

Overcoming Barriers and Problem Solving

Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the difficulties within partnerships, the problems to be solved. The UN state that ‘partnerships’ are essential for implementation of the SDGs but also acknowledge that many barriers must be overcome. This is evidenced by the UN Economic and Social Council special event; ‘2015 Multi-Stakeholder partnerships: Making them work, for the Post 2015 Development Agenda’. There were many obstacles during the Health, Well-being and Physical Education (HW & PE) project and insights are shared for the benefit of stakeholders in a similar context.

This chapter investigates the difficulties with partnerships, the trials and tribulations. The UN states that ‘partnerships’ are essential for implementation of the SDGs and continued efforts towards equality in health and wellbeing. However, they also acknowledge that many barriers must be overcome and problems solved as evidenced by the UN Economic and Social Council special event titled ‘2015 Multi-Stakeholder partnerships: Making them work, for the Post 2015 Development Agenda’. There were many obstacles during the Health, Well-being and Physical Education (HW & PE) project, ‘Best Start: A community collaborative approach to lifelong health and wellness’.

Partnerships often fail due to the complex and cumbersome problems that arise, what Leisinger refers to as ‘wicked’ problems. Wicked prob-

lems are “not evil, but tricky, devious, messy and big, with interacting and evolving dynamics of social societal context” (Leisinger 2015). This is supported by research by Pattberg et al. (2012) who found that less than one quarter of partnerships output aligned directly with their stated goals.

Overcoming barriers and problem solving has strong connections to the ‘how’ of partnerships and is often dependent upon context. Context is the sub-heading for the last three stages of the International Civil Society Centre ‘Nine building blocks for successful partnerships’ (2014, p. 14), referenced throughout the storyline. The building blocks were identified for creating successful multi-stakeholder partnerships based on over 15 years of research from successful and failed partnerships (ICSC 2014).

CONTEXT

Meta-governance

Partnerships are an indication of an emerging property of global governance, namely, fragmentation, which is characterised by uncoordinated and non-hierarchical institutional arrangements, often leading to overlap and competition among initiatives within one and the same issue area. Without coordination, fragmentation could lead to inefficiencies, redundancies, and a seemingly large governance landscape, but with little real impact. (ICSC 2014, p. 28).

The ideal of the community collaborations was to create a ‘hybrid space’, involving “non hierarchical interplay between academic, practitioner and community expertise” (Zeichner 2010, p. 89). The reality of meta-governance is often the reverse of this purpose, where conflict between stakeholders is experienced with counterproductive results.

Competition and overlap was present from the very beginnings of the project (January 2011). There was initial resistance by the leader to complete the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as while it was clear that this was the requirement for anyone wishing to become a swimming and water safety presenter, it did seem somewhat inconsistent that previous teaching experience was not recognised as ‘training and assessment’. A university lecturer with a number of education degrees—all of a higher AQF Framework level—was then required to complete

to overcome and problems to be solved, efforts and time invested were greatly valued by all stakeholders.

Responses from stakeholders suggested that they all valued the enhanced learning community collaboration generated. The children from the local primary schools were excited, parents attended lessons in support and comments from teachers, teaching assistants, parents, and the children expressed gratitude. We are reminded by Lawrence (2015) that different interests will always exist and they are not a barrier to success, rather “different interests create the intellectual tension that allows you to find better ways to solve problems”.

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