



# PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR SKILLS TRAINING

Irish Sports Council  
November 27 2008

**Ros Tennyson**  
Director, The Partnering Initiative

# Programme



## 09.30 GETTING STARTED

- The Partnering Cycle in practice
- Partnering risks, challenges and benefits
- Building a partnership (1)

11.00 break

## 11.15 ROLES AND SKILLS

- Building a partnership (2)
- Coordinators as partnership brokers
- Roles, responsibilities and skills

12.45 lunch

## 13.30 BROKERS IN ACTION

- Building a partnership (3 & 4)

15.00 break

## 15.15 LEADERSHIP & FOLLOWERSHIP

- Q&A and a conversation

## 16.00 FINALLY...

- What is good 'brokering'?

16.30 end

# Getting Started



- The Partnering Cycle in practice
- Partnering risks, challenges and benefits
- Building a Partnership – Exercise 1



# Partnership – the dictionary definition

---



A formal arrangement in which  
**risk and profit (benefit) is shared**

A **relationship** as in games-playing, marriage and dancing

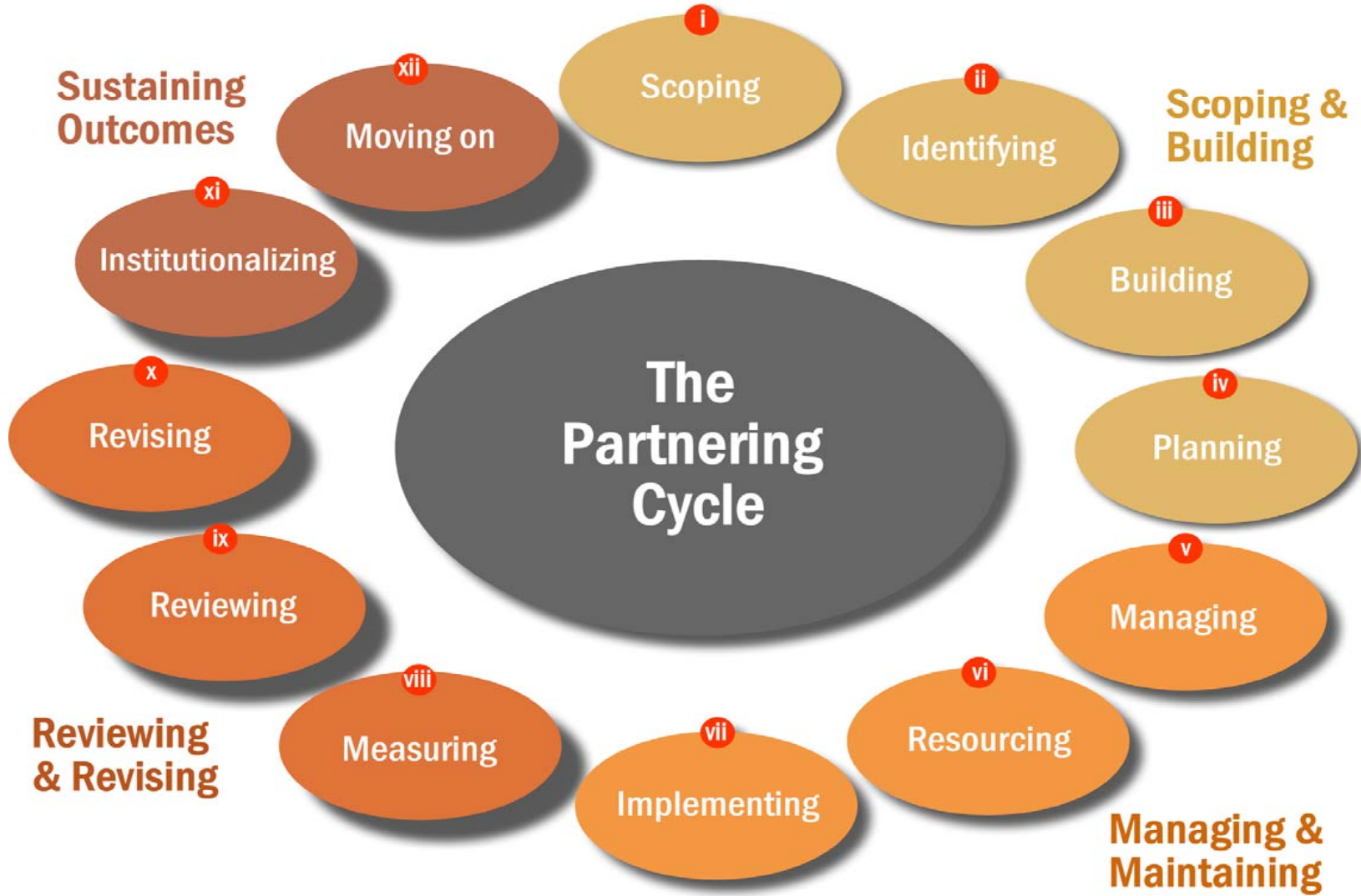
*Note: If the two highlighted elements are missing from a relationship it is probably not a 'partnership' (though this does not mean that it is not valuable).*

# Why do organisations partner (in general)?

---

Because they come to understand (from experience) that they cannot achieve their goals by working on their own...and they believe that by working cooperatively with other sectors they can achieve greater innovation, impact, scale, reform and / or sustainability...

