

Building Donor Partnerships

Prepared for the Soros Foundations Network
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Section 1

What is a donor partnership?

A donor partnership is created when two or more individuals or organizations find it in their common interest to work together toward a specific outcome.

Individuals and organizations can make partnerships. A partnership can exist between two organizations, an organization and an individual, a group of five organizations and 30 individuals, or any other combination you can think of.

Donors have a basis for becoming partners if they are able to agree on a purpose, a task, a project, or a desired outcome which meets the interests of all partners and can be achieved better, faster, or more efficiently if they unite their efforts. Finding a common agenda is a fundamental starting point.

Partner individuals or organizations do not necessarily share the same mission or ultimate goal. The Soros foundations may find it in their interest to work with an organization that has a stated mission other than building open society, such as economic development, children's welfare, or environmental protection. In fact, most donors have a more narrow or targeted mission than the broad aim of "building open society" of the Soros foundations network.

Partners can bring different things to their partnership. These might be funds, goods, services, technical assistance, technology transfer, training opportunities, implementation capacity, legitimacy, publicity, access, or information. Partners do not always bring equal things and equal shares. Often, they contribute complementary resources to the partnership, depending on their capacity and strengths. If partners are to collaborate successfully, however, they must bring some trust in each other and in the partnership.

Partnerships can be highly structured or less formal. Some partnerships take the form of a new, ad hoc organization or independent project built from the partnership. Other partnerships may be a less structured collaboration of efforts. Whether the structure is "tight" or "loose," it is essential that the partners know what they expect from each other and what they want to achieve together.

Partners can join their efforts in many ways. Some of the partnership arrangements most used or most likely to be used by the Soros foundations are described in this section.

Seed funding and pilot projects

These arrangements begin with an idea that needs to be tested, developed, or cannot otherwise be implemented widely at first. A lead partner provides resources to get the project started, with the expectation that other donors will join later. Commitments of other donors are usually dependent on the success of the initial project. It is important to identify, inform, and involve future partners in early stages of this kind of effort. Potential partners may need to be convinced that the pilot project has been successful and can be replicated. This requires documentation and sharing of information about the experience—both positive and negative—of the pilot project.

The Soros foundations often make an excellent lead partner to provide seed funding or develop a pilot project because of their willingness to innovate, readiness to move human and financial resources quickly, ability to adapt, and their local implementation bases.

Program replication and expansion

This arrangement applies when there is demand, interest, or readiness to replicate or expand a successful pilot project or small-scale program. The partnership usually involves a plan to replicate a project or expand program coverage to more people, more institutions, or a wider geographic area. The donor who initiated the program may not have the means or will to replicate or expand the effort alone. The lead partner(s) must enlist partners. The proposal to replicate or expand can be driven by the initiator, by interested partners, or by stakeholders in the project.

Before moving ahead or committing resources to such an arrangement, there should be careful thinking and planning about the expansion process, resource requirements, and the ultimate outcome. Partners need to ask themselves and each other: Does the initial program design need to be adapted to go to a larger scale? Does the necessary implementation capacity exist, or does it need to be mobilized or developed? How will new participants or sites be selected? What is the feasible timing for replication or expansion? How does the replication or expansion involve the institutions or individuals who are stakeholders in the program? How will the replication or expansion be sustained over time?

Opportunities to form such partnerships are growing in the Soros foundations network. For example, there may be local demand to expand coverage of the network's Step-by-Step program to more kindergartens and primary schools. The introduction of Internet

connectivity through the network's programs may generate the appetite for wider access. Ministries of education may want to distribute textbooks developed by a national foundation of the network to all schools in the country. Other donors with successful programs may approach the Soros foundations for grants to expand.

Matching partnerships

Matching occurs when a pledge or commitment of resources is used to encourage other donors to commit themselves to the effort or to increase their current support. The objective of a matching approach is to enlist partners in a specific program and to multiply the resources available for this program. Matching is a strong tactic because it attracts attention and creates momentum among those who could be involved in supporting a given effort. Pledging the foundations' funds on the condition that there are matches can stimulate others to move from discussion to action in committing their resources.

Although this kind of partnership is generally understood to involve funds, matching can also be used to mobilize non-monetary resources, such as goods, labor, or expertise.

There are different types of matching:

Pooling funds

Partners strive to commit equal or equivalent amounts of funds to a common pool of resources for a specific program. The funds may even be allocated to a joint bank account. This pool of funds is then used to implement the partnership program.

Parallel funding

Partners agree on a common objective but decide to manage and disburse their funds separately. This arrangement allows donor partners to use their own financing, administrative, and governance structures. Parallel funding may be the most sensible or feasible arrangement when the Soros foundations are seeking to match funds with large, more rigid, or bureaucratic donors.

In-kind matching

Financial contributions by a donor are complemented by non-monetary resources of other organizations or individuals. This arrangement works when one donor is ready to supply funding to a project and other partners who do not have financial

means can be mobilized to contribute other kinds of resources. These resources might be technical expertise, volunteer work, materials, or use of facilities.

Fund-raising challenges

A lead partner takes a direct, proactive approach to involve others in a project and mobilize their resources. A fund-raising challenge can be used to attract partners such as businesses, community-based organizations, individuals, or others. The partners might contribute money, time, goods, or endorsements. This arrangement requires a strong incentive to participate and to be associated with the effort. A strong publicity strategy and campaign is usually the driving force of such a partnership. A national foundation challenging others to provide funding will almost certainly raise the public visibility and others' expectations of the foundation.

Matching is not necessarily on a 1:1 basis. The Soros foundations should recognize that not every matching partner can provide equal amounts of resources, and not every partner can provide a match quickly.

It is important to assess the capacity of the matching partner to contribute. A \$10 contribution from a family or a \$100 contribution from a community organization might be equivalent to a \$10,000 grant from the Soros foundations. Likewise, a \$1 million commitment from the Soros foundations might be considered equivalent to a \$10 million commitment from the World Bank or European Union.

For reporting and publicity purposes, it is important to document the matching partners and their contributions. There should be no hidden partners, unless a donor wishes to remain anonymous. In the case of pooling funds, it is clear who has given what. In the other types of matching, it may be necessary to collect and compile information about the matches. In-kind contributions can be valued and reported (for example, the number of hours or equivalent wage cost of volunteer labor, or the market value of donated goods and services). Valuing in-kind contributions in monetary terms can give a more accurate picture of the success of a matching effort. Valuing or reporting matching partnerships in U.S. dollars or German marks increases others' understanding of the impact of your effort.

National foundations that are seeking a match should be aware of their working context. Other donors may see themselves as already matching your foundation's efforts through their current funding commitments or programs. In a successful matching effort, all partners win. Each partner is able to report and publicize that its own commitment is being matched and has leveraged the resources of other donors.

Collaborative program design and implementation

Partners see a common problem, priority, or need. They conceptualize and design a program together and divide among themselves the tasks of delivering the program.

This arrangement can work effectively when there is little happening in a given area of activity, but there are two or more donors interested in addressing a need. Collaborative program design and implementation often requires a lead partner or designated coordinator. Facilitation, coordination, and regular communication of the partners are crucial. This arrangement is more difficult when numerous donors have already developed their own programs and established their own ways of working in a given area.

