



Applying the Lessons Learned to Your Own Collaborations Across Difference

Building strong relationships between smaller, grassroots community groups and larger, mainstream organizations isn't easy, but the organizations we've talked with all agree it's worth it. Based on our survey of three successful collaborations, here are some key questions to ask as you develop your own relationships.

- Addressing Power Dynamics**
 - What is your collaborating partner's belief about power and access to resources as it relates to race, culture and class? Are you in agreement?
 - How do each of your organizations express your beliefs about power and access?

- Committing to A Deepened Relationship**
 - Do you share the same passion and vision for larger community empowerment? What does community empowerment mean to you?
 - What are you each willing to give and do in order to mutually support each other in your larger vision for community empowerment beyond the basic agreements you have specified for your collaboration?

- Being Open to Influence**
 - Do you and your collaborative partner have strong communication? How do you communicate best? How do you address conflict when it arises?
 - How open are you to adapting the way you do your work in order to be accessible to your collaborating partner? How open are they to shifting how they do their work?

- Flexibility and Adaptability**
 - What is your comfort level with ambiguity? When you are confused, how do you gain clarity?
 - How comfortable is your collaborating partner with ambiguity? How do they seek clarity?
 - As the collaborative relationship progresses, how do you anticipate sustaining the collaboration through major changes, such as a cut in funding or a key person leaving?

- Relationships and Trust**
 - Do you have a strong relationship with your collaborative partner? Do you trust them?
 - Do you believe they trust you?
 - What actions build trust between you?

- Valuing All Skills**
 - What skills do you bring to the collaboration? Do you think they are equally valued?
 - What skills does your partner bring to the collaboration? Do you think they are equally valued?
 - How do you make decisions? Is one collaborative partner's voice louder and more respected?
 - How is credit for the success and outcome of your collaborative effort shared?