# Partnerships can be run more systematically:



THE PARTNERING TOOLBOOK, IBLF, 2004 – available in 19 languages!

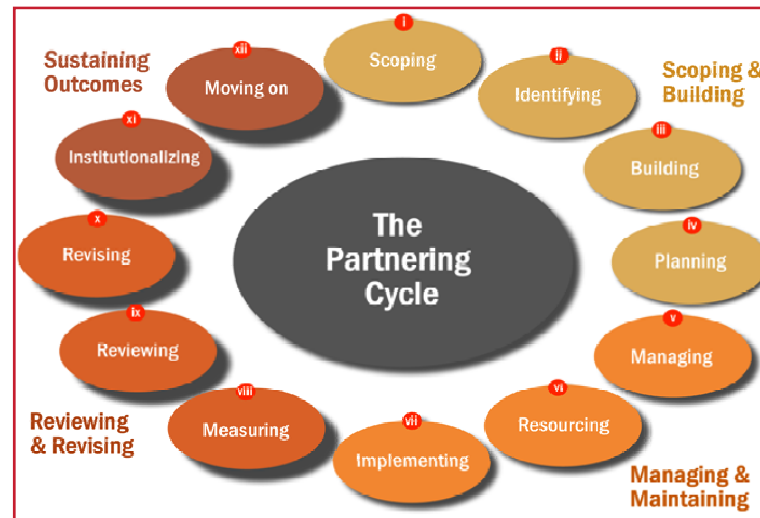
## SUSTAINING OUTCOMES

Implement a 'moving on' strategy  
Ensure outcomes are sustainable  
Celebrate success / share lessons

# PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERING

## SCOPING & BUILDING:

Define partnership  
Agree partnering principles  
Set benchmarks  
Make commitments  
Formulate an agreement



## REVIEWING & REVISING

Track activities  
Review relationship  
Revise arrangements  
Evaluate impact



## MANAGING & MAINTAINING:

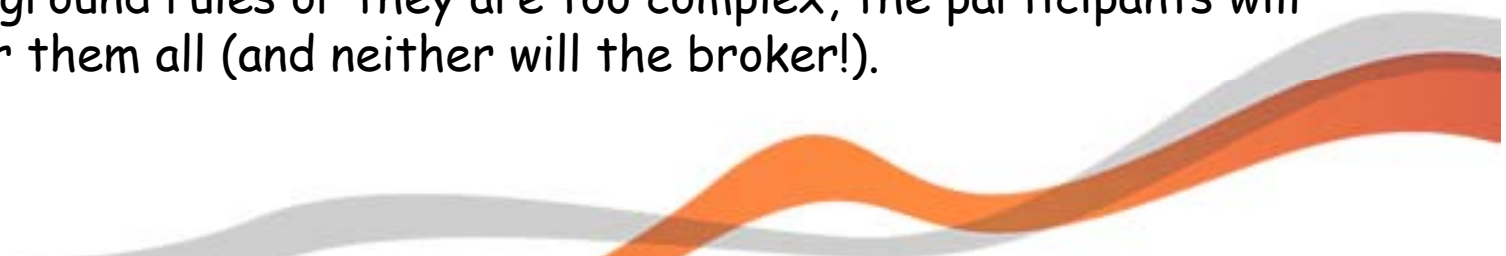
Establish ground rules  
Agree decision-making procedures  
Communicate regularly / appropriately

# Uses of 'ground rules' – for example:



1. Rules for interacting with other participants / partners
2. Rules for communicating inside and outside the partnership
3. Rules for managing logistics
4. Rules for making decisions

Note: It is a good idea to keep any ground rules as few and as simple as possible while still ensuring that they fulfil their desired intent. If there are too many ground rules or they are too complex, the participants will not remember them all (and neither will the broker!).



## Different Levels of 'checking things out'



- **Tracking** activity and performance – *on-going*
- **Assessing impacts** of activities / projects – *as often as required by resource providers*
- **Reflecting** on the partnership's management / decision-making processes to improve efficiency / effectiveness – *how often?*
- **Reviewing** the partnership to assess its value / further potential for different partners – *annually?*
- **Evaluating** the partnership paradigm – is it / was it better than alternative approaches? – *at what stage? Why does this matter?*

# Partnering is an 'art' because it requires...



- Insight / imagination / feeling
- Vision (of the future)
- People skills
- Active listening
- Personal engagement



Rene Magritte

# We consider partnering as a 'science' because it requires:



- Knowledge / analysis / thinking
- Understanding (of the past)
- Administrative / technical skills
- Precise speaking
- Professional detachment



# Building a Partnership – Exercise 1

---

Making the case / internal selling



# Exercise 1: Making the case / internal selling

---

- Listen to the scenario
- Break into pairs comprising individuals from the same organisation
- One advocates that the 'costs and risks' of entering into the proposed partnership are too great, the other that the 'benefits and opportunities' to the organisation far outweigh the risks and costs. In each organisation, one is 'for' the partnership, the other 'against'.
- Read through your brief – **do not share briefs with each other**

You have 15 minutes to reach a consensus on your organisation's perspective in time for a meeting with the other potential partners.

