

Navigating Effective Partnerships

*EXPANDING OUR REACH!
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DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation

Kid Power Overview

- Kid Power is a civics-based organization that provides academic, artistic, and service-learning opportunities for youth in underserved neighborhoods in the District of Columbia. Kid Power empowers youth to become informed and engaged advocates for change in their own lives and in their communities.
- Kid Power works with 250 students at 10 program sites throughout the District.



Partnership Models

1. Short-Term Partnership
2. Long-Term Partnership/Strategic Alliance
3. Merger/Acquisition



Key Questions for Potential Partnerships

1. Will this partnership make us stronger?
2. What is your pressing need?
3. What is the goal/objective of the partnership?
4. Who are your stakeholders?
5. What is the timeline? Is the timing right?
6. What are the resources (internal and external)?
7. What issues/challenges would stop you from starting this partnership?



Challenges

- Capacity to implement a partnership
- Logistics of a large-scale partnership (transportation, schedules, space, & energy)
- Motivating participants (excitement factor), attendance
- Engaging DCPS (principals, staff, teachers)

Challenges (cont.)

- Varying skill levels of participants
- Introduction of a new curriculum/new activities
- Training needs
- Diversity/cultural issues
 - Racial, sexual orientation, and socio-economic divisions
 - Geographic separation
- Personalities vs. Institutions
- Funding and sustainability
- Ending the partnership



Short-Term Partnership Model

Key Elements:

- For agencies: particular expertise, increased manpower, positive youth experience
- For schools: introduces students to new organizations, new cultures, new service types

Problems:

- For agencies: little buy-in from provider, inconsistent quality, “hassle” factor, few lasting results
- For schools: reinforced stereotypes, lack of investment from students, lack of satisfaction for students, “make work” quality



Long-Term/Strategic Alliance Partnership Model

Case Study: Kid Power-Georgetown Day School

Key Elements:

- Building student-mentor relationships
- Substantial teaching and learning
- Bridging socio-economic and cultural divides
- Deep participant commitment
- Significant collaboration between partners
- Promotes leadership skills and participant “ownership”
- Curricular learning



Long-Term/Strategic Alliance Partnerships

Problems:

- Difficult to maintain expectations on both sides
- Uneven level of participation on both sides
- Volunteer and administrator retention
- Logistical support, staff continuity
- Keeping things fresh, program fatigue
- Maintaining and evaluating program quality

Strategic Alliance

Making the Leap to a Strategic Alliance (e.g., *Private-Public School Network*)

- Long-term planning and program goals
- New levels of communication and collaboration
- More sophisticated implementation and evaluation
- Fundraising and stability




Merger/Acquisition

Key Questions:

What is a merger? How is it different in the nonprofit world?

- Why? What's the motivation for each organization?
- When should they be attempted?
- Who's driving/championing the project on each side?
Outside help?
- What's the bandwidth/capability of each organization?
- What's the final organization going to look like?
- What's the work plan? Benchmarks? Target dates?
First steps, second steps?

Seven Steps to Partnership Success

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1. Create/adapting a new project
 2. Promote collective ownership
 3. Integrate partner needs/cultures
 4. Maintain regular communication
 5. Institutionalize the project
 6. Seek diverse sources of funding
 7. Plan for growth/retraction

Seven Steps to Partnership Success

1. Create/adapt a new project
 - Stressing innovation and true collaboration
 - Curriculum creativity and diverse activities
 - Building in program flexibility
2. Promote collective ownership
 - Sense of investment and responsibility
 - Buy-in from all stakeholders (Students, DCPS, CBO's, Partners, Parents, etc.)
 - Making time for partnership



Seven Steps to Partnership Success

3. Integrate the needs and cultures of different partners
 - Emphasize flexibility
4. Maintain regular communication
 - Equality of voices (partnership conference rather than being “called into the principal’s office”)
 - Timely responses, continual feedback, and training opportunities



Seven Steps to Partnership Success

5. Institutionalize the project

- Longevity of partnerships measured in years
- Maintaining commitment despite leadership changes
- Stability of participant pool
- Extensive evaluation with measurable outcomes

6. Seek diverse sources of funding & support

- Actively sought out by all partners

7. Plan for growth/retraction

- Willingness and ability to replicate
- Sharing capacity burdens



Questions and Answers



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