Comprehensive program strategy and multi-donor financing

This arrangement involves multiple donors committing their resources and programs to a broad, strategic aim. Such partnerships emerge around large efforts, such as a humanitarian emergency response, a national reconstruction program, the reform of a sector, or a regional initiative.

This type of partnership requires a broad vision and comprehensive planning. All donor partners are not necessarily involved in designing the effort. Often, a large international agency—with technical expertise or major funding capacity—takes the lead in preparing the strategy and implementation plan, in cooperation with the national government(s) most concerned. There is usually quite formal coordination of the donors in this partnership arrangement.

Donor partners may commit a part of the funding required, implement a defined project within the broader scheme, or develop their own program, as long as they serve the common aim. Generally, the partners are not categorized by their level of contribution, but rather by their status as donors—international organizations, governments, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). While the Soros foundations are grouped with other NGOs, their funding and potential impact is often more comparable to the contributions of donors in the other categories. This unusual situation provides both an opportunity and a responsibility for the Soros foundations to ensure that their voice in planning and design reflects the level of their contribution.

A crucial element in this arrangement is confidence of the various donors in the broad strategy and plan, in the lead agency, and in the involved government(s). It also

requires excellent coordination, communication, and cooperation. There can be frustration among partners, especially NGOs, because broad coordination and consensus building often delays implementation. This partnership arrangement can, however, eventually have a high impact.

NGO working alliances

This kind of partnership usually emerges from the informal networking that occurs within the NGO community in a given country or in a given sector. NGOs may find it in their common interest to design and implement programs jointly. They may also commit or mobilize resources collaboratively. This partnership arrangement is based on the shared belief that the effort of the whole is greater and stronger than the effort of many separate parts.

NGO working alliances often act as an important voice within the donor community. Together, NGOs may be able to influence the priorities and programs of governments and major agencies. Through collaboration, NGOs can also leverage additional resources from major donors. NGO working alliances offer a powerful, credible, and well-grounded implementation structure. They often find it necessary and beneficial to incorporate the views and efforts of community-based structures and stakeholders in their alliances. NGO working alliances may be organized either loosely or in more formal associations, counsels, or consortia.

The Soros foundations may be partners in existing NGO working alliances. A national foundation might also stimulate the formation of working alliances, fund these alliances, or deliver programs through such implementation structures. Success of an NGO working arrangement depends heavily on coordination, communication, and trust among its partners.

Remember: Whenever two or more individuals or organizations find it in their common interest to work together towards a specific outcome, there can be a partnership. The partnership arrangements described in this section are suggestive. These structures are not exclusive or exhaustive. More than one arrangement can be used in combination. For example, a matching approach may be used to finance an expansion plan, or a pilot project may be carried out as part of a comprehensive program strategy with multi-donor financing. As long as there is a common agenda and trust in each other, partners can create other, new partnership arrangements to suit the situation.

Partnership Arrangements and Their Features

Seed funding and pilot projects

- Begin with an idea that needs to be tested or started on a small scale
- Are started by a lead partner, with the expectation that others will join later
- Necessitate involvement of potential partners in early stages
- Require documentation

Program replication and expansion

- Are based on demand to reproduce a pilot project or widen program coverage
- Require planning of process, resources, and implementation capacity
- Are driven by initiator, partners, or stakeholders

Matching partnerships

- Are used to enlist partners and multiply available resources
- Can mobilize both funding and in-kind contributions
- Are comprised of four types—pooling funds, parallel funding, in-kind matching, and fund-raising challenges
- Can raise public visibility and expectations of matching partners
- Are not necessarily on a 1:1 basis
- Require documentation of contributions and publicization of the partnership

Collaborative program design and implementation

- Are based on a common problem, priority, or need
- Often require a lead partner or coordinator
- Are more difficult when numerous donors are already implementing programs

Comprehensive program strategy and multi-donor financing

- Involve multiple donors around a broad, strategic aim
- Are characterized by partners providing part of the funding required or implementing a project within the comprehensive plan
- Are guided by strategic vision and comprehensive planning
- Are often led by a large, international agency
- Usually involve formal donor coordination
- Require confidence of partners in common strategy and leadership
- Can have high impact but slow implementation

NGO working alliances

- Are joint efforts of NGOs undertaken for the purpose of increasing impact
- Emerge from networking in NGO community

- May be able to leverage resources or influence priorities and programs of other donors

Section 2

Who are the donor partners?

Donors have different interests, resources, and ways of working. There are advantages and disadvantages to partnering with any donor. Likewise, other donors see advantages and disadvantages in collaborating with the Soros foundations. This section describes potential donor partners and their features.

International organizations

These organizations are made up of members from numerous countries and are sometimes called “multilateral” organizations. The members are usually governments. Examples of international organizations are the Council of Europe, the European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations (UN) organizations, and the World Bank.

Because of their membership bases and size, international organizations often have large resources, technical expertise, and legitimacy with governments. They are active in most countries of the Soros foundations network. When they do not have an office in your country, there is usually a formal liaison with these organizations in the government. International organizations may also be contacted through their international headquarters or regional offices.

Partnering with an international organization can yield substantial co-funding, professionalism, access, legitimacy, influence, and recognition from governments and the donor community. These organizations often play a leading role in donor coordination. Their staff are being increasingly encouraged and even required to cooperate with NGOs in the countries they serve. This provides an opportunity for the Soros foundations network.

A relationship with an international organization does not always need to be based on co-funding. Contact can result in a valuable exchange on strategy and priorities in a specific sector and the efforts of the government and other donors in your country. Participating in dialogue with international organizations might also help to put an overlooked or even controversial issue on the national agenda.

The staff of international organizations often possess broad and comparative experience. The Soros foundations can invite technical specialists of these organizations to seminars and workshops, usually at no charge. Organizations such as the OECD and the World Bank can also recommend specialists and provide access to international networks.

National foundations may request background papers, technical assessments, and project plans that international organizations prepare in the course of their work. At the request of the international NGO community, many of these organizations have been loosening their restrictions on the release of documents. Through their offices, the OECD and the World Bank make available a wide range of country assessments and comparative studies. Your national government also has copies of major reports by these organizations concerning your country, usually translated into the local language.

The Soros foundations network should be realistic about the possibilities of co-funding with international organizations. In your country, an organization might not be working in your sector of interest. An international organization will finance programs only in those sectors that have been agreed upon by the government and the organization as funding priorities. Even if an international organization has an interest and willingness to partner with the Soros foundations network in a specific area, the national government must also be in agreement.

Because international organizations operate with the resources and formal consensus of their many members, their decision making on funding is bureaucratic and time-consuming. Often, the contracts for goods and services supplied to projects funded by these organizations are awarded through competitive bidding to suppliers in their member countries. Some organizations are trying to streamline their procedures and increase the flexibility of their programming. Nevertheless, even when a national government and an international organization have agreed to work in a given sector, it can take several years to formulate, formalize, and begin a major program.

Let's look at a few examples.