# De-brief: Exercise 1

---

- Which pairs reached agreement with regard to their organisation's position in relation to the partnership proposal? Why / How? Why not?
- How hard was it to 'make your case'?
- What helped? What did not help?
- How hard is it to 'represent' your organisation in a partnership? How hard is it to represent a point of view that is not your own?

# Break

---

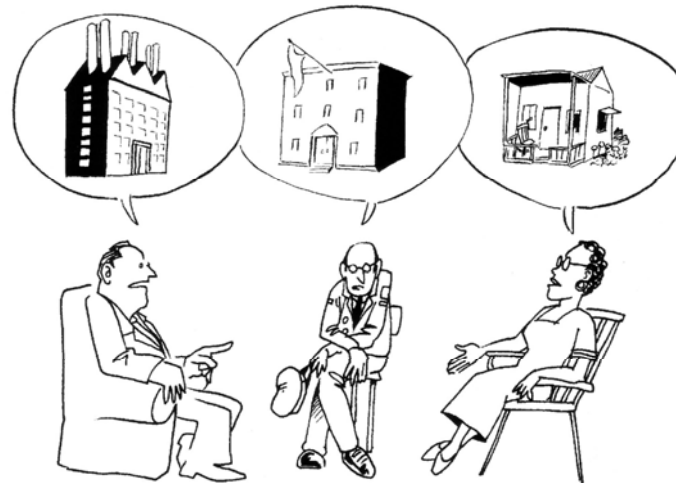
Over the break decide with your partner which of you would be the best person to represent the organisation at the up-coming meeting of potential partners.

Be back in 15 mins!

# Building a Partnership – Exercise 2



## Meeting with potential partners



## Phase 2: Meeting with potential partners

---

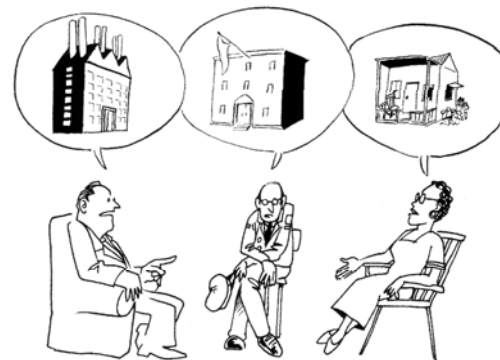
- Whatever your 'internal' organisational decision, you have agreed to meet up with the representatives from the other potential partner organisations to take the discussions further...
- The selected representative from each organisation goes to the meeting...
- The others observe the meeting and note what happens and **how** the potential partners do or don't come to a decision about whether or not to proceed.

The potential partners have 15 minutes to reach a common decision on whether or not to proceed further with the proposed partnership.

## De-brief: Exercise 2

---

- How did the rationale agreed in pairs play out in the meeting with the potential partners? What worked / what didn't?
- What did you learn about the early stages of exploring a partnership?
- What role(s) might a broker / coordinator have played before / during / after the meeting?



# Some conclusions from Exercises 1 & 2

---

- Partnership is not a panacea.
- There are always costs and risks which may outweigh the benefits. The costs include not only the value of resources committed to the partnership, but also hidden costs including the opportunity costs of staff time.
- Risks include reputation risks (to any partner) if the partnership is not successful or fails badly.
- A 'broker' may be essential in helping to develop the case for partnership, both internally (within an organisation) and externally (as a proposal from one organisation to another)

# Principles of Interest-based Negotiation

---

1. **Build trust** through mutual understanding and meaningful communication
2. Focus on revealing **underlying interests** rather than positions
3. **Widen the options** for a solution through the creativity and lateral thinking that comes from joint problem solving
4. **Reach agreement** by satisfying underlying interests and adds value for all parties

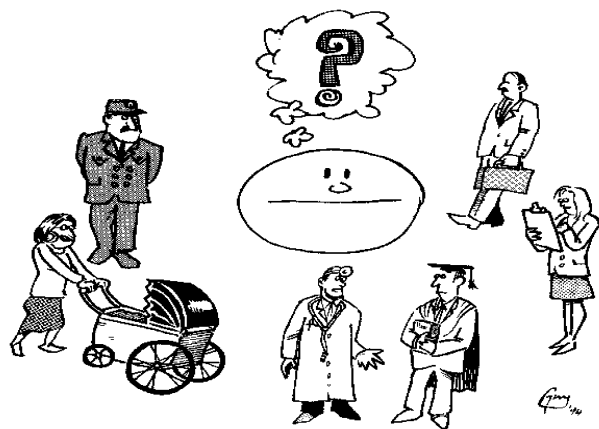
Adapted from the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme



# Partnering Roles and Skills



- Coordinators as partnership brokers
- Roles, responsibilities and skills
- Building a Partnership – Exercise 2



# What is a partnership 'broker'?



A **broker** in the dictionary definition is a 'go-between' in making and building relationships.

