

## Importance of Partnerships

No one organization can fully meet the needs of, much less solve, the social challenge(s) non-profits are established to address. Functional, strategic partnerships can lighten the load and increase effectiveness of the effort for all involved.

### 1. Deciding on Partners – Suggested Criteria

- Similar Mission/Vision – or at least not in direct opposition
- Reputation in the community
- Leadership – capabilities, capacity, energy, knowledge of the issue(s), expectations, experience with partnerships
- Similar Values – modus operandi
- Regular, thorough communications
- Agreed-upon means for resolving conflicts – style, process, documented
- Proactive or reluctant partner?
- Ability to hold each “other” accountable and mutual problem-solving skills
- Recognize personalities – work around possible? or “live for another day”?

### 2. “Community Engagement”

#### Definition of community engagement

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with community groups to address issues that impact the well-being of those groups. Activities that help firms (*non-profit and/or community organizations*) engage the community include credible and transparent reporting, town hall meetings and collaborative decision-making.

Firms that most proactively engage the community often find efficiencies in pushing forward with new projects because they have secured the social license to operate. They often develop the most innovative products and processes because of the need to balance sometimes conflicting points of view, forcing them to think outside the box for new solutions.

However, such community engagement activities often take considerable firms' resources and time, but there is widespread agreement for most firms involved in community engagement that such efforts are highly rewarded.

#### **Example**

Anything from the large, such as site locations and environmental impact assessments, to the seemingly inconsequential, such as supporting local schools and financing youth sports teams, that contributes to a “social license to operate.” [\[1\]](#)

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- Formal vs. Informal means of “engagement”