed availability of key personnel** and that the project won’t overload or over-commit them
* **Uninterrupted access to an appropriate space** to workin and to store materials or partially completed work.

Qualities

Some questions can be challenging to ask yourself and others – it is worth being candid to establish a transparent, solid foundation for your partnership project.

**Are you committed?**

Do you care enough about the project’s partners, participants and outcomes to really commit? You need to be up front about how invested you are in the partnership in terms of your time, financial contribution (if any) and how hands-on you intend to be.

Check you have:

* **confirmed key personnel are available for the entire duration** of the project in the capacity identified
* **confirmed the project is considered a priority** by the school leadership team/creative professional or organisation
* **confirmed both project partners pledge adequate time and resources.**

**Are you a good communicator?**

Are you willing to share your ideas, thoughts, plans, feelings, criticisms, compliments and expertise with your partners and students?

*Creatives*- you need to be able to explain what you do and how you do it to your partner in plain language.

*Teachers* - you need to be able to explain school curriculum, culture and language.

See Planning Tool 2 – *Artists and Teachers: a Cultural Exchange* for more information about understanding the different languages of schools and creatives.

Check you have:

* **met, shared initial ideas, and started working towards shared ideas** with a good understanding of each other
* **discussed how often you might meet**, phone, videoconference, and email
* **discussed ideas for professional learning** sessions for teachers to experience creative practices
* **discussed a school induction** for creatives and introduction to the school community
* **arrived at a common understanding** of the project plan

**Are you flexible?**

This means not being too attached to your pre-conceived ideas and plans. A flexible person can share decision-making and respond to opportunities and challenges as they arise. Plans are important but should not be set in stone. Changes to plans must be discussed and communicated with everyone involved before moving on.

Check you have:

* talked about our preferences and discussed how much detail and planning we might expect for timetables, workshop plans, lesson plans etc.

**Are you mutually respectful?**

A respectful partner doesn’t assume that they have all the expertise. They ask for and value their partner’s opinion, share leadership and acknowledge one another.

Task – strengths and challenges

Do you think your team is strong and equitable in all areas, or patchy in some areas? What strategies can you employ to strengthen these areas?

Discuss and list your strengths and challenges relating to:

1. **Equal voice** –all parties contributing ideas and being heard
2. **Driving the project** – equal responsibility ofpropelling the project forward
3. **Leading the planning** – taking turns in facilitating meetings and sharing preparation and planning
4. **Contributing ideas** – everyone has a turn talking and supported to contribute

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