A **partnership broker** operates as an active intermediary between different organisations and / or sectors that are seeking to collaborate in a sustainable development initiative

Source: *THE BROKERING GUIDEBOOK*, 2007



# A good broker:



- Gets **inside** different partner perspectives
- Demonstrates **clarity of purpose** and focus in everything they undertake
- Provides **practical, productive and tactful** interventions
- Is **meticulous in record-keeping** and communicating
- **Supports** rather than dominates in the way s/he behaves
- Accepts that they are a **servant** to the partnering process
- Is ready and **willing to let go** when the time is right

Source: *THE BROKERING GUIDEBOOK*, 2007

# Skills required to broker partnerships



<b>MEDIATION</b>	May be essential in pre-partnership phase or during a crisis between partners
<b>NEGOTIATION</b>	Building consensus from diverse underlying interests
<b>FACILITATION</b>	Managing the partnering process
<b>SYNTHESIS</b>	Interpreting and reporting effectively
<b>MENTORING</b>	Coaching / empowering others
<b>MONITORING</b>	Ensuring good governance and genuinely 'value added' activity

Source: THE BROKERING GUIDEBOOK, IBLF, 2005

# A 'partnership broker' is...



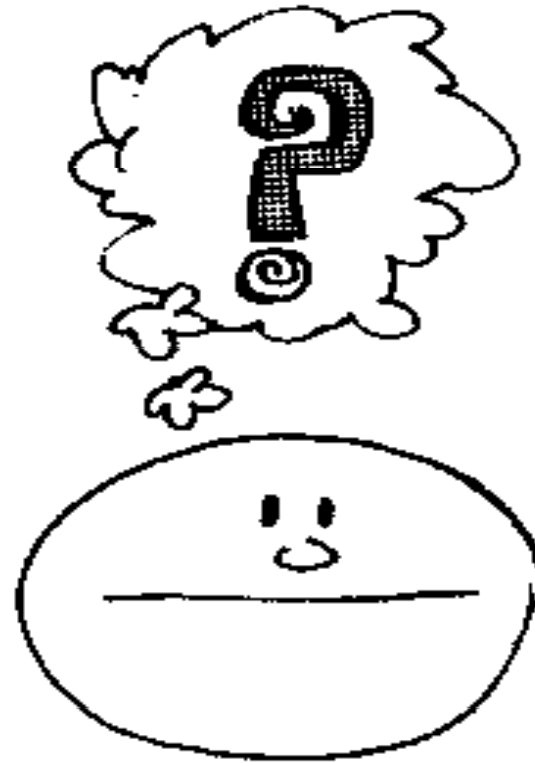
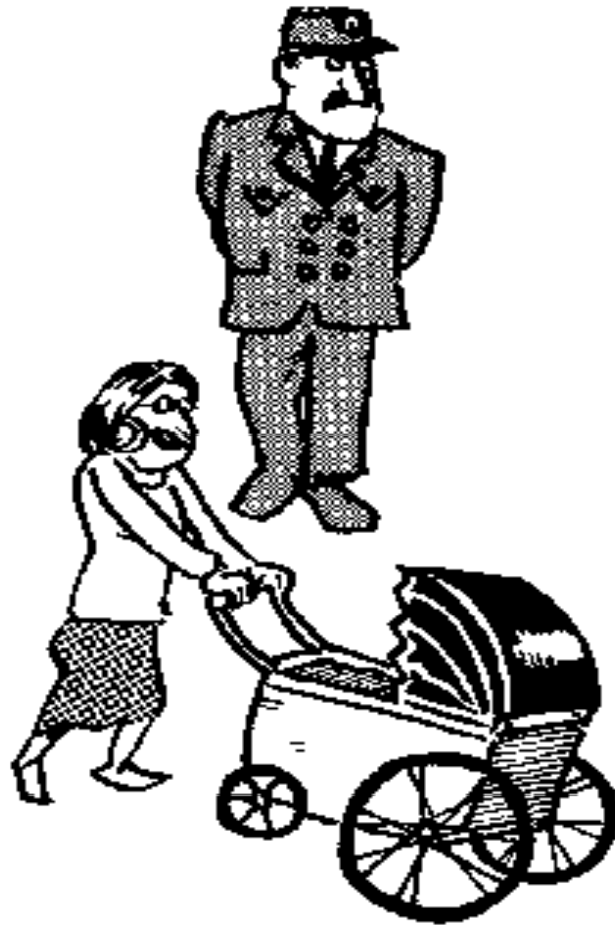
---

... an active go-between or **intermediary** between different organisations that aim to collaborate as partners in a sustainable development initiative.

They effectively coordinate and manage the partnering **process**.

This can involve several 'faces' (see next slide)

Partnership brokers  
may need to be:



Gerry '94

# Brokers can be both individuals and organisations



	INDIVIDUAL	ORGANISATION
I N T	Individual operating from within one of the partner organisations	Specialist unit within an organisation supporting a range of partnerships
E X T	Independent consultant offering a suite of brokering services	<b>Independent organisation operating as an intermediary between partners</b>

## A Brokering unit or organisation typically:



- **Builds coherence** in partnering approaches across the organisation, partnership or system
- **Offers advice**, tools, skills training, support, mentoring to other parts of the system
- **Sets partnering standards** and monitors partnering activity
- **Acts as gatekeeper** between external stakeholders (including actual / potential partners) and the organisation, partnership or system

# Tips for good brokering:

---




- **Stop talking (!)** (Active listening is the single most important skill)
- **Use 'open' questions** (and only 'closed' when necessary)
- **Be encouraging**
- **Demonstrate genuine interest and empathy**
- **Acknowledge emotions** (anger, distress, agitation)
- **Reframe their negatives into positives**
- **Play back** what they have said (to show you have understood)
- **Take action** based on what you have heard from partners

---

LUNCH...

back in 45 mins!

