

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF PARTNERSHIPS: CSR - BUSINESSES ENGAGING WITH NGOs

Principles of Partnership; Mutuality; Agenda Setting;
Role Clarity; Project

By

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Background

In 1996, at the initiative of Partners in Change, a network of five organisations (donors!) was created: It consisted of Aga Khan Foundation, Action Aid / Partners in Change, CRY, Concern India and OXFAM India. The purpose was to enable promotion of partnerships between NGOs and the business (Corporate Sector). A day long meeting with 25 NGOs (five partner NGOs per network member) was convened in Delhi to sort out development sector's pre conceived notions / misgivings about the business sector's emerging agenda of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and their purely profit motives. At the end of the day the consensus emerged in favour of giving a try to the concept of partnership of the NGOs with the Corporates. After a few months, daylong meeting was organised between Delhi based NGOs and Corporates to explore partnerships in practice; the match making function began at that meeting itself. Over the years partnerships have emerged between NGOs and the businesses.

LEARNING: Both parties have a long way to go in terms of relationship building: the notion of give and take, trust, mutual respect and accountability needs to emerge.

Background.....Contd.

Partnership is a commonly used phrase in the development circles. Partnership entails a relationship that extends beyond agreements and contracts. Even a two or three year funded project gets labelled as a Partnership project, though the conditions of grant may be more of a contractual relationship.

Historical and Emerging Approaches of Partnerships:

- N. M. Sadguru Water and Development Foundation set up in 1974 with support from Mafatlal Group of Industries, is an excellent example of NGO's continuing relationship with industry.
- SRUTI, initiated in 1983 / 1984, celebrating thirty years this year has substantially depended on overseas funding agencies for their core support, while raising in-country resources for providing support to SRUTI Fellows. SRUTI has also received corpus funding support from Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT).
- PRADAN established in 1983 has a long history of successful partnerships with international and national donor agencies. Initiated as a development support agency providing an opportunity to NGOs and young professionals to work together, got into projects implementation mode. Building partnerships with industry is a recent phenomena initiated with SRF Ltd.
- Society for All Round Development (SARD) has a partnership with number of companies, e.g. SRF Ltd., BILT, Hero Group of Industries, Dalmia Cement and others.
- Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur is engaged with Eicher Group of Industries since 1994-95 in improving the quality of education in government schools in Alwar district, Rajasthan.

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Pre-Requisites for a Nurturing Partnership

- Equity- Relationship of give and take
- Mutual Respect, Trust and Accountability
- Observant with an attitude of a learner
- Enabler
- Facilitator
- Disseminator
- Understanding
- Trusteeship
- Stewardship
- Empathy
- Humility
- (Free) from Arrogance and Ego

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CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

- **Has to be one of give and take**

(Potentially) a company gives:

Resources (cash and kind)

Business Management Expertise ,

Others (Name, Credibility, Visibility)

(Potentially) a company takes (receives) from an NGO:

Knowledge and experience base

Understanding and /or link up with communities

Resource Multiplier (Link up with other resource agencies / funding agencies)

Earns Respect

Others

Accountability and Transparency (mutual)

Company's insistence on NGOs accountability and transparency must be reciprocated

Mutual Respect

Respect has to be earned and not demanded. It has to be mutual

SRRF – Round Table

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Thank you.....



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