

GROW STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Partnerships need care, consideration and careful management to be successful. A well-developed partnership will often take a project well beyond the initial expectations.

Partners can provide:

- insight into a community
- access to existing relationships
- resources, knowledge and skills that will support the artists and participants
- project management
- links to other supporters, advocacy and audiences
- continued engagement with a community after the project finishes.

An artist and community group may partner with a range of people and organisations. Often this includes:

- arts organisations and venues
- social or health services
- iwi
- schools
- local councils
- police
- youth workers
- local businesses.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROJECT WITH STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

I. PARTNERSHIPS ARE EXPLORED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT

Consider a range of partnerships at the start of the project and select the right ones.

Tip: When considering which potential partners to approach, ask yourselves the following questions:

- Who is already engaging with this community?
- Are there partners within the community as well as outside of it?

- Do their aspirations for this community align with the community's?
- Do they have something that will add value to the project?
- Is there something that the project can offer to them in return?
- Which partners are key to the success of the project and the long-term aspirations of the community?
- Will the partners need a lot of looking after and does the team have the capacity to do this?

2. THE AIMS AND DESIRES OF THE PARTNERS ARE CLEAR AND ALIGNED WITH THOSE OF THE COMMUNITY

Aligning everyone's intentions early builds a solid base for the project. Partners have their own reasons for getting involved. These may differ from the community of participants, the artist(s) or funders. These intentions don't have to be the same but it is important that they align.

For example, for a local street art project the outcomes are different for each community partner. However, each specific outcome does still align to the project:

- The young people in the project want to learn about street art techniques, make friends and have fun. They bring their enthusiasm, creativity and the story they want to tell.
- A local business owner wants to reduce graffiti on their buildings by having a mural on the wall. They may provide their wall and refreshments during the painting and at the launch.
- The local council wants to reduce how much graffiti they have to remove and bring the community together. They provide funds to pay the artist.
- The local police want to reduce graffiti and engage with young people who are at risk of offending. They refer young people to the project and use their local communications person to promote the project.
- The artist wants to test some new teaching and stencilling techniques that they've developed, and get paid. They bring their skills and expertise.
- The local paint business wants to promote their business. They provide paint for the mural in return for acknowledgement at the launch and a sign next to the mural.

Tip: Ensure that all partners involved in a project:

- are clear about what the project is and its goals
- discuss how to make the project relevant and accessible to the participants
- have opportunities to meet together

Tip: Are you clear about a partner's intentions for joining the project?

- Ask questions to find out why they want to be involved. Find out their aspirations.
- Find out how well this aligns with the intentions of others in the project, especially the community.
- Is there a mismatch between the intentions of the community and other stakeholders? Make sure you resolve this before you continue.

3. RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPECTATIONS ARE CLEAR AND WELL MANAGED

Build relationships with partners based on honesty, mutual trust and respect to get strong outcomes.

Tip: Effectively manage relationships and expectations by:

- approaching your partners early, before the creative part of the project starts, and with respect
- having people who can introduce you to new partnerships
- making sure you are familiar with your potential partner's kaupapa and aspirations before you approach them
- thinking about what they could offer and what you can offer them (but also keep the possibilities open)
- involving them in a discussion about ways to strengthen the project
- making sure everyone is clear about what has been agreed. If appropriate, create a simple contract that includes goals, roles, responsibilities and expectations
- setting up clear, consistent and regular communication with your partners
- looking after your partners. Make sure you:
 - invite them to key events

- weave them into the project
- create opportunities for them to engage in the process (if dual learning is an important part of the partnership)
- thank them.

MORE INFO

For more resources on partnerships see our Community Arts toolkit > [Tools to develop your project](#)

Is something missing from these tipsheets? Email us: website@creativenz.govt.nz