Decorative wavy lines at the bottom of the slide, consisting of a grey wave and an orange wave overlapping each other.

# Brokers in Action



BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE.



# Building a partnership – Exercise 3

---

## Resource mapping

The three organisations are moving closer towards a partnership and are meeting again to explore what resources each partner might be able to contribute



# What do we mean by the term 'resources'?

---

- Skills & competencies
- Knowledge / information
- Credibility / reputation
- Access to networks / stakeholders
- Experience & expertise
- Authority
- Products
- Services
- Cash
- Other

## Exercise 3: Resource mapping

---

You are now beginning to explore the potential partnership and programme of work in more practical ways.

At a further meeting you have agreed to 'brainstorm' the skills, knowledge, connections, expertise, physical and other resources each organisation can bring to the partnership.

You capture all 'in principle' possible contributions on a flip chart to use as a reference as you come to design the proposed project in more detail.

Your meeting is managed by a facilitator / coordinator from the Sports Council

# Example of resource mapping

NGO	COMPANY	LOCAL AUTHORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School liaison experience</li> <li>• Expertise in inclusion</li> <li>• Links to disability orgs</li> <li>• Experts to wk with teachers</li> <li>• Local networks / contacts</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Ability to assess needs</li> <li>• Skill at consultation</li> <li>• Expertise in evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discount on equipment</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Media relations</li> <li>• Appeal of logo / brand</li> <li>• Employees as volunteers</li> <li>• Employee donations</li> <li>• Knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Future job opportunities</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Kids</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Credibility</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Office for project</li> <li>• Trainers</li> <li>• Facilities (sports hall etc)</li> <li>• Admin support</li> </ul>

**FURTHER RESOURCES NEEDED:** Links to wider sports community / facilities

TAKEN FROM GROUP WORK

# De-brief: Exercise 3

---

- How can you encourage partners to think 'outside the box' and recognise what a range of resources they actually have and can offer?
- How can you use resource mapping to build equity in a partnership?
- How can you put a value on non-financial contributions?


**What role(s) did / could the facilitator / coordinator / play?**

# Building a partnership – Exercise 4

---

## Agreeing an outline design

After resource mapping the time has come to work with the potential partners to match project ideas to the resources available and work together to 'co-create' a viable project that will meet pre-agreed goals.



# Exercise 4: Co-creating an outline design

## Hoped for Outcomes

- Healthier children able to learn better
- Disabled children more integrated
- Sport seen as more central to school curriculum
- Reputational benefits for all partners
- Staff motivation in all partner organisations

	Partners		
Proposed Activities	1	2	3
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			

Tool adapted from the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme

# De-brief: Exercise 4

---

- What comes first – Project design? Resource commitment? Partner selection?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this kind of 'tool'?
- What is more important – Clarity? Flexibility? Vision? Practicality?

**What role(s) did / could the facilitators / coordinators play?**

# Break

---

Be back in 15 mins – PLEASE!

# 'Leadership' and 'Followership'



- Leadership and collaboration
- Managing difficult behaviour
- Managing exits and entrances
- Dependence, independence and inter-dependence



A conversation...



# What is 'leadership'



in the partnership paradigm?



# Difficult behaviour includes:

---

- Non engagement – find out why...
- Domineering personalities – transform from bully to leader
- Powerful organisation – address the equity deficit
- Different and / or hidden agendas - insist on open communication
- Negativity – find out why... and transform into p'ship's monitor
- Dumping – refuse to be dumped on (!)
- Impractical / too idealistic – get other partners to get real
- Showing off – transform into the partnership's communicator
- Tension between agency hat and partnership hat – provide support