World Bank funding for education in your country can be disbursed only if the national government and the World Bank have agreed that education is a funding priority, if the necessary technical analysis and preparation has been completed, if the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved the loan or credit, and if the government has formally signed the World Bank's loan or credit for education. Agreement by the Minister of Education is not sufficient; approval by the Council of Ministers and even the Parliament is often required before funds flow.

Funding from EU programs is generally allocated to those priority sectors that have been formally identified by the recipient government in consultation with the European Commission.

Many UN agencies, such as UNDP, UNESCO, and UNICEF, work through country programs with multi-year plans and allocations that have been negotiated with the national government.

It is difficult, but not impossible, for the Soros foundations to influence decisions on funding priorities made by national governments and international organizations. A national foundation that has good relations with the national government and regular contact with the international organization's office in the country may be in a position to make suggestions on priorities and program design. When a government changes, consultations with international organizations often reopen, and there is opportunity to reshape priorities.

If involved from the early stages, the Soros foundations can be an important catalyst and partner in the broad programs of international organizations and the national government.

There are several possible forms of collaboration:

Participation in program design

When an international organization and the government are developing a program in a given area, a national foundation might provide ideas, insight, background information, or materials from its experience in the country concerned and the Soros foundations' experience in other countries.

Public dissemination and debate

A national foundation can sponsor public information and open debate on controversial issues of reform related to the program of the international organization and the government.

Start-up efforts

A national foundation can provide seed funding, implement a pilot project, or help launch a program before the financial resources of the international organization are available.

Addressing an urgent need

A national foundation can finance and implement an effort to meet an urgent need in the short term, while the international organization and the government are working on a more sustainable solution for the long term.

Filling a gap

A national foundation can fund and implement a project that is not covered in the program and financing of the international organization and the government but falls within their overall strategy.

Matching resources

A national foundation, the inter-national organization, and the government can match one another's resources for a project component or a broad program.

When a national foundation is considering partnerships with international organizations, it will need to weigh all these factors and possibilities. Because the partnership could involve political dimensions, technical complexity, and large amounts of funding, the staff may decide to involve the national foundation's leadership or call upon specialists and senior management of the Soros foundations network.

Bilateral donors

These are agents used by donor governments to fund or deliver country-to-country development assistance. They may be ministries, such as the donor country's ministry of development cooperation, foreign affairs, or education. Or, they might be bilateral agencies that are government-owned and funded, such as the British Council, the German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In general, bilateral donors have resources, technical expertise, formal diplomatic access, and legitimacy with recipient governments. Bilateral donors almost always consult primarily with the recipient government on defining their programs. They usually have regular contact with other bilateral donors and international organizations based in your country. In some cases, bilateral agencies also consult with the NGO community in the recipient country. They often fund NGOs from their own country

that are active in the recipient country. Bilateral donors can be contacted through the donor country's embassy or the office of the bilateral agency in your country.

The program of a bilateral donor is usually based on the particular strengths, expertise, and experience of the donor country. For example, Germany has an international reputation in technical education and training; the United Kingdom in publishing; and France in culture and arts. Many donor countries provide at least some support to promote their language and culture in the recipient country. Bilateral programs are often multi-year commitments with fixed-priority program areas. The size and scope of bilateral programs reflects the economic situation in the donor country and its political, trade, and historical relations with the recipient country.

The donor country's government usually decides on priorities and on major, high-cost projects in a given country. The programs of bilateral donors do not necessarily reflect locally assessed priorities or requests. The donor country's diplomatic and bilateral agency staff in the recipient country is normally consulted in decision making. Programs may therefore be influenced by their particular concerns and interests. Thus, building and implementing a partnership with a bilateral donor can be complex and time-consuming. Ambassadors of the donor country may have modest discretionary funds available in your country for special events or urgent projects. In general, these funds cannot be used for program overhead or operating costs.

In gaining access to bilateral donors and their resources, it is important to understand who decides on programs and funding and where decisions are made. The key contacts may vary among bilateral donors. It may be necessary to build relationships with the diplomatic representatives at the donor's embassy in your country, staff of the bilateral agency that are resident in or visiting your country, or bureaucrats of the bilateral agency or relevant ministry back in the capital of the donor country.

Bilateral donors and the Soros foundations might collaborate in the following ways:

- A national foundation might organize a seminar and request a bilateral donor to identify and finance the participation of a specialist from the donor country.
- A bilateral donor might ask the national foundation and other local NGOs to be implementing partners for one of its projects.
- A national foundation might set up a resource center and request an in-kind donation of materials from the donor country.
- A bilateral donor might organize an exchange program and request the national foundation to complement the program by financing a similar exchange with another country in the Soros foundations network.

- A national foundation might challenge a bilateral donor to provide matching resources for a specific project.
- Bilateral donors and the Soros foundations might share the costs of a scholarship program in the donor country.

In forming partnerships with the Soros foundations, bilateral donors often seek and expect public recognition of their contribution to enhance their image and profile in the recipient country. Building partnerships with bilateral donors is likely to be more difficult in countries where the national government's relation with either the donor country or the Soros foundations is unfriendly or hostile.

National and local governments

These are the official authorities in the countries in which the Soros foundations are working. They are present at various levels—national, regional, district, and municipal. Government officials may be elected, appointed, or employed as civil servants.

Many areas of the work of the Soros foundations involve some kind of oversight, regulation, or reform effort of the government and parliament. National and local governments can be your worst enemy or your strongest ally. They can create obstacles in developing and implementing a program, or they can be a valuable partner and perhaps even crucial to the long-term sustainability of your effort.

National foundations are well aware of the realities, advantages, and disadvantages of their own country's governments. Obviously, the relation between the NGO community and the government, the relation between the national foundation and the authorities, and even the image of George Soros in the country are factors in building a partnership.

It is important, wherever politically possible, for the national foundation to have a working relationship and regular consultation with the authorities. Informing the government about the Soros foundations' activities might help to avoid suspicions or misperceptions and could even lead to partnership opportunities.

In what ways can the Soros foundations and governments be partners?

- Public financing can be used to co-fund, expand, or ensure sustainability of programs initiated by the national foundation.
- Government officials can donate their time and expertise to the design, implementation, or evaluation of a national foundation's program.

- The national foundation can launch a pilot project at the request of the government.
- The national foundation and the government can jointly develop and implement a program that promotes the building of open society.
- The national foundation can provide resources, including expertise, for the reform and restructuring of a sector by the government.
- Resources of the national foundation can be used to stimulate extra-budgetary matching funds from the government and parliament.
- When a government cannot provide funds, it can allocate land, use of facilities, media time, or staff to a donor partnership.
- Governments can waive or reduce taxes and duties for efforts of the Soros foundations.
- Governments can publicize the programs or requests of the national foundation through official channels, often at no charge.
- Government institutions, parliamentary bodies, and the national foundation can organize seminars jointly on major national issues or policy questions.

As with other donor partners, it is important to acknowledge publicly the successful collaboration of the government and the Soros foundations. Each national foundation will know best the sensitivities, advantages, and likely consequences of a public and visible cooperation with the government.

NGOs and foundations

As countries become more open and civil society becomes more vibrant, there are more and more opportunities for partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other foundations that are introducing programs in countries in where the Soros foundations operate.

