

Planning for Equitable Collaboration Meetings

- 1. Set up structures that are inclusive of all partners to a collaboration.** Create a core team that includes someone from each major sector.
- 2. Design agendas collaboratively and ensure that content is inclusive.** Frame agendas in a way that engaged everyone by avoiding jargon, using open-ended questions, and exploring assumptions.
- 3. Share leadership roles.** Rotate meeting facilitation where possible and seek opportunities to involve all partners in all meeting roles. Also consider rotating meeting locations.
- 4. Establish a clear group decision-making process.** Decide whether decisions will be made via vote or consensus, and how all perspectives will be considered.
- 5. Establish group accountability.** These can include partnership norms, communication modes and methods, and clear ways of documenting collective decisions.
- 6. Include cultural approaches of all partners.** Ensure that your partnership supports and benefits from different and holistic points of view.
- 7. Use small group or committee work in meetings.** Encourage full participation and exploration of topics by regrouping participants into small groups so that all voices are heard and considered.
- 8. Allow time for socializing and relationship building.** Build in adequate breaks, provide food, and create structured opportunities for participants to get to know each other.
- 9. Avoid common institutional pitfalls.** Allow adequate time to address meeting topics; prioritize topics that invite genuine discussion. Avoid gatekeeping and/or decision making outside of established group processes.

Sample Meeting Agenda: Monthly Check-In

- I. Relationship building:** Authentic partners take time to get to know each other as people. Use this time to pose a new question each meeting or consistently respond to the same prompt, such as "Share a highlight from the past week."
- II. Project Check-In:** In relation to both the project and the partnership process, share your perspectives on how things have been going since you last met.
A. What's working well? B. What could improve?
- III. Timely Topic:** Choose a relevant topic (Defining project goals, Program evaluation, Funding, etc.) that is timely at this stage of your partnership. Depending on the depth of the topic and size of group, this can be an opportune time for small group discussions.
- IV. Upcoming:** Discuss opportunities, events, changes, etc. that will impact your work between now and your next meeting.
- V. Action steps:** Clarify what actions will be taken, by whom, and by which date based on today's conversation.
- VI. Schedule next meeting**
- VII. Closing:** Close the meeting with a reflection, expression of gratitude, or other form of closing.