TAKEN FROM GROUP WORK

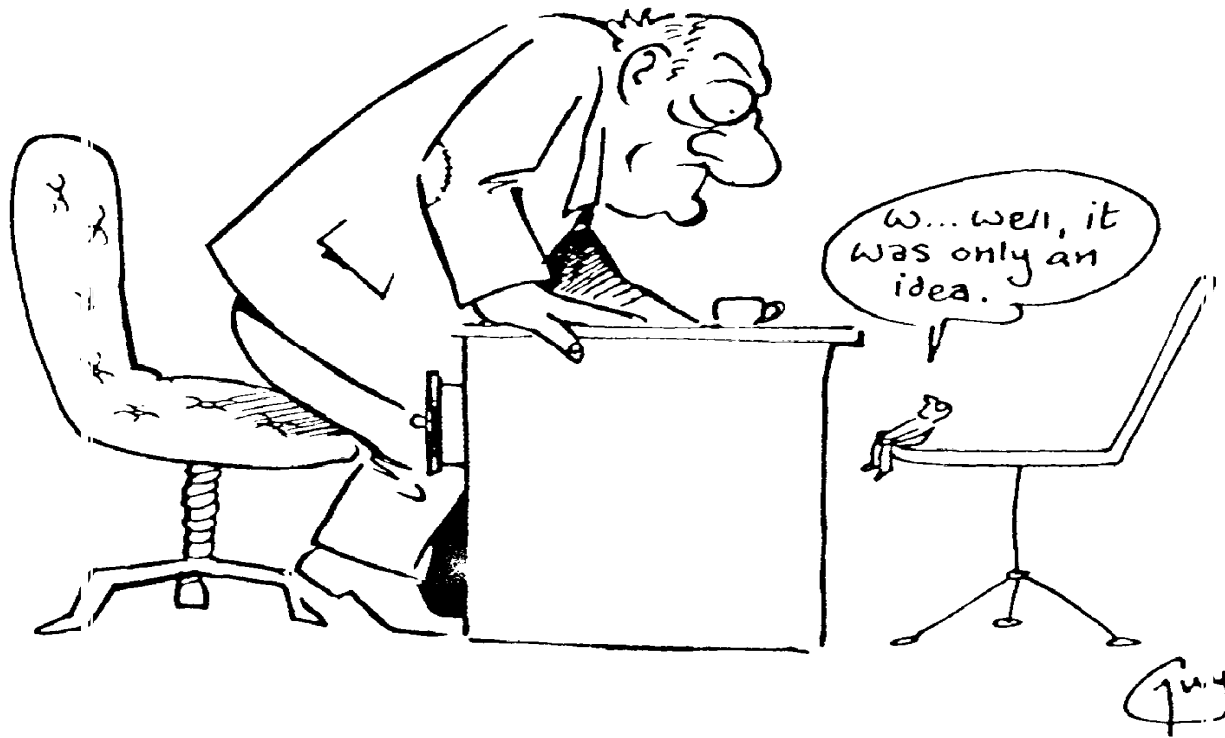
# Partnering Principles



How can a good broker / coordinator ensure core partnering principles are respected and observed?