NGOs vary in mission, status, origin, structure, and funding arrangements. In many countries of the Soros foundations network, the local NGO sector is still relatively new and sparse. In general, local NGOs are formed and registered in the country. They may rely on local funding or external resources from official or private donors. In most countries, a national foundation of the Soros foundations network is a locally registered NGO that is funded primarily by a grant from a single outside funder and governed by a local board.

International NGOs have branches in many countries. Examples are Amnesty International, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the International Rescue Committee

(IRC), Médecins Sans Frontières, and Save the Children. International NGOs may be registered locally or not. Many international NGOs are private humanitarian organizations which address emergencies created by armed conflict, civil disturbances, or national disasters. Many international NGOs also undertake longer-term economic development programs as part of a reconstruction effort or assistance to impoverished countries or regions. Although they are privately directed, international NGOs receive a large portion of their funding directly from governments and international organizations. Other sources of financing include private donors, churches, and, in some countries, the national lottery.

Foundations make grants to both local and international NGOs for program delivery and organizational support. Of the many private foundations based in the United States, a few operate in the countries of the Soros foundations network. Examples are the Ford Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation. The opportunities for partnerships with foundations in Europe are limited. In general, tax laws in Western Europe have not encouraged the emergence of private foundations.

In Western Europe, there may be more opportunities for partnerships with foundations that receive part or all of their funding from their governments but operate under private direction. Examples are NOVIB in the Netherlands and the Westminster Foundation in the United Kingdom. These quasi-private foundations often support organizations or activities from which the donor government and its bilateral agency wish to maintain some distance, such as human rights work or independent media.

International NGOs and foundations may have country budgets or program budgets. They may have multi-year programs or may fund or implement ad hoc projects. They may operate country-wide or only in a designated area. The international boards or trustees of these organizations usually allocate funds and define their program priorities, such as protecting the environment, providing services to the local NGO sector, or developing higher education. The greatest opportunity for partnership with foundations and international NGOs lies in the areas where their defined priorities overlap with those of the Soros foundations. There are directories, databases, and information centers in many countries that describe the programs and list contact information for these organizations.

The Soros foundations network acts both as a foundation and an NGO. Thus, there can be various relationships with other NGOs and foundations:

Project partnerships

NGOs and foundations can be partners in the design and delivery of a project or in matching their resources.

NGO collaboration

The Soros foundations can be involved in NGO working alliances which address NGO sector issues or coordinate NGO efforts.

NGO contracting

Foundations can request and fund the development and implementation of a specific project by local and international NGOs.

Grant making

Local and international NGOs can receive grants from the Soros foundations and other foundations to finance projects initiated by these NGOs.

Let's look more closely at relationships between the Soros foundations and NGOs.

It is possible for the Soros foundations to have, at the same time, both a partnership and a contracting relationship with an NGO. For example, a local NGO that has been contracted by a national foundation to design and implement a program may also bring a matching contribution to the effort. In such cases, it is important to clarify to whom the NGO reports. In general, the more central and significant the role of the Soros foundations as a contractor, the greater the accountability of the contracted NGO to the national foundation.

NGOs are attractive partners because they are easily approachable, relatively flexible, and usually less bureaucratic than other types of donors. It may be easier for the Soros foundations to find a common interest or agenda with an NGO partner. The mission and mandate of other NGOs, however, are often more narrowly defined than the Soros foundations' broad aim of building open society. Partner NGOs might offer grass-roots and rural implementation capacity and expertise that is better developed than that of the national foundation. Whereas the Soros foundations are both a funding and implementing organization, many other NGOs concentrate their efforts on direct program delivery.

Because of the wide variation in NGOs, it is important to assess whether an NGO partner is reliable or not.

Factors to consider in building a partnership with an NGO are:

- What, if any, political affiliations does the NGO have?
- Does the NGO have secure, sustainable core funding?
- What are the funding sources of the NGO's share of the partnership project?

- Is there a record of delivery?
- Is there a common agenda and shared philosophy about how the partnership should work?
- Does the NGO see the Soros foundations as a funder or as a partner?
- Are there evaluation reports on the NGO's work?
- How is the NGO governed and staffed?
- To whom is the NGO accountable?
- Is the NGO open to a wider cooperation, or is it acting alone?

NGO partnerships are often of an ad hoc nature. They may be formed to respond to a crisis or to fill a gap where the government, the private sector, or other donors are not yet able or willing to act. For example, NGO partnerships may deliver emergency relief, teacher training, or credit for small business. The duration and effectiveness of these partnerships should be watched carefully. Ideally, the partnership is dissolved when its aim has been achieved. In the worst cases, an NGO partner may prolong the partnership project in the interest of its own existence and continued funding.

A national foundation often has more resources than other NGOs in the country. The Soros foundations may therefore be seen as a leader among NGOs. One form of partnership is coordination and cooperation with the NGO community in order to mobilize a voice or a concerted role of the NGO sector. This coordination or facilitation by a national foundation can be an important contribution to building civil society.

Universities

Universities are rarely direct funders. In fact, they may see themselves primarily as recipients of Soros foundations' funding and programs. Universities can, however, make available or be encouraged to contribute useful resources to a partnership. Most universities have intellectual resources, an institutional infrastructure, and status within the country and even internationally. In a partnership, universities can provide expertise, academic legitimacy and accreditation, research, seminars, training, use of facilities, and access to networks of intellectuals.

In many countries, the Soros foundations have provided support to universities for many years. The trust, contacts, and credibility already established can be used to encourage universities to participate as partners. Some universities are elitist, bureaucratic, and insular institutions. Partnering with organizations like the Soros foundations can help universities open to cooperation with other actors in civil society.

Private enterprises and businesses

Potential partners in the private sector include small, medium, and large local enterprises, as well as multinational companies. These are profit-making organizations that can be motivated to become donors in ways that directly or indirectly serve their economic interest.

For an enterprise, donor activity can be “good business.” Donor partnerships may help to promote the sales of a company’s goods or services. Donor partnerships may help a business to penetrate a new market. Donor partnerships may enhance a firm’s local image as a socially responsible enterprise. For tax reasons, it may be advantageous for a business to become a donor. Companies may also engage in donor activities to improve the socioeconomic conditions of their employees, their future labor force, or their customers.

The Soros foundations can seek the following resources from private enterprises and businesses in a partnership:

- Cash donations, grants, or matching funds
- Donations of goods and services
- Discounts on the market prices of goods and services
- Sponsorship of awards and prizes
- Sponsorship of events, projects, or fellowships
- Social projects that benefit their employees and their families
- Fund-raising among their employees

Private enterprises and businesses can be attractive partners because they have resources available and can make decisions quickly. Like the Soros foundations, businesses may be attracted to opportunities for innovation and quick, visible impact. Moreover, collaboration of the Soros foundations with successful entrepreneurs might bring to the partnership valuable skills and an orientation to management and marketing. In identifying a partner in the business community, the Soros foundations need to balance the business objective of profit with the network’s objective of open society. A national foundation should ensure that these goals do not conflict and that its mission is not compromised. It will need to consider the nature of the company’s activities, its public image, and the consistency of the company’s way of working with the Soros foundations’ principles of open society. Even if a business is willing to become a donor

partner, there could be understandable reasons why a national foundation decides not to build a partnership.

