Partnership Value Canvas

Pay Attention to the Partnership | Article 5

Purpose

A practical conversation aid for partners to examine **value in contributing**, **value from contributing**, **value created together**, and the **sustainability of participation**. It is not a validated diagnostic or a financial valuation method.

How to use

Invite each partner organisation to complete the canvas from its own perspective before comparing responses in a facilitated discussion. Record concrete examples where possible. Do not assume that different organisations should value the same things or contribute equally.

The canvas

Dimension	Questions to explore	Our perspective / evidence
1. Value in contributing	How does participating advance our mission, responsibilities or strategic purpose? Why is making this contribution worthwhile to us?	
2. Value from contributing	What do we gain through participation - resources, relationships, learning, influence, capabilities, income or opportunities? Are those benefits sufficient?	
3. Value created together	What outcomes, services, capabilities or benefits become possible because we work together? Who benefits beyond the member organisations?	
4. Sustainability of participation	What staff time, funding, assets, risks or opportunity costs do we carry? What support or conditions are necessary for us to keep contributing?	

Compare perspectives across partners

Discussion prompt	What to look for
Where is there mutuality?	Do partners understand and respect one another's different purposes, interests and constraints?
Where is reciprocity under strain?	Is the relationship between contributions and returns becoming difficult to justify or sustain for any partner?
Whose contribution is easily overlooked?	Community trust, local knowledge, convening, volunteer effort, access, specialist expertise or other non-financial assets.
Who carries costs or risks?	Unfunded activity, delayed benefits, workforce pressures, financial exposure or lost alternatives.
What should change?	Funding, recognition, decision-making, shared investment, responsibilities, risk-sharing or expectations.

Closing conversation

Ask each partner to answer these questions openly:

1. **Do we find sufficient value in what we contribute?**
2. **Do we receive sufficient value and support from contributing to continue?**
3. **Are we creating meaningful additional value together?**
4. **What would make participation more sustainable over the next 12 months?**
5. **What one change should we agree now?**

Agree an owner and review date for any action. Repeat the conversation when the partnership's resources, strategy or membership change.

Facilitator's note

Avoid reducing value to money or assuming that fairness requires identical contributions and returns. A partner may willingly contribute more because the shared outcome advances its purpose. Equally, mission-driven commitment should not be used to justify an unsustainable burden, particularly for smaller VCSE organisations. The goal is to make different forms of value, dependency and cost discussable without assigning blame.