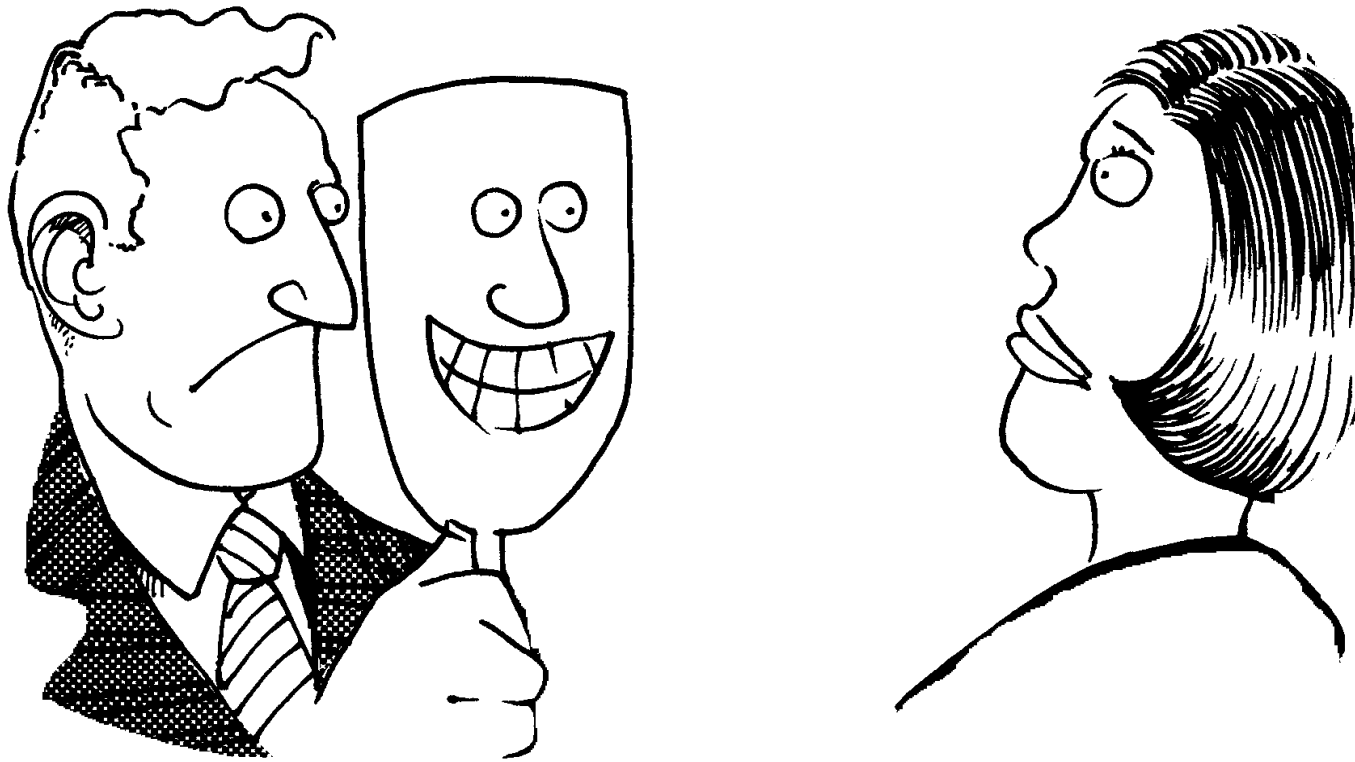


# 'EQUITY'...?



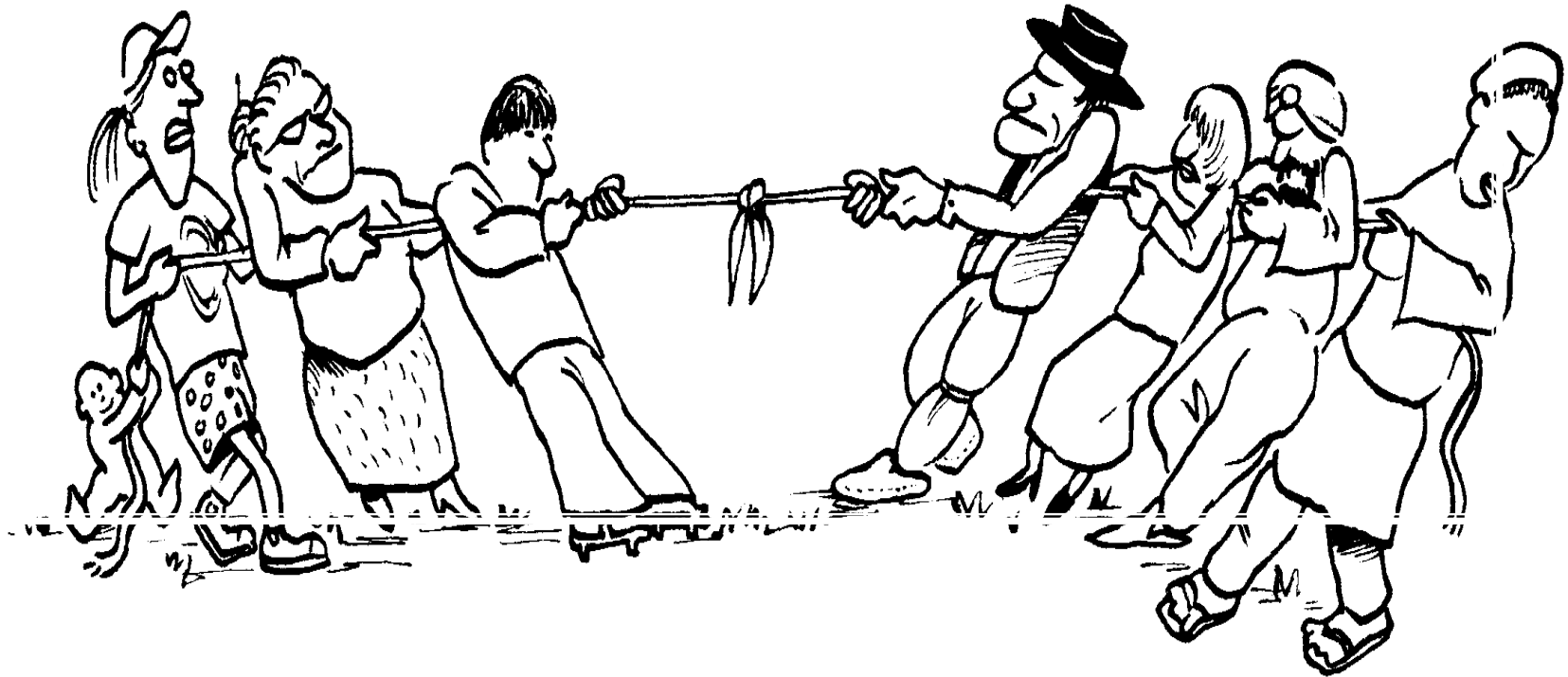
Whose behaviour has to change?