Building partnerships with businesses requires a proactive approach by the Soros foundations. Some enterprises may not yet think of themselves as donors. It may be necessary for a national foundation to help an enterprise see its economic interest in a partnership and the ways in which it can contribute to the collaboration. Companies can also be stimulated to become a donor partner when they know that other businesses or their competitors are engaged in donor activity. Enterprises will rarely be long-term partners of the Soros foundations, because their economic interests will change. Only large companies may be interested or able to sustain a major donor effort.

In partnerships with companies, it is necessary to create the kind of visibility that the enterprise is seeking through its contribution. This may be done by attaching the name of the business and an acknowledgement to all project documentation and any donated goods; display of the company's logo at public events; a letter of thanks from the foundation's board to the enterprise; recognition of the partner in the media; wide publicity of a list of business contributors to the partnership; and organization of ceremonies that recognize the contribution of the enterprise.

Professional organizations and associations

Professional organizations and associations are groups of people formed to promote the common interests of their trade, profession, or industrial sector. Examples are associations or organizations of teachers, publishers, lawyers, owners of small businesses, factory workers, academics, professional women, writers, journalists, medical professionals, or farmers.

Partnerships with professional organizations can provide an effective communication and dissemination network. They may be indispensable for consensus building and professional endorsement of a program. Professional organizations can also play a role in ensuring technical and professional quality in program design, monitoring, and evaluation. Professional organizations and associations will be attracted mainly by partnerships that advance, promote, or draw upon the specific interests of their profession. Most of these organizations have limited financial resources and staff.

There are specific contributions that might be sought from professional organizations and associations:

- Free, targeted dissemination of information through the organization's newsletter or membership correspondence
- Pro bono expertise and labor
- Technical and professional analyses
- Organized, professional debate of an issue or program idea
- Fund-raising among their members
- Career information for students and young professionals in their sector

Community-based organizations

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are grass-roots groups formed to serve the interests of families or stakeholders in communities. They often emerge through schools, churches, neighborhoods, ethnic groups, sports, or cultural activities. CBOs may or may not be formally registered as NGOs. They can be based purely on volunteer participation and contributions, on membership and membership fees, or on fund-raising that is organized by the community. In many countries where the Soros foundations operate, CBOs do not exist in large numbers or are difficult to find. In less open societies, CBOs are often suppressed.

CBOs can bring goods and services, volunteer participation, or matching funds to a partnership. As a partner, the Soros foundations may provide resources to expand existing community-based programs.

Partnership with CBOs in programs initiated by the Soros foundations can be invaluable for:

- Generating, introducing, and seeking acceptance of new ideas
- Identifying and resolving implementation issues at the community level
- Ensuring the sustainability of initiatives supported by a national foundation

CBOs are distinctive in their high commitment to their work. After all, they often represent the main stakeholders in a project. CBOs can mobilize and move ahead quickly, once convinced of their own interest and the integrity of the partnership. Partnering with CBOs requires extensive, skillful consultation and building of trust. This process can be time-consuming, especially in the early stages of partnership.

It may be necessary to screen CBOs for the quality and sustainability of their efforts and their reliability as a partner. This can be done by attending their meetings, visiting their offices or sites, and interviewing others in the community.

CBOs often don't have office infrastructure or full-time staff. The Soros foundations should not expect polished partnership proposals from these organizations at the outset of cooperation. In some countries, it might be necessary for the Soros foundations to stimulate and support the formation of CBOs before community partnerships are possible.

Families and individuals

In certain initiatives, it may be appropriate and beneficial for the Soros foundations to develop partnerships with families or individual contributors. These partners may be able to provide cash donations, expertise, sponsorship, volunteer labor, or other contributions.

Reaching large numbers of families or individuals is labor intensive. Enlisting these partners may require an intermediary, such as another NGO, CBO, or professional organization. The Soros foundations should have a clear idea of what they are seeking from these partners and what will motivate families or individuals to become partners. It may be necessary to establish an informal contract that clarifies expectations, rights, and responsibilities in the collaboration. Recognition of family and individual contributions can encourage others to join the effort.

Some partnerships may benefit from the involvement of prominent individuals, such as philanthropists, celebrities, public figures, or opinion leaders. These national or international personalities can be invited to sponsor, endorse, inaugurate, publicize, or inspire a project or initiative. In enlisting a prominent individual, a direct approach by someone in the Soros foundations network who already knows the person might be most effective. Background information on the individual, his/her interests, and other initiatives that he/she supports can be helpful in targeting those who are most likely to partner with the Soros foundations.

Donor Partners and Their Features

International organizations

- Are comprised of members from numerous countries
- Are often leaders in donor coordination
- Can provide technical background and expertise for program design
- Formulate programs with governments
- Are characterized by time-consuming procedures and decision making

Bilateral donors

- Provide country-to-country assistance
- Have programs based on strengths, expertise, and experience of donor country
- Often consult with government of recipient country
- Are characterized by time-consuming procedures and decision making

National and local governments

- Are often involved in regulation, oversight, or reform efforts
- Have a political dimension to their work and partnerships
- Can be important for sustainability of initiatives
- Are characterized by time-consuming procedures and decision making

NGOs and foundations

- Vary in mission, status, origin, structure, and funding
- Are often approachable and flexible
- May have local implementation capacity

Universities

- Can provide intellectual resources, institutional infrastructure, and status
- Are sometimes bureaucratic and insular

Private enterprises and businesses

- Are profit-making organizations
- Can be innovative and quick
- Are unlikely partners for long-term programs
- Seek visibility in donor activity

Professional organizations and associations

- Have a communication and dissemination network
- Are attracted by partnerships that advance interests of their membership

Community-based organizations (CBOs)

- Vary in origin, membership, and funding
- May be difficult to find and evaluate in some countries
- Are often stakeholders with high commitment
- Can contribute local credibility
- Require extensive consultation prior to forming partnership

Families and individuals

- Can be labor-intensive to reach large numbers
- May require an intermediary to mobilize

Donor Partners and Their Resources

Section 3

How is a donor partnership built?

Now we have the mortar and bricks for a donor partnership. Section 1 presented different forms of partnerships. Section 2 described potential donor partners of the Soros foundations network. This section adds the tools and techniques for building a partnership.

The basic building blocks in a donor partnership are:

- Knowing your potential as a partner
- Laying the groundwork for partnership
- Presenting yourself as a partner
- Seeking a partner
- Clarifying the partnership
- Implementing the partnership
- Building on experience

These building blocks do not always need to be laid one on top of the other or straight in a row. The process of partnership will vary according to the situation.

Knowing your potential as a partner

The Soros foundations network is an increasingly attractive partner for other donors. It is unique in its ability to mobilize significant resources quickly and flexibly through locally based governance and implementation structures that are supported by an international network. What unites the network is the ideal of open society, which is interpreted and promoted by the individuals, foundations, and initiatives that form the Soros foundations.

