

Effective partnership working - getting beyond the rhetoric

ABO Conference 2018



National Foundation for
Youth Music



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Collaborative Learning: Effective partnership working - getting beyond the rhetoric

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Cardiff | 2018

ABO





"We have time for just one long-winded, self-indulgent question that relates to nothing we've been talking about."

Table group discussions

1. How do you know when your partnership working has been successful?
2. How do you evaluate your partnership working and who are you asking?
3. What have you learnt in terms of good partnership practice and pitfalls to avoid?

Format

- Elect a facilitator to lead the discussion and feedback
- Elect a scribe to take notes

How do you know when your partnership working has been successful?

- Shared purpose and outcome – reviewed regularly at ‘checkpoints’
- Allowing for flexibility to be able to nimbly adjust when necessary
- All partners open to change rather than organisational protection
- Rigorous about each partner’s commitment – holding each other to account
- CEO / senior management ‘buy-in’ throughout
- Balance of creative and management excellence
- Roles of each partner absolutely clear

How do you evaluate your partnership working and who are you asking?

- 360 degree evaluation – all stakeholders not just your organisation
- Start with evidence of need – how do you really know it's needed?
- External perspective useful to evaluate with fresh pair of eyes
- Evaluation questions related to overall purpose and outcomes
- Constantly ask 'why?' and 'how?' over and above 'what'
- What's changed as a result for stakeholders?
- What's changed for your organisation – how will your core business adapt?

What have you learnt in terms of good partnership practice and pitfalls to avoid?

- Avoid 'victory narratives' i.e. "it's all brilliant"
- A culture of absolute trust and reflection is vital
- Be clear throughout about why you're all working together
- Discuss 'good failures' and act accordingly so they can be avoided in the future
- Always keep a close eye on the purpose of each partnership
- Allocate proper time and resources throughout for effective partnership working – from concept stage to completion