# TRANSPARENCY... ?



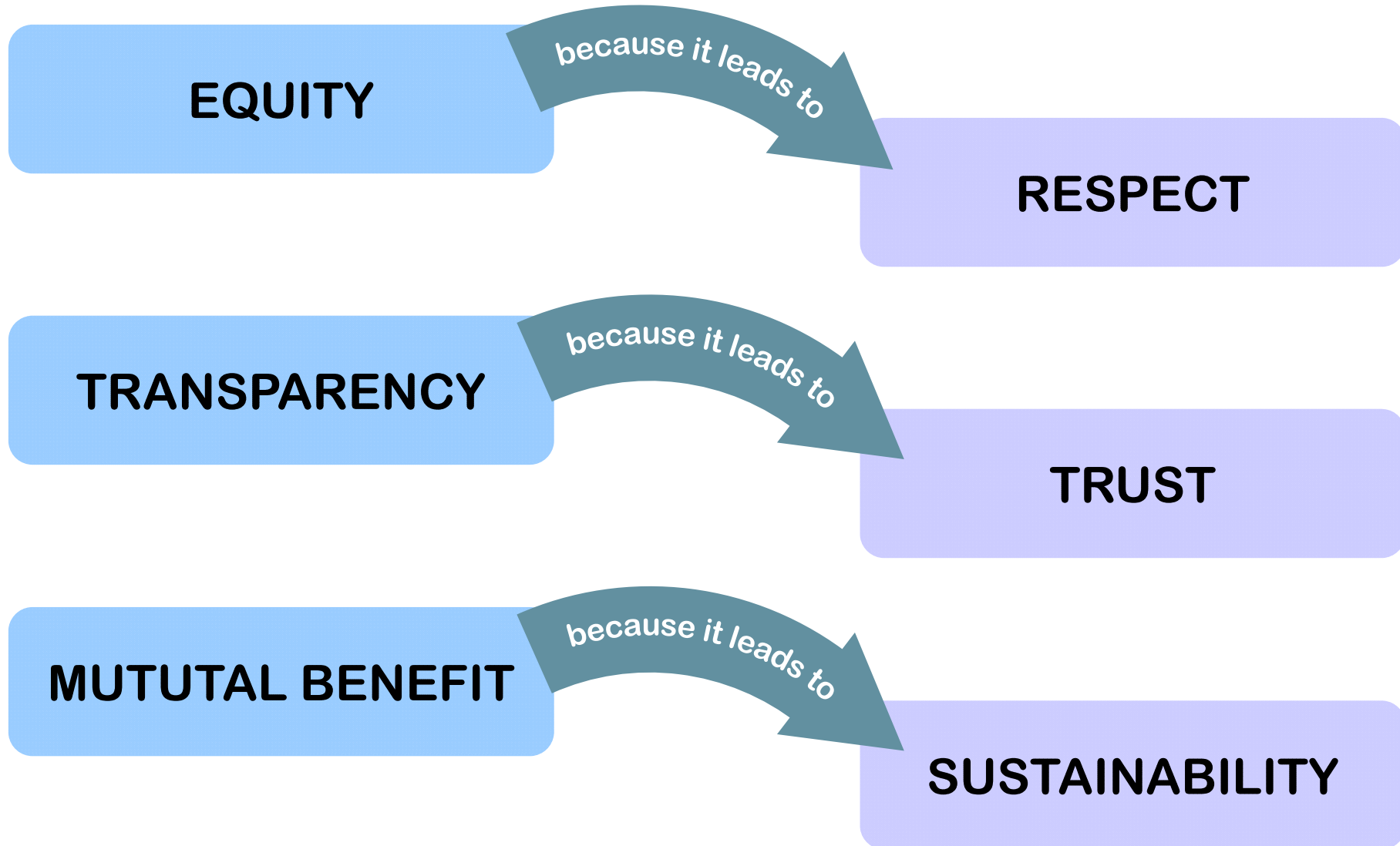
What would help to promote transparency?

# MUTUAL BENEFIT ...?



What demonstrates commitment to 'mutual benefit'?

# Why does adherence to these principles matter?



# Managing exits and entrances...



# Dependence, independence and interdependence...



# Finally...



What is good 'brokering'?



## Effective Partnerships:



- Promote practical action
- Experiment and innovate
- Engage for the long-term
- Build internal capacity of both / all partners
- Focus on new opportunities
- Modify core operations of both / all partners
- Invest in maximising value to both / all partners

What implications does this have for the broker's role?

In our view partnerships are about:



## INTERDEPENDENCE

We need to learn how to collaborate systematically if we are to manage our global interdependence and deal with the many sustainable development challenges we face – *partnering is a way of building sustainable interdependence*

## INNOVATION

Working with 'non-traditional' partners is *a spur to imaginative problem-solving* and 'out of the box' development thinking and practice

## INFLUENCE

Every partnership – however small – *has the potential to influence and impact the mainstream* helping to transform attitudes, behaviour and systems

# Bad ('cowboy') brokers are those who are...

---

- **Bossy** (towards partners)
- **Possessive** (of the partnership & partner relationships)
- **Controlling** (of the decision-making process)
- **Conceited** (about good results)



# Good (enough) brokers...

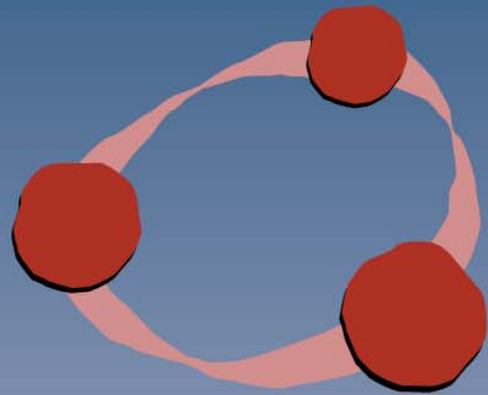


- Act as **intermediaries** at all times
- **Inspire** and give confidence to others
- Encourage **good partnering behaviour**
- Protect the **vision and values** of the partnerships  
(on behalf of the partners)
- Are both flexible **and** firm



BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE.

**Good luck in all your partnering efforts!**



# the partnering initiative

Developing the art & science of cross-sector partnership

[www.ThePartneringInitiative.org](http://www.ThePartneringInitiative.org)