The Soros foundations have an ethos of tackling difficult and controversial challenges, experimentation, innovation, and risk taking. Initiatives can be started quickly and adapted in the face of developments or unintended consequences. The Soros foundations are increasingly recognized by other donors—especially international ones seeking to operate locally—as ready funders, leaders, and deliverers. Many national foundations are respected as local bases of knowledge, insight, and experience on the ground.

The network's record of delivery and impact is creating a momentum in which major donors and national governments are including the national foundations in their consultations on program and policy development. This trend is opening up new opportunities for partnerships. The network's identity enables the national foundations to explore partnerships in which they make use of their strengths and negotiate for contributions and complementary efforts.

As discussed in Section 2, there are advantages and disadvantages of each donor as a partner. This is also true for the Soros foundations. In some countries, there are negative perceptions about George Soros, the national foundation, or the network. The Soros foundations may be viewed as political or controversial. International donors, whose work often depends on good relations with governments, may see risk in associating themselves with the network.

The Soros foundations may also be seen as so well-funded that they don't need or want partners. Some foundation programs or initiatives are viewed as unprofessional through the eyes of older, more established donor organizations and national governments. Sometimes, other donors simply lack information or do not grasp the foundations' unusual, fast-moving, and non-bureaucratic way of working. These factors cannot always be overcome. They should be recognized, however, and dealt with realistically in seeking partnerships.

In approaching and working with other donors, it may be important to communicate that the Soros foundations bring the following to a partnership:

- The ability to mobilize significant funding and human resources quickly and flexibly
- Local governance and implementation structures
- An international network with vast potential for collaboration
- The shared ideal of open society with flexible interpretation
- Willingness to take on challenges, experiment, innovate, and take risks
- Ability to start quickly, to lead, and to adapt to developments
- A track record of delivery
- Local bases of knowledge, insight, and experience on the ground
- Recognition that no individual or organization has all the answers and that mistakes, failures, and unintended consequences are inevitable in building open society.

Laying the groundwork for partnership

Partnerships originate in ways that require different types of background preparation. A partnership might begin with the idea of a national foundation's staff member or the priority of a national foundation's board. There could be a demand for the expansion of an existing foundation program. The Soros foundations may conceive of an initiative but lack the capacity or will to fully fund or implement the program. A national foundation and other donors in a program area may come together seeking coordination and partnership. A pressing need or crisis may call for partnership. A government or another donor may approach a national foundation seeking funding, expertise, or program collaboration. A successful program that has been funded mainly by the Soros foundations may be ready to become an independent NGO funded by multiple donors.

Whatever the origin of a partnership or program initiative, several steps are necessary to lay the groundwork for collaboration:

Meet the stakeholders

Identify and interview those individuals or groups who have an interest or "stake" in the area in which you will work. Stakeholders might be government officials, community leaders, other NGOs, organizations, enterprises, parents, or others that would be involved or affected. Meet with the stakeholders individually to seek advice and perspective. Bring together a roundtable of stakeholder representatives for discussion of the problem, initiative, or potential partnership. These contacts can be valuable if you decide to form an advisory group for your partnership project.

Assemble background information

Gather data and analyses of the problem or area in which you are working. Information might be available from local researchers, government offices, international organizations, or other donors. Find out what is already being done by the Soros foundations network or other organizations in your country and perhaps in other countries. Identify the main actors in the area. This background information may be useful later on, in support of a project proposal or in deciding on a structure for the partnership.

Meet the active donors

Make contact with individual donors. Interview them in their offices and go to their project sites. Ask for documentation about their programs. Find out about any donor coordination meetings or existing networks. If none exist, consider organizing one—on your own or with another donor. A donor coordination meeting can be informal; it might begin with an exploratory meeting or get-

together at the national foundation's office. Seek referrals or suggestions of donors who are not yet active but may be interested in becoming involved.

Use resources of the national foundation and the network

Obtain advice, referrals, and support from knowledgeable colleagues and board members in your foundation. Find out if there is relevant expertise in other national foundations or regional programs of the Soros foundations network.

Laying this groundwork helps to define or refine your ideas about a program and possible partnerships. It can clarify what the national foundation will aim to do and what it will not aim to do. Solid preparation also forms a basis for a convincing project proposal and well-informed negotiation of a partnership.

Presenting yourself as a partner

As your ideas and intentions become clearer, you will need to consider how best to present yourself to potential partners. It is good practice to document your ideas, for use both within the network and with potential partners. Most donors and increasingly the Soros foundations network will request some form of documentation as a partnership develops. Documentation is often useful when contacts with potential partners are at the working level and they will need to seek support and approval from their managers and boards.

The detail and completeness of documentation will vary depending on the stage of the idea, project, and partnership. In general, it is useful to write down what you know when you know it. The drive to document should not become an obstacle to moving forward with a partnership. Your documentation does not need to contain all the answers. It can include questions, issues, and risks for consideration and debate. Thus, there is no perfect blueprint. Rather, documentation is an aid to an ongoing process.

Your documentation might be a letter of interest, a letter inviting cooperation, a note on the need or issue, an analysis of the problem to be addressed, a sketchy project summary, a letter of appeal for partnerships, or a detailed project and partnership proposal.

In thinking through your documentation or organizing for a presentation, the information and questions to consider are:

Summary

What is the essence of your initiative? The summary should be prepared last but presented at the beginning. Some of your audience will not digest any more than the summary.

Need and rationale

Why are you undertaking this initiative? What need or problem is it addressing? How does it complement or supplement other initiatives in the area? What assumptions are you making? Background data and information can be included here.

Goals and objectives

What is the overall aim of the initiative? What are you trying to achieve specifically? Objectives and expected impact are best expressed in measurable outcomes.

Project description

What are the project activities and components? What will be delivered? If the initiative will be limited to certain geographical areas or participants, how will these be selected?

Implementation plan

How will implementation be organized? Who will be responsible for what? What is the time frame? What is the governance and accountability structure?

Costs and resources

What are the costs of the overall initiative? Of these costs, who will pay for what? Are there any in-kind contributions? Specify start-up capital costs and operating costs. Which costs are already covered with committed funds? Which costs still need funding? What structure of donor partnership is envisaged?

Monitoring and evaluation

How will you review progress during implementation? How will you determine whether the objectives have been met? Are there targets or benchmarks at intervals during the initiative? What reviews or reporting will be required, by whom, to whom, and when?

Sustainability

What should be the life span of the initiative and of the involvement of the Soros foundations network? How will the impact of the initiative be sustained? What are you doing now to ensure sustainability? What resources and partners are required for sustainability, now and in the future?

Issues and risks

As you enter the initiative, which questions or issues remain unresolved? What are the risks to project success? What can be done to address these issues or risks? This part of the presentation may include unanswered questions.

This information should be covered not only in documentation and presentations that you prepare—either on your own or with a partner—but also in presentations you receive from other donors when they initiate a partnership. The questions above may be used as a checklist for reviewing ideas or proposals. It is good practice to prepare documentation both in the local language and in English, so that local and international donor partners, as well as stakeholders, will have access to the information.

In building a partnership, it is necessary to communicate not only your ideas but also your value and credibility as a partner. A potential partner may ask you to describe your organization's capacity in terms of expertise, staffing, management, financing, experience, and commitment. Sharing background information on the organization, its board members, and its previous activities and impact can increase credibility. Annual reports of the Soros foundations network and your national foundation should be readily available. You might prepare a simple impact statement or summary of work undertaken in the area of interest. Because of the Soros foundations' unique structure and way of working, it may be necessary to explain how funding decisions are made, how the network is organized, and what is the philosophy of open society.

Seeking a partner

The Soros foundations need to be realistic at the outset of collaboration about the agendas, strengths, and working realities of potential donor partners. A perfect partner in theory—one who shares your objectives and has resources—may not be an ideal partner in practice. Some partners, even with the best of intentions, may promise more than they can deliver. Some donors are more interested in being recognized for their own distinct contribution than in collaboration. It is therefore important to assess what the partner can offer and whether it can deliver on its commitments.

The most effective partnership contacts are developed locally, around a common purpose or specific task. Formal, top-down donor coordination events rarely yield direct collaboration and joint funding commitments. For these donor contacts to be effective, there needs to be interest and follow-up by working-level staff on the ground. The rapport and trust between staff of the Soros foundations and the donor partner can make or break the building of a partnership.

There are various tactics for first contacts with potential donor partners. Personal contact is usually more effective than written appeals. Personal contact followed promptly by correspondence and documentation often works well. When approaching potential partners, foundation staff should be aware of other contacts, partnerships, or proposals from the Soros foundations with that donor. Regional coordinators of the Soros foundations may be able to assist with introductions and contacts with donors based outside your country, as well as the regional or international offices of donors that are active in your country. They can also be asked to help you obtain information on how the donor partner makes program and funding decisions. With few exceptions, the larger and more bureaucratic the partner organization, the longer the time interval between the first contact and a partnership commitment.

In identifying your partner(s) and the structure of the partnership, you should consider the following:

Common agenda

Do you and your partner(s) agree on a common goal or objective? Do you share common values in your work? If not, can you accept or integrate a diversity in working styles? What is motivating your partner(s) to collaborate?

Trust and respect

Do you and your partner(s) trust and respect each other, or must you earn one another's trust and respect? To what extent is your partner known locally and to your foundation? What is at stake in associating yourself with this partner?

Organizational capacity

What can your partner(s) deliver? How well-established is the partner in your country? How secure is your partner's core funding? Does your partner have a track record of delivery in your country and in the area of interest? What do you know about the management and staffing of your partner's organization?

Readiness to deliver

Is your partner(s) ready to move ahead with the partnership? Is there consensus in your partner's organization about what it will deliver? Does its staff have the necessary approval from managers, boards, headquarters, or governments? If not, how long will it take to obtain approval? Can the partner(s) deliver on its commitment with existing organizational capacity, or will the organization need time to expand or mobilize? Is your partner realistic about its readiness to deliver?

Resource commitment

What resources can your partner(s) contribute to the partnership? Are these resources financial or in-kind contributions? What is the source of these resources? Have the resources been formally committed to the partnership? When will the resources be available and for how long?

Leadership and coordination

Do you or your partner(s) have expectations about whether there will be a lead partner or coordinator? If so, which partner is expected to lead or coordinate the collaboration? Does the capacity to lead or coordinate already exist in one of the partners' organizations, or should it be developed?

Complementarity

Is there a fit between you, your partner(s), and what you each bring to the partnership? What will be the relationship among the partners in terms of timing of funding and implementation, levels of resource commitment, and geographic coverage? What is the most appropriate arrangement for the partnership? Are you and your partner(s) driven by what you are able to supply rather than by the needs of the initiative or partnership? To what extent are you and your partner(s) dependent on one another's contributions? Do you and your partner(s) need to seek additional partners to fill gaps?

These factors should be considered when you are identifying a partner and when a donor is approaching you. Other donors will have the same questions about the Soros foundations as a prospective partner.

Clarifying the partnership

It is important to define the roles of the partners in the partnership. You will have expectations of your partner(s), and your partner(s) will have expectations of the Soros foundations. Failure to clarify these expectations at the outset increases the likelihood of misunderstanding, conflict, and delay later on.

Successful collaboration requires clarity and consensus between the partners regarding:

- Shared goals and objectives
- The partnership arrangement (see Section 1)
- Scope of activities under the partnership
- Division of tasks
- Resource commitments of each partner
- Time frame of the partnership

- Leadership, coordination, monitoring, and information mechanisms
- Publicity of the partnership
- Other agreements between the partners

It is useful to document and formalize the partnership; a handshake or a verbal understanding is rarely enough for successful collaboration. Written agreement is especially important in large, high-cost initiatives or in those that involve numerous or new partners. The documentation can be “tight” or “loose.” It might be a letter of agreement, a memorandum of understanding, or a more detailed partnership contract that is signed by all parties.

Documentation of the partnership can distinguish between basic agreements (such as the shared aim, the structure of the partnership, respective roles, and contributions) and provisional details that are likely to be revised during implementation (such as cost estimates or time tables). Too heavy an emphasis on documentation and detail can unnecessarily complicate, bind, or delay the partnership. Some organizations may find it difficult to commit themselves to strict, detailed agreements. When necessary, documentation can create flexibility by building in a pilot or trial period, by providing for review and adjustment, or by phasing the resource commitments of the partners.

Implementing the partnership

Delivering, in good faith, on the commitments you have made to the partnership will earn your partner’s trust and reinforce the credibility of the Soros foundations network. Moreover, fulfilling your commitments will put you in a position to expect your partner(s) to fulfil their commitments. Good partnership is shown not only through implementation of signed agreements and transfers of funding. It is also demonstrated through good communications—promptly returned calls and faxes, regular efforts to meet, open exchange of information, and cooperative problem solving.

The partnership is tested when a problem arises. Problems and conflicts are inevitable. Good partners put problems and disagreements on the table to be discussed and resolved. Open communication is especially important in partnerships that transcend culture and language. If necessary, partners adapt the partnership by revising the initiative and re-evaluating their roles, responsibilities, and resource commitments. It is unproductive and harmful for the partners to focus on placing blame or criticizing each other rather than solving the problem. Such behavior will undermine or destroy trust in the collaboration.

There are various reasons why a partnership ends or may need to be ended:

- The partnership has achieved its objective.
- The vision of the partners diverges over time.
- A partner cannot live up to its funding or other commitments.
- The implementation of the partnership is evaluated and found to be unsuccessful.
- Partners or their staff are unable to work together.
- There is an unanticipated development or crisis.

If the partnership has achieved its objectives, the partners should evaluate the effort and determine whether there are other opportunities or needs for collaboration among themselves.

A partner who decides to leave the partnership before the collaboration has been fulfilled should do so as responsibly as possible. The departing partner should clearly inform the other partner(s) about the reasons for its decision. Pulling out of a partnership suddenly or without explanation can reduce the credibility of a donor in the eyes of its partners and the broader community.

When a partner leaves before its commitment is fulfilled, the remaining partner(s) need to assess whether the effort can and should be continued. Is there a substitute for the partner who has left? Can the remaining partner(s) fill the gap left by the former partner? Is the departure of the partner a sign that the partnership is in trouble and needs to be ended? How might the implementation of the partnership be adapted to compensate for the loss of the partner? The remaining partner(s) has to weigh these practical questions along with political, ethical, and other dimensions of the situation.

Good partners are sensitive to acknowledgement and publicity of the partnership, both during and after the collaboration. Different partners wish to be recognized in different ways. Some donors prefer to remain anonymous or with low visibility for personal, political, or other reasons. This should be respected. Most partners, however, seek and expect some form of recognition of their contribution and the accomplishments of the partnership. The expectations and responsibilities of the Soros foundations to acknowledge partners and publicize the partnership are greater when the foundations play a lead role in the collaboration.

Some ways to recognize the partnership and its achievements are:

- Listing the names of all partners on relevant documents

- Affixing an acknowledgement of the partnership on goods associated with the initiative, such as books or computers
- Acknowledging the partnership at public events
- Organizing events to celebrate accomplishments of the partnership
- Publicizing the partnership in the media or on the World Wide Web
- Reporting on the partnership to managers and board members
- Preparing a one-page summary of the partnership that can be shared publicly
- Quantifying and disseminating information on what has gone into the partnership and what has been achieved

Some ways to recognize and give credit to your partner(s) are:

- A letter of appreciation from your foundation's board to the leadership of the partner(s)
- Recognition of partner(s) in your national foundation's annual report
- Certificates of recognition and awards, especially to individuals who have contributed to the partnership
- Recognition of partner(s) at public events
- Personal introductions of partner(s) to Soros foundations network leaders
- Acknowledgement of partner(s) at donor coordination meetings

Recognition builds good relations, reinforces the partnership, sets an example for others, and paves the way for future cooperation.

Building on experience

The experience of a partnership teaches valuable lessons. You are wiser from the mistakes and unforeseen obstacles that you encountered. You have learned from your partner(s) and about their organization. You have a better idea of what the Soros foundations can contribute and achieve through partnership. And your experience may provide insight and examples to colleagues in your national foundation and in the Soros foundations network.

The experience of a partnership can generate opportunities. You now have useful contacts that should be maintained and can be built upon. Your donor partner(s) may become interested to work with your national foundation in new areas. Other donors may want to join and expand the successful partnership you have established. The partnership might even take on a life of its own as an independent organization or a grant recipient of the original partners. The publicity and visibility of your partnership

may spark wider interest. A donor partnership in your country could become a model for collaboration in other countries of the Soros foundations network.

Glossary

The terms defined below have been used in this text and may be useful as working vocabulary in your contacts with donor partners.

B

Bilateral

A two-way relation; used to describe country-to-country projects, as well as national donor agencies.

C

Capital costs

Expenses of start-up or fixed assets, such as communications equipment, vehicles, start-up consultation, or travel.

Community-based organizations (CBOs)

Grass-roots groups formed to serve the interests of families or stakeholders in communities. CBOs usually emerge through schools, churches, neighborhoods, ethnic groups, sports, or cultural activities.

Core funding

Financing required for the basic structure of an organization, including salaries of full-time staff, facilities, equipment, communications, and the direct expenses of day-to-day work. Core funding requirements are often budgeted separately from other costs of project delivery.

D

Discretionary funds

Unallocated financial resources that can be made available by quick decision for unforeseen needs and priorities.

Donor coordination

Attempts by lead agencies, groups of donors, or governments to exchange information and better integrate their efforts.

F

Fund-raising challenge

A direct, proactive approach or public campaign to mobilize the resources of others.

Funding commitment

The formal, usually written confirmation that financing will be made available.

Funding disbursement

The actual release of money by a donor.

Funding pledge

An indicative, often verbal promise that financing will be made available.

G

Grass-roots

Used to describe organizations or initiatives that operate within local communities, very close to stakeholders, or with population groups that are difficult to reach.

I

In-kind contribution

Non-monetary donations, such as equipment, supplies, business services, office space, staff time, or volunteer labor.

In-kind matching

Financial contributions by one donor are complemented by non-monetary resources of other partners.

International organizations

Agencies comprised of members from many countries.

L

Lead partner

A donor or implementing agency that initiates or directs the partnership by developing a strategy, starting a program, overseeing donor coordination, managing implementation, providing seed funding, or committing the largest share of resources.

Leveraging

The use of one's own resources to raise others' commitment of resources.

M

Matching

A pledge or commitment of funding or in-kind contributions used to encourage other donors to commit themselves to the effort or to increase their current support.

Multilateral organizations

Used to describe international organizations that are comprised of members from many countries.

Multi-year commitment

An allocation of resources for a several-year period for a defined set of priorities, programs, or projects.

N

National foundation

The locally governed NGO in a given country that is part of the Soros foundations network. Usually provides grants and implements programs. Receives all or most of its funding from George Soros.

NGO working alliance

Cooperative arrangements among NGOs that are based on the shared belief that the effort of the whole is greater and stronger than the effort of many separate parts.

O

Operating/Recurrent/Running costs

Ongoing annual or monthly expenses of an organization or project, such as salaries, utilities, consumable materials, and communications.

P

Parallel funding

Partners agree on a common objective but decide to manage and disburse their funding separately, using their own financing, administrative, and governance structures.

Pilot project

An initial or small-scale effort designed to test an idea or working approach. Pilot projects are usually undertaken with the intention of replicating or widening the scale of implementation at a later stage.

Pooling funds

Partners commit equal or equivalent funds to a common pool of resources for a specific program.

Pro bono

Used to describe a person's donation of time or expertise at no charge, except for reimbursement of the direct costs of carrying out the work, such as travel or communication.

Program overhead

The administrative costs of implementing a project or program.

Project/Program component

A distinct part of a broader effort. Examples are the textbook component of an education reform program or the radio component of a media development project.

S

Seed funding

Resources to start an initiative or stimulate matching contributions of others.

Soros foundations network

The group of individuals, national foundations, regional offices, programs, and other initiatives that have been established and funded by George Soros to build open society.

Sponsorship

An organization or individual associates itself with an initiative or project through funding, endorsement, or another contribution.

Stakeholders

Individuals or groups who have an interest or "stake" in a given project or program. Those who can affect change or will be most affected by it.

T

Technical assistance

Professional or management advice and training provided by local or external specialists.

The network of foundations created by George Soros is an increasingly attractive partner for other donors. It is unique in its ability to mobilize significant resources quickly and flexibly through locally based governance and implementation structures that are supported by an international network. What unites the network is the ideal of open society, which is interpreted and promoted by the individuals, foundations, and initiatives that form the Soros foundations network.

The Soros foundations network has an ethos of tackling difficult and controversial challenges, experimentation, innovation, and risk taking. Initiatives can be started quickly and adapted in the face of developments or unintended consequences. The Soros foundations are increasingly recognized by other donors—especially international ones seeking to operate locally—as ready funders, leaders, and deliverers. Many of the foundations are respected as local bases of knowledge, insight, and experience on the ground.

The network's record of delivery and impact is creating a momentum in which major donors and national governments are including the Soros foundations in their consultations on program and policy development. This trend is opening up new opportunities for partnerships.

This publication aims to increase the practical capacity in the network for building donor partnerships with a wide range of donors.